Q’Ladrin Qourters, SGA President; Dr. Sandra J. Jordan, Chancellor, pose with members of the ACCHE Timothy W. Simmons, Jackie Busbee, Teresa Haas (chair), Charles H. Marvin, IV (secretary/treasurer), Clarence G. Jackson (vice chair) and King Laurence.
The Gateway to Achievement

In November the university celebrated the completion of its new entrance on University Parkway, which was made possible by the Aiken County Commission for Higher Education.

The financial support from the ACCHE helped make this grand entrance possible and it coincides with the recent launch of new visual identity.

The new entrance was designed by Michael Jordan, the university’s “First Gent” and Chancellor Sandra Jordan’s husband. Jordan gifted his time and talent to the project.

Jordan, who works as an architect the SRS, says that USC Aiken “has been such a supportive and significant part of my life, I wanted to give something tangible back to this amazing university.”

The project was identified in the university’s 10-year master plan, created by several stakeholders within the campus community. This road map helps determine and prioritize projects and campus enhancements. The collaborative effort included faculty, staff, students, leadership groups, alumni and members of the administration.

The ACCHE partners with USC Aiken in various ways to assist with some of the projects identified in the 10-year plan.

“We have enjoyed a productive and extremely effective relationship for almost 60 years,“ said Teresa Haas, chair of the ACCHE. “All of us on the commission know how special USC Aiken is.

She explained that the handsome new entrance connects USC Aiken students, the campus, and the Pacer culture to the local community.

“The highly visible and pronounced entry not only showcases the new USC Aiken logo but also ushers in scores of prospective students and their families,” Haas said.

“And, it sets the tone for faculty, staff, students, and guests alike who come onto our campus - it says: ‘Welcome, Pacers!’”

During a ribbon-cutting ceremony, the president of the USC Aiken Student Government Association thanked Chancellor Jordan and the commission for their efforts to make the entrance not only possible, but “worthy of a Pacer.”

“I have always been proud of this institution, especially for the commitment USC Aiken administration, faculty, staff and the commission make to students’ success,” said Q’Ladrin Quarters, SGA president.

“This new entrance is just one more reason to be incredibly proud of who we are and all we represent.”
USC Aiken Bustling with Activity

2019 was an exciting year for USC Aiken. We were highly ranked and recognized as one of the most innovative institutions in addition to receiving continued accolades for our Veteran and Military Student Success Center. We also established several new degree programs, opened our brand-new front entrance, launched an innovative website, and unveiled our new logo and monogram.

Accolades

This year, U.S. News & World Report once again ranked the university as one of the top Public Schools in the Regional College-South category. In the last 22 years, the university has been number one 14 times and in the top three the other years.

While we are exceedingly proud of our rankings, we would not need them at all if we had the name recognition of a Harvard or Princeton. However, a comprehensive university that is not on everyone’s mind and lips must find ways to demonstrate value and worth beyond its marketing. Rankings like U.S. News and World Report cut through all the static and help inform parents and students about quality, and in turn, they help us attract students. This year, USC Aiken attracted students from 36 different states in the U.S. and 38 countries.

Innovation

A new category in the rankings this year placed USC Aiken second in the South as being a “Most Innovative College.”

We are very proud of this ranking. Across the nation, higher education, like many other professions, is undergoing disruptions that create massive changes, and we are obliged to respond rapidly. Thus, we are continuously exploring new ways of delivering instruction and support for different generations of students. Recognition of our innovation means we are doing a good job finding ways to reach out to our populations.

One example of our innovation is our aggressive move into online degree programs. One of the most significant sized populations in South Carolina seeking higher education are nontraditional students. They are working adults over the age of 25, with families and debts. They have complicated and busy lives, and finding a way to offer a high-quality education at a reasonable cost is a point of pride for us. Current online offerings include an MBA through the School of Business Administration and the R.N. to BSN degree through the School of Nursing.

Veteran Support

Over the years, we have continuously sought to enhance the university’s commitment to veterans, military students, and their families. The Veteran and Military Student Success Center is a centralized transition and resource hub, designed to offer students the holistic support and assistance they need to navigate the transition into the civilian world. The professional staff, many of whom are also veterans and military service members, provide a conduit to benefits, scholarship and career opportunities, networking, and counseling. In November, the university was once again was named a “Best for Vets” school by Military Times.

College of Distinction

USC Aiken has also become a College of Distinction. This coveted title recognizes institutions that foster highly engaged learning. While the entire university has earned this title, all of the university’s professional schools—Education, Business, and Nursing—earned individual recognition as well.

This distinction is a measure of how well the faculty interacts with the students. To be considered, the majority of courses must be experiential learning-based. It means the faculty are keeping the students engaged in their work by having them be an active participant in the learning process. In other words, students are not just sitting at a desk and letting information flow over them.

An Expanding Array of Degree Programs

We continue to expand upon our course offerings. We have created new majors that support the business, educational, and industrial needs of the region and state. Those majors include bachelor’s degrees in industrial process engineering, creative and professional writing, clinical health care, cybersecurity, and applied gaming.
The university takes pride in helping to support this entire region, and we do that by producing graduates who have incredible skills and abilities and knowledge base. The faculty fully embraces this goal and want to develop even stronger connections between our region and the university.

**Collaboration of National Importance**

Public universities cannot thrive without strong partnerships. Partnerships not only help us better serve our region but also strengthen everything we do.

A significant step toward realizing the dream of the Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative (AMC) on the grounds of the university recently became a reality. The President’s FY20 budget requested $50 Million for the AMC. While Congress authorized the full $50 Million, $25M was appropriated for the Department of Energy in the recent Omnibus Spending Bill and was signed into law by the President this past December. The university is seeking support for the additional $25M in the FY21 budget, and we hope to break ground later this semester.

The Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative (AMC) will be an innovation hub for manufacturing, fostering modern industrial practices, advancing new technologies, and improving innovative research collaboration between the Savannah River National Lab and academia. It will provide businesses and industries in our region access to state-of-the-art tools they need to be internationally competitive.

The planned location of the AMC places it across the street from the Ruth Patrick Science Education Center and the Aiken Scholars Academy (a partnership between the university and Aiken County Public School District that provides an elite academic experience for qualified high school scholars). The AMC will become an exciting place where students of all ages can see scientists at work. (see related story, page 6).

**International Partnerships**

We have continued to strengthen international relationships as well. An agreement with Ajeenkya DY Patil University allows its students to study the USC Aiken curriculum while they are in India and ultimately earn a degree from the university. ADYPU students interested in a study abroad can successfully transfer all their credits to USC Aiken.

**Financial Stability**

The university is more financially stable than ever before.

At the end of September, the Aiken Partnership Foundation had assets totaling almost $30 million and representing more than 450 accounts.

We are very grateful for every member of the Aiken Partnership Board who works hard for the university and our students.

The last fiscal year, they allocated more than $1.45 million, which funded:

- more than $813 thousand in student scholarships and support
- close to $500 thousand to support our faculty and student-centered programs
- and $143 thousand in equipment and renovations

These efforts are the direct result of the investments of almost 670 donors.

**The Way Ahead**

All that we have accomplished—and all that we have planned—would not be possible without the tremendous support of our partners and donors.

It is our pleasure to prepare graduates for the workforce to partner with local businesses and industry to meet current and anticipated workforce demands—and to pump more than $281 million into our local economy every year.

While you are indeed a gift to us—we strive to do our part to give back as well.

Sandra J. Jordan, PhD
Chancellor
**The Power of Proximity: Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative**

The first step in realizing the dream of the Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative (AMC) on the grounds of the University of South Carolina Aiken recently became a reality. The President’s FY20 budget requested $50 Million for the AMC. While Congress authorized the full $50 Million, $25M was appropriated in the recent Omnibus Spending Bill and was signed into law by the President. The university is seeking support for the additional $25M in the FY21 budget, and to break ground later this semester.

This new lab will put “science to work” in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Energy, the Savannah River National Lab (SRNL), USC Aiken, Aiken’s Economic Development Partnership, and other partners. This facility will promote partnership among industry, academia and government to implement and accelerate the future of technologies. The AMC and engagement of partners would ultimately produce an ecosystem for the future state of South Carolina workforce.

The power of proximity will allow university students and researchers to interact with SRNL scientists and promote partnerships in an innovative hub. Included would be:

1. the proposed National Guard DreamPort on our campus aligning with Fort Gordon and our new cybersecurity academic programs
2. joint faculty appointments
3. proximity to scholars and universities (USC Aiken, Aiken Technical College, and other universities in South Carolina and Georgia.)
4. a continuum of STEM education programs benefitting youth ages five and up:
   - the state recognized Ruth Patrick Science Education Center (with over 70,000 students and faculty visits per year);
   - the Aiken Scholars Academy attracting the very best regional high school students who can earn university credit hours before graduating high school;
   - the university’s latest STEM curriculum which touts its Industrial Process Engineering, Virtual Reality and Cybersecurity.
   - connections with a broad array of USC Aiken discipline such as marketing, accounting, technical writing and graphic design.

This is good for South Carolina and good for the entire region. The AMC will act as an anchor around which new businesses will want to locate, creating a research/development corridor that stretches out in several directions. USC Aiken is also the home of the Small Business Development Center, the Aiken Economic Partnership, a AACSB accredited MBA program, and the USC Aiken Entrepreneur Center—all are standing by to assist businesses large and small to apply the knowledge and innovation of the SRNL into new enterprises.

Additionally, the AMC located on the university campus, will be an educational accelerator. Whenever there are tough problems to solve, collaboration between scientists, industry, and academia is a splendid idea.

As an educational leader in the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA), the university has been preparing for this capital lease project for the past four years by aligning aspects of the curriculum with the EM and SRNL missions and launching new programs such as Industrial Process Engineering, Cybersecurity, Alternative Reality (simulation design), Industrial Math, Chemistry, and Computer Science to complement the technological and scientific work of the AMC.

As a capital lease project, this center will become an economic driver for the region, leveraging intellectual capital between SRNL, DOE, and educational partners. Coupling world-class science and engineering with a new facility located at the USC Aiken campus in proximity to the Savannah River Site (SRS) will add to the groundbreaking work already on-going at SRNL.

The AMC will include labs, high bay, industrial workspace and office space as well as space for the university. The modern, environmentally-friendly, energy-efficient space will house approximately SRNL personnel and visiting partners conducting research, engineering, manufacturing, and administrative work. The modern, commercially viable and flexible laboratory space in the AMC will allow Savannah River National Laboratory to consolidate and reduce its footprint and begin exiting aging facilities that are inadequate for modern technology development. The newer space will have the added benefit of enhancing recruitment of new talent to SRNL and the SRS. AMC will be a “game changer” for SRNL since the facility will be outside the Savannah River Site (SRS) proper, a first for the region.

In summary, AMC will be a tremendous catalyst for the local economy and an anchor to spearhead a technology corridor initiative around USC Aiken, South Carolina, Georgia, DOE Complex and beyond.
The executive budget released recently by Governor Henry McMasters includes $15 million for the South Carolina National Guard (SCNG) to begin construction of the DreamPort Cybersecurity Collaborative on the USC Aiken campus. This innovative facility, supported by a partnership between the SCNG and the university, will enhance the state’s cyber-response capabilities.

“I am thrilled,” said Mayor Rick Osbon ’93. “The City of Aiken is glad to be able to assist the National Guard as it continues to protect our security in the cyber domain. The cyber network in this region is ever increasing, and we are glad to know that Aiken will be at the heart of it all.”

Situated near the Savannah River National Laboratory’s (SRNL) Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative, the project creates a space where cyber experts in the private, government, and academic sectors have access to classified and unclassified environments and facilitates collaboration with Fort Gordon’s Cyber Operations and SRNL researchers.

Chancellor Sandra Jordan noted that the DreamPort Collaborative will create opportunities for faculty and students to work with some of the country’s top cyber experts. “The university is honored to partner with the National Guard in this important way,” she said. “We are grateful for the support of Aiken and Aiken County’s leadership and our local legislative delegation serving in the statehouse who are aware of the state’s cyber needs and the threats that continue to emerge on a daily basis.”

The DreamPort Collaborative is a top priority for U.S. Army Major General R. Van McCarty, adjutant general for South Carolina, and U.S. Army Brigadier General Brad Owens, South Carolina National Guard director of joint staff.

McCarty explained, “Cybercrimes can impact state and federal governments, affect military operations, and even threaten national security. With the current cyber environment, we know it is increasingly important to find ways to mitigate this threat. Through this partnership with USC Aiken and the support of Governor McMaster, we are taking steps toward protecting the citizens of South Carolina and deterring the efforts of those individuals capable of employing a cyberattack.”

The SCNG has one of the Army National Guard’s five cyber protection battalions, the 125th Cyber Protection Battalion, which is currently headquartered at McEntire Joint National Guard Base. Soldiers conduct advanced cybersecurity training courses, certifications, and collective training to employ individual cyber protection skills to defend networks by leveraging military cyber capabilities.

“I applaud General McCarty’s and General Owens’s extraordinary vision,” Jordan said. “They have created a way to expand their cyber expertise to impact the entire region and state. And by leveraging the SRNL and higher education, they have contributed to building a future cyber workforce. The DreamPort will become a place where business and industry will work with the National Guard to focus on cyber solutions.”

Fighting cyberattacks has become a necessity for all industries. In October the Ponemon Institute released a study, “The Global State of Small and Medium Businesses Cybersecurity. It states that 69 percent of U.S. organizations reported the loss of sensitive corporate or customer information in the 12 months prior to the study—a 50 percent increase over four years.

According to Gary Bunker, chair of the Aiken County Council, the DreamPort facility will generate multiple benefits for the county, the state, and the country. “It will integrate and leverage cyberdefense capabilities, research, education, and workforce development initiatives,” he said. He also noted that it will create connections among various institutions, like the SCNG, the SRNL’s Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative, Aiken Technical College, the Aiken County Public School System, the Ruth Patrick Science Education Center, and Fort Gordon. Additionally, Bunker said, it will “leverage state and federal participants and funding sources, take advantage of the state’s world-class talent, and attract cyber-focused business.” From an educational perspective, he said that “by providing a comprehensive K–16 cyber training environment, [DreamPort] will create an in-state talent pipeline for future growth. This project’s access to secure research and technology will provide a competent cybersecurity complex within South Carolina.”

Finally, he noted that it will provide important state and regional economic development benefits and “an environment for entrepreneurs, nontraditional companies, small business, industry, and academics to develop new technologies in support of our cyberwarriors.”
For the last two years (2018 and 2019), the Jingle and Jazz event has honored friends and donors who have made an impact on the university. The Distinguished Citizen Award has been a tradition since 1986. It recognizes those partners making made a demonstratable difference in the lives of our students and who also in Aiken. Two years ago, the Advancement Office decided to celebrate this particular award during the Jingle and Jazz event, and highlight our ‘distinguished citizen’ more notably.

The Advancement Volunteer Award was established in 2018. It honors loyal supporters who not only give of their time and talent but also encourage and inspire others to give. Recipients of this award work with our major-gift officers by recruiting new donors and volunteers to the university.
The showpiece of Ben Cox’s support has been the annual Winter Nocturne concert now in its tenth year. This special concert has become a tradition, during which we welcome the new year with an enchanting evening of brilliant music.

Cox makes it possible for guest artists to share their passion for music with area school children and university students through educational programs.

One of the first things Ben did for USC Aiken was to establish a significant planned gift to fund a scholarship for a student wanting to study piano.

Cox also provided funding for student-jazz musicians to attend the Wellbourne Jazz Camp in Middleburg, Virginia, each summer.

He was the first to suggest that the university consider achieving the All-Steinway status ten years ago. He inspired us to continue our efforts until we realized that goal last January.

Ben Cox has already made a lasting impression on the university and our students through his enthusiasm for our growing music program at USC Aiken.

2019 Advancement Volunteer of the Year: Ben Cox

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Gail, a retired marketing director, devotes much of her time to the Aiken Partnership Board, a key partner with the university.

Whether she is helping guide the strategic vision of the board and university, she is always a positive influence on other committee members and, ultimately our students.

Now that both she and Reggie are retired, Gail has time to pursue an education passion of her own.

She is now studying art at USC Aiken. She has painted several beautiful pieces, primarily in oils, drawing inspiration from her experiences living in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

The university is extremely grateful for the commitment the Ebner’s have made to each Pacer.

2019 Advancement Citizen of the Year: A Dynamic Duo

Longstanding supporters of the university, our students, and the greater Aiken community, Gail and Reggie Ebner originally hail from Texas but have called Aiken their home for some time.

From the time they arrived, they have partnered with the university to help ensure each student’s success.

In keeping with the university’s core value of engaged citizenship, the Ebners modeled this for our students by supporting their efforts with Habitat for Humanity. Many of our students help build homes locally and around the country for those less fortunate.

A retired engineering consultant, Reggie helped to develop the curriculum for our industrial process engineering major. That rigorous program recently earned accreditation from ABET—the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology. The Ebners also established the Gail and Reggie Ebner Engineering Endowment Fund, helping to ensure the continued rigor and success of the program by attracting the best faculty.

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David Stinson: Student of Life

BY CHRIS QUIRK
Something of a legend for the variety of his undertakings, David Stinson—real estate agent, jack-of-all-trades, and philanthropist—has cut a bold figure in Aiken since arriving from Los Angeles 26 years ago.

After spending his formative years in the heady environments of dance and performance and working as a design professional in Beverly Hills, he brought it all back to where he started, to more serene southern climes, with a plan to set out on a new endeavor. As is often the case, nothing went quite according to plan. And as is just as often the case for Stinson, everything has turned out just fine, and then some.

Stinson grew up in rural Warrenton, Virginia, where a love of the arts was imbued in him early on. His mother, an accomplished musician, also had a television program, “Lady in the Mountain,” which aired on WBKB in Chicago in the late 1940s. “My mother was very active with music, and we had to follow suit,” said Stinson. “We also had a weekly chore list, which wasn’t unusual except hers always had some artistic tasks on it,” Stinson recalled. “It would be: fill up the firebox, rake the yard, write a letter to your grandmother, and write a poem or write a story about what you remember from the trip to Arizona. She was really intent on ensuring that we cultivated a creative side of our lives.”

In college at the University of Montana, Stinson’s natural curiosity worked against his efficient completion of his degree. “It took me six years to finish because I changed majors so many times—journalism, Russian, and finally history, back and forth.” But his eclectic impulses led him to take a dance class to fulfill a physical education requirement. “There weren’t a lot of guys dancing, so they were super excited to have a man in the room. I was given a lot of opportunities to perform that someone at that skill level would not normally get,” Stinson admitted. “I wasn’t much on finesse, but I would say I was an athletic performer.”

After completing his bachelor’s degree, Stinson continued his study of dance and performance in Boulder, Colorado, at the new, multidisciplinary Naropa Institute. The school, which was founded in 1974 by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, a renowned teacher of Tibetan Buddhism who also had a deep interest in the arts, attracted top talent. Stinson found himself among a rarified elite in the modern dance world. “Trungpa had a lot of followers among Merce Cunningham’s troupe, so all of a sudden there were all these world-famous dancers at this tiny college.” Stinson’s teacher, Barbara Dilley, went on to become one of the most revered of contemporary choreographers and teachers.

From the free-spirited Naropa, Stinson went to the California Institute of the Arts to earn his master’s degree. “Cal Arts was a very rigorous, no-nonsense school and focused on exploring creativity in every direction. They certainly cultivated that, but there were requirements for technique classes, modern dance, jazz, ballet, and choreography, and the reviews were tough. It was not a school for dreamers.”

Stinson was now at the nucleus of the avant-garde art world. “I felt very at home there. It just struck me as right,” he recalled. “I had creative visions that blended well with the kind of ‘no boundaries’ art world of the late seventies and early eighties. The idea that you bring in unstructured influences to create an art form was very exciting to me, and as a creative and an intellectual exercise it suited me well.”

After finishing the program, Stinson struck out on his own as an artist in Los Angeles, attempting to achieve escape velocity and the stable orbit of a sustainable art career. “It was an eye-opening moment,” he said. “I had these degrees and experience, but there was never a chance of turning it into a paying job. My survival instinct took over.”

Hearing from a friend that her husband, an executive at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, was looking for a design coordinator, Stinson rushed across town to interview. “I foolishly decided to be very honest, and I said I don’t know much about the film industry, I don’t care a lot about films, and I don’t know a thing about graphic design,” he recounted. “But if you give me this job, I will work til midnight every day, and I guarantee you that in three months you will think I was born for this.”

Stinson started the following Monday and stayed for more than six years, thriving in a post where the portfolio of duties was only tangentially related to his past experience. “It was one of the most fascinating things I’ve ever done in my life.”

Beyond the challenge of the work at the Academy, Stinson enjoyed some of the perks of his position. “I loved learning about the movies, but I wasn’t the typical gay kid growing up who knew every star and what films they had been in.” Case in point: Stinson brought his mother to the Academy Awards several times. At one of the ceremonies, as the red carpet grandees milled about, Stinson balanced a pair of champagne flutes on the back of his hand so he could help his mother put her jacket on. “This very nice gentleman said to me, ‘Oh, I see you’ve waited tables, too,’ as he passed by.” Stinson’s mother turned to him in some surprise and asked if he knew the fellow. Stinson was flummoxed. “That,” his mother informed him, “was Danny Glover!”

After six years at the Academy, Stinson was lured to Aiken by a
friend from the area, who later became his partner, to start all over again. Stinson had plans to try his hand at screenwriting, but after a period of much work and meager compensation, he turned to real estate. “I took a course and thought it would be a stopgap.” Stinson bullied through a scant first year with characteristic zeal and could often be found at the local copy shop hand-crafting direct-mail cards. He remembered getting a call out of the blue one day. “I’m not interested in buying a house,” the woman on the other end of the line said, “but I’ve been getting your cards, and I’m very impressed with how hard you work.”

That zeal is one of Stinson’s defining traits, say folks who know him. “David takes classes at USC Aiken not just on a whim,” said Judith Goodwin, development officer at USC Aiken. “He takes serious classes. He is always hungry for knowledge.” Some of the courses Stinson has taken include accounting, psychology, and art history. “It’s a wonderful campus, and I enjoy being with the students,” he said. “The first day they sort of wonder about this old guy, but by the middle of the semester they’re asking me, ‘Hey, did you get number four?’ They’re exciting and dynamic young people, and they feed me with their great energy and curiosity.” Most recently, Stinson signed up for a welding course at Aiken Technical College so he could try his hand at metal sculpture. “I’ve never seen such a Renaissance man in my life,” said Goodwin. “He’s constantly traveling, meeting people, and reaching out to others in the community, looking for causes that he can help.”

Renaissance man is a term often heard when speaking about Stinson with those who know him. While apt, Stinson’s persona differs from the sober profile of erudition the term can conjure. He launches himself into new endeavors not with protracted preparation but a daredevil’s impetuosity. “I have a great appetite for life. I’m not the world’s greatest at anything, but I love challenges,” said Stinson. “I think it all comes from a central place in me which is just bubbling over with questions and inspirations.”

While Stinson clearly has abundant natural abilities, he is also adept at leveraging things he learns in one forum for use in another. He describes unconsciously using a kind of theatrical blocking—that is, the arrangement and movement of actors on stage—when showing a client a property. “If I sense that there’s a space in the house that they are drawn to, I don’t want to be in it. I get out of the way and move to another part of the room and let them enjoy it. If I sense there’s an area that’s perplexing to them or troublesome, I want to draw near to them and elicit a conversation and see if it’s really awkward for them or talk about what we could do here.”

Another example recalls Stinson’s experience in contemporary dance. “In a lot of my dance and performance experience, my teachers emphasized improvisation. Those exercises taught me to think quickly, to develop a sixth sense of my surroundings and to be sensitive to the energy level around me,” he said. “That always turns into a helpful tool, whether it’s in a business setting or your
household, to react naturally but quickly with the changes going on around you.”

While Stinson may seem a natural for the stage, he had not acted in a play before coming to Aiken. He has since appeared in numerous productions at the Aiken Community Theatre. Bob Franklin, theatre director, directed Stinson in his theatrical debut and also selected him for the lead in a stage adaptation of *A Few Good Men*. In the 1992 film, the character Colonel Jessup was made infamous by Jack Nicholson’s fearsome performance. Franklin was confident of Stinson from the outset. “David is not small; he is robust, and that body type gives him a commanding presence whenever he enters the stage. I knew he would be perfect for the Jessup role from the first moment of his audition, and he was.”

One might expect an imposing and perhaps daunting personality from someone cut of such cloth, but that is not how his friends describe him. “David doesn’t blow his own horn,” said Franklin. “If anything, he’s full of humility. He is highly educated, interested in diverse topics, but he is also someone who seems to make those around him happy. I don’t know how quite to explain that, but he makes people comfortable. He’s just a wonderful person to talk to.”

Indeed, in conversation Stinson speaks carefully and thoughtfully, his baritone low and measured, and at a pace that radiates introspection. “David is one of those people who has a well-rounded intelligence and is knowledgeable on a wide variety of subjects. He is a great, old-fashioned raconteur, but he immediately puts you at ease,” said Paul B. Crook, executive director of the Etherredge Center. “He’s interested in you, and he asks you questions about what you do, and he is genuinely interested in your responses.”

Crook manages the Cultural Series program, to which Stinson has contributed greatly this season. He served as a sponsor for the sold-out performance of the Four Tops, as well as performances by Flex Ave and Broadway’s Next Hit Musical. “David is so knowledgeable artistically. It’s exciting to have him as a sponsor for these programs,” said Crook.

Stinson has set up a scholarship in the name of his mother, the Barbara Rogers Stinson Endowment, which is awarded annually to a USC Aiken student of great musical promise. “David recognizes where we want to go as an institution, and he wants to help with that,” Goodwin said. “He is a great fit for USC Aiken, and I am proud to work with him.” He also aided the effort to make USC Aiken an All-Steinway School, one of only four in the state. “The All-Steinway designation means a lot, and statistics show that it attracts the best students,” reported Goodwin. “Students look at that and know that we understand quality and that we are serious about our music program.”

Notwithstanding Stinson’s generosity to his fellow humans, no portrait of him would be complete without his dogs. A devotee of rescue pups, and a former president of the local SPCA, Stinson now has four lovable mutts: Edith, Maxwell, Pistol, and Rebar. “Pistol and Rebar were such tiny puppies when I rescued them, I thought they’d never make it in this world, so I gave them tough names. They’ve lived up to them,” he said.

“David is an inspiration for all of us,” said Goodwin. Stinson, per usual, demurs. “Everything good that has happened to me has been by the grace of others. I’ve just been a really lucky man.”

Stinson with his mother Barbara Rogers Stinson aboard a trans-Canada train in 2004.
Literary Spotlight Shines on Aiken

BY TOM MACK

Nearly every field of endeavor boasts a list of practitioners who have achieved preeminence. Many memorialize their greats in an institution. Some of these institutions are physical, like the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio; others are figurative, like the South Carolina Academy of Authors (SCAA). Founded in 1986, the Academy seeks to “identify and recognize South Carolina’s distinguished writers, living and deceased, and to promote the reading and rediscovery of their works.”

Each year the Academy’s Board of Governors, made up of about two dozen community leaders from across the state, selects a roster of inductees. Among the first writers to be inducted into South Carolina’s literary hall of fame were nineteenth-century novelist and man of letters William Gilmore Simms, whose historical romances are compared to James Fenimore Cooper’s The Leatherstocking Tales; novelist Julia Peterkin, whose Pulitzer Prize-winning Scarlet Sister Mary chronicled the folkways of African Americans on her husband’s plantation; and poet and novelist James Dickey, best known for his novel Deliverance.

The list has expanded to include such historical luminaries as poet Henry Timrod, diarist Mary Boykin Chesnut, and DuBose Heyward, whose novel Porgy inspired the opera Porgy and Bess. Among the living inductees are Josephine Humphreys, John Jakes, Nikky Finney, and Sue Monk Kidd, author of The Secret Life of Bees. She was inducted in 2011—when SCAA hosted its first annual induction weekend in Aiken.

This spring the ceremony returns to our fair city. SCAA is partnering with USC Aiken to host the 2020 induction dinner at the Etherredge Center on April 18, when five notable authors with strong local ties will be welcomed into the Academy:

Aiken native Pam Durban, who holds the Betts Chair at UNC–Chapel Hill, is the author of two short story collections and three novels, most notably The Tree of Forgetfulness, which recounts a tragic event that took place in Aiken County in the early years of the last century. The prolific writing duo of Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith count among their many books the Pulitzer Prize-winning Jackson Pollock and Van Gogh: The Life, the definitive biography of one of the most influential figures in the history of Western art. Award-winning novelist and short story writer Andrew Geyer currently serves as chair of the university’s English Department. Posthumous honors go to nineteenth-century poet James Matthews Legare, who published his landmark volume, Orta-Undis, and Other Poems (1847), while a resident of Aiken, where he lived from 1846 until his death in 1859.

Other public events scheduled for induction weekend (some of them free) include

- short readings and presentations by Durban, Naifeh, and Geyer at the Etherredge Center, part of the Oswald Distinguished Writers Series; April 17 at 7:30 p.m.
- dedication of the Legare gravesite at St. Thaddeus Episcopal Church as an American Library Association Literary Landmark, followed by a free reception; April 18 at 2 p.m.
- dedication of a historical marker at the Legare-Morgan Cottage on Laurens Street, hosted by the Aiken County Historical Society and followed by a free reception; April 19 at 1:30 p.m.

The two dedications will bring long overdue recognition to our city’s native son James Matthews Legare—nineteenth-century poet, visual artist, and inventor extraordinaire.

For a complete schedule of induction weekend activities, visit www.scacademyofauthors.com.

Each year the South Carolina Academy of Authors selects a different city to host its induction ceremony. In 2020, for the second time in the organization’s 34-year history, Aiken will host the event. It’s time to celebrate! For one shining moment, April 17 to 19, the Aiken community—and the USC Aiken campus—will be the epicenter of the state’s literary arts.

Reservations for the April 18 induction ceremony dinner (business attire required) require prepayment of $55 per person or $100 per couple at www.scacademyofauthors.com. Proceeds fund the educational mission of the South Carolina Academy of Authors—and attendees enjoy a full dinner and an opportunity to bear witness to a history-making event.
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At Jingle and Jazz, scholarship recipient Q'May Qourters (pictured far left) thanked her grandmother Gwen Jones (middle left) and her mother Lynn Bradley (middle right) for their commitment to her educational dreams. Q'May and her twin sister, Q'Ladrin Qourters, (far right) credit these matriarchs as well as the support of generous university donors with their success.

GIVING LEVELS
Effective July 1, 2018

**Pacesetters ($1–$499):** Leaders and initiators, these donors give proudly and inspire others to do the same.

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**Pacer Spirit Society ($1,000–$2,499):** These donors promote the Pacer spirit embodied in the Spirit Horse, which stands proudly at the entrance to our campus.

**Stetson Society ($2,500–$4,999):** All institutions have leaders who are innovative and forward thinking. The Stetson Society applauds those leaders on whose shoulders we stand—making USC Aiken a more progressive university.

**Gregg-Graniteville Circle ($5,000–$9,999):** Honoring the legacy of the Gregg-Graniteville Company and its historic emphasis on education, this leadership society recognizes donors who support the advancement of higher education at USC Aiken.

**Banksia Founders Society ($10,000–$24,999):** Commemorating the early graduates of USC Aiken, Banksia Founders recognizes those who give at levels that provide substantial support to promote programs, facilities, or scholarships.

**Chancellor’s Cabinet ($25,000–$99,999):** The Chancellor’s Cabinet recognizes donors whose gifts build on the university’s tradition of excellence and innovation.

**Pickens-Salley Circle ($100,000–plus):** The highest level of recognition, the Pickens-Salley Circle honors those donors whose generous gifts are transformative for USC Aiken, our students, and faculty, and, by extension, our community.
Dear Friends,

Thanks to you, our students are busy planning their exciting, fulfilling future. Jarred Eads has learned the power of perseverance. After struggling at USC Aiken 8 years ago, he joined the Air Force “to get [his] life back on track.” He has returned to the university to pursue a degree in computer science with a minor in cybersecurity. “I chose to come back to USC Aiken because I wanted to conquer where once I failed.”

Hanna Hall plans to work at a local hospital in the Labor and Delivery Department or the Emergency Room after she graduates from the School of Nursing in 2021.

Evan Jenkins is a third-generation Pacer. His mother and grandfather both attended USC Aiken. Now, he’s preparing to graduate in 2021 with a political science degree.

Pavithra Padala, an international student from Hyderabad, India, feels that USC Aiken is the “perfect campus” for her due to the small class sizes and high-quality instructors. She is thankful for the scholarship opportunities that help make her education possible. “Scholarships to [international] students like me motivates us to study harder and better.”

Darius Ross will be part of the inaugural graduating class of the Teaching Fellows program when he graduates in May 2020. Afterward, he plans to give back to the Aiken community as an elementary school teacher. He intends to further his education with a Master’s degree in Educational Leadership.

You’ll find some of these students featured in the upcoming pages. These profiles provide a glimpse at the profound impact you have made. Your contribution has helped these students realize their educational goals.

We look forward to sharing more about our students’ success with you in future magazines and newsletters. In the meantime, if you would like to schedule a visit to see, firsthand, the difference your gift is making, please contact us.

Our sincere thanks for your support throughout the years.

Warmly,

Mary Driscoll
Vice Chancellor of Advancement

Your gift, in any amount, can help support programs, scholarships and activities at USC Aiken. Please visit usca.edu/giving to explore all the options for giving or to make a gift online.
Junior Q’May Qourters, a biology major with a concentration in pre-med, aspires to be an obstetrician-gynecologist. Like many USC Aiken students, she is the beneficiary of a scholarship enabled by the generosity of university donors. Qourters was invited to share her story at the 2019 Jingle and Jazz celebration.

“As many of you may know,” she began, “I have a twin sister, Q’Ladrin, who shares my dream of becoming a doctor. We also have a brother who is a year and a half younger than we are. My mother has always encouraged us to dream big and to be the best that we can be. But coming from a single-parent household, my dreams sometimes felt like burdens.”

She described her mother’s dedication to her family despite some major challenges. “Being a single mother raising twin daughters and a son was definitely not easy for our mom, but she never gave up. Never giving up was one of the most valuable lessons my mother has taught me. She laid my foundation,” said Qourters, “and USC Aiken is building my future.”

The scholarship, she said, is helping her to finance her dream and pursue opportunities to gain experience and develop leadership and other skills. As a freshman, for example, Qourters was selected to serve as a Chancellor’s Ambassador, a prestigious position that allowed her to represent the chancellor and to advocate for the university’s more than 3,700 students by engaging with legislators and administrators. Qourters also works with Chancellor Jordan as her student assistant.

“Working in her office, by her side, has given me confidence as a woman, as a student, and as a leader. I’m grateful for the opportunity,” Qourters said.

In her sophomore year, Qourters received an invitation to join biology professor Bill Jackson’s undergraduate research lab. It was a watershed moment, she believes, that played a crucial role in helping her realize her potential.

“When I walk into the lab and slide on those blue gloves, at that moment I can see my dream coming true,” she said. “I can hear future patients calling me ‘Dr. Qourters,’ and it immediately gives me confidence.” The lab, she said, provides an exceptional educational experience. “I gain hands-on experience, independence while in a research setting, and most of all, knowledge and relationships that will last forever. USC Aiken is helping me as I navigate my career path, and [it] is also helping me develop remarkable relationships.”

Qourters has built relationships, too, through her active engagement in the university community. During her freshman and sophomore years, she was selected to serve as a Pacesetter. These orientation leaders play a front-line role in welcoming freshman and transfer students to campus; often the first Aiken students that new Pacers will meet, they have a special responsibility to represent the best of the university.

“I decided to become a Pacesetter because of my initial experience at USC Aiken,” Qourters said. “I visited several universities as a junior in high school, but the tour I took here at USC Aiken was important. This university and the people here are the only ones who remembered my name. They made feel like I mattered. I want to make others feel the same way.”

As the current Student Government Association vice president, Qourters serves alongside her twin sister—who is president. “I ran for this office because I wanted to serve my fellow Pacers, and address the needs of every member of the student body, and create very personal connections.”

Q’May Qourters recognizes the opportunities afforded to her. “This university has blessed my family tremendously, and I owe it all to the generosity of our supporters. Without your generosity, my dreams would still feel like burdens. Everything given to this university is truly a gift to my family.”

She added, “From my family, and the bottom of my heart, thank you all for all you do for this university and students like me.”
Gifts received during the last calendar year—January 2019 through December 2019

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Kelsey Spurlin
**Hometown:** Gaffney, South Carolina  
**Major:** Secondary English Education  
**Scholarship:** Blanche King Rutland Memorial Scholarship

“USC Aiken was clearly the best choice to further my academic and athletic career.”

Cruiz Emery
**Hometown:** King Ferry, New York  
**Major:** Business Administration and Accounting  
**Scholarship:** Aiken-Augusta Wounded Warrior Golf Classic  
Bridge the Gap Veteran Scholarship

After serving in the U.S. Navy, Cruiz decided to attend USC Aiken because of the location and small personal campus environment. He works as a Student Success Advocate in the Office of Veteran and Military Student Success where he helps fellow veterans achieve their educational goals.

Alaine Sullivan
**Hometown:** Nassau, New Providence, Bahamas  
**Major:** Business Administration and Finance  
**Scholarship:** USCA Alumni Association Student Involvement Scholarship

Alaine has made the most of opportunities to give back to campus and the greater Aiken community through service. Her commitment to kindness resulted in her having more community service hours in 2019 than any other USC Aiken student.

Alyssah Ridley
**Hometown:** Aiken, South Carolina  
**Major:** Mathematics and Computer Science  
**Scholarship:** Oscar A. Towler Math Scholarship

“Once I graduate, I would like to find a career in the information technology, software, or information security industry. I have always had an interest in cyber security, so ethical hacking and penetration tester has peaked my interest.”
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Jarred Eads

**Hometown:** Aiken, South Carolina  
**Major:** Computer Science  
**Scholarship:** Aiken-Augusta Wounded Warrior Golf Classic  
Bridge the Gap Veteran Scholarship

“I actually attended USC Aiken 8 years ago and ended up failing. I went into the Air Force to get my life back on track. I am now a returning student who is pursuing a bachelor’s degree in computer science. This opportunity allows me to prove to myself that I can do anything no matter how many times I may fail as long as I persevere.”

Hanna Hall

**Hometown:** North Augusta, South Carolina  
**Major:** Nursing  
**Scholarship:** Doris L. Peters Scholarship

“I chose to attend USCA because of their outstanding BSN program, with intimate class sizes and high NCLEX passing rates. After graduation, I plan to become a licensed RN with my BSN and work at a local hospital in the Labor and Delivery or Emergency Room department.”

Darius Ross

**Hometown:** Barnwell, South Carolina  
**Major:** Elementary Education  
**Scholarship:** USCA Academic Convocation Scholarship

“I chose USC Aiken because it is a community. This is one of the most inclusive and diverse universities in our state. I did not want to feel like a number in college. At USC Aiken there are always opportunities to assist those around you. The university has made this a cornerstone.”

Thomas Burgess

**Hometown:** Streetsboro, Ohio  
**Major:** Chemistry  
**Scholarship:** Frederick Carl Memorial Scholarship

“I transferred to USC Aiken from a university in Ohio, not only to be closer to family but also for the intimacy of a smaller college. This was definitely the right move for me; my time at USC Aiken has opened countless doors for me. I feel that my professors care for me on a personal level and are always willing to help me learn. I feel like I am prepared for life after college.”
Da’Keya Nicholson
Hometown: Johnston, South Carolina
Major: Nursing
Scholarship: Tim and Lisa Hofferth Endowed Scholarship Fund

“I chose USC Aiken because it provides so many opportunities. The university makes sure you stay on the right track and offers tutoring sessions if you are struggling. The scholarship made it possible for me to attend school here!”

Amethyst Marroquin
Hometown: Harlingen, Texas
Major: Sociology
Scholarship: Lionel and Dot Smith Scholarship

“Upon graduation, I hope to become a fellow at the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute. My main career goal is to continue working in diversity and inclusion.”

Ryan Moulday
Hometown: Oakville, Ontario, Canada
Major: Secondary Mathematics Education
Scholarship: Irene Y. Curtis Multicultural Scholarship Fund

“I plan to teach high school or at the college level to help prepare the next generation to make the world a better place. I firmly believe that school provides the tools for our next leaders and scientists to make the changes that drive human progress.”

Anne Ramsey Deibel
Hometown: Aiken, South Carolina
Major: English
Scholarship: Dr. Ellen Lott Smith Endowed Scholarship

“Being from a single parent household, I wanted to attend a school that would allow me to stay at home to help my mom and watch my little brother finish his high school career. Due to low tuition, living at home, and scholarships, I have been able to pay for my academic career with very little debt, while also receiving an amazing education.”
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Dr. Ann M. Willbrand

* deceased
Pavithra Padala

**Hometown:** Hyderabad, India  
**Major:** Mathematics and Computer Science  
**Scholarship:** Thomas C. Hobbs Memorial Multicultural Endowed Scholarship

“I chose to attend USC Aiken as it is a perfect campus for me—not too big, not too small. In class, every student has the professor’s attention, which makes it easy for students to understand the subject well.”

Jeffrey Pires

**Hometown:** Tiverton, Rhode Island  
**Major:** Biology  
**Scholarship:** Donald M. & Leona G. Kaber Scholarship Endowment

“I plan on attending graduate school after my time here in Aiken in pursuit of a pharmacy degree, and I know my opportunities to network early on will have a large impact on my future both as a student and as a professional.”

Paige Davis

**Hometown:** Nassau, Bahamas  
**Major:** Communication  
**Scholarship:** Samuel A. Cothran Journalism Scholarship

“I come from the Bahamas and grew up on an island that is only 21 miles long and 7 miles wide. I was looking for a smaller school because I wanted to have that family oriented community. When I got to USC Aiken I thought to myself, ‘Wow, I’ve found it.’”

Nadine Lucia Zandbergen

**Hometown:** Wellington, New Zealand  
**Major:** Business Administration and Management  
**Scholarship:** USCA International Student Scholarship

“I am so very grateful for this scholarship, as it has given me the opportunity to study and grow at USC Aiken. From the first day I set foot on campus, I knew I was meant to be here. I aspire to have my own business one day.”
Joshua Whitley
_Home town:_ Columbia, South Carolina
_Major:_ Exercise Science
_Scholarship:_ Dr. & Mrs. A. P. Majors Scholarship

Joshua is an athlete on the men’s cross country team, a sport that was recently added for USC Aiken. He hopes this experience will prepare him for a career in athletics after graduation. Ideally, he would like to be a cross country coach or to work in a strength and conditioning position at a university.

Evan Jenkins
_Home town:_ North Augusta, South Carolina
_Major:_ Political Science
_Scholarship:_ USCA Alumni Endowed Legacy Scholarship

Evan is carrying on his family’s legacy as a third generation Pacer. His grandfather and mother both received degrees from USC Aiken. Now it’s Evan’s turn; he will graduate with his political science degree in 2021 and complete the family’s alumni trio.

Samuel Boyd
_Home town:_ Aiken, South Carolina
_Major:_ Computer Science
_Scholarship:_ Phillips Family Mathematical Sciences Endowed Scholarship

“I chose USC Aiken because the university offered me the unique opportunity to have a community around me that knows me personally. This scholarship and altruism of our donors continues to reinforce my love for the school and the fact that USC Aiken was the right decision for me. After graduation I plan to pursue higher certification in cyber-security.”

Kwajelin Farrar
_Home town:_ Grovetown, Georgia
_Major:_ Sociology
_Scholarship:_ Stathy Verenes Memorial Scholarship

Throughout her time at USC Aiken, Kwajelin has seen great success both on and off the court as a star player for the women’s basketball team. She was named the PBC Freshman of the Year during the 2016-2017 season. Then, in 2019, she was chosen as the women’s basketball MVP after setting a school record of 26 career double-doubles.
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