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Chamber Elects Ten Business Leaders to the Board of Directors

Ten outstanding business and civic leaders have been elected to The Chamber's Board of Directors for three-year terms beginning on January 1, 2003 following approval by the general membership and certification by the Election Committee.

Elected were:



Rich Anders
Anders Hardware



Johnny Dancy
Best Western Park Plaza Inn



Scott Donaldson
Donaldson & Watkins



Howard Garrison
Duckworth-Morris-Garrison
Real Estate



Jim Harrison, III
Harrison Galleries



Tim Harrison
Harrison Construction Company



Gene Poole
Hudson-Poole Jewelers

Re-elected for a second three year term were:



Eddie Jackson
Heritage Health Care Center



Gary Phillips
Premier Service Company



Linda Paulmeno Sewell
Mercedes-Benz
U. S. International

The Chamber's Board of Directors is made up of a total of 36 members, elected by the membership.

Regional Workforce Assessment Encouraging

The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama has recently completed an assessment of the regional workforce in West Alabama through the contracted efforts of The Pathfinders of Dallas, Texas, a nationally-known economic development and site-selection consultant to many of the nation's largest corporations. The Pathfinders also conducts the Tuscaloosa County wage and benefit study for The Chamber on an annual basis.

With continuing concerns by area business and industrial CEO's about the skill levels and availability of workers in Tuscaloosa County and West Alabama to meet growing job opportunities and expanding industries, The Pathfinders were engaged to provide an assessment and to assist with quantifying workforce needs, issues and availability.

The Tuscaloosa Area Assessment Report survey area includes: Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Pickens, Tuscaloosa, Walker counties along with portions of West Jefferson County. The estimated total civilian labor force in this 'labor shed' is 177,500 people; and contains approximately 8,900 unemployed people seeking work.

The Pathfinders also quantified the number of "underemployed" in the region, which refers to the number of potentially available workers who have indicated an interest in changing jobs at reasonably higher wage levels as compared to existing pay rates. According to the survey, these "underemployed", who possess the skills, experience and education to qualify them for the pay rates at which they would take a new job, provides a pool 31,300 potentially available workers.

Of the 31,300 "underemployed" individuals, over 35% have some college experience; 7% have associate degrees; and another 21% have earned four year college degrees or higher. And according to The Pathfinders study, about 10% of

individuals classified as "underemployed" would change jobs for under \$7.90 per hour; 33 1/3% would change jobs for less than \$10.93 per hour; and 50% would change for \$13.69 or less. In addition, this group of "underemployed", according to the assessment, exhibits competitive measures of experience and skills in the areas of manufacturing, assembly, customer service, and office, data and word processing.

It should be noted and cautioned, that while the number of "underemployed" workers identified in the region, as well as their skills, experience, education and costs, all of those individuals may not be acceptable candidates for an employer. Their previous work records along with other factors have to be considered.

The Tuscaloosa area workforce also received good marks for productivity. Many of the companies that were interviewed stated that their local operations compared favorably with operations in other locations in terms of profitability and productivity, indicative of not only good management but also of a productive workforce.

One of the most common employer complaints throughout the nation relates to the basic educational competencies of the workforce. Results of The Pathfinders study relative to basic educational competencies in the Tuscaloosa Area study indicated that 75% of employers rated reading and writing competency at an excellent or good level; and 63% rated competency in calculations at excellent or good.

Another common employer concern relates to the shortage of skilled and technical workers. Skilled and technical workers are in great demand and difficult to find in the vast majority of locations throughout the nation, especially those communities with growing economies. Of the firms in the Tuscaloosa labor shed interviewed, 50%

considered skilled worker availability to be excellent or good, while 31% considered it to be fair. However, 56% of those employers interviewed indicated only a fair rating of availability of technical workers.

Among other employer ratings in the study, 76% of employers rated worker productivity either excellent or good; and 75% rated worker reliability and attitudes as excellent or good. In comparison with other similar assessment around the nation, 38% of Tuscaloosa area employers rated worker productivity as excellent while the median of locations surveyed in the last 18 months was only 19%.

The Pathfinders assessment contains a great deal of additional information and data that is being reviewed and will be available for use by area businesses and industries as well as by various educational institutions. For more details, contact Johnnie Aycock at The Chamber at 391.0559.

New Wage & Benefits Study Available

A current Wage & Benefits Study has been completed is now available. Developed in contract with The Pathfinders, Inc. of Dallas, Texas, the report provides up-to-date information on wage rates of a diverse schedule of jobs along with benefits information and other data to assist local businesses and industries. Eighty area firms participated in this 3rd annual study.

Copies of the report are available to Chamber-member firms for \$25.00 each. Non-member firms can obtain a copy for a cost of \$200.00. For more information or to obtain a copy, call The Chamber at 758.7588 or drop by the office at 2200 University Boulevard.

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Tango Charlie Lima: Silk Purse or Sow's Ear?

Dr. Charles Haynes, Professor of Civil & Environmental Engineering at The University of Alabama and member of The Chamber's Airport Development Task Force, asks a very important question: Is the Tuscaloosa Airport, known by its call letters of "TCL - Tango, Charlie, Lima" a silk purse or a sow's ear? In other words, do we have an asset that can be developed into a more productive and valuable resource or not?

And this is why The Chamber and the City of Tuscaloosa have joined together to pursue new avenues of development and possible improvements for the Tuscaloosa Municipal Airport. Under a current contract between The Chamber and the City of Tuscaloosa, an Airport Development Task Force has been established to assess and recommend action steps related to implementation of an air cargo/distribution center at the airport along with physical improvements, an enhanced management system, marketing of the airport, and other related airport enhancements.

The current work of the task force is a follow up to a completed feasibility study conducted by Wilbur Smith Associates on behalf of the City of Tuscaloosa at the end of 2001, which The Chamber had encouraged. The study provided insight and a preliminary business plan that supported pursuit of air cargo and distribution objectives as well as other elements of airport expansion. The task force is currently assessing three areas of air cargo and airport development, including marketing, physical improvements, and management.

Looking back briefly, the Tuscaloosa Airport was originally built as Druid Field in 1923; renamed Maynor Field in 1938; and later renamed Van de Graaf field. The passenger terminal was dedicated in 1972. In the past, the airport was used as a military training facility during World War II; and was served by passenger service by Southern

Airlines, Republic Airlines, and various commuter passenger services up until about 1997. Since that time, the facility has fallen into a 'semi-abandoned' state, although air activity is still at a fairly reasonable level including private, corporate, charter and some cargo uses.

The task force is currently reviewing in more specific detail the air cargo/distribution potential and quantifying potential uses, needed physical improvements and investments needed, and the airport's management system's needs. The task force is on schedule to report their recommendations to the Mayor and City Council by mid-February, 2003.

There are several types of air cargo operations being reviewed including recruitment of an integrated express carrier, such as UPS, Fed Ex, etc., ad hoc cargo operators, and others that can provide door-to-door and/or freight forwarding services. The Tuscaloosa/West Alabama region appears to offer the potential to support these types of services because of the expanding industrial region, level of high-value goods in the market, and other economic and regional advantages.

While the task force is currently completing a major portion of their contracted work and is looking at specific needs, several needs and opportunities have already surfaced. It is evident that the community has an asset that is not being utilized to its highest use and potential; and has a physical facility, with some investment, could be easily adapted and readied for air cargo and distribution uses.

The Tuscaloosa Airport is also a resource that could be marketed on a more aggressive level resulting in new economic benefits for the community; that requires full-time professional management; and that could deliver positive dividends from expanded investment in the facility. While yet to be completed,



One of the first impressions of Tuscaloosa by corporate prospects, business clients, vendors, and visitors of all types is the Tuscaloosa Municipal Airport. What kind of image does the airport project for our community?



The Tuscaloosa Airport continues to deteriorate in its use and physical appearance.

the early indications are that the Tuscaloosa Municipal Airport has regional potential, but will require commitment and support from the City of Tuscaloosa and the business community.

The Airport Development Task Force includes: **Ed Barnes**, Alabama Power; **Robert Deason**, Tuscaloosa Airport Group; **Bryan Finison**, Tidwell Dewitt; **David Griffin** and **Joe Robinson**, Tuscaloosa Department of Transportation; **Mark Gurganus**, Gulf States Paper Corporation; **Dr. Charles Haynes**, University of Alabama College of Engineering; **Buddy Moman**; **Dr. Robert Morgan**, University of Alabama College of Commerce; **Mark Powell**, Tuscaloosa Airport Tower; **John Presley** and **Jim Cockrell**, JVC America; **Darrell Watkins**, All-Pro; and **Johnnie Aycock**, The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama.

Business Made Simple. . .

The One Stop Business License & Permitting Center - a collaborative effort between The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, local and state government, as well as various businesses and educational institutions - has been developed to provide business owners and prospective entrepreneurs a physical and online location for information and forms regarding licenses, permits and taxes required by local, state and federal governments.

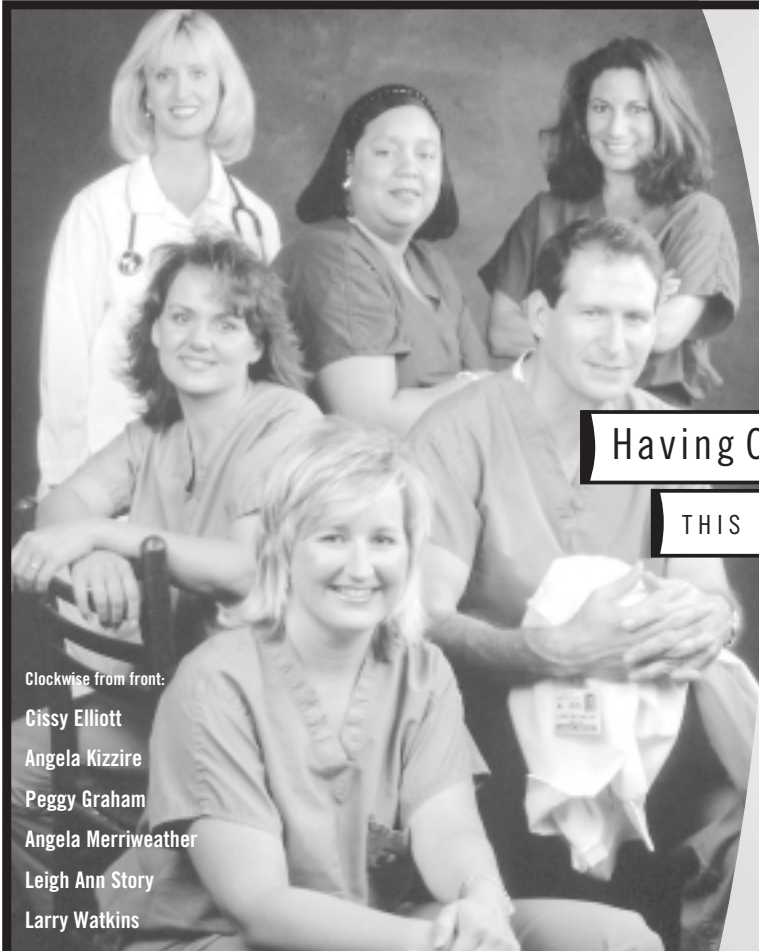
You are "One Stop" closer to meeting your business needs by accessing this site at www.youronestopcenter.com or by visiting the One Stop Center located in The Chamber of Commerce at 2200 University Boulevard in Downtown Tuscaloosa.

The informative website has several features that every business will find useful including: resource links and downloadable help tools; a start-up business checklist; various business, license and permit forms; and other practical and applicable information.

For more information about The Chamber's Business Resource Center, call 758.7588.



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Angela Merriweather
Leigh Ann Story
Larry Watkins

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to any unexpected medical need. That's important when seconds count. If you are a candidate for outpatient surgery, inform your physician that you choose DCH Regional Medical Center, Northport Medical Center or Fayette Medical Center. We're the home team.



DCH Regional Medical Center Northport Medical Center Fayette Medical Center

Nominations Sought For Corporate Service

The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama will present the 3rd annual Robert C. Tanner Corporate Service Award at the annual meeting on Thursday, January 16, 2003 at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel. The award is named in honor and memory of the late **Bob Tanner**, founding partner of the law firm of Tanner & Guin and a former Chairman of The Chamber.

The award is given to honor and recognize exceptional corporate leadership and service to the community through volunteer, charitable, philanthropic and community service efforts by a local firm, business, industry or institution.

The Chamber annually recognizes individual achievement and leadership by volunteers through the Charles Land Member of the Year Award as well as through Distinguished Service Awards. However, the Robert Tanner award is given to express appreciation and highlight the significant contributions of a corporate

entity that is helping in an exceptional way to build a better community.

Previous winners of the award are **Tanner & Guin** and **Mercedes-Benz U. S. International**.

Nominations are sought from all members of The Chamber. To make a nomination, simply write or FAX a letter on your letterhead outlining the volunteer service, charitable and philanthropic efforts, and community leadership provided that has contributed to a higher quality of life and better community in Tuscaloosa County and West Alabama.

Nominations are due no later than **Monday, December 30th**. Mail or FAX your nomination to: Robert C. Tanner Corporate Service Award, The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, P. O. Box 20410, Tuscaloosa, AL 35402 or FAX 205.391.0565. Nominations can also be dropped by The Chamber office at 2200 University Boulevard in Downtown Tuscaloosa.

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Tuscaloosa Continues to be an Entrepreneurial Hot Spot

Tuscaloosa-Birmingham continues to be ranked as one of the top large metro areas in the United States according to the ninth annual “Entrepreneurial Hot Spots”, released by Cognetics, a corporate and economic research firm in Waltham, Massachusetts.

The Tuscaloosa-Birmingham area is ranked 8th in the nation based on the latest finding by Cognetics. The findings are based on the actual number of startups and growth of companies by large metro areas, small metro areas, states, regions and rural areas.

In an attempt to answer the question of why entrepreneurs are starting and growing companies in some areas more than others, a number of hard and soft factors were identified by the report. Today’s entrepreneurs are making use of new technologies “in fields such as computer software, communications, health, law, finance, electronics, biotech and specialty products in old fashioned industries like steel, textiles and fish”.

Both measurable and intangible factors are influencing decisions. Hard factors identified in the report included universities, skilled labor pool, airports and a quality place to live. Soft factors have to do with the community’s culture, and the ability to tolerate and recognize “new and different people doing new and different things” reads the report.

In the state rankings, Alabama was 10th in the nation, moving up four spots from the last report. Nevada was ranked number 1; and among southeastern states, Florida was ranked 11th, Louisiana, 15th; and Mississippi, 29th. Earlier in the year, the Small Business Survival Committee named Alabama as the 10th most entrepreneur-friendly state in the U. S.

Around Alabama in the small metro area rankings, Huntsville was 9th in the nation, and Mobile was ranked 17th in the nation.

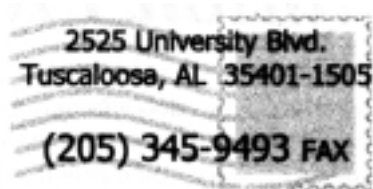
Entrepreneurial Climate Test

Cognetics offer the following questions to determine if a city is entrepreneur-friendly.

- When the mayor meets with business leaders, are there as many CEOs of mid-size growth companies as bankers and corporate executives?
- Are entrepreneurs invited to join the best athletic, social and civic clubs, and have they joined?
- Does the local newspaper follow the fortunes of start-ups and mid-sized companies with the same intensity and sophistication as it does the large corporations?
- Are innovative companies able to recruit nearly all of their professional work force from the local area?
- Is there a sizeable, visible venture capital community?
- Does the local university encourage its faculty and students to participate in entrepreneurial spin-offs, and do they?
- Do growth company CEOs and venture capitalists hold a least a quarter of the seats on the board of the larger banks?
- Does the community’s economic development agency spend more time helping local companies than it does chasing after facilities of out-of-state corporations?
- Can you quickly think of 10 recent spin-offs, start-ups, or growth firms started by entrepreneurs who have left larger companies?

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The CELEBRATION continues

JANUARY

Journey of Excellence - Honoring Founders and Leaders

Jan. 12	Program	2:00 p.m.	Bean-Brown Theatre
	Reception	3:00 p.m.	Atrium

FEBRUARY

Black History Month - Focusing on the C. A. Fredd Campus

Feb. 4	Everett McCorvey Performance	7:30 p.m.	Bean-Brown Theatre
Feb. 7	Black History Month Banquet with Congressman Artur Davis	TBA	C. A. Fredd Campus
Feb. 28	Musical Tribute to Zelpha Wells	TBA	C. A. Fredd Campus
TBA	John Stallworth Scheduled Appearance		C. A. Fredd Campus

MARCH

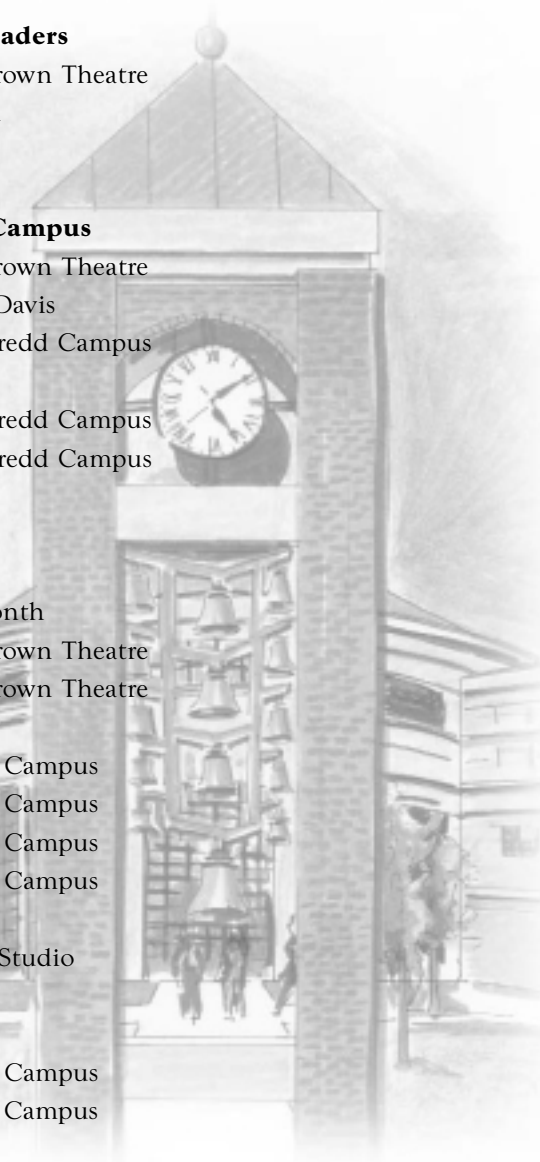
Celebrating the Arts and Humanities

Artwork of current and former students on exhibit during the month			
Mar. 6	Poetry and Music Production	7:30 p.m.	Bean-Brown Theatre
Mar. 15	Alabama Stage & Screen Hall of Fame		Bean-Brown Theatre
Mar. 24	Mark Childress, author of Crazy in Alabama		
	Student Session	11:00 a.m.	Martin Campus
	Film Showing	1:30 p.m.	Martin Campus
	Reception and Book Signing	5:30 p.m.	Martin Campus
	Evening Session	7:30 p.m.	Martin Campus
Mar. 29	Master Ballet Class with Cornelius Carter	11:00 a.m.	Dance Studio

APRIL

Our Future - Our Students

Apr. 3	Wellness Center Health Fair	10 a.m.	Martin Campus
Apr. 23	Jubilee Finale	11:30 a.m.	Martin Campus
	Clock Tower Dedication and Luncheon		



Members In The News

DCH Regional Medical Center



Meredith Jones has been selected as the Director of Lab Services for DCH Regional Medical Center, according to **Donna Marrero**, Vice President of

Outpatient/Ancillary Services. As Director, he will supervise all inpatient and outpatient lab services.

Jones joined the Regional Medical Center from Bayer Diagnostics in Terrytown, New York, where he served as director of lab consulting services. Prior to that position, he was lab director for Athens Regional Medical Center in Georgia for 10 years. He holds a bachelor's degree in medical technology and a master's degree in administrative services from East Carolina University in Greenville, N.C.

McAlister's Deli Opens New Location



Mayor Harvey Fretwell and Chamber Chairman **Dr. Charles Nash** joined McAlister's employees for a September 7th ribbon cutting for their new location at 3021 Tyler Road in Northport. Congratulations!

Pizza Magia Holds Grand Opening

Pizza Magia held its grand opening on Thursday, September 26th.



Dr. Harold Hirsch, owner, and other representatives were joined by Tuscaloosa **Mayor Al DuPont**; Northport **Mayor Harvey Fretwell**; Chamber Chairman, **Dr. Charles Nash**; and members of the Boys and Girls Club of Tuscaloosa County to cut the ribbon. Pizza Magia donated \$250.00 to the Boys and Girls Club of Tuscaloosa during their grand opening ceremony. The new store is located at 1110 15th Street. Congratulations!

Krystal's Opens New Store



Krystal's new facility, located on Tyler Road in Northport, was officially opened with a ribbon cutting ceremony on Thursday, October 17th. The standing room only crowd included Krystal's staff and families, Northport city officials, Chamber Board members, many area business people, and members of the Boys and Girls Club of Tuscaloosa County. Krystal employees served items from the menu while wearing tuxedos. The Boys and Girls Club of Tuscaloosa County received a \$1000.00 donation in the form of a "ribbon". Krystal's also donated 1% of the net sales for the first month to the Boys and Girls Club of Tuscaloosa. Congratulations and thank you!

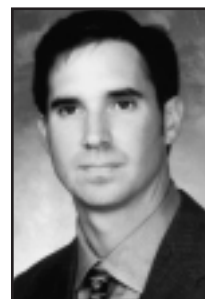
Best Western Park Plaza Has One of Alabama's Unforgettable Faces For 2003

Johnny Dancy, General Manager of Best Western Park Plaza, has been named one of Alabama's Unforgettable Faces for 2003 by the Alabama Bureau of Tourism & Travel. Johnny was nominated because he actively promotes and markets Tuscaloosa and West Alabama in many various ways. He is an active member of The Chamber of Commerce, and has served as an Ambassador for two years and will serve on the board of directors in 2003. He also Chairs the Tuscaloosa Area Hospitality Association.

Clay Kilgore Construction

Clay Kilgore Construction, Inc. was recently awarded the prestigious Builder of the Year Award for 2002 by the Home Builders Association of Tuscaloosa. Selected by the membership, the criteria for the honor includes community involvement, business reputation, and participation in the Home Builders Association's activities.

In addition, the company was also awarded the 2002 Gold Award for its Parade of Homes entry in the Lexington Downs neighborhood.



Kilgore Construction specializes in custom home design consultation and home construction. **Clay Kilgore** is President of the firm. Congratulations!

Ward Scott Veron Architects

The Tuscaloosa architectural firm, Ward Scott Veron Architects, Inc., is proud to announce the addition of **Robert C. Lanoux**, AIA, to its staff. He will be responsible for the administration of various architecture projects including

Members In The News



building design and interior design coordination.

Mr. Lanoux graduated from LSU with a degree in architecture. Fifteen years of his professional work experi-

ence has been in the Birmingham market; and his design experience includes corporate, educational, federal judicial, commercial and residential projects, with a special concentration in health care facilities.

Regions Bank



Charles R. Sittason, Chairman and CEO of Regions Bank Tuscaloosa has announced that **Walter H. (Buddy) Spidle, Jr.** has been promoted to Commercial Loan Officer of Regions Bank in Tuscaloosa.

Buddy Spidle

Spidle joined Regions in Birmingham in 1979 as an Installment Loan Coordinator then Branch Sales Manager. Later he joined Regions Morgan Keegan Trust as Trust Business Development Officer. Spidle majored in Business and Finance at UAB and The University of Alabama. He also served in the U.S. Marines. A native of Birmingham, he is an active member of the American Cancer Society, Junior Achievement, Habitat for Humanity and the Leukemia Society. He will reside in Tuscaloosa.



In addition, **R. Lance Johnson** has been promoted to Retail Lender of Regions Bank in Tuscaloosa. Johnson joined Regions in 1997 as a part-time associate in the Credit

Department. He graduated from the University of Alabama in December 1997 with a degree in Business Management and began his Regions career full-time. A native of Northport,

Johnson is an active member of IBX Business Exchange Group and Northport Baptist Church. He and his wife, Stacey, are expecting their first child in March and reside in Northport.

cus•tom ('kus-təm) *adj.*: made or performed according to individual order.



Custom home at Lexington Downs

**2002 Builder of the Year
Gold Award Winner 2002 Parade of Homes**



205/349-8886



Third Annual Civic Hall of Fame Seeking Nominations

Bear Bryant, Maude Whatley, Charles Stillman, Julia Tutwiler, Buford Boone, Munny Sokol - these and other 'civic giants' are all part of the fabric of Tuscaloosa County's history, heritage and progress. Countless numbers of citizens over the years have helped build the economic, social, cultural, educational and civic fabric of our community - and that's what the Tuscaloosa County Civic Hall of Fame is designed to honor.

The 3rd Annual Civic Hall of Fame induction ceremony will be held on **April 29, 2003** at the Bryant Conference Center, and we are looking for nominations! Sponsored by The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, nominations must be submitted on the official nomination form available at The Chamber and **must be received no later than January 15th.**

The mission of the Tuscaloosa County Civic Hall of Fame is to honor citizens of Tuscaloosa County who have made broad and lasting contributions to the betterment of the community. By recognizing these individuals and portraying them as role models, the Hall of Fame will help stimulate interest in and appreciation for the value of the history of the community, and also motivate an interest in community service on the part of others.

"The Chamber established the Civic Hall of Fame as a gift to the community during our organization's centennial year in 2000," said Chamber President **Johnnie Aycock**. "It was created to be a permanent reminder of



Tuscaloosa County
CIVIC HALL OF FAME

our history and heritage through induction of citizens that have made significant, lasting contributions to a

better way of life and more prosperous, quality community. Our first two classes of honorees have certainly achieved these objectives and reflect the very essence of civic duty and servant-leadership."

The first class of honorees for the Tuscaloosa County Civic Hall of Fame included: Dr. Charles Stillman; Julia Tutwiler; Frank Blair; Maude Whatley; Snow Hinton; Harry Pritchett; Buford Boone; McDonald Hughes; Frank Moody; George LeMaistre; Paul "Bear" Bryant; Munny Sokol; Reese Phifer; Gwendolyn Faucett; and Bob Tanner.

The second class of inductees included: Mildred Westervelt Warner; J. Oviatt Bowers; Leroy McAbee; Jimmy Harrison, Jr.; Mary Ann Phelps; Jim Boone; and Cordell Wynn.

Please make plans and take time to submit a nomination for the 3rd annual Tuscaloosa County Civic Hall of Fame. Guidelines, nomination forms and other details are available by contacting The Chamber office at 758.7588 or drop by our office at 2200 University Boulevard.



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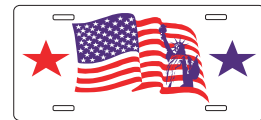
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