



# Advisory Board Member Expectations

## General Expectations

1. Know and understand the purpose of the institute's mission, values, goals, and programs.
2. Engage in meaningful discourse, seek to understand other points of view, and model the same behaviors for students and Fellows.
3. Serve in leadership positions or undertake special assignments when able to do so.
4. Suggest nominees for the Advisory Board that live the values of the institute, represent a diversity of opinion and personal background, and wish to invest in the long-term positive development of students.
5. Bring dedication, collegiality, and a sense of humor to the board's meetings, events, and deliberations.

## Board Meetings and Institute Events

1. Prepare for and participate in board and committee meetings. The advisory board meets twice a year, immediately preceding an annual networking event (April) and an annual symposium (August).
2. Attend other institute events as scheduling allows.
3. Ask timely and substantive questions, while also supporting the majority's final decision.
4. Maintain confidentiality of the board's executive sessions.
5. Present updates on committee work or other relevant information to the board when asked to do so by the Chairperson or Director.
6. Suggest agenda items periodically for board and committee meetings to ensure that multiple points of view and constituent needs are addressed.

*(Continued)*

## Relationship with Staff

1. Counsel the Director and offer support based on your skills, knowledge, and experience.
2. Make requests for staff assistance through the Director, so staff work load, project priority, and task assignments can be managed appropriately.
3. Refrain from asking staff to make exceptions to policy, without prior consultation with the Director.

## Avoiding Conflicts of Interest and Partisanship

1. Avoid conflicts of interest and disclose any possible conflicts to the Chairperson in a timely fashion.
2. Maintain independence and objectivity and openly act in a manner consistent with fairness, ethics, and personal and professional integrity.
3. Understand and support the non-partisan nature of the institute's work. The Blackburn Institute as an entity does not take a stance on political actions or policies, rather it seeks to build a network of engaged individuals that take civic action to improve the state based on their own values.

## Fiduciary and Fundraising Responsibilities

1. Read and understand the organization's financial statements and otherwise help the board fulfill its fiduciary responsibility.
2. Contribute to the institute's programming and board's activities through annual dues, payable by December 31 for the following calendar year. Annual dues for board members under the age of 35 at the start of the calendar year (January 1) are \$500; annual dues for all other board members are \$1,000.
3. Consider any additional current or planned giving according to personal means.
4. Assist the Finance Committee, Chairperson, and Director by implementing fund raising strategies through personal influence with others (e.g. corporations, foundations, and individuals).



# Blackburn Institute Advisory Board

Officers and Executive Committee		
Mike House Chairperson Executive Committee	McLean, VA	Partner Hogan Lovells US LLP
William O'Connor Past Chairperson Executive Committee	Montgomery, AL	Past President Campaign for Alabama
Holly Piper Vice-Chairperson Executive Committee	Tuscaloosa, AL	Daughter of Dean Blackburn
Gordon Martin Member at Large Executive Committee	Birmingham, AL	Senior Vice President & General Counsel Alabama Power Company
Adam Sterritt Ex Officio Member Executive Committee	Tuscaloosa, AL	Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs The University of Alabama
Marion McIntosh Secretary	Leeds, AL	Process Engineer Honda Manufacturing of Alabama, LLC

Zack Ashbee	Mobile, AL	First Vice President of Investments, Senior PIM Portfolion Manager The Ashbee Group of Wells Fargo Advisors
J. Norman Baldwin	Tuscaloosa, AL	Professor The Univesity of Alabama
Jenna Bedsole	Birmingham, AL	Shareholder Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, P.C.

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Kyle Buchanan	Muscle Shoals, AL	CEO Lawrence Medical Center
Julian Butler	Huntsville, AL	Attorney Sirote & Permutt, PC
Mary Margaret Carroll	Montgomery, AL	Attorney Fine Geddie & Associates
Prince Cleveland	Birmingham, AL	Content Usage Specialist EBSCO Industries
Sue Bell Cobb	Pike Road, AL	President Next Generation Consulting, Inc.
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Mark Cooper	Nashville, TN	Surgeon The Surgical Clinic
John Covington	Tuscaloosa, AL	President Chesapeake Consulting
Kathleen Cramer	Tuscaloosa, AL	Retired Former Senior Assoc. VP of Student Affairs, The University of Alabama
Bradley Davidson	Montgomery, AL	Executive Director Empower Alabama
Milton Davis	Birmingham, AL	Director of Industrial Business Development BL Harbert International
David Donaldson	Birmingham, AL	Vice President, Governmental and Community Relations Vulcan Materials Company
Corey Ealons	Silver Spring, MD	Senior Vice President VOX Global
J. David Ellwanger	Austin, TX	Retired President The Center for American and International Law



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Fournier "Boots" Gale	Birmingham, AL	General Counsel Regions Bank
Robert Harris	Birmingham, AL	Community Development Officer Cadence Bank
Cornelia Heflin	Tuscumbia, AL	Managing Member Abroms & Heflin Capital, LLC
Sandra Hullett	Eutaw, AL	Physician Retired
Bryan Jones	Monroeville, AL	CEO Crowne Health Care
G. Douglas Jones	Birmingham, AL	Attorney Jones and Hawley, PC
Peter Lowe	Huntsville, AL	President G.W. Jones and Sons Real Estate Investment Company, Inc.
Mark Martin	Cambridge, MA	Doctoral Student Harvard University
F. David Mathews	Dayton, OH	President Kettering Foundation
Stephen McNair	Mobile, AL	Owner McNair Historic Preservation
Ray Miller	Mobile, AL	CEO Autism Avenue, Inc.
Rosalind Moore-Miller	Northport, AL	Director of Student Involvement The University of Alabama
Martha Morrow	Red Bay, AL	Optometrist Self-Employed
Victoria Nabors	Atlanta, GA	Attorney Ward Law, PC
Taylor Nichols	Montgomery, AL	General Counsel, Business Development Division Alabama Department of Commerce
Leroy Nix	Maplesville, AL	Federal Government Affairs Alabama Power Company
Marjorie Kay Nix	Birmingham, AL	Retired

Jon Noland	Birmingham, AL	Division Sales Manager, Steel Pipe Division American Cast Iron Pipe Company
Larry O'Neal	Tuscaloosa, AL	Retired Former Director of Development, The University of Alabama
Tom Patterson	Pensacola, FL and Hoover, AL	Retired Co-Founder and Former CEO, DAXCO LLC
Carol Patterson	Pensacola, FL and Hoover, AL	Retired Co-Founder, DAXCO LLC
Andres Peña	San Antonio, TX	Director of Governmental Relations Kaufman & Killen, Inc.
Alejandro Perez	New York, NY	Managing Director Goldman, Sachs & Co.
Eric Pruitt	Vestavia Hills, AL	Shareholder Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC
Joe Ritch	Huntsville, AL	Attorney Sirote & Permutt, PC
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John Saxon	Birmingham, AL	Partner John D. Saxon, P.C.
Barbara "Bobbie" Siegal	Birmingham, AL	Retired Community Volunteer
Christian Smith	Birmingham, AL	Director of Development for the UAB Department of Medicine The University of Alabama at Birmingham
Joan Smith	Huntsville, AL	Engineer AMRDEC
Lynwood Smith	Huntsville, AL	United States District Court Judge United States District Court, Northern District of Alabama
Will Sorrell	Birmingham, AL	Master of Divinity and MBA Candidate Samford University
Donald Stewart	Anniston, AL	Attorney and President Donald W. Stewart, PC
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Tracy Thompson	Birmingham, AL	Partner Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP

Kevin Turner	Washington, DC	Counsel Venable LLP
Robert Turner	Helena, AL	Pastor St. Paul A.M.E. Church
Judson Wells	Mobile, AL	Shareholder Carr Allison
Joshua White	Trussville, AL	Financial Analyst Regions Financial Corporation





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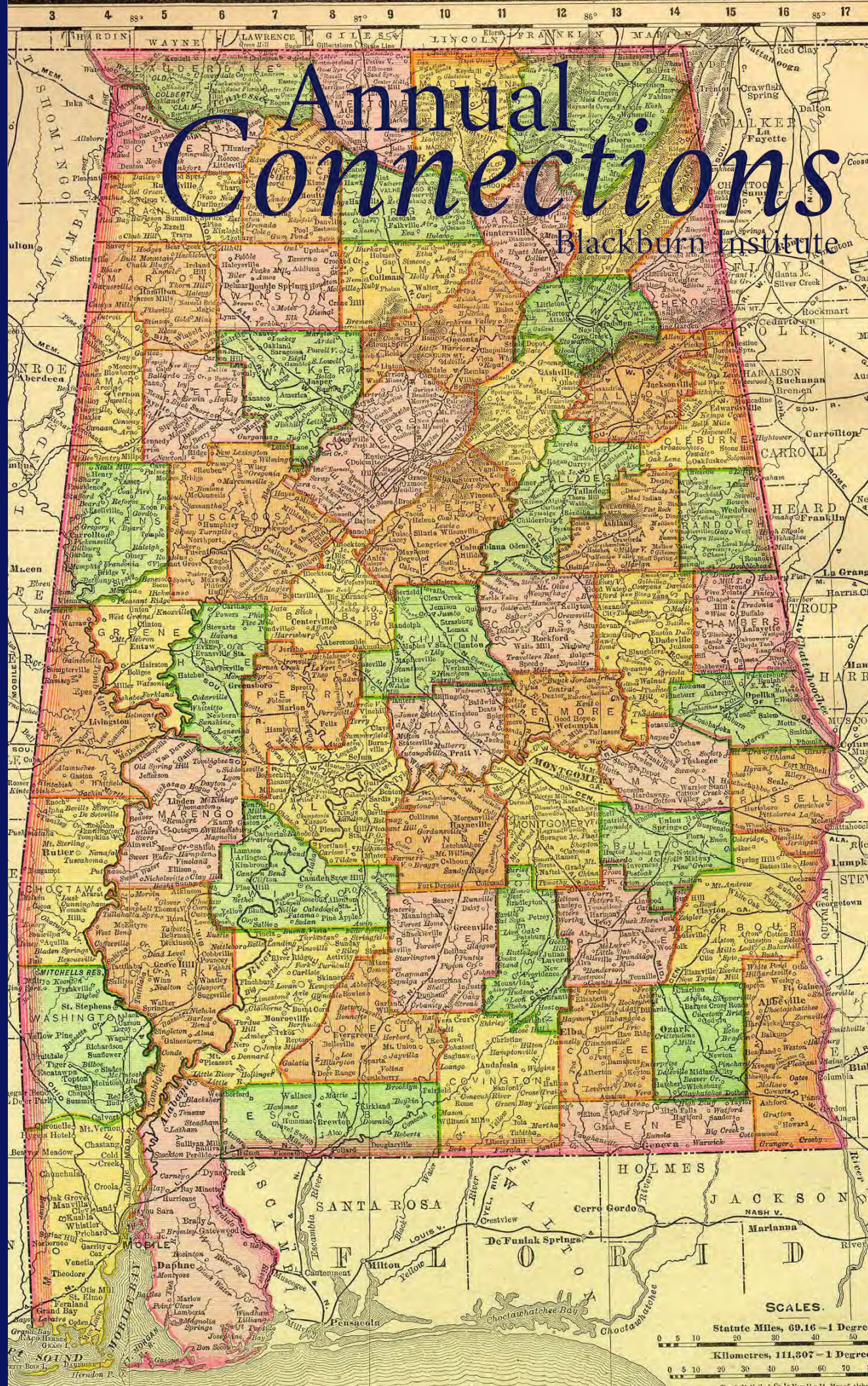
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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
ALABAMA







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### Director

R. Mac Griswold, Ph.D.

### Program Assistant

Darcel Green

Pictured on Cover:  
1895 map of Alabama

Pictured Above:  
2016 Class of Students at D. Ray Pate New  
Student Retreat



**BLACKBURN**  
INSTITUTE  
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA®

### Issue No. 3

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changes, professional updates, or ideas to  
[blackburninstitute@sa.ua.edu](mailto:blackburninstitute@sa.ua.edu).

# Director's Message

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The Blackburn Institute kicks off the new academic year with its Annual Symposium and the theme, "The Engaged Citizen: Working for a Better Alabama and Nation." Tied directly to the mission of the institute, this theme emphasizes the value of taking action to improve our society.

Attendees at this year's symposium have the opportunity to learn about the roles and responsibilities of individuals in political campaigns, how candidates connect with and engage the electorate, how citizens can discern fact from opinion in the media. These tracks offer different perspectives of the ways in which we can be engaged in society and work for change.

We are taught that politics, religion, and sex are taboo topics for polite conversation, but I invite you to discuss the world of politics as a vehicle for change. Not the

partisanship that divides us in many respects, but the politics that shape our local, state, and federal governments' policies and programs. I challenge you to dive into the sessions with an enthusiasm and interest that will help you become more engaged in our communal work.

This work took on new forms in some changed and expanded programs in the 2015-16 academic year and, as a year of change, we were also challenged to adapt. The Blackburn Institute saw the transition of two staff members, Dr. Mary Lee Caldwell and Mrs. Candace Peters, to new roles on campus. Each will continue to serve UA students as director of student governance and citizenship and academic advisory for the Culverhouse School of Accountancy, respectively. Mrs. Peters' successor, Ms. Darcel Green, began in her role as program assistant in mid-July and has been a welcome addition to our community.

In terms of programming for the institute, 2015-16 was a year of successes. The revised format of the Burt Jones Travel Experience was well-received, with

over fifty participants gaining insights into the Wiregrass region of the state over four days in late October. The Daniel Community Scholars program



accepted applications from Fellows and supported a start-up non-profit organization through seed funding and a community-based Fellow's work.

Finally, the pilot of the Summer Mentorship Experience paired two Blackburn Fellows and a faculty mentor with two Blackburn Students. These students gained valuable skills, developed relationships with Blackburn Fellows, and engaged in work that directly impacted the state of Alabama over the course of the summer.

The Blackburn Institute's twenty second year of operations closed with announcement of a new class of forty one students at the Spring Networking Dinner and they have a bright future ahead of them! ☺

“The Engaged Citizen: Working for a Better Alabama and Nation”





## Mary Lieb

**M**ary Lieb is a graduate student at The University of Alabama studying Communication Studies. She recently graduated from UA where she served in a variety of leadership roles including Honors College President and Student Government Association Director of Communication. In these positions, she enjoyed working with teams to discover new and exciting ways to engage students. This year, she will serve as Student Chair of the Blackburn Institute, and she looks forward to learning more about Alabama and the communication methods that play a vital role in its development. After graduation, she hopes to use her skills to help others communicate ideas that will help make people's lives better. She believes great work can happen anywhere.

### **What has been your most meaningful experience as a member of the Blackburn Institute?**

When I first arrived at The University of Alabama, I was greeted by students from a number of places across the United States and

around the globe. We were able to share our unique experiences about why we loved the places we came from and what made our homes so special. Within these conversations, I recognized that although I knew a lot about where I was raised, there was so much to uncover about what it meant to be a student at The University of Alabama and more importantly, what it meant to be a new resident in the state of Alabama. The Blackburn Institute offered me an opportunity to explore answers to questions that extended further than the borders of UA's campus.

My most meaningful experiences with the Blackburn Institute have happened during the institute's travel experiences. When we visit communities unlike my own, I learn about the sacrifices, struggles and victories of people simply working to make their homes better for their families and for future generations. This past fall when we visited Pike Road, Alabama, I saw the steps local community members had made to pave a path towards education that better suited their needs. We met with people who were champions in their own right. They seemed to know that their accomplishments would go largely unrecognized by official honors or plaques, but were willing to invest their talents and

skills for the chance to open doors to more opportunities in years to come. From school teachers to politicians, Blackburn has introduced me to theories of public service that incorporate the tireless work from citizens who work countless hours even when there is no clear solution to complex challenges. In hearing their stories, I have learned how to lead better, how to listen more intentionally and how to shape a lofty goal into tangible reality.

### **What does leadership mean to you?**

I believe that great leaders create an environment that allows others to thrive. Leadership is hope, it is resilience and it is the willingness to believe that things can always be better. But more than that, I think leadership is the motivation to work towards those goals. Blackburn focuses on ethical leadership, and at a time where our campus, state and national political scenes seem riddled with controversy and questionable decisions, I see my fellow members make choices each day that work to put aside their personal gain for the benefit of those around them. Their curious nature as leaders makes us better, and over time, each conversation together becomes easier to have. Despite our different experiences, we are connected by Dr. Blackburn's fundamental value that together, we make each other better, and in turn can begin transforming our worlds.



# New Students

## Lieb (continued)

### How do you think Blackburn students can contribute to the Institute's values?

I have made some of my greatest Blackburn memories just by showing up. Being invited into a room of peers who are all infinitely more informed about any issue we discuss has not only allowed me to grow intellectually, but also taught me how to agree, disagree and collaborate more effectively. Sometimes the discussions we have in the Blackburn office are difficult. We each only know our own story, and sometimes we don't have a defined viewpoint on the topic yet. But when we have the opportunity to engage and listen, we learn more about ourselves and the world around us.

### What role do you see the Blackburn Institute playing on campus?

Blackburn's role on campus is powerful. The Institute brings leaders, both in positions of leadership and students who haven't found their niche yet. Throughout all of

Blackburn's activities we develop relationships and invest in each other's lives. We create a bridge across common humanities. Blackburn combines our love of Alabama and our willingness to try and make a difference. In order to contribute to something greater than ourselves, I think we first must learn about what makes our community what it is. Blackburn offers the outlet to do that and to create bonds with people who may not be like-minded, but who are like motivated.

### What lessons do you hope current and future Blackburn students will learn while on campus?

One of the first transformative moments I had within the Blackburn Institute was when I realized that my experiences were not universal. And with this realization also came the understanding that different experiences didn't need to create a barrier between people. Not only could different beliefs lead to healthy dialogue, but they could lead to friendships that extend far beyond any Blackburn event. Invest in the people and experience around you because you never know what you might be able to learn from them. ∞

## 2016 New Students

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**Row 1:** Ryan Coleman, Chandler Shields, Caitlin Cobb, Sophia Warner, Camille Carr, Dwyer Freeman, Tori Leonard, Jessica Tolbert, Mollie Gillis, James Clinton, Kristen Chambliss, Amber Scales, Maya Perry, Andrea Hayes, and Millicent Krebs

**Row 2:** Ronald Nelson, Rob Grady, Melissa Mathews, Akiesha Anderson, Jilisa Milton, Patrick Fitzgerald, Nivory Gordon, Ada Katherine van Wyhe, Kelsei Coleman, Alex Smith, and Jimmy Pritchett

**Row 3:** Carson Ford, William Bounds, Dalton Beasley, Josh Fuller, Ryan Truitt, Becca Michel, David Turner, Phuong Nguyen, and Tucker Martin

**Row 4:** Jared Hunter, Chris Lancaster, Ibukun Afon, and Cameron Harris

**Not Pictured:** Madeleine Lewis and Dana Sweeney



# Our Foundation

## Vision

“My vision is to develop a community of ethical leaders who collaboratively accomplish good and noble ends. A good community is comprised of more than one generation; embraces transcending values that esteem each citizen; and creates a sense of oneness where individuals set aside personal gain, benefit, or goal for the sake of the group.”

*Dr. John L. Blackburn*

## Mission

The mission of the Blackburn Institute is to develop a network of diverse leaders who understand the challenges facing the state of Alabama and the nation and who are committed to serving as agents of positive change.

## Overarching Values

### Facilitating a Diversity of Opinion

by providing opportunities for students to experience all sides of issues impacting their communities as well as creating situations for open dialogue focused on fostering the resolution of issues rather than their mere identification.

### Being Called to Action

by inspiring active citizenship as individuals and collectively by identifying and implementing strategic initiatives for the common good.

### Networking Through the Generations

by providing opportunities for students and fellows to engage in dialogue and personal contact with advisory board members, faculty, community leaders, scholars, and political leaders.

### Instilling a Lifetime Commitment

by providing a rich collegiate experience so that, upon graduation, fellows are encouraged not only to continue to foster relationships with the Blackburn Institute and its members, but to also uphold the ideals of the Institute in their daily lives.

ANNUAL  
SYMPOSIUM



BLACKBURN INSTITUTE  
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS  
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

During a weekend filled with opportunities to learn about issues of state and national concern, Blackburn Students, Fellows, and Advisory Board Members connect with one another and campus and community partners at the Institute's marquee event: the Blackburn Annual Symposium. The Annual Symposium is also the home of the Frank A. Nix Lecture on Ethical Leadership and the Gloria and John L. Blackburn Academic Symposium in alternating years.

Formerly known as the D. Ray Pate Dinner, this premier event for the Institute is a time for reconnection, fellowship, and celebration. Held in Birmingham, the Blackburn Institute comes together for an evening designed to welcome its newest students, to congratulate its graduates, and to reaffirm the Institute's mission and values.

## SPRING NETWORKING DINNER



BLACKBURN INSTITUTE | DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS  
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

# Daniel Community Scholars

Thanks to generous support from the Daniel Foundation of Alabama, members of the Blackburn Institute are given the opportunity to put the Institute's values into action by developing proposals for a project that will better their community. New Students work as small groups to turn their ideas for community improvement into reality as they compete for funding through the Daniel Community Scholars competition. Students and fellows are also encouraged to submit additional proposals to start sustainable community initiatives throughout the state.



## Heirloom Harvest



In January 2016, funding was awarded to three Fellows for their roles in building a new, Alabama-based non-profit organization. Bradley Davidson (2002 Fellow), Jennifer Traywick Mims (2001 Fellow), and Will Dodd (2012 Fellow) were three-quarters of the team that started Heirloom Harvest, an organization dedicated to supporting and connecting local farmers and restaurants.

The first grant was to assist with organizational development and helped provide seed funding for start-up costs, such as printing, website development, and

promotional materials. The second grant was in the form of funding for a Resident Daniel Community Scholar, Will Dodd, who served 20+ hours per week in the start-up phase of the organization. His task was to conduct a state-wide survey of farms to identify farms, crops grown, anticipated yield, and acreage.

In a seven-month period, the organization has increased its visibility through direct outreach to farms, participation in industry conferences, and meeting with governmental officials. Heirloom Harvest is already being promoted by organizations including the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries and the Alabama Councils of Soil and Water Conservation

Districts as a resource for information on produce production on small farms.

Heirloom Harvest also made a name for itself in Alabama's 2016 blackberry season as it connected Harvison Farms, a brand new farm in Monroe County, to multiple new markets across central Alabama. During the two-month blackberry season, the organization delivered hundreds of pounds of fresh, Alabama-grown berries to multiple restaurants, breweries, and creameries across the Birmingham metro area.

Watch for more from this group in the coming year! ∞





# 2016 Pinned Fellows



**Row 1:** Michael Moore, Meghan Dorn, Alex Smith, Vel Lewis, Leigh Terry, Yarden Wolf, Katie Plott, Shuwen Yue, Amanda Bennett  
**Row 2:** John Roberts, Polly Ricketts, Olivia Atkinson, Lindsey Smith, Mark Hammontree, Frank Foley, Undré Smith, Will Sorrell, John Pounders  
**Row 3:** Landon Nichols, Nick Roy, Parker Alison, Alex Marsh, Will Gonzalez, John David Thompson, Al Gilani, Chisolm Allenlundy, Andrew Cicero  
**Not Pictured:** Jackson Britton, Anna Carroll, Chelsea Caveny, Archie Creech, Henry Downes, Sahar Ezez, Aaron Howard, A.J. James, Ronte Pritchett, Eric Roddy, Christian Shannon, Elliot Spillers, Warner Thompson, and Hashuluv Watson



**D**ana Lewis is a thinker, doer, and teacher of health and digital things—and the unexpected developer of a do-it-yourself closed loop artificial pancreas. As a result, Dana founded the #OpenAPS movement to make safe and effective artificial pancreas technology more widely available. She created and moderates #hcsn, the global healthcare social media community that meets weekly on Twitter, and works at the intersection of all things health and digital. Professionally, Dana serves as Director of MDigitalLife for W2O Group, helping organizations understand, engage, and activate the online health ecosystem.

**How were you involved as a student at The University of Alabama and what connection does that involvement have to your life today?**

I was involved in a number of ways as an undergraduate, both on and off campus. I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes as a freshman in high school and thus was actively involved in advocacy work for people with diabetes during my time on campus – even missing classes from time to time, including flying to DC to testify before the U.S. Senate HELP committee and also missing my freshman honors philosophy exam in order to represent the U.S. at the 2006 World Diabetes Congress in South Africa. I couldn't resist being engaged on campus, either, especially when there were so many opportunities (challenges) to address. One of the main ones that sticks in my mind was dealing with the dining halls and attempting to navigate the lack of nutrition information available across campus. This led me to work directly with Bama Dining to create a nutrition label program, so nutrition

labels would be placed at the point of service for just about every item, every day, in addition to providing a digital kiosk outside so you could peruse the menu and have more information at your fingertips to make decisions about what to eat.

One other thing I did as an undergraduate, which bridges into my work today, was creating and moderating the first healthcare chat on Twitter, #hcsn. I started it because I thought instead of reaching out to leaders in healthcare to discuss how they're using social media individually, it would save a lot of time to get together and discuss it all together. Eight years later, we're still chatting every Sunday night at 8pm Central! Because of my work with creating the #hcsn community I was persuaded to move to Seattle and work for a non-profit health system (Swedish), and encouraged to keep up my involvement in #hcsn, the diabetes space, and everything else I was doing. My "involvement" in these extracurricular areas has been what has landed me every job I've had in my career, and it's been a big part of the rest of my life, too. More so now that, in my spare time, I am building diabetes tools that I personally use (#OpenAPS, a DIY closed loop artificial pancreas) and are now being used by hundreds of other people around the world!

**How do you view your work as part of a community effort to build the network of "ethical leaders who collaboratively**

## Dana Lewis

**accomplish good and noble ends" envisioned by Dr. Blackburn?**

I've noticed a trend where I often start pursuing a solution to my own problem, but find that my solution can serve other people, and soon shift to making that solution available to a broader community of people wherever possible. I've been fascinated to tap into the open source community, which I wasn't really a part of before diving into #OpenAPS. But as I've started working with them through #OpenAPS, I've been pleasantly surprised to see just how many people are these very ethical leaders who collaboratively accomplish SO much good. However, they don't always view or categorize themselves as "leaders", even when their very work makes them so. As such, they're not always thinking big picture about how their work could be expanded or linked to do even





## Lewis (continued)

more good than they originally intended. Some of my 'work' has been encouraging and facilitating this sharing and networking of individuals and communities to further expand their work. The more these individuals can scale their work and connect with others, the more this network of leaders continues to grow!

### **As a Blackburn Fellow who lives outside of Alabama, what advice would you give to those that are similarly situated and want to continue living the mission of the Blackburn Institute?**

One thing that helps, regardless of your geography, is surrounding yourself with people who are living the mission, even if they don't know about John L. and his work! And this can be surrounding yourself online, too. One way I've felt able to stay connected is through online channels. I encourage reading what others are doing and "lurking" if you're not actively part of a particular group, but also don't hesitate to share your own experiences and thoughts about how to be the change you want to see in the world – from what I've learned, you'll never know who you might inspire next to go out and do exactly that. ☺



## Danielle Blevins

### How to Live a Blackburn Lifestyle in a DC Life

*Danielle Blevins is a 2007 Fellow currently living in Washington, DC and working as a United States Supreme Court Correspondent for Talk Media News.*

It is one thing to live in Alabama and be part of the Blackburn Institute, but what does it mean when you live almost 800 miles away? How does one live a Blackburn lifestyle in Washington, D.C.? These questions and more were tackled one evening in late April by a group of Blackburn Fellows in the office of Blackburn Fellow and Advisory Board member Corey Ealons at VOXGlobal. Facilitated by Blackburn Fellow David Eagles, attendees shared ideas about what it means to be part of the institute and a member of the network outside of the state of Alabama.

Many are lured to this city as an epicenter of history, power, and change. Alabama, however, means more to Blackburn Fellows than a mere song sung by Lynyrd Skynyrd; with the demands of day-to-day life and work, the refrain is not often heard around these parts. While sharing common experiences with other fellows, participants brainstormed meaningful ways to be involved as an ambassador of the state. They weighed the ability to be connected to the state through technological engagement with direct, personal immersion. One fellow said, "The institute is my lifeline to the state." With that sentiment, fellows expressed their desire to know more about the substantive things occurring in the state, rather than just treading water through headlines and soundbites.

The fast-paced lifestyle many lead in D.C. makes the stakes that much higher for those who deeply care about the direction the state heads. The demands of living away from home in Washington make it difficult to return to the state, something most fellows living outside of Alabama realize. From "cultivating a spirit of public service" in student fellows and participating in the new mentorship program, more than anything, fellows expressed their desire to contribute lasting benefits for the future of the Blackburn network and the state of Alabama from the D.C. area.

Excited about seeing the network energized, fellows offered different ways they would like to see the Blackburn Network active in the D.C. metro area. Recognizing the importance of their life-long commitment, participants are enthusiastically looking forward to the next substantive gathering of Blackburn Fellows in the nation's capital. Looking at everyday as way to make a positive impact, fellows walked away with new ideas to complement their DC life as they live a life of Blackburn values. ☺

## Marion McIntosh

**M**arion S. McIntosh is a 2005 Blackburn Fellow and has been a member of the Advisory Board since 2012. Marion graduated from The University of Alabama with B.S. and M.S. degrees in Industrial Engineering. He currently works as a Process Engineer at Honda Manufacturing of Alabama, LLC. Marion also serves on the Board of Directors for the Alabama Mathematics, Science, & Engineering Coalition (AMSTEC), a network of dedicated state, education, and public policy stakeholders working for systematic change in STEM education. He's also a Life Member of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

### **What would you say has been the most meaningful experience as a member of the Advisory Board?**

It's impossible to pinpoint just one definitive experience as there are way too many. One example I can recall is running into the Siegals at a function outside of the Institute that Honda sent me to as the company representative. I was greeted with that same Blackburn hug and smile that is characteristic

of Ms. Bobbie, and that coy grin and welcoming handshake of Mr. Don. And they proceeded to introduce me to some very accomplished individuals at that particular event. It's motivation for me. I concede, sometimes I don't feel accomplished enough to sit on this Board. However, one day soon, I will be.

### **How has your involvement with the Blackburn Institute changed over time?**

I've always made it a point to maintain a positive relationship with every Director of the Institute. As a result, I've had the opportunity to participate at numerous events by volunteering to moderate, host, and speak whenever needed. Thus, my involvement hasn't changed much; I've tried to be relatively consistent throughout the years. I get busy with my career at times just like anyone else, but I try to make time for Blackburn events as much as possible.

### **What are your views on servant leadership and how have you integrated those into your personal life and your work with Blackburn?**

Fortunately, servant leadership has been a part of my life long before I joined the Institute. Whether it was the National Society of Black Engineers, where I served on a Regional Board and as Chapter

President, or my fraternity, serving others through mentoring, tutoring, and positively influencing is something that I've believed in for years and try to practice daily. Servant leadership is something that I feel is characteristic in most Blackburn Fellows, from student, to career, to family life. I mentor young engineers at work, particularly Black males who seek out my advice, and just recently, I became chair of my next family reunion. The greatest rewards in life are the people you help and the things that you don't necessarily get paid for.

Blackburn has taught me to always consider "who's not in the room" and we even have a similar school of thought at work where we routinely reference "standing up for people in meetings they aren't invited to." Equally as important, another philosophy I've learned is discourse with the main goal of exchanging ideas and understanding instead of winning an argument or debate. Often, we can't get past our own views, but it helps to simply understand the other side. Listening has to be just as important, if not more important, than speaking to be a good Blackburn Fellow. It's what makes our organization stand out from the rest.

### **What has been your most significant contribution to the State of Alabama?**

May I answer this question honestly? I haven't contributed nearly enough as I am my own worst critic. However, I've always tried to be a positive representation of every organization I've been a part of, and be helpful in any way possible as alluded to previously. I do want to share this story though. At a Blackburn networking function



# Advisory Board Profile

## McIntosh (continued)


some years ago at Vulcan Park, I asked the late [Advisory Board member] Mr. Redding Pitt what I should do to get involved in politics. He gave some of the best advice ever. He basically made three points: 1) Make some money; you don't want your mortgage payment to be dependent on the next election, 2) Start local; don't start out too broad when nobody knows you, and 3) When you've done local long enough, realize you love it, and you're willing to risk it all, then go for a larger office. "Risk it all" resonated with me, given all of the scrutiny involved with public office at the highest levels. I suppose I'm still trying to figure out step 1.

## What role do you see the Blackburn Institute playing in the State of Alabama?

The Blackburn Institute is already playing a vital role in the State of Alabama and our nation with respect to public policy, education, and community activism. Further, numerous fellows have been on staff for state, local government, and federal government. If there's going to be a positive change in the State of Alabama, the road will have to go through the Blackburn Institute. We are the best Alabama has to offer. Statewide, nationwide, worldwide, we are the leaders of tomorrow, the gateway to the future. Take the youngest Blackburn Student Fellow right now. In his/her lifetime, I believe unequivocally that this individual will see the following from the Institute: a multitude of state legislative officials and board appointees, at least ten members of the U.S. House of Representatives, at least four U.S. Senators, at least two Governors, at least one Supreme Court Justice, and at least one President of the United States. This is likely a conservative estimate. Please check this scoreboard in the not so distant future. Remember that you heard it here first. 🐼

## New Website Coming Soon

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 **Division of Student Affairs**

**Blackburn Institute**

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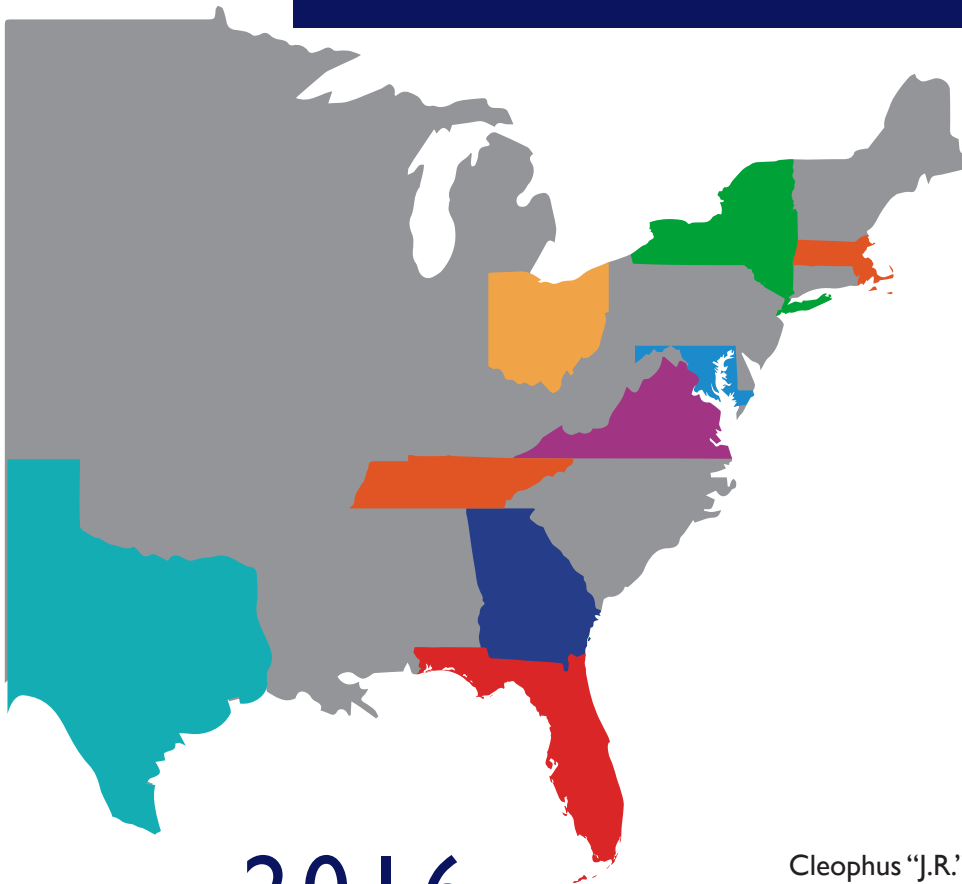
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## BURT JONES TRAVEL EXPERIENCE

The Burt Jones Travel Experience is a cornerstone of the leadership development curriculum for the Blackburn Institute at The University of Alabama. Named for the director of Palmer Hall during James Hood's time as one of the first African American students on campus and in the residence hall, these



# Advisory Board



## Regional Representation

Birmingham	21
Tuscaloosa	8
Montgomery	8
Huntsville	6
Gulf Coast	2
NE Corridor	1
Blackbelt	2
Shoals Region	1

## 2016 Membership

J. Norman Baldwin  
Jenna Bedsole #  
Lynne Berry  
Gloria Blackburn  
Michael Briddell  
Katie Boyd Britt #  
Kyle Buchanan #  
Julian D. Butler  
Mary Margaret Carroll  
Cheree Causey  
Prince Cleveland #

Sue Bell Cobb  
Ray Cole  
Mark Cooper  
John Covington  
Kathleen Cramer  
Bradley Davidson #  
Milton Davis  
David Donaldson  
Corey Ealons #  
J. David Ellwanger  
Wendy Evesque

Cleophus "J.R." Gaines  
Fournier "Boots" Gale  
Robert Harris III #  
Mike House ^  
Sandra Hullett  
G. Douglas Jones  
Peter Loftis Lowe Sr.  
Gordon Martin ^  
Mark Martin #  
F. David Mathews  
Marion McIntosh ^ #  
Ray Miller  
Leroy Nix #  
Marjorie Kay Nix  
Jon Noland  
William O'Connor  
Larry O'Neal  
Carol Patterson  
Tom Patterson  
Andres Peña #  
Alejandro Perez

Holly Piper ^  
Redding Pitt \*  
Eric Pruitt #  
Joe H. Ritch  
Michelle Roth  
John D. Saxon  
Bobbie Siegal  
Joan R. Smith #  
Lynwood Smith  
Victoria Starks #  
Donald Stewart  
Louise Thibodaux  
Tracy Thompson  
Kevin Turner  
Robert Turner #  
R. B. Walker #  
Judson Wells

\* Deceased  
^ Board Officers  
# Blackburn Fellow

Elected in April 2016 to terms beginning January 1, 2017:

Marsha Folsom  
Cornelia Heflin

Rosalind Moore  
Taylor Nichols #

Christian Smith #  
William Sorrell #

Joshua White #



# Looking Ahead to 2016-2017

## *A Bright Future for Blackburn* | R. Mac Griswold, Ph.D.

The Blackburn community can look forward to some exciting opportunities in the 2016-17 academic year. Programs launched as pilots in 2015-16 will be fine-tuned and expanded, new student programs will be developed, and visibility of the institute's work will be increased.

A first area of growth will answer the call to provide greater interaction with leaders from a variety of sectors, a new series of public lectures will be launched in September and continue throughout the year. "Perspectives on Leadership" will be a monthly series designed to expose students to different styles of leadership.

This series, open to all students at The University of Alabama, will promote greater visibility of the Blackburn Institute on campus, provide a venue to share our work and values with a wider audience. Additionally, the series is an opportunity to collaborate not only with partners in student affairs, but also with academic disciplines.

A second area of growth for the institute's programming in the coming year will be with activities for graduating students. Programming in this area will enhance the senior year experience through activities intended to:

1) strengthen relationships

between graduating students and the Fellows Involvement Network;

2) allow graduating students to showcase their skills to Advisory Board members and

Fellows; and

3) integrate a public declaration of commitment

to the values of the institute into the student-to-Fellow transition.

The Fellows Involvement Network (FIN) has already established the foundation for a new Soft Landings Program, designed to facilitate the integration of Fellows into new communities after they graduate. After an initial call for Fellows' involvement in summer 2016, over 25 individuals have offered to assist recent graduates. Starting in spring 2017, graduating students will receive earlier communication about the FIN and be asked to provide information about their post-graduation plans in an effort to connect them with Fellows.

Additionally, the new Living the Mission Reception planned for April 2017 will allow graduating students to showcase their work in support of the mission values of the institute. For some, this will be

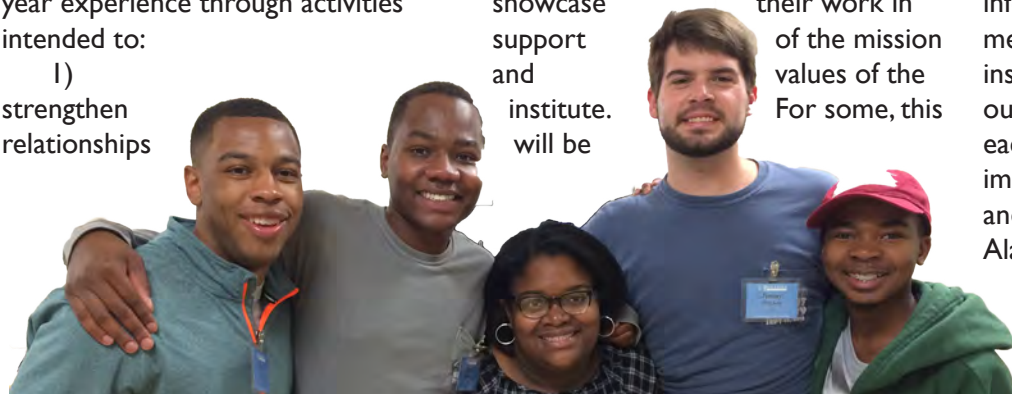
through deeper involvement in the institute's programming, while for others it will be through time and energy dedicated to civic

“A public declaration of commitment to the values of the institute...”

projects, community-based research, policy development, organizational leadership, or other avenues of interest and impact.

Finally, consistent with leadership development models such as the Civic-Minded Graduate, graduating students will be invited to make a public declaration of their commitment to the values of the institute as part of their transition from a Blackburn Student to a Blackburn Fellow. Throughout fall 2016, students will be asked for input into the design of this declaration, both in terms of content and ceremony.

Students, Fellows, and Advisory Board members are all parts of the efforts that help the Blackburn Institute to evolve and grow. Stay informed, contribute within your means, and attend and participate in institute events. As we draw closer to our 25th anniversary as a community, each of these components will be important to our continued success and contributions to improving Alabama and the nation! 🌟





“Our active involvement in the Blackburn Institute allows us to participate with outstanding students who continue to inspire us to try to improve Alabama each and every day. Blackburn Institute is unique in its ability to equip young people with the essential skills and perspectives required to be thoughtful change agents in their communities.”

☞ Bobbie and Don Siegal, Blackburn Society Members ☞

# 2016-17 Dates

- .....
- Aug. 26-27 | Annual Symposium and Fall Advisory Board Meeting
  - Sept. 5 | First Sunday Sundaes  
*Monday due to Labor Day*
  - Sept. 30 | Open House
  - Oct. 2 | First Sunday Sundaes
  - Oct. 17 | Daniel Community Scholars Competition and Reception
  - Oct. 26-29 | Burt Jones Travel Experience  
*Tennessee Valley*
  - Nov. 6 | First Sunday Sundaes
  - Nov. 7 | New Student Nominations Open
  - Nov. 28 | End of Semester Social
  - Jan. 10 | Spring Kick-Off Meeting
  - Jan. 12 | New Student Nominations Close
  - Jan. 12-13 | Montgomery Travel Experience
  - Jan. 16 | New Student Interest Session
  - Jan. 17 | New Student Applications Open
  - Jan. 31 | New Student Applications Close
  - Feb. 2-13 | New Student Essay Review
  - Feb. 6 | First Sunday Sundaes  
*Monday due to Superbowl*
  - Feb. 14-17 | New Student Group Interviews
  - Feb. 23-25 | New Student Individual Interviews
  - Feb. 27 | New Student Class Announcement
  - Mar. 5 | First Sunday Sundaes
  - Mar. 31 - Apr. 1 | D. Ray Pate New Student Retreat
  - Apr. 2 | First Sunday Sundaes
  - Apr. 11 | “Living the Mission” Reception
  - Apr. 17 | Spring Networking Dinner and Spring Advisory Board Meeting
  - Apr. 24 | End of Semester Social

# Looking Forward; Giving Back

As we move into our 21st year, we hope that you will consider giving to the Blackburn Institute. Designed to instill the Institute's four overarching values, the Blackburn Student and Fellow experience is only achieved through generous donations from our supporters. Thanks to contributions, 20 classes of Blackburn Students have been able to participate in dynamic programming, to explore different communities within our state, and to develop meaningful relationships within our intergenerational network. Please consider giving so that future generations of Blackburn Students can be involved in this unique experience. Let us continue to work towards turning Dr. Blackburn's vision into a reality. Give today by visiting <http://blackburninstitute.ua.edu/institute.cfm>.



## Stay Connected

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[blackburninstitute@sa.ua.edu](mailto:blackburninstitute@sa.ua.edu)

Blackburn Institute  
The University of Alabama  
Box 870167  
2400 Ferguson Student Center  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487

205.348.3277  
205.348.5928

THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**ALABAMA**<sup>®</sup>

*Division of*  
**Student Affairs**  
**Blackburn Institute**





# LIVING GROWTH LASTING CHANGE

*The Blackburn Institute celebrates 20 years.*

By Jessie Patterson Jones

**T**he Blackburn Institute has become a touchstone for agents of change on the campus of The University of Alabama and throughout the state that claims it.

Officially formed in 1994 by the Division of Student Affairs as a tribute to former Dean of Students John L. Blackburn, the Institute works to promote his vision of developing a community of ethical leaders who set aside personal gain, benefits and goals in order to collaboratively accomplish what he once called “good and noble ends.”

Twenty years after its creation, the Blackburn Institute stands 560 fellows strong, and strives to teach each new class that they all have the ability and opportunity to impact their community in a positive way. The lasting impact the Institute leaves on the lives of its members pales in comparison to the mark they, in turn, have left on their community.

“The Blackburn Institute knows our fellows will have the opportunity to make an impact, and so we try to help our students be ready when opportunities arise,” said Mary Lee Caldwell, assistant director of the Blackburn Institute and a 2012

fellow. “We try to educate them on issues, equip them with necessary skills, expose them to new people, places and ideas – and empower them to act with intentionality.”

Earning the title of “Blackburn Fellow” carries with it a lifetime obligation. Students become fellows the semester prior to graduation, after completing the Blackburn Institute’s student curriculum. “Each fellow is committed to the Blackburn Institute ideals and understands that it is their obligation to work strategically to advance our state and nation in a positive way,” said Dr. Cheree Causey, a former director and current board member

of the Institute. “A Blackburn fellow may not physically reside in the state of Alabama and may not be able to attend every event, but they live the ideals to network across generations, ask for a diversity of opinions and then act strategically to improve our state.”

On Aug. 22-23, almost 50 Blackburn fellows gathered to kick off the Institute’s 20th year with the annual Gloria and John L. Blackburn Academic Symposium. Gathered around the theme of “Alabama Voices,” fellows heard from a wide range of speakers, including MSNBC’s “Morning Joe” host Joe Scarborough and Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Rick Bragg.

“Because the Institute’s mission is so connected to the state of Alabama, we thought it would be a good opportunity to highlight that focus while also introducing our students, alumni and community members to things within the state that they may not be as familiar with,” Caldwell said. “With ‘Alabama Voices,’ we wanted to do something different from anything we had done before, but that was also rooted in our mission.”

More than 300 UA students and



Joe Scarborough, host of MSNBC’s “Morning Joe” and UA alumnus, talks with Blackburn fellows following dinner at the symposium.



**Above:** Dr. Kathleen Cramer is named a member of the Blackburn Society’s inaugural class of inductees. **Below:** Rick Bragg, a Pulitzer Prize winner and current UA professor, speaks.

community members joined the Blackburn fellows to hear the public lecture by Scarborough, and more than 160 members of the Blackburn Institute attended other symposium events.

With the symposium serving as a kick-off event, the 20th anniversary celebration will span the entire 2014-2015 academic year. It comes at the perfect time in the Institute’s history, Caldwell said. “There is so much excitement surrounding the Institute right now, and the 20th anniversary just adds to that. We are in the newly renovated and expanded Ferguson Student Center, we’re searching for our new director, and we have new leadership within Student Affairs. With so many new things going on, it’s great to use the anniversary as a touchstone for remembering our history while still looking toward the future.”

For Blackburn fellow and board member Jon David Conolley, the 20th anniversary provides an opportunity to reconnect and reenergize. “The 20-year mark serves as a pretty neat milestone, and if we as an organization do a really good job of reminding one another that we have made a commitment to make a better state for future generations and reenergize some of



**Above:** Bobbie and Don Siegal, longtime Blackburn Institute supporters and UA alumni, take part in a discussion with current Blackburn students.



Dr. Blackburn always talked about passing the torch, and that's what we are doing.

Dr. Kathleen Cramer, former senior associate vice president of Student Affairs



Patterson Hood, left, co-founder of the Drive-By Truckers band, takes part in a session on Alabama culture.

the folks that are at the margins of the Institute, I'd be really excited."

Blackburn Advisory Board chair Mike House said the anniversary was special to him because the Institute has endured and grown to become such an important part of the University. "It began as an idea, became a reality and has withstood the test of time," he said. "It will only become more relevant to the University, the state and the nation as it continues to grow."

Landon Nichols, who serves as both the Blackburn Institute's student chair and the program's graduate assistant, said his experiences in Blackburn have shown him the power of networking through generations and really impacting UA's campus and the state of Alabama. That's something he would like to build on for the

Institute this year, he said.

"I'm excited about all of the opportunities we have, but I'm most excited to take Dr. Blackburn's mission into a new decade," Nichols said. "We're looking to have a more profound impact, but also a more profound presence. Having moved our office to the Ferguson Student Center will help."

For Nichols, the Institute's call to action is something he thinks all students could take to heart. "Making our community better is easy to do. This is where you are for four years," he said. "Take these formative years, and use them to give back so your college home is strong for future generations."

Nichols said he hopes the Blackburn Institute imparts on each new class of fellows just how much of an impact they can have

as fellows during their time on campus and beyond. "I hope each of our new fellows will realize they are part of something bigger than themselves that transcends time and generations, and they will have the opportunity to not only leave a lasting impact on the entire University, but also the entire state," he said.

Travel experiences are a core component of the Blackburn experience. They provide opportunities for Blackburn students and fellows to travel to communities within the state so they can become better educated on the issues and industries impacting Alabama.

"We meet with community and political leaders, visit local businesses and take in local culture," Caldwell said. "These programs are designed to give students a more comprehensive view of what is going on in Alabama."

This year, travel experiences will take students to Birmingham, Demopolis, the Gulf Coast and Montgomery. Travel experiences routinely focus on an important industry, a rural community, a regional community and the state's Capitol. "This year, we intentionally chose communities we have visited before, so we could honor our 20th anniversary and learn how things

More than 300 University of Alabama students and community members joined Blackburn fellows at the symposium.

# HIGHLIGHTS

from the 20th Blackburn Academic Symposium



"When Dr. Blackburn calls, you show up," said Dr. Cheree Causey, former Blackburn Institute director and current board member. Causey, left, spends time with Gloria Blackburn at the symposium.

*"I'm from The University of Alabama, and I'm proud of it. It sets me apart. It gives me character. It makes me different."*

MSNBC's "Morning Joe" host and former Congressman Joe Scarborough, shown speaking above



"While Dr. Blackburn may not be here everyday to impart wisdom, his ideals and legacy live on through this organization." Landon Nichols, right, current Blackburn student chair and graduate assistant, shown with Blackburn staff member Candace Peters.

Joe Scarborough shares a moment with Gloria Blackburn, wife of the late John L. Blackburn, for whom the Blackburn Institute is named.



have changed in areas since we last visited."

Each year, the travel experiences help train a new class of fellows along with other current Blackburn students, and prepare them to take up the torch of leadership within the state.

"Dr. Blackburn always talked about passing the torch, and that's what we are doing," said Dr. Kathleen Cramer, former senior associate vice president of Student Affairs. "We were

Don Siegal, center, and Tom Patterson speak about the integration of The University of Alabama, with Bobbie Siegal moderating.



very intentional about this year's programming. We are being very intentional about the leaders we select to lead. We are passing the torch to the next level of the Blackburn experience.

"Two decades later, it's important for

us to remember where we have come from, but also to grow up into our future. I think Dr. Blackburn would be very pleased with the foundation we have set, but also with the future that we are embracing." ■