



145TH
Founder's Day
Convocation

CELEBRATING ALABAMA FEMALE FIRSTS

Thursday November 4, 2021 | 11:00 AM
Birthright Alumni Hall

Dr. Cynthia Warrick, President

STILLMAN COLLEGE



145TH
Founder's Day Convocation

Mark McCormick, Ph.D., Presiding
Cynthia Warrick, Ph.D., President

THE PRELUDE: Sonata "Pathetique" op 13 no 8, Second MVT Ludwig Van Beethoven

THE PROCESSIONAL: "Praeludium" from Partita no1 in B-Major BWV 825 J.S. Bach

THE CALL TO ASSEMBLE Dr. Mark McCormick
Provost & Vice President of Academic Affairs

THE INVOCATION Rev. Cathy Hoop
Pastor, Grace Presbyterian Church, Tuscaloosa, AL

SELECTION: "Achieved Is The Glorious Work" Joseph Hayden
*The College Choir – Mrs. Jocqueline Richardson, Director
Mr. Jeremey McMillan, Accompanist*

GREETINGS FROM —

THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION George Warnsley
SGA President

THE NATIONAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION Sean Toney
President '94

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) SYNOD OF LIVING WATERS Rev. Cathy Hoop

THE FACULTY & STAFF Dr. Mark McCormick
Provost & Vice President of Academic Affairs

INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKER Dr. Cynthia Warrick
President

SELECTION: "I'm Gonna Sing Til The Spirit Moves In My Heart" Moses Hogan

THE ADDRESS Katie Boyd Britt
Member, Stillman College Board of Trustees

RECOGNITION OF ALABAMA FEMALE FIRSTS HONOREES Dr. Cynthia Warrick

RECOGNITION & ANNOUNCEMENTS Dr. Mark McCormick

THE ALMA MATER Barnes-Lockhart

THE BENEDICTION Rev. Cathy Hoop

THE RECESSIONAL: "Water Music Suite no 2 "A lla Hornpipe" G. F. Handel

***The audience is asked to remain seated for the Processional and Recessional**



ALABAMA *Female* FIRSTS



Cynthia Almond

Cynthia Almond was born and raised in Tuscaloosa. She graduated from Central High School and then attended Vanderbilt University. She received a bachelor of arts from the University of Alabama, majoring in history and minoring in Spanish, and she also received her Juris Doctor from the University of Alabama School of Law.

of Representatives for District 63 in Tuscaloosa. Previously, she served four terms on the Tuscaloosa City Council where she also was chair of the council finance committee and was elected by her peers as the president pro tem. She is a graduate of Leadership Alabama and co-chair for its regional council; she serves on the Capstone Health Services Foundation, the Tuscaloosa County Tax Board, the Hank Poore Foundation, and the BankFirst Advisory Board; and she serves as a Sunday school teacher and on the missions team at First United Methodist Church.

Almond is an attorney in the private practice of law, where she concentrates in estate planning and probate, business law, and real estate. She also owns a title company, Capitol Park Title. Almond recently was elected to the State of Alabama House

Almond has two children, Lee and Miller. In her spare time, Almond enjoys playing tennis, walking, running, mountain bike riding, kayaking, and most any other outdoor activity.



Cynthia Anthony

Cynthia Anthony currently serves as the president for Lawson State Community College in Birmingham. Dr. Anthony has 30 years of higher education experience. Prior to her appointment as interim president, Dr. Anthony was interim vice chancellor for student success for the Alabama Community College System. She is the former executive vice president and

Technical College, Shelton State Community College, and Enterprise State Community College.

dean of students at Lawson State. Dr. Anthony has served as interim president at three other institutions in the Alabama Community College System: Drake State Community and

Anthony earned a bachelor's degree in psychology at Talladega College in Alabama. She holds a master's degree in counseling from the University of Alabama at Birmingham and completed a doctorate in educational leadership through a joint program at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the University of Alabama.

She was awarded UAB's Department of Education's Outstanding Alumni Award in 2005.



Elisabeth French

Elisabeth French attended the University of Montevallo on an athletic scholarship and received her bachelor's of arts degree with a double major in political science and Spanish in 1993.

civil jury trials. In November of 2010, French was elected as a judge for Jefferson County's Circuit Court. She was re-elected in 2016 and elected as the presiding judge in 2020.

French earned her law degree from Samford University's Cumberland School of Law in 1997. French litigated complex civil cases and tried multiple

French is a member of the Birmingham Bar Association, the Magic City Bar Association and the Alabama Lawyers Association (ALA). She is a former president of the ALA and the ALA Judicial Council. She is a member of the Court of the Judiciary and has participated in multiple committees of the Supreme Court of Alabama.



 **Katie Boyd Britt**

A native of Enterprise, Katie Boyd Britt is a graduate of The University of Alabama with a degree in political science. Britt's career began in Washington, D.C., as Senator Richard Shelby's deputy press secretary and later press secretary, serving as head of the department at only 23. Britt then served as special assistant to then-University of Alabama President

Robert Witt. After obtaining her law degree, she practiced law with Butler Snow LLP.

In 2015, she took a leave of absence to serve as Senator Shelby's deputy campaign manager and communications director before rejoining his team as chief of staff in 2016.

Britt was then selected as president and CEO of the Business Council of Alabama in December 2018, where she works to build a stronger business community. In this role, she serves on numerous committees and task forces, including Montgomery United Transition Committee, Alabama Technology Network Advisory Board, Leadership Council of the Alabama Law Alumni Society, the Montgomery Area Committee of 100, Stillman College Board of Trustees, both Governor Ivey's Coronavirus Task Force and Broadband Working Group, the University of South Alabama President's Advisory Council, and the Alabama Wildlife Federation Board of Directors.

Britt resides in Montgomery with her husband, Wesley, and their two children, Bennett and Ridgeway. She is involved in numerous civic, educational, and leadership organizations.



 **Debbie Hughes**

Debbie Hughes is IBM's vice president of computer services industry for DXC Technology Worldwide. She leads DXC technology, which is a \$18 billion company and a staff of over 2,000. Her team is responsible for working with the business partner community around the world to drive the sale of services, which represents a significant market opportunity. These services

include infrastructure, cloud and managed services, security, business resiliency and consulting services and maintenance.

Hughes represents IBM in the leadership relationship with DXC Technology. Her leadership portfolio includes membership on IBM's Global Executive and Global Integrators & Computer Services.

During her 34-year tenure at IBM, Hughes has had extensive experience working around the globe as a sales executive and senior advisor on many top accounts and executives. She is an

accomplished sales and consulting executive, currently serving as the global vice president for communication & CSI in North America. Industry focuses include communication, E&U, automotive, banking, insurance, sports & entertainment and travel and transportation.

As a vice president, Hughes provides day to day leadership to a team of highly skilled professional sellers, consultants and technologists who are changing the way their clients do business and serve their own clients. She holds solution expertise in the areas of digital reinvention, cognitive enterprise, automation and platform as a service.

Hughes has spent the last three years leading a cross brand team supporting DXC Technology, which has become one of the largest global system integrators in the world. Her previous jobs have been in global technology services (GTS) as vice president, channels and midmarket, global business services (GBS) software, hardware and IBM channels. She has filled business development, marketing, CRM, consulting and sales roles.



 **Mildred Robinson Porter**

Mildred Robinson Porter was born in Epes, Alabama in 1957. She attended Epes Elementary School, Sumter County Training School and graduated from Livingston High School in 1975. She has two children – Walter Charles and April.

She began her career in radio broadcasting in 1989 at WSLY Radio in York, Alabama. She started working with Jim Lawson Communications

in 1992 as an announcer. Over the years, she advanced to sales manager. In 2013 Mildred Porter was granted a license to own and operate radio station 107.3 WQZZ-FM.



Vivian Malone Jones

Vivian Malone Jones became the first African American to graduate from the formerly segregated University of Alabama on May 30, 1965.

She was one of the first two African American students at the University in 1963. Despite being an exceptional high school student and member of

the National Honor Society, Ms. Malone Jones was one of several Black students to have their applications rejected from UA because of “class size” and “enrollment” issues. She earned a bachelor’s degree at Alabama A&M, a predominantly black university, but it lost its accreditation.

Along with another African American student, James Hood, Ms. Malone Jones and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund filed suit against UA for denying entry to Black students. A district judge ruled in favor of the pair entering the university but was blocked by then-governor George Wallace in the infamous “Stand in the Schoolhouse Door” event. Wallace made a political stand and kept his promise to uphold segregation in the state, using

the now infamous slogan of “Segregation Now, Segregation Forever.” Only after federalized guard troops arrived, four and a half hours after Mr. Wallace’s initial refusal, were the students admitted.

In November 1963 there were three bomb blasts at the University of Alabama, one of them just four blocks from Vivian Malone Jones’ dormitory. “I decided not to show any fear and went to classes that day,” she said in an interview with *The Post Standard* of Syracuse in 2004. Out of fear for her safety, the university hired a driver for her, a student at Stillman College in Tuscaloosa named Mack Jones. They later fell in love and married.

After graduating from Alabama, Ms. Jones worked for the United States Justice Department in its civil rights division. She also worked at the Environmental Protection Agency as director of civil rights and urban affairs and director of environmental justice before retiring in 1996 to sell life insurance.



Natalie Kelly

Natalie Kelly leads corporate responsibility at Brasfield & Gorrie, one of the nation’s largest privately-held construction firms. Upon joining the company in 2016, she took on the responsibility of building her department to support the organization’s diversity and inclusion, sustainability, and charitable giving

initiatives. During this time, Kelly has become a noted leader and influencer in diversity and inclusion, developing and executing the company’s strategic plan, spearheading a diversity managers’ roundtable for senior executives, and serving on related boards at Auburn University and within the construction industry.

A graduate of Auburn University, Kelly has spent her career working in construction, the corporate sector, and as an entrepreneur. Before joining Brasfield & Gorrie, she founded and managed SUSTAIN Strategy & Media Group, a strategic consulting and communications agency committed to helping companies move sustainability initiatives forward. Her

professional accomplishments as the president of SUSTAIN have benefited organizations such as Toyota USA, the United States Department of Energy, Southern Company, and various corporate and media clients.

Kelly’s construction experience started at Kelly Road Builders, her family’s road construction business. She has worked in and supported the company for more than 20 years in various capacities. She attributes her ability to be an influential and visionary leader in her current role at Brasfield & Gorrie to her time “growing up” in construction.

Kelly resides in Birmingham, Alabama, and has been honored by her community for her work. She was recognized as one of the Birmingham Business Journal’s 2021 Leaders in Diversity honorees, a 2020 Women to Watch honoree, and a Top 40 Under 40 professional. Natalie is active with the United Way of Central Alabama, where she founded and currently chairs the J. Mason Davis Leadership Society, an affinity group for African American philanthropists. She is an alumna of Leadership Birmingham and a member of the Kiwanis Club.



Bobbie Knight

In August 2019, Birmingham native Bobbie Knight was elected as the 15th president and first woman to serve at the helm of Miles College.

Knight retired in 2016 after a successful career of more than 37 years with Alabama Power Company. Knight held various executive and leadership

positions, including vice president of the Birmingham Division – Alabama Power’s largest division.

Although retired from her professional career, Knight continues to use her business acumen as CEO of her own company, Bobbie Knight Consulting, LLC. She also serves as chair of the Board of Managers for the Birmingham Times Media Group. She also serves as vice chair of the BAA.

In 2017, Knight was elected to the Board of Trustees of the historic Miles College in Fairfield, Alabama, where she served on the development committee. Also in 2017, she was tapped by then Birmingham’s Mayor-elect Randall Woodfin to serve as co-chair of his transition team.

Knight has earned recognition for her dedication to leadership with civic organizations, from championing the city’s downtown Railroad Park, to serving as chair of the board for

the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute. Her past philanthropic and civic board affiliations include Red Mountain Theatre, REV Birmingham, VOICES for Alabama’s Children, The Literacy Council, and the A. G. Gaston Boys and Girls Club, among others.

Throughout her career, Knight has received many awards and accolades including Outstanding Alumni in Public Relations by the University Of Alabama School Of Communications and the Women’s History Award from the Birmingham Chapter of NAACP.

In what she considers a highlight of her career, Knight was selected as one of 21 women worldwide for the acclaimed Leadership Foundation Fellows Program of the International Women’s Forum. This program afforded her the opportunity to study at Harvard University and the Judge School of Business at Cambridge in the United Kingdom.

Knight has a B.S. degree from the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa and a Juris Doctorate from the Birmingham School of Law. She is also a graduate of Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management Executive Leadership Program.

She is married to Gary Burley, retired NFL player, local philanthropist, and founder of ProStart Academy.



Jacqueline Morgan

Jacqueline Morgan currently serves as founder and director of the University Fellows Program at the University of Alabama, an elite honors program attracting some of the most outstanding students in the country, and associate professor in the Honors College.

Previous roles at UA include serving as the first associate dean of the Honors College for 10 years; senior associate director of Undergraduate Admissions and Scholarships; and as founder and director of the McNair Scholars Program, an undergraduate research experience that earned a ranking in the top 10 percent in the country of similar programs while she was director.

She holds doctorate and master’s degrees, summa cum laude, in counseling from The University of Alabama with a specialization in marriage and family therapy and educational psychology and master’s and bachelor’s degrees, summa cum laude, from Florida State University in the area of Learning Disabilities and Emotional Disturbances.

With civic engagement as one of her priorities, she has served as a board member of numerous organizations, including as president for the local nonprofits The Tuscaloosa County Preservation Society, the Junior League of Tuscaloosa, Tuscaloosa’s One Place, and Counseling Ministry Professionals. She is currently President of the Rotary Club of Tuscaloosa, President of Tuscaloosa Business Exchange, and a board member of the following organizations: Hospice of West Alabama, Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, UPerk, and Counseling Ministry Professionals.

Her awards include the ODK Living Legend Award, which recognizes outstanding contributions to the goals and ideals of higher education; Amanda Grace Taylor Watson Distinctive Image Award, which is given to persons who exemplify the essence of the University in all aspects of life; and the Walter R. Guyton Student Service Award, which recognizes outstanding commitment to the service of UA students, among others

Jacqueline is married to Robert Morgan, an attorney and adjunct professor at The University of Alabama Law School.



Concetta Hubbard Odongo



Concetta Hubbard Odongo is a high-energy, highly-skilled, results-oriented professional and proven human resources (HR) generalist. She's a business partner with skills in employee engagement programming, internal and external communications, employment/staffing and training expertise, human resource

development planning/programming, large-scale event planning and change management leadership abilities. Odongo also has experience in data analysis, compliance and reporting, organizational development, and designing and delivering HR programs, policies/procedures and administrative systems that are strategically and tactically linked to organizational performance.

Odongo received her BA degree in communication from the University of Montevallo, a master's degree in corporate and organizational communications, and post graduate certification in human resources management from Fairleigh Dickinson University.

Odongo has done additional graduate studies in mediation, contract management and public administration at Troy University. In 2006, she earned the senior professional in human resources certification and is a 2015 graduate of Leadership Tuscaloosa. As a member of the LT Alumni Association, she served as chair of Leadership Tuscaloosa

for the class of 2018-2019. Professionally, Odongo has held executive-level human resources and organizational communications positions for such Fortune 500 companies as General Electric, Nabisco, Starwood Hotels and Intercontinental Hotels Group.

Odongo is involved in several professional organizations including the Public Relations Society of America and the PR Council of West Alabama, where she served as VP of community service programs and currently serves as board secretary. For 25-plus years, Odongo has been involved with the United Way and has served as employee campaign coordinator, loaned executive and on the volunteer allocation team for the United Way of West Alabama. Odongo served as the vice president of programs for the Tuscaloosa Human Resources Professionals and is a Silver, Life & Legacy Member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., having served on its national board of directors, as a leadership fellow, charter chapter member, and in several local chapters, cluster/area and regional leadership roles. She enjoys serving as a life coach, mentor, and career counselor.

Odongo is employed by Michelin Tire Manufacturing North America as the regional communications and community relations manager for the state of Alabama, with offices in the Dothan and Tuscaloosa factories. She enjoys serving as a reading ally for children at Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School, volunteering, travel, sports, spending time with her daughter, Trinity, and playing board games.



Felicia Rucker



Felicia Rucker is a retired deputy chief with the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, with 31 years of uninterrupted service.

In 2016, Rucker made history as the first African-American female captain, and later that year she received an award for "Woman of the Year" from

the NCAAP. In 2020, she became the first female to hold the title of deputy chief with Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, a first in their 200 year history. That position is the highest-ranking civil service position within the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office.

Throughout her career, Rucker has worked numerous assignments. She has commanded the jails (Jefferson County Jail has the distinction of being the largest county jail in

Alabama). She has also work vice and narcotics, school resources, identity theft, criminal division, and patrol.

Rucker attended and graduated from the police academy at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. She holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Columbia Southern University.

Rucker is married to Odell Sumerlin and is a mother of two (Kennis Rucker and Brittany James) and grandmother of seven (Cyla, Amya, Khaliyia, Charity, Christian, Jamiya and Ariel). She and her daughter purchase and restore homes in low-income neighborhoods to help in the revitalization of those areas.

Her father, Jimmie Brown, mother, Rosia Underwood, and son all served in the U.S Army. Brown was a Vietnam veteran; her mother retired (20+ years of service) from the Army; and her son served for 10 years in the Army, having served two tours of duty in Afghanistan and once in Iraq. Her son would later come home from his last tour and become a victim of gun violence.



Robbie Gosa Washington

Robbie Gosa Washington is a native of West Alabama and a graduate of Gordo High School and the University of Alabama, where she received a bachelor of science degree in accounting.

She began her career as an examiner with the Federal Home Loan Bank Board in Atlanta, and later became an agent with the U.S. Department of the

Treasury, earning certification and an appointment as a Federal Thrift Regulator in 1990.

A merger transaction in 2018 with Tennessee-based SmartBank led to her current position as senior vice president and director of compliance for \$4.0 billion institution with offices in Tennessee, Alabama, and Florida.

Outside of work, Washington is involved in numerous volunteer, civic, and community service activities. She was a member of the inaugural Supervisory Committee of the former

Stillman Community Development Credit Union, and serves on the board of Project B.E.T.H.E.L., an outreach program for students expelled from the Tuscaloosa city and county school systems. She teaches financial literacy through her association with Jr. Achievement, and regularly supports the mission of several nonprofit groups and organizations committed to advancing excellence among young people through education, character-building, and positive role-modeling.

Washington is a Silver Star and Life member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., and served as the president of the local graduate chapter, Eta Xi Omega, from 2015-2018. She is also associate (Lifetime) member of Jack and Jill of America, Inc., having completed her 19-year tenure in May 2020 after serving in various capacities including Chapter President from 2010-2013.

Robbie is married to Randy Washington, and they have two daughters, Reagan – a 2019 and 2021 graduate of Auburn University – and Kennedi, a sophomore at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB).



Danielle Wunningham

Danielle Wunningham is the first female executive director of the Tuscaloosa County Economic Development Authority. During her first year as TCEDA executive director, Wunningham led the organization in rebranding and comprehensive marketing strategy, secured nearly \$2.5 Million in road infrastructure grants,

and announced over \$125 Million in new capital investments and over 550 new jobs.

Wunningham is a graduate of Mississippi College and the University of Oklahoma Economic Development Institute. Wunningham brings over a decade of experience as a leader in economic development. She has certifications in economic and workforce development and is a member of several boards and councils, including the Tuscaloosa County Road Improvement Commission, Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, Southern Economic Development Council, National Organization of Workforce Development Professionals and International Economic Development Council.



Liz Huntley

Elizabeth “Liz” Huntley is an accomplished litigation attorney, and dedicated child advocate, author and lecturer. She practices law at Lightfoot, Franklin & White, LLC in Birmingham, Alabama.

Huntley is the recipient of many professional honors and awards, including membership in The National

Black Lawyers–Top 100 organization and selection to Super Lawyers as a 2019 Mid-South Super Lawyer.

Huntley is the president and co-founder of the Hope Institute, an organization in Alabama that helps schools build a culture of character for their students. Huntley is a leader in the movement to expand access to high quality pre-K to all four year olds in Alabama and has received several state and national awards for her work for children. She was recently named a 2020 Momentum Top 5 “Women of Impact” in Alabama.

Huntley is also a Birmingham Law Foundation Fellow and an Alabama Law Foundation Fellow.

Huntley serves on multiple civic boards, commissions and task forces throughout Alabama and regularly speaks to groups throughout the country, often referencing her own journey as described in her published memoir titled *More Than A Bird*. She serves her local community as a board member for the Chilton County Industrial Development Authority and the Chilton County Children’s Policy Council.

Huntley earned her law degree from the University Of Alabama School Of Law and her undergraduate degree from Auburn University, where she is now a member of the Auburn University Board of Trustees.

Huntley and her husband, Tony, live in Clanton, Alabama with their three children.



Past Female First Classes

2017



Dr. Viola L. Acoff
Dr. Louise Crawford
Adjutant General Sheryl Gordon
Judge Elizabeth C. Hamner
Dr. Trudier Harris
Rev. Cathy C. Hoop
Brenda McCampbell Lyons
Annetta W. Nunn
Judge Jo Celeste Pettway
Rev. Leanne Pearce Reed
Congresswoman Terri Sewell
Judge Carole Smitherman
Chief Justice Lyn Stuart

2018



Marilyn F. Booker
Karen Brooks
Dr. Paulette Patterson Dilworth
Shelley Jones
Sherrie LeMier
LeN'a Powe McDonald
Dr. Lily D. McNair
Sarah Patterson
Gudrun Pechtold
Dr. Lena B. Prewitt
General N. Lee S. Price
Nancy G. Sewell
Karen Thompson
District Attorney Lynneice Washington

2019



Tracey Morant Adams
Dr. Lucy Culpepper-Bendolph
Dr. Judy Bonner
Michele Coley
Pamela Cook
Dr. Pamela Payne-Foster
Attorney Elizabeth McGiffert
Kimberly McMurray
Essye Miller
Dr. Pamela Parker
Tiara Pennington
Dr. Cathy Randall
Dr. Belinda Rhodes
Dr. Melinda Rhodes
Patrice Moore Smith
Dr. Christine Taylor
Ellie Taylor
Kay Wallace
Attorney Elizabeth Winter



ALABAMA
Female
FIRSTS

The Alma Mater

Far above the Warrior's waters
With her waves of blue
Stands our noble Alma Mater
Glorious to view.

Far above the busy humming
Of the bustling town
Stands our noble Alma Mater
Looks she proudly down.

Stillman, we will love thee ever
True to thee we will be;
Faith and hope and joy forever
Thou will hold the key.

(CHORUS)

Lift the chorus, speed it onward
Loud the anthem ring;
Hail to thee,our Alma Mater
Hail, O Hail, Stillman.





Hail, O Hail

STILLMAN COLLEGE

3601 Stillman Boulevard | Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35401

S T I L L M A N . E D U