

Student Advocate

'Coach' Blanco's influence will remain for years to come

AFTER 46 YEARS OF SERVICE TO UL Lafayette, vice president for Student Affairs Raymond Blanco will retire, effective Jan. 1, 2009.

He relinquished his student affairs duties in August but remains in charge of campus maintenance through this year.



Raymond Blanco's career has spanned four university administrations.

The university is conducting a search for Blanco's successor. Dean of Students Ed Pratt is interim vice president.

Blanco has served during the administrations of four of the university's six presidents: Dr. Joel Fletcher Jr., Dr. Clyde Rougeou, Dr. Ray P. Authement and Dr. Joseph Savoie. He earned a reputation as a passionate advocate for students.

"During my 46-year career at the university, I have watched the evolution of student life on campus from integration to student protests of the war, to the current era of instant communication," Blanco said. "But the one thing that has remained constant is that kids want to be respected and they want to know someone cares about them.

"We were able to deal with difficult times because we listened, we communicated, and we truly cared about kids."

Dr. Jimmy Clarke, executive director for the ACT Center for College and Career Success, worked with Blanco in Student Affairs for more than 15 years. "He would tell us repeatedly, 'Treat these kids as you would if they were your own or as their parents should,'" Clarke said.

Blanco initiated the Dean on Call program so that students could contact a student dean at any time of the day or night if they needed help. He was also responsible for providing emergency call boxes on campus.

Clarke said Blanco pays attention to detail and taught him and others to do the same. "In the same way he used to break down film as a football coach, he is able to process and think through multiple circumstances and situations and piece them together and see ahead."

Clarke said Blanco's retirement is a loss for the university. "But I think he would be the first to tell you that no one person is bigger than the organization.

And, what he has so successfully done is to bring up so many of his charges, who now have extraordinary responsibilities at the university. So, although he personally is leaving, his philosophies, his commitment and his ideas are there and they will be for a long, long time.”

Blanco grew up in Birmingham, Ala. He graduated from St. Benedict’s College in Atchinson, Kan., in 1958 with a bachelor’s degree in philosophy and political science. He became assistant football coach at Kirwin High School in Galveston, Texas, the same year.

From 1959 to 1962, Blanco was head football coach and athletic director at Catholic High School in New Iberia, La. He led its football team to the state championship in 1962.

Blanco joined the university in December 1962 as assistant football coach and defensive coordinator. During his coaching tenure at UL Lafayette, the Ragin’ Cajuns had five winning seasons and won two conference championships. He is still referred to affectionately as “Coach” by many former students.

Blanco married Kathleen Babineaux of



Raymond Blanco taught students about the importance of social justice.

New Iberia, La., in 1964.

In 1969, Blanco was named dean of men. He later became dean of students and was soon promoted to vice president for Student Affairs. He also took on the additional responsibility of overseeing the university’s Physical Plant Department.

University President Dr. Joseph Savoie said Blanco gave him an opportunity to become a university administrator. “He was one of my first mentors and taught me to be sensitive to students and their needs.

“Over his many years of service, he has also mentored dozens of college administrators that are now serving on campuses across the state. Many of the remarkable things he has done at the university have gone unnoticed, but have had a lasting impact on many students, faculty, and staff.”

When the university was grappling with rising energy costs, Blanco was charged with developing an energy management program to reduce electrical and fuel costs. That program saves the university more than \$1 million annually.

Savoie said the impact of the energy management program is significant. “This program has allowed us to dedicate more revenue to faculty salaries and is now a model program for other higher education institutions in the state.”

In the late 1970s, Kathleen Blanco was district manager of the U.S. Census. When that project was complete, she and her husband started a political consulting firm. Over the next two decades, she held several elected positions. In 2000, she was elected governor of Louisiana; Blanco became the state’s first gentleman.

Blanco said he is excited about the university’s new administration and the direction the university will take. “I had the opportunity to hire Dr. Savoie some 30 years ago and I have watched



Former Gov. Kathleen Blanco and Raymond Blanco celebrate at a ball held the night of her inauguration.

his career with great admiration and pride. The university family and the community are excited about the future of the university and under Dr. Savoie’s leadership, they have every right to be.” ■

BLANCO BIO

- 1935** Born in Birmingham, Ala.
- 1953** Graduated from John Carroll High School, Birmingham, Ala.
- 1958** Graduated from St. Benedict’s College, Atchinson, Kansas
- 1958** Assistant football coach at Kirwin High School, Galveston, Texas
- 1959-62** Head football coach, Catholic High, New Iberia, La.
- 1962-69** Assistant football coach University of Southwestern Louisiana, now University of Louisiana at Lafayette
- 1964** Married Kathleen Babineaux of New Iberia, La.
- 1969-72** Dean of men, USL
- 1972-74** Dean of student personnel, USL
- 1974-82** Dean of students, USL
- 1974-2008** Vice president for Student Affairs, UL Lafayette
- 2000-2004** First gentleman of Louisiana

Alert System Passes Real-Life Test

RIGHT AFTER A BANK near campus was robbed this summer, thousands of phones started spreading the news. The University of Louisiana at Lafayette's web site and its hotline announced the crime, too.

"We needed to alert the campus community about a possible threat as a result of this armed robbery. We wanted to ensure the safety of all students, faculty and staff on campus," said UL Lafayette Police Chief Ray Lucas.

It was the first time the university activated First Call, its new emergency notification system, to issue an alert. Previously, it had only been activated for tests.

Warnings about the robbery were sent via text messaging and by calls to all campus phone lines and all cell phones registered with First Call. UL Lafayette's hotline gave callers a recorded message.

"The system performed as it was designed to perform," Lucas said.

A second message was distributed after a suspect was arrested later that day.

UL Lafayette President Dr. Joseph Savoie said he was pleased with the system's performance. "The safety of our students, faculty and staff remains a top priority for this university," he said.



Savoie encourages all UL Lafayette students and employees to sign up – at no cost – for First Call by providing their contact information. They can give additional e-mail addresses and phone numbers for First Call to automatically contact in case of an emergency. For instance, a student may furnish his parents' home phone number as an additional contact number.

First Call is only activated for emergencies and tests of the notification system. It does not distribute any advertising.

UL Lafayette students and employees can register their contact information online at <http://ens.louisiana.edu>

The First Call service is part of an initiative by the Louisiana Board of Regents and supported by the University of Louisiana System.

Universities across the nation began implementing emergency notification systems after a disturbed student shot and killed 32 students on the campus of Virginia Tech before killing himself last year. A review panel criticized Virginia Tech administrators for failing to take steps that might have reduced the number of casualties, such as informing students more quickly about the shootings.

T-Shirt Swap Puts More Red On Campus

TIRED OF SEEING any other university colors worn by UL Lafayette students on campus, the University Program Council's Spirit committee held a T-Shirt Swap at the annual Yell Like Hell pep rally.

Students could trade other university shirts for limited-edition UL Lafayette T-shirts. They were invited to stay after the pep rally to watch other shirts burn in a bonfire intended to get students fired up for the Cajuns' Homecoming game and spark more school spirit.

A total of 150 UL Lafayette shirts were given away. An additional 90 shirts had to be ordered to give to students later who had brought shirts to the event to swap.

"I never expected to exchange as many shirts as we did that night. It was such a success that we may sponsor another T-shirt Swap in the near future," said Laura Bullinger, UPC Spirit Committee chairperson.

Aimee Graugnard, UPC president, said she hopes there won't be a need for many more T-shirt exchanges.

"Ideally, we will get to a point where we don't have to host this type of event because everyone on campus will be sporting UL shirts all the time," she said.

Turn It Up!

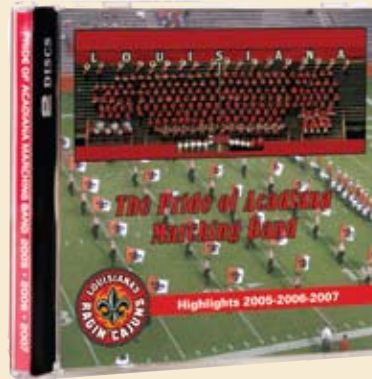
RAGIN' CAJUNS fans can enjoy the music of UL Lafayette's Pride of Acadiana Marching Band long after the football season is over.

A new two-CD set offers crowd favorites, such as "Respect," "Fight Song" and "Tear the Roof Off." It features drum cadences and percussion pieces, as well as tunes performed during halftime shows in the past three years.

There's a bonus: Songs the band played during the 2005 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City. The Pride of Acadiana was one of only two university bands invited


to perform in the parade that year.

A number the band performed in Herald Square at the end of the parade is also included. It's a medley of "When the Saints Go Marching In," "On the Sunny Side of the Street" and "South Rampart Street Parade" that's called "When the Saints Go Marching Down the Sunny Side of South Rampart Street."



The CD set can be purchased at the UL Bookstore in the Student Union on campus, Follet's Bookstore on St. Mary Boulevard and Louisiana Hot Stuff on Ambassador Caffery. For more information, call the UL Band Department at (337)

482-6014 or visit its web site.

 www.ulbands.com

Buses Double as Rolling Billboards for University

TWO NEW BUSES used to transport students from Cajun Field to campus are sporting custom wraps.

They feature photos of UL Lafayette students celebrating at home football games. The buses also display the university's primary athletic mark. UL Lafayette's pepper logo is on the front of the bus.

The university's Office of Communications and Marketing worked with Prejean Creative, a local design firm, to produce the bus' new look.

"Lisa and Kevin Prejean spent weeks measuring each bus and making minute adjustments to the designs so that they fit just right along all the panels and contours of the buses," said Matt Tarver, assistant director for trademark licensing at UL Lafayette.

The first wrapped bus was unveiled in April, just in time for the university's inaugural Retailers' Appreciation Tour. Students, staff, faculty and fans used the bus to visit



MATT TARVER

45-foot red moving billboard?"

The second wrapped bus debuted before UL Lafayette's Homecoming week in late October. Its wrap design features different photos of students.

"It's another great way to get our name out to the community," said SGA President Jamey Arnette.

Besides shuttling students, the buses are used for campus tours and other university events. "I think the wrapped buses add great school spirit, not only on our campus but city wide," Dustin Domangue, SGA vice president, said.

Kimberly Wooten, SGA treasurer, described the first time she saw the wrapped buses: "I immediately stopped in awe."

nearly 20 local retailers to say "thanks" for selling Ragin' Cajuns merchandise.

Tarver said the wrap was an instant hit. "The first day the bus was used, people all across Lafayette were waving and blowing their car horns when they saw it."

Kennan Guillory, assistant director of UL Lafayette's Parking and Transit, said the buses are a powerful advertising tool for the university. "Who doesn't notice a

PODCASTS ENABLE NURSING STUDENTS TO PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

Thanks to a grant from the Louisiana Board of Regents, students taking the "Fundamentals of Nursing" course at UL Lafayette can review lab skills anytime they want.

The College of Nursing and Allied Health Professions received \$50,000 to produce podcasts of lab skills. Podcasts are audio and video files that can be downloaded from the Internet onto portable media players, such as iPods and mp3 players.

"We are always looking for ways to motivate students and to also give them more flexibility," said Susan Randol, freshman and sophomore coordinator for the college.

Dr. Melinda Oberleitner, who's a professor, head of the Nursing Department and associate to the dean of the college, said the podcasts have been a hit with students. "They love it. They want more," she said.

"Fundamentals of Nursing," is the first clinical course that nursing students can take. Second-semester sophomores are



BLANE PAUL

eligible to enroll in it.

Oberleitner explained that students might only have a couple of chances to interact with an instructor who demonstrates certain clinical nursing skills. A podcast gives them "the ability to watch that demonstration as many times as they need to. . . They can review the skill right before they go into a patient's room," she said.

Students can stop a podcast at any point and watch or listen to it as many times as needed to review a technique.

Nursing student Jacob Kora said the podcasts are helpful. "There's only so much you can get from your notes on lab skills. This program shows that the nursing instructors are willing to help students any way they can," he said.

A survey showed that about 70 percent of students taking "Fundamentals of Nursing" own an iPod or mp3 player. Those who don't can borrow one for a semester. The grant enabled the college to purchase 30 to loan to students. A podcast can also be viewed on a computer.

The project is part of a pilot study that will track recruitment and retention for the college.

"We're banking that the more resources that we can give students outside of class, that will help with retention," Oberleitner said.