

## Can't Wait to Graduate

Student alumni ambassadors help promote loyalty to university

**A**LTHOUGH THE UL LAFAYETTE Alumni Association is housed in the Alumni Center on St. Mary Boulevard, it's represented all over campus, every day of the week.

That's because its student alumni ambassadors can be found in classrooms, at student organization meetings and just about anywhere else students gather.

"They truly define the word 'ambassador.' They reach out to other students and explain what the Alumni Association's impact is on the university. They have done a fine job of that," said Angela Morrison, as-

stant director of the UL Lafayette Alumni Association and SAA adviser.

SAA is composed of a dozen members of the Association of Future Alumni, which is a chapter of the UL Lafayette Alumni Association. AFA was formed by students in 1996 to promote loyalty to the university and to strengthen ties between students and alumni.

AFA members assist with Association events, such as reunions, receptions and tailgating. The AFA is open to all UL Lafayette students; it has about 110 members.

Morrison said student alumni ambassadors choose to take an even more active role in Alumni Association projects by serving as officers of AFA. But student alumni ambassadors are not elected by their peers. To be chosen for the elite SAA group, AFA members

must go through an application and selection process conducted by the Alumni Association staff, the AFA president and certain Alumni Association executive leaders, such as its president-elect.

Student alumni ambassadors are involved in a variety of projects throughout the year. One of their newest is Red Carpet Day. "It's like Preview Day, which the university holds to enable high school students to learn more about UL Lafayette and what it offers. But Red Carpet Day is a special preview that they conduct just for potential 'legacy' students, who are relatives of UL Lafayette graduates," Morrison said.

Student alumni ambassadors spearhead fundraising events to generate operational funds. Some of the money they raise is used to pay for travel to regional or national conferences.

"They came up with a brand new fundraiser this year. They're selling chrome emblems bearing UL Lafayette's logo, which can be placed on vehicles or trailer hitches," Morrison said.

Claire Pettit, who was AFA president last year, helped establish the SAA group.

She was succeeded as SAA president by Blake Cormier this year. Morrison said Cormier "has worked hard to really fine-tune the SAA, to make it even better."

The AFA has grown significantly since Morrison joined the Alumni Association staff in 2002. "Even though the students' faces have changed over the past five years, attitudes have remained the same. They want to be more connected with alumni. They can see the advantage of starting now and building networking opportunities," she said.

For more information about the Association of Future Alumni, phone the Alumni Association at (337) 482-0900 or send e-mail to [alumni@louisiana.edu](mailto:alumni@louisiana.edu) ■



SHOWN, FROM LEFT: Blake Cormier, president of the Association of Future Alumni; Blair Broussard, staff assistant of the UL Lafayette Alumni Association; Angela Morrison, assistant director of the Alumni Association and Student Alumni Ambassadors advisor; and Dan Hare, director of the UL Lafayette Alumni Association.

BLAINE FAUL

# ALUMNI

## 1954

**MIKE STANSBURY** was inducted into the “Order of Living Legends” by the Acadian Museum of Erath in December in Erath, La.



He was instrumental in the development of weight training, Olympic weightlifting and body building in Louisiana. In 1957, Stansbury was a member of SLI's weightlifting team, which won the school's first National Collegiate Weightlifting Championship. He is a former recreation supervisor for the City of Lafayette and operated a business in Abbeville, La. Stansbury holds bachelor's degrees in business administration, liberal arts and art education from SLI. He and his wife, Andr e, who live in Lafayette, recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. They have one daughter, one granddaughter and two great-grandsons.

## 1957

**JACQUELINE J. (SCHRODER) DAVIS**, a retired teacher, lives in Creswell, Ore. She's a member of the Spanish choir at St. Philip Benizi Catholic Church and is a researcher at Creswell Historical Museum. She taught Spanish and history in Fairfield, Calif., for 18 years. Davis holds a bachelor's degree in Spanish/English from USL. She and her husband, the late **JAMES J. DAVIS**, '52, have seven children, Kateri, Christopher, Tristan, Nicol e, Daland, Darian and Danan.

## 1960

**LETHA SAVANT BRIGGS** is director of Community Life at St. Edmond Catholic Church in Lafayette. Her family was honored by the Louisiana Volunteers for Family and Community in 2006. Briggs earned a bachelor's degree in home economics education. She is married to Willard A. Briggs, who attended USL for two years. The couple have six children, Byron Briggs; Stephen Briggs; **SUSAN BRIGGS SMITH**, '87; Michael Briggs; **ELIZABETH BRIGGS BERTUCCI**, '93; and Robert Briggs, who attended UL Lafayette. The couple have 11 grandchildren.

## 1973

**DEBRA B. CHOATE** retired in May 2006 after teaching at Maurice Elementary School in Maurice, La., for 33 years. She received a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a master's degree in education from USL. Choate participated in UL Lafayette's Professional Development Schools program as supervisor of student teachers at Maurice Elementary. She and her husband, **PAUL D. CHOATE**, '74, have a daughter, **FAITH CHOATE**, '06, and a son, Tyler Choate, who is a freshman at UL Lafayette.

## 1974

**DION J. DUBOIS** is an instructional specialist for the Dallas Independent School District, where she designed the first School Counseling Alternative Certification Program in Texas. She was formerly a professor at Northwestern State University and Texas A&M University-Commerce. Dubois holds bachelor's degrees in French

and elementary education, as well as a master's degree in administration and supervision, from USL. She received a doctorate in education from the University of Houston.

## 1976

**RICHARD L. CRAVATTS** was recently named founding director of Boston University's Book and Magazine Publishing Certificate Program, which is offered by the university's Center for Professional Education. For more than 27 years, he was publisher of the Boston Classical Network, a firm which creates custom publications to help market the region's major performing arts organization. He has launched new consumer magazines, playbills and other custom publications. Cravatts holds a doctorate in English from USL.

## 1977

**BLAKE S. WILLIAMS** is president of Vermilion Bank and Trust Company in Kaplan, La., and a member of its board of directors. He is also president of Rotary Club of Kaplan and of the Vermilion Milk Fund. He's a member of the St. Edmond Church Parish Council in Lafayette. Williams received a bachelor's degree in marketing from USL. He and his wife, **LYNN HEBERT WILLIAMS**, '81, have two sons, Alex Williams, and Kyle Williams, who is attending UL Lafayette.

## 1980

**SHARON MENARD MOON** is a first grade teacher at Ossun Elementary School in Ossun, La. She has been a teacher for more than 26 years. Moon is a member

of Catholic Daughters of America and a volunteer for the Louisiana Organ Procurement Agency. She earned bachelor's and master's degrees in elementary education from USL. She has three children, Hailey Moon, who is attending UL Lafayette; Alison Moon; and Marisa Moon.

## 1982

**RANDY GRAY** was recently named president and chief executive officer of Alucid Solution, which provides usability labs for clients such as Samsung and Intuit.



He has relocated the company from Atlanta to Baton Rouge. Gray holds a bachelor's degree in business from USL, where he was a member of Sigma Nu fraternity. He and his wife, Jenny Gray, have two children, Melinda and Jack.

## 1983

**MICHAEL J. LOPINTO** is commanding officer of the

### 1900-1921

Southwestern Louisiana Industrial Institute

### 1921-1960

Southwestern Louisiana Institute

### 1960-1999

University of Southwestern Louisiana

### 1999-PRESENT

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

## ALUMNI PROFILE: DR. JOSEPH KEITH MELANCON

## Five patients receive kidneys in simultaneous transplants

A UL LAFAYETTE GRAD is one of a dozen surgeons at The Johns Hopkins Hospital who made medical history in November by performing the first quintuple kidney transplant.

Dr. Joseph Keith Melancon, '82, is director of kidney and pancreas transplantation and clinical transplantation research at the renowned Baltimore facility. He earned a bachelor's degree from USL. He received his medical education and surgical training from Tulane University, which was followed by a multi-organ transplantation fellowship at the University of Minnesota.

Melancon's work may be familiar to viewers of the Discovery Health Channel. He was a member of a team of surgeons featured on a recent episode of its "Surgery Saved My Life" series that documented a successful triple kidney transplant. Three patients who had what Discovery Health described as "unusual cocktails of antibodies in their bloodstreams" each received a kidney from live donors.

The quintuple kidney transplants were 10-hour surgeries that occupied six operating rooms and required 11 anesthesiologists and 18 nurses, in addition to the 12 surgeons. A total of about 100 medical personnel were involved in the trans-



Dr. Joseph Keith Melancon

plants, including immunogeneticists, nursing coordinators and pharmacists.

Kidneys were removed from five unrelated female donors and given to three males and two females whose ages ranged from 40 to 77.

"Four transplant candidates had come to Johns Hopkins separately for evaluation, each with a willing donor whose blood and tissue types were incompatible with the intended recipient and who therefore could not donate to their loved one," a Johns Hopkins Medicine spokesman stated in an announcement of the historic quintuple transplants.

"Using a previously developed living donor matching system, the Hopkins transplant team included a so-called altruistic donor in the mix and were able to arrange a five-way swap,

in which all four original candidates received compatible kidneys from someone they had never met, and the remaining kidney went to a patient who was next on the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) organ recipient list. An altruistic donor is a person who, for personal reasons, has a generous desire to donate a kidney to no particular recipient."

The Hopkins transplant team is a pioneer in the exchange of kidneys between incompatible donor-recipient pairs, he added. ■



Louisiana Air National Guard's 159th Fighter Wing, which is at the Naval Air Station-Joint Reserve Base

in New Orleans. The 159th Fighter Wing operates the F-15A/C "Eagle" and has more than 1,500 personnel. Lopinto is an F-15 instructor and a veteran of more than 25 combat sorties over Iraq in support of Operation Provide Comfort and Northern Watch. He was one of the first Air Guardsmen to open the naval air station in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and assisted with relief and recovery in Louisiana in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. He received a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from USL. Lopinto and his wife, Anne Lopinto, have a daughter, Francesca.

## 1984

**DONNA A. ARMENTOR**, senior manager-promotions at Sony Computer Entertainment America, helped lead marketing efforts that introduced the Sony PlayStation 3 gaming system in November. She has been employed by Sony for 12 years and has assisted with every PlayStation launch. Armentor was featured in the November/December 2006 issue of *Event Marketer* as a member of the publication's "Dream Team," which it described as "10 marketers we would hire if we were starting our own brand." Armentor earned a bachelor's degree in marketing from USL. She has served as a volunteer in Nicaragua and Guatemala. She is also a volunteer with the Autism Speaks Foundation. Armentor lives in San Francisco.

**JEFFREY COURTRIGHT** was promoted to associate professor, with tenure, in the School of Communication at Illinois State University recently. He teaches public relations and coordinates public relations internships. A book he co-edited, *Power and Public Relations*, was published in 2006. Courtright is a member of the ISU Civic Chorale and of Cantus Novus, a semiprofessional singing group. He also is leader of the a capella worship team at Northside Church of Christ in Bloomington, Ill. Courtright holds a bachelor's degree in communication from USL.

## 1986

**MONIQUE GUILBEAU COSSICH** received a master's degree in human sciences from Stephen F. Austin State University in December. As executive director of enrollment management at SFA, she is responsible for

recruitment and retention activities. Cossich holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from USL. She and her husband, **MARC COSSICH, '88**, live in Nacogdoches, Texas.

**TROY M. NAQUIN** works for Dynamac Corporation of Scott, La., as a government contractor for U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region



6. He is a registered professional geologist and a certified hazardous material manager. Naquin conducts assessments and cleanups at sites of releases of hazardous materials or oil that are covered under Superfund or the Oil Pollution Act. After Hurricane Katrina struck south Louisiana in 2005, Naquin assisted with urban search and rescue

operations and conducted initial samplings of air, water and soil in affected areas. When Hurricane Rita hit southwestern Louisiana a month later, he served as division supervisor of the Central Hazardous Debris Collection Branch for Vermilion and Iberia parishes. He assisted with the anthrax terrorist situation in Washington, D.C., in 2001, and conducted counterterrorism activities at the 2002 SuperBowl and 2003 Sugar Bowl. In 2003, he was an EPA team leader for the Columbia Shuttle disaster response in east Texas. Naquin holds bachelor's degrees in geology and science education from USL. He and his wife, **ROSLYN (GRIZZAFFI) NAQUIN, '86**, have two children, Sarah and Ian. They live in Scott, La.

## 1987

**KAROLYN J. MAUGHAN** was recently promoted to clinical manager at Our Lady of Lourdes Regional Medical Center, where she leads the oncology department. She serves on the board of directors of the Supportive Care Coalition, a national Catholic health system group. Maughan has received several professional awards and was among the Great 100 Nurses Foundation's "Great 100 Nurses of Louisiana for 2006." She is a member of the nonprofit Cajun Invasion Dragon Boat Team, which is dedicated to supporting cancer survivors. A former staff nurse with Hospice of Acadiana, Maughan started the Compassionate Care Coalition, a group of local professionals who are involved in end of life care and issues. She has written articles for national publications and has participated in several medical missions to Mexico and Bolivia. Maughan received a bachelor's degree in nursing from USL. She and her husband, **LEONARD MAUGHAN SR., '87**, have a daughter, **MERIDITH A. JOHNSON, '97**, and a son, Thomas J. Maughan.

## 1990

**JOYCE B. LINDE** is a professional photographer whose work is included in the permanent collections of the Paul and Lulu Hilliard University Art Museum at UL Lafayette, Ogden Museum of Southern Art in New Orleans

and Louisiana State Museum in New Orleans and Baton Rouge. She earned a bachelor's degree in fine arts from USL. Linde and her husband, Mel Linde, live in Lafayette. They have three children: Shane Boudreaux, who attended UL Lafayette; **MARK BOUDREAU, '85, '94**; and **MELANIE LINDE GAUTREAU, '92**.

## 1991

**CARMEN M. SCOTT** is a law clerk at the law office of Darren Cantor in Denver, Colo., while attending law school at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law. She holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from USL.

### SANDRA HARVEY

**TONKEL** is pricing assistant for Grabill Cabinet Company in Grabill, Ind. She holds a bachelor's degree in business from USL. Tonkel and her husband, Robert Lee Tonkel Jr., have three children, Michael, Matthew and Melissa.

## 1992

**DENISE GALLAGHER** was recently promoted to senior art director at BBR Creative, an advertising, design and marketing communications agency in



Lafayette. She has won several Best of Show and Art Director of the Year awards from the Acadiana Advertising Federation. She has also won gold and silver awards in regional and national competition. Gallagher received a bachelor's degree in fine arts from USL.

**MICHAEL R. ISTRE** manages the Design Engineering and Drafting departments in the Houston branch of Project Consulting Services. As senior mechanical

# A Look Back



GEORGE LARRIEU

## 1950

Malcolm "Honk" Hebert, an SLI catcher, rounds a base in 1950. The Bulldogs won the Gulf South Conference that year.

engineer, he's responsible for development of engineering standards and procedures. Last year, he obtained patents for the design of a non-contact measuring device for pipe and methodology used to match a group of pipes for welding. After graduating from USL with a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering, Istre earned a master's degree in engineering from The University of Texas. Istre and his wife, Connie Stagg Istre, have twin boys, Logan and Ethan.

## 1993

**HANNAH MARIE MOSE** is principal of James H. Law Elementary School in the Houston Independent School District. She serves on various superintendent committees, is a member of the Administrators' Mentoring Program and coordinates several professional development programs. Mose, who received a bachelor's degree in elementary education from USL, has two

daughters, Gabrielle Chaney and Olivia Chaney.

**TARA G. RICHARD** was recently elected partner at Jones Walker law firm in New Orleans. She primarily practices in the fields of bankruptcy and creditor/debtor rights. Richard received a bachelor's degree in communications from USL.

## 1994

**BURLEY JOSEPH PELLERIN II** is owner of On-Site Document Destruction of Lafayette. The company was named "Outstanding New Business" in 2005 by the Better Business Bureau of Acadiana. Pellerin, who holds a bachelor's degree in marketing, is a member of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce. He has one daughter, Peyton Louise Pellerin.

## 1996

**LISA GIRARD SANSALONE** is an acute

## ALUMNI INFORMATION FORM

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OR THE SEMESTER YOU LAST ATTENDED THE UNIVERSITY

### CURRENT JOB TITLE

### BUSINESS NAME

### BUSINESS ADDRESS

### PROFESSIONAL DUTIES

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### SPOUSE'S NAME

FIRST MIDDLE LAST MAIDEN NAME

### SPOUSE'S USL OR UL LAFAYETTE GRADUATION DATE

AND MAJOR, IF A FORMER USL STUDENT

### CHILDREN

(IF ANY ARE UL LAFAYETTE STUDENTS OR USL GRADUATES, PLEASE INDICATE)

### CURRENT DATE

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care pediatric nurse practitioner in Houston. The *Journal of Pediatric Health Care* recently published an article she had written. She holds a bachelor's degree in nursing from USL and a master's of science in nursing degree, with a pediatric acute care nurse practitioner specialization, from Vanderbilt University. Sansalone is married to **BRIAN J. SANSALONE, '96**.

## 1997

**KAMI M. MCDONALD** is public information officer for the East Baton Rouge Parish School System. She is the liaison between the media and school system and coordinates the development and implementation of magnet and gifted programs, advertising and recruitment. McDonald also oversees internal and external school system publications, public service announcements, advertising, direct mail, special events and production of videos. She is a former news producer at WBRZ-TV in Baton Rouge and at KATC-TV in Lafayette. She earned a bachelor's degree in public relations from USL.



## 1998

**TRASIMA N. RICHARD** earned the 2006 Region IV Educator of the Year Award presented by the Louisiana Association of Computer Using Educators. She teaches sixth grade math at

Sugarland Elementary School in New Iberia, La., and holds Louisiana teacher certifications in 10 areas. Richard received bachelor's degrees in general studies and elementary education from USL. She earned a master's degree in educational technology and leadership from McNeese State University and an educational specialist degree from Northwestern State University. Richard is married to **DUANE J. RICHARD, '02**. The couple have five children: Joseph Jean-Batiste, Peaches Jean-Batiste, Thaddius Jean-Batiste, Preston Jean-Batiste and Jeremiah Jean-Batiste.

## 1999

### JENNIFER HARAGEONES PATTERSON



is director of Creative Arts of St. Tammany in Covington, La., a group dedicated to bringing theatrical education and productions to St. Tammany Parish, and Cedarwood School's Drama Club in Mandeville, La. She teaches acting to children ages 2-16 and then produces a show in which they perform. She also directs and acts with CAST's troupe, the Jack and Jill Players, which performs musicals for schools in the New Orleans area. Patterson holds a bachelor's degree in performing arts from USL. She is married to Shawn Patterson; they have one daughter.

**MILAURO B. SPELMAN** teaches a language class for students in

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Seminole County public schools in Florida who have moderate communication difficulties and learning disabilities. She also started a private practice in 2005, providing speech and language therapy, as well as reading evaluations and remediation. Spelman earned a master's degree in speech pathology from USL. She and her husband, Jason, live in Oviedo, Fla.

## 2002

**DANE ST. CYR** is site manager and construction engineer for FMC Corp., a chemical company in Opelousas, La. He also travels to the company's other facilities to handle projects such as major retrofits, new plant construction and major equipment installation and repair. St. Cyr, who received an associate's degree and bachelor's degree from UL Lafayette in industrial technology, is a certified welding inspector and hazardous materials incident commander. He is a member of American Legion Post 209 in Washington, La., and a life member of Disabled American Veterans. St. Cyr and his wife, **NANCY (FONTENOT) ST. CYR, '90**, have three sons, Andrew, Benjamin and Criston.

## 2003

**JOEY SCHULZ** was recently named an account executive at Gallinghouse and Associates, a marketing communications firm in Covington, La. He



earned a bachelor's degree in mass communications, with a concentration in advertising, from UL Lafayette. Schulz successfully completed an internship in the Interactive Media Department at Temerlin McClain in Irving, Texas, where he worked on campaigns for American Airlines and Subaru.

**NATE A. PRITTS** is an assistant professor of English at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, La., and editor of *H\_NGM\_N*, an online journal of poetry. His poetry collection, *Big Crisis*, was published in

October 2006. Pritts, who earned a doctorate in English from UL Lafayette, has published several works of poetry and criticism throughout the United States and abroad. He is married to **RHONDA GLEASON-PRITTS, '02**, who received a bachelor's degree in English from UL Lafayette and is completing a master's degree in studio art from Northwestern State. They have three children, Katie A. Pritts, Dylan E. Gleason-Pritts and Helena D. Gleason-Pritts.

## 2004

**GARLAND L. RODRIGUEZ** was named the 2006 Conference USA Equipment Manager of the Year. An assistant equipment manager at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, La., he received certification from the American Equipment Managers Association in 2004. Rodriguez holds a general studies degree from UL Lafayette.

## IN MEMORIAM

**MALCOLM "HONK" HEBERT SR., '51** died Sept. 23, 2006, in Alexandria, La. A mechanical engineer, he had retired in 1981 from the City of Alexandria, La., where he was Commissioner of Streets and Parks and director of the Department of Public Works. Earlier in his career, he was employed by Roland Construction Co. for more than 25 years, as vice president and treasurer. Prior to enrolling at Southwestern Louisiana Institute, Hebert served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He played first base on the 1950 SLI Gulf States Championship baseball team and earned a bachelor's degree in engineering from SLI. Hebert is survived by his wife of over 55 years, the former Mary Patricia "Pat" Morgan; a son, Malcolm Paul Hebert Jr.; four daughters, Paulette Ryland, Tommie Hebert and Renee Gutierrez, all of Alexandria, and Deborah Hebert of San Angelo, Texas; six grandchildren; and two sisters, Maxine Hebert Meadows of Alexandria and Betty Hebert Thompson of Lake Charles, La.

**LEANNA (FAULK) SIEGRIST, '56**, a former home economics teacher,

died Oct. 21, 2006. After earning a bachelor's degree in home economics from SLI, she began teaching in Houma, La. In 1962, Siegrist moved to Grand Rapids, Mich. After her children were grown, she worked as an executive secretary at Grand Rapids Junior College until her retirement in 1999. Siegrist is survived by her husband, Thomas David Siegrist of Grand Rapids, Mich.; two daughters, Cindy Siegrist Berthold and Lisa Siegrist Fuhr; four sons, Mike Siegrist, Mark Siegrist, Robert Siegrist and Allan Siegrist; two sisters, Sadie Duhon and Beverly Mitchell; and eight grandchildren.

**CECIL J. PICARD, '59**, Louisiana's superintendent of education, died Feb. 15, 2007, in Lafayette. Under his leadership, significant progress was made in K-12



education. Louisiana developed an accountability program that was recently ranked No. 1 in the nation by *Education Week* magazine. The state also earned national attention for its efforts to improve teacher quality. Picard considered his most important contribution to be the creation of LA 4, a pre-K program for at-risk students that is now a model for the nation. He began his career as a teacher at LeBlanc Elementary School in Erath, La. He later became a teacher, coach and principal at Maurice High School in Maurice, La. Picard was elected to the Louisiana House of Representatives in 1976 and to the Louisiana Senate in 1979. As a senator, he championed numerous education reform initiatives. He was named state superintendent of education in 1996. Picard received an honorary doctorate from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in 2006. He held a degree in upper elementary education from SLI and a master of arts degree in administration and supervision from Sam Houston State Teachers College. Survivors include his wife, Gaylen David Picard; two sons, Tyron D. Picard and Mark Lane Picard; four grandchildren, Stephanie Marie Picard, Madeline

Ann Picard, William Andrew Picard and John Wright Picard; one sister, Geraldine "Gerry" Picard LeBlanc; his mother-in-law, Mrs. Fadra David; and his sister-in-law, Bonnie Eveland. Memorial contributions can be made in Picard's name to The Cecil Picard Endowment Fund, benefiting the Early Childhood Development Center at UL Lafayette, c/o the Community Foundation of Acadiana, P.O. Box 3892, Lafayette, La., 70502-3892.

**THOMAS D. PETITJEAN, '92**, an assistant professor of English at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, La., died May 5, 2006. He published three books and wrote for numerous technical writing publications. Petitjean was former promotion director for *New York Magazine* and a script writer for "Another World" and "As the World Turns" television shows. He taught at Rayne High School for five years and was selected Teacher of the Year there in 1995. Petitjean received a bachelor's degree from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, La., and a master's degree and doctorate from USL. Survivors include his parents, Thomas D. and Evelyn S. Petitjean of Rayne, La.; one sister, Andree Wingate of Rayne, La.; two brothers, Jim Petitjean and Joe Petitjean of Rayne, La.; five nieces; and one nephew.

**ROBERT MORRIS COLE**, coach of men's track at USL from 1963 to 1984, died Jan. 12, 2007, in Lafayette. He joined the university's athletics program as head men's track coach and as an assistant football coach. One year later, a USL team with 20 freshmen won the first of four consecutive Gulf States Conference outdoor track titles. Teams coached by Cole later won numerous conference championships. Survivors include one son, Robert M. Cole Jr. of Duson, La.; one daughter, Donna Voigt Beck of Destin, Fla.; and one granddaughter, Lauren Elizabeth Cole of Duson, La.



## Making History

UL Lafayette graduate represents President Bush in Africa

**W**HEN DR. CINDY COURVILLE WAS sworn in last fall as the first U.S. ambassador to the African Union, former classmate Condoleezza Rice presided.

Courville and the nation's secretary of state attended the University of Denver together more than 20 years ago. Today,

Courville was nominated for the post in July; her nomination was approved by the U.S. Senate in late September.

Courville has more than 20 years of expertise in African issues. After growing up in Opelousas, La., she received bachelor's and master's degrees in political

science from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. She earned a second master's degree and a doctorate in comparative politics and international relations from the University of Denver's Graduate School of International Studies.

Prior to being named envoy to the AU, Courville was special assistant to the president and senior director for African Affairs at the National Security Council. She had served as senior intelligence officer in the Office of the Chief of Staff at the Defense Intelligence Agency and had taught at several universities.

The United States is the first non-African country to appoint an ambassador to the AU.

Courville is based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where the AU has headquarters.

It is a high profile appointment. As a U.S. ambassador, she represents Bush and acts as a communication channel between the United States and Africa.

The Bush administration has strongly supported the AU and the United States is the leader in providing humanitarian aid to African countries.

In testimony before the Senate Foreign



PHOTO COURTESY OF U.S. SECRETARY OF STATES OFFICE

Prior to being named ambassador to the African Union, Dr. Cindy Courville served as a special assistant to President George W. Bush and senior director for African Affairs at the National Security Council.

they have key supportive roles in Africa's struggle to improve its economy, conquer malaria and HIV/AIDS pandemics, and develop a united democracy.

At the November swearing-in ceremony at the State Department in Washington, D.C., Rice said President George W. Bush's appointment of Courville as ambassador was a "natural turn" in the evolution of the relationship between the United States and the African Union.

Relations Committee in August, Courville echoed the United State's stance that Africa needs "partnership, not paternalism."

She also quoted Bush's National Security Statement:

"Africa holds growing geostrategic importance and is a high priority of this administration. It is a place of promise and opportunity, linked to the United States by history, culture, commerce and strategic significance. Our goal is an African continent that knows liberty, peace, stability and increasing prosperity."

The AU is a five-year-old organization of 53 of 54 African countries. (Maurina was suspended in 2005.) Its goals include:

- greater democratization;
- a single currency;
- political stability in the continent, while preserving each country's sovereignty and territorial integrity;
- an improved economy and subsequent standard of living;
- intervention where there is genocide or war crimes; and
- a national defense.

The AU was created to replace the 38-year old Organization of African Unity. "Nobody is mourning the end of the OAU," summarized BBC correspondent Paul Reynolds in 2002 in a report. By the time the AU was formed, Africa's problems were immense. Some progress has been made, but the challenges it faces are daunting.

• Many of its countries are drowning in debt repayments to other nations. Their economies are crippled by a lack of educated workforces and civil strife.

• The continent is grappling with an HIV/AIDS pandemic. "Africa is ground zero of the crisis, home to nearly two-thirds of those living with HIV/AIDS worldwide," reported African Action in 2006. Sub-saharan Africa has been hardest hit. An estimated 25 percent of South Africa's population has been infected.

- Africans are battling an old scourge,



Dr. Cindy Courville, left, newly appointed U.S. ambassador to the African Union, meets with African Union Chairperson Alpha O. Konare in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

malaria. It's estimated that one child in Africa dies every 30 seconds from the mosquito borne disease.

• Parts of Africa are paralyzed by civil wars and subsequent famine. Americans are probably most familiar with the crisis in Darfur, a region of Sudan. Videographers and photographers have documented starving men, women and children. According to the Associated Press, civil war has resulted in about 200,000 deaths and displaced more than 2.5 million people.

But political violence is not limited to Sudan. There are also conflicts in Uganda, Zimbabwe, Somalia and the Congo, for instance.

The Bush administration has committed significant resources to help Africa meet its challenges.

In June 2006, Rice spoke at the African Growth and Opportunity Forum in Washington, D.C. She gave examples of that aid.

"In the past five years, with strong support from our Congress, President Bush has tripled foreign assistance to the countries of Africa and we are on pace to double that by 2010," she said.

Thanks to the Multilateral Debt Relief

Initiative, "which the United States worked tirelessly to secure, 14 African countries are now receiving over \$30 billion of debt relief. Our ultimate goal is to extend this initiative to 19 other African countries, forgiving more than \$10 billion of additional debt," she said.

Rice also noted the United States' five-year, \$15 billion commitment for prevention, treatment and care related to AIDS/HIV.

A year earlier, President Bush had announced the President's Malaria Initiative. The five-year, \$1.2 billion program challenges private industry to join the U.S. government in

combating malaria in 15 of the hardest-hit African countries. The goal is to reduce malaria's mortality rate by 50 percent in those target countries.

At the African Growth and Opportunity Forum, Rice spoke of Africa's importance to the United States: "It was the stolen sons and daughters of Africa who lifted up the body of America, brick by



African Union flag

brick, field by field, city by city. More than anyone, it was the quiet righteousness of African Americans, men and women like my parents and my grandparents, sons and daughters of the American South, who helped to redeem America at last from its original sin of slavery." ■

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