

COLLEGE OF SCIENCES AND MATHEMATICS

# Pathways

Volume 2, Number 1

## COSAM LAYS DOWN THE LAW



AUBURN  
UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF SCIENCES  
AND MATHEMATICS

# COSAM

## *Mission Statement*

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The mission of the Auburn University College of Sciences and Mathematics is three-fold: to **teach** by providing an environment that ensures excellence in the biological, physical, and mathematical sciences for the purpose of preserving, interpreting, and conveying existing knowledge; to **research** by creating, integrating, and applying new knowledge; and to **reach out** to others by fostering educational exchange within the University, the Alabama community, and society as a whole.

## Pathways

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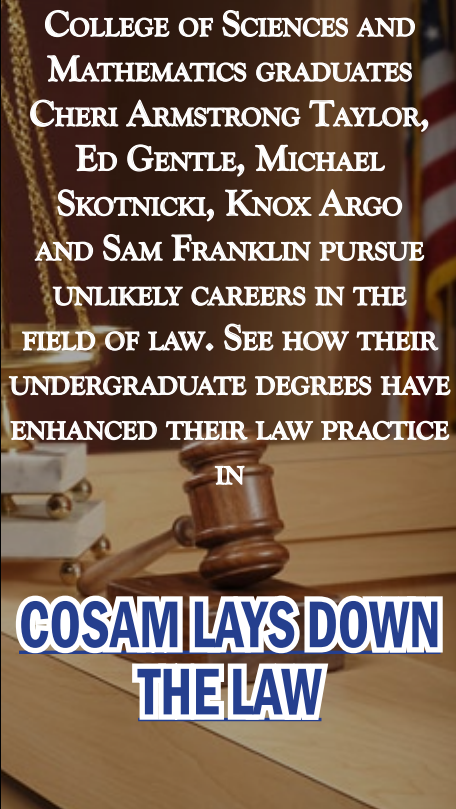


# Table of Contents:

## ON THE COVER 9

COLLEGE OF SCIENCES AND MATHEMATICS GRADUATES CHERI ARMSTRONG TAYLOR, ED GENTLE, MICHAEL SKOTNICKI, KNOX ARGO AND SAM FRANKLIN PURSUE UNLIKELY CAREERS IN THE FIELD OF LAW. SEE HOW THEIR UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES HAVE ENHANCED THEIR LAW PRACTICE IN

**COSAM LAYS DOWN THE LAW**



## NEW MEDIA LAUNCHED 17

COSAM has launched several new initiatives to keep alumni and supporters connected to the College's news, events and advancement.

**WWW**



## message from the dean 4



## cosam national scholars 5



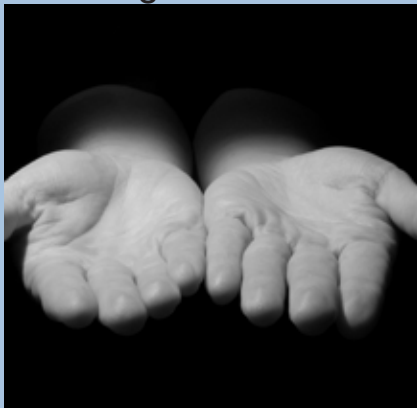
## science supports emergency first responders 7



## alumni updates 13



## how to give 16



## nasa global climate initiative 18





# COSAM Was Here...

Mathematics Professor Dr. Chris Rodger teaching mathematics to aboriginal children in Ross River, Central Australia.



COLLEGE OF SCIENCES  
AND MATHEMATICS

AUBURN UNIVERSITY IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION / EMPLOYER.

This concept was inspired by the American Association for the Advancement of Science. COSAM shares the AAAS vision to advance science to support a healthy and prosperous world.

# A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



As a youngster, I recall a very simple and engaging sketch of a cartoon-like character peeking over a horizontal line meant to be a wall. Just above this drawing were the words “Kilroy was here.” I came to learn this representation had a reassuring connotation to the troops, and those at home, serving in, or in

support of, World War II and the Korean War.

As I think of the achievements of COSAM’s students and alumni, and where they have left their mark, I frequently picture a “COSAM was here” slogan left behind. When plans were being made for publishing *Pathways*, we sought to provide our readers with a collection of stories that followed the paths of COSAM people who left an imprint traceable back to Auburn and our College. In this issue of *Pathways* we bring you a collection of “COSAM was here” stories.

Two examples where the quality of our undergraduate instruction has left its mark on students are described on page five in *COSAM National Scholars*. **Rebecca Ludvigsen** and **Anne Marie Hodge** were the recipients of a Fulbright scholarship and an NSF graduate fellowship, respectively. It is noteworthy that the University has established an Office of National Prestigious Scholarships, and is finding COSAM students to be a source of the most worthy and qualified candidates. Also, this past year has seen a COSAM student recognized as the SEC female scholar-athlete of the year, as homecoming queen, and as the Phi Kappa Phi outstanding senior. For more information on these stories, visit the following Web site:

[http://www.auburn.edu/academic/science\\_math/cosam/news/documents/2009Journey.pdf](http://www.auburn.edu/academic/science_math/cosam/news/documents/2009Journey.pdf)

As popular attention has focused on the fragility of our planet and its ecosystems, COSAM’s presence can be found in the Environmental Protection Agency careers of **Michele Burgess** (Washington, D.C.) and **John Griggs** (Montgomery, Ala.). Burgess’ role in the post-Sept. 11 and Hurricane Katrina eras for assessing the impact of natural and manmade disasters will benefit future generations.

Few students enter COSAM as freshmen with the intent to become attorneys, but this issue calls attention to five alumni with degrees from our College whose law careers share a COSAM mark in their area of expertise: **Cheri Armstrong Taylor**, Pre-Medicine ’70, in

biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, and chemical patents; **Michael Skotnicki**, Geology ’82, by an association with the Alabama Supreme Court; **Knox Argo**, Chemistry ’61, in real estate, civil issues, and in lobbying; **Sam Franklin**, Mathematics ’69, as an advocate for the defense in suits such as Alabama versus Exxon Mobil Corporation over the miscalculation of royalties on natural gas in the Gulf of Mexico; and **Ed Gentle**, Biological Sciences ’75, with his emphasis on fairness to claimants in suits against big businesses over their environmental misdeeds.

COSAM alums are having their impact in data analysis for naval defense strategies (**Greg Cox**), in public health (**Sharon Massingale**), avian conservation (**Dick Ashford**), and following an enormously successful career as an orthopedic surgeon, recognition as one of America’s top football players (**Ed Dyas**).

COSAM will soon be in the classrooms of Alabama high schools with its recently funded NASA grant on climate change. This is being done in collaboration with the Alabama State Department of Education and is led by COSAM’s Associate Dean for Research Dr. Marie Wooten.

“COSAM was here” exists in the careers of **John Oakberg** and **Bob Piper**. While not highlighted in this issue of *Pathways*, their stories have been captured via Podcasting with the Dean. I encourage you to link to this site and listen to a conversation with Oakberg (episode 14) and Piper (episode 16):

<http://www.auburn.edu/cosam/PodcastingwiththeDean.htm>

You don’t need an iPod to listen; just click on the link, and it will play on your computer. Included are show notes to embellish the interviews. With Piper, the FDA recently approved one of his compounds for use against peripheral T-cell lymphoma, while Oakberg was a member of the team that received the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize.

COSAM is moving toward expanding electronic delivery of our news. This will allow us to contact and communicate with you more frequently, and thus extend the vision of “COSAM is here.”

Each of you has an affiliation with COSAM in some way and, however you express yourself, we are grateful that “COSAM was here” in the pathways you have taken.

Thanks for spending time with COSAM via *Pathways* or on the Internet. We are grateful for you and that you represent COSAM.

WAR EAGLE,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stew Schneller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stew Schneller  
Dean and Professor

# COSAM National Scholars

By Christy Kyser Truitt

On the collegiate-athletic field, excellence is rewarded on the national level through such honors as the Heisman Memorial Trophy, Jim Thorpe Award or being named All-American. In the collegiate-academic community, similar outstanding achievement is recognized through the awarding of prestigious scholarships. Just as a coach might nurture the talent of a young athlete, Auburn University and the College of Sciences and Mathematics (COSAM) also have a vision for academic excellence.

Auburn University established The Office of National Prestigious Scholarships within The Honors College in the fall of 2008. The University recognized a need for a more cohesive effort in the application process in order to compete with schools and peer institutions across the country for national prestigious scholarships.

“I bleed orange and blue and love the Tigers. A prestigious scholar like a Rhodes or Fulbright is like winning a national championship. It reconfirms that we (Auburn University) are on a national scale, and Auburn is a top-ranked academic institution,” says Dr. Paul Harris, director of The Office of National Prestigious Scholarships.

Dr. Harris, a 1997 Ph.D. graduate in the Auburn University College of Liberal Arts and a former Fulbright Scholar himself, discovered his first prestigious-scholarship candidate on the Friday before the first week of class in the fall of 2008. Dr. Harris says he was visiting his colleague, Kathie Mattox, The Honors College associate director for Student Academic Services, when he met Rebecca Ludvigsen, Biomedical Sciences '09.

“Kathie knew she spoke German so we began conversing in fluent German. Her (Ludvigsen's) German was perfect. I asked her if she'd ever

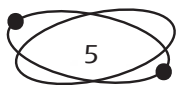
considered applying for a Fulbright Scholarship, and she told me she'd never heard of it. Since applications were due in September, we had a lot of work to do,” Dr. Harris says, adding that the application process typically takes between 40 to 60 hours per student.

Ludvigsen eventually was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to study the protein fetuin-A in Germany and added her name to the growing list of COSAM students awarded such prestigious scholarships since the college was formed in 1986.

Anne-Marie Hodge, Zoology '09, is another COSAM student who was awarded scholarships under Dr. Harris's watch. Hodge's senior year at Auburn was paid for through a Goldwater Scholarship. Hodge also won a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, which will cover all of her doctoral studies - valued at over \$90,000.00. Hodge entered The University of North Carolina-Wilmington this fall, and upon graduation she will pursue a career as a research biologist and university professor.

“Now that I have a whole year behind me, I have a handful of students applying for the Fulbright and others, including the Rhodes Scholarship at Oxford,” Dr. Harris says.

The Rhodes Scholarship to study at Oxford



University is the only prestigious recognition that has not been awarded to a COSAM student as the college exists today. However, of the three former Auburn University Rhodes scholars, two of them were scientists. Dr. Hugh Long, Physics '47, was Auburn's first Rhodes Scholar and Birmingham attorney Ed Gentle, Biology '75, received the honor in 1977.

According to Gentle, "The ideal Rhodes Scholar is not a mere bookworm, but is an athlete, has an empathy for the weak and shows instincts to lead, per the will of Cecil Rhodes which established the

**"The ideal Rhodes Scholar is not a mere bookworm, but is an athlete, has an empathy for the weak and shows instincts to lead, per the will of Cecil Rhodes which established the scholarships."**

**-Ed Gentle,  
1977 Rhodes Scholar**

scholarships." Gentle admits that no one completely meets these criteria, but contends that many Auburn students come very close and should aspire to be awarded this scholarship.

Dr. Harris encourages his students to look at the Auburn University seal - instruction, extension and research. "Instruction means doing well in class. Extension, broadly construed, is related to outreach and volunteerism. Examples include active involvement in organizations like SGA, COSAM student governance, faith-based organizations and mission work," he says. Dr. Harris cited Ludvigsen's leadership in the Auburn United Methodist Church college ministry where she led a Bible study and worked as a summer camp counselor in addition to her stellar GPA and in-depth research activities. Hodge was also involved in extra-curricular activities while at Auburn University as a founding member of the Society for Conservation Biology (SCB), which champions the "Tigers for Tigers" conservation campaign. For her work as SCB president, Hodge was awarded the Student Government Association's

President-of-the-Year award 2008-2009.

"The application process begins when students first arrive on campus. It's my job to meet with all of Auburn's 13 colleges and schools. Working closely with advisors, department chairs and individual faculty, I hope to identify students as early as possible ... I want alumni that have children coming to Auburn or that may already be here to come see me right now so we can discuss all the parameters as the process is quite extensive," Dr. Harris recommends.

As with any vision, the earlier the preparation begins, the better the chances for success. Auburn University and COSAM promote excellence in all student achievements and are poised to elevate that recognition to an international scale through the prestigious-scholarship program.

Dr. Harris concludes, "Auburn students are of the highest caliber. Our students can and do compete with the top students in this country for prestigious scholarships."



Photo courtesy of Rebecca Ludvigsen

(left) Fulbright Scholar Rebecca Ludvigsen. (above from left) Rhodes Scholar Ed Gentle, COSAM Dean Stewart Schneller, and Dr. Cyndee Carver-DeKlotz, '02 Applied Mathematics, who was selected as Auburn's first Gates Cambridge Scholar.



# SCIENCE SUPPORTS emergency first responders

Photo courtesy of EPA

By Timothy Meeks

First responders, in the form of police, fire or other emergency-management personnel are frequently associated with the response to a natural disaster or other large-scale emergency. These brave men and women can often be the difference between life and death for those impacted by a crisis. However, Dr. Michele Burgess, Chemistry '88, a senior biologist for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and her team of scientists follow on the heels of first responders and may actually play a larger role in overall public safety by assessing the long-term impact of natural and man-made disasters.

According to EPA records, each year more than 20,000 emergencies involving the release (or threatened release) of oil and hazardous substances are reported in the United States, potentially affecting both communities and the surrounding natural environment. Emergencies range from small-scale spills to large events requiring prompt action and

evacuation of nearby populations.

Burgess, who says she “fell in love with chemistry at Auburn,” didn’t have a specific career path that would lead her to Washington D.C. and the EPA. But the combination of science and communication skills essential to her role make Burgess a perfect fit for her current position.

“So much of what we do requires inter-agency cooperation,” says Burgess in an understatement. Each crisis situation can involve local, state and a veritable alphabet soup of federal agencies.

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“The situations can be very fluid, and the information coming in can be incomplete or contradictory. It’s our role to assess the information, but also be able to interpret and communicate what it means.”

-Michele Burgess

Additionally, some events, including Hurricane Katrina, Sept. 11 and the anthrax scare of 2001, rise to the highest levels of law enforcement, military and government officials. “When an event triggers a response, we simply must open lines of communication. That’s one of the roles of our response center. We can then identify and prioritize roles.”

The role Burgess and her contemporaries play is to assess immediate, short-term and long-term impacts in response to hazardous situations. It involves analyzing data – and sometimes under time pressures and less than ideal circumstances. “The situations can be very fluid, and the information coming in can be incomplete or contradictory,” says Burgess. “It’s our role to assess the information, but also be able to interpret and communicate what it means.”

Based in the high-pressure city of Washington D.C., and working in a post Sept. 11 and Hurricane Katrina era, where homeland security has a heightened profile and importance, Burgess exudes a calm confidence that is likely based on her solid background as a scientist and experience as a communicator.

John Griggs, Chemistry '91, a classmate of Burgess at Auburn and now director of EPA’s Center for Environmental Radio Analytical Laboratory Science, based in Montgomery, Ala., saw the roots of Burgess’ success in her COSAM studies. “Michele and I attended Auburn University during the mid-to-late 1980s. She was an undergraduate student, and I was in graduate school at the time. As I came to know her, I found Michele to be very intelligent and very inquisitive. No doubt these qualities contributed to her becoming a good scientist,” says Griggs. “However, these qualities alone don’t explain how Michele became an effective scientist. In addition to her intelligence and inquisitive nature, Michele was very hard working, and she was determined to excel in her area of study. Her success today as a scientist is largely due to these qualities and the dedication and hard work to turn her potential into reality.”

Embracing the historic spirit of the Washington D.C. area, Burgess and son Evan in costume at the Gadsby’s Tavern in Old Town Alexandria, Va. Photo courtesy of Michele Burgess.



# COSAM LAYS DOWN THE LAW



COSAM graduates **CHERI ARMSTRONG TAYLOR**, **ED GENTLE**, **MICHAEL SKOTNICKI**, **KNOX ARGO** AND **SAM FRANKLIN** HAVE PURSUED UNLIKELY CAREERS IN THE FIELD OF LAW. READ THEIR STORIES TO SEE HOW THEIR UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES HAVE ENHANCED THEIR LAW PRACTICE.



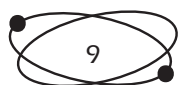
*Cheri Armstrong Taylor, Pre-Medicine '70, is a partner with Finnegan, a Washington, D.C.- area based intellectual property law firm, and occupies an important role in the firm's practice as she works in litigation related to biotechnology, pharmaceuticals and chemical patents. Her educational background, supported by her biology and chemistry foundation at Auburn, includes a graduate degree in genetics and Ph.D. from Georgia State University and a law degree from George Mason University. Quite simply, Dr. Taylor has an arsenal of knowledge to utilize as she navigates litigation related to scientific discovery and intellectual property.*

In addition to her impeccable qualifications and background, Dr. Taylor exudes a style and personality that reflect her gracious Southern roots. It's that balance of knowledge, drive and personality that position this accomplished attorney as a key mentor to peers and new members of the Finnegan law firm. Her office walls are adorned with photos of contemporaries celebrating the milestones of the careers she helped to develop. Mementoes of cases - each with an engaging story - illustrate the breadth of Dr. Taylor's law career.

Dr. Taylor credits fundamentals honed at Auburn as key components to her deliberate thought process. "Science and math challenges you to grow cognitively," says Dr. Taylor. "Logic allows you to apply these concepts to a variety of other ideas. I have discovered this to be true throughout my education and career."

As accomplished as Dr. Taylor is professionally, friends and family remain high on her priority list. She describes her Northern Virginia home in terms of how it accommodates guests and social events - a testament to her cordial nature. Two active grandsons, along with a diverse travel schedule, keep Dr. Taylor on the move.

In the midst of her packed calendar, there is a sense of balance. Dr. Taylor's office desk is covered in files, briefs and correspondence - yet there is still a prominent place on the credenza for Washington Nationals baseball tickets to enjoy with her grandsons. Dr. Taylor is an accomplished attorney. But the nature of her influence goes well beyond the area of law. For more information on Cheri Taylor, visit her firm's website at [www.finnegan.com](http://www.finnegan.com).





**When Michael Skotnicki, Geology, '82, M.S. Geology, '85, left his hometown in Northwestern Pennsylvania to come to Auburn, he had never been in the South.**

“One of the first things I noticed is the people at Auburn are very friendly. I didn’t know anyone on campus, but within a couple of months I had all the friends I wanted,” says Skotnicki. “I had some friends that were in fraternities and some friends that were not in fraternities. Auburn has always been the kind of place that measures you more on who you are as a person than anything else.”

For Skotnicki, Auburn was also the kind of place where he could set career goals. Upon graduation, he had his sights set on working in the oil industry. However, the price of oil dropped significantly in the early 80s, which led to massive industry-wide layoffs.

“The industry didn’t rebound like I had hoped, so after I got my master’s I spent almost five years doing environmental consulting,” says Skotnicki.

Unhappy with the extensive travel required as an environmental consultant, Skotnicki decided to take the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT). He scored well on the LSAT, and Cumberland School of Law, where Skotnicki attended law school, offered him a scholarship.

“This is about as far away as I could get from what I thought I would be doing for a living,” says Skotnicki. “Life doesn’t run in straight lines. It’s full of twists and turns.”

As an attorney, Skotnicki, who specializes in civil appeals, completed five years of public service with the Alabama Supreme Court, where he served as law clerk to Chief Justice Sonny Hornsby from '93 to '94. From '94 to '98 he was a staff attorney successively to each of the Associate Justices Henry B. Steagall II, Terry L. Butts and Champ Lyons. Currently he is Of Counsel with the firm Haskell Slaughter Young & Rediker, LLC.

“I don’t think I would be practicing law the same way if I hadn’t had all the training at Auburn. Being a scientist makes me view how things in the law relate to each other a little bit differently than other lawyers. When I write briefs, I do so in a step-by-step fashion and try to really explain, perhaps more so than others, my logic and reasoning,” says Skotnicki. “The experience of getting my master’s degree and having a year of research and a year of writing my thesis really formulated how my mind works today, both in my job and in my personal life.” For more information on Michael Skotnicki, visit his firm’s Web site at [www.hsy.com](http://www.hsy.com).



Photo courtesy of Knox Argo

**The first question on Knox Argo’s, Chemistry '61, Law School Admissions Test concluded a circuitous journey into the field of law. “The first question was a chemistry question. I could hear groans from across the room, but it confirmed I was where I was supposed to be,” the Montgomery attorney recalls.**

Argo says his high school chemistry teacher inspired him to his major at Auburn University, where his father played football. Upon graduation, he fulfilled his ROTC requirements in the Air Force and became a pilot. “I remember my sergeant telling me, ‘Boy, you’d make a good lawyer,’” Argo said. He attended the University of Alabama School of Law and was hired by a pre-political Richard Shelby, Alabama’s senior United States senator.

“Having a degree in a science field was good training for law because it instilled critical thinking and application of logic,” Argo said.

Today, Argo is a partner in the Law Offices of J. Knox Argo and Joseph Warren of Montgomery, which includes 40 percent real estate, 40 percent litigation (civil, domestic relations and family law), and 20 percent lobbying and governmental affairs. In his spare time, Argo has traveled with the War Eagle Travelers and supports Auburn athletics with season tickets to Tiger basketball and football games.



*Behind the scenes of Auburn University's Athletic Department is an attorney who is involved in all of the NCAA compliance issues that arise. His name is Sam Franklin, Mathematics '69, and his path to practicing law was one of many twists and turns. His journey began as an undergraduate at Auburn who was majoring in engineering.*

Photo courtesy of Sam Franklin

"I stayed in engineering almost three years," says Franklin. "During the summers I worked in the field. I worked for two summers in Huntsville (Ala.) and two summers with IBM in Colorado. I realized that I did not like the lifestyle of an engineer."

After his realization, Franklin decided to change majors, and he graduated from Auburn with high honors with a B.S. in Mathematics and a minor in Physics.

Following graduation, Franklin made the decision to attend law school at the University of Alabama.

"My undergraduate experience at Auburn was great preparation for law school," says Franklin. "Because of my background in mathematics and science, I was used to learning a set of rules and applying them to solve a problem. This process fit perfectly with what studying and practicing the law is all about. Many people in law school had never been given a problem with the expectation of working through it to find the results. I felt like I was as well prepared based on my undergraduate degree as anyone else in my law school class."

After he received his law degree in 1972, Franklin attended Harvard University, where he received his LL.M. degree. Following graduation from Harvard in 1973, Franklin attended Officer Basic Camp and served three months of active duty with the United States Army. Franklin then set out to begin what has turned into a 37-year career. Reflecting back on the early days of his career, Franklin believes that his strong basis in science and mathematics helped him as he was working heavily in the area of products liability.

"I didn't have to be totally knowledgeable

about the products we dealt with, but my science background certainly helped," says Franklin.

These days, besides working as one of Auburn University's official NCAA compliance attorneys, Franklin is also a partner at the Birmingham-based firm he co-founded almost 20 years ago, Lightfoot, Franklin & White. He specializes in civil litigation, primarily on the defense side. Franklin estimates that nearly 90 percent of the cases he has handled are litigation oriented. Included in that list are several highly publicized cases. For example, when the state of Alabama sued the ExxonMobil Corporation over a miscalculation of royalties on natural gas from the Gulf of Mexico, Franklin was called to defend the ExxonMobil Corporation. Franklin also represented Auburn University when, under Gov. Don Siegelman's leadership, the state of Alabama experienced a proration funding crisis in public education.

"The impact of the funding crisis and the proration allocation was greater on Auburn University than it was on K-12," recalls Franklin. "The court eventually ruled that the burden should be applied equally."

Perhaps the most well-known case amongst Auburn University graduates that Franklin has handled was when he was called to defend then-football coach Pat Dye in the Eric Ramsey case.

"I feel very blessed to have been so successful in my career," says Franklin. "For the most part, my work is still a lot of fun, and on most days I really look forward to it."

For more information on Sam Franklin, visit his firm's Web site at [www.lightfootlaw.com](http://www.lightfootlaw.com).

*In 2003, a ground-breaking case was settled among 18,000 individual claimants, whose health and welfare had been jeopardized, and the Monsanto Company. The claimants either lived or had lived in Anniston, Ala., near a plant that produced polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Due to exposure to PCBs in everything from the soil to the water, many of the claimants have experienced on-going health problems. Others involved in the suit have extremely high levels of PCBs in their blood. It is believed that even the children in the area may have been exposed to PCBs that crossed their mother's placenta in the womb. The result of the lawsuit was a \$300 million settlement in favor of the claimants. Attorney Edgar C. Gentle, III, Biological Sciences '75, was named claims administrator for this massive settlement.*



Photo by Kirkland T. (Tom) Byars

Faced with the reality that 90 percent of the claimants are African-American, with 80 percent earning less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level, Gentle wanted the settlement distribution to be as fair as possible. In a recently published article, written by Gentle, titled “Administration of the 2003 Tolbert PCB Settlement in Anniston, Alabama: An Attempted Collaborative and Holistic Remedy”, Gentle states that he “attempted to design a collaborative settlement that is both forward looking and holistic.”

Gentle’s solution to making the settlement collaborative included question-and-answer sessions with claimants at large town meetings, the creation of a claimant advisory committee, questionnaires sent to claimants that would reflect how they would prefer the settlement divided, and three days of fairness hearings meant to address any questions the claimants had about how their input shaped the model adopted for payments. The result was an average payment of \$9,100 to adults for personal injury, \$2,000 to children for personal injury, and \$11 million distributed to claimants for property damage based on the tax-appraised value of their property.

Gentle, in an attempt to give the settlement a holistic approach, drew on his love for science balanced with his concern for the marginalized citizens of the case, and used part of the settlement funds to establish a medical clinic, sponsor scientific research, and initiate community reconciliation.

This method of distributing and allocating funds according to attempted claimant consensus is both new and innovative. Attorneys and judges across the country have taken notice of Gentle’s ground-breaking work, and he has recently been appointed claims administrator for a similar case in West Virginia.

“I like science and I like law so I try to blend them,” says Gentle. “In the Monsanto case we collected data and ran blood tests on all 18,000 claimants. The case in West Virginia will be similar.”

For more information on Gentle, visit his firm’s Web site at [www.gtandslaw.com](http://www.gtandslaw.com).



## ALUMNI UPDATES



“Mathematicians are an impressive group,” says Dr. Greg Cox, Mathematics ’73. That may sound like self-promotion from a man who holds B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Mathematics from Auburn University. However, Dr. Cox is referring to the talented strategists he has encountered in his time at the Center of Naval Analysis (CNA), a federally funded research and development center serving the Department of the Navy and other defense agencies.

With a mission to “analyze and solve problems by getting as close as possible to the people, the data and the problems themselves, in order to find the answers of the greatest clarity and credibility – all to help government leaders choose the best course of action,” CNA and Dr. Cox understand that their charge takes a combination of skills and willingness to gather first-hand information. “In order to get a sense of the real operational issues, no matter where they are, you have to be there,” says Dr. Cox.

CNA was founded as a response to the U-boat threat in the North Atlantic in 1942, when the United States Navy turned to a small group of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) scientists for help. The research model they developed is considered a living iteration of Sir Isaac Newton’s work 300 years prior:

*Direct observation of events and people, by highly trained analysts, can improve practitioners’ understanding of complex and dynamic processes.*

Based on his years of experience at CNA, Dr. Cox is happy to share an important component of his approach to analysis and believes it has applications to students today. “We often deal with structured problems in mathematics, and that is an important foundation,” says Dr. Cox. “But it is the unstructured problem, where we deal with outliers, which calls for true innovation and creativity. That’s a hard, but important, component of analysis.”

For the Department of the Navy, U.S. government, or even individuals looking to solve complex problems, Dr. Cox provides some profound direction. The foundation of that direction can be traced back to mathematics at Auburn University.



Dr. Cox preparing for a fact-finding mission in Bosnia.



Dr. Greg Cox, continuing his military analyst work with a visit to the soon-to-be-completed Littoral Combat Ship in Mobile, Ala.

Photos courtesy of Greg Cox



# ALUMNI UPDATES



Photo courtesy of Auburn Athletic Department

Dr. Ed Dyas, Pre-Medicine '61, has been selected for induction into the College Football Hall of Fame, as announced by the National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame.

The former Auburn football All-American finished fourth in the 1960 Heisman Trophy voting and was selected captain of the 1960 Scholastic All-American team. His accomplishments on the field included a 1960 NCAA record for the most field goals in a season with 13. The retired orthopedic surgeon won four SEC games with field goals that same year. Dr. Dyas was also a leading fullback and linebacker, concluding his college career as Auburn's sixth all-time leading rusher with 1,298 yards and was selected as the SEC's most outstanding back. As a senior, Dr. Dyas received the Cliff Hare Award, which is presented to the outstanding Auburn senior student-athlete, and the Bill Steit Award, which goes to the football player with the highest grade point average over four years.

Dr. Dyas received the Walter Gilbert Award in 1994, which is awarded annually to a former Auburn student-athlete who distinguishes him/herself through achievements post-graduation, and was inducted into the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame in 1999. Retired from his Mobile practice, Dr. Dyas is the 12th Auburn coach or player inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame.

For more information, visit <http://auburntigers.cstv.com/sports/m-footbl/spec-rel/043009aaa.html>.



Dr. Sharon Massingale, (Ph.D. Microbiology '99), was recently promoted to head of the Alabama State Public Health Laboratory in Montgomery, Ala. Dr. Jim Barbaree, former Biological Sciences department chair said of this promotion, "This is an important job in that each state has one person in this job, and he or she interacts with other states and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) as part of the job along with running the laboratory as the state reference lab. Dr. Massingale will succeed because of her training at Auburn University, dedication to working in the field of public health, and interpersonal skills. She understands the importance of her job and appreciates very much the mission of the Public Health Department."

Photo courtesy of Sharon Massingale



Photo courtesy of Fred and Helen Martin

COSAM alumnus Fred Martin, '64 Mathematics, and his wife Helen visited The Great Wall of China in April 2009. The Martins live in Birmingham, Ala., where Fred is president of Martin Software Associates.



Photo courtesy of Rohan Kambeyanda

## Alumni Updates continued...

During the summer of 2009, Rohan Kambeyanda, Biomedical Sciences, '09, spent two months in Paris, France, working for a company called Fat Tire Bike Tours. Two or three times a day, Kambeyanda would lead English-speaking visitors on bike tours around Paris.

“It was great,” says Kambeyanda. “It was a unique experience. Now I know what it is like to be a tour guide. Basically, I was just overseeing tours every day, with about 20 to 25 people per tour. I would show them around, stop at historical landmarks, do a little shtick, and be responsible for bike repairs.”

Kambeyanda pursued this two-month opportunity with medical school in mind.

“I knew it would be my last opportunity to go abroad before starting medical school,” says Kambeyanda. “I met a lot of cool people, had the opportunity to explore Europe and do something out of the ordinary. I realized that I couldn’t be a tour guide my whole life, so it was good to get back (to the U.S.) and start school.”

Kambeyanda is currently a first-year medical student at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, where he was elected class president.



Dick Ashford, Mathematics '66, was recently elected board chairman of the American Birding Association. The Ashland, Ore., resident was elected to the board of directors in 2007 by a majority of some 15,000 constituents and has been a member of the organization since 1986.

“As a long-time birder and conservationist, I wanted to join an organization that is in the forefront of North American birding. After 20 years of membership, I saw a need for new leadership, so I ran for the board,” Ashford says. He added that his election as board chair, a two-year term, was relatively fast tracked.

“Like many non-profits, the association has experienced a membership and revenue decline in the recent past. We are now in a ‘turn-around,’ rebuilding phase. And we’re getting there!” Ashford says.

The American Birding Association is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization that provides leadership to birders by increasing their knowledge, skills and enjoyment of birding. For more information, visit [www.aba.org](http://www.aba.org).

Photo courtesy of Dick Ashford



## DAVID SNODDY HONORED BY FAMILY WITH ESTABLISHMENT OF COSAM SCHOLARSHIP



**WHERE THERE'S A WILL,  
THERE'S A WAY ...**

TO PLAY A ROLE IN THE FUTURE OF THE COLLEGE OF SCIENCES AND MATHEMATICS (COSAM) AT AUBURN UNIVERSITY.

Gifts from alumni and friends are crucial as we strive for excellence in the classrooms, laboratories and beyond. While some choose to make gifts to COSAM outright, for others planned or deferred gifts best fit their needs.

A bequest is an effortless way for you to leave an enduring legacy in COSAM. Although it costs you nothing now, you will receive immeasurable satisfaction knowing that you will impact future generations of COSAM students and faculty. Induction into the prestigious George Petrie Society is an honor reserved for those making planned gifts, and recognition of your gift can encourage others to do the same. In addition, a bequest may provide an estate-tax deduction to your family.

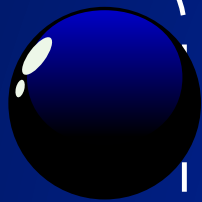
To make your bequest, simply give the following language to your attorney:

**“I give, devise and bequeath to the Auburn University Foundation, a nonprofit corporation, as described in Section 170 (c) of the Internal Revenue Code, located in Auburn, Alabama [written amount or percentage of the estate or description of property] for use in the College of Sciences and Mathematics.”**

We hope you will share with us when you have remembered COSAM in your estate plans. Our Office of Development staff is ready to work with you to ensure your gift will be used in the manner you desire. [www.auburn.edu/cosam/alumni](http://www.auburn.edu/cosam/alumni)



Dr. Brian Snoddy, Chemistry '98, and his wife Christina have endowed a scholarship in the College of Sciences and Mathematics to honor Brian's father, David Earl Snoddy, Mechanical Engineering '58, who is a retired test engineer and charter member of NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center. "It's a way to honor my father and to extend the opportunity for others to have the Auburn experience," says Dr. Snoddy, a Birmingham, Ala., cardiologist. The scholarship will benefit a student from North Alabama, with preference given to Limestone, Lauderdale and Madison Counties – areas near the Snoddy homestead in Athens, Ala.



# NEW MEDIA

from the college of sciences and mathematics

With the rapid growth of "new media" in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, the College of Sciences and Mathematics has launched several new initiatives to keep alumni and supporters connected to the College's news, events and advancement.

## DEAN'S PODCAST

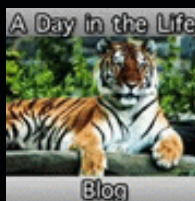
COSAM Dean Stewart Schneller has launched "The Dean's Podcast," available for download on COSAM's home page or at the Web address below. Podcasting has emerged as a popular vehicle to communicate both audio and video messages. Show notes and relevant links to the topics covered in the podcast are included, along with download instructions.



<http://www.auburn.edu/cosam/PodcastingwiththeDean.htm>

## THE COSAM EXPERIENCE BLOG

*A Journey Through the Day and Life of COSAM Students* is available online through a blog developed by the Office of Student Services. A diary of the happenings of present days students, through words and pictures, provides a glimpse of life on campus, circa 2009.



<http://auburncosamexperience.blogspot.com/>

## COSAM YOU TUBE CHANNEL

Can't get back to Auburn for an on-campus lecture? Want to see a replay of a major media outlet's coverage of a COSAM story? The COSAM You Tube channel serves as the repository for dynamic college video.



<http://www.youtube.com/profile?user=AuburnUniversity&view=playlists>

[http://www.youtube.com/view\\_playlist?p=06882DC513806A4C](http://www.youtube.com/view_playlist?p=06882DC513806A4C)

[http://www.youtube.com/view\\_playlist?p=F2CA5068058D5957](http://www.youtube.com/view_playlist?p=F2CA5068058D5957)

# NASA Global Climate Initiative

The Auburn University College of Sciences and Mathematics (COSAM), in collaboration with the Alabama State Department of Education, was recently awarded \$600,000 from The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to produce modules in varying science-focused areas of global climate change. The program, Bringing Global Climate Change Education to Alabama Classrooms, will partner with Alabama Science in Motion (ASIM) to effectively train teachers and educate ninth- through 12th-grade students about the changing planet.

Steve Ricks, director of the Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative, said the partnership with Auburn University will allow Alabama’s teachers and their students to experience first hand how scientists investigate global change. Teachers and students will gain unique insight into the science behind one of the most prevalent scientific issues of our time – the environment and its effect on our lives. “Different aspects of global climate change and its impact on Earth can be debated,” says Ricks. “But regardless of where you stand on the issues, learning how science is applied to study the planet and its climate will help our students acquire the skills needed to compete in a global economy.”

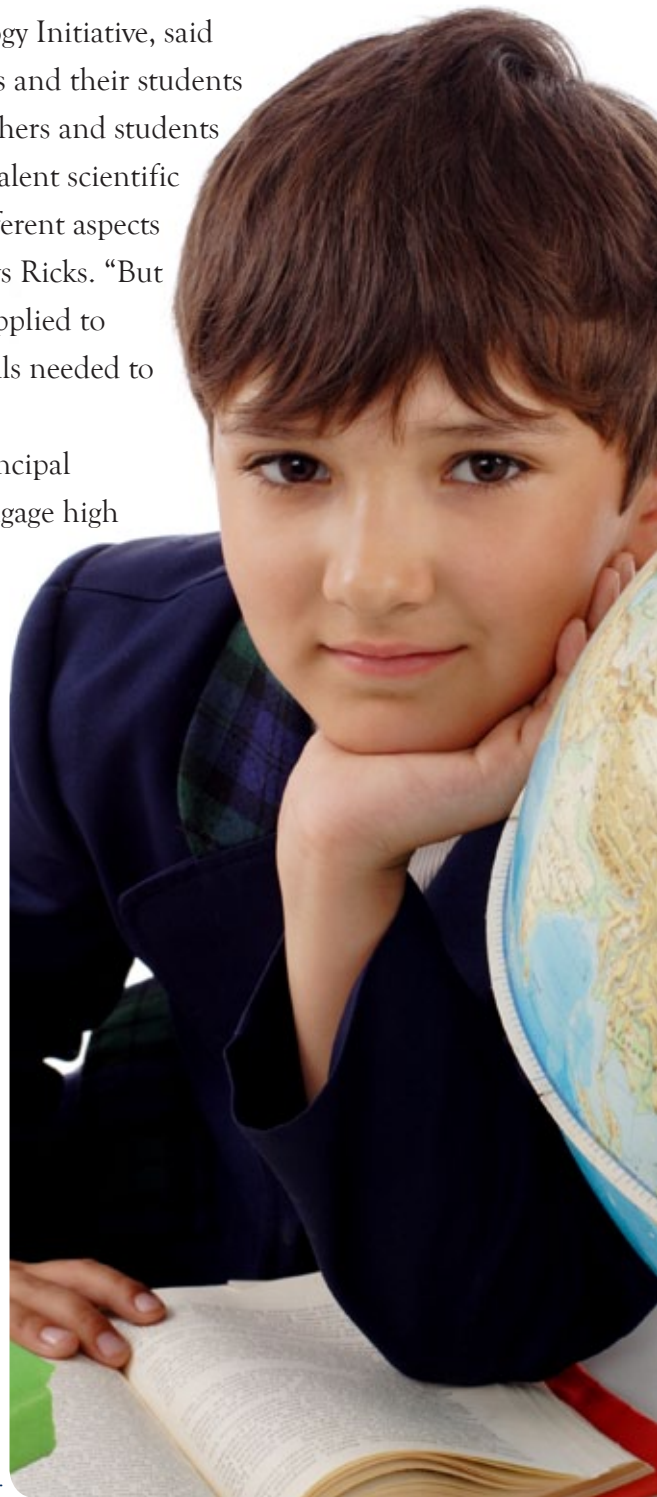
An interdisciplinary group of faculty members will serve as co-principal investigators to develop interactive education modules designed to engage high school students on changes in the Earth’s climate and its effect on weather, carbon cycle and ecosystems. They will also explore changes in climate variability, as well as atmospheric composition using NASA resources.

“Our ability to partner with ASIM is unique. Within three years, our hands-on, inquiry-based experiments will be incorporated in the high school curriculum across the state of Alabama with the goal of creating a climate-literate society,” explains Dr. Marie Wooten, COSAM associate dean for research and principal investigator of the project.



Pictured here from left to right are Auburn faculty and staff who are working on the development of the interactive education modules.

**Front Row:** Laura Steltenpohl, Wei Ren and Matha Anne Allison. **Second Row:** Cathy Miller, Marie Wooten, Mary Lou Ewald, Emily Wheelles and Roger Birkhead. **Third Row:** Amy Thomas, Jennifer Cox, Luke Marzen, Robin Nelson and Kevin Fielman. **Back Row:** Marllin Simon, Regina Halpin, Ming-Kuo Lee and Steve Ricks. **Not Pictured:** Yu Lin and Paul Norgaard.





**COSAM HAS LAUNCHED NEW MEDIA.**  
see page 17 for details.



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