

“Educate a Woman and You Educate a Family”

The

Linly Heflin

Newsletter

Inside this issue:

Focus on our Scholars



**Deletha
Hardin, Ph.D.**

Associate Professor
University of Tampa

**Dr. Lisa Williams,
M.D.**

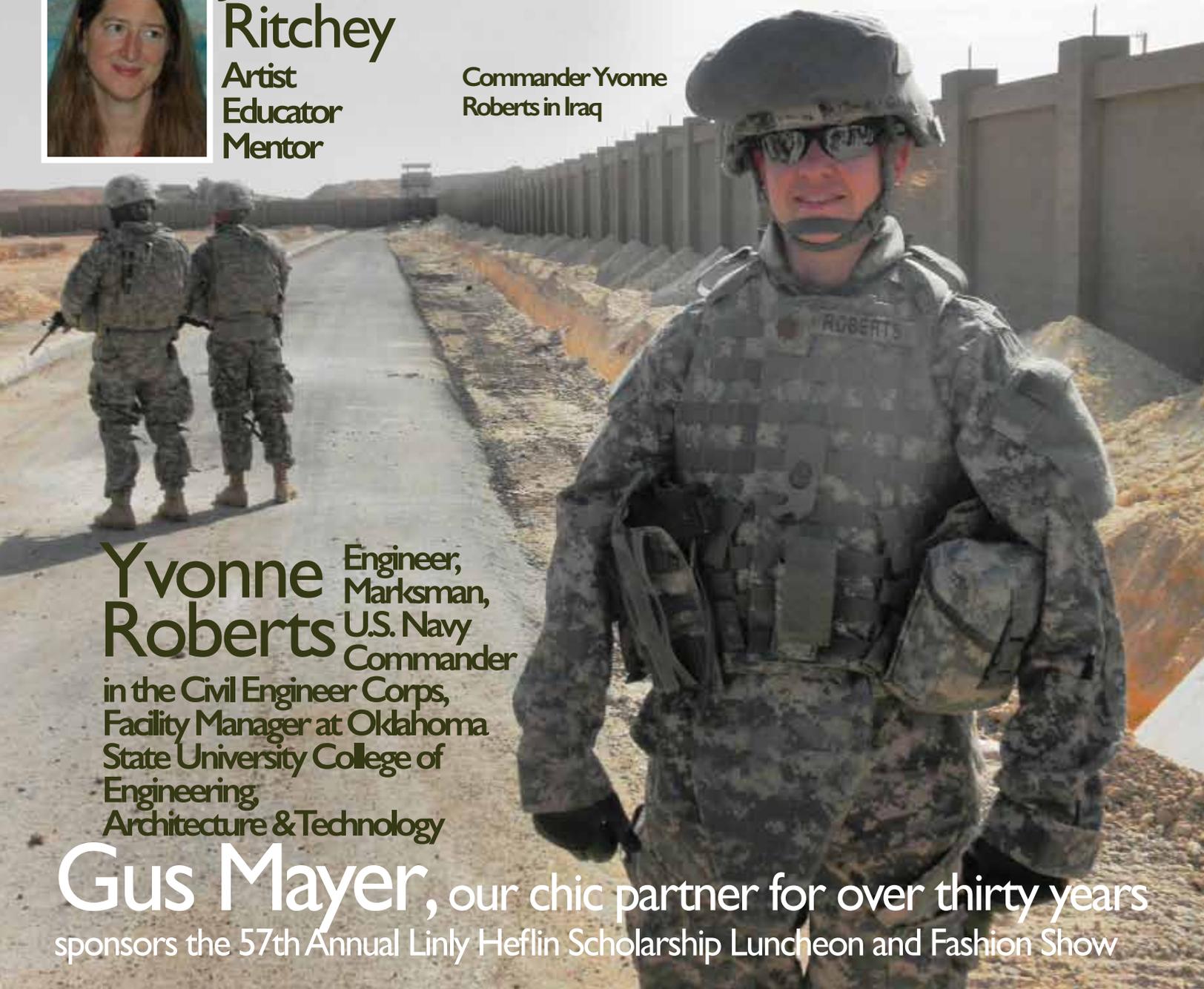
Internist
Pulmonologist
Critical Care Specialist



**Jill
Ritchey**

Artist
Educator
Mentor

Commander Yvonne
Roberts in Iraq



**Yvonne
Roberts**

Engineer,
Marksman,
U.S. Navy
Commander

in the Civil Engineer Corps,
Facility Manager at Oklahoma
State University College of
Engineering
Architecture & Technology

Gus Mayer, our chic partner for over thirty years
sponsors the 57th Annual Linly Heflin Scholarship Luncheon and Fashion Show

Yvonne Roberts

Commander, U.S. Navy (Retired)



Naval Commander Yvonne Roberts, who recently retired from the Navy after giving twenty years of devoted service to our country, grew up in the small town of Daleville, Alabama. With a population of approximately 5,000, Daleville proudly calls itself the "Gateway to Ft. Rucker", for the U.S. Army Aviation Base lies just a few miles north of the town. Although the family lived on a farm, both parents were employed at Ft. Rucker. Yvonne tells us that she considered it a real privilege to have grown up on a farm, for she loved the freedom of roaming through the fields and nearby woods, and exploring the beauties of the natural world. No doubt these early experiences led to her love for the outdoors and her subsequent devotion to hiking and camping. Along with the pleasures that the farm afforded came a number of responsibilities. Yvonne admits that she was not exactly thrilled with such activities as helping with the shearing, feeding, and the general care of sheep. Yet

she realizes now that having these responsibilities at an early age was good training for the future, and probably helped her to develop the excellent work ethic that has remained with her throughout the years.

From first grade on, Yvonne was an outstanding student, consistently making excellent grades. Her two principal extra-curricular activities during her years at Daleville High School were participating in competitive marksmanship and in the Army JROTC unit. Both of her parents had a love for competition shooting, and they all spent much time attending weekend events. Yvonne had a natural aptitude for the sport, and was part of several winning teams as well as earning top individual awards. She also found her activities with the Army JROTC to be quite rewarding, and during her senior year achieved the rank of Battalion Commander. At an early age, Yvonne had developed a love for and devotion to her country, which was nurtured by her father, a member of the National Guard, and her mother, who served in the Air Force Reserve. During her senior year, Yvonne began to seriously consider making the armed forces her life's career. Realizing that college was a necessary step toward this goal, she started making plans to go to Auburn University. Her parents were wholeheartedly behind her ambitions, but at that time were financially unable to underwrite all of her expenses.

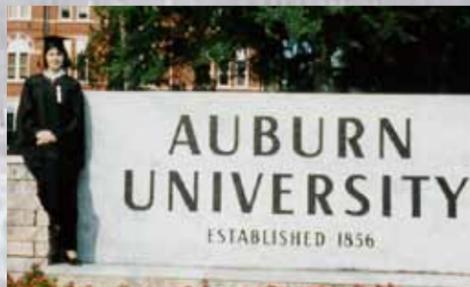


Yvonne and her parents, Beth and Sonny

As Salutatorian of her graduating class, Yvonne was awarded several scholarships, and also a Pell Grant. With the extra income provided by a work-study program, she was able to enter Auburn in the fall of 1991. She chose engineering as her major, for she had particularly enjoyed math and science classes in high school. She loved being at Auburn, and made outstanding grades in all of her subjects. However, since some of her scholarships would end after her freshman year, she needed to find other funding in order to remain in the university. Thankfully, a counselor in the Financial Aid

office suggested that she apply for a Linly Heflin Scholarship, and Yvonne was overjoyed when her application was accepted. She remains grateful for all the help our scholarship provided.

In August of 1995, Yvonne's proud parents watched as she received her Civil Engineering degree. Her honors included being inducted into such prestigious societies as Tau Beta Pi, Phi Kappa Phi, and Chi Epsilon. Having been recruited by the Navy during her senior year, she immediately reported to Officer's Candidate School in Pensacola, Florida. That December, she was thrilled to receive the rank of Ensign, and after additional training as a Navy Civil Engineer, she started a life of service to our country filled with adventure and travel.



Yvonne graduated with honors in 1995

Yvonne's first duty station was in Adak, Alaska at an Aleutian Island base that had been established during World War II. At this time, the base was being closed and returned to the Aleut Indians. Yvonne's duties included a number of environmental remediation and landfill closure projects. Upon completion of this assignment, Yvonne was sent to a language training school in Monterey, California, to learn Italian. After becoming quite proficient in the language, she was sent to Naples, Italy on a two-year assignment. Here, she worked as project manager at various small installations on both the Mediterranean and Adriatic coasts in support of U.S. and United Nations operations in Kosovo. During her off time, she enjoyed exploring Italy, and developed a love for its language, history, food, and art.

After returning to the U.S., Yvonne spent several years in Virginia. Although she had not yet achieved her status as a Lieutenant, she was assigned a position as Company Commander at Amphibious Construction Battalion TWO, where she led personnel in honing their contingency construction skills. One project they undertook under her direction was to construct a thousand foot long expeditionary pier in support of a joint operation on the coast of South Korea. Yvonne then supported



After graduating from Auburn University with honors (Civil Engineering) in 1995, Yvonne immediately reported to Officer's Candidate School in Pensacola, Florida, and was commissioned as an Ensign in December.

Naval Special Warfare Group TWO as their facilities officer at the start of operations in Afghanistan and Iraq following the events of September 11, 2001. Her next assignment took her back to the halls of academia. First, she spent a year representing the Navy CEC (Civil Engineer Corps) interviewing potential Navy officers at universities in the Eastern United States. Next, she enrolled at North Carolina State University in Raleigh and earned a Master's degree in Civil Engineering.

In the summer of 2005, Yvonne began a two year assignment with Headquarters, Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) at the Navy Yard in Washington D.C. Yvonne then left the East for Twentynine Palms, California, where she spent a rewarding three years serving as the Public Works Officer responsible for providing a broad range of facilities improvements for the Marines stationed there.

Her next assignment took her from the Mojave Desert to the hot, blowing sands of Iraq, where she spent 16 months supporting all branches of the U.S. military as the Public Works and Base Transition Officer at Al Asad Air Base. Having

At her final duty station, at NAVFAC Southwest, as team leader, Yvonne completed a multi-billion dollar program that brought much-needed improvements for the Marine Corps' installations/commands in the Southwest.

steadily worked her way up to the rank of Lieutenant Commander, Yvonne was made a full Commander while in Iraq. (This is a position that is equal to that of Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army and the Air Force.)

Upon returning to the U.S., she was stationed in San Diego, California, where she carried out her final Navy assignment. As the NAVFAC Southwest team leader responsible for providing facilities engineering for all Marine Corps installations/commands in the Southwest, she completed a multi-billion dollar improvement program benefiting the Marines and their families in the area.

Throughout her Navy career, Yvonne continued to pursue her life-long passion, which began in high school: competitive marksmanship. She was a member and also Officer-in-Charge of the Navy Marksmanship Team, and competed both with the team and as an individual across the U.S. While in the Navy, she earned both the Navy Distinguished Marksman (rifle) and Pistol Shot badges, becoming the first Navy female to become "double distinguished". Yvonne continues to compete in both pistol and rifle events at the national and international levels. She also enjoys volunteering as a coach with local shooting clubs and with the Boy Scouts of America.

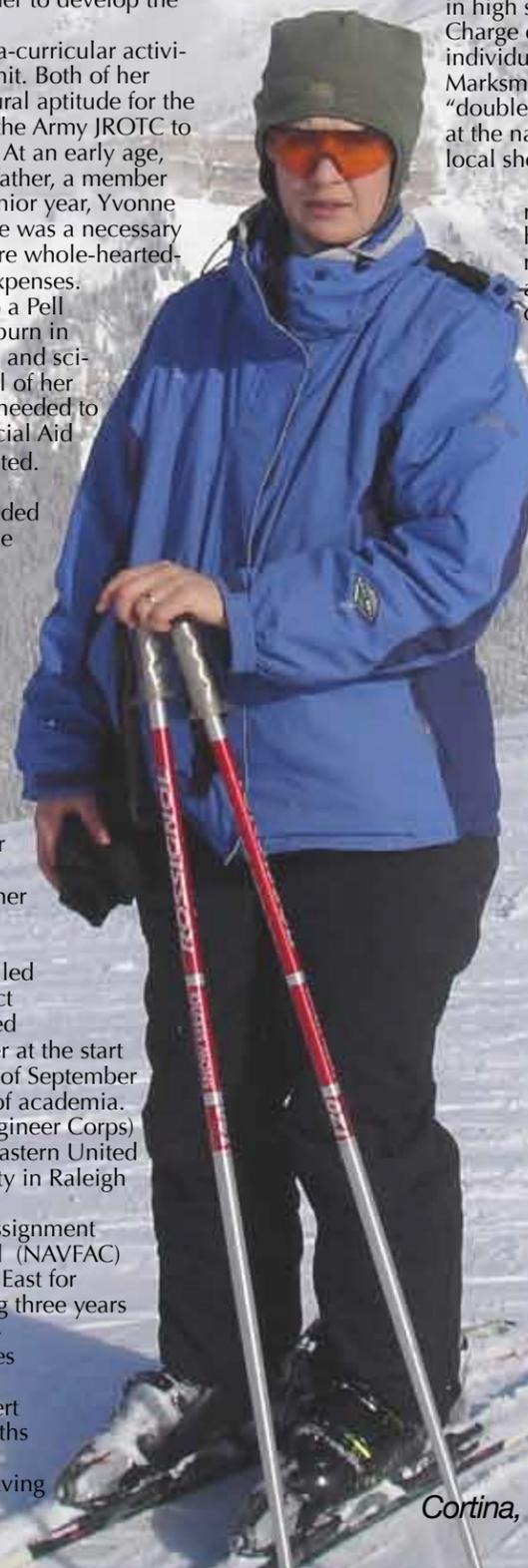
Yvonne's additional activities include reading, writing poetry, hiking, taking walks with her Chesapeake Bay retriever, "Cruiser", snow skiing, and stand-up paddle boarding. Her travels around the U.S. have enabled her to hike and explore many of our beautiful National Parks, including Yosemite, Yellowstone, Death Valley, and Mammoth Cave, as well as Hawaiian volcanoes and waterfalls. She is a registered Professional Engineer, and is certified as an Educational Facilities Manager. She is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, the National Society of Professional Engineers, and the American Public Works Association.

It is evident that Yvonne's retirement from the Navy did not lead to a life of leisure. Because of her patriotism and love of country, she gladly spent the last twenty years serving in the armed forces. Currently, she is extremely busy in her new position as the Facilities Manager at Oklahoma State University for the College of Engineering, Architecture, and Technology. In addition, she has decided to pursue a long-term interest in theology, and is enrolled at Oklahoma Christian University, which is located an hour's drive away from her home in Stillwater. She is attending classes there each week and plans to graduate with a Master's in Theology. The Linly Heflin proudly recognizes Yvonne as one of our truly outstanding scholarship recipients, and we wish her well in all of her future endeavors.

While in the Navy, she earned both the Navy Distinguished Marksman (rifle) and Pistol Shot badges becoming the first Navy female to become double distinguished. (2015)



2013 Seabee Ball



By Katy Terry



Western North Carolina



"Relaxing" in Western North Carolina



50 yard Pistol, California, 2013



Happy Shooter



Ocoee River



Hiking in Yosemite 2013



600 yards Service Rifle, California, 2013



Yvonne with her parents, Beth and Sonny, at Clearwater Beach, FL



Hiking in California 2012

Cortina, Italy, 2004

Deletha Hardin, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Psychology at The University of Tampa

of Governor Hunt. Among these, we are proud to spotlight Dr. Deletha Hardin.

Deletha tells us that she enjoyed growing up in the close-knit community of Holly Pond. She was the first of two daughters born to Brenda and Charles Holcomb. Her younger sister, Paula, came along when Deletha was seven. Both girls received a great deal of love and attention from their parents, grandparents, and other family members. They particularly enjoyed visiting their grandparents' farm, located only two miles from the town. Here, the girls were allowed to roam freely, and learn such skills as caring for the chickens, goats, and cows that their grandparents raised. Deletha felt particularly proud when she was allowed to help milk the goats. However, she admits she never acquired a taste for goat's milk! Asked about the main advantage of growing up in a small town, Deletha responded: "Everyone knows everyone!" As for the disadvantage, she quickly informed us: "Everyone knows everyone"! Despite its small size, Holly Pond has always had an outstanding public education system. Deletha took full advantage of this, and by the end of her first year in school had already become a competent reader. She remembers the pleasure of devouring such favorites as the "Nancy Drew" and Laura Ingalls Wilder series of books. In addition to reading, Deletha had a natural aptitude for music. She began taking piano lessons at the age of eight, and by her thirteenth year had become the principal piano player for her church. She also started learning to play the saxophone in grade school, later taking up the French horn and clarinet. Early on, Deletha's mother stressed the importance of making good grades in school. She also challenged her daughter to achieve a perfect attendance record. Deletha has a competitive streak, and she worked hard to meet all of her mother's expectations.

In addition to her schooling, Deletha acquired various practical skills from her father as a child. Since there were no boys in the family, Deletha and Paula filled the gap when their father needed help. She remembers learning to drive by operating a lawn mower, and later a tractor, under his supervision. At the age of eleven she spent two weeks helping him rebuild the engine of a dump truck. When she was sixteen, she learned to drive a manual transmission in the same truck, before finally being allowed to drive the family's Volkswagen Super Beetle. Since Holly Pond's elementary and high schools were housed in different wings of the same building, the transition to ninth grade was easy for Deletha. The school had an excellent music program, and along with many of her friends, she joined the high school band. This soon became her favorite extra-curricular activity, and she fondly recalls the excitement of performing at football and basketball games. Other favorite school activities included singing in the Glee Club, and serving as captain for the Scholars' Bowl Team. In May, 1989, Deletha's family was privileged to watch as she received her diploma from Holly Pond High School. Both Deletha and her mother were gratified that she had achieved her twin goals of making straight As, and having a perfect attendance record for all twelve years of school.

Deletha achieved her goals of making straight A's and having perfect attendance for all twelve years of school

Another of Deletha's long-term goals was to get a college education. Although neither of her parents had gone to college, they fully supported her ambitions. However, financial problems prevented them from giving monetary help at the time. Because of her outstanding high school record, Deletha was offered enough scholarship aid to cover tuition at The University of Alabama at Huntsville. Still needing funds for housing, books, and fees, she won a Linly Heflin scholarship, which paid for most of these expenses. (Incidentally, Deletha's sister, Paula, was also awarded a Linly Heflin scholarship several years later.)

Deletha's college career was equally as successful as her years at Holly Pond High School. Chemistry had been a favorite subject in high school, and she decided to major in chemical engineering until she realized that she hated having to take the required calculus courses. On the other hand, she thoroughly enjoyed a freshman psychology course, becoming intrigued with a branch called "social psychology". This is a discipline that studies people in groups and the ways that groups influence people. At the beginning of her sophomore year, Deletha switched to this field as her major. She excelled in all of her studies at UAH, making straight A's, with the exception of one B, (which she says broke her heart at the time)! She graduated Summa cum Laude in 1994, having been chosen for two honor societies: Psi Chi and Sigma Tau Delta. She also had the honor of being awarded a fellowship for graduate study in social psychology at the University of North Carolina. A particularly happy event that occurred during

Dr. Deletha P. Hardin, Associate Professor of Psychology at The University of Tampa, and former Linly Heflin scholarship recipient, still recalls with pleasure one of the outstanding events of her school years: marching with the Holly Pond High School Band in the inauguration day parade of Governor Guy Hunt. This was truly a banner occasion, not only for the band, but for all of the citizens of Holly Pond. With the 1987 election of native son Guy Hunt to the governorship, the small (population: 800), relatively unknown Cullman County town achieved an importance it had never before known. The tiny town has produced many other notable citizens since the days



Deletha teaching one of her Psychology classes

Deletha graduated summa cum laude in 1994, having made straight A's, except for one B!

her years at UAH was meeting an attractive fellow student from Gadsden, David Hardin. She and David dated regularly during her junior and senior years. After Deletha graduated and moved to Chapel Hill, North Carolina, David took employment in Washington, D.C., and the two continued a long-distance relationship until their marriage in 1998.

Always a diligent worker, Deletha accomplished a great deal during her years at UNC. In addition to taking classes,



Deletha married her college sweetheart, David Hardin, in 1998

she spent many hours teaching and doing research. Her efforts were rewarded when she received her M.A degree in 1996, followed by a Ph.D in 2000. About this time, David accepted a new job offer in Tampa, and the couple moved to Florida. In 2001, Deletha began a position at The University of Tampa as an Assistant Professor in the psychology department, and in 2007 she achieved the rank of Associate Professor. She enjoys being at the university, and appreciates the fact that it is large enough to have good resources and opportunities, but is small enough for her to get to know students well. Her teaching skills have won her several awards from the university. She also finds time for a great deal of research and writing in her chosen field of social psychology, and her work has appeared in a number of prestigious publications.

Deletha and David are very happy living in Tampa. They have found it to be a welcoming city, and have made many wonderful friends. David is employed as a computer professional at nearby McDill Air Force Base. He is completely sold on Tampa's climate, especially after having endured the ice and snow that he encountered in the north. An avid fisherman, he appreciates the wealth of opportunities the area affords for this activity. He and Deletha enjoy their membership in King's Avenue Baptist Church. They share the hobby of wood-working and are also active with Cat Call, Inc., a local cat rescue organization. Ironically, Deletha is allergic to cats, but regularly takes allergy medication in order to enjoy their

three pets: Aurora, Katya, and KC. They have enjoyed business and pleasure trips to destinations all over the coastal United States and Hawaii. Yet after their travels, both Deletha and David are always ready to get back to their much-loved home in Tampa.

"Your motto, 'Educate a woman and you educate a family' resonates with me. I'm the first in my family to attend college."

Deletha remains grateful for the help she received from the Linly Heflin so many years ago. She states: "Your motto, 'Educate a woman and you educate a family' resonates with me. I'm the first in my family to attend college. At the time I started at UAH, my parents had recently divorced and my mother had become a single mom. She's incredibly strong and smart. However, she never had the opportunity for college, and when she began supporting our family, it was quite tough. She emphasized education for my sister and me, and has been our biggest cheerleader. She shared in all of my successes because the lessons she taught me were really important in persevering to make them happen. Had my mom gone to college, who knows what she might have done! Education for women gives them choices. I think that's the important point. Without the Linly Heflin Unit, my college education would not have been possible. I would not have begun the journey that has brought me to this wonderful place that I am in today."

By Katy Terry

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Deletha on the University of Tampa campus



Deletha with her Mom and sister Paula at Myrtle Beach



Deletha and David in Tubingen, Germany



Deletha and her husband, David Hardin, with their three cats, Aurora, Monkey, and KC (Monkey passed away last year)



Deletha's mom and Deletha when she graduated from UAH in 1994



Deletha was the emcee at a pageant when she was a senior in high school



The University of Tampa with historic Plant Hall in the foreground



David and Deletha hiking on the Kihohana Plantation



Deletha's mom's 65th birthday celebration. It was held at Palisades Park near Oneonta, Alabama. From left to right: Deletha, Troy Reid (brother-in-law), Brenda Blackwood (mom), Bailey Reid (her niece in her Mom's lap), Paula Reid (sister), Susan Black (sister), and Brad Black (brother-in-law)

Dr. Lisa Williams, M.D.

Internist, Pulmonologist, Critical Care Specialist

ery, tells us that by the time she was five or six years old, she had decided to become a doctor. She first became interested in the medical field when her beloved grandfather was diagnosed with leukemia, and sometimes the family would let her pretend to give him the shots that were part of his treatment. She was heartbroken when he passed away, and remembers promising herself that when she grew up, she would become a doctor, so she could help sick people like her grandfather. The fact that she never deviated from this goal throughout grammar school, high school, and college bears witness to her intellectual gifts, compassion for others, and tremendous strength of character.

Aside from losing her grandfather, Lisa had a very happy childhood. Her parents, Therese and Shelley Neil

Jackson, provided a warm and loving environment for her and her younger brother, Shelley, in their Montgomery home. Lisa was a very precocious child, and to channel her boundless energy, her parents gave her lessons in gymnastics, jazz and baton dancing, ballet, and piano. In addition, Lisa always studied hard, for she realized that a good academic record was essential for reaching her goal of becoming a doctor.

When she reached high school, she was accepted into the prestigious Lanier Academic Motivational Program (LAMP) of Sidney Lanier High School in Montgomery. This is a magnet school, which provides an accelerated program for academically talented and highly motivated students. Once again, Lisa excelled in her classes, in spite of the challenging advanced placement curriculum. In addition to being consistently named to the Honor Roll, she participated in many extracurricular activities, while continuing with her dancing and piano lessons.

In keeping with her medical aspirations, she volunteered with the Montgomery Rehabilitation Center, where she worked with stroke victims and head injury patients. As a deeply committed Christian, Lisa never neglected giving her time and energy for Normandale United Methodist Church, her family's place of worship, where she often played the piano for services, and was an active member of the youth group.

Although high school years were filled with much joy and numerous accomplishments, a great sorrow came to Lisa's family during this time. Her dear mother, Therese, was diagnosed with a rare blood disorder, aplastic anemia. After a long and difficult illness, she passed away in the summer of 1991. It was a devastating blow for Lisa and her family. Yet her minister, Reverend Edward Henne, writes: "Lisa went through this experience without ever neglecting her Christian faith, her remarkable scholarship, her daily duties, or her glowing, sweet, and winsome personality. She showed a maturity and a judgement which was beyond her years."

At the time of her mother's death, Lisa had just completed her junior year, and it was with a heavy heart that she began her senior year, realizing she could no longer count on her dear mother's encouragement and support. She did, however, find consolation in a new and important friendship. During the summer, she met an attractive fellow student, John Williams, and they began an extended courtship, culminating with their 1999 marriage.

Losing her mother filled Lisa with a new resolve to achieve her goal of becoming a physician. After researching various colleges, she decided that Birmingham-Southern College could provide the best preparation for a medical career. Although she had no problem being accepted into the school, financing her education was another matter. Her mother's illness had drained the family's resources, and Lisa soon realized that she must have outside help. Fortunately, her excellent school record enabled her to get enough scholarship aid to begin her freshman year in the fall. The next year, when some of her financial aid had ended, she won a Linly Heflin scholarship, which she says was a great help during her remaining time in college. Her career at Birmingham-Southern was marked with the same academic success she had enjoyed in high school. Majoring in chemistry, and minoring in Spanish, she had no trouble making outstanding grades. At the same time, her incredible work ethic enabled her to hold down a part-time campus job, as well as participate in many campus activities. She volunteered regularly for a tutoring program, and honed her Spanish language skills by spending a month working at a girls' home in Honduras. Among the outstanding honors she received while at B.S.C. were being elected to Mortar Board and Phi Beta Kappa. In the spring of 1996, her family proudly watched as she received her Bachelor of Science degree, Magna cum Laude.

Medical School was the next step in Lisa's long-term plan. Lisa's outstanding college record won her acceptance into the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, and in the fall she began four years of arduous, yet rewarding study as a medical student. To help defray expenses, Lisa got summer jobs at the National Health Service Corporation, and at Montgomery Hematology and Oncology Associates. She consistently earned top-notch grades, and was gratified to receive a special Linly Heflin Medical Scholarship for her last three years of medical school. Another event she found time for in her busy schedule was her 1999 "fairy tale" wedding to her high school sweetheart, John Williams. We are pleased to report that they have lived a "happily ever after" life together from then until now!

Following graduation from medical school, Lisa and her husband moved to Birmingham, where she served a three year residency in Internal Medicine at Carraway Hospital. Although she enjoyed being at Carraway, she decided that she did not want to spend her medical career in primary care. Instead, she found that she preferred working with pulmo-

"What do you want to be when you grow up?" is a question adults often ask children, as a way of beginning a conversation. In reality, most young people struggle with this question well into their high school and even college years. However, Dr. Lisa Jackson Williams, highly respected pulmonologist of Montgom-

Lisa decided to become a doctor by the time she was five or six years old.

After a long and difficult illness, Lisa's mother passed away while Lisa was still in high school

Dr. Williams and her partners agree that healing the sick is their prime reason for being, not the fees they can collect



Cole, Jordan, Lisa and John at an Auburn game



Jordan and Lisa

nary and critical care patients. With her usual determination, Lisa won a fellowship in pulmonary, critical care, and sleep medicine at the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta. On completing three years of training there, she and John returned to their beloved Montgomery, where she became a partner with the Montgomery Pulmonary Consultants group. There are seven doctors in this group, of which Lisa is the only woman. Lisa has become known as one of the top physicians in her field, and her patients praise her for her timely, compassionate care. One patient observed: "Dr. Williams is the best physician I have ever encountered!" Montgomery Pulmonary Consultants maintains two offices in Montgomery, and cares for patients in four different hospitals. Lisa is particularly proud of the fact that her group is committed to serving everyone who comes to them for help, never turning away a patient who lacks the proper insurance credentials, or is unable to pay. She and her partners agree that healing the sick is their prime reason for being, and not the fees they can collect.

Lisa and John have made a wonderful life for themselves and their two young sons, nine-year-old

Cole, and four-year-old Jordan. Their home is in nearby Wetumpka, where Lisa's father also resides.

In addition to her medical career, Lisa does volunteer work for the Montgomery Junior League, is involved with an animal rescue shelter, and works with Camp Hope, which serves foster and adoptive children. John's flexible employment schedule at a nearby marina enables him to be their children's principle driver and caregiver while Lisa is at work. The family has a special love for animals, and currently has three dogs, obtained from a local shelter. The entire family enjoys the outdoors, and spends a great deal of time at their nearby home on Lake Jordan in such activities as kayaking, tubing, paddle boarding, wake surfing, and water skiing. Other favorite activities include camping trips to the beach and to the mountains, and attending Auburn football games. On most Sundays, one can find them attending worship services at Cain's Chapel United Methodist Church in the nearby community of Holtville.

In surveying Lisa's life and list of accomplishments, one can only say: "Wow"! When Lisa was applying for the Linly Heflin Medical Scholarship, a dean of the University of South Alabama Medical School wrote: "Lisa's inner qualities of caring and compassion, and her high degree of ethics, morals, and soundness of mind provide the very important basics for a good physician. It is evident that Lisa is an asset to her community and to society. Your scholarship will serve to enhance Lisa's capabilities for becoming a major donor to society and the service of humankind." The Linly Heflin is proud indeed to have played a small part in helping Lisa to achieve the lofty goals she set for herself so many years ago.

By Katy Terry



Jordan and Lisa



Lisa wakesurfing on Lake Jordan



Lisa paddleboarding and John wakesurfing on Lake Jordan



Lisa, Cole, Jordan and John in Keystone, Colorado



Lisa and Cole skiing



Jordan, Cole, Lisa and John at Lake Jordan



Lisa and her parents, Therese and Shelley Neil Jackson



Lisa enjoyed ballet, jazz, tap, gymnastics, and baton dancing as well as piano

Lisa was accepted into the prestigious Lanier Academic Motivational Program (LAMP) of Sidney Lanier High School in Montgomery.



Lisa's high school graduation

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Lisa married her high school sweetheart, John Williams in 1999. Pictured here with the happy couple are Lisa's father, Shelley Neil Jackson, and her brother, Shelley Neil Jackson, Jr.



Jill Ritchey

Artist, Educator, Mentor

Middle school can be a scary place. Between adjusting to the roller coaster of adolescence, new peer groups and rigorous academics, any young person might feel lost. A strong adult mentor, such as a teacher or coach, can be an invaluable guide for a young person as she explores her interests and discovers her gifts. Former Linly Heflin scholar, Jill Ritchey, is just such a mentoring educator, and she has been blessed with several adults who have guided her along the way. In fact, it was in middle school when one of these adult mentors encouraged Jill's budding interest in art to grow into a lifelong passion and a rewarding career.

Jill Johnson Ritchey is the older of Nancy and Jim Johnson's two daughters. Jim, an Army veteran of the Vietnam War, worked as an air traffic controller and entered the telecommunications business in 1981. The Johnson family settled in the Birmingham area, and Nancy stayed home to care for Jill and her sister, Mindy, until they entered high school. Mindy, just sixteen months younger than Jill, was born profoundly deaf and was diagnosed with Usher

Jill Ritchey and her painting "Nature Within"

Syndrome when she was one year old. Usher's is a rare genetic disorder that causes hearing and vision loss, and the Johnsons were determined to do whatever they could to provide the best opportunities for Mindy. The first step was for each of them to learn sign language, and that included Jill, who was only 2 or 3 years of age at that time.

Jill has loved art from a very young age, and she remembers with gratitude the seeds planted by her first grade art teacher. For the next several years, Jill's elementary school did not have a full time art teacher and she had to be satisfied with small art projects during regular class times. She remembers working hard on a piece for the school art contest and being rewarded for her efforts with a first place ribbon. This was the beginning of Jill earning recognition for her talent and hard work in art.

Jill was excited to attend Gresham Middle School, where she would finally have a full time art teacher at school. While at Gresham, Jill's art teacher, Mrs. Polly Westburg Levert, became an important mentor whose encouragement gave Jill the confidence she needed to develop her love of art, and provided a model that Jill would later emulate in her own teaching career. Jill went on to attend Shades Valley High School where she found another mentor in Mrs. Sue Weeks. Mrs. Weeks encouraged Jill to take as many art classes as possible, including AP Art classes at Shades Valley and private art classes at Space One Eleven, and urged her to continue to enter art competitions. Jill worked part-time at Michael's during high school both to help with family expenses and for the employee discount on art materials.

By this time, Jill's father had gone back to school to pursue a degree in business and had started his own business, Net Access Solutions LLC. Jill's mother was working as well as advocating for her girls, and both parents encouraged the girls to pursue college. When Mindy began high school, the Johnsons realized the specialized training provided in a school for the deaf would give her the best chance to succeed in spite of her disabilities, so she went off to high school at the Model Secondary School for the Deaf in Washington, DC. Jill continued at Shades Valley, where her love of art continued to grow, graduating from high school in 1990. She began her college career at Birmingham-Southern College pursuing a Fine Arts degree. Meanwhile, Mindy graduated from the Model Secondary School for the Deaf the following year and entered college at neighboring Gallaudet University.

With Jill and her sister so close in age, and the challenges of Mindy's disabilities, it became more difficult for the family to cover tuition and all of the related expenses for both girls. Jill worked nights and weekends throughout college and commuted from home to make ends meet. She was busy applying for every scholarship she could find when she learned of the Linly Heflin Scholarship. Jill's hard work and talent paid off, and she was awarded the Linly Heflin Scholarship at the beginning of her sophomore year. At the same time, Jill decided to transfer to the University of Montevallo where most of her tuition and expenses would be covered with the help of the Linly Heflin Scholarship.

Jill developed close relationships with many of her college art professors, and she excelled in her art classes, graduating from Montevallo with a Bachelor's Degree in Fine Art in 1995. After graduation, Jill broadened her horizons through a University of Georgia Study Abroad program to Cortona, Italy and continuing education courses at the Art Institute of Chicago. She then went to Central Washington University in Ellensburg, Washington to earn her Masters of Fine Art, with a concentration in Painting. Jill stayed in contact with her mentors at Montevallo who were espe-



Jill riding elephants in Rajasthan, India



National Art Education Association Delegation of Art Professionals to India 2012



Shades Valley High School Art Club at Magic City Art Connection Art Festival 2014



Alabama Art Education Association Board Members

Jill is "paying it forward" by serving as a mentor to her students and to novice teachers.

Jill has received many awards, including being chosen as the AAEA Secondary Art Teacher of the Year for 2013

cially encouraging to her in the area of art education. Professor Ken Proctor, gave Jill the opportunity to serve as an adjunct professor after she graduated from Central Washington, and before long Jill began to consider art education as a fulltime career. She taught as an adjunct art professor at the University of Montevallo for two years before returning to teach art at her alma mater, Shades Valley High School, in 2006.

Jill met her tech savvy and musician husband, Albert Ritchey, when she was a graduate student during her summer break in Birmingham. Jill and Albert have been married for ten years and have one son, seven year old Aiden. They are a creative family who share their passion for the arts. Albert has collaborated with Jill in art shows in digital photography. He is a talented musician who plays improvisational music at festivals and special events such as Magic City Art Connection. Young Aiden is no doubt growing up with a high appreciation for the fine and performing arts.

Jill is in her tenth year as an art teacher at Shades Valley High School and currently serves as the Chair of the Fine Art Department. She teaches beginning and advanced level art courses including Art I, II, III and 3D courses which include drawing, painting, printmaking, ceramics, mixed media and integration of art history as part of Shades Valley's Art Academy program. She also teaches art classes for students enrolled in the Shades Valley Visual Arts Academy of Jefferson County International Baccalaureate School. In addition, Jill serves as the sponsor for the Art Club and the National Art Honor Society and is an active member of the Birmingham Art Education Association, the Alabama Art Education Association (AAEA), currently serving as National Art Honor Society Chair and the Secondary Division Chair, and the National Art Education Association (NAEA). A highlight of her career was to be selected to participate in the October 2012 NAEA delegation to India. This group of art educators from across the nation worked with top schools, artists and art teachers in New Delhi, Agra and Jaipur. Jill brought this experience back to her classroom by introducing images, video and art techniques from India. Her students studied Indian culture, textile patterns and line designs and applied their designs using woodblock-inspired printmaking techniques. Jill also presented workshops on these techniques to art teachers across the state of Alabama and surrounding states at the AAEA Annual 2013 Fall Conference and at the 2013 NAEA conference in Ft. Worth, Texas. Jill continues to be honored for her talent and dedication to her students, and was chosen as the AAEA Secondary Art Teacher of the Year for 2013 and the NAEA Southeastern Region Secondary Art Teacher of the Year for 2014. She participates in several art projects and workshops each year around Alabama and beyond, as a presenter, contributor and volunteer.

Jill remains grateful to the Linly Heflin Unit and traces much of her success as an artist and educator to her Linly Heflin scholarship. Jill and Mindy

Jill traces much of her success as an artist and educator to her Linly Heflin scholarship

are the first women in their family to graduate from college, and Jill's Linly Heflin Scholarship helped to make this dream a reality by enabling the family to direct more of their financial resources toward Mindy's special needs. Jill proudly tells us that Mindy earned a degree in counselling from Gallaudet and went on to serve as a counselor at Louisiana School for the Deaf in Baton Rouge and later as President of the Georgia Association of Deaf Blind. Mindy continues to be an advocate and volunteer for deaf blind issues.

Jill is "paying it forward" by serving as a mentor to her students and to novice teachers. Jill believes that her experience as a Linly Heflin Scholarship recipient impacts her students by showing them what can be achieved through hard work and sacrifice. She hopes that her example will provide that "spark of hope for them to believe that they can achieve their goals despite challenges" and shows "that there is help and support for them along the way." One Shades Valley parent, Catherine Brockman, shared with us that Jill's encouragement and innovative teaching had a life changing impact on her daughter, Elizabeth. Jill saw promise in Elizabeth and encouraged her to pursue art through the Jefferson County Visual Arts and Communications Academy, which is a "school within a school" focused on providing students with skills in Commercial Photography, Digital Multimedia, Sequential Art, Graphic Design, and Fine Art. Elizabeth excelled in this program, especially in the area of Digital Art, and is now in her senior year at Savannah College of Art and Design, in Savannah, Georgia. Last year, Jill invited Elizabeth to teach a two-day class to her students about different forms of sculpture; with Jill's encouragement, Shades Valley may have another budding art teacher in the making! The Linly Heflin Unit applauds Jill's contributions to art education and the positive role she plays in the lives of young people, and we are grateful to have played a small part in helping her along the way.

By Shirley Elliott

Jill at the Taj Mahal in 2012



Ritchey family portrait at the beach Thanksgiving 2014



Jill Ritchey, sister Mindy Dill, son Aidan Ritchey, and parents Jim and Nancy Johnson



NAEA San Diego Secondary Division Southeastern Region Art Educator of the Year Award 2014



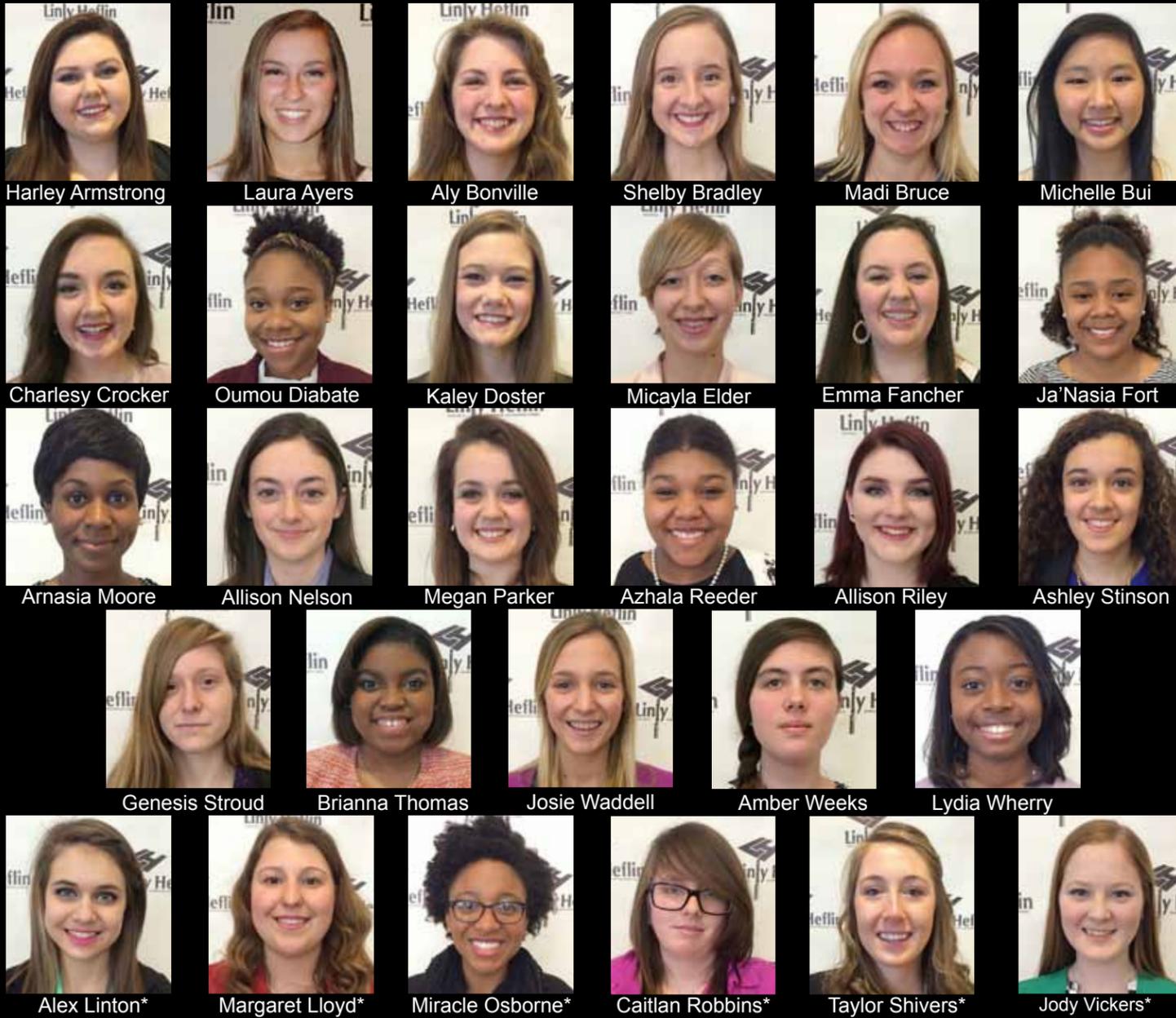
Jill Ritchey in the classroom



Jill spoke at the National Art Education Association Convention 2015. Seen here with Secondary Division Art Educator of the Year award winners of 2014

Congratulations to our New Linly Heflin Scholarship Recipients for 2015

Each spring the Scholarship Committee interviews and selects the new recipients. The criteria used include high G.P.A.s, ACT and SAT scores, extracurricular activities, proof of need for financial help, and the over-all impression the candidates make during the interviews.



Harley Armstrong Laura Ayers Aly Bonville Shelby Bradley Madi Bruce Michelle Bui
 Charlesy Crocker Oumou Diabate Kaley Doster Micayla Elder Emma Fancher Ja'Nasia Fort
 Arnasia Moore Allison Nelson Megan Parker Azhala Reeder Allison Riley Ashley Stinson
 Genesis Stroud Brianna Thomas Josie Waddell Amber Weeks Lydia Wherry
 Alex Linton* Margaret Lloyd* Miracle Osborne* Caitlan Robbins* Taylor Shivers* Jody Vickers*

*1-year Grant Recipients

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Linly Heflin Scholarship Luncheon and Fashion Show 2014



Speaker: Dr. Viola Acoff, Ph.D.

The 56th Annual Linly Heflin Scholarship Luncheon and Fashion Show was held on October 1, 2014. Co-chairs Kate Cotton and Sue Ellen Lucas and their committee members worked with Gus Mayer to please the audience with another memorable show. Gus Mayer featured some beautiful, wearable examples of Fall fashions from their store at the Summit and Gus Mayer's Michael Tatum produced the show.

Photos by Barrett and Anne Hicks

Newsletter Editor: Katy Terry
 Graphic Artist and Co-editor: Anne Hicks
 Writer and Assistant Editor: Shirley Elliott

New Linly Heflin Trust Fund Named Scholarship

Named scholarships are established by a gift of \$15,000 to the Linly Heflin Scholarship Trust Fund. Some donors choose to give a lump sum, and others spread out their giving over a number of years. The

Mary S. and Craig K. Harsh Scholarship

is the latest named scholarship established. This scholarship was established by Griff R. Harsh, III in memory of his mother and in honor of his wife, past presidents of the Unit.

Check out our website:
www.linlyheflin.org

Learn more about the Linly Heflin scholarship, print reply cards for the Scholarship Fashion Show and Luncheon and much more!
 Our thanks to Midge Miller

100% of your donation goes straight into funding scholarships. Your donation will not be used for administration or overhead. Linly Heflin has an administrative account, funded solely by membership dues, that pays all administrative expenses. Furthermore, volunteers do all of our labor. Over 3,000 scholarships, totalling over 5 million dollars, have been awarded. This year Linly Heflin has 102 scholarship recipients at 16 different Alabama schools.

57th Annual Linly Heflin Scholarship Luncheon

Photos by Gina Boyd



L-R: Brittany Jones, store manager at Gus Mayer; Smith Sinrod, designer; Herman Heinle, president of Gus Mayer and Sue Ellen Lucas, chairman of the Linly Heflin Scholarship Luncheon and Fashion Show.



Smith Sinrod, Owner/Designer of "by SMITH"

The 57th Annual Linly Heflin Scholarship Luncheon and Fashion Show fundraiser is set for Wednesday, October 14, 2015 at the Sheraton Birmingham Hotel Civic Center Ballroom.

Co-Chairs Sue Ellen Lucas and Leigh Hancock announced Smith Sinrod Owner/Designer of "by SMITH" as the featured designer and Birmingham clothier, Gus Mayer will partner again with the Linly Heflin Unit.

Smith Sinrod, Designer of by SMITH, launched her eponymous line in Spring 2010 as a contemporary women's collection of sophisticated and chic dresses and separates. by SMITH is recognizable for handpainted prints, vibrant colors and bold geometric patterns that place a spin on classic looks.

A graduate of The University of Alabama's Apparel Design program, Smith developed her love for Thailand's rich silks during a trip to the region, and has since incorporated them into all her collections. Inspired by her great-grandmother and drawn to bold outfits and bright colors as a child, Smith designs pieces with a bit of whimsical and vintage glamour.

Smith's continuous growth in the fashion industry has elevated her brand's appeal across a wide range of audiences internationally. During Gen Art's March 2010 "Miami Fresh Faces in Fashion" runway show, the Miami News Times was quoted saying: "the hit of the [Gen Art] show was easily by SMITH." Southern Living touted Sinrod as a "Designer to Watch" in 2014 following a cross country series of pop-up trunk shows hosted out of a vintage Airstream, her original "Streamin' by SMITH" tour.

by SMITH was launched in Atlanta and relocated to New York City in 2011. The line is proudly manufactured in New York's Garment District as part of the Made in America Movement. by SMITH is carried in upscale stores throughout the United States and internationally. Most recently, Smith relocated from New York City to New Orleans for the extra space and to continue to grow her brand from the South.

Letter from the President



Welcome to the 57th Linly Heflin Scholarship Luncheon. The Unit was founded in 1919 and since 1923, we have focused on giving scholarships to Alabama women to attend Alabama colleges and universities. With your generosity and that of our corporations and foundations, we currently have 102 women in 16 state schools and were able to give 28 new scholarships in 2015. Because we are an all volunteer organization and our dues cover our operating expenses,

100% of all donations go directly into our Scholarship Fund. Beyond all the statistics I have just stated, we have a deep commitment to the women coming behind us. They are smart, hard working, and hungry for a chance to change their lives with a college education. Many of our Scholars are raising children, and in some cases, siblings, whose lives will be changed for the better. The ripple that spreads out as a result of a helping hand is phenomenal.

We at Linly Heflin are the facilitators of dreams, but you, through your generosity, make dreams come true.

Thank you all for being here today and remember the very true words, "WHEN YOU EDUCATE A WOMAN, YOU EDUCATE A FAMILY."

Anna Donald

Anna Donald
President of the Linly Heflin Unit

We wish to thank

Gus Mayer

our chic partner
for thirty years

and the many individuals who contributed
generously, and especially our...

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