

The Nerve



A Weekly Newsletter of the Rotary Club of Tuscaloosa

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This Week, May 14, 2013 Gina Simpson

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Gina is a native of Alabama, resident of Tuscaloosa, and a multiple graduate of The University of Alabama. She holds a B.S. in Management with a concentration in Small Company Management and Entrepreneurship and a M.S. in Marketing. She spent her career as a serial entrepreneur founding, managing and growing several companies. Currently, she is the Owner of VeloCity Pro Cycle, a full service bicycle shop. She founded the company with her husband in 2006 and they have grown it to be the largest bicycle shop in the area. Using VeloCity as the catalyst, she was able to found, grow, and aid in the recruitment of several sporting events in the area including the Tour de Tuscaloosa, multiple National USA Triathlons, and the Spooktacular Cyclo-Cross race. She is also the President of Regina Holdings, LLC, a private investment firm she founded in 2010. Currently, Mrs. Simpson is using her entrepreneurial experience to grow and foster businesses in the Tuscaloosa area, acting as a consultant for the West Alabama Chamber of Commerce in the role of Director for The EDGE, Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation. In addition to business owner and consultant, she is an Adjunct Professor at The University of Alabama in the areas of Entrepreneurship and Leadership. In 2009, she was awarded the Rising Star Entrepreneurship Award by the West Alabama Chamber of Commerce. In 2011, she was presented with the Roots and Wings Award by the Women in Business Council. She is a current member and past chairman of the Tuscaloosa Tourism Sports Commission (TTSC). She also served as the Chairman of the TTSC CEO Search Committee and currently serves on the TTSC Partnership Committee. She serves as Vice President of the Board of Directors for the Alabama Cycling Association, a member of the West Alabama Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, a member of the Future PAC Board of Directors, and a member of the Tuscaloosa Downtown Entertainment District Committee.

Last Week, May 7

Dr. Robert Witt

Dr. Witt began by talking about when he was first President at the University of Alabama on March 1st, and had been invited to speak at the Arts & Sciences building on March 8th. He was walking to the event when a car stopped with parents and college bound teenagers stopped, rolled down the window and said "Sir – do you work for the University?" and he (quite proudly) replied "Why, yes I do. I am the President." They then asked where the Admissions Office was to which he had to reply "I don't have a clue!!" Embarrassed....to say the least!

UA System includes campuses in Tuscaloosa, Huntsville, Birmingham and Medical Facilities in Birmingham, Huntsville, Montgomery, Tuscaloosa and Selma. It employs 27K faculty and staff and 59K students. 40% of all students registered are from within the state.

UA System generates a \$7.5 Billion economic impact on the state, is the largest employer in the state, and oversees \$700 million in Research Grants. His job as Chancellor of the System is to oversee and drive the strategic and operational plans of the 3 campuses and medical facilities. Plans are developed to meet the goals and objectives of each. The programs offered are key to this success. He must work very closely with Federal and State Governments to always be in compliance with their reporting guidelines.

The System hired it's first Director of Risk Management 8 months ago. Due to the Penn State, and other campus tragedies it became very apparent that this was a real need. The Director works with the team to keep students, faculty and staff safe. Background checks are now done on everyone – even temporary employees, and policies and procedures have been developed and are in place to communicate with all during a crisis, or emergency event. It is so important to manage the events correctly as reporting incorrectly or failing to report to the Federal Government can result in huge fines.

Maintaining good credit worthiness – along with so many other business practices are a part of the Chancellor's job, but probably most important is making sure that the system functions as a system. Things like combing purchasing power can save millions!

Currently they are working to help UAB and UAH build recruiting programs to grow the campuses, and to create the "total experience" for students that

choose these campuses. They are looking at additional ways for the campuses to work together including sharing professors that are experts in their area of study – and also to manage classroom usage to maximize potential.

Thinking of smart solutions is always key to success. For instance – out of the 33,000 students at our UA campus 15,000 receive financial aid of some sort.

The first 4 – 6 weeks of school can be a nightmare for the Financial Aid Office, as you can imagine. Judy Bonner hired an American based call center, provided training for operators and took 70% of the call burden off the Office so they could process the applications, and have personal interaction with students. This resulted in a far superior experience for the parents and students that chose UA.

Dr. Witt is adamant about the fact that Economic Development is part of the duty of the System. Nisa Miranda with the UA Community Development Office is making a huge impact. Harnessing the energy and resources of UA can be used to help businesses succeed, and improve the quality of life for our citizens so that they buy into the benefits of higher education. He spoke of a local program where University Accounting Students trained on filing taxes and 354 of them assisted over 6,200 families file their taxes this year free. 100,000 Eye screens for children that would have otherwise not received them and 11,000 were supplied with corrective lenses through another program.

It is a major challenge to keep education affordable with the way budget cuts are affecting institutions of higher learning. While Scholarships are available for Academically successful students – or for those with a financial need – those students that fall in the middle are greatly affected and desperately need help. Online learning is highly encouraged and is being sought out by more and more students.

UA is also working to build a strong entrepreneurship program to encourage graduates to live their dream, and open their own business. Hopefully Tuscaloosa will be able to retain some of those entrepreneurs that will build successful businesses in our area!



Announcements

- Tuscaloosa Rotary Honor Flight will be making its 4th flight on May 18th and we will be taking both WWII and Korean War Veterans to see their memorials in Washington, D. C. More information will be posted on the Club's Website, and anyone interested in helping out with this year's flight or knows a potential veteran or guardian can e-mail Rotarian Jordan Plaster at james_plasterjr@ml.c
- Jim Hughey is at Hospice but is improving and expected to be back at home soon.
- Riley Lumpkin is hospitalized at Northport with a serious kidney issue
- Jordan Plaster – Rotary Honor Flight is almost at capacity! Currently there are 80 Korean War Veterans and 12 WWII Veterans signed up. Guardians are still needed and the cost is \$550.00 if interested.
- Jim Shamblin reported on the project selection for the Tuscaloosa Rotary Memorial Foundation. The committee and anyone interested may meet at the DCH Cancer Center Rotunda at 5pm to tour the Breast Center.
- J.G. Brazil presented a Paul Harris Fellow award to Margaret King. Eleven Rotarians took advantage of the matching fund campaign in April to become Paul Harris Fellows.
- Drew Kyle presented our newest Member, Chris McCune. Chris is an Asst. Vice President and Branch Manager for Cadence Bank.
- The Board decided to initiate a membership program whereby members bringing guests during the month of June will not be charged for their meals. Since many will not be in attendance due to school being out and many taking vacations. The fact we are paying for "x" number of guaranteed meals, we could encourage members to bring prospective new members as guests and use our "paid for" meals. This would run for the entire month of June and hopefully gain new members.
- Dusti Monk has met the qualifications for membership in the Rotary Club. She is a financial advisor

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

May 21

Lauren Ballard
Angel Flight Soars

May 28

Judge Mark Fuller

June 4

Dr. Harris
President of
Alabama State
University

“If there is any one particular in which I would have Rotary distinguished from other organizations, it is in the quality of character which results in the doing of things.”

— Paul Harris



Guests May 7th

Guests at the April 30 meeting of the Club included:

Matt Calderone, guest of Lowell Davis (Student); **Teresa Wise**, guest of Margret King (UA); **Brandon Labresh** guest of Andre Hudson (Pritchett-Moore Insurance); **Debbie Lane**, guest of **Karen Baldwin** (UA) **Wayne Wilson**, guest of Hank Wilson (Retired); **Kevin Rolle**, guest of Charles Nash (educator); **Gina Simpson**, guest of Jim Page (The Edge).



At the Head Table May 7th

Mark Nelson (speaker intro), **Lowell Davis** (Invocation), **Harry Shumaker** (guest intro), **Rob Moore** (Pledge).

ABSENT? MAKING UP ATTENDANCE IS EASY...

- Visit with the Morning Rotary Club every Thursday at 7 AM at Indian Hills Country Club.
- Attend another club's meeting within two weeks before or after an absence.
- Participate in a Rotary event, such as a committee meeting, social function, Interact event, etc.
- Make up at E-club online: www.rotaryclubone.org.

REPORT ALL MAKEUPS TO CLUB SECRETARY NANCY JONES