



Schloss Inaugurated as Valdosta State's Eighth President



Left: University System of Georgia Chancellor Erroll B. Davis Jr. charges Dr. Patrick Schloss with the duties of president of Valdosta State University at the 4 p.m. graduation ceremony Dec. 13, 2008.

It was a day to celebrate the accomplishments of more than 750 graduates who received the rite of passage and became Valdosta State University's newest alumni. This joyous occasion also included the official inauguration of Dr. Patrick J. Schloss as the university's eighth president.

During the inauguration ceremony, Erroll B. Davis Jr., chancellor of the University System of Georgia, charged Schloss to be a good steward of the institution and create an even higher level of academic and leadership excellence.

"I charge you [Schloss] to maintain and to defend at this institution a climate that encourages the search for truth and an expansion of the limits of knowledge," Davis said.

Schloss accepted his presidential duties and thanked Chancellor Davis and Regent Doreen Poitevint for attending and their support of Valdosta State University. His message focused on the significance of higher education and its power to transform lives — and the importance of not building bridges that are defined by class or privilege.

"Chancellor, and all in attendance, I commit to you that my every passion, energy, and insight will focus on extending this opportunity to the citizens of Georgia and the nation," Schloss stated. "In doing so, I will build bridges to Valdosta State, the University System of Georgia and office of the President." ■

President Schloss' Inauguration Speech

Chancellor Davis, Regent Poitevint, colleagues, graduates and friends. Over 50 years ago, my father, Peter Schloss was born into deep poverty. No running water, no central heat, subsistence resulting from a cow named "Oley," and 160 acres of hard/dry earth. English was not spoken by his parents. Home schooling was a matter of necessity, not choice.

The war, the GI bill, benevolent teachers, and friends provided an escape from these brutal conditions. Persistence in undergraduate and graduate education absolutely altered his life... my life... the lives of my three children... and the lives of my five grandchildren. The reverberations of his choices will be felt for human eternity.

He marked his accomplishments as an administrator at a small college, vice president of the NJCAA and husband to my very special mother, Pauline.

Whether the first generation collegian is graduating today, watching a loved one graduate or is present deep in the minds of those in attendance, the value of our work is profound and easily recognized.

Chancellor Davis, I owe a deep debt to you for your confidence, to my beloved Cindy Nelson Schloss and Maureen Smith Schloss and children, Pat, Rebecca and Tarah. Their support and sacrifice have been substantial. I owe a debt to this academic community for allowing me to join in this important mission.

Mostly, I owe a debt to my father. He first understood the power of education in transforming lives. At the same time, he demanded that its power be used to build bridges; not define class or privilege. As he once told me, "Bemidji State Teachers College, The University of Wisconsin and University of Colorado made him better educated. But, they did not alter the way he put on his pants."

Chancellor, and all in attendance, I commit to you that my every passion, energy, and insight will focus on extending this opportunity to the citizens of Georgia and the nation. In doing so, I will build bridges to Valdosta State, the University System of Georgia and office of the President.

Thank you and God bless you. ■

Georgia Data Just Clicks Away

The Center for Business and Economic Research at Valdosta State University launched the Georgia Regional Economic Analysis Project on January 1.

The Web-based program, available at www.pnreap.org/georgia, is a source for data at the county, metropolitan and state levels. Within seconds, users may view 38 years worth of annual data about population, income, employment, total industry earnings and average earnings per job for all 159 Georgia counties.

Unlike other resources, the GA-REAP provides more than just statistics — it gives users actual analysis of data.

Interactive tools allow for in-depth research and analysis. Reports can be generated to clearly explain trends and implications for a local area in terms easily understood by non-experts.

"The CBER is proud to offer this service to folks in Georgia wishing to conduct their own research using publicly available data," said Dr. Cliff Lipscomb, CBER director and assistant professor of economics at VSU. "What makes the GA-REAP different is that actual analysis of the data accompanies the tables — you

have to see it for yourself to believe the insight into Georgia counties that can be gained after a few clicks."

VSU's CBER provides the GA-REAP in collaboration with the Pacific Northwest Regional Economic Analysis Project. The most recent data is provided for 2006;

Within seconds, users may view 38 years worth of annual data about population, income, employment, total industry earnings and average earnings per job for all 159 Georgia counties.

however additional information will be added as updates are received from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

CBER will begin offering an annual conference and training session, the first of which will be scheduled this spring. Economic development personnel, city and regional planners and other users

will receive an overview of the CBER's services, faculty research related to economic development and GA-REAP training on use of the powerful data tool.

A service arm of VSU's Harley Langdale College of Business Administration, the CBER supports regional economic development and promotes activities that strengthen the competitive positions of regional business within VSU's 41-county service area. For more information, call Lipscomb at (229) 245-3774 or e-mail him at calipscomb@valdosta.edu. ■

The College of Education Goes Paperless *Dewar Replaces Clutter with Automated Evaluations*

For the first time ever, the Valdosta State University Dewar College of Education conducted end of the semester evaluations this fall without clutter and waste.

The college recently transitioned to a paperless evaluation system, which uses more effective technology to administer a user-friendly evaluation process for students, faculty and administrators. Previous methods required faculty to administer paper evaluations, which students had little time to complete, and administrative staff had to compile results. New database applications have automated the process, improving accuracy, timeliness and security of the private data.

Faculty can now view course evaluations electronically and more easily compare current with historical data. Students can complete course/faculty evaluations within a two-week period at their own convenience, providing more flexibility and time for thoughtful reflection. Off-campus students in distance learning programs can participate with the new system as well.

COE found this process very successful and similar processes may be developed for other VSU colleges in the future. Call Julia Reffel or Elizabeth Omiteru at (229) 259-5132 for more information about the new system. ■

***Celebrate the New Year
with Some Holiday Hoops***

Upcoming VSU Basketball Games



Men's Schedule

West Georgia*
8 p.m. on Thu., Jan 15
Valdosta, Ga.

North Alabama*
4 p.m. on Sat., Jan 17
Valdosta, Ga.

West Alabama*
8:30 p.m. on Thu., Jan 22
Livingston, Ala.

Montevallo*
8:30 p.m. on Sat., Jan 24
Montevallo, Ala.

West Florida*
4 p.m. on Sat., Jan 31
Valdosta, Ga.

Women's Schedule

West Georgia*
6 p.m. on Thu., Jan 15
Valdosta, Ga.

North Alabama*
2 p.m. on Sat., Jan 17
Valdosta, Ga.

West Alabama*
6:30 p.m. on Thu., Jan 22
Livingston, Ala.

Montevallo*
6:30 p.m. on Sat., Jan 24
Montevallo, Ala.

West Florida*
2 p.m. on Sat., Jan 31
Valdosta, Ga.

*Gulf South Conference Games.



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VSU Football Trades Team Spirit with Military Overseas

VSU Football Coach David Dean chose defensive linemen DeMario Jones (far left) and Mark Sibenaller to carry the American flag Mike Stewart sent to the team across the field before two games this season. The flag had flown over Forward Operating Base Warhorse, located in Diyala Province, Iraq.

Former Lowndes County Manager Mike Stewart was sitting on the couch next to his wife of 31 years, watching the 2007 State of the Union Address, when President George W. Bush stressed the need for experts in Iraq's reconstruction efforts. Stewart, who had worked for and advised governments for more than 20 years, had watched his only son, Thomas, head to war-torn Baghdad years earlier; but the dedicated family man could not shake his sense of duty.

"Maybe it was my military upbringing — my dad was in the army for 20 years — or maybe it was just knowing I could help; but being a part of the solution had been on my mind since the war started," said Stewart, who received his Master of Public Administration from VSU in 1996. "When those words came out of the president's mouth, and I thought about all those people making such a commitment to freedom, it was the final straw. I had to do something. It has been on my mind almost nonstop."

He looked at Jeanine sitting next to him, but when you have been married that long, Stewart said, your partner can sense those inner struggles. She didn't waver in her support, and in August Stewart shipped off to Iraq and its sweltering 125-degree heat. By day, the civilian contractor consulted with elected officials, and by night he dreamed of Jeannie's next care package of essentials and biography books.

"The language barrier takes us a bit longer to get our points across, and there is always the threat of violence against anyone working to rebuild because the insurgency thrives on instability," said Stewart, who works as a city management advisor. "But the work is largely the same when I am in the states. I help provincial governments oversee financial matters, public works,

and infrastructure and some banking issues, for instance. The sooner we can help the Iraqi's get stabilized and be able to govern and provide services, the sooner we can all come home, which is what we want, and in fairness, they really want."

The avid outdoorsman has spent most of the past year in the confines of Forward Operating Base Warhorse, located in Diyala Province, Iraq. While the reconstruction team tries to "get outside the wire" as much as possible, Stewart spends much of his time coordinating with co-worker government officials at the base.

"I've spent a lot of time on that base, and every day I would eat in the D-Fac [dining facility], and see all the football paraphernalia hanging from the ceiling," Stewart said. "I got to thinking, VSU just won the national championship. We should have a VSU flag flying."

Stewart mentioned the lack of VSU spirit in the mess hall to friend and current Lowndes County Commissioner, Richard Lee, who serves as VSU's assistant dean of students for student conduct. Lee, who was also a commissioner when Stewart was Lowndes County Manager, charged into action, and in October, sent his friend and longtime Valdosta State sports fan a VSU flag that flew over a 2007 semifinal game. VSU Football Coach David Dean and the rest of his staff and championship players signed the banner.



Former Lowndes County Manager Mike Stewart, '96, pauses to take a picture with Iraqi children in the Diyala Province, where he is working with the U.S. State Department to rebuild local governments. Stewart hung a VSU flag in the base dining hall to honor the NCAA Division II Championship football team.

"Mike Stewart basically epitomizes the spirit of patriotism," Lee said. "He was in a high powered job over here, with a comfortable life, and he put that on hold to donate his time and efforts to rebuild a war-torn nation. His dedication is the spirit of America, and what makes our county and its people so great."

Stewart said he was "extremely touched" when he pulled the VSU flag out of its box at the barracks, and even more proud when he presented the flag to the base's leadership at the weekly staff meeting. The nine-hour time difference and lack of dependable television signals has limited the number of VSU football games he has been able to watch; but every Sunday the football enthusiast checks game scores on the Internet.

In response to the kind gesture, the base sent the VSU football team an American flag that had flown over the skies of



MLK Celebration

*Internationally Renowned Speaker
Naomi Tutu Speaks at VSU*

Valdosta State University's Office of Equal Opportunity Programs and Multicultural Affairs will host the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration from 7-9 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 15, in the University Center Magnolia Room.

Nontumbi Naomi Tutu, third child of South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Nomalizo Leah Tutu will provide the keynote address regarding Dr. King's efforts towards advancing human rights and social justice. Tutu is an internationally recognized speaker, human rights activist and consultant on gender, race and international relations. She consults for the Spiritual Alliance to Stop Intimate Violence and the foundation for Hospices in Sub-Saharan Africa. The former chairperson of the Tutu Foundation — which supports South African refugees in African countries — serves as associate director of the Office of International Relations and Programs at Tennessee State University and was formerly the program coordinator of the Race Relations Institute at Fisk University in Tennessee.

"Naomi has a very unique perspective," EOP Director Maggie Viverette said. "After growing up in South Africa and attending college in the United States, she has the dual perspective of seeing the history and progress of social justice in both countries."

The public is invited to the free MLK event and reception. Call the EOP office at (229) 333-5463 for more information. ■

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Flag CONTINUED —

Baghdad. Coach David Dean said the team was extremely proud to receive the flag and felt compelled to run it across the field during the team's two playoff games in 2008.

"We are very proud of our military and try to honor them whenever we can," said Dean, who has been the team's head coach since January 2007. "We always end every practice with a prayer and often pray for the safety and well being of the individuals and their families that are sacrificing for this great country. We truly believe they are the heroes of today."

Dean chose sophomore DeMario Jones to run the flag onto the field during the North Alabama game and senior history major Mark Sibenaller to run the onto the field during the Carson Newman game. The two defensive linemen, who both have friends and family overseas, said they credit service men and women with giving them the freedom to play the game they love and to pursue education for a secure future.

"My uncle, who has been in the army for more than 20 years, just got back from Iraq. He actually surprised me at the Fort Valley game, when

I had no idea he was on leave," said Jones, a political science major, whose father served in the military for 10 years. "My uncle, who has been a mentor to me all my life, is always worried about us over here, but he is the one who is fighting for our freedom. I am so proud of him, and honored to be his nephew."

VSU's football season was coming to a close in December just as Stewart returned home for the first time since his deployment in July. The son of a career military man wished he could have seen the boys carry the American flag across the field during the games; but just as rewarding, Stewart said, is the thought that someone in the stands felt a sense of security and hope as the red, white and blue paraded through the air.

Stewart has not had time to dwell on his absence from football mania. He is too busy enjoying the company of his wife and spending time with friends and family during the holiday season.

"I have missed my wife, my friends, and just the comfort of home for so long. The living conditions are pretty rough over there, but you hear few complaints. Everything is bland and brown," said Stewart, who lives in LaGrange. "It's funny what you miss. We were running some errands the other day, and we stopped at Chick-fil-A, which was such a nice treat." ■

Got some news to share?
Send it our way — news@valdosta.edu

VSUConnection

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The *VSU Connection* is a semimonthly newsletter designed to inform VSU personnel and students about the latest campus-wide news. Check out the *Connection* online at www.valdosta.edu/news/.

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