Gene Bartow, visionary and founding director of the University of Alabama at Birmingham intercollegiate athletic program and one of the winningest NCAA Division I basketball coaches, died Tuesday, Jan. 3. He was 81.

UAB Athletics began in 1977 with the hiring of Bartow as athletic director and men’s basketball coach. He oversaw an unprecedented era of athletic accomplishment during the next 22 years, including the expansion of UAB athletics as it grew to 17 intercollegiate teams competing at the nation’s highest level.

“To begin an athletic program from the ground up, UAB had to find a motivating force without parallel,” said UAB President Carol Garrison. “Gene Bartow certainly was that person. He was a pioneer and a passionate believer and leader in UAB athletics. Anyone who was fortunate enough to know Coach Bartow was enriched. “His enduring legacy will be providing fantastic sports memories to UAB fans and ensuring opportunities for physical and academic achievement for thousands of young people. He will be greatly missed.”

UAB basketball was a success almost instantly upon Bartow’s arrival, exploding onto the national scene with a trip to the NCAA Elite Eight in the program’s fourth season. The Blazers became a basketball powerhouse in the 1980s, reaching the NCAA Tournament in seven consecutive years and producing three All-Americans in the first eight years.

UAB experienced some of its greatest athletic achievements under Bartow; the 1993-94 season is still considered one of the best in the history of Blazer athletics. UAB teams won six Great Midwest Conference championships, including the Commissioner’s Cup, which was awarded to the university with the most successful overall athletics program.

As director of athletics, Barton’s impact at UAB was equally significant. He was a major force behind UAB’s move from the Sun Belt Conference (1978-91) to the Great Midwest Conference (1991-95) and eventually to Conference USA in 1995. Bartow’s dream of seeing UAB compete in all phases of college athletics became a reality when the Blazers began a football program in 1989, and he directed the program to its eventual NCAA Division I status.

Father of UAB Athletics Gene Bartow leaves lasting legacy

Jan. 9, 2012
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A PUBLICATION BY AND FOR THE UAB COMMUNITY

A ll university and UAB Health System employees will be able to access all training and development courses through a Web portal beginning later this month.

The UAB Faculty & Staff Learning System will enable employees to browse training opportunities, register for classes, track their training histories and more.

“The new Faculty and Staff Learning System will make it more efficient for our employees to take online training courses and register for in-classroom training classes, which is one of the primary goals,” says Pam Burks, executive director of Human Resources.

UAB will be able provide faculty and staff with an array of online training tools and resources 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

New Faculty & Staff Learning System site to launch soon

Employees will be able to take control of their own training and development, and UAB will be able to ensure that state and federal-mandated courses are delivered in a timely manner.

The Health Services Foundation first began using HealthStream in 2003. Since 2007, other members and affiliates of the UAB Health System came on board, including UAB Hospital, Callahan Eye Hospital, VIVA, UAB Health System and UAB Medical West, says Pam Morgan, learning management administrator for the Health Services Foundation. When the campus goes live on the system later this month, HealthStream will be rebranded and called the UAB Faculty & Staff Learning System.

Employees can form teams of four people and staff members and affiliates of the UAB campus locations the week beginning Jan. 23. Weigh-in times and locations are online at www.uab.edu/wellness. Team members do not have to weigh in at the same time. The contest is free, and there will be cash prize drawings when the contest concludes the work week ending April 13.

The goal is to lose a pound a week during the 10-week period.

Jan. 23: Time to Scale Back

New Year’s Day has come and gone, and you’ve had ample time to break that resolution you made. You know the one: “I’m going to lose weight in 2012.”

Don’t fret. There’s still time to reset your sights and enlist some friends struggling with their own weight-loss efforts.

Beginning Jan. 21, UAB faculty, staff, students and family members are invited to commit to Scale Back Alabama, the 10-week, statewide contest that encourages Alabamians to lose weight, exercise and have fun doing it.

This past year, more than 33,000 Alabamians reported a cumulative weight-loss of 143,309 pounds during the contest; 3,740 of those pounds were shed by UAB faculty and staff.

“‘This is a perfect time to think about establishing good habits that will make you healthier,’” said Lauren Whitt, Ph.D., UAB Employee Wellness coordinator. “Scale Back Alabama is a great starting point to help you reach your goals in a fun, healthy way.”

Employees can form teams of four people to weigh in and register at one of several weigh-in locations across the UAB campus.
Scholarships available to kids of employees through UAB NAS

The UAB National Alumni Society is taking applications for the new Employee Student Scholarship. This scholarship is $1,000 and is available to children of UAB faculty and staff who are currently employed by UAB on a full-time basis. Other requirements and an application can be found online at www.uab.edu/alumni.

The Office of Alumni Affairs must receive completed applications no later than Feb. 1.

Noms due Jan. 12 for Woolfolk Award

Nominate a full-time faculty member who has rendered outstanding service to the Birmingham community in education, economic development, health-care delivery, the arts, social services, human rights and/or urban and public affairs for the 2012 Odessa Woolfolk Community Service Award.

Submit a brief letter of nomination, the faculty member’s curriculum vitae, a one- to two-page description of the community service performed and a maximum of five letters of recommendation to the Office of the Vice Provost for Student and Faculty Success (AB 374, +0103) by 5 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 12, 2012. Learn more at www.uab.edu/faculty/awards. Direct questions to Linda Piteo at lapiteo@uab.edu or 934-9438.

Register for Jan. 16 UAB Day of Service

On Jan. 16, UAB will partner with the non-profit Hands On Birmingham for the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. Faculty, staff and students are invited to support the university’s outreach. Most projects will take place Monday, Jan. 16, but there will be a few Saturday options available.

To volunteer, visit www.handsonbirmingham.org, and click on the special events icon. Email questions to Melissa Firestone at Melissa@handsonbirmingham.org.

Beat the pack

Ready to quit tobacco? Beat the pack in a free four-week course to be held from 4:15 to 5 p.m. Tuesdays, Jan. 10, 17, 24 and 31 in West Pavilion Conference Center Room G.

The course, led by UAB Resource Center/Employee Assistance counselors, is free for UAB faculty, staff and family members. For more information or to register, contact the UAB Employee Wellness office or visit www.uab.edu/wellness.

Meditation, T’ai Chi and yoga classes to begin this month

Learn new skills for relaxing and managing stress with classes offered by UAB Resource Center Employee Assistance Program that begin this week.

Meditation classes will begin Tuesday, Jan. 10 and continue each Tuesday from 12:10 p.m. until 12:50 p.m. for eight sessions through February. Counselor John Queenell leads meditation and a brief discussion.

T’ai Chi classes will begin on Thursday, Jan. 12 and continue each Thursday from 12:15 p.m. until 12:45 p.m. through February. It will focus on New Forest T’ai Chi, which uses simple, easily accessible movements.

Kinetic sculpture works by UAB Associate Professor John Fields will be featured in an exhibition that opens Jan. 20 at the UAB Visual Arts Gallery. The new director named for Visual Arts Gallery

The UAB Visual Arts Gallery is now under the management of interim Director John Fields, adjunct instructor in the UAB Department of Art and Art History. Fields is the simple, easily accessible movements.

The New Light support group, formed in spring 2011, provides information and understanding to triple-negative breast cancer patients, survivors and their families. The group is funded by the Susan G. Komen North Central Alabama Affiliate Craft Grant. At quarterly meetings such as this one, oncology professionals and research scientists provide insight into managing the disease, one of the most aggressive forms of breast cancer. For more information about New Light, contact Kimberly Robinson at 975-7912 or krobinson@dpom.uab.edu.

Blackboard Learn assistance available

Instructional Technology Open Lab (ITIT) instructional designers will provide hands-on assistance to faculty on the Blackboard Learn LMS and related tools from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Friday, Jan. 15 in the EB 238 computer lab. For more in-depth information on applying technology in and out of the classroom, technology workshops will be offered throughout the spring term.

eLAS certification and balance roll will end Jan. 15

For individuals using the Electronic Leave Accrual System (eLAS), the annual certification period will end Jan. 15. All 2011 time-off requests must be submitted and approved before the year-end roll Jan. 15. Direct questions to your organization administrator or go to www.uab.edu/elas.

Benevolent Fund grant applications due Friday, Jan. 20

The UAB Benevolent Fund is accepting applications for its 2012 grant cycle until noon Friday, Jan. 20. Non-profit agencies are invited to review the RFP at www.uab.edu/benfund/ia and, if eligible, apply for a grant. In 2011, almost $90,000 was awarded to 13 different Birmingham-area agencies using funds donated by UAB employees. Direct questions to Lisa Higginbotham at llish@uab.edu or call 934-1581.

New director named for Visual Arts Gallery

The UAB Visual Arts Gallery is now under the management of interim Director John Fields, adjunct instructor in the UAB Department of Art and Art History. Fields is the director of the college’s Visual Arts Program.

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Life sentences: UAB faculty teach, learn in prison outreach

By all accounts, the young man we’ll call Jimmy was brilliant. He came highly recommended for admission to the UAB Honors Program. So it was a real shock for Ada Long, Ph.D., then director of the program, to awake one morning in 1987 and learn that Jimmy was under indictment for capital murder.

“It was almost unbelievable,” she recalls. “He was an exceptional student and one of the smartest people I’ve known.”

Jimmy was tried, convicted and sentenced to life without parole.

“I visited Jimmy every week for a couple of years,” Long recalls. “I also became acquainted with many of the other prisoners at Donaldson (Correctional Facility) and felt that it was a nightmare to be in such an environment with no intellectual stimulation.”

Long took hundreds of students and teachers to Donaldson to talk with inmates. “They came away deeply impressed at the inmates’ high level of knowledge, curiosity and hunger for learning,” she says. “Students were stunned and the prisoners seemed so ordinary, much like people they knew on the outside. They were also dismayed at the unseasoneability of the prison environment — the noise, smell, monotony, suffocation and dreariness.”

Changing the guard

Long retired from UAB in 2004, but the Donaldson lecture series that she began continued, thanks to the advocacy of Ron Casanuva, who was then the prison psychologist and now is director of treatment for the Alabama Department of Corrections. In 2008, Alison Chapman, Ph.D., UAB associate professor of English, took charge of the series.

“Typically, we send one or two faculty members a month to Donaldson to lecture on just about any academic subject,” says Chapman, who specializes in British literature of the English Renaissance period. “We’ve offered everything from acting workshops to lectures on Antarctic marine biology, German Expressionist art and poetry.”

Kathy Allen, a psychologist at the prison who coordinates the series with Chapman, says she is delighted with the contributions of UAB faculty members. “Our inmates just love it. I find that the UAB lecturers, especially if they’re coming out for the first time, almost always say things like, ‘I wish my freshman class was like this.’”

Chapman says she encourages faculty not to focus on lectures that they think will be appropriate for the audience.

“Inmates usually want to learn about things completely outside their sphere of reference.” In 2005, after Chapman’s first lecture at Donaldson, she was asked to teach there on a regular basis. “Inmates wanted me to teach them about John Milton’s epic poem Paradise Lost,” she says. An essay Chapman wrote about that experience, “Milton’s Captive Audience,” was originally published in UAB’s PMS professorial literary journal and was later listed in the “New and Notable” section of 2010’s Best American Essays.

“They enjoyed Milton so much that they wanted to keep going,” Chapman says. “So the next year, we focused on Shakespeare’s King Lear: Othello, Macbeth and Hamlet. Finally, the inmates said that the tragedies were too depressing — and could please read some comedies.

“They go right to the heart of really big questions about life and death and all of the lousy things people do to one another.” Chapman says. Seeing the works through the inmates’ eyes has made me quicker to reach for the deeper questions in the classroom.”

Breaking the ice

“Literature is sort of the crystal palace on the hill that can take inmates away from imprisonment for a while,” Chapman says. But the inmates at Donaldson have a chance to explore more than the world of books.

UAB polar biologists Charles McClintock, Ph.D., Margaret Ansler and James McClintock, Ph.D., lead discussions at Donaldson on their research in Antarctica. It’s not unusual for them to have 30 to 40 inmates attend their talks.

“We’ve had them help us demonstrate how to put on a dry suit, like the kind we wear when diving beneath the Antarctic ice shell,” McClintock says. “This, of course, gets everyone rolling with laughter — watching some poor guy struggling to get into the suit.’”

It can be easy to forget the unique circumstances of students at Donaldson. “I recall one kid who looked about 16,” McClintock says. “He was so bright and attentive that I couldn’t help but ask the prison psychologist what he possibly could have done to land in a maximum-security prison. She replied, ‘He killed his mother and father and his siblings with a hatchet.’ And I was stunned. I’m sure there are those who wonder why anyone would waste their time teaching people who are incarcerated. But that’s never been my feeling — and it wasn’t Ada’s.”

Caring audience

The alien nature of the prison can put people off at first. Chapman says. But, typically, once visiting lecturers begin talking, they find that they’re dealing with a very respectful, curious and attentive audience. McClintock says he has received questions at Donaldson “that I would expect from students in a graduate seminar.”

NEW SITE

CONTINUED from page 1

“We want to emphasize to Health System employees that we are not going to a new learning system,” says Morgan. “The current system is going to be integrated enterprise-wide and re-named the UAB Faculty & Staff Learning System. The only things that will be different for most employees within the UAB Health System are the name and the Web address. Everything else will remain the same. The only exception is that UAB Medicaid will continue to log in to the current site at this time.”

Employees will log into the new system using their Blazer ID credentials. One of the advantages of this is that the system will be able to keep track of training histories in one place, giving employees a complete record of courses they have completed at UAB.

“In the past, employees have had to go to two or three different places to find a history of the classes they have taken,” Burks says. “That made it somewhat difficult and time consuming to track down which courses they had completed.”

Thousands of employees take advantage of training and development courses each year, Burks says, and their course histories will be moved into the new learning management system. So when faculty and staff begin exploring the system later this month, they will be able to view a complete list of courses on their training transcript.

Another advantage of the new learning management system will be the ability to self-register for elective learning courses, in addition to regulatory courses, from a single sign-on access point. Now, if a physician needs to take courses for research-related purposes and regulatory courses to meet state or federal requirements, he or she doesn’t have to go to several different locations. Individuals can search for the course they need and register for it on the new Faculty and Staff Learning System site.

Another feature the new system will provide is the ability to push classes out to specific groups of people.

“If a department has a specific mandatory training need for their employees — like all research assistants and associates need to take a class for regulatory purposes — the class can be pushed out to them, and they will be informed that they need to take it,” Burks says. “To set up a class to be sent out, the department’s system administrator or representative will be able to assist.”

The website for the new UAB Faculty & Staff Learning System will be unveiled later this month. Watch the UAB Reporter and The eReporter for the next update.
"Coach Bartow meant a lot to me and was a mentor to me. I've known him a long time. He recruited me out of high school and has always been there for me. I watched him and I will carry with us and cherish always the memories of more than two decades at UAB. That includes the friends we have made, the wonderful players and coaches we have been associated with and some of the best administrators in the world who invited us here in the beginning, stood with us over the years and continue to make this program possible." Bartow, a Browning, Mo., native, was inducted into the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame in 1989. He also was part of the inaugural class of the UAB Athletics Hall of Fame in 2009—the same year he was inducted into the National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame. He most recently was president ofHoops LP, a group that owns and operates the Memphis Grizzlies professional basketball franchise. Before joining UAB Bartow had established himself as one of the premier coaches in college basketball; he led his 1973 Memphis State and 1976 UCLA teams to the NCAA Final Four. He coached teams at six universities during a 34-year span that included 12 NCAA tournament appearances and two Final Four appearances. He was named NBAC National Coach of the Year in 1973 and has since been inducted into the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame, the Missouri Basketball Hall of Fame and halls of fame at Central Missouri State University and Valparaiso University.

As National Coach of the Year in 1973, Bartow guided Memphis State to the National Championship game against UCLA. He succeeded John Wooden at UCLA in 1975 and took the Bruins to the 1976 Final Four. He left UCLA for UAB after the 1976-77 season in a move that stunned the world of collegiate athletics.

UAB was less than 10 years old and had no varsity athletic program when Bartow arrived. Twenty-three years after his retirement, a program started with a handful of student-athletes and employees and a big dream was a thriving enterprise that included more than 400 athletes in 17 sports (six men’s, 11 women’s) and had an annual operating budget exceeding $10 million.

Bartow and his wife, the former Ruth Huffine, have three children, Mark, Beth and Murry, who is the head men’s basketball coach at East Tennessee State.

Bartow’s impact on the court also has been tremendous. He opened the door for donors to UAB athletics to also support cancer research at the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center in 2009 by establishing the Gene Bartow Fund for Cancer Research.

The inaugural UAB Health System Gene Bartow Classic, a men’s basketball game to benefit the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center, first took place in December 2009. The Bartow Classic, along with the Pink Zone women’s basketball game, raise money for the Gene Bartow Fund, which also receives donations and support from other targeted fund-raising events.

At press time, a public visitation for Coach Bartow was held for Sunday, Jan. 8 at Bartow Arena. His funeral was set for Monday, Jan. 9 at Victoria Hills United Methodist Church.
Former players recall Bartow’s intensity, compassion

**ANDY KENNEDY** had been a basketball junkie from the time he could hold a ball in his hands until injuries ended his professional career. When his playing days finished in 1994, Kennedy decided to do the only thing he knew to do — coach. So he called Gene Bartow, who was still UAB’s coach and athletic director, expecting his mentor to help him land a choice coaching job. He was wrong.

“I wanted him to name me associate head coach, like all former players want their coaches to do,” Kennedy says, chuckling. “He wasn’t as helpful as I wanted him to be. I was like, ‘Dadgum coach, I helped you win some games and made some baskets. I need a job.’ He said, ‘Andy, why don’t you go be a doctor or a lawyer — do something else. You don’t want to get into this rat race.’ I told him, ‘Coach, basketball is all I know.’”

Kennedy, now the head basketball coach at the University of Mississippi, was one of many former UAB players, administrators, coaches and friends sharing fond memories Bartow after his death Tuesday, Jan. 3. The funeral will be held at 11 a.m. Monday, Jan. 9 at the Vestavia Hills United Methodist Church.

Kennedy met Bartow in the summer of 1985 when the coach recruited the hotshot shooting guard from Louisville, Miss. Kennedy signed to play under Jim Valvano at North Carolina State before transferring to UAB, where he lettered three years and earned the school’s second all-time leading scoring record. But while skills as a sharp-eyed shooting guard weren’t enough for Bartow to advise Kennedy to pursue a coaching career, Kennedy pursued Bartow’s help relentlessly.

“I got the job here at Valpo, we became good friends, I was always an excellent coach, but more importantly, he was always a very gracious, very kind person and an outstanding coach and family man and will be dearly missed.” — Ben Howland, UCLA Men’s Basketball coach

“Received some very, very sad news Tuesday night. My good friend and mentor, Gene Bartow, passed away Tuesday after a long battle with cancer. He was 81. Not only was he a great coach, he was a great man. He’s going to be sorely missed. His wife, Ruth, and I talked Monday morning. Both of us cried knowing that it was coming to an end. My heart and my prayers go out to the Bartow family. Weeds will never be able to describe how much Gene meant to me.” — John Calipari, Kentucky Men’s Basketball coach

**What they Tweeted**

“With the passing of Gene Bartow, UAB and the whole world have lost a great man, great coach, and great leader. He will be missed!”

@gettman Mike Gettman

**UAB Men’s soccer coach**

“I still can’t believe this is the first day the world has turned without Gene Bartow. He’ll always be missed by the Green and Gold faithful.”

@UABBlant

“RIP Gene Bartow, one of the finest coaches and people basketball has known. He succeeded Wooden, and succeeded in everything he ever did.”

@jelbhas

“Bartow directed a team that united a racially divided city, succeeded John Wooden and built an athletic department from scratch. Remarkable.”

@dawwooklen

“Bartow nicknamed ‘Clean Gene’ A longtime friend told Fox 13 that Gene’s idea of a big celebration was a glass of milk and chocolate cake.”

@nwfomemphis

“RIP — Gene Bartow, met him once outside Birmingham restaurant. We talked Memphis basketball for 30 min. It was Great. One Very Nice Man.”

@DaMemphisBlues

“Gene Bartow’s legacy extends well beyond sports into the realms of kindness and great leadership.”

@BHMBizAlliance

[Image 216x793 to 757x1135]

Former UAB President Dick Hill (left) stunned the college basketball world when he lured Gene Bartow away from UCL A to start the Blazers’ athletics program from scratch.

**REMEMBERING BARTOW**

CONTINUED from page 4

school days when he was coaching in the St. Louis area while I was playing. He was always an excellent coach, but more importantly, he was always a very gracious, very kind person and an outstanding coach and family man and will be dearly missed.” — Ben Howland, UCLA Men’s Basketball coach

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Jan. 9, 2012 UAB Reporter 5
Local organ donor honored on Rose Bowl Parade float

Organ donation always has been a serious subject to the Brannon family — even before the decision was made to donate their son Daniel’s organs after his death in 2009.

But it also was talked about light-heartedly. Steve Brannon laughs and says he learned early that he didn’t have a choice in the matter. His mother-in-law was an ICU charge nurse whose work led her to become an organ donor. She encouraged her children, grandchildren — and their spouses — to do the same.

“Lavonda told me, ‘You may as well be an organ donor, because Mom is going to make sure they get them anyway,’” Brannon says.

“We joked about it with each other,” Lavonda Brannon says. “But we never really thought we would have to do it.”

But they did. Daniel “Danny” Brannon’s organs gave life to five others in 2009, and he was one of 72 donors remembered with a memorial floragraph — a portrait made from flowers — sponsored by the Alabama Organ Center and UAB Hospital on the Donate Life Float, “One More Day,” in the Rose Parade on Monday, Jan. 2.

Brannon was killed Nov. 28, 2009, by a drunk driver while skating at a red light in Birmingham. The 2006 graduate of Carver High School has been a straight-A student and a drummer in his high-school band. He spent his last days studying mechanical engineering at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, and he was scheduled to graduate in May 2011.

Daniel had made the decision to be an organ donor before his accident, his mother says. He told her, “Where I am going, I do not need these.”

Michael Waldrum, M.D., CEO of UAB Hospital, says Danny’s story is one of hope and inspiration.

“When I read Danny’s story, I was struck that he was the type of kid who lived every day in the service of others,” Waldrum says. “When he was tragically killed, he continued to live that way through the gift that he gave. He wanted to pass on the gift of life. That is such a special thing.”

The Brannons hope the Rose Parade float increases awareness about organ donation and more lives will be saved.

“We’re selfish most of our lives,” Steve Brannon says. “We don’t know when we are going to leave, but we know we are. Why hold onto something that is going to turn to dirt when you can share it and be generous in death? What have you got to lose?”

“Give,” LaVonda says. “You have some awesome things inside of you that can help others. Just give.”

Register to become an organ donor at alabamaorgancenter.org or contact Rebecca Davis at Rebecca.Davis@ccc.uab.edu for more information.

Researchers seeks to reverse Rett syndrome in children

Neurodiscovered details might advance efforts to reverse Rett syndrome, a rare condition that prevents girls from ever being able to think and remember by changing the way their developing brains build the capacity to store information as circumstances change.

The work proceeds from the revolutionary discovery that activity in the developing brain is required for the development of neural connections to the extent that “inactivity causes loss of plasticity,” said Lucas Pozzo-Miller, Ph.D., professor of neurobiology at UAB and senior author of the paper. “You also provide the latest argument that correcting for the genetic miscues that cause Rett syndrome,” said Lucas Pozzo-Miller, Ph.D., professor of neurobiology at UAB and senior author of the paper.

“Having a good model is essential,” said Rebecca Davis at alabamaorgancenter.org or contact Rebecca Davis at Rebecca.Davis@ccc.uab.edu for more information.

Steve Wood

ClaSSiFieDS

caMpUS NewS

Contributed by Rebecca Davis

N eedly discovered details might advance efforts to reverse Rett syndrome, a rare condition that prevents an infant’s brain circuitry from developing, according to a presentation called ‘Plasticity Is a Hot Topic’ by the Society for Neuroscience at its recent annual meeting.

The study by UAB researchers is part of mounting evidence that conditions from autism to Down syndrome need not last a lifetime.

“Our results suggest that the field is on the right track in early efforts to design a treatment for a devastating condition in Rett syndrome,” said Lucas Pozzo-Miller, Ph.D., professor of neurobiology at UAB and senior author of the paper. “You also provide the latest argument that correcting for the genetic miscues that cause Rett syndrome.”

“Having a good model is essential,” said Rebecca Davis at alabamaorgancenter.org or contact Rebecca Davis at Rebecca.Davis@ccc.uab.edu for more information.

Steve Wood
Professionalism, compassion earn Joseph EOM honor

Denise Joseph has spent her 15-year career at UAB making positive impressions — on co-workers, students and administrators.

Louis Dale, Ph.D., vice president for Equity and Diversity, took notice of Joseph more than six years ago in his capacity as professor of mathematics. He noticed her professionalism and rapport with mathematics students and faculty and was particularly impressed with the way she expressed herself.

“I remember when I came to interview for the executive assistant position in Equity and Diversity, Dr. Dale told me he had been watching me do my job in the math department,” Joseph says. “That scared the heck out of me. But he said he liked the way I carried myself and the way I communicated with others.”

Joseph, who was hired as executive assistant in the Office of the Vice President for Equity and Diversity in September 2005, is described as a hard-working, well-organized individual who is pleasant, punctual and conscientious — all qualities that made her Employee of the Month for December 2011.

Joseph’s responsibilities include providing diverse, complex and often confidential administrative, secretarial and support services for Dale. She also undertakes special assignments, including research, summarizing correspondences and data for UAB and compiling reports for submission to the University of Alabama System and the National Science Foundation.

One of her primary duties is maintaining the vice president’s evolving calendar. Joseph is asked to attend events for Dale on occasion, and she does so in a professional manner, he says.

“While Ms. Joseph’s duties, responsibilities and workload may be typical of an executive assistant, I must add that she is an outstanding employee, hard worker and contributes to the success of the office,” Dale says. “She exemplifies what is best about UAB.”

Joseph’s interaction with colleagues and students is a shining example of that.

In addition to supervising temporary staff, Joseph is the contact person for several minority graduate fellowship programs. It is here that she interacts with and assists students with paperwork and schedules.

Osuoke Emonina, academic advisor in the Department of Biology, often refers students to Joseph for the Alliance for Minority Participation Bridge to the University.

“Extended mom” was one she relished and sometimes get pictures of the first baby or new home. But I wasn’t inviting them to my home for any reason other than I just care about people and our students.

“Since I’ve been in the Office for Equity and Diversity, I’m not quite as hands-on with the students. I really enjoy working with them. I’m in awe of their knowledge and capabilities and what they’ve managed to accomplish and obstacles they’ve overcome. I admire what they do and how well they do it.”

José Fernandez, Ph.D., associate professor of nutrition sciences and director for diversity outreach in the Office of Equity & Diversity, says Joseph is an example of the commitment and professionalism that characterize UAB.

“She is a quiet person with controlled and settled moods and refined and calm manners,” Fernandez says. “She is also efficient and capable of handling high-stress situations with great equanimity. Ms. Joseph has earned the respect of staff members and faculty who has interacted with her throughout the years. Her commitment to diversity, her vision of equality and her understanding of equity shows in the actions she delivers in her job responsibility.”

Joseph is quick to share her accomplishments with others.

“It’s truly a team effort in our office,” she says. “We have a good working relationship, and I’m really fortunate to have always had that since I’ve been here. I’ve always been able to pick up the phone and call all over campus and get whatever I need from wherever I need it. I think that says a lot about the people here at UAB.”

**Scale Back**

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“We’re really encouraging healthy weight-loss, not crash-dieting.” Whit says.

“Throughout the contest, participants will be provided with tips for eating healthy, exercising and losing weight, and encouragement on the UAB Wellness Facebook and @UABWellness Twitter accounts.”

Nearly one in three Alabamians is considered obese, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the nation’s third worst rate — behind only Mississippi and West Virginia.

Scale Back Alabama challenges those obesity rates and encourages citizens to lose weight and be healthier. Alabama’s hospitals, the Alabama Department of Public Health and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama sponsor the contest.

For every team that completes the 10-week contest with each team member losing at least 10 pounds (an average of one pound per week), the team will be included in a drawing for one of three grand prizes on April 30. The members of the first team drawn will win $1,000 each, the second team will win $500 per member and the third team will win $250 per member.

Everyone who loses at least 10 pounds will be included in a drawing for one of 50 achievement prizes of $100 per person, regardless of their team’s achievement.

Everyone who lost any weight and weighs out also will be included in a drawing.


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