

# Looking back



**Taking the next step.**  
Graduates from the Class of 1943 prepare for the next stage in their lives as they process from Bibb Graves Hall to take part in commencement ceremonies.

# alumnnotes

## '60s

**Gerie Bledsoe (1964)** retired from the California Teachers Association after 32 years of work in higher education and public schools. Even in retirement, he will continue to consult on political and legislative affairs.

## '70s

**Gayle Oberst (1971, 1974)** was recently appointed as the mayor of Panama City Beach, FL. She is a native of Elba, AL.

**Frederick E. Hoff (1974)**, chief of software development at Maxwell Air Force Base's Air University, has recently written the novel "Question Marks." The thriller examines the search for the creator of a mysterious computer virus that leaves no evidence behind except for three question marks.

**Sylvia Nobles (1974)** has been appointed by Gov. Bob

Riley to serve on the Alabama Board of Nursing. She was also selected by the Alabama Board of Nursing to serve on the Joint Committee of Advance Practice Nursing.

**Dr. Melinda Maddox (1976)** recently received the Leader of the Year Award from the national association of State Educational Technology Directors. The award is given annually to outstanding educational leaders for their efforts to ensure students and teachers receive the opportunities they need to be competitive in the world's global marketplace.

**Twyla Pipkin (1976)** was recently named principal of College Street Elementary School in Enterprise, AL.

**Charles Oliver's (1977)** company, Bags by Coach O, was #1 in on-line registration and merchandise. The company is constantly growing and has grown more than ever in the past 12 months. He also sponsors several track meets throughout the Southeast.

**Jack P. Golson, Jr., (1978)** has joined AmeriFirst Bank as business development officer.

**John Adams (1979)** has joined the staff of Southern Independent Organizing Group, Inc., as chief financial officer. While at TROY, Adams was a four-year letterman for the Trojan football team during which he was named to the All-Gulf South Conference Freshman Team and was twice voted second team all conference. He was also named to the All-Gulf South Conference Academic Team.

**Shirley Nettles (1979)**, a kindergarten teacher at Frisco City School, has been named Alabama Teacher of the Year.

## '80s

**Kay Kirkland (1980)**, managing editor of The Southeast Sun in Enterprise, AL, was recently presented with the Howard Quattlebaum Media Award by the Enterprise Chamber of Commerce. Kirkland has served as managing editor of The Southeast Sun and The Daleville Sun-Courier since 1991 and is a 25-year veteran of the newspaper business.

**J. Doug Martin, Jr., (1983)** recently joined the law practice of L. Merrill Shirley of Elba, AL.

**Brian Dove (1986)** was recently named director of finance and administration and chief financial officer of the Southeast Alabama Gas District.

**Jeannine Birmingham (1988)** was chosen to be the new Executive Director of the Alabama Society of CPAs effective May 2007.

**Huey "Hoss" Mack, Jr., (1988, 1999)** was recently named Man of the Year by the Central Baldwin Chamber of Commerce. Mack, who holds a master's degree from TROY, is sheriff of Baldwin County, AL.

**David J. Rhodes (1988)** was the Reid State Technical College administrator nominee for the Alabama College System Chancellor's Awards. He was presented with a plaque on Nov. 19 during the annual Alabama College

# Star power

Alumna Jill Dobson serves as news and style editor of 'Star Magazine'

By *Amanda DePriest*



# W

When television news and entertainment networks need insight into the latest celebrity news or style trends, they call on a Troy University alumna.

Jill Dobson, news and style editor at-large for "Star Magazine," serves as the magazine's primary television spokesperson and is a frequent guest on programs such as NBC's Today Show and Fox News' Fox and Friends. The 1998 summa cum laude graduate of TROY's Hall School of Journalism is also called on by networks, such as VH-1 as a guest for special programming and MS-NBC for their entertainment news programming.

Dobson, who grew up in Michigan, heard about TROY her senior year in high school, moments after being crowned Michigan's Junior Miss.

Association conference in Birmingham. He serves as business manager.

**Teresa Jacobs (1989, 1996)**, a teacher at Kinston Elementary School, was recently featured in the Enterprise (AL) Ledger's "Educator Spotlight." She and her husband Mickey have two children – Aaron and Marley.

## '90s

**Michael R. Callahan (1990)** has

joined Fairfax, VA-based Dewberry as an Air Force client manager.

**David Ridgeway (1991, 1997)** of Enterprise was recently named retail banking director for Wachovia Bank's Jackson, MS, and South/Central Alabama markets.

**LeAnn Riley (1991)** is the newest member of the Andalusia (AL) City School Board.

“My dad said I was eligible for a full ride to Troy University in Alabama, and I immediately knew that was where I was going to college,” said Dobson. “My parents drove me to TROY during my Spring Break, and I was very impressed with the beautiful campus, the journalism and communications programs and the people.”

While at TROY, she competed as a member of the Cross Country team and was honored as an All-Conference Academic Athlete. She was also named 1998 Journalism Student of the Year.

“Troy University helped me gain practical experience and I thrived under the personal attention of my instructors. All that knowledge I gained helped me earn an academic scholarship to attend graduate school.”

Dobson received her master’s degree in journalism from Michigan State University. During her time in graduate school, she was named Miss Michigan USA and went on to be a Top Ten finisher in the Miss USA Pageant.

Upon graduation, Dobson interned at a small television station in Lansing and then went to New York City’s Fox News Channel during the September 11 attacks. She began her internship with Fox News just four days before the terrorist’s attacks. “I interviewed rescue workers at Ground Zero and felt honored I could help people across America see what was really happening as that day unfolded.”

Following her internship, Dobson began her television career as a news reporter for the CBS affiliates in Grand Rapids and Lansing, MI.

After three years as a television reporter, Dobson moved back to New

York to cover celebrity news for E! News Live. She also served as a host for the National Lampoon Networks, reported for News 12 Long Island and co-hosted specials on Bravo and WE Networks.

Dobson points back to TROY Chancellor Jack Hawkins, Jr., when thinking about the people who have influenced her success.

“He told me one key to success is to sit down with the people you’d like to emulate and then ask them how they reached their goals,” said Dobson. “I’ve been doing that for years; and not only have I heard a lot of valuable advice, but also people are impressed that I want to learn from them and they become mentors to me.”

This August, Dobson will give back to the University she credits for much of her success. She will return to campus with her husband Jim Ornstein, a talent agent for the William Morris Agency, to speak at TROY’s Odyssey Convocation for new students.

*DePriest, a senior print journalism/public relations major from Dothan, AL, is a work-study student in the Office of University Relations.*



**Jill Dobson gives celebrity insight on The Dr. Keith Ablow Show on Feb. 16.**

– Photo courtesy of Warner Bros.

**C. Todd Thompson (1992)** has been promoted to president and chief executive office of Security Federal Savings Bank in Jasper, AL. He holds an Executive Master of Business Administration degree from TROY and has been a member of the Security Federal staff for 19 years.

**Steve Kirk (1993)** recently completed the Special Enrollment exam administered by the Internal Revenue Service and has been accepted into the

National Association of Enrolled Agents. He has been employed at Corbett Financial Services in Greensboro, AL, since 2000.

**Joe Hampton (1995)** has been named division manager for Alagasco in Selma, AL. He has worked with Alagasco since 1998.

**Melissa Nall (1995, 1999)** was recently named the Elementary School Teacher of the Year by the Andalusia

(AL) Area Chamber of Commerce. She is the Alabama Reading Initiative reading coach at Red Level School.

**Mark Burgess (1996)** has been named chief executive officer of South Alabama Gas District.

**Jean Moore Sims (1996)** was appointed associate vice chancellor for human resources at Elizabeth City State University by Interim Chancellor Willie J. Gilchrist in October 2006.

She also received certification in Employment Mediation, DID Training and Retirement Planning.

**Shasta Smith (1996)** recently joined the Birmingham, AL-based Daniel Corporation as residential accounting manager. She holds both bachelor's and master's degrees in business administration from TROY.

**Justin Clark (1997)** was recently named as a principal of the firm of Wilson Price. He holds both bachelor's and master's degrees from TROY.

**Chris Murphy (1997)** was recently named the director of the Alabama Department of Public Safety. He holds a master's degree in criminal justice from TROY.

**Christie Joy Colvin (1998)** was recently named the Secondary Teacher of the Year by the Andalusia (AL) Area Chamber of Commerce. She teaches special education at Florala High School.

**Wendy Graham (1998)** was recently named LaFayette (AL) High School Teacher of the Year for 2006-2007. She has taught business technology essentials and entrepreneurship at the school for the past five years.

**Jennifer Milner (1998)** has been

named 2006-2007 Elementary School Teacher of the Year by the Enterprise Education Association. A teacher at Hillcrest Elementary School for the past nine years, Milner holds a master's degree in elementary education.

**The Rev. Keith Moore (1998)** recently celebrated his first anniversary as pastor of Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church in Clanton, AL. He holds a bachelor's degree in psychology.

**Ricky Britt (1999)** is the new assistant principal at Enterprise (AL) High School. He has served in the Enterprise City School System for 18 years.

**Curtis Ray Dunn (1999)** was recently promoted to the rank of Commander in the U.S. Navy during a ceremony at the Navy Personnel Command in Millington, TN. He holds a master's degree in business management from TROY.

**Rod Morgan (1999)** has been appointed as chief financial officer for the city of Prattville, AL.

**Chris Morris (1999)** recently joined the firm of Wilson, Price, Barranco, Blankenship and Billingsley, P.C. as a staff accountant.

**Jason Smith (1999)** was recently named vice president, commercial

loan officer for the Auburn, AL, office of Colonial Bank.

**Jamie Thomas (1999)** of Selma has been named procurement forester for IndusTREE Timber, one of Alabama's largest timber procurement and forestry consulting companies.

**Alison Wingate (1999)** has earned the certified association executive designation from the American Society of Association Executives. The certification is the highest professional credential in the association industry with less than five percent of all association professionals earning it. Wingate is vice president of the Alabama Retail Association.

## '00s

**Jason McDonnell (2000)** recently became pastor of Forest Hills Baptist Church in Daleville, AL.

**Todd Wilson (2000)** was recently named principal of Wadley (AL) High School.

**Buford Clark (2001)** was promoted to sales manager for 95 KSJ of Clear Channel Radio in Mobile, AL.

**Pate Huguley (2001)**, president of West Point Foundry and Machine Company, will serve as president of the Chattahoochee Valley (AL) Hospital Society Board of Trustees for 2007.

## *Alumna interns with NATO*

**K**aren Desmangles, a recent Master of Science in International Relations graduate from Troy University's Pacific Region, is serving in a six-month, paid internship at North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Military Headquarters in Mons, Belgium.

She will return to her home in Okinawa, Japan, in July. She hopes to work full time with an international organization and eventually pursue a doctorate degree in social sciences.

Desmangles learned of the NATO Internship Program by surfing the internet. Her proposed project to compare logistical systems used by NATO with those used in the private sector was accepted. She based her proposal on her global studies concentration in the MSIR Program.

The wife of an active duty military member, Desmangles says she is looking forward to putting her MSIR degree to practical use.



From left to right are Michelle Danielson, Troy University program coordinator at Kadena Air Base; Karen Desmangles; and Dr. Peter Hefron, associate professor of international relations.

**Angela R. Mayberry (2001)** has been awarded the Alabama Commendation Medal by Gov. Bob Riley. Mayberry received the award in recognition of her being named the Air National Guard Services Company Grade Officer of the Year for 2005.

**Carlos S. Stennis (2001)** joined MetLife with Central States Financial Group as the firm's Financial Services Registered Representative.

**Clinton D. Ellis (2002)** recently earned a Master of Divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, TX.

**Brandy Miller (2002)** has joined MidSouth Bank in Dothan, AL, as a senior accountant. She holds both a bachelor's and a master's degree from TROY.

**Alisha Odom (2002)** is the new librarian at W.S. Harlan Elementary School in Andalusia, AL. She and her husband Daniel reside in Opp, AL.

**Jessica Tomlin (2002, 2004)** of Luverne, AL, serves as the director of the

Crenshaw County Emergency Management Agency. She also serves as the county's point of contact for Homeland Security.

**Paul Adams (2003)** has been named as a full-time assistant to Covington County (AL) District Attorney Greg Gambriel.

**Julie Beasley (2003)** was recently named Elementary School Teacher of the Year by the Chambers County (AL) Board of Education. She teaches fourth and fifth grades at LaFayette Lanier Elementary School.

**Lee Lawson (2003)** was recently named director of economic development and research for the Baldwin County (AL) Economic Development Alliance.

**Hilary Perry (2003)** is starting a position at the Cornerstone School in Pelham, AL.

**Rose Battle (2004)** was hired as vice president and manager of the downtown Montgomery (AL) Aliant Bank.

**Chad Dykes (2004)** has been named

vice president and commercial loan officer at MidSouth Bank's Panama City, FL, office.

**Jacob Rasberry (2006)** is the band director at Zion Chapel (AL) High School. Rasberry played saxophone in the Sound of the South while at TROY.

**Erin Turner (2006)** has joined Copeland Communications of Birmingham, AL. She previously served for three years as founder and director of the non-profit ArtStart Alabama.

**Lou Boykin (2007)** is director of the Clarke County (AL) Department of Human Resources.

**Sharon Tolbert (2007)** has been recognized for academic accomplishment and outstanding work and dedication to the city of Auburn, AL. Tolbert serves as director of the Auburn Community Development Division.

*Share your news with us and your former classmates. Send your achievements, along with your class year, to [alumdev@troy.edu](mailto:alumdev@troy.edu).*

## TROY sets stage for alumna's success as a playwright

By Torie Hardee

Troy University alumna Shahara Ruth made a name for herself as a poet and playwright early in her lifetime. As a sixth-grade student, her teachers discovered Ruth's talent through attempts to keep her in line.

"I was one of the hyper kids, so they gave me things to do to keep me from disturbing class," Ruth explained.

Many years later, as a graduate student at TROY's Atlanta Site, Ruth's passion for writing continued to grow under the instruction of her professors. "I love TROY and will always remember my classes with the University," she said. "The University helped me learn how to reach and communi-



**Shahara Ruth, poet and playwright**

cate with audiences of different backgrounds."

It appears Ruth's audience is most certainly buying what she is selling. Her most recent play, "Women Dating Badly," was such a hit that it sold out every show. This play accompanies several other works including her plays: "House of Iron," "Suicide," "Two Kinds of Women and Fallen Leaves" and her poetry book,

"From The Poet To The People."

One tactic Ruth uses in her plays is her ability to keep crowds intrigued. "I always leave the audience guessing," she said.

Ruth explained that this style is fashioned after her favorite poet, Edgar Allen Poe. "In his plays, nothing is what it appears to be," she said.

Another interesting spin Ruth adds to the life of her plays is hip-hop music. "I incorporate elements of hip-hop into my plays. It's my way of blending the future and past," she said.

Her latest play, "Behind Safe Walls," which debuted March 24, is a mystery involving family relationships in the 50s and 60s. It is portrayed through an African American family that lives in a small southern town.

"It really deals with some issues of how parents are controlling their children by trying to live their lives through them," Ruth said.

## TROY mourns loss of first 'Golden Trojan'

Margaret Pace Farmer, class of 1932, played many important roles in the Troy community, including those of historian, businesswoman and supporter of education. On Jan. 19, the woman often called the “most influential” in Pike County history died at age 94.

The daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Matthew Downer Pace of Troy, Mrs. Farmer held the distinction of being the only person who completed all of her education at Troy Teachers College. In Mrs. Farmer’s day, the on-campus laboratory school offered classes through the 12th grade. She was also the recipient of the Alumni Association’s first “Golden Trojan” Award, presented to alumni who have celebrated their 50th anniversary of graduation from TROY.

She earned widespread recognition as the chronicler of Troy and Pike County history and her “History of Pike County, Alabama” is considered the de-



**Margaret Pace Farmer receives the first “Golden Trojan” award from Faith Ward, director of alumni affairs, in 2002. Looking on is The Rev. James Dean, then the priest at St. Martin of Tours Catholic Church in Troy.**

finitive work in this area. She was the first woman to serve as president of the Alabama Historical Association. Mrs. Farmer also was an avid proponent of the development of the Troy

Public Library.

She was married to Mr. Curren Farmer, a local businessman, for 70 years until his death in 2005. The couple is survived by four children.

## in remembrance

### Troy University Alumni

1940- Mrs. Frances O. Hilla  
 1940- Mr. Earl D. James  
 1941- Mr. Willie R. Davis  
 1943- Mr. Thomas A. Sellers  
 1945- Mrs. Elna M. Harrison  
 1945- Mr. Homer Stallings  
 1947- Ms. Marie S. Baker  
 1947- Ms. Sarah I. Barry  
 1947- Mrs. Patricia Shoffner  
 1948- Ms. Claudie Smith  
 1949- Mr. John E. Brabham, Sr.  
 1951- Mrs. Susie N. Johnson  
 1951- Mr. Lawrence Edwin Stubblefield  
 1952- Ms. Mildred Mims Weems  
 1953- Mr. John E. Morrow, Sr.  
 1954- Mr. Alfred H. Lipscomb  
 1954- Mr. Mack Primm  
 1955- Mr. Raymond Chisum  
 1956- Mr. Harry D. Conner  
 1957- Mr. W. A. Harrell  
 1958- Ms. Vivian Estelle Rowell Conger  
 1959- Ms. Jacqueline B. Hayes  
 1962- Mr. John R. Nichols  
 1964- Mr. Thomas O. Walters  
 1966- Mr. Henry E. Bourne  
 1967- Mr. Robert W. Barr  
 1969- Mrs. Evelyn Weeks Dauphin  
 1969- Mr. Dayton Long  
 1970- Mr. Joe W. Bruner  
 1970- Mr. John R. King

1970- Mr. Arnold R. Money  
 1971- Mr. Clifton P. Capell  
 1972- Mr. Bobby R. McCracken  
 1972- Mr. Charles D. Starling  
 1973- Colonel Norman H. Runge  
 1974- Dr. Charles L. Jones  
 1975- Ms. Carol J. Bassett  
 1976- Mr. Andrew N. Alford  
 1976- Mr. James E. Altwies  
 1977- Mr. Joseph G. Clark Jr.  
 1977- Mr. Wyman R. Daniel  
 1978- Mr. Howard E. Casey  
 1978- Mr. James Fernandes  
 1978- Mr. James O. Moore  
 1978- Mr. Ronald C. Waterman  
 1979- Mr. Grady L. Petty  
 1979- Mr. Joseph M. Vrabec  
 1980- Mr. George W. Mershimer  
 1981- Mr. Claude E. Geoghegan  
 1981- Mr. Lloyd D. Wilsam  
 1982- Mr. Duconz Hancock  
 1982- Mr. James L. Turner  
 1983- Mr. Duane A. Barts  
 1984- Mr. Henry L. Lynn  
 1984- Mr. Dwight D. Turner  
 1986- Mr. Ross G. Livermore  
 1987- Mr. Kenneth L. Wise  
 1988- Lieut. Col. Robert W. Ines, II  
 1989- Mr. William A. Pugh  
 1989- Mr. Van J. Seagle  
 1989- Mr. Winston D. Stewart

1989- Mr. Bobby G. Stover  
 1990- Mr. Reginald R. Mize  
 1991- Mrs. Bernice M. Richard  
 1993- Mrs. Kimberly T. McKenzie  
 1994- Mrs. Margaret E. Bob-Manuel  
 1994- Mr. Ray M. Stover  
 1995- Mrs. Kaye Ann Adaway  
 1996- Mr. Israel S. McGhee  
 1999- Mrs. Maryann T. Foreman  
 1999- Mrs. Nicole S. Williams  
 2001- Mr. Miguel D. Harris  
 2001- Mr. William J. Holley  
 2001- Mrs. Gladys R. McRae  
 2004- Mr. Bobby W. Pitman  
 2006- Mr. Keith Edwin Houts  
 2006- Mr. Skylar McClellan  
 2006- Mrs. Virginia G. McKee  
 2006- Mr. Tommie Jo Rhoads

### Troy University Friends

Dr. Robert A. Dietz  
 Mr. Calvin A. Evans  
 Mrs. June Collier Fletcher  
 Mrs. Nell Harrington  
 Mr. John Hawkins  
 Mrs. Rachel Hawkins  
 Mr. Robert H. Hollis  
 Mr. Jack Hughston  
 Ms. Helen A. McCollough  
 Mr. James U. Terry

# Following in the footsteps

Sisters still actively support their alma mater

By Clif Lusk

There never was any real question about going to college for five Troy sisters, and there never was a real question about where they would attend.

“My daddy was the biggest TROY fan there ever was,” said Jennifer Colley Ventress, one of five daughters of Matt and Mary Folmar Colley.

Ventress, who graduated 1984 with a nursing degree, is the little sister who didn’t mind following in the family footsteps.

“Daddy dragged me out to those football games when I was five or six years old, and I’ve been going ever since,” she said.

The sisters’ love for TROY also was sparked by their uncle long-time Troy physician Dr. J.O. Colley, an avid supporter of the University.

Cheryl Colley DiChiara was a member of the University’s second nursing school class, finishing her degree in 1974.

A member of the Sound of the South, Dichiarra said Dr. Johnny Long had the biggest impact on her life: “He taught us things had to be right and that was the way it was done.”

DiChiara wasn’t the first Colley sister to have that sort of TROY experience, nor would she be the last.

Annette Colley Owen completed her undergraduate degree in 1971 and was head majorette in the Sound of the South,



From left to right, Dr. Doug Hawkins, president pro-tem of the TROY board of trustees Jennifer Ventress, Julie Lowery, Annette Owen, Cheryl DiChiara, Helen Long and Chancellor Jack Hawkins, Jr., enjoy a reception hosted by Long prior to the Trojans’ football game against Florida Atlantic.

a role younger sister Helen Colley Long would assume just a few years later and hold for three years.

Owen admits to having two very influential TROY connections: Dr. Long and the fact she met her husband Allen while both were students. The Honorable Allen Owen currently serves on the University’s Board of Trustees.

“The background in education that I got at TROY has allowed me to make a living for a very long time,” said Owen, who also earned a master’s degree, administration certification and an education specialist degree in administration from TROY.

Long graduated in 1978 and experienced first-hand just how much a family TROY is.

A physical education major, she broke her neck during a test on the trampoline in Dr. Gene Hanson’s class. She was hospitalized for four months, in a full-body brace for three months and required several operations.

“The band stepped up to the plate giving blood and visiting me, and I was back in school that next fall,” she said.

Dr. Long, too, played a pivotal role in her recovery.

Julie Colley Lowery, slid into TROY between Owen and Long, graduating in 1975. She graduated again in 1990 with a master’s in elementary education.

The twice-over Trojan said she stays connected to the University because of the value of her education.

“I feel like I got a great education at TROY and I met great friends – that’s the reason why I want to support it – it’s a great university,” she said.

It’s that sentiment that really unifies the five sisters.

“Take advantage of what your University has to offer,” DiChiara would say to freshly minted alums. “We have everything here.”

For a twist on the same theme, Long, who credits a successful career in education directly to TROY, urges alums to look for vision.

“Look at all that’s been accomplished in the short 27 years since I was a student and look at what could happen in the next 27 years if only we keep supporting our school,” she said.

## Tiny TROY fan

Kaina Gabrielle King, daughter of former Trojan track athlete Keesha Sanders King (2000), shows off a smile and a little Trojan spirit. Kaina’s mother finished with a degree in education and was a part of the 1999 conference championship team.



## weddings & engagements

- Julie Echols (1999) to Jeff Reyburn on September 30, 2006
- James Voss (1999) to Heather Danley on May 27, 2006
- Virginia Faulk (2001) to Bartley Wilson on October 28, 2006
- Lauri Frazier (2001) to Drew Wyatt on July 8, 2006
- Olivia Idland (2001) to Russell Autrey on November 25, 2006
- Earkiyah King (2002) to Michael Freeman on October 14, 2006
- Alison Bailey (2003) to Doug Richardson on July 15, 2006
- Jessica Holmes (2004) to Christopher Jordan on July 21, 2006
- Natalie Stokes (2004) to Chris Barefield (2006) on August 26, 2006
- Lynn Dzanbazoff (2005) to Joseph Frye (2006) on September 3, 2006
- Melissa Hartzog (2005) to Ryan Morrow (2005) on November 4, 2006
- Shelly Williams (2005) to Bill Hughes on October 7, 2006
- Aimee Whitehead (2005) to Jason Kirkland on August 19, 2006
- Mallore Bedsole (2006) to Justin Prescott on October 21, 2006
- Laura Woods (2006) to John Arnold on October 21, 2006