



## Leadership Tuscaloosa

I greatly expanded my knowledge of the community. I thought I had a good view of the community, but I quickly saw that I didn't know as much as I thought. I learned a lot about segments of the community that I had not been exposed to.

### What are you doing now, in terms of community involvement, that you might not be doing if not for your Leadership Tuscaloosa experience?

I don't know if I'm doing something now that I would not have done if I'd not been involved in Leadership Tuscaloosa. I do attribute a part of whatever successes I've been a part of through P.A.R.A. to the knowledge, experience gained and contacts made through my participation in the Leadership Tuscaloosa process. It helped me grown as a public servant—to see a broader aspect of the community.



### Anne Green

Alabama Gas Corp.  
Class of 2002

### How do you feel Leadership Tuscaloosa helped you?

It was a great opportunity for me to meet people who work in the Tuscaloosa area.

### What was the most important/interesting thing you learned during your Leadership Tuscaloosa experience?

I learned that teamwork among businesses and involvement in the community are the keys to a successful city.

### What are you doing now, in terms of involvement in the community, that you might not be doing if not for your Leadership Tuscaloosa experience?

I am involved in the community by serving on two boards: the American Red Cross and Focus on Senior Citizens.



### Jeff Atkins

Duckworth-Morris Acordia  
Class of 1999

### How do you feel Leadership Tuscaloosa helped you?

Leadership Tuscaloosa gave me a greater sense of awareness about the distress in our city. Before taking part in the program, I wasn't aware of (or simply chose to ignore) the vast needs of so many—the poor, the hungry and the homeless. And with that, I appreciate more the function

of all of our United Way agencies and the part they play in providing “life” opportunities to so many of these people.

### What was the most important/interesting thing you learned during your Leadership Tuscaloosa experience?

We are a diverse community, and that's OK. The fact that Leadership Tuscaloosa strives to create a diverse class of individuals—thus allowing for the exchange of different ideas and beliefs—was extremely beneficial to me. No, we don't all think the same way, believe in the same things, or vote for the same people. But, then, wouldn't it be boring if we did?

### What are you doing now, in terms of involvement in the community, that you might not be doing if not for your Leadership Tuscaloosa experience?

Since graduating from Leadership Tuscaloosa in 1999, I have been involved with the Red Cross of West Alabama—just completing a two-year term as chairman of the board. And this year I established a production company called Purpose Productions, with the sole purpose of bringing more Christian music entertainment to the Tuscaloosa area. But, in recognizing diversity, we are promoting these concerts at secular venues like the Bama Theatre.

### Dr. Samory Pruitt

University of Alabama  
Class of 1997



### How do you feel Leadership Tuscaloosa helped you?

Leadership Tuscaloosa provided me with an opportunity to meet and interact with a wide range of community leaders in Tuscaloosa. Through the sessions, I was able to learn more about my classmates, the city of Tuscaloosa, and about myself. Leadership Tuscaloosa introduced me to a broader segment of people in Tuscaloosa, helped me to get more involved in the community, and allowed me to develop a network with other individuals with a shared interest in civic involvement.

### What is the most important/interesting thing you learned during your Leadership Tuscaloosa experience?

The most important thing I learned during my Leadership Tuscaloosa experience was that most people, regardless of their education or economic status, want primarily the same thing for their families and their community. They want to be able to provide for their families, send their children to good schools, and live





## Leadership Tuscaloosa

in a safe and comfortable environment. We have more things in common than we do differences. Additionally, distress from health-related issues, job-related issues, or family-related issues hurt the same across the entire demographic spectrum.

### What are you doing now, in terms of involvement in the community, that you might not be doing if not for your Leadership Tuscaloosa experience?

I am working with several leadership development initiatives that seek to introduce individuals to the Tuscaloosa community in the hope that they will become more involved in the community as well.



### Vickie Baughman

AmSouth Bank  
Class of 1995

### How do you feel Leadership Tuscaloosa helped you?

Since my Leadership Tuscaloosa experience in 1995, I have felt more “plugged in” to the political, social, and infrastructural challenges of the Tuscaloosa community. Every town has a story, and Leadership Tuscaloosa gives participants—newcomers as well as natives—a quick study on the obstacles and opportunities facing our leaders and citizens.

### What was the most important/interesting thing you learned during your Leadership Tuscaloosa experience?

In the past, I tended to hear local political rhetoric in the community with an attitude of “that’s just the way it is.” Since Leadership Tuscaloosa, I find myself more likely to speak up in community forums, even when I don’t take the popular point of view. I have found it very interesting to note how often this results in a new consensus, simply because no one else had wanted to initiate an opposing discussion.

### What are you doing now, in terms of involvement in the community, that you might not be doing if not for your Leadership Tuscaloosa experience?

Leadership Tuscaloosa provided insight into many behind-the-scenes programs that address critical needs in our community. One of the most compelling parts of the program for me was the “Broken Brick Road,” an exercise that demonstrates the bureaucratic maze which must be maneuvered by recipients of government aid programs. I was also moved by the poverty and housing issues brought to light by Community Service Programs. Since then, my involvement in programs such as Welfare-to-Work, Habitat for Humanity, and the Community Soup Bowl has made these issues more

personal, and has allowed me to share concerns and talents with community members who I have not been able to work with before. Many of them are working to overcome personal life challenges.

### Cressandra Smothers

Stillman College  
Class of 1992

### How do you feel Leadership Tuscaloosa helped you?

Leadership Tuscaloosa introduced me to the inner workings of the city and gave me access to information I otherwise might not have had. I developed a broader understanding of the community in which I live, and a greater interest in serving it.



### What was the most important/interesting thing you learned during your Leadership Tuscaloosa experience?

Tuscaloosa has a lot to offer. Yes, I learned a lot about effective leadership, city government, how a society should function, and so on. But the bottom line for me was that I learned to value Tuscaloosa. Too often we take for granted the specialness of our city. Leadership Tuscaloosa provided an enriching experience, and I’m glad I had an opportunity to participate.

### What are you doing now, in terms of involvement in the community, that you might not be doing if not for your Leadership Tuscaloosa experience?

I am a member of the Tuscaloosa Convention and Visitors Bureau Board of Directors and the Focus on Leadership Steering Committee. Because I’m currently enrolled in graduate school and working fulltime, I’ve cut back on my community involvement for the time being. Since 1992, I’ve been involved with the Murphy African American Museum, chaired the Lou Rawls Parade of Stars Viewing Party to benefit Stillman and the United Negro College Fund, served on the board of Big Brothers/Big Sisters, was a stakeholder in Challenge 21, served on the Michael A. Figures Leadership Steering Committee, worked with the Mental Health Association of Tuscaloosa County, and was a member of the Leadership Development Task Force of Challenge 21.





## Leadership Tuscaloosa



### Jenny Thagard

Davis-Emerson Middle School  
Class of 1992

#### How do you feel Leadership Tuscaloosa helped you?

Leadership Tuscaloosa introduced me to aspects of the Tuscaloosa community that I had not encountered before. My Leadership Tuscaloosa classmates were a wonderful group of individuals with whom I would not have come in contact without the program. I have met many of my classmates over the years working with various agencies and committees.

#### What was the most important/interesting thing you learned during your Leadership Tuscaloosa experience?

The session on poverty and homelessness in Tuscaloosa was the most eye-opening. The experience of visiting the Salvation Army shelter and touring areas of Tuscaloosa where poverty is prevalent made a lasting impact on me.

#### What are you doing now, in terms of involvement in the community, that you might not be doing if not for your Leadership Tuscaloosa experience?

I became involved in the Adopt-A-School Program with The Chamber of Commerce, as well as serving as a volunteer with the Girl Scouts of America, following my Leadership Tuscaloosa experience.

### Loie Robinson

Easter Seals of West Alabama  
Class of 1993



#### How do you feel Leadership Tuscaloosa helped you?

I'm not a native Tuscaloosan, although I had lived in Tuscaloosa for a number of years prior to attending Leadership Tuscaloosa. As a member of Leadership Tuscaloosa, I got the "big picture" of the services and resources available in our community. I also learned what a caring community we live in, a city I'm proud to call home. I gained confidence and perspective from this experience.


#### What was the most important/interesting thing you learned during your Leadership Tuscaloosa experience?

I saw that one person can make a difference. And, if that one person bonds with other people, big changes can occur. The most interesting thing I did was SIMSOC

(Simulated Society), where group action' was put to the test. I made friends in Leadership Tuscaloosa that I still have today, years later. The SIMSOC "red group" will bond you forever!

#### What are you doing now, in terms of involvement in the community, that you might not be doing if not for your Leadership Tuscaloosa experience?

I became administrator of the Easter Seals of West Alabama organization. I've been really involved in the Tuscaloosa Civitan Club, serving as chair person for the Citizen of the Year Program, serving as president of the club, and serving on its board of directors.



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## Downtown Motor Company

### Going The Extra Mile

By Crystal L. Lucas



Some call it southern hospitality and others call it the golden rule, but to John Tucker, owner of Downtown Motor Co., the phrase “Do unto others as you would have them to do unto you” is a way of life.

Tucker and his wife have personal relationships with the

people they do business with, and are able to identify with their needs as consumers. This approach has allowed him to sell over 26 cars to one family.

Many of their customers have grown into longtime friends, like Frances Montgomery, who stops by occasionally just to say hello.

His father Gurnie Tucker started Downtown Motor Co. on Labor Day of 1952. John Tucker worked with his father while he attended the University of Alabama.

After graduation, he served two years in the U.S. Air Force as a personnel officer in Texas. In 1957 he returned to Alabama to be a partner in the dealership and bought the business from his father in 1980. He has been running the business for the past 24 years along with his wife, Jane and a small staff of part-time employees.

“We try to treat everybody fair, like we would want to be treated, and give a good price on our products, which is usually lower than most other places.” said Tucker.

He believes the most important aspect of car buying is knowing what kind of person you are doing business with.

“We offer warranties on our vehicles,” said Tucker. “We want people to come back if they have a problem.”

Tucker has seen the car industry transform over the years

and says the most time-consuming part of his job is the paperwork.

That paperwork increased in 1975 when the government began requiring that vehicles have titles.



When you step into the Downtown Motor Co., don't expect to be bombarded with a flashy show of facts and figures from a fast talking salesman.

John Tucker greets his customers with a friendly smile and a firm handshake.

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## Mark Moody: New ideas

# Stretch Success For Jupiter Bar and Grill

By Jodi Harrell

Considering the new forms of entertainment Mark Moody now has to offer at Jupiter Bar and Grill, the success of his business is snowballing.

Jupiter Bar and Grill has been an ever-growing entertainment spot and restaurant for three years now. Located on the strip, it is the hottest spot for college students to hang out, listen to bands and enjoy delicious food. However, Mark Moody has not forgotten about the older population.



Mark Moody, owner of Jupiter Bar and Grill, led his business to be chosen as one of the top 10 college venues.

Away from the colorful array of lights and the loud dance music, Jupiter offers a more cozy atmosphere in the dining area with dim lights and a small stage.

“Tuscaloosa doesn’t seem to have much entertainment for this age group, so we plan to set aside a Friday or Saturday of each month, beginning in January, especially for this crowd,” Moody said. “It will begin at 7 or 8 and be finished at 10.”

Moody plans to book a variety of Blues singer and Oldies bands. He believes this will bring a more relaxed mood that caters to their needs.

Willie King, a notorious Blues singer from Tuscaloosa recently performed. He is a favorite for this age group. King recently received an award for his contribution

to the Tuscaloosa area for his involvement in the entertainment industry.

Jupiter Bar and Grill is known for the wide selection of bands pulled from many different areas. This also draws crowds from all over the map.

Country music artist Robert Earl King recently performed here. Two people came all the way from Manchester, New Hampshire to enjoy the show. Moody hires the best acts he can.

“This can sometimes be hard because if people are not familiar with the band, they might not trust that they are going to get their five dollars worth.”

He tries to stick with the more publicized bands.

Moody works up a delicious entrée selected from the mouth-watering specialties on the menu.



One performer, in particular, was country music star Kenny Chesney. Chesney had asked for the top 10 college venues to perform at as a charity offer and a way for him to practice for his big tour. Jupiter was one of the venues chosen.

“Our bar has a good reputation because of all the big acts, and it’s a good venue for performers,” Moody said.

Moody would like people to realize that Jupiter is much more than great bands and a large dance floor. They offer a wide variety of foods including pastas, sandwiches and wraps, salads, hotdogs and hamburgers. They also have free delivery to downtown Tuscaloosa and the college campus on orders during the day.

The newest form of entertainment that has been a big contribution to Jupiter’s success is the “Texas Hold ‘Em” Poker Tournament, held every Tuesday night.

“This seems to bring in a large crowd,” Moody said. “It is something different that we wanted to offer as another form of entertainment.”

Along with the popular bands booked throughout the calendar each month, Jupiter offers Dance Night with DJ Pete on Saturdays for a more up-beat crowd. On Wednesday nights, Karaoke is offered.

Moody is proud to be a member of The Chamber. “It definitely gets the name out there and provides a good marketing tool,” Moody said. Jupiter has contributed to many chamber events by providing food.

As Jupiter is the biggest planet in the galaxy, Jupiter Bar and Grill will remain the biggest venue in Tuscaloosa if they keep spicing up their entertainment agenda with new ideas and popular performers and continue to serve “out of this world” food.



The appetizer sampler which includes, chicken fingers, fried mushrooms, cheese sticks and dipping sauces is one of the most popular selections.





## Introduction to New Members

*We want to welcome the following people and organizations into The Chamber. If you know these people and/or do business with them, take time to tell them you're glad they're a part of The Chamber Team.*

*Twelve of these new members are participants in the Focus on Leadership program, a joint effort of The Chamber and The Tuscaloosa News, designed to raise the level of community leadership by minority persons.*

*We hope they'll be active members. We know they'll be glad they invested in The Chamber.*

### **Airgas South**

Michael Barfield  
1701 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue  
Tuscaloosa 35401  
Gas: Industrial, Medical  
233-0170

### **Alma Bogan**

1708 Montrose Drive  
Tuscaloosa 35405  
Individuals  
758-6619

### **Brenda Carter**

1525 Montrose Drive  
Tuscaloosa 35405  
Individuals  
758-6619

### **Buffalo's American Grille**

Joe McCormick  
2325 University Blvd.  
Tuscaloosa 35401  
Restaurants  
349-3434

### **Concetta Grubbs**

2807 Sunset Drive NE  
Tuscaloosa 35404  
Individuals  
554-1869

### **Curtis Dykes**

2201 University Blvd.  
Tuscaloosa 35401  
Individuals  
349-0327

### **Greater New Testament Church**

Patrice Smith  
P. O. Box 41009  
Tuscaloosa 35404  
Churches  
554-0657

### **Herb Ragsdale**

512 Stone River Road  
Tuscaloosa 35406  
Individuals  
792-4638

### **Martha Alexander**

P. O. Box 72166  
Tuscaloosa 35407  
Individuals  
758-6619

### **Murray Guard Inc.**

Roger Murray III  
120 Summit Parkway, Suite 103  
Birmingham 35409  
Security Systems/Equipment/Monitoring  
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### **Northridge Fitness**

Steve Richardson  
1825 McFarland Blvd. N.  
Tuscaloosa 35406  
Fitness Centers  
752-1201

### **Office Depot #2274**

Carl Wright  
2300 McFarland Blvd., Suite 50  
Northport 35476  
Office Supplies/Furniture/Equipment/Service  
333-6930

### **Patrick H. Thomas Agency Inc.**

Patrick Thomas  
500 15<sup>th</sup> Street East, Suite A  
Tuscaloosa 35401-3232  
Insurance  
344-6330

### **Randy Allen**

2970 Juniper Lane  
Tuscaloosa 35405  
Individuals  
758-6619

### **Re/Max Achievers**

Teresa Dobbs  
1432 Crown Pointe Blvd.  
Tuscaloosa 35406  
Real Estate/Realty/Realtors  
759-5626

### **Realty South**

Marie Lawrence  
312 Merchant's Walk, Suite 5B  
Tuscaloosa 35406  
Real Estate/Realty/Realtors  
758-3300

### **Stephen Anderson**

6512 Ash Hill Drive  
Tuscaloosa 35405  
Individuals  
553-3187

### **Theo Bruinton**

2149 Fox Ridge Road  
Tuscaloosa 35406  
Individuals  
344-4450

### **TownCritic.com-Town Critic LLC**

Ira Thrasher  
2810 8<sup>th</sup> Street  
Tuscaloosa 35401  
Internet Directory/Solutions  
556-3250

### **Veronica Clark**

500 Snows Mill Avenue, #1107  
Tuscaloosa 35406  
Individuals  
758-9210

### **Vertis Giles-Brown**

1723 Arborway Drive  
Tuscaloosa 35405  
Individuals  
758-4667

### **Watchdog Document Services**

Tarah Perdue  
14411 Highway 140  
Coker 35452  
Waste Reduction/Disposal  
339-6322

### **Women At Work LLC**

Mary Patton  
3838 Sheffield Court, #15  
Tuscaloosa 35405  
Janitorial Services/Janitorial Supplies/Paper  
Products  
886-6953

### **Decorator Warehouse**

Doug Barger  
2307 Jack Warner Parkway  
Tuscaloosa 35401  
Furniture Dealer/Interior Design  
349-5855

### **Atokie Boman**

2800 McFarland Blvd.  
Apartment 916  
Tuscaloosa 35405  
Individuals  
562-5645

### **Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz P. C.**

Marion Walker  
420 North 20th Street  
Birmingham 35203  
Attorneys  
(205) 328-0480

### **Sealey Firewood**

Jeff Fondren  
4512 Lakeshore Drive  
Northport 35473  
Manufacturers/Processors  
333-5768

### **Prepaid Legal, Independent Associate**

Betty Key  
3736 Norwood Lane  
Tuscaloosa 35405  
Legal Services  
242-9421



## Spiller's new store in Northport

Shane Spiller speaks to a gathering of guests and employees prior to a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the company's new store in Northport. Shane recently



became president of Spiller Furniture Stores. He also serves on the Board of Directors of The Chamber.

## Chamber Seminar

So far during 2004, more than 750 Chamber members and non-members have received training, either in the technological arena or in other aspects of business like the quality of service. Dr. Randy Jarrell of Shelton State Community College on October 27 led a Chamber seminar entitled, "What Is It That Customers Really Want?" These seminars, offered to Chamber members at minimal charge, are one of the benefits of Chamber membership.



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*The Chamber leadership and staff wish you and yours the very best this holiday season.*

*Thanks to your investment in The Chamber and the work of hundreds of volunteers, 2004 has been an excellent year for our organization.*

*We're looking forward to an exciting and productive year in 2005.*

*Jim Flemming*  
2004 Chairman

*Johnnie Aycock*  
President



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# Together

## We're building a brighter future for West Alabama.

True understanding, in life as well as law, depends upon recognizing the connections among seemingly diverse issues, problems, and personalities.

Through their involvement in a variety of community organizations, attorneys at Phelps, Jenkins, Gibson & Fowler L.L.P. are helping to build bridges that lead to greater insight and understanding.

- AMERICAN RED CROSS
- BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF WEST ALABAMA
- CHALLENGE 21
- CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF WEST ALABAMA
- CITY OF TUSCALOOSA INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD
- CIVIL SERVICE BOARD FOR THE CITY OF TUSCALOOSA
- DCH REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER
- DCH FOUNDATION
- KID ONE TRANSPORT SYSTEM
- LEADERSHIP TUSCALOOSA
- RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
- TUSCALOOSA CHILDREN'S CENTER
- TUSCALOOSA CITY SCHOOLS EDUCATION FOUNDATION
- TUSCALOOSA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
- TUSCALOOSA COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
- UNITED WAY OF WEST ALABAMA
- AND MANY OTHERS



### PHELPS, JENKINS, GIBSON & FOWLER L.L.P.

#### Firm Partners

*Seated left to right:* Sam M. Phelps, James J. Jenkins, C. Barton Adcox, and J. Russell Gibson, III.

*Standing left to right:* W. David Ryan, Randolph M. Fowler, A. Courtney Crowder, Stephen E. Snow, Farley A. Poellnitz.

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