

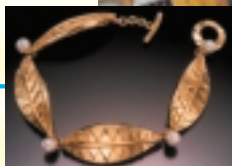
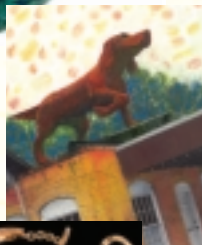
Chamber \_\_\_\_\_  
*Perspectives*

Second Quarter, 2003



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# the kentuck art center



*Kentuck Museum  
the Gallery at Kentuck  
the Gallery Shop  
Art Night (first Thursdays)  
Kentuck for Kids  
Studio Artists  
the Kentuck Festival of the Arts  
(October 18 & 19, 2003)*



From left: glass, Xochitl Ross; jewelry, Jamie Cassevoiy; photography Kathleen Fetters; vase, 2003 Merit Award Recipient Mark Rademacher; basket in background, 2003 Merit Award Recipient Lonnie Talaferro



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# Chamber Perspectives

Second Quarter, 2003



Shelton State Community College's new Clock Tower

## Chamber Perspectives

A publication of  
The Chamber of Commerce  
of West Alabama

**Bryan Kindred**  
Chairman

The Chamber of Commerce  
of West Alabama

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## Mission of The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama

The mission of The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama is to provide the vision, leadership and catalyst for the advancement of the economic prosperity, business climate and quality of life for the total community.

  
*Tuscaloosa County*  
**CIVIC HALL OF FAME**

## Inducts Six New Members

Six outstanding citizens were honored on Tuesday night, April 29th by being inducted into the Tuscaloosa County Civic Hall of Fame during ceremonies at the Bryant Center.

Sponsored by The Chamber, this was the third annual induction ceremony for the Civic Hall of Fame, which is designed to honor exceptional citizens who have made significant, long-term contributions to the overall development of Tuscaloosa County.

The Civic Hall of Fame, which was born during The Chamber's 100th anniversary year, has inducted 22 citizens to date, fifteen in the inaugural class in 2001, and seven citizens in the 2002 class. The six newest members of the Tuscaloosa County Civic Hall of Fame are:



Born in 1830, **James Harris Fitts** was a lawyer, banker, industrialist and civic leader during the critical years of development and reconstruction in

Tuscaloosa in the mid-nineteenth century. A graduate of The University of Alabama and its Law School, Mr. Fitts served as City Attorney, which during his tenure, the laws of the City of Tuscaloosa were codified in 1863.

Mr. Fitts founded the first private bank in Alabama, the J. H. Fitts & Company Bank, which later became City National Bank, First Alabama, and today, Regions Bank. He was the founding President of the Alabama Bankers Association in 1890. An exceptional businessman, Mr. Fitts also was responsible for a variety of new industries and businesses and is considered one of the most prominent early economic development leaders for Tuscaloosa.

Mr. Fitts also was a key leader in the rebuilding, reorganization and fiscal improvements of The University of Alabama following the Civil War, serving for 40 years as the volunteer Treasurer of The University during this critical period. He also served in a variety of other key leadership roles with the Episcopal Church, was a charter leader of the Alabama Historical Society, and led in the development of Alabama's first geological survey. Mr. Fitts died in 1912.



Born in Tuscaloosa in 1907, **John Clemson Duckworth, Sr.** is synonymous with civic and business leadership for a great part of the 20th century in Tuscaloosa. A graduate of The University of Alabama in 1928, Mr. Duckworth joined the Tuscaloosa Building & Loan Company, which later became First Federal Savings & Loan Association. During his fifty years of leadership, First Federal grew into one of Alabama's leading financial institutions.

A leader in his profession and in the community, Mr. Duckworth served in a diverse, broad range of roles during his distinguished career. He served as President of the Tuscaloosa Planning Commission during the time Tuscaloosa's first zoning ordinances were adopted; and served as President or Chairman of a wide range of organizations, including Community Chest (United Way), Greater Tuscaloosa Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club,

*(Continued next page)*

*Continued from previous page)*

YMCA, United Methodist Church, Tuscaloosa Hotel Corporation, and a host of others.

Mr. Duckworth was instrumental in the development of Capitol Park, and a faithful and active supporter of The University of Alabama, playing a significant role in the development of scholarships and endowments for area young people. A recipient of the Tuscaloosa County Citizen of the Year in 1991, Mr. Duckworth died in 2001.



Born in 1917, **Jonathan (Jack) Westervelt Warner** moved to Tuscaloosa as a child when his grandfather, Herbert E. Westervelt consolidated Gulf States Paper Corporation in Tuscaloosa in 1929. A graduate of Culver Military Academy and Washington & Lee University, Mr. Warner has become one of Tuscaloosa's great treasures, contributing in significant ways to the community's economic, historical, cultural and social progress.

Mr. Warner joined Gulf States after World War II and served in every key leadership role, including Chairman, CEO and President during his illustrious career, retiring on January 1, 1995. During the period under his leadership, Gulf States experienced unprecedented growth and expansion of markets and products. His business leadership was felt throughout Alabama and the nation, and he is a member of the Alabama Business Hall of Fame and the Alabama Academy of Honor.

A man of great passion for the arts, preservation, higher education, and conservation, Mr. Warner has served in a broad variety of leadership roles. The Warner Art Collection - a founder of Tuscaloosa's Heritage Week - preservation of historic structures throughout the Tuscaloosa community – leadership roles on behalf of local, state and national business and education organizations – park development – all of these and more are a testament to the civic leadership of Mr. Jack Warner.



Born in 1927, **George Shirley** embodied all of the attributes of civic responsibility and service during a long, distinguished banking career in Tuscaloosa. A graduate of The University of Alabama, Mr. Shirley was an effective business leader, serving most of his career in key leadership roles, including President and CEO, with the First National Bank of Tuscaloosa, now AmSouth Bank.

A respected businessman, Mr. Shirley served in various capacities including President of the Alabama Bankers Association, member of the Board of Directors of the Birmingham Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, and President or Chairman of key community organizations such as the Greater Tuscaloosa Chamber of Commerce, United Way, Tuscaloosa Exchange Club, YMCA, First United Methodist Church, and the Tuscaloosa Planning & Zoning Commission.

Mr. Shirley served as Vice Chairman of the Tuscaloosa City Board

of Education during one of the most critical times in the history of the community. Dedicated to education at every level, Mr. Shirley served his beloved alma mater, The University of Alabama, with great distinction, including member of the Board of Trustees of The University of Alabama System. A model citizen that understood his civic responsibility, Mr. Shirley died in 2000.



Born in Greensboro, Alabama in 1938, **Verta Barr Meherg** has made an indelible mark on Tuscaloosa during her exceptional professional and civic career. A veteran professional in the automobile business, Ms. Meherg began her career in 1956 and today is the owner and President of Quality Mazda/Volkswagen.

While she plays down the fact that the automobile industry is male dominated, she has made great strides on behalf of women in the business and civic arenas. Ms. Barr was the first woman to serve as President of the Tuscaloosa New Car Dealers Association and the Alabama Independent Automobile Dealers Association – the first woman to Chair the Alabama New Car Dealers Association – and the first woman to serve as Chairman of The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama.

An unselfish and devoted civic servant, Ms. Barr has served in key leadership roles with a variety of community and civic organizations during her distinguished career. She has served as President or Chairman of United Way, Tuscaloosa League of Business and

*(See "Civic" page 5)*

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("Civic" continued from page 3)

Professional Women, Soroptimist International, United Cerebral Palsy, Shelton State Foundation, Tuscaloosa Convention and Visitors Bureau, and a host of other charitable and service causes.



Born in Uniontown, Alabama in 1947, **John H. England, Jr.** has earned a reputation and respect as a man of fairness and justice with a heart for others during his distinguished career. A graduate of Tuskegee Institute and The University of Alabama Law School, Judge England has been an effective attorney and sensitive public servant.

Judge England began his law career in Tuscaloosa following service in the U. S. Army, and soon began to impact public policy in Tuscaloosa. Judge England help lead the way to change the commission form of government to a Mayor-Council form. In 1985, he was one of the first two African Americans to be elected to the Tuscaloosa City Council since reconstruction.

Following his terms on the City Council, Judge England was appointed as Circuit Court Judge in Tuscaloosa County, making him the first African American Circuit Court Judge in over 100 years; and he was subsequently elected to a full term in 1994, becoming the first black candidate to win a county-wide election in Tuscaloosa County. In 1999, Judge England was appointed to fill a seat on the Alabama Supreme Court. Today, he serves once again as a

Circuit Court Judge and as a member of the Board of Trustees of The University of Alabama System.

"These six models of excellence should inspire all of us to reach higher levels of service and civic responsibility", stated Chamber President **Johnnie Aycock**. "In some ways, these are ordinary men and women, but they have provided extraordinary service through their commitment to a better way of life for all of us. We congratulate each of these new Civic Hall of Fame honorees."



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