

# addenda



The University of Tennessee at Martin Faculty and Staff Newsletter | July 5, 2023

## Four UTM faculty, staff earn President's Awards



**Henri Giles**

Four faculty and staff members at the University of Tennessee at Martin were the recipients of 2023 President's Awards, announced by UT System President Dr. Randy Boyd during the annual UT Board of Trustees meeting on June 30 in Memphis.

A total of 14 faculty and staff members from across the UT System received awards to celebrate their accomplishments and dedication to the Be One UT values.

These values are intended to shape culture across the system, build purpose, improve team



**Dr. Stephanie Kolitsch**

cohesion and create a shared sense of commitment in the workplace.

The four President's Award winners from UT Martin this year is the most for any UT System entity.

UT Martin faculty and staff selected to receive a 2023 President's Award were:

- Embrace Diversity Award, faculty: **Henrietta Giles**, a lecturer in the Department of Mass Media and Strategic Communications.

Giles served as co-creator and producer of the CMT/MTV Networks film "Waiting in the



**Dr. Clinton Smith**

Wings: African Americans in Country Music," which brought attention to underrepresented voices. In 2015, Giles received an Emmy Award for Best Documentary for her work on "Reflect, Reclaim, Rejoice: Preserving the Gift of Black Sacred Music."

Giles's collaborative work with civil rights icon the Rev. Joseph Lowery on his biographical project, "Singing the Lord's Song in a Strange Land," amplifies marginalized narratives.

Since 2015, she has been involved in coordinating the



**Destin Tucker**

annual UT Martin Civil Rights Conference and chaired the 2023 event. In her classes, Giles creates assignments that prompt students to analyze and document pressing issues and dilemmas facing the world. Through interviews with experts, peers and family members, students develop compelling features that explore perceptions and opinions. Completing Giles's class requires a thoughtful inspection of the world and a deep

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## Skyhawk football season tickets are now on sale!



**Chair seats**  
**General public - \$85**  
**Faculty/staff - \$55**

**General admission**  
**General public - \$65**  
**Faculty/staff - \$47**

**More information**  
**731-881-7201**  
**[athletic.events@utm.edu](mailto:athletic.events@utm.edu)**

# YoUTMs

highlighting the excellence of our faculty and staff

**Laura Hatch**, an assistant professor of accounting in the UTM College of Business and Global Affairs, was recently published in the Journal of Accounting and Finance.

The article is titled “Who Is Interenested In Forensic Accounting?” and can be found in Volume 2 of the publication

The Journal of Accounting and Finance is a publication of the North American Business Press and all accepted research goes through a blind, refereed process.



**Erica Bell**, director of Regional Centers and Online Programs, recently completed her second term as President of the National Association of Branch Campus Administrators. The international association is committed to supporting the leadership, teaching, and research for branch and regional higher education administrators and accelerating their locations’ growth.

**Kara Tapp**, director for the UTM Somerville Center, recently graduated from the 2022-23 Branch Campus Leadership Institute V at the National Association of Branch Campus Administrators’ 26th Annual Conference held at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, Florida.



**Dr. Alice-Catherine Carls**, a Tom Elam Distinguished Professor of History, edited UT Martin’s first Open Educational Resource textbook with students taking her HIST 459 “The 21st Century World” class in Spring 2023.

The student authors are Luke M. Curtis, Madeline R. Hart, Christina M.L. Henry, William M. Morris, William C. Ramage, Clay Palmer, Emmalea N. Rogers, Casey S. Ruggiero, Lilly A. Slipher and Damon C. Thurman. Each student wrote one chapter.

The book, entitled “The 21st Century World: Crises and Solutions” is an overview of current world events that focuses on factors that destabilize and threaten human life and proposes solutions. These factors include: sustainability (food, water, agriculture, poverty and the global economy); demographics (population distribution and location, migrations and refugees); literacy (education, and the media); and freedoms (oppression, revolt, liberalization, and war and terrorism). The book cover is an illustration by UT Martin’s art



professor Clay Palmer entitled “Nesting Box Bump.”

Entirely produced by UT Martin faculty and students, the book purports to encourage college students to learn to process current events into coherent, meaningful narratives. Future student contributions are encouraged, as they will deepen the historical depth of these narratives.

The book can be found at <https://oercommons.org/courses/twenty-first-century-world-crises-and-solutions> and is also located in the UT Martin Digital Collections.



**Conrad Pegues**, public services librarian, has a book chapter entitled “Antiracism, Cultural Humility, and Black Males in the Library,” included in Antiracist Library and Information Science: Racial Justice and Community, edited by Kimberly Black and Bharat Mehra and recently published by Emerald Press.

**Let the UT Martin community know about your most recent accolades by submitting a YoUTM to [addenda@utm.edu](mailto:addenda@utm.edu).**

**View photos online at [utm.edu/photo](http://utm.edu/photo)**

# YoUTMs

highlighting the excellence of our faculty and staff

At the June 21 meeting of Kiwanis, Chris Choate of Nashville (far left), a UT Martin graduate and successful businessman, described his exciting adventure of hiking Mount Kilimanjaro, the world's tallest (19,341 feet) free-standing mountain located in the African nation of Tanzania.

Choate described the months of preparation for the climb, his fellow travelers, the support group and the tremendous views from the 6½-day hike up to the summit, Uhuru Point.

His breathtaking photographs and commentary gave all present a sense of this awesome volcanic mountain.

At UT Martin, Choate was a University Scholar and a leader in student government. He remains close to many of his former professors and recognized with gratitude and appreciation his friend **Hurshell**



**Knox** (far right), a UT Martin employee who assisted him for two weeks after a surgical

procedure.

Pictured also with Choate are Kiwanis program coordinator

for June **Earl Wright** (second from left) and Kiwanis president **Ann Gathers**.



**RETIREES FROM THE PHYSICAL PLANT** – Brad Burkett (second from left) of Troy retired June 30 from the university as interim director of the Physical Plant. He came to the university in April 2004 as the Physical Plant's associate director. He was honored June 27 with a cookout by the Physical Plant staff. Joining him at the event were (from left) Dr. Tim Nipp, former Physical Plant director and now associate professor and chair for the Department of Engineering; Petra McPhearson, senior vice chancellor for finance and administration; and Dana Hagan, Physical Plant project coordinator.

## AWARDS from PAGE 1

exploration of the differences that shape interactions with others.

- Excel in All We Do Award, faculty: **Dr. Stephanie Kolitsch**, the interim provost and senior vice chancellor for academic affairs as well as the director of accreditation and liaison to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

Kolitsch has been a valued member of the UT Martin community for almost 30 years, beginning her tenure in 1994 as a mathematics faculty member. She has gone above and beyond in serving the university and is the perfect example of how to excel in all we do. She has been leading UT Martin's reaffirmation of the accreditation process and has successfully developed the quality enhancement plan, which is part of the SACS review process and the Foundations of Excellence self-study.

Kolitsch pioneered a monthly assessment campus-wide newsletter. It highlights outstanding work from departments, keeps deadlines at the forefront of individuals' minds and challenges them to continue to think about how good assessment provides data-driven decisions.

Kolitsch's pursuit of excellence, exceptional leadership and outstanding performance, as well as her commitment to the university's mission and vision, have cemented her status as a visionary leader.

- United and Connected Award, faculty: **Dr. Clinton Smith**, a professor and chair of the department of educational studies.

Smith embodies a commitment to service that elevates UT Martin. Joining its faculty in 2012, he has risen

through the ranks and in ever-increasing leadership roles. He engages in service to the university, his profession and the community while also making significant contributions to research and scholarship. Smith has authored 17 publications and three book chapters and delivered 57 international presentations and 26 state presentations.

The leadership roles that Smith has assumed are a testament to others recognizing his exceptional qualities and inviting him to serve. Those who have had the privilege of working with him quickly learn to admire his commitment to excellence, his embodiment of dedication, focus and integrity in all interactions.

- Optimistic and Visionary Employees Award, staff: **Destin Tucker**, the director of undergraduate admissions.

Tucker has demonstrated great dedication and commitment to her role for the past seven years as director of undergraduate admissions at UT Martin. With nearly 17 years of experience in the field of admissions, Tucker's expertise shines through in every aspect of her work.

Tucker also serves as the strategic enrollment management chair at UT Martin, where she plays a pivotal role in shaping the institution's strategic plan. She turned around a struggling admissions office through bold leadership, intuitive intelligence, willingness to ask questions and integrity. The outbreak of COVID-19 presented recruitment obstacles, including school closures and restricted visits by admissions counselors. The ambiguity of campus operations made it difficult to relieve worries of families.

Orientation shifted to an online format, which made it demanding to maintain a personal touch. Tucker rallied

and supported her staff as they navigated circumstances none had experienced before. She possesses a keen ability to anticipate obstacles and establishes meaningful relationships with a grateful heart.

President's Award recipients were nominated by campus and institute leaders and are selected annually from a system-wide pool. Each winner will be honored by the president and his Be One UT cabinet at a special luncheon on Aug. 3 in Nashville.

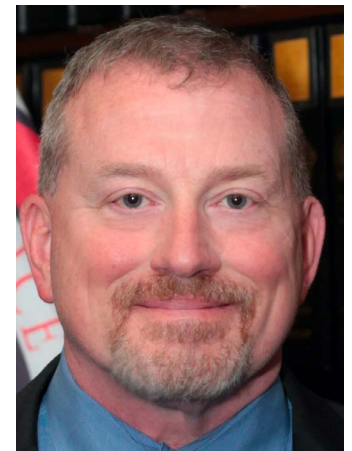
"We are certainly proud to have more President's Award winners than any other UT System entity this year," said Interim UTM Chancellor **Dr. Philip Acree Cavalier**.

"The UTM faculty and staff who earned these awards are definitely deserving and represent our campus well. They embody the spirit of 'Be One UT' as well as the growth and progress that our campus is seeing. My congratulations to these outstanding individuals."

"Our 'Be One UT' values are not just a philosophy but a concrete way we define our culture and way of doing business," Boyd said. "These award recipients exemplify who we are as well as who we continually aspire to be in serving the people of Tennessee."

The President's Awards were established in 2016 to annually recognize the accomplishments of faculty and staff from across the UT System with the mission to educate, discover and connect. Additionally, the awards celebrate and acknowledge outstanding contributions in the areas of support and diversity.

The President's Awards are the highest honor a UT employee can receive from the university. Winners receive commemorative plaques and a monetary award of \$3,000.



**O'Neill**

## *O'Neill named public safety director*

**Michael O'Neill** will be the next director of the UT Martin Department of Public Safety, the university announced today.

O'Neill comes to the Martin campus after serving 28 years in the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office in St. Paul, Minnesota, where his most recent rank was commander. He most recently served as the watch commander and hospital security unit commander, overseeing all operations after hours for a department of more than 450 employees. He also directly supervised a hospital unit of two sergeants, 13 deputies and other correctional staff.

O'Neill also serves as a command sergeant major in the U.S. Army Reserve, where he has served for 25 years.

He is a member of the command team of the 6th Brigade 102nd Division, conducting all civil affairs and psychological operations training in the Army Reserve.

O'Neill is also the garrison command sergeant major, or "mayor," of the military base

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# RISE campaign raises more than \$175 million

The UT Martin RISE fundraising campaign has surpassed its goal of \$175 million weeks before its planned June 30 end date.

The RISE campaign is the university's fourth campaign as well as its greatest fundraising endeavor in the university's 123-year history.

In 2021, UTM completed its "Prepare for Takeoff" five-year strategic plan, which helped to guide the planning of the RISE campaign. The strategic plan was formed through an inclusive process involving more than 600 administrators, faculty, staff, alumni, students and members of surrounding communities.

The RISE campaign's priorities aligned with the strategic plan and focused on two of its strategic themes:

- Enhancing student outcomes through recruitment, retention and graduate students who are prepared to be responsible, informed and engaged citizens and leaders,



and

- Strengthening engagement by being a model of responsible stewardship while improving the vitality and prosperity of West Tennessee and beyond.

Interim Chancellor **Dr. Philip Acree Cavalier** said the largest portion of the monies raised through the RISE campaign would support student scholarships and begin offering programs in veterinary technology and veterinary science and animal science at the Wildwood Farm in Germantown.

Funds will also support athletics and capital projects at the university.

Cavalier said he was pleased with the result of this ambitious effort and praised Vice Chancellor for University Advancement **Dr. Charley Deal** for his work on the project.

"I'm thrilled that we have exceeded the very ambitious goal that was set for the RISE campaign," he said. "Former chancellors **Dr. Keith Carver** and **Dr. Bob Smith** led the campaign for the university and played critical roles in creating a compelling case for supporting the transformational work of UT Martin, and Dr. Charley Deal played a major role in advancing that case and leading the advancement team to succeed."

Deal said the impact of the capital campaign cannot be undervalued and praised those who had a hand in its success.

"The historical outcome of this campaign will shape our university for generations

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## O'NEILL from PAGE 4

at Fort Totten, New York. He has previously served as a military police command sergeant major, operations sergeant major and first sergeant, and has deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait.

"My wife, Barbara, and I are excited to join the University of Tennessee at Martin community," O'Neill said. "I will focus on continuing to provide a safe environment for the students, staff and faculty at UTM while also building positive relationships with the police. I am thankful for this wonderful opportunity."

O'Neill's awards include the Ramsey County Sheriff's Distinguished Service Medal, the U.S. Army Bronze Star, Defense Distinguished Service

Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal and the Combat Action Badge.

The director of public safety is responsible for directing UT Martin's efforts to provide a safe, secure and orderly environment for members of the campus community and visitors to the campus.

This responsibility is fulfilled through crime prevention activities and education, enforcement activities and extensive interactions with students, faculty, staff members, non-campus individuals and groups that frequent the campus or that are otherwise impacted by and have an impact on the university.

O'Neill earned his

bachelor's degree in 2010 from Columbia College in Missouri and his master of business administration degree from Columbia Southern University. He earned an executive certificate in leadership and management in 2012 from the University of Notre Dame and a graduate certificate in police executive leadership development in 2022 from the Southern Police Institute in Louisville.

He is currently pursuing his doctor of philosophy degree in public policy and administration from Walden University in Minneapolis, where he is completing his dissertation.

"UT Martin will be fortunate to have Commander Michael O'Neill join the

Department of Public Safety," said Petra Rencher McPhearson, the senior vice chancellor for finance and accounting. "In addition to his military experience, his law enforcement background - including peer support counseling, crisis intervention, investigations, training instruction and state and federal collaborations - have positioned him to lead our incredibly dedicated campus police force."

O'Neill succeeds Monte Belew as the director of public safety. Belew held the position for three years after serving as the Henry County sheriff for 14 years. **Lt. Jerry Garcia** has served as interim director of public safety since Belew's departure.

**Read more UT Martin news online at [utm.edu/news](http://utm.edu/news).**

## RISE from PAGE 5

to come,” he said. “Without a dedicated staff of professionals and a campus that embraces philanthropy, we would not have been successful in meeting and surpassing our goal.”

Kerry Witcher, the chief executive officer for the UT Foundation, expressed his gratitude to those who contributed to the success of the campaign.

“All of us are grateful for the support from nearly 14,500 alumni and friends during the campaign,” he said. “Thanks to their generosity, UTM is well-positioned to serve the next generation of students.”

Campaign co-chairs **Charlie and Bettye Moore** said they supported the campaign because “For us, it is our way of paying it forward to the next generation of leaders, innovators, nurses, teachers, etc. We are proud to have assisted in raising funds to support the amazing students that attend UT Martin. We want to thank the countless



**RISE campaign co-chair Charlie Moore makes the official coin toss at UT Martin’s home football game against Samford on Sept. 11, 2021, when the RISE campaign was announced during Family Weekend. The Skyhawks won the game 33-27, and the campaign also won, crossing its \$175 million goal line weeks before its goal date.**

volunteers and donors who have invested their time and funds into making UTM a better place.”

Previous UTM independent fundraising campaigns were

initiated in 1977, 2000 and 2012.

Despite reaching and exceeding the target goal, people who want to contribute to the campaign may still do so as a way

to contribute to the university’s future. Donation information can be found at [www.utm.edu](http://www.utm.edu), by calling 731-881-7620 or by emailing to [development@utm.edu](mailto:development@utm.edu).

## You Tell Me

• **Question** – What’s the story behind the beautiful flowers that are growing near the Student Recreation Center and the Highway 431/Skyhawk Parkway intersection?

• **Answer** – These flowers are special plantings to support UT Martin’s Bee Campus USA program affiliation, which was announced in July 2022. The program aims to improve landscapes for the benefit of pollinators. Although the plots appear to have a single species, they actually have at least three species presently blooming, and more species should bloom in the coming months and years (all native – a critical program component). Each plot has between a dozen and three dozen species planted; some will take time to establish. Opportunities are anticipated to help plant future plots, which is part of the continuing certification requirements. In addition to these and other plantings, a campus Integrated Pest Management Plan was created that sets policies for minimal and responsible use of pesticides (a requirement of the Bee Campus USA certification). For information about the program, contact Dr. Eric Pelren, professor of wildlife biology and coordinator of the UTM Sustainability Center, at [epelren@utm.edu](mailto:epelren@utm.edu), or Chris Virgin, grounds manager, at [cvirgin@utm.edu](mailto:cvirgin@utm.edu).

*Submit your questions to Addenda at [addenda@utm.edu](mailto:addenda@utm.edu).*

## addenda

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