



# VSU Connection

For the Faculty, Staff and Members of the Valdosta State University Community

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## Retiring Dean Plans to Bring Professional Life Full Circle

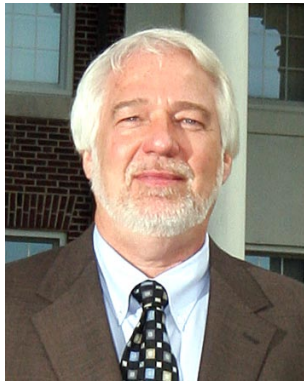
When asked about his successes, Dr. Ralph Allen, retiring dean of the Langdale College of Business, could spout a laundry list of honors or mention his more than 40 published works; but instead, Allen, whose last day is June 30 after 26 years at Valdosta State, says he is only as successful as those around him.

In his role as dean, he considers his greatest accomplishments the retention of high quality faculty he regards as family, an increase in classroom technology, and the creation of inviting study areas for students. But first and foremost, Allen considers himself a professor and as such, he hopes he has motivated and challenged students to achieve their potential.

"As dean, I can be proud of the wonderful faculty, tremendous advances in technology, and push toward more research," Allen said. "But I have received my greatest challenges and rewards as a professor — trying to help students find an area of study that excites and interests them, and teaching those students that it's not the degree you walk away with, but the skills you have retained that make you successful in your career and life."

To Allen's list of influences, faculty and staff said they would add his open and cooperative nature. Allen distributes leadership positions throughout the ranks of the College of Business so that faculty and staff members feel invested in the program and its mission. Accounting instructor, Wanda Causseaux, said Allen asked her to chair the college-wide scholarship committee.

"He did not just put me to work; he gave me an opportunity to contribute," said Causseaux, who studied under Allen during her graduate coursework. "And at the honors banquet, when it came time to announce the scholarship recipients and donors, he gave that honor to me rather than keeping the spotlight on himself."



Dr. Ralph Allen

College of Business students attribute much of the comfortable atmosphere at North Campus to Allen's vision to establish the school as a place where students want to remain to study or socialize. When storage space in Pound Hall was recently transformed into offices and the high-tech "Decision Center" computer lab, Allen pushed for the installation of couches in the

hallways and student lounge as well as the beautification of Crane Plaza.

"His success has been so great that, during exam week, the building was so full of students that there was not a place left to sit," Causseaux added. "Students started using empty classrooms and the auditorium as gathering places between exams."

Allen's contributions to VSU are not limited to the business school. Dr. Louis Levy, vice president for Academic Affairs, said Allen has earned a reputation as a student-centered advisor and a "first-rate" scholar. When Levy arrived at VSU in 1989, he worked with Allen during the eager business professor's research of campus crime statistics.

"I was immediately impressed with his research skills and with his interpersonal skills. It was clear to me that Dr. Allen was able to conduct research that cut across the normal disciplinary boundaries of academic affairs," Levy said. "In all of his work as a faculty member, a department head and a dean, Dr. Allen excels in every task placed before him. He is a friend to many colleagues and a mentor to countless students. His contributions will remain an important part of Valdosta State University."

Allen, who headed the

Department of Marketing and Economics for nine years before his appointment as dean, said he is going to miss the people at VSU as he transitions into retirement; but Allen said he is ready to embark on new challenges. Allen and his wife, Libby — who retired in December after 26 years of teaching English and gifted resources at Valdosta High School — are relocating to a plot of land that overlooks Lake Keowee in South Carolina. The outdoorsy couple purchased about 2 acres of land in an auction about 10 years ago, and they have dreamed of building a home, hiking rustic terrain and boating with family in the second cleanest lake east of the Mississippi.

"I am looking at this as my first vacation in a long time," Allen said. "I never took a sabbatical, and I always managed to work during the summers. I designed the house, and I am excited to see the project come about. We are hoping to be in the house within 10 months."

Allen, who developed the business school's capstone research class, received a Bachelor of Science in Physics from Emory University, a Masters of Science in Mathematical Statistics and a Ph.D. in Economics both from Georgia State University in Atlanta. His primary research interests are in the fields of applied micro theory, economics of crime and macro-foundations.

Once he and Libby are settled into their life in South Carolina, he plans to seek out a teaching position at an area college. His wife already has a job as an English teacher in the area. Allen said he feels that working as a professor again will bring his professional life full circle.

"I went into this profession as a professor, and I think it is only fitting that I leave the profession teaching — my great passion." ■



Instructor of accounting, Wanda Causseaux, demonstrates the touch-sensitive computer screen technology Dr. Allen was instrumental in acquiring for College of Business instruction.

## Nursing Professor Recognized for Excellence in Teaching and Practice

The Valdosta State University College of Nursing honored Dr. Deborah Weaver, associate professor of nursing, for her commitment to excellence in teaching, service and scholarship at the Second Annual Valdosta Area Nursing Recognition Reception Thursday, May 8. College of Nursing Dean Dr. Anita Hufft presented Weaver with the Excellence in Nursing Collaborative Practice Award in celebration of Weaver's devotion to student learning and contributions to the nursing profession.

"VSU College of Nursing is proud and honored to have the opportunity to recognize the clinical contributions of one of our own," Hufft said at the reception, which was held at VSU in the University Center Magnolia Room. "In addition to the knowledge required to create and deliver curriculum. . .our faculty value, respect and love working with students and taking care of patients."

Weaver, who remembers playing nurse during her brothers' fights as cowboys and Indians, said she was deeply honored and humbled that peers recognized her 21 years of teaching



*Dr. Deborah Weaver, professor of nursing at VSU, talks outside the nursing school about her tenure at the university.*

at VSU and work as an educator and on-call nurse for Hospice of South Georgia.

"I am truly touched that my fellow faculty members and nurses in the community value my commitment to students and the work I have done outside the classroom," said Weaver, who received her Ph.D. in Nursing from Georgia State University in August 2000.

"I have always maintained that it is important for instructors to work in the field. My work with hospice patients keeps my skill levels up, and I stay informed about advances and changes in the profession."

The first-generation college student received her Associate of Nursing from the University of South Carolina Upstate, in Spartanburg, S.C., then completed her Bachelor of Nursing from Valdosta State College in 1987. She began teaching at VSC in 1987.

Weaver, who has taught about five full-time nursing faculty at VSU, said the greatest advice she could ever give a nursing student is to "think before you act." She also urges students to

remember to take care of themselves so that they don't burn out.

"Nursing is tough, and it is definitely not for everyone," Weaver said. "The shortage of nurses is not because we don't have enough people with licenses. The best nurses are often the type of people who give and give. I have seen too many caring, wonderful nurses burn out because they didn't take time out for themselves."

The avid seamstress, who sewed nearly all the clothes her children wore growing up, said she stays busy in her free time by reading and keeping up with her two children, two stepchildren, four grandkids and four step grandchildren. She and her husband, John, enjoy spending time together and attending Nashville United Methodist Church.

Weaver was one of 10 area nurses who received Excellence in Nursing Awards for their measurable, positive impact on patient care in the region. The recognition reception and awards were developed two years ago through a collaboration among representatives from South Georgia Medical Center, Valdosta State University, South Georgia Collaborative Chapter of the Georgia Nurses Association and the South Health District. ■

## Candidates Submitted

### Selection of VSU President Now in the Hands of the System Office

The campus visits for the six semi-finalists for the VSU presidential search concluded on April 30. The participation by staff, faculty, administrators, students, alumni and business leaders showed great support and interest in the search process. The Presidential Search and Screen Committee greatly appreciated all who participated in the various search activities.

On May 1, the committee met and agreed upon a list of candidates to submit to Dr. Susan Herbst and the Special Regents Selection Committee. The list included strength and concern statements for each candidate.

Although a specific timeline has not

been released, the Special Regents Selection Committee will continue the screening process and meet with the candidates before the end of May. Fourteen days after the Regents publicly announce the finalists, the Regents will name the eighth president of VSU.

President Zaccari is scheduled to retire June 30 and in recognition of his more than six years of service to VSU, the state and the local community, a special section will be featured in The Valdosta Daily Times on Sunday June 29. For more information on the presidential search process visit the university's Web site at [www.valdosta.edu/presidentialsearch](http://www.valdosta.edu/presidentialsearch). ■

## COSA 2008-09 Election Results

### Academic Affairs Ballot

- Shirley McClain  
—OASIS Center for Advising

### Finance & Administration Ballot

- Judy Hart—Human Resources
- Lisa Hayes—Plant Operations
- Regina Lee—Human Resources

COSA would like to thank everyone who participated in this important process.

## Got some news to share?

Send it our way — [news@valdosta.edu](mailto:news@valdosta.edu)

## VSUConnection

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