



Residence facilities named for UTM pioneers

Jessie Lou Arnold was the first African-American student at UT Martin, enrolling on June 12, 1961. The moment was reported by newspapers across Tennessee.

Arnold, now Jessie Lou Arnold Pryor, was encouraged to be the first by **Harold Conner Sr.**, her principal at the Weakley County Training School who later became the first African-American administrator at UT Martin.

Conner, who was known as “Dean Conner,” joined the staff at UT Martin in 1969 as the assistant dean of students, later becoming the assistant vice chancellor for student affairs.

On Friday, Oct. 20, both pioneers were remembered by having residence facilities named in their honor. Arnold Pryor Place reflects the courage and determination that the student had in those first years of integration on campus. Conner Community memorializes the vision and mentorship of the former administrator.

The buildings were formerly known, respectively, as University Village 1 and University Village 2, but now they have names, names of honor that will last for years to come.

Dr. Mark McCloud, the vice chancellor of diversity and inclusion, led a ceremony held between the two facilities and spoke about the history of Pryor and Conner.

“Their remarkable journey as the first Black student and first Black administrator have left an indelible mark on our institution, and we are proudly, profoundly thankful for their dedication, courage and leadership,” he said.

McCloud spoke about each of the honored people and what made them worthy of the honor.

“As the first Black student, Jessie Arnold Pryor’s presence at our university symbolizes the power of education, equality and unyielding determination to overcome obstacles,” he said. “She blazed a trail that countless others have followed, creating



Harold Conner Jr., the son of the late Harold Conner Sr., speaks on Oct. 20 about his father at the naming ceremony for two UT Martin residential facilities, to be named Conner Community and Arnold Pryor Place.

a more diverse and inclusive campus for generations.

“As the first Black administrator, Harold Conner Sr.’s leadership and commitment to fostering an inclusive environment has been instrumental in the transformation of our university into an institution that is more equitable and welcoming as a community. His tireless efforts have helped to break down barriers and promote diversity in all aspects of our university life.”

Pryor was unable to attend the ceremony, but she asked Student Government Association representative sophomore **Favour Osisioma** of Medina to read a speech that she sent to her.

“I know it took many people to make today a reality, and I am grateful to all of them,” the speech read. “...When I learned that a residence hall was to bear my name, I was dazed and speechless. I felt much like I did in the weeks before I first entered UT Martin, when sleep eluded me and I was

overwhelmed.

“I was especially humbled to learn that I would be honored along with a man I had such deep respect and admiration for, Professor Harold T. Conner Sr. He was my teacher, basketball coach, high school principal and guidance counselor. I also knew him as a man of God. I have many fond memories of times with him, his wife and his children in those early years.”

Pryor’s speech included what she called “lifelong lessons gained through residence hall life.”

“Being the first person of color to live in one of the UT Martin residence halls opened up new experiences for me,” she stated. “For example, I could use the campus library, but the Martin city library was still off-limits to me. I learned to swim in the UTM pool, but was not allowed at the city pool. I could eat in the UTM cafeteria, but not at any of the city restaurants.

YoUTMs

highlighting the excellence of our faculty and staff

In their work at the 2023 Go Cloud Careers Summit in Orlando, Florida, **Dr. Jamye Long** and **Dr. Cooper Johnson**, both associate professors of management, provided feedback, expert advice and professional observations to seven attendees' presentations.

The design of this Executive Presence session within the summit invited volunteers to put their ego and self-confidence to the test as they demonstrated their professional speaking skills

to a panel of judges, including the UT Martin professors and the Go Cloud Careers CEO.

Presenters were evaluated on their command of the room, ability to gain and keep the audience's attention and the quality of their overall executive level communication skills.

Long and Johnson's session resulted in many attendees learning how to improve their professional communication and public speaking skills.



Long



Johnson

Dr. John LaDue and **Kathryn Brown** of the Paul Meek Library presented at the 2023 Showcase event organized by Tenn-Share, a statewide library consortium.

Tenn-Share is a nonprofit membership organization for libraries that serves as Tennessee's only purchasing consortium for all library types.

Tenn-Share negotiates discounts for critical library resources, operates the state's interlibrary loan courier service, holds events and professional development opportunities for librarians, and generally works to help Tennessee libraries fulfill their missions.

The presentation made by LaDue and Brown, "Inviting Library Exploration through Scavenger Hunts and Online Orientation," discussed the development of these high-impact practices to engage and educate students in the use of library resources.

For more information about the Paul Meek Library, visit its website [here](https://www.library.utm.edu).



LaDue



Brown



Chris Baxter (left), professor of political science in the Department of Accounting, Economics, Finance and Political Science, spoke at the Oct. 11 Kiwanis meeting and said that he has reason to remain cautiously optimistic about the future when he teaches young people in his political science classes and in the Tennessee Governor's School for the Humanities. Baxter described the negative atmosphere of the first presidential election these young people encountered in 2016 and suggested that perhaps the youth of today will be the ones to lead us forward into becoming more engaged, respectful and civic-minded. Kiwanis President Dr. Clinton Smith (right), professor and chair of the Department of Educational Studies, presented a certificate of appreciation to Baxter and announced that a donation will be made in his honor to Martin Public Library.

View photos online at utm.edu/photo

Blaylock Inspiration Oracle dedicated Oct. 20



Dr. Paul Blaylock speaks at the podium at the dedication ceremony for the Blaylock Inspiration Oracle on Oct. 20. The open-air structure was made possible through a \$2.4 million donation by Blaylock. Also present at the ceremony near the podium are Dr. Charley Deal (seated at left), vice chancellor for university advancement, and UT Martin Chancellor Dr. Yancy Freeman.

Rai to be guest speaker at Young Writers Conference

The 2023 Young Writers Conference will take place Friday, Nov. 3, on the campus of UT Martin.

The event is sponsored by the UT Martin Department of English and Modern Foreign Languages, the College of Humanities and Fine Arts and the West Tennessee Writing Project.

This year's conference will feature workshops by UT Martin faculty, a keynote speech by guest author Dr. Misha Rai and an optional viewing of "Legally Blonde: The Musical" performed by students of the UT Martin Vanguard Theatre.

Rai will also present a lecture for the campus and community at 4 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 2, in Campbell Auditorium in the Holt Humanities Building.

The lecture is titled "Novelist, Interrupted by Life: Using Subtext/Staging of Desire to Create Literary Suspense." This event is free and open to the public.

Dr. David Carithers, faculty member of the Department of English and Modern Foreign Languages and one of the coordinators of the Young Writers Conference, said the event has something for everyone.

"With workshops on various topics from Japanese calligraphy to songwriting - plus a chance to see the Vanguard Theatre's performance of "Legally Blonde: The Musical" - this conference offers sessions for all interests," he said.

"Teachers also enjoy the opportunity to learn new strategies for their classrooms by attending workshop sessions with their students. And, we are very excited to welcome our guest author, Misha Rai."

Rai is an accomplished writer whose work has received support from the Kenyon Review Fellowship Program, the Whiting Foundation and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts.

Her short story "Twenty Years Ago" was recognized as Distinguished in the 2021 Best American Short Stories anthology.

She is a faculty member of English and creative writing at the University of the South at Seawanee.

For more information about Rai, visit her website at www.misharai.com.

Registration for the conference is \$10 for students and free for teachers. A lunch voucher to the university cafeteria is included with registration. Information on the workshop options, presenters and how to register can be found on the 2023 Young Writers Conference website [here](http://www.youngwritersconference.com).



Rai

'Music from Outer Space' piano duo set for Oct. 24

Dr. Elaine Harriss, UTM professor of music, and Dr. Keith Hennis, Bethel (Tenn.) University professor of music, will present Gustav Holst's "The Planets" for two pianos, at 7:30 p.m. Oct. 24 in Blankenship Recital Hall in the UT Martin Fine Arts Building.

"The Planets" was originally

written for two pianos and later scored for orchestra. The work is a suite for piano duo and contains seven movements representing the planets known at that time (except for Earth).

Composed in 1914-16, "The Planets" was one of the first attempts to represent outer space in music. Later composers,

especially those writing music for film and television programs about space, drew heavily on Holst's work.

John Williams, in his music for "Star Wars," frequently borrowed from Holst.

A brief introduction to the piece and the composer will precede the performance,

and photos of the planets and associated deities will be displayed throughout the performance.

The program will last an hour and is open to the public at no charge.



Dr. Elaine Harriss, a professor of music at UT Martin, and Dr. Keith Hennis, a professor of music at Bethel University in McKenzie, will perform "The Planets" by Gustav Holst on Oct. 24 at the Blankenship Recital Hall in the UTM Fine Arts Building. The performance is open to the public and admission is free.

This Week's UT Martin Skyhawks Home Events

Thursday, Oct. 28

Equestrian vs. Texas
Christian, 9 a.m., N.W.
"Doc" Robinson Arena
at Ned McWherter
Agricultural Complex

Friday, Oct. 29

Equestrian vs. Georgia, 11
a.m., N.W. "Doc"
Robinson Arena at Ned
McWherter Agricultural
Complex

Monday, Oct. 30

Women's basketball vs.
Blue Mountain, 6 p.m.,
Elam Center

Full schedules can be found
at utmsports.com.

You Tell Me

- **Question** – How can I know the proper name of a classroom, auditorium or other university space or building?
- **Answer** – The "Guide to UT Martin Facility Namings and Dedications" can be found on the Office of University Relations home page. The guide features the full name of each building and area, room, or street. An acceptable second reference is also listed, along with a naming ceremony date (if applicable) and a brief history for each entry. Using the correct full name, or acceptable second reference, honors the person or persons named and/or provides consistency for referencing the university and its many entities. .

Submit your questions to Addenda at addenda@utm.edu.

Submit a YoUTM or question to addenda@utm.edu!

Gordon Museum to host Caldecott winners, Honors Books

The UT Martin J. Houston Gordon Museum is hosting “Young at Art: A Selection of Caldecott Book Illustrations,” an exhibition from ExhibitsUSA, a national program of Mid-America Arts Alliance.

The exhibit features original illustrations from Caldecott Medal recipients and Honor Books as well as other illustrations by award-winning artists.

Curated by Danny Bills – curator of collections and exhibitions at Wichita Falls Museum of Art – and organized by Wichita Falls Museum of Art at Midwestern State University, the collection celebrates the vision and talent of 28 award-winning artists, including the first Caldecott Award recipient, Dorothy P. Lathrop; two-time winner Chris Van Allsburg; and Maurice Sendak, whose work “Where the Wild Things Are,” like Van Allsburg’s “Jumanji” and “The Polar Express,” was adapted for the big screen.

These illustrations are widely recognized not only as artistic classics in children’s literature but also as the source of countless beloved memories for the young and young at heart.

“Young at Art: A Selection of Caldecott Book Illustrations,” is open for public viewing through Nov. 22. The J. Houston Gordon Museum is open to the public from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays.

The gallery is located off the Paul Meek Library lobby through the Corbitt Special Collections reading area. Parking will be in the Paul Meek Library parking lot on Wayne Fisher Drive off Mt. Pelia Road. Parking permits are available online at www.utm.edu/departments/publicsafety by selecting the “Online Visitor Parking Permit” link.

For more information, contact J. Houston Gordon Museum curator Samuel Richardson at 731-881-7094 or sricha12@utm.edu.



This illustration for the cover of “Mother Hen” (1947) by Leonard Weisgard will be one of several Caldecott Award winners featured in an exhibit of Caldecott winners and Honor Books at the J. Houston Gordon Museum through Nov. 22. For information, call 731-881-7094.

UTM to host two regional art exhibitions

Two student art exhibitions hosted by the UT Martin Department of Visual and Theatre Arts began this week.

A juried exhibition of artwork by students from colleges throughout the South titled “Bellwethers 2023” will be held through Nov. 16 at the West Tennessee Regional Art Center in Humboldt. It will be open to the public from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily.

This exhibition is competitive, and the juror for this year’s show is **Josh Breeden**, a Martin native and UT Martin graduate and the art director for Loaded for Bear

advertising agency in Memphis.

Several of the 32 artists selected for the exhibit are from the UT Martin art program and include Nidia Alonso, Jordan Dodd, Callie Hollowell, Matthew Mancusi, Izzy Merickle and Taylor Rucker.

The Department of Visual and Theatre Arts will also host an exhibition of artwork by senior art education students throughout the region on the UT Martin campus.

UTM senior **Stephanie Hopper** of Memphis will have a show entitled “Well, Bless Her Heart” and will include collages

and mixed-media pieces.

UTM senior **Abigail Wynn** of Paris will have a show entitled “Home” and will include ceramics and mixed-media works.

The exhibition will be held from Oct. 24 through Nov. 4 at the UTM Fine Arts Building Gallery and will be open to the public from 1 to 5 p.m. daily. A public reception will be held on Tuesday, Oct. 24, from 5 to 6:30 p.m.

For more information, contact the Department of Visual and Theatre Arts at 731-881-7400.

PIONEERS from PAGE 1

“Things gradually changed, but that was my reality in the beginning, and that provided lifelong lessons in tolerance and patience.”

Conner’s son, Dr. Harold Conner Jr., spoke on behalf of the Conner family and also thanked those involved with bringing about the naming of the residence hall in his father’s honor.

“I would like to talk a little bit about the life and legacy of

Harold Conner Sr.,” he said. “Many of you knew him as educator, as coach, as mentor, as lecturer. He was several things to several people.”

Conner said his father had to take a bus from Fulton, Kentucky, to McKenzie every day to finish high school. He then fought in World War II, got married and had three children.

“Before he came here as a dean, he taught me math and

science and talked a lot about engineering,” he said. “So, I decided, ‘I’m going to be one of those engineers that he’s talking about.’ So, he was instrumental in my career and many of yours.

“...I tried to get Black students to fulfill their highest potential,’ and I think any of you who were around him for any length of time know that’s what he would say.

“Many of you have heard him say that he didn’t believe

in luck. That’s what a fool says when God blesses him with a favor. He also said many times that prejudice is ignorance, and all should be judged on their merit.”

Administrators involved in the residence facility naming process included UT System President **Randy Boyd**, former UTM Chancellor **Keith Carver**, UTM Provost **Dr. Philip Acree Cavalier** and current UTM Chancellor **Dr. Yancy Freeman**.

HOMECOMING HIGHLIGHTS



(Left photo) The 2023 Alumni Award winners were announced on Oct. 21 at the Chancellor’s Brunch at the Paul Meek Library. Posing with UT Martin Chancellor Dr. Yancy Freeman (far left) are Dr. Julie Basler, Outstanding Alumni Award; James Wingett, University Service Award; and Brandon Anderson, Outstanding Young Alumni Award.

(Right photo) The 2023 Homecoming king and queen are Hayden Swearingen (second from left), a sophomore agriculture business major and member of Alpha Gamma Rho from Cross Plains, and Emma Copley (second from right), a senior psychology major and member of Alpha Omicron Pi from Centerville. They are posing with UT Martin Chancellor Dr. Yancy Freeman (far right) and his wife, Rafielle (far left).



Shown with books donated by the Martin Rotary Club to the UT Martin STEM Center for Teaching and Learning are (from left) Martin Rotary Club member Josh Moore, STEM Center Director Dr. Steve Elliott and Martin Rotary Club members Dr. Harriette Spiegel, Roger Donaldson and Dr. Richard Robinson.

Rotary Club donates book collection to UT Martin STEM

The UT Martin STEM Center is one of the recipients of educational books and learning materials from the Martin Rotary Club Literacy Grant.

The materials will benefit the teachers and students in Weakley County classrooms served by the UT Martin STEM Center.

STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and

Math, which are fields of study that need more teachers.

The additional local agencies, serving children of Weakley County and receiving books are the Martin Housing Authority, Carl Perkins Center, the pediatric office of the West Tennessee Volunteer Hospital and the Imagination Library.

More than 400 books from the Martin Rotary Club were distributed.

addenda

