Kennesaw State celebrated at Georgia State Capitol

By Jennifer Hafer
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Black and gold were the colors of the day at Georgia’s Capitol as faculty, staff, students, alumni and others celebrated Kennesaw State University’s inaugural “KSU Day at the Capitol,” where Georgia legislators had the opportunity to celebrate the university’s contribution to the state.

By Tiffany Capuano
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The University System of Georgia’s Board of Regents approved the naming of the Michael A. Leven School of Culinary Sustainability and Hospitality at Kennesaw State University.

Michael Leven, a veteran hospitality industry executive and president and CEO of the Georgia Aquarium, has donated $5 million for Kennesaw State University’s School of Culinary Sustainability and Hospitality. The gift represents the largest single contribution from an individual in the University’s 52-year history.

“A team of Kennesaw State faculty, staff, students and alumni hosted the inaugural “KSU Day at the Capitol,” where Georgia legislators had the opportunity to celebrate the university’s contribution to the state.

Offer congratulations to President Daniel S. Papp, who was invited to the Georgia House of Representatives and Senate sessions as they presented Kennesaw State with resolutions in recognition of the event.

With the 36-member Men’s Ensemble, directed by Leslie Blackwell, singing in the Rotunda, the resolution unanimously passed. In addition to the Men’s Ensemble, who performed the KSU Fight Song, the day included appearances by Kennesaw State’s mascot Scrappy, KSU cheerleaders, and members of the Formula SAE team, who displayed their award-winning vehicle outside the Gold Dome.

Kennesaw State’s Culinary and Hospitality Services prepared a feast of treats from the university’s nationally recognized farm-to-table culinary program.

The most popular draw for legislators, Capitol visitors and school children alike, however, was Sturgis, the university’s first live owl mascot.

The event was one the university’s first public outings as a consolidated university. In January, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia approved the consolidation of Kennesaw State with Southern Polytechnic State University, now referred to as the “Marietta Campus.”

The yearlong process culminates when classes begin this fall and the two Cobb County-based institutions begin operating as a fully consolidated institution.

Kennesaw State student and Vice President of the University’s Student Government Association Khyll “K” Chestnutt said that he was excited about attending the inaugural event.

“Seeing the sea of black and gold inside the Gold Dome was an incredible sight and made me proud to attend Kennesaw State University,” he said.

Hospitality industry executive donates $5 million to culinary program

By Tiffany Capuano
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“We are deeply appreciative and honored to receive this substantial gift from Mr. Leven, whose generosity extends well beyond his financial investment in the future of this program,” said Daniel S. Papp, president of Kennesaw State University.

Leven’s philanthropic gift will be used to support an endowed faculty chair as well as scholarships for culinary sustainability and hospitality students.

“Michael Leven is a titan of our industry,” said Christian Hardigree, director of the Institute for Culinary Sustainability and Hospitality at Kennesaw State. “His commitment will provide our students with a distinct competitive advantage by ensuring that they receive the highest quality of program and an exceptional learning experience.”

Leven has spent his entire 54-year career working in the hospitality industry, serving as president for the Las Vegas Sands Corporation, Holiday Inn Worldwide and Days Inn Corporation. In 1995, he founded U.S. Franchise Systems, Inc., which franchises the Microtel Inn & Suites and Hawthorn Suites hotel brands, and served as its CEO and president until 2007. He also co-founded the Asian American Hotel Owners Association.

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Maestro: President Papp conducts KSU Wind Ensemble

By Robert S. Godlewski rgodlewski@kennesaw.edu

Most people would be content to hum along as the band played John Philip Sousa’s rousing “Washington Post March,” but not Kennesaw State President Daniel S. Papp. Before an enthusiastic crowd at the Dr. Bobbie Bailey and Family Performance Center on March 18, Papp donned a maestro’s baton, and when it was done, the audience gave him and the ensemble a standing ovation.

“I had a brief lesson from music professor David Kehler,” Papp said, “and I practiced with the KSU Symphony earlier in the week.”

While admitting he doesn’t have much formal musical training, Papp said, “I love all kinds of music, all kinds of rock and country but primarily Southern rock, heavy metal and American music. I believe it is a key to culture.”

Could there be more musical performances in his future?

“There are two instruments I enjoy playing,” he said. “I have taken harmonica and saxophone lessons, and I intend to learn how to play them better, especially the sax, when I get some time.”

Papp’s conducting debut wrapped up a special evening performance by the KSU Wind Ensemble with guest composer David Kirkland Garner and the Georgia premier of his piece, “Concerto for Soprano Saxophone and Wind Ensemble,” featuring KSU Director of Jazz Studies Sam Skelton on soprano saxophone. Also on the program, Michael Torke’s 2013 composition “Bliss” had its Georgia premiere.

University awards faculty, alumni for global impact

By Sabbaye McGriff smgriff@kennesaw.edu

Kennesaw State University recognized the outstanding work of global public servants and educators at its second annual International Achievement Awards ceremony on March 26.

The awards, which include the Madhuri and Jagdish N. Sheth awards to a distinguished Kennesaw State alumna and faculty member and special awards for global public service and community partnership, were presented to individuals whose work or service has made a global impact. This year marks the first time a student was among the honorees.

Lance Askildson, Kennesaw State’s vice provost and chief international officer, joined University President Daniel S. Papp and Provost W. Ken Harmon, in hosting more than 150 guests attending the ceremony.

“We are honored to recognize these outstanding individuals this evening and proud that Kennesaw State continues to maintain a reputation as a leader in global education,” Askildson said. “The University continues to teach students about international culture, history and perspectives so they may better understand our global community and the common humanity that we all share.”

The 2015 International Achievement Awards recipients are:

· The 2015 Kennesaw State University Global Public Service Prize – Dr. Daishaku Ibeeda, founding president, Soka Gakkai International

· The Madhuri and Jagdish N. Sheth Distinguished Alumnus Award for Exceptional Humanitarian and Service Achievement – Elizabeth Elango Bintulif, vice president of Africa programs, Heifer Project International

· The 2015 Madhuri and Jagdish N. Sheth Distinguished Faculty Award for International Achievement – Dr. Laurence Sherr, composer-in-residence and professor of music, Kennesaw State University

· The 2015 Division of Global Affairs Distinguished International Community Partner Award – Alberto Quinti, school director, Il Sasso Language School

· The 2015 Emerson Scholarship for the Advancement of International Education – Destiny Nieves, exercise science major, WellStar College of Health and Human Services

The International Achievement Awards are organized by Kennesaw State’s Division of Global Affairs with financial support from Madhuri and Jagdish N. Sheth, for whom the awards to faculty and alumni have been named.

Kennesaw State names first Vice President for Economic Development and Community Engagement

By Tiffany Capuano tcapuano@kennesaw.edu

Kennesaw State University President Daniel S. Papp has named Charles Ross, director of Startup Networks for the Enterprise Innovation Institute at Georgia Tech, as Kennesaw State’s first vice president for economic development and community engagement.

Ross will assume the role on July 1.

The new cabinet-level officer position at Kennesaw State was added to bring leadership to the University’s economic development and community engagement efforts, and will bring coordination and synergy to several other related areas of operation within the University as well. The position will report directly to President Papp.

“Charles will be a valuable asset to the cabinet, and he will provide indispensable expertise in working with business and industry,” said Papp. “His keen grasp of community engagement, and the opportunities that such engagement presents, will help the University leverage our relationships, create more job opportunities for our students, and significantly enhance our public service mission.”

Ross brings a wealth of academic and industry experience to Kennesaw State. He joined Georgia Tech in 2005 as a venture capitalist in the Advanced Technology Development Center, and became general manager and director of Entrepreneurship Services at the Center in 2008, before assuming his position as director of Startup Networks in the Enterprise Innovation Institute in 2009. He also worked in strategic investments, consulting and business development for more than 20 years in Chicago and Washington, D.C., for companies such as Ameritech Development and General Electric Medical Systems. At Kennesaw State, Ross will serve as the University’s chief officer focused on deploying resources to aid economic development and expand relationships with off-campus communities. Ross will work closely with the senior vice provost to generate new opportunities for the University’s research centers and institutes.

Ross also will oversee and manage Kennesaw State’s Office of Community Engagement and the Office of Government Relations. He will chair the KSU Economic Development Task Force and serve as the University’s chief liaison to the Cobb County Chamber’s Competitive EDGE Project.

Kennesaw State senior selected as Newman Civic Fellow

Kennesaw State University senior Khyllil “Khly” Chestnut was selected as a Newman Civic Fellow for 2015.

Chestnut, a political science major with a dual minor in business management and dance, served as vice president of the Kennesaw State Student Government Association and currently serves as the director of external affairs for the group.

In putting forward Chestnut’s name for consideration, Kennesaw State President Daniel S. Papp stated, “Khyllil is an outstanding example of student leadership and commitment to civic engagement. Khyllil’s involvement includes direct service, civic leadership, and engaged scholarship. He has participated in numerous university initiatives to advance community engagement and regularly serves as a student advocate for diversity and inclusion in our efforts to strengthen community partnerships.”

The nomination also noted Chestnut’s involvement in university-sponsored programs as “remarkable personal commitment and leadership through volunteer service and internships.”

Kennesaw State Senior President Daniel S. Papp conducts the KSU Wind Ensemble during a March concert.
Maureen McCarthy named American Council on Education Fellow

By Sabbaye McGriff
smcgriff@kennesaw.edu

Maureen McCarthy, faculty executive assistant to Kennesaw State University President Daniel S. Papp and professor of psychology, has been named an American Council on Education Fellow for the 2015-16 academic year. McCarthy is one of 50 fellows nationwide to be selected to this year’s program following a rigorous application process. As an ACE Fellow, McCarthy will spend the next academic year focusing on an issue of concern to a college or university president and other senior officials at a soon-to-be-determined host institution. The ACE Fellows Program is designed to strengthen institutions and leadership in American higher education by identifying and preparing emerging leaders for senior positions in college and university administration.

Appointed in spring 2012, McCarthy is the third person to hold the position of faculty executive assistant to Kennesaw State’s president. As the faculty voice on the President’s Cabinet, she has been instrumental in the move to consolidate Kennesaw State and Southern Polytechnic State University, as well as efforts to establish an organizational framework for Kennesaw State’s engagement with local, state, national and international communities. “Maureen has been an invaluable member of Kennesaw State’s administrative team,” said Papp. “She has lent her insights, knowledge and leadership to a number of very critical initiatives. I am proud of her accomplishments, and I am confident that she will make an outstanding ACE Fellow.”

A distinguished professor in Kennesaw State’s College of Humanities and Social Sciences, McCarthy has taught a range of undergraduate and graduate courses. She also conducts research in the areas of pedagogy, assessment of student learning and program evaluation, publishing frequently in these areas.

In addition to working with a host institution, McCarthy will join other fellows as they participate in retreats, interactive learning opportunities, campus visits and placement at another higher education institution to condense years of on-the-job experience and skills development into a single semester or year.

Thousands of football fans turn out for inaugural spring game

By Robert S. Godlewski
rgodlewski@kennesaw.edu

It may have been a chilly, windy day but the warmth of the crowd at Kennesaw State University’s Fifth Third Bank made it a perfect day for football. K-State cheerleaders handed out Scrappy the Owl bobbleheads to thousands of cheering fans who came to see the Spring Black and Gold Game, the first real taste of football this year until the inaugural season starts in earnest this fall.

Some 4,000 students, alumni, faculty, staff and supporters filled the home stands and most of the visitor’s section of the stadium for the 1 p.m. kickoff on March 28.

Kennesaw State President Daniel S. Papp praised the efforts of the hundreds of volunteers assisting the KSU Athletics staff, stadium workers and public safety officers in pulling off a flawless event. “A lot of people put in a lot of hard work, a lot of excellent work, and here we are,” Papp said. “It’s just really neat.”

Director of Athletics Vaughn Williams said he was very pleased with the results. “We’ve completed yet another important milestone. We were testing out a lot of variables for our first game day,” Williams said. “We are definitely ready for some football!”

Keisha Hoerrner named dean for University College

By Tiffany Capuano
tcapuano@kennesaw.edu

Kennesaw State University President Daniel S. Papp named Keisha Hoerrner dean of University College in April. Hoerrner had served as interim dean of the college since January 2014.

Prior to her appointment as interim dean, Hoerrner served as associate dean of Liberal Arts, department chair of First-Year Programs, assistant department chair of University Studies and director of learning communities.

She is a professor of communication and previously held a faculty position in communication at Louisiana State. She joined the Kennesaw State faculty full-time in 2000.

During Hoerrner’s tenure as interim dean, she advocated for the restructure of academic support initiatives and brought First-Year and Undeclared Advising Services, as well as Orientation and Transition programs, under the charge of the College. She also oversaw the redesign of the bachelor’s degree in Integrative Studies and worked to launch the master’s degree in First-Year Studies, the College’s first online graduate degree program.

“Keisha has been a tremendous contributor to University College and Kennesaw State,” said Ken Harmon, provost and vice president for Academic Affairs at Kennesaw State. “Along with her leadership and wealth of knowledge, her vision and dedication will continue to propel the College into national and international spots.”

Hoerrner was selected as dean after a nationwide search chaired by Val Whittlesey, associate vice president for academic affairs.

“I am truly honored to be selected as dean and look forward to working with my colleagues in University College to enhance the learning experiences of both undergraduate and graduate students within the new Kennesaw State University,” said Hoerrner. “It is humbling and a bit surreal to transition from being an undergraduate at Kennesaw College to being a member of the faculty and now dean of one of the university’s degree-granting colleges. This institution is very special to me, and I am thrilled to serve it in this capacity.”

Baseball head coach Mike Sansing earns 1,000th career win

Kennesaw State Head baseball coach Mike Sansing has had his 1,000th career win on March 27, when the K-State baseball team flew past Atlantic Sun foe USCUpstate for a 5-0 victory at Stillwell Stadium in the 2015 conference opener.

Sansing, who was introduced as head coach of the K-State program on August 21, 1991, entered his 24th season at the helm of the Owls’ baseball program in 2015 just 13 victories shy of 1,000 career wins and completed the milestone in front of fans on the campus of Kennesaw State.

“We’re very fortunate to have all the players that have come through this program and believe in what we were doing,” Sansing said. “I’m very fortunate to have had the opportunity to coach them. I just want to thank all the players. Great players make great coaches, and I couldn’t have done this without them.”

The Owls were led by junior pitcher Jordan Hillyer, whose resilient effort on the mound helped put Sansing in four figures.

Sansing began his collegiate career as head coach for three seasons at Shorter University (102-55) before coming to Kennesaw State in 1991. Since then, he has compiled a 898-476 record with the Owls, including two national championships, 20 Coach of the Year honors, 10 national tournament appearances and over 40 players drafted in the major leagues. He also led his program to four Atlantic Sun Conference Tournament appearances and five total championships since arriving at Kennesaw State in 1991. The program reached new heights in 2014 when it advanced to the 2014 Super Regional after defeating Alabama in the Tallahassee Regional, capping off the most successful season at the Division I level.
Kennesaw State names new vice president for student affairs

By Jennifer Hafer
jhafer@kennesaw.edu

Kennesaw State University and the Cobb Chamber have named Metro Atlanta Chamber Vice President of Entrepreneurial Development Nancy Wright Whatley as the executive director of the Georgia Business Success Center, a new business incubator, accelerator and education project.

The Georgia Business Success Center, in partnership with Kennesaw State University, is an outgrowth of the Cobb Chamber’s Competitive EDGE program, which contributes to the county’s economic development strategy by encouraging entrepreneurship and aiding small businesses.

As executive director of the new center, Whatley’s primary responsibilities will be to support the economic growth of Cobb County, the metro region and the state of Georgia by supporting and promoting entrepreneurship and business growth.

Whaley will focus on strategic planning, business development, entrepreneur identification, budget management, fundraising and facility oversight. She will report directly to Kennesaw State University President Daniel S. Papp.

The Georgia Business Success Center in partnership with Kennesaw State University will support Georgia’s entrepreneur community by identifying, developing, and providing the resources startups and new businesses need to grow and succeed. The Center will focus on providing entrepreneurs space to innovate and access distinct programming, counseling services and collaborative opportunities.

In her role with the Metro Atlanta Chamber, Whaley was responsible for generating new business development opportunities for small businesses, creating programming to accelerate small business growth, and creating engagement within the metro area’s startup community. Her professional experience includes owning and operating VantagePoint Staffing Solutions, a certified Women’s Business Enterprise. Before she sold the company in 2010, she successfully negotiated and won contracts with Georgia Power, Southern Company, Turner Broadcasting, Chick-fil-A and Cox Communications.

An Atlanta native, Whaley earned a B.B.A. in management from the University of Georgia, where she served as an advocate for the development of many programs and services that have enriched the lives of many students, and we are abundantly grateful for his many contributions to the University,” said Papp. “His legacy will be everlasting.”

As Kennesaw State’s new vice president for student affairs, a cabinet-level position reporting directly to Papp, White will serve as the chief officer focused on assuring student success beyond the classroom. In her role, she will oversee, manage and direct the Division of Student Affairs and provide leadership in planning, integrating and conducting co-curricular student programs and activities. White will also collaborate across all areas and constituents within the University to enhance the student experience, including service to students, parents, alumni, community members, faculty, staff and campus administrators.

White joined Louisiana State University in July 2002 as an associate dean of students. In December 2005, she was named associate vice chancellor for student life and dean of students, where she served as an advocate for the needs of students and worked to provide a student-centered experience to assist students in their success and to support their academic pursuits.

Executive director named for new entrepreneurship project

By Scott Wiltes
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When political commentator Ann Coulter was asked who she supports for the 2016 election, it was a resounding “Mitt Romney, Mitt Romney and Scott Walker.”

Coulter, a syndicated columnist and best-selling author, spoke on immigration, gun control and presidential candidates at the Dr. Bobbie Bailey and Family Performance Center at Kennesaw State University in April.

Coulter’s talk, “Republicans Could Win, if They’d Stop Doing Some of the Things They’re Doing” was the second lecture in the University’s “Marketplace of Ideas” lecture series, which launched in 2013 to present guest speakers and discussion on a wide range of topics.

“I have been dying to come to Kennesaw ever since I heard about your sensible gun laws,” Coulter said. The city of Kennesaw has mandates that all homeowners own guns.

From concealed carry laws to gun restrictions, Coulter spoke about liberals who want new gun laws pushed through after elementary school shootings, yet keep repeating statistics that claim guns are more likely to kill the owner than the intruder.


Coulter criticized the news media for feeding the frenzy with manufactured stories initially created by liberals, and for reporting stories as if they are a cause.

Coulter turned her attention to immigration, saying that amnesty as an immigration policy doesn’t work, and she talked at length about the types of immigrants that the U.S. is attracting.

“We are in a sellers market, but we act like we are a hospital in the inner city,” she said. She posed fun at the liberal policies that exist when it comes to immigration.

“Our immigration policy is anyone who lives within walking distance,” Coulter quipped. “Our family reunification policies allow a guy who runs a donkey cart, who is illiterate in his own language, let alone ours, takes precedence over a Danish surgeon.”

During her 50-minute talk, Coulter discussed her opinion of the presidential hopefuls that she would not support because of their immigration policies, including former Fla. Gov. Jeb Bush, Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., and Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky.

Coulter said she likes Wisconsin Governor Walker for wanting to protect American workers, and former Massachusetts Gov. Romney, although not a current contender for the Republican party, for his “great track record.”

Ann Coulter speaks on presidential candidates, immigration and gun control

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