

# GEM

OF THE HILLS

FALL 2014

**HERE WE GROW**  
community garden

**DR. JOHN KETTERER**  
reflects on his time at jsu

**ALUMNI OF THE YEAR**  
2014 award winners

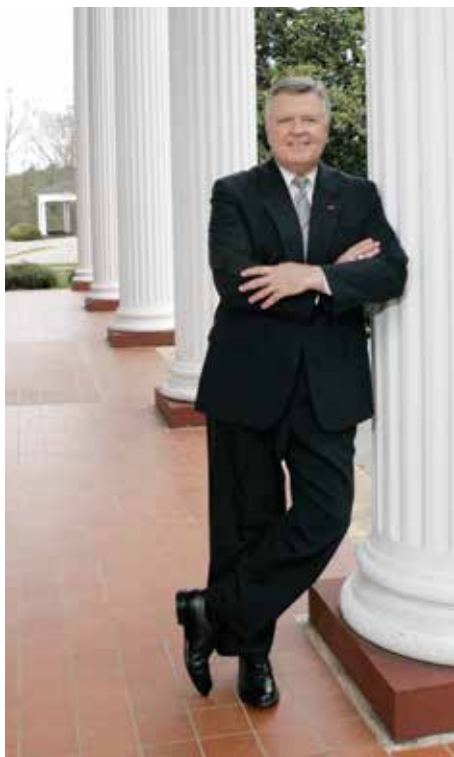
**HOMECOMING**

JSU VS. AUSTIN PEAY  
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1<sup>ST</sup> 3 PM

*Dr. Ken Bodiford and Coach John Grass  
are gearing up for a great fall season!*



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## DEAR ALUMNI,

We are pleased to bring you this special Homecoming edition of the Gem of the Hills. As we begin the fall semester, we want to update you on the exciting happenings at your alma mater.

As always, we are proud to share with you news about the national recognition of our academic programs, as well as our partnership in service to our local community. You will also want to read the Gamecock Athletics Year in Review on page 8 to learn about what an outstanding year of championships and awards our Gamecocks have earned.

Meet the JSU National Alumni Association's Outstanding Alumni of the Year on pages 14-15. We are very proud of our alumni's accomplishments and look forward to recognizing them at Homecoming this fall.

After fourteen years of service, Dr. John Ketterer has recently retired from the university. Read about his time here at JSU and all that he has done for the International House Program beginning on page 10. He will be missed.

As always, I hope you enjoy this issue of the Gem and urge you and your family to come back to campus during Homecoming weekend, October 31-November 2. We have planned an exciting schedule full of opportunities to visit with former classmates and share fond memories of this special place that is so deeply rooted in our lives.

Sincerely,

*William A. Meehan*

William A. Meehan, Ed.D.  
President



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454-14 University Publications 8/14



# HERE WE GROW!

JSU PROFESSORS AND VOLUNTEERS  
PLANT SEEDS OF SUSTAINABILITY  
IN COMMUNITY GARDEN

BY ANGIE FINLEY



College is a time of growth when new choices are made, new wisdom is gained and new outlooks are achieved. With that in mind, it’s entirely fitting that Jacksonville State University is taking another opportunity to help grow the community we serve.

This summer, just one block away from a cornucopia of fast food restaurants, Dr. Joseph Akpan and Dr. Larry Beard of JSU’s College of Education and Professional Studies have joined master gardeners and volunteers from Jacksonville’s First United Methodist Church and Kitty Stone Elementary School in creating a community garden that is providing healthy, fresh produce for neighbors in need.

But this garden on Gayle Avenue is about more than food. It also provides nourishment for the soul, as the gardeners

and volunteers teach the community about healthier lifestyles and self-sufficiency, and provide a place for social interaction in an environment harmonious with nature.

This isn’t the first time that JSU faculty and students have taken up hoes for shared sustainability. In the early 1910s, a State Normal School farm south of Jacksonville provided students with a roof over their heads and food for the table in exchange for their willingness to work the land. It also provided a laboratory for agricultural education.

While gardening methods have changed since then, the concept of community gardening has not. Within Jacksonville’s garden, begun by the First United Methodist Church, there are separate smaller plots that make up a large sea of green where okra, corn, spinach, several varieties of beans, eggplant and tomatoes

thrive under the vigilant care of volunteers. Through the Jacksonville Christian Outreach Center, the bounty from these crops is routed to the tables of the needy. To date, the garden has produced close to two hundred pounds of produce. Volunteers hope to see that grow to a ton by season’s end.

Mike Limerick with Jacksonville’s First United Methodist Church and Dr. Akpan, a professor in JSU’s secondary education department, provided the seeds for JSU’s portion of the garden. Dr. Akpan and Dr. Beard, a professor of special education curriculum and instruction, sowed them in April.

Dr. Akpan knows a lot about agricultural sustainability. He grew up in Nigeria, where gardening was not only a necessity, but also a means of producing income.

“I have been doing this all my life,” he said during a recent tour of the garden. “I believe in doing something to help people in general. Since I came here (to Jacksonville), I continue to own a garden. I used to bring my crops to my colleagues and other members of the Jacksonville community. This year, I am doing this instead.”

Why give up his personal garden for one that serves a community?

“I’m doing it to help the people in the area, to help those who believe in eating fresh vegetables, to help the community where I find myself,” he said.

“When I travel around Jacksonville, in some ways I see people hurting. I want to leave them better than when I met them. That’s why I am planting this garden, to feed the people.

“It is not about me. It’s about helping the community at large. Regardless of where you come from, regardless of who you are, everyone is welcome to feed from this garden.”

For Dr. Beard, working the garden is a return to his roots, literally.

“My granddad was a gardener and I grew up in a garden. I garden because I can get my fingernails dirty, play in the dirt, and see something come out of it. A garden is beautiful; even okra has some really pretty flowers,” he said.

Earlier this spring, Dr. Akpan sent out email to engage volunteers. As is often the case, the number of enthusiastic helpers waned as the summer wore on and people got busier. A very rainy growing season has made keeping up with the weeds challenging.

Now that the crops are beginning to come in, the steadfast are asking for help.

“Harvest is plenty but the laborers are few,” Dr. Akpan said with a smile as he picked a handful of squash. “We welcome any who can lend a hand. They don’t even have to let us know they’re coming, but it would be nice.”

Nicer still, he said, is a world where everyone could tend a little plot of land. 🌱

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Please complete the following information and return to:  
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\$50 per brick  
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Check (make your check payable to: JSU Foundation)  
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Account # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

BRICK SIZE: 4” x 8” Three lines, 16 characters or spaces per line (Indicate your engraving information in the boxes below)




ONLINE CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
GRADUATE PROGRAM

RANKED IN THE  
**TOP 25**  
IN THE NATION

This year, Jacksonville State University was ranked among the top twenty-five online criminal justice graduate programs across the country. JSU hit the list at number twenty-one.

The rankings were derived from reviews posted by over 60,000 students participating in over 1,500 graduate programs nationwide, as well as data gathered by Graduateprograms.com from September 1, 2012 through April 15, 2014.📡



**EDUCATION &  
PROFESSIONAL  
STUDIES PROGRAM**

ACCREDITED BY THE CAEP

Jacksonville State University’s Professional Education Department has been accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

CAEP reviewed JSU, along with sixty-six institutions, with standards from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). NCATE is used to distinguish schools with high quality teacher, specialist, and administrator preparation.

JSU has been NCATE accredited since NCATE’s inception in 1954. Meeting national standards for teacher preparation and other school personnel over the past sixty years is due directly to the tradition of excellence made possible by the JSU faculty and staff, both present and past, and our P-12 partners.📡



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30 – SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2

**HOMECOMING**  
JSU vs. AUSTIN PEAY

HOMECOMING & FAMILY DAY SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

<b>THURSDAY</b>	
6:00 PM	Calhoun County Alumni Wine Tasting
8:00 PM	Homecoming Pep Rally   JSU Stadium
<b>FRIDAY</b>	
12:00 NOON	Class of 1964 50 <sup>th</sup> Year Class Reunion 11 <sup>th</sup> Floor Houston Cole Library
5:00 PM	Sixties Group Alumni Dinner McClellan Medical Mall Business Center
6:00 PM	ROTC Annual Alumni Banquet 11 <sup>th</sup> Floor Houston Cole Library
	1985 National Championship Basketball Team 30th Year Reunion   12 <sup>th</sup> Floor Houston Cole Library
<b>SATURDAY</b>	
8:30 AM	'55 Football Team Reunion Breakfast   Alumni House
9:00 AM	Alumni House Open To All Alumni, Family and Friends
	Family Day Activities On Campus
9:30–10:30 AM	President’s Open House
11:00 AM	Parade
11:30–2:30 PM	Departmental Open Houses CCBA-Merrill Building, Communications-Self Hall, Art Department-Gladys Carlisle Building, JSU Parent Association for Undecided Students and The National Society of Collegiate Scholars-TMB Front Lawn
Noon–1:00 PM	Alumni Association Meeting TMB Auditorium (open to all alumni)
	Basketball Alumni Tailgate   Stephenson Gym
12:30 PM	Ocean Street Concert   Dillon Field
3:00 PM	JSU vs. Austin Peay Kickoff
Halftime	Alumni of the Year & Homecoming Court Recognition
	Southerners Performance
<b>SUNDAY</b>	
2:00 PM	UN Day Tea   International House

**HOMECOMING**  
REUNION INFORMATION

**ROTC ELC REUNION 1978-1983**  
Friday, Oct. 31 – Saturday, Nov. 1  
ELC’s are encouraged to contact  
Gene Wisdom for more information  
at finz2night2003@yahoo.com

**SIXTIES GROUP ALUMNI DINNER**  
Friday, Oct. 31  
5:00 PM Check In  
5:30 PM Dinner  
Casual Dress \$15/person  
(payable to W.E. Connell)

**ROTC ALUMNI BANQUET**  
Friday, Oct. 31  
6:00 PM Social  
6:30 PM Dinner  
Casual Dress \$25/person  
Please make checks payable  
to the JSU Foundation  
Contact Chapter President COL  
Chuck Buxton at cbuxton@cdc.gov  
or Chapter Secretary, Joe Serviss  
at JoeServiss@aol.com

**CLASS OF ‘64 50<sup>TH</sup> “GOLDEN  
GAMECOCK” REUNION**  
Friday Oct. 31  
12:00 Noon Lunch  
Business Casual Dress

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE RECEPTION**  
Saturday, Nov. 1  
Anders Round House on the Quad  
8:30 AM | Casual Dress

**’55 FOOTBALL TEAM REUNION  
BREAKFAST**  
Saturday Nov. 1  
8:30 AM | Alumni House

**TO REGISTER  
FOR HOMECOMING  
EVENTS VISIT  
WWW.JSU.EDU/GIVING**



# GAMECOCK ATHLETICS

## YEAR IN REVIEW

Jacksonville State athletics continued to dominate on the field of competition as the Gamecocks won numerous Ohio Valley Conference Championships and advanced to NCAA Championships, while also excelling in the classroom, during the 2013-14 year.

The Gamecocks won five Ohio Valley Conference Championships and finished fourth in the OVC Commissioner’s Cup, marking the sixth straight year the Gamecocks have finished in the Top 6 in the standings.

The Gamecock football team advanced to the NCAA Quarterfinals, posted an 11-4 overall record, and was ranked No. 10 in the final The Sports Network football poll. JSU also set forty-nine school records, thirteen OVC records and three NCAA records during the 2013 season. Jacksonville State earned the school’s fourteenth NCAA Playoff appearance with an at-large berth and defeated Samford 55-14 to earn the school’s first-ever Division I playoff win. The Gamecocks then defeated No. 6 McNeese State 35-10 in the second round to advance to play No. 2 Eastern Washington in the quarter-final round.

The Gamecock baseball team became the first school in Ohio Valley Conference history to win six-straight elimination games to win the 2014 OVC Baseball Championship. After losing 2-1 in the opening round to fall into elimination bracket, JSU reeled off six straight wins – the longest winning streak of the season – to eliminate every single team to win the school’s fourth OVC Championship and earn a trip to the NCAA Regionals at Ole Miss.

The Gamecock rifle team claimed the school’s eighth OVC Rifle Championship to advance to the NCAA National Championship, where they posted an eighth-place finish. Individually, Cole Tucker finished second in the Air Rifle competition at the NCAA National Championship.

The JSU men’s tennis team won the OVC regular-season and Tournament Championship to claim the program’s fourth OVC crown. It marked the second time in school history that

JSU won both the regular season and tournament title, as it won both in 2007. Steve Bailey was named the OVC Coach of the Year as the Gamecocks advanced the NCAA Regionals at the University of Georgia.

The Jax State softball team claimed its fourth OVC regular season championship after posting a 40-15 overall record and a 22-5 mark in the OVC. Head coach Jana McGinnis was named the OVC Coach of the Year for the fourth time in her eleven seasons in the league, while Tiffany Harbin was named Pitcher of the Year and Sara Borders was tabbed as the OVC Player of the Year. The team also claimed the OVC Sportsmanship Award, the sixth time the Gamecocks have earned this prestigious award.

The Gamecock men’s golf team claimed the school’s fifth Ohio Valley Conference title, its third in the last four years, after winning the OVC Tournament at The Shoals. Jax State advanced to the NCAA Regionals for the seventh time in school history, and posted their best NCAA regional showing at the Division I level with an eighth place finish.

Jacksonville State had five OVC Player or Most Valuable Player of the Year Awards, nine NCAA All-Americans, sixty-one OVC All-Conference honorees, two teams claimed OVC Team Academic Achievement honors, and four OVC Coach of the Year Award winners.

Since joining the Ohio Valley Conference in 2003-04, Jacksonville State has solidified itself as the preeminent athletic program in the conference.

The Gamecocks have won fifty-eight OVC Championships over the last ten years, which is nine more than the next OVC school. JSU has seen nine of its fifteen programs bring home various titles and combine for thirty-eight trips to NCAA post-season play.

Gamecock student-athletes also excelled in the classroom after ten teams posted a combined grade point average of 3.0 or higher, and it marked the third-straight year the department finished above a 3.0. Additionally, 113 student-athletes were named to the OVC

Commissioner Honor Roll and eighteen were named to the OVC Medal of Honor Roll, while 131 student-athletes posted a 3.0 grade point average or higher during the academic year.

### 2013-2014 Cumulative Awards

**FIVE OVC CHAMPIONSHIPS**  
Baseball (Tournament), Softball (Regular-Season), Men’s Tennis (Regular-Season and Tournament), Men’s Golf (Tournament), Rifle (Tournament)

**OVC COACH OF THE YEAR AWARDS**  
Rick Pietri, Women’s Basketball  
Jana McGinnis, Softball  
Steve Bailey, Men’s Tennis

**INDIVIDUAL AWARDS**  
Samantha Bullard, OVC Smallbore Athlete of the Year, Anne Kathrin Albrecht, OVC Women’s Golf Freshman of the Year, Josh Barge, Football Freshman All-American  
Max Holcombe, Football All-American, DaMarcus James, Football All-American, Griffin Thomas, Football All-American, Sara Borders, OVC Softball Player of the Year, Tiffany Harbin, OVC Softball Pitcher of the Year, Griff Gordon, Baseball ABCA/Rawlings All-Region, Sara Borders, CoSIDA Academic All-American, Melania Bajo Geijo, Women’s Collegiate Golf-All-American Scholar

**TEAM ACADEMIC HONORS**  
All-Academic, Women’s Cross Country by the United States Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches All-Academic, Soccer by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America



## GAMECOCK FOOTBALL 2014

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
AUG. 29	AT MICHIGAN STATE	6:30 PM
SEPT. 6	AT UT CHATTANOOGA	5 PM
SEPT. 20	WEST ALABAMA (BAND DAY)	3 PM
SEPT. 27	*AT MURRAY STATE	6 PM
OCT. 4	UT MARTIN (FALL PREVIEW DAY)	3 PM
OCT. 11	AT TENNESSEE STATE	2 PM
OCT. 18	OPEN	
OCT. 25	TENNESSEE TECH	3 PM
NOV. 1	AUSTIN PEAY (HOMECOMING/FAMILY DAY)	3 PM
NOV. 8	AT EASTERN KENTUCKY	12 PM
NOV. 15	EASTERN ILLINOIS (MARCHING SOUTHERNERS REUNION)	3 PM
NOV. 22	AT SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE	1 PM

CHECK OUT ALL THE FALL SPORTS SCHEDULES AT [WWW.JSUGAMECOCKSPORTS.COM](http://WWW.JSUGAMECOCKSPORTS.COM)

ALL TIMES CT (SCHEDULE AND TIMES SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

## MARCHING SOUTHERNERS 2014

In 2014, the Marching Southerners invite you to join them on a powerful and emotional passage from the strife and struggle of darkness to the healing and hope of light. SALVATION IS CREATED: A JOURNEY FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT is a musical portrait that reminds us that, although life is often difficult, there is always joy on the other side of sadness, peace after every storm, and darkness always gives way... to the light.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE SHOW VISIT [WWW.MARCHINGSOUTHERNERS.ORG](http://WWW.MARCHINGSOUTHERNERS.ORG)



# DR. JOHN KETTERER

reflects on his time at jsu

BY CHRISTINA MACDONALD



Since he became director of the James and Myra Hume Jones International House Program at Jacksonville State University fourteen years ago, Dr. John J. Ketterer has spent 5,110 days on the job, has seen at least three classes of college students through their entire college careers, and has directly impacted the lives of at least five hundred students. But, as he planned for his retirement on July 1, these staggering numbers represent only a portion of what he has accomplished during his career, and only hint at what is yet to come as he begins the next chapter of his life.

Dr. John Ketterer had international education experience before his employment as director of JSU's International House organization and program. He worked four years in Paraguay and six years in Mexico as the superintendent of schools and four years in Nicaragua and Peru as secondary administrator for grades seven to twelve. These high school education systems were multicultural and multilingual, which prepared Dr. Ketterer for his next career development, the move to JSU. Dr. Ketterer took his position as director in fall 2000 and was joined in Jacksonville by his wife, Ivania, and their two children, Genevieve and Jack.

However, it was not only Dr. Ketterer's experience in international schools that brought great success to the International House. Jeff Clark, who serves as International Programs coordinator, explained the leadership of the International House by saying, "Because Ena Aguilar, the International House coordinator, was here prior to Dr. Ketterer's arrival, she had a wealth of knowledge that allowed them to jump in and work immediately as a great team. When he came in it was almost like a marriage of cultures. Ena's sons came through the program and her heart truly is with the program. With their pasts in Latin American cultures, they both shared a great understanding of cultural blending."

Dr. William Jones, son of the International House founders, said, "Ivania really helped breathe life into the program, too. Dr. Ketterer already had an international background, especially in education. Ivania has helped to create a hospitable environment for the students. Even his personal life really fed the program... There have been four directors and I think what Dr. Ketterer has done has benefitted not

only the program, not only JSU, but also the world."

In a personal letter to Dr. Ketterer, Jeffery Smyth, who is a board of trustees member for the Jones International House Program, wrote, "Take a deep bow!...The territory is not always friendly, but you have been on the right side of history and you can always take personal satisfaction from your very great contribution to that ideal."

Speaking of history, it would be a great injustice to not recognize the history of the program, as it is one of the very few international housing programs in the country.

The sixtieth anniversary of the International House, which took place in 2006, was celebrated by a large reunion and the creation of a DVD, which chronicles the history of the program. Dr. Ketterer and Ena Aguilar have played the reunion video as part of the International House freshman orientation. Appropriately, the video itself says there is no true way to recap the magnitude of history that program covers: the inspiring people who created the program, the ambassadors and professionals who have visited, the incredible amount of work that took place, and the exceptional alumni.

At the reunion, Dr. Jones read a letter that his mother wrote in 1964 to Dr. Houston Cole, saying, "We have tried to hold fast to our faith in the possibility of building a better world. And a with a little more goodwill, it is doubtful that any of us have any real comprehension of the power inherent in simple human kindness."

Dr. and Mrs. Jones provided the spark that lit a fire with Colonel Clarence Daugette, Jr., Dr. Houston Cole, and Mrs. Kitty Stone. After all had witnessed a deteriorating Europe following World War II, they longed to create a program to bring diversity to the campus and also to represent the positive side of the American way of life. While Jacksonville State University was still known as Jacksonville State Teacher's College, the program was founded and centered on the 'Maison Internationale,' which in French translates to International House.

The 'Maison Internationale' remains today, located in the heart of Jacksonville State University's campus. Its Grecian columns have

welcomed the majority of the JSU community through numerous and diverse events.

The International House organization and programs include connections with the English Language Institute (ELI) and the International Student Organization (ISO), which Dr. Ketterer has helped to advance. The International House is the nucleus of all international activities, from ISO parties to visa renewals.

The Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs and The Anniston Rotary Club District 6860 have both been very influential and supportive of the International House Program from its origin. Dr. Ketterer is a Rotary member and has been very active with the club. Such ongoing relationships have cemented friendships, provided new opportunities for the international students to interact with the surrounding communities, and continue to bring positive exposure for the university.

Dr. Ketterer has also greatly contributed to the creation of JSU's international cultural exchange programs with Chinese universities, such as Taizhou University, Wuhan University, and the Zhejiang University of Media and Communications.

In 2004, he led a two-year restoration of the house including the dining room, lobby, and basement areas. In 2006, he had the attic restored and redesigned as an archive for all international records.

Dr. Ketterer commented on the restoration of the house, humbly saying, "Mrs. Ena Aguilar spent an entire summer in the hot attic just rescuing all the files! It's been a team effort. Just yesterday I looked through every United Nations Day Tea program from the year 2000."

The United Nations Day Tea is one of the greatest traditions of the house.

Ena Aguilar said, "Dr. Ketterer was the one who suggested that we have the event outside, and truly moved for the great amount of talent that's always within this house to be shown through performances. It's always a treat now to see the students showcase their cultures."

As director, Dr. Ketterer has brought forth great change in social clubs, academia and student life. Many of the students will agree.

Ruben Herrera, an International House alumnus ('01-'03), said, "It [the International



House] is a place for personal and professional growth. Whether you like it or not, you will always find yourself getting out of your comfort zone. I really believe that those years in the house changed me forever. It made me see the world more colorfully! It was not so much black or white or even grays; rather, it was an interesting mixture of all sides of life.”

The students of the International House affectionately refer to Dr. Ketterer as Dr. K, as that’s how he introduces himself at orientation. He immediately opens an environment of warmth to the students both in ISO and the International House.

Herrera said, “I could not tell you how grateful I am to them. They [Dr. Ketterer and Ena Aguilar] treated me like family, like real family! And when you are hundreds of miles away from home, in a foreign place, knowing that you can always count on them makes a whole world of a difference. Their kindness is compared to none. They are people that I will always have close to my heart.”

Saloua Lahlou is an International House alumna (’05-’07). She said, “Whenever I look back at the people who made a huge difference in my life, Dr. Ketterer stands at the top of them. He always reaches first and helps before we even ask. I went through a difficult period

in my personal life, where his love and support made a huge difference. He is an amazing human being, a great leader, compassionate father and the perfect director.”

As Dr. Ketterer celebrated his tenth year as director, alumnus Milic Zecevic (’05-’09) wrote Dr. Ketterer a personal letter stating, “You showed me and my fellow international students the true value of the program. You are a true leader; you showed us how to be respectful, tolerant, open minded and, most of all, noble to each other. You showed us many useful things and you were our parent away from home... You sacrificed time from being with your own family in order to create us our International House family. I thank you, Mrs. Ivania, and your children for that. The America you represent is the America we want to live in...”

“A great man once told me ‘It’s a great life if you don’t weaken.’ You should listen to this great man, Dr. K, because we – the International House members and alumni - need you. The world is a better place with you in it.”

When asked if the International House facilitated the same abundance of his personal growth as it did the students’, Dr. Ketterer solemnly said, “I am still a person who is becoming what I will be next. The house has

demonstrated to me that there are good people everywhere and it only takes being open to see that and the possibilities to make a part of that goodness part of your life. The house is a part of my life.”

Dr. Ketterer sighed, leaned his chair back, and began to smile. Friends of Dr. Ketterer know that this is usually followed by a familiar piece of advice: “Don’t grow up too fast, kid.”

What is next for this man who has impacted so many lives at JSU?

Dr. Ketterer has accepted the position of superintendent of the U.S. State Department-sponsored school in Honduras. The discovery school is accredited by SACS and is characterized as a Montessori type school with over forty nationalities in small class sizes.

Jacksonville State University is grateful for Dr. Ketterer’s contributions to our university here and abroad, and wishes him the best as he begins the next chapter of a very colorful and meaningful life.

**For more information about the Dr. James H. and Myra Hume Jones International House Program, please visit [www.jsu.edu/ihop](http://www.jsu.edu/ihop).**

# JSU Alumnus Wears Many Hats, Including “PEACH MAN”

BY HEATHER GREENE

Many know him as “the Peach Man,” as that is the name he’s been given by those who stop by his truck on a sweltering summer day in Jacksonville to purchase mouthwatering Chilton County peaches. However, Glen Graham has worn a number of hats throughout his lifetime, including a graduation cap from Jacksonville State University.

Hauling peaches from his hometown of Clanton to Jacksonville began when Graham was a nineteen year-old student at JSU. While Graham was working as a resident assistant, some faculty found out that he was from Chilton County and involved in the peach farms down there. He, in turn, found out that they liked peaches and agreed to bring them some. That one basket of peaches Graham brought back to Jacksonville began to increase to five, then to ten, then to thirty or forty more baskets. Thirty-three years later, Graham sometimes has to bring two vehicles packed to the brim with peaches; he usually sells out each trip to Jacksonville.

Decades of selling peaches has allowed him to stay connected to his alma mater and also provided him with entertaining stories to tell through the years, such as returning to his truck after running peaches into Bibb Graves Hall to find a young Dr. Bill Meehan, Larry Smith, and Dr. Alice Cusimano selling peaches for him.

Graham has an impeccable memory for recalling the names of his customers and always greets them with some classic southern hospitality, a kind word and an inquiry about their family.



Peach hauling has become a family business for the Grahams, as his wife, children, and late father have all been involved.

“Jacksonville has been good to me, it really has,” states Graham. “I’ve made a lot of friends up here through the years.”

He began his time at JSU majoring in business, dropped out for a time, but returned to graduate with a degree in physical education. Like many things in his life, his time studying business came full circle and has benefited him during his time selling peaches. After his time at JSU, Graham went on to receive his master’s degree from Oregon State University.

He has coached for a total of twenty-eight years, including eighteen at Isabella High School in Maplesville. He retired briefly during 2012, during which time he taught an adjunct class at JSU that took a group of students to the state Special Olympics, an organization in which he was actively involved for about ten and a half years.

His connection to the Special Olympics organization began in January 1986, while teaching at a school for children with disabilities. Graham even had the opportunity to coach at three of the International Special Olympics games, carrying him to such places as Notre Dame, Minnesota, and Yale University.

“Special Olympics gives children and adults (ages) eight to eighty who don’t always get a lot of opportunities to showcase their talent,” explains Graham. “A lot of them are more capable than people give them credit for.”

“I’m a high school coach and a peach hauler,” Graham humbly describes himself,

despite the fact that his work in the International Special Olympics has afforded him the opportunity to meet such celebrities as Arnold Schwarzenegger, John Kennedy Jr., and Bon Jovi. He even holds a personal letter from Eunice Kennedy Shriver, who founded the Special Olympics.

After adjunct teaching at JSU during his retirement sabbatical, his heart for coaching called him back to Isabella High School.

In addition to the various hats he has worn, perhaps his most important roles are husband and father.

In July, he and his wife Leah celebrated twenty-four years of marriage. She is also a native of Clanton, but was living in Ohio when her sister and a friend persuaded her to come down to Tuscaloosa, where Graham was coaching, to meet him. Ten months later, they were married.

The Grahams have two children, Sarah, a senior in high school who took first place in the half-mile at the 2A Alabama High School Association track competition earlier this year, and Isaac, a freshman who is a spelling bee champion and has an interest in piano.

Graham is also actively involved in his church, West End Baptist Church, and was recently elected deacon.

Of his life, Graham states, “It’s just weird, in my life, God has just put me in places and brought me in circles that I never expected... its just kind of been happenings, but they have all been good happenings. A better plan than I had.”



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# ALUMNI

## OF THE YEAR

AWARD WINNERS WILL BE RECOGNIZED AT HALFTIME OF THE HOMECOMING GAME ON SATURDAY NOVEMBER 1



Mr. Ken Howell '72



Dr. Niyah E. Griffin '98



Mrs. Katie Carter Stotts '05

### ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

**MR. KEN HOWELL '72** Mr. Howell earned his Bachelor of Science in accounting from Jacksonville State University in 1972. At that same time, he was commissioned into the Army Reserve as a second lieutenant. He served in the Reserves from 1972-1982 attaining the rank of captain. During that time, he began his accounting career and in 1986, landed at Auto Custom Carpets (ACC), Inc. in Anniston, Ala where he is currently the president and chief executive officer. ACC is the world's leading manufacturer of automotive replacement carpet. The company employs over 150 workers across two states and five locations. Mr. Howell is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and a Chartered Global Management Accountant (CGMA). He serves as a member of the Greater Anniston Business and Professional Association, the JSU Gamecock Club, The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, and the Alabama Association of Accountants. He also serves on the Advisory Board for Regions Bank, is the president of the Oxford City Schools Education Foundation and the president of the Anniston Country Club. He is also a director of the JSU Foundation Board. Mr. Howell enjoys golf, traveling, ballroom dancing and coin collecting. He and his wife Jenny teach a non-credit continuing education Ball Room Dance Class for JSU and he has served as an alumni mentor and guest speaker for multiple JSU students and accounting classes. He is a lifetime member of the JSU National Alumni Association. The Howells have four grown children and they reside in Anniston, Ala.

### ALUMNA OF THE YEAR

**DR. NIYAH E. GRIFFIN '98** Dr. Griffin earned her Bachelor of Science in elementary education from Jacksonville State University in 1998. She continued her education at Tennessee State University earning a Master degree in 2001, certifications in English as a Second Language in 2003 and School Administration and Supervision in 2006. In 2008, she received a Doctorate in Educational Administration degree, also from Tennessee State in Nashville, Tn. In 2011, Dr. Griffin completed her superintendent certification from Abilene Christian University in Abilene, Tx., for post doctorate work. Currently, she is the associate superintendent with the Diocese of Birmingham Catholic School District. Dr. Griffin oversees the district's accreditation, curriculum development, and professional development for principals and teachers within the district. Prior to this position, Dr. Griffin was a principal, assistant principal and adjunct professor. She has presented at national educational conferences and published in educational journals. She has also served as a Peer Review Team member and/or evaluator for the Southern Association for Colleges and Schools (SACS) and the Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS). In 2011 she had the opportunity to be an ambassador with the People to People program representing the United States in a Supervision and Curriculum Development Delegation to China. In 2012, she was an ATHENA Award nominee. The ATHENA Award is considered Nashville's highest award of recognition for the achievements of professional women as it honors outstanding female leaders for their career success, service to the community, and

encouragement of other women. Dr. Griffin is a member of the National Catholic Educational Association, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the National Association for Elementary and Middle School Principals Association, the National Association of Professional Women, the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and the National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa among others. She is a lifetime member of the JSU National Alumni Association. She and her husband, Darryl, have two children, Lauren (13) and Jordan (9) and they reside in Vestavia Hills, Ala.

### YOUNG ALUM OF THE YEAR

**MRS. KATIE CARTER STOTTS '05** Ms. Stotts earned her Bachelor of Science in criminal justice from Jacksonville State University in 2005. Upon graduation, she began working as a probation officer for Georgia Department of Corrections in Dalton, Georgia, supervising a diverse caseload of up to 350 cases. In 2006, Ms. Stotts transferred to Marietta, Georgia and was promoted to an Intensive Probation Officer supervising a high risk caseload and monitoring curfew compliance. Shortly thereafter, she was hired with the United States Probation Office for the Northern District of Georgia as a Probation Officer Assistant and conducted pretrial and presentence investigations. In 2010, Ms. Stotts was promoted to her current position as a U.S. Probation Officer and supervises pretrial and post-conviction cases, including individuals on electronic monitoring. In addition to her core duties, Ms. Stotts is also a firearms instructor, a safety instructor, and a member of the search and enforcement team.



Colonel Barry F. Graham '88

While at JSU, Ms. Stotts was a JSU Ambassador, SGA Senator, SGA Justice, Gamecock Hostess, Mimosa Editor, Panhellenic Vice President of Judicial and Junior Panhellenic and Greek Woman of the Year (2004). She also served as financial vice president, new member orientation chair, marshal and ritual chair for Alpha Xi Delta. Ms. Stotts continues her involvement with JSU as the vice-president of the JSU Criminal Justice Alumni Chapter and serves as the Chapter Life Advisor for Alpha Xi Delta. She is also a lifetime member of the JSU National Alumni Association. She and her husband, Billy, reside in Stone Mountain, Georgia, and have two daughters, Carolina (16) and Molly Grace (12).

### MILITARY ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

**COLONEL BARRY F. GRAHAM '88** Colonel Graham began his military service in 1984 as an enlisted field artilleryman at the former Fort McClellan, Ala. He is a 1988 distinguished military graduate of Jacksonville State University where he earned Bachelor of Arts in political science and law enforcement and a regular Army commission as an infantry officer, later transferring to military intelligence. Colonel Graham also holds a Master of Science in international relations from Troy State University. Among others, he is a graduate of the Infantry Officer's Basic Course, the Military Intelligence Officer's Advanced Course, the Arabic Linguist Course, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, the Joint Forces Staff College and was a U.S. Army War College Intergovernmental Fellow in Washington, D.C. He currently serves as the assistant chief of staff, G-2 for Third Army/USARCENT. Colonel Graham has been awarded twenty different military awards and decorations which most notably include; the Legion of Merit, three awards of the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart Medal, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Parachutist Badge, the Expert Infantryman Badge, the Army Staff Badge and the Combat Action Badge. Colonel Graham and his wife, Bunny, are the proud parents of Mary Beth and her husband 1st Lt. Bryson Soden of Fort Drum, NY, a son Seth who is in the tenth grade and twins Anne and Emma who are in



Dr. Rhonda Kilgo '97/'01

the ninth grade. The Grahams are currently stationed at Shaw Air Force Base, SC.

### OUTSTANDING FACULTY/STAFF OF THE YEAR

**DR. RHONDA KILGO '97/'01** Dr. Kilgo earned a Bachelor of Science in education from Jacksonville State University in 1997 with a concentration in mathematics and English. After graduation, she taught high school mathematics at Gadsden High School for one year and Arab High school for four years during which time she obtained her Master of Science in education from JSU in 2001. She returned to JSU as a member of the math faculty in the MCIS department in 2002. Her main teaching responsibilities include general studies mathematics and math classes which help prepare pre-service elementary education majors. Dr. Kilgo was awarded the degree of Doctor of Education in Higher Education Administration from the University of Alabama in 2012 and in the fall of 2013, she joined the College of Education and Professional Studies as a faculty member of the department of secondary education. She serves as the primary advisor for undergraduate and graduate secondary education mathematics majors as well as the mathematics specialist for the department. Dr. Kilgo also serves as the liaison between secondary education and faculty who teach mathematics content courses. During her career, Dr. Kilgo has received various recognitions for both her teaching and service. She was awarded the JSU Arts & Sciences Dean's Service Award, the Golden Apple Award by the JSU SGA for her teaching and support of students, and selected as the Greek Faculty Advisor of the Year in 2013. She has served on numerous university, college, and departmental committees and as faculty advisor for various organizations including Alpha Omicron Pi and Phi Eta Sigma Honor Society. Dr. Kilgo has also served as an

advisor for the freshman orientation program and for the last six years, she has served as the Gamecock Orientation Advisor Coordinator for the program. She is also an annual member of the JSU National Alumni Association. She and her husband, Wesley, reside in Jacksonville with their daughter, Whitley (3) and are expecting their second child in September.

### ALUMNI CHAPTER OF THE YEAR

**BLOUNT COUNTY** led by Drs. Joe('64) and Syble('64) Brindley. There are approximately 437 alumni residing in the Blount County area.

To nominate someone for the 2015 Outstanding Alumni of the Year, complete the form at [www.jsu.edu/alumni](http://www.jsu.edu/alumni)

Nomination deadline for 2014 alumni of the year is March 1, 2015.

## UPCOMING EVENTS & REUNIONS

### SEPTEMBER 20

2003-2004 Back-to-Back OVC Football Champions Reunion

### SEPTEMBER 27

Fab 40s/Nifty 50s Reunion

### OCTOBER 4

Baseball Alumni Reunion

Football JClub Meeting prior to JSU vs. UT Martin

### OCTOBER 17

Greater Washington D.C. Area Alumni Dinner

### OCTOBER 25

Cheerleader Alumni Reunion

### OCTOBER 31 – NOVEMBER 1

Homecoming Weekend  
See event schedule on page 7

### NOVEMBER 14 – 15

Marching Southerners and Ballerinas Alumni Reunion

REGISTER ONLINE FOR ALL  
EVENTS AT [WWW.JSU.EDU/ALUMNI](http://WWW.JSU.EDU/ALUMNI)





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A large, red chicken mascot is shown on the left side of the page. It has a yellow beak and is wearing a white jersey with 'JSU' and the number '1' in red. A red speech bubble is positioned to its right, containing the text 'YOUR OPINION COUNTS!'.

# YOUR OPINION COUNTS!

JSU will be launching an online alumni survey soon and we want your feedback. Tell us **what is important to you** so that we can make sure our communications and programming are **what you want and need**.

The survey will be sent out electronically so please make sure we have your most recent e-mail address. To update your information and make sure you get a survey, go to [www.jsu.edu/alumni](http://www.jsu.edu/alumni) or use your phone to scan the QR code.

**Thank you in advance for your participation.**

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