



Richardson Outlines Goals For Auburn

Saying he wants to ensure that his successor has a long and successful tenure at Auburn, interim President Ed Richardson presented a broad, fast-paced agenda to the Board of Trustees and the university community on June 17.

The agenda, expanding upon six initiatives unveiled in 2004, places major emphasis on creating a comprehensive and ongoing strategic planning process, changing the concept of the AU System, developing a process of academic program review and creating an institute to give a new focus to programs in agriculture, forestry and the natural sciences.

“It is important to note that many of these proposals come in anticipation of what I believe will be a continually growing demand for accountability from both the Legislature and the taxpayers of Alabama,” Richardson said.

By moving quickly on the plans and proposals, Richardson said,

Auburn would control its destiny and overcome “disconnectedness,” which he described as an environment in which AU constituencies see themselves at odds with one another instead of pursuing goals for the common good of the university. By working together in pursuit of these goals, he said,

all parties will help set the stage for Auburn’s success under a long-term president.

Richardson said the university could make enough progress during the coming year to conduct a search for a new president and fill the position by the end of 2006.

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A farmers’ market offering fresh locally grown produce and a way to while away Thursday afternoons opened June 30 at AU’s Ag Heritage Park. The market is an effort by several groups interested in providing new markets to Alabama farmers and new sources of Alabama produce to consumers.

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President Cites Initiatives, Objectives To Tackle

Six initiatives that interim AU President Ed Richardson introduced in October 2004 figure prominently in proposals and plans that Richardson presented to the Board of Trustees on June 17.

Initiatives discussed were:

- Reviewing and reorganizing Auburn’s agricultural and related programs to reposition those programs to meet 21st-century challenges.
- Defining the relationship between Auburn and AU-Montgomery, ending ambiguity about how the institutions

work together while maintaining separate identities in the AU System.

- Establishing a process for regular, ongoing review of academic programs.

Initiatives discussed earlier this year were:

- Establishing a research park near campus to bolster faculty research and state economic growth.
- Providing university leadership for a privately financed and operated beach-front resort hotel and convention center at Gulf State Park that will provide a base of operations for related academic programs.

- Repositioning the AU-owned Auburn-Opelika Robert G. Pitts Airport as a more attractive, more modern and self-sustaining economic development tool for East Alabama.

The airport initiative was advanced through board action authorizing the administration to proceed with approval of ground leases for commercial development at the airport.

Richardson further defined and set timetables for the initiatives related to agricultural programs, the AU-AUM

(Initiatives, continued on page 4)

Message from the President

Dear Auburn Friends and Supporters,

As most of you are already aware, I put before our Board of Trustees at its June 17 meeting several items that will result in significant change at Auburn and within the Auburn University System.

It is important to note that many of these proposals come in anticipation of what I believe will be a continually growing demand for accountability from both the Legislature and the taxpayers of Alabama. When implemented, the changes I have proposed should better position us to meet that demand as well as to be more attractive to highly qualified, outstanding presidential candidates of the quality this university deserves.



We are already beginning to see the call from our state lawmakers to demonstrate that we are making wise use of the funds we are allotted. Recently, the Legislature's Commission on Government Accountability released data from a survey of recent graduates of Alabama's public universities. The survey asked graduates whether they would attend their respective alma maters again as well as sought ratings on various elements of their student experiences. Auburn fared extremely well in this survey. In fact, a higher number of our graduates said they would definitely attend Auburn again for their undergraduate degrees than did those of any other school.

But this simple survey, despite the importance of the numbers that it generated, is only the tip of the accountability iceberg. It is clear to me that the public perceives that stringent measures to demonstrate how well our institutions of higher learning are spending public money are long overdue. From Opp and from Oxford, the public view of higher education is dominated by ever-increasing tuition rates and the perception that our professors enjoy light workloads, yet draw significant salaries.

Rest assured that constituents pass those views — in essence, those concerns — along to their legislators and that those concerns, unless they are effectively countered, come into play when the state begins its annual budgeting process. Soon, these demands for accountability will become more stringent and more formal, and Auburn is far better off if we prepare ourselves in advance of those formalities.

In order to do so, there are a couple of important steps that we can take. One is to position the university and its programs to be more reflective of the needs of the state's citizenry. Certainly, the formation of the institute that will revolve around life and environmental sciences, the coming Research Park and, to a lesser extent, plans for the Gulf State Park are steps in that direction.

Also, better definition of the relationship of Auburn and Auburn-Montgomery, along with more effectively integrated administrative and business operations, should provide for better use of resources and more appropriately address the needs of the state and both institutions' local communities.

Secondly, and most importantly, higher education should take the lead in defining the terms by which accountability will be measured. It is only reasonable that those who work daily on our campus should know better than anyone the best indicators of our effective use of resources. If we are able to play an active role in establishing the benchmarks by which we are measured, we are, in essence, self-governed — a far better fate than having standards imposed upon us by those less familiar with what we do.

It is my desire that Auburn lead the way in establishing accountability measures for higher education in the state of Alabama. Now, in advance of mandates that are sure to come, is the right time for us to begin "setting the bar." The timing is made even more essential with a presidential search on our horizon.

We can begin to address accountability in advance of outside mandates by keeping tuition increases to their minimums.

We must also closely scrutinize faculty time and workload, taking into account time spent in the classroom, time spent in the research laboratory and other applicable factors.

We must re-examine how we schedule our classes and utilize our space, ensuring that we don't create new space to meet maximum class loads that could be more effectively spread out and, as a result, require less space.

We must begin to establish relationships through which we work with other institutions of higher learning throughout the state to maximize resources. In particular, we should take advantage of opportunities to work closely with the University of Alabama System. Such a relationship can prove particularly beneficial, as is evidenced by our cooperation in the most recent legislative session.

Finally, we must pursue the ongoing comprehensive strategic planning process that will provide for us all a more definitive focus for Auburn's future.

Increased calls for accountability are on the horizon, and I believe that measures taken as a result of my six initiatives coupled with those I have outlined here will better prepare this university to

(President's Message, continued on page 5)

Auburn COMMONS

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Smiths Add \$4 Million For Support Of Museum

A Houston couple whose \$3 million gift in the late 1990s was instrumental in establishing an art museum at Auburn University has donated another \$4 million to help the museum expand its programs and collections.

Although the first gift helped bring a 50-year dream to life for devotees of the arts at Auburn, the long-term impact of the latest gift could be just as great, say AU officials.

The initial gift to Auburn from Albert J. Smith Jr. was a 50th anniversary surprise for his wife, Jule. The gift provided momentum for other alumni contributions, enabling the university to design and build a museum that had been a decades-long dream of art lovers across Alabama.

In recognition of the Smiths' pivotal role in 1998, AU named the new museum the Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art.

Since the museum opened in 2003, it has quickly attracted attention for both the quality of its art and the beauty of its travertine stone building. The 40,000-square-foot building houses rare collections of Audubon prints, Irish Belleek porcelain and other valuable collections.

Of special note in the art world is the collection of 36 pieces from the historic "Advancing American Art" collection, which the land-grant institution purchased after the U.S. State Department pulled the paintings from an international tour in 1947, the same year Albert Smith graduated from Auburn. For more than 50 years, there was no place on campus to display this important group of mid-20th century art.



Jule and Albert Smith

Albert Smith, noting that the initial gift prompted other friends of Auburn and the arts to support construction of the museum, said he and Jule hope that the new gift will have the same rallying effect as the first one. "Jule and I feel that our leadership gift a few years ago has helped the museum evolve into one of the best things that has happened to Auburn in many years," he said. "It means a lot to us and to many other people who love Auburn."

Smith said he wants the Auburn museum to maintain its early momentum. "There aren't many museums in the country that have developed as fast with such a high level of quality as this one," he said. "We want to be sure the resources are there for it to continue growing and getting better. And we hope that this gift will encourage others to continue their support as well."

Interim AU President Ed Richardson said the Smiths' latest gift will have a major impact on the fine arts at Auburn. "Albert

and Jule Collins Smith are inspirations for the entire Auburn family," Richardson said. "They set the example for giving that made it possible for Auburn to develop an art museum that is a source of pride for us all."

Richardson added, "Now, with this latest gift and the example they are setting for others, Al and Jule are ensuring that the museum will continue to grow and flourish. Their influence will be felt for generations to come."

Michael Panhorst, director of the Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art, said the Smiths' gift will enable the museum to expand its art collections and programs for students and the community. "Albert and Jule Smith led a handful of benefactors who saw the potential for fine arts at Auburn University," he said. "Their support and influence with other art patrons enabled Auburn to develop one of the finest art museums in the South."

He added, "We are especially grateful for this latest show of

support from the Smiths because it will enable us to work toward our goal of making the Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art into one of the finest museums of its type in America."

Although they have lived in Texas for more than five decades, the Smiths have deep roots in Alabama and strong connections to Auburn. Albert Smith grew up in Montgomery. A U.S. Navy veteran, he graduated from Auburn in 1947 with a degree in mechanical engineering. At Auburn, he met and married Jule Collins, who was born in Auburn and grew up in Lowndesboro and Montgomery, where her father, Albert Hamilton Collins, a former Auburn faculty member, was Alabama State Superintendent of Education.

After their marriage, the Smiths moved to Texas, where Albert became a pioneer in the construction of privately owned and operated generating plants for sale of electricity to public utilities and large industrial users. In Houston, Smith and a partner created and built Power Systems Engineering, later PSE Inc., into a major player in the cogeneration industry.

Now retired, the Smiths divide their time between Houston, where their three children and extended families live, and Auburn, where Jule returned to AU and earned her degree in sociology in 1999. The Smiths were recently honored in a ceremony by the Houston Symphony for their lengthy support of the arts in that city. Providing a link between that city and Auburn, they also led a delegation of art lovers from Auburn on a fine arts excursion to Houston in April. 🌸

Faculty Plan Parkerson Mill Creek Restoration

There was a time when Parkerson Mill Creek gently meandered across the south side of the Auburn campus, a thriving stream bordered by healthy native shrubs and trees and serving as a habitat for diverse species of aquatic life.

But decades of growth and expansion on campus and in the city of Auburn have degraded the waterway so that today the creek is a glaring eyesore—a highly eroded ditch overrun by kudzu, banked by weeds and scraggly, exposed-root trees and devoid of living creatures.

Now, a team of stream restoration specialists and enthusiasts is out to reclaim and restore it to a healthier, more stable creek.

“Parkerson Mill Creek has been severely insulted through the years as the campus and the city have expanded,” said restoration specialist Eve Brantley of the AU College of Agriculture’s Department of Agronomy and Soils. “Parts of it have been covered, and the natural stream



Parkerson Mill Creek

channel has been straightened out and relocated to make room for roads and buildings.

“Our goal is to transform it from an eyesore to a campus amenity, an attractive space that people can enjoy,” Brantley said.

The first phase of the restoration project, designed to overhaul about 1,000 feet of the 10,000-foot open-channel portions of the stream, will be funded by a \$257,500 grant from the U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency and cash contributions from the College of Agriculture and the Athletics Department, which has facilities that border the creek. The restoration team, which includes AU College of Agriculture faculty and state agency personnel, estimates restoring all open-channel stretches of Parkerson Mill would cost \$1.2 million.

An engineering firm is developing a plan for the stream’s

restoration, the key components of which will be the construction of a new, naturally curving stream channel; the development of natural open spaces along the stream corridor, providing room for walking and bike trails; and the planting of river birches, Virginia sweetspire and other native trees and plants. Construction on the restoration project may begin as early as this fall. ☀

Tuition Hike To Help Fund Scholarships

The AU Board of Trustees on June 17 approved a 4 percent increase in tuition for 2005-06.

One-fourth of the \$5.3 million in added revenue will fund scholarships, and one-eighth will be for Student Activities Programs. The remainder will go toward university operations.

The increase will be \$95 per semester to \$2,400 for in-state students. Non-resident students will see their tuition rise by \$285 to \$7,200 per semester.

Addressing concerns about the impact of rising tuition on students from families with lower incomes, the increase will generate more than \$1 million per year for scholarships.

Executive Vice President Don Large noted that AU ranks near the bottom among major universities in the South in the amount of financial aid, \$12 million, awarded per year, and in the percent of students receiving aid.

In 2004, 55 percent of entering freshmen at Auburn received financial aid, compared to 74 percent at the University of Alabama. ☀

Initiatives

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relationship and academic program review.

The research park and the Gulf Shores projects are in early stages of development.

Richardson cited some objectives that fall outside the six initiatives. These include:

- Finalizing the criteria and guidelines for a space utilization and management plan for the AU System.
- Completing a north Auburn campus plan to accommodate future needs and preserve valuable existing programs.
- Adopting a plan to promote diversity. The plan would attempt

to reflect “best practices” and be adaptable for future conditions. Annual reports, including comparisons with peer institutions, would be made available to the board.

- Expanding the university’s involvement in partnerships with the City of Auburn and other local governments. Explore partnerships, especially, in such endeavors as development of a new performing arts center to serve both the city and the university.

- Building upon the enhanced relationship between the AU and University of Alabama systems. Richardson noted that both

universities fared better in the 2005 legislative session because they worked together instead of separately. He also called for an increased presence in Washington, D.C., and cited plans to contract with a director of external relations to prepare for next year’s legislative session in Montgomery.

- Continuing to review operating costs with an eye toward containment of expenses. The review would involve athletics along with other programs and include services, publications, utility usage, health care costs, staffing and facilities. ☀

Hartsfield Really Digs Doing The Dirty Work

Christy Hartsfield likes to play in the dirt.

As director of AU's Donald E. Davis Arboretum, Hartsfield admits it is the hands-on part of her job that she loves the most.

Planting new native azalea bushes, digging in logs to teach children about decomposers and maintaining a compost pile are some of the tasks that have kept Hartsfield busy lately. On the job since January 2004, Hartsfield has been surveying arboretum visitors about what they like most about the space and developing programs that highlight the arboretum's varying attributes.

Home to more than 250 species of native trees and more than 350 species of native plants, the arboretum operates within the Department of Biological Sciences in AU's College of Sciences and Mathematics. Hartsfield works with a 12-member committee to ensure the mission of the arboretum is fulfilled.

One of her priorities as director, she said, is to "grow" the current collection.



Christy Hartsfield, director of Auburn's arboretum

"I want to keep adding trees but we're also adding other plants to fill out the rest of the native habitat – the wildflowers, the understory. We've got quite a few trees in the arboretum but we're still searching out and finding those we don't have," she said.

In addition to adding new plants, Hartsfield wants to increase education and conservation efforts. "We want to have many varying types of native

fauna so that people can come here and study it." Many university classes use the arboretum as an outdoor classroom, as do area school children, Hartsfield said. "There are so many different kinds of plants in the state of Alabama and each plant is important in its own place in the environment. We want to let people know what exists."

Within its 13 acres, the arboretum has one of the largest collections of native plants specific to Alabama and contains several different areas that represent habitats from around the state. Hartsfield is creating a fen garden – an outcropping of alkaline rocks that only occur a few places throughout Alabama. The fen garden project will add to the other habitats that already occur, including high and dry, low and wet, a long leaf pine habitat, sea oats in sandy dunes and a pitcher plant bog, among others. "We had some fen plants donated and we're working on creating a seepage bog," she said.

Apart from the diverse collection of plants and habitats,

Hartsfield said the best thing the arboretum provides visitors is solitude.

"It is a quiet space on campus for anybody to come out and walk or run or just be. It is a place where people can come enjoy the sunshine and be outside for a while."

Hartsfield has a lot of experience with the outdoors. She graduated from AU with a bachelor's degree in entomology and several horticulture classes to her credit. She then gained experience with different landscaping companies and nurseries in the area.

When she decided to return to school, her interests were in industrial design. She completed her master's in AU's industrial design program and taught in that department for two and a half years before being named arboretum director.

Hartsfield has begun several projects to enhance the arboretum. For example, last fall she launched Arboretum Days, which are Saturday-morning sessions before home football games to provide opportunities for elementary-aged children to learn about nature. The sessions have different themes from week to week and feature lessons on water, trees, raptors, animal tracks, bird watching, insects and other nature subjects.

"I had walked around campus on game days the previous year and noticed that there really was not a lot for kids to do, especially early in the morning, until right before the game starts," Hartsfield recalled. She said last year's sessions were such a success that she is planning new sessions for this autumn. 🌻

President's Message

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answer those calls and, at the same time, attract a president with the qualities to serve Auburn well for many years.

It is my hope that the entire campus community — students, faculty, staff and administrators — can move toward making these proposals a reality with a degree of unity so that we can improve and effectively demonstrate to the legislature, taxpayers and presidential candidates the outstanding job we do in meeting our missions of education, research and outreach.

War Eagle,

Ed Richardson

Goals

(Continued from page 1)

Faculty and administrators began work on the strategic plan earlier this year. The plan will guide the board's allocation of resources, guide efforts to establish a legislative agenda and assist the board in identifying priorities that would aid in the search for highly qualified candidates for a new president.

Richardson said he expects to bring a proposal to the board in November. If the board approves the plan, the administration will immediately begin developing organizational strategies.

The strategic plan, Richardson said, should include statements declaring an official AU System. At present, he said, AU has operated as a system only for budgeting purposes, missing other advantages of a system. He promised to bring recommendations for revamping the system in September.

"Auburn University is a system on paper but seldom in practice, which again illustrates the disconnect problem," he said.

Richardson said administrative titles would change under the system model but the changes would require no additional staff or compensation.

The title of the Auburn University president would change to chancellor of the AU System and president of Auburn University.

The title of chancellor of AU-Montgomery would change to president of that campus.

The executive vice president at AU would become vice chancellor for financial and administrative services for the AU system and would retain the current title for AU duties.

The title of AU provost and vice president for academic affairs would be changed to vice chancellor of academic affairs for the AU System and the person would retain the current title for AU duties.

The title of the vice president for development would change to vice chancellor for development for the AU System while retaining the current title at the Auburn campus.

Richardson proposed that the board invite the president of AUM to sit at the table as an adviser during board meetings when the stronger system model is implemented.

He said changing to a stronger system will result in more timely consideration and approval of academic and administrative changes and make AU more attractive to presidential candidates. He added that the changes would provide recognition of AUM as a major component of the AU System, demonstrate an improved commitment to the AU mission and help strengthen both campuses through shared resources.

In another major initiative, Richardson said AU needs a comprehensive, coherent approach to academic program review if the university is to maintain its progress. Academic programs now undergo an array of reviews by external accrediting agencies and various units within the university, but those reviews vary widely and often have little in common with one another.

"How do we know if our programs are successful and our graduates are prepared unless a comprehensive review of academic programs is conducted?" he asked.

Richardson said the provost will work with faculty to develop a presentation to the board in November. That presentation will address specific criteria, objectives and timetables for conducting academic reviews.

"There will be some cost to conducting ongoing reviews," he said. "But the confirmation of success, adjustments to further improve the programs, reorganization to comply with the Auburn System's strategic plan and establish a more objective system of accountability should be worth the cost and should provide valuable information to the board."

Richardson added that the academic review program should include a cycle of review for the faculty, including tenured faculty. "The purpose is to support faculty development as a basis for strong academic programming and, in addition, ensure that our students receive a quality education," he said.

Willie Larkin, faculty adviser to the Board of Trustees, said faculty leaders are not sure additional reviews of faculty performance are needed at this time but are willing to work with the administration on the matter.

Meanwhile, in a move that goes to the heart of Auburn's original land-grant mission, Richardson proposed establishing an institute to administer programs now under the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station, Alabama Cooperative Extension System, College of Agriculture and School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences.

Richardson said the institute would not be dominated by the College of Agriculture and

would be led by an administrator in Samford Hall. He said the name should reflect the institute's broader role in natural resources and environmental science. He will present recommendations to the board in September.

As part of the institute development, AU needs to reduce the number of agricultural experiment stations and have targeted objectives or specialties for those that remain, he said. Funds generated by sale of agricultural station lands should be earmarked in a quasi-foundation fund to help maintain the institute's operations, he added.

For the institute to be effective, Richardson said, additional changes will be needed by April 2006. Those changes could follow a review of departments and programs in other colleges and schools and decisions on whether they would be more appropriate to include in the institute, he said. ☀

Visit AU Alumni's Online Community And Join The AAA

The Auburn Online Community is a service to alumni and friends that allows members to log in securely and access online services such as updating address information, finding friends from Auburn University, enabling a permanent e-mail address and more. Check www.aualum.org for more information.

Members have been vital to the Auburn Alumni Association throughout its 108-year past. To learn about all the benefits of being a member, visit www.alumni.auburn.edu/ ☀

CHS Involved In State Initiative To Strengthen Families

Auburn's College of Human Sciences is playing a major role in the Alabama Healthy Marriage Initiative, an inter-agency, statewide initiative to strengthen communities by strengthening relationships and supporting family stability.

The Alabama Healthy Marriage Initiative unites government officials, educators, social services professionals, civic leaders and others in community programs to help couples and families cope with the economic, social and interpersonal stresses that often lead to divorce or other family crises.

As one of the first states to organize a statewide initiative under a nationwide effort supported by the Bush administration, Alabama is charting a new course in family and marriage programs, said Francesca Adler-Baeder, who coordinated a recent meeting in Auburn of the Alabama Healthy Marriage Initiative Steering Committee.

Adler-Baeder, an assistant professor of human development and family studies, said the academic aspects of the initiative will serve two functions. One is to promote research-based outreach by social-service and other organizations that help strengthen stability in couples and families. The other is to get research-based information directly to individuals and families through web-based sources or agency distribution.

The Alabama initiative draws heavily upon research in the College of Human Sciences and other academic areas at Auburn and other universities across the state, said Adler-Baeder, who is also a human development and family studies specialist with the

Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

Adler-Baeder said civic leaders and others outside the academic community look to scholars for information on the best practices in counseling and the making of public policy. "There is a lot of solid research being done in the field of marriage and

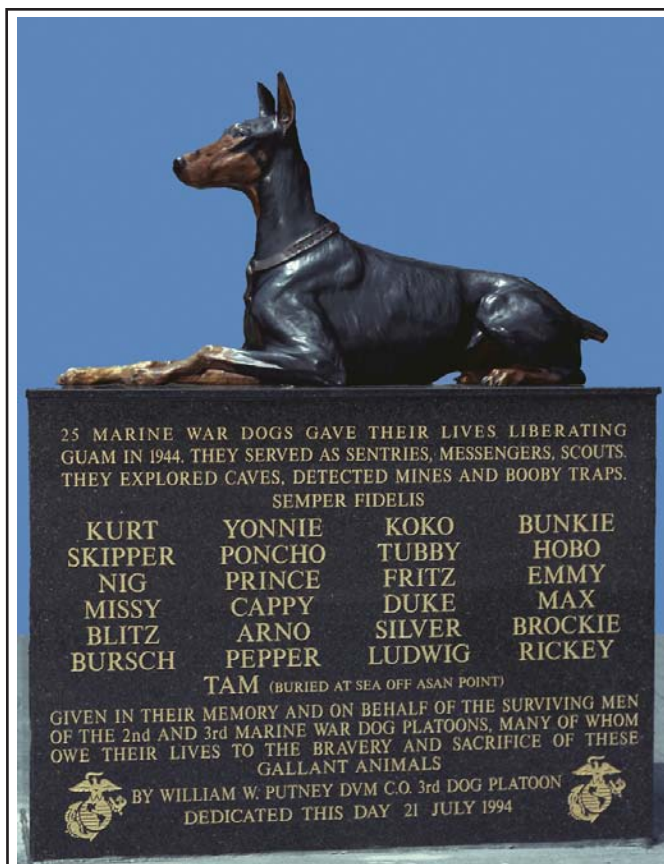
family studies," she said. "As the academic home for the knowledge on which these programs are based, the College of Human Sciences has an important role in meeting those needs."

"The Alabama Cooperative Extension System also has a key role across the state in providing educational services to families

about issues that affect their future and the future of their communities," Adler-Baeder said. She added that many Extension educators are the primary coordinators of marriage education programs in their communities.

Although no segment of society is immune from the pressures that can break apart families, people with lower incomes are the most vulnerable because they often do not have access to information, educators, counselors, financial advisers or other resources, Adler-Baeder said. AU and the Cooperative Extension System can inform moderate- and low-income families about resources to help them avoid and overcome the financial, relationship, intergenerational and other problems that many families face, she added.

"Research has shown that education on skills in relationships can help lower distress levels and can lead to higher levels of happiness and satisfaction in relationships and the greater likelihood of relationship stability," Adler-Baeder explained. ☀



CVM Unveils War Dog Tribute

Auburn's College of Veterinary Medicine unveiled a "War Dog Tribute" sculpture April 22 during the college's fourth National Detector Dog Conference.

"This bronze sculpture will pay respect to all dogs that serve mankind and will honor all of Auburn's veterinary alumni who have served in the military," said Gary Beard, the college's assistant dean for outreach.

The sculpture is a gift from Betsy Putney of Woodland Hills, Calif., widow of William Putney of the Auburn veterinary class of 1943.

Bill Putney was the commanding officer of the Third Marine War Dog Platoon that helped liberate the Pacific Ocean island of Guam in World War II. In the book "Always Faithful," Putney described his experiences in the battle. ☀

DeVries Awarded NEH Fellowship

The National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded a summer fellowship to Joyce DeVries, an assistant professor and art historian in the Department of Art in the AU College of Liberal Arts.

"The NEH grant provides a summer stipend to cover research and travel associated with a book DeVries is writing," said Mark Graham, interim head of the Art Department. ☀




Graduation guests

Interim AU President Ed Richardson welcomed U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney, center, and Alabama Gov. Bob Riley to Auburn for spring graduation on May 13. The university conferred degrees on approximately 2,400 students in two separate ceremonies. Cheney was the guest speaker at the 10 a.m. ceremony. Auburn University is a preeminent land-grant and comprehensive research institution with nearly 23,000 students and 6,500 faculty and staff. Ranked among the top 50 public universities nationally, Auburn is Alabama's largest educational institution, offering more than 230 undergraduate, graduate and doctoral degree programs.

Auburn University is an equal opportunity employer/educational institution.

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