GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIR

As I enter my seventh year as department chair, I realize that I have served as chair under three different USM presidents and two different deans. Only two of the current faculty were hired before I came in 1988. I’m starting to feel old! We are continuing to hire new faculty, with Paige Phillips, Karl Wallace, and Alvin Holder joining us in August 2006 and Yong Zhang joining us in August 2007. Unfortunately, two faculty left the department this summer. Peter Butko moved to the University of Maryland to join his wife who took a position there two years ago and Andrew Lowe moved across the street to Polymer Science.

I just completed our annual ACS report where I listed the 15 Bachelor of Science, 2 Master of Science, and 4 doctoral graduates from this past year. One of our graduates, Erin Fortenberry (ACS biochemistry) won the USM Phi Kappa Phi Silver Bowl Award, the top academic honor for a graduating senior. Although not graduating this year, two other majors received national awards. Jessica Shackleford was selected as a Barry Goldwater scholar and Andrea Marshall was a Goldwater honorable mention. No other Mississippi university had a Goldwater winner this year, so congratulations to Jessica and Andrea! See the department website for other award winners.

The department had a very good year with external funding, bringing in nearly 4 million dollars. This was helped by a large Homeland Security grant to Gordon Cannon and Sabine Heinhorst, along with collaborators Jeff Evans and Karl Wallace. We did have a couple of education grants, with Angela Bedenbaugh receiving a grant from the Mississippi Department of Education to continue their work with middle school teachers, and Debbie Booth heading up a college team receiving an NSF Noyce grant to fund large scholarships for pre-service high school science teachers.

Our External Advisory Board met this past spring and continued planning for our department’s 50 year anniversary in the fall of 2009. Our department will “carry the banner” into the Centennial year anniversary for USM in 2010. We are considering several ideas for the fall celebration including a medical symposium by medical alumni, a scientific symposium by other alumni, and of course, homecoming celebrations. Other suggestions are welcome and, in fact, we need alumni to volunteer for planning committees. Please contact Rosie, Sharon, or me if you are willing to help plan these departmental celebrations or participate in the symposia. It’s going to be fun! Oh, one final thing. I am assembling a departmental history for the anniversary and would love to have stories from alumni about your time in the department. Just send those directly to me.

Robert Bateman
Robert.Bateman@usm.edu

OUR 2006/2007 GRADUATES

Bachelor of Science Degrees:
Tsegayesus Alemu, Eric Boyer, Christopher Bounds, Erin Fortenberry, Erica Faust, Jennifer Hammons, Adam Harless, Patrick Heidingsfelder, Sara Johnson, Mary Alice Mackey, Shanna Nesser, Timothy Pursley, Adam Roberts, Ryan Stephen, Meredith Todd, Patricia Villalta

Master of Science Degrees:
Zulma Jimenez, Gloria Viner, Veronika Viner

Doctorate Degrees:
Steven Adamson, Anne Giselle Marks (née Schnaubelt), Na Li, Eric Williams

ALUMNI NEWS

William Ainsworth (B.S. ’99; M.S. Florida State Univ.) had been working for the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Bureau of Petroleum Inspection. In March, he began a new job with Champion Technologies in Lafayette, LA as a field chemist.

David Arrington (B.S. ’97) is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Chemistry at the University of Alabama. He recently accepted a faculty position at Troy University in Troy, Ala.

Chad Booth’s (Ph.D. ’00) and collaborator Gary Beall’s development of a transparent ballistic polymer with superior properties was featured in the March issue of Texas Monthly. Chad is an assistant professor of chemistry at Texas State University San Marcos.

Julie Cameron (B.S. ’93; M.A. Univ. of Arizona) worked in the drug discovery field at the R. W. Johnson Pharmaceutical Research Institute in New Jersey for several years after obtaining her graduate degree. She visited China as a student of Chinese languages and cultures before returning to Mississippi, where she taught high school chemistry and math for four years. She just completed her first year teaching high school chemistry in Little Rock, Ark.

Jennifer Coleman (B.S. ’98) has been working at the Mississippi Power Plant in Daniel, Miss., for eight years,
most recently as a senior scientist. She and husband Stephen have been married for 10 years and have a 4-year-old daughter named Alexandria.

**Tricia Coleman** (Ph.D. ’04), husband Sean and son Miles have moved to the Minneapolis area, where she is working for Abbott Laboratories’ Renal Care Division as a medical science liaison. The family is in the process of adopting a baby girl from Ethiopia.

**Jennifer Clark Dickens** (B.S. ’96) wrote in response to our last newsletter: “I am now Jennifer Clark Dickens. I received my M.D. from the University of Alabama at Birmingham in 2000 and completed a family practice residency at Medical Center East in Birmingham in 2003. I married Jackson Dickens, a computer systems engineer, in January 2004. We live in Charlotte, N.C. For the past three years, I have been practicing at Matthews Family Physicians in Matthews, N.C., a suburb of Charlotte.” Jennifer and Jackson are expecting their first child in March of 2008.

**Gina Egan** (B.S. ’95; Ph.D. Pennsylvania State Univ.) is an instructor at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, Kan. She wrote: “Of all previous applications of my degree, I have found this to be the most fulfilling. I find interacting with the students and sharing my knowledge very enjoyable. It is most exciting when a student is truly interested in a topic and I notice they suddenly “get-it.”

**Pam Corder Miller** (B.S. ’94) is a quality control chemist at Chevron Corporation in Pascagoula, Miss. Pam, husband Frank Miller and son Andrew, who was born in 2006, live in Moss Point.

**Herbert Dedeaux** (B.S. ’92) was promoted to associate lab director of the Miami Drug Enforcement Administration last December. Herb and his wife Teresita Robinson have two children, daughter Brianna (12) and son Bryton (10).

**Dionne Fortenberry** (Ph.D. ’98) has been promoted to associate professor and was granted tenure at Mississippi University for Women. She is currently the senior chemistry faculty member, coordinator for the Physical Sciences Program, and is chairing the Undergraduate Curriculum Council at “The W.”

**Megan Fortenberry (née Johnson)**; B.S. ’01, M.S. in Science Education has been teaching math and chemistry for three years at Oak Grove High School. This past year, she was recognized by the Lamar County School Board for having the highest number of algebra students to make a perfect score on the state algebra test. Congratulations, Megan!

**Nicole Gill** (Ph.D. ’02), was recently promoted to associate principal scientist at Schering Plough Corporation. She became the proud owner of a condominium in 2005, is an accomplished member of her company’s bowling league, plays the clarinet in the local community band, and has learned to play Mah Jongg.

After six years of teaching high school chemistry, Andrea Hall Krell (B.S. ’01), a former student in our department’s licensure program, decided it was time for a career change. She will be joining the Master of Public Health program at the University of North Texas Health Sciences Center in Fort Worth, Texas, this fall and hopes to eventually specialize in epidemiology. Andrea and husband Gabriel Krell have a daughter, Katherine, who will celebrate her second birthday this summer.

**Rhoma Johnson** (B.S. ’92; Ph.D. Emory University), a former U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Emerging Leader Fellow, currently serves as a consumer safety officer with the Food and Drug Administration. In her spare time, she is writing a novel about three generations of women growing up in the Mississippi Delta region and hopes to one day become a famous “Mississippi author.”

Long-time supporter of our department and of the Honors College, **Robert D. Jordan** (B.S. ’78) invited the majors within the Honors College to tour the BP Plant in Decatur, Ala. Dr. David Wertz served as the official chaperone for the group of students who traveled to Decatur over the 2007 Mardi Gras break. At the plant, the students were taken on a tour of the facility, and were given guided tours through, among others, the research lab and a unit control room. While touring the facility control room, they even had the opportunity to experience the duties of an operating board technician through the use of the facility’s multi-million dollar training simulator.

**Jackie Key** (B.S. ’85) was named laboratory director for the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality in Pearl, Miss. He has been with MDEQ for 21 years, where he most recently was the manager of the Organic Chemistry Section of the Lab. Jackie and his wife Miki (B.S. ’85 Speech and Hearing) reside in Brandon, Miss., and have two children, Bo (11) and Luke (5).

**Chris Jones** (B.S. ’93) is currently working as an applications engineer at Molecular Imprints, an imprint lithography company based in Austin, Texas. In ’00, he married Shannon Melms.

**Patrick Lewis** (B.S. ’95; Ph.D. Louisiana State Univ.) is completing his residency in pathology at Washington University in St. Louis, Mo., and will begin a one-year fellowship in surgical pathology this summer. Tim’s wife Megan, a Southern Miss alumna, whom he met during his final year here, is working at the St. Louis City Crime Lab as a DNA analyst. The couple is expecting their first child.

**Vinh Nguyen** (B.S. ’00) has been working as a synthesis and applications chemist for Celanese in Houston, TX for the past four years in the company’s Polyvinyl Alcohol Division. He is also a partner in two small businesses in Texas and Mexico.

After her lecture here in the spring of 2006 (see previous issue of this newsletter), Kate Holloway suggested that we ask...
Johnny Pryor (B.S. ’81; M.D. Univ. of Mississippi Medical Center), another Laurel native, to give the next lecture in the Distinguished Scientists Seminar, Hattiesburg Clinic Lecture and Forum Lecture Series. Through his involvement in many national and international research projects, Dr. Pryor has emerged as the leading expert in diagnosis, management and treatment of cerebrovascular disease. He is the director of Interventional Neuroradiology and Endovascular Neurosurgery at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, and an instructor in neurosurgery and radiology at Harvard University. Needless to say, we were thrilled that he readily accepted our invitation and gave a fascinating lecture about “Chemistry, Innovation and Patient Care” in Bennett Auditorium last fall. He also discussed various issues related to studies and practice of medicine with Southern Miss pre-medical students during his visit to his alma mater. We are still waiting, however, for Dr. Pryor to continue the tradition initiated by Dr. Holloway, namely to suggest which of our distinguished alumni to invite as the next speaker in the lecture series!

Felicia Stewart (B.S. ’99) worked at the NASA Redstone Arsenal in Decatur, Ala., after graduating from Southern Miss and is continuing her education at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. She and husband Kelly McCarty have two children, Eboni Felise (3) and Chase Alexander (1). The family is accompanying Kelly, an international professional basketball player, on his many travels.

Linda Ward (B.S. ’96; M.S. Univ. of Alabama at Birmingham) had her research on detection of Vibrio parahaemolyticus in shellfish published in the Journal Applied and Environmental Microbiology. She and husband Eric Elam moved back to Houston, Texas after she received her Master of Science degree in forensic science. Linda is designing new tests for Spectracell, a company that does nutritional testing. Last September, the couple announced the birth of their first child, Logan Paul.

Bonnie Wells (née Cook, B.S. ’03) is completing her Master of Science degree in plant pathology at Mississippi State University and is exploring opportunities to join a doctorate program. In May 2005, she married the love of her life and long time companion, Robert Wells. Bonnie and Robert live in Leland with their family of rescued cats and dogs.

William West (Ph.D. ’96) is working in Baton Rouge for Deltech Corporation, a small specialty monomers company selling and shipping products all over the world. He has his own lab group, which supports all of the R&D, process control, pilot plant operations and product quality control activities for the company.

Senior Bridget Confait was an intern at Bayer Materials Science, Pittsburgh, Pa., this summer, and junior Lakeshia Gibson participated in the summer undergraduate research program in biochemistry at Texas A&M University, pursuing research in neuroscience.

Senior Ryan Stephen was awarded a Research Internship in Science and Engineering from the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst and spent the summer at the Max Planck Institute for Psychiatry in Munich, Germany. He analyzed and characterized novel antidepressant-responsive genes in the brains of mice that might represent targets for the treatment of depressive disorders in humans.

Presentation Awards

Several of our undergraduate and graduate students received awards for their presentations at the meeting of the Central Mississippi Section of the ACS: Xiao Deng (2nd place, graduate poster), Mary Alice Mackey (2nd place, undergraduate poster), Jessica Shackleford (3rd place, undergraduate poster), and at the Annual Meeting of the MS Academy of Sciences: Jessica Shackleford (1st place, undergraduate poster), David Heaps (1st place, graduate poster), Sandipan Dawn (1st place, graduate oral presentation), Dale Rosado (2nd place, graduate oral presentation).

Other Honors and Awards

Master of Science student Xiao Deng received a Southern Miss Office of Graduate Studies Thesis Research Grant.

Doctoral candidate Zhicheng Dou was awarded a Corporate Activities Program Student Travel Grant to present a poster at the 107th General Meeting of the American Society for Microbiology in Toronto, Canada this May. Zhicheng was selected for this award from over 800 applicants nationwide. Zhicheng was our department’s 2007 Graduate Student of the Year.

May 2007 graduate Erin Fortenberry was this year’s Southern Miss Phi Kappa Phi Silver Bowl recipient. As the chemistry/biochemistry major in the ACS-certified emphasis with the highest GPA, Erin also received the departmental Culpepper Award.

Senior Sara Johnson, who served as president of the ACS Student Affiliate Chapter this past year, won the Shelby Townsend Citizenship Award for her service to the department.

Junior Andrea Marshall competed successfully on the national level for a Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology-Minority Access to Research Careers (FASEB-MARC) travel grant to attend the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students in Anaheim, Calif., this past November. Andrea presented a poster about her research on a bacterial microcompartment protein, networked with fellow student researchers and

STUDENT NEWS

Internships, Summer Research and Study Abroad

Last year’s Organic Chemistry Award recipient, Chad Bush, spent the spring semester as an exchange student at the University of Exeter.
Andrea is a Ronald E. McNair Scholar and received an Honorable Mention for her application for a Goldwater Scholarship.

Last year, doctoral student Balaraj (Raj) Menon entered an essay competition that was sponsored by the biotechnology company, New England Biolabs. As one of 10 winners nationwide, he received an all-expense-paid trip to the company’s headquarters near Boston, Mass. While there, he met with Nobel Laureate Dr. Richard J. Roberts, Chief Scientific Officer of NEB, and invited Dr. Roberts to visit Southern Miss. In February 2007, Dr. Roberts met with Southern Miss and area high school students and presented a lecture as part of the Distinguished Scientists Seminar Series, Forum Lecture Series and Hattiesburg Clinic Lecture Series in the Sciences. His talk, “Friends and Foes: The Unseen Microbes who Share our Planet,” drew a large crowd to Bennett Auditorium and stimulated numerous discussions. We are very happy that Raj helped bring this memorable event to our campus. Raj is a second-year graduate student in the Cannon/Heinhorst research group.

Doctoral candidate Kerrick Nevels received a Wood-Whelan International Research Fellowship from the International Union of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and traveled to the National Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology in Thailand this summer as a researcher in the lab of collaborator Boonhiang Promdonkoy. Kerrick’s research there is related to his dissertation thesis work on the cytolytic Bt toxin Cyt1A.

Doctoral candidate David Rankin was selected to participate in the Excellence in Graduate Polymer Research symposium at the spring 2007 National Meeting of the American Chemical Society in Chicago.

We are particularly proud of sophomore Jessica Shackelford, who was awarded one of the coveted national Barry Goldwater scholarships. Jessica has been active in hands-on research since her freshman year under the mentorship of organic chemist Doug Masterson. To date, her research contributions earned her a co-authorship on a peer-reviewed publication and garnered an invitation to spend the summer as an undergraduate researcher in the laboratory of noted organic chemist Mukund Sibi at the University of North Dakota. According to her e-mails, Jessica had no problem stepping up to the scientific challenges and survived the strong prairie winds in North Dakota.

Doctoral candidate Amanda Thigpen received a travel award to make a presentation at the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology meeting in Washington, D.C.

Veronika Viner presented a poster on her doctorate research at the NSF-funded First U.S.-Brazil Workshop on the Challenges at the Frontiers of Materials Science in Gramado, Brazil this spring.

Doctoral student Scott Walper presented a poster about his research on antibody-based biosensor development at the recent Department of Homeland Security First Annual University Research Summit. His project was selected to be featured in the most recent issue of the DHS Newsletter, which focused on bioterrorism.

**FACULTY AND STAFF NEWS**

Dr. Angela O. Bedenbaugh received the Mississippi State Achievement Award from The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International in March 2007. Angela and her husband Dr. John Bedenbaugh’s efforts to improve the quality of science education in our state through inservice teacher professional development workshops have been supported by several large grants throughout the years. Most recently, Angela received over $1.5 million in grant money from the U.S. Department of Education through the Mississippi Department of Education No Child Left Behind funds for the three-year project Improving Middle School Students Learning of Science. A large portion of this money will be used to buy materials for classroom teachers, so they can provide meaningful science activities for their students.

Professor Emeritus Dr. David Creed gave an invited lecture on June 29, 2007 at the University of Basel, Switzerland at a retirement symposium honoring an old friend, prominent photochemist Professor Jacob Wirz. His talk was entitled “The Photochemistry of Some Liquid Crystalline Polymers.”

Dr. Douglas Masterson was awarded and NSF-RIG grant for his work on synthesis of unusual amino acids and peptides that may provide new biomedical and diagnostic approaches in the future. Dr. Masterson is the research mentor for undergraduate Biological Sciences major (Jessie Louise Geoghegan), whose poster garnered her first place at the poster competition of the Central Mississippi ACS section meeting. Hats off to Doug for encouraging students from other disciplines to engage in interdisciplinary undergraduate research in our department!

Dr. John Pojman gave an invited lecture at the First U.S.-Brazil Workshop on the Challenges at the Frontiers of Materials Science held in Gramado, Brazil from April 25-27, 2007. He was named the 2006 Chemist of the Year by the Central Mississippi section of the ACS and gave the keynote address, “How Molecules Organize Themselves: What is Nonlinear Chemical Dynamics and What is it Good For?” at the section’s annual meeting. The meeting was held at the new Thad Cochran Center on campus. Thanks to the Herculean efforts of Dr. Paige Phillips and administrative assistant, Ms. Sharon King, who dealt with logistics, secured industry sponsors and organized student poster competitions, the meeting was a truly memorable event for the researchers in the state and boasted a record attendance of 176. This summer, Dr. Phillips...
is enjoying her stay at the U.S. Naval Research Lab in Washington, D.C., where she is participating in several interesting research projects through the NRL Summer Faculty program. The program is designed to forge new partnerships and foster collaborations between researchers in academics and government labs.

**Dr. Hans J. Schanz** led the effort that secured funds from the NSF-MRI and CRIF MU programs to purchase a MALDI-ToF and an Ion Trap/LC Mass Spectrometer. These instruments support a broad range of research projects in the fields of proteomics, peptide synthesis, RNA analysis, catalyst development, nanomaterials and polymer science and have helped to establish in our department a state-of-the-art mass spectrometry facility that is one of the best in Mississippi.

**Dr. Steven Stevenson** was chosen as this year’s recipient of the Junior Faculty Research Award. The award is given annually by the Southern Miss Faculty Senate and is officially announced at the university’s Letters Day.

Our own **Frank Woodruff** is the most recent recipient of the College of Science and Technology Outstanding Staff Service Award. Frank coordinates the freshman laboratories and serves as Southern Miss’s radiation safety officer. He has been working at Southern Miss since 1972.

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**NEW FACULTY AND STAFF**

Barbados native **Dr. Alvin A. Holder** received his Bachelor of Science degree in special chemistry from The University of the West Indies (UWI) Mona Campus, Jamaica, followed by a doctorate in inorganic chemistry from the same university. He served on the faculty in the Department of Biological and Chemical Sciences at the UWI Cave Hill Campus in Barbados for almost nine years, spending several summers as a visiting scientist at Newcastle University, UK. After postdoctoral stints at ExxonMobil Research and Engineering, Virginia Tech, Ohio State University and Colorado State University, Alvin, his wife Denise, and son Alvin Asoni moved to Hattiesburg last fall. Alvin’s research revolves around biological and inorganic chemistry, bioinorganic and inorganic reaction mechanisms. His hobbies are bodybuilding, hiking, traveling, watching cricket games and other sporting events, keeping an eye on global affairs, and meeting nice people.

**Ms. Sharon King**, the new administrative assistant for the department, has a Bachelor of Science in Management Information Systems from Southern Miss. Before working for the department she worked in the College of Science and Technology Dean’s Office for the College Development Officer. **Dr. J. Paige Phillips**, a Virginian (East Coaster) by birth, has spent enough time in West Virginia to wear the label “Appalachian American.” Not always a student of science, she has also worn the labels of editor, teacher and cook. After graduating from Virginia Tech with a doctorate in physical organic chemistry, she stayed on as a post-doc student in the polymer science department, working on medical applications of new magnetic polymer-nanocomposite materials. She subsequently joined a high-tech small business and advanced to a management/director position in that company. She joined our department first as a research professor, and since 2006 as a tenure-track assistant professor.

**Dr. Karl J. Wallace** was born in Essex (a true Essex boy!), UK. He obtained his Bachelor of Science at the University of the West of England, Bristol, where he developed an interest in inorganic chemistry and coordination polymers. He completed a doctorate at King’s College, London, working with Jonathan W. Steed on the synthesis and binding studies of hosts for small molecule recognition. In 2003, he moved to the University of Texas at Austin as a post-doctoral fellow, synthesizing molecular “scaffolds” for applications as practical sensor devices. In 2006, he joined our faculty as an assistant professor. His research interests are in supramolecular chemistry, particularly molecular recognition and the synthesis of molecular sensors and devices. Karl recently co-authored the book “Core Concepts in Supramolecular Chemistry and Nanotechnology.” He and fiancée Terri Tarbett were married in New Orleans in July.

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**2006-07 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS**

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<th>Scholarship Type</th>
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<td>Chemistry Alumni Scholarship</td>
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*Dr. Alvin A. Holder*

*Dr. J. Paige Phillips*

*Dr. Karl J. Wallace*
**ALUMNI AND FRIENDS, MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

Alumnus Leo W. Collins (Ph.D. '91), with help from faculty retirees David Creed and Newton Fawcett, is organizing the first ever – and hopefully soon to be annual – Southern Miss Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry Alumni Reception at the spring 2008 ACS Meeting in New Orleans! The get-together will kick off the yearlong festivities in honor of our department's 50th anniversary and will be the perfect (long overdue) opportunity to meet old friends. Wait for further details in the mail.

If you can help with this event in any form (as co-organizer, as a financial sponsor, by providing some good ideas, etc.), please e-mail Sabine Heinhorst (sabine.heinhorst@usm.edu). She will forward your e-mail to Leo. The success of the reunion will depend on broad participation by all of us!

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**SCHOLARSHIP CONTRIBUTION CARD**

Enclosed is my check (in the amount of $___________________) payable to The USM Foundation.

- Please add to the Chemistry/Biochemistry 50th Anniversary Scholarship Fund (#1719).
- Please add to the Chemistry/Biochemistry Alumni Endowed Scholarship Fund (#371).
- Please add to the Chemistry/Biochemistry Alumni Operating Scholarship Fund (#648).
- Please split between accounts #371 and #648.

**Donor’s Name(s):**

**Please check here if you wish your contribution to remain anonymous.**