

# addenda

The University of Tennessee at Martin Faculty and Staff Newsletter | Oct. 13, 2025



University of Tennessee System President Randy Boyd provides remarks at the opening ceremony of UT Martin's 125th anniversary celebration Oct. 10 in the Phillip W. Watkins Auditorium. Also speaking at the event were (seated, l-r) Ashlee Mallon, student trustee on the UT Board of Trustees and a junior finance major at UT Martin; Bud Grimes, vice chancellor for communications and marketing, who emceed the event; Dr. Sandy Mehlhorn, Faculty Senate president and professor of agricultural engineering; Chancellor Yancy Freeman Sr.; and Art Sparks, chair of the UTM Advisory Board. Dr. Chandra Alston, former vice chancellor for human resources at the UT Health Sciences Center and a UTM alumna, also spoke at the program.

## UT Martin's 125th anniversary celebration begins

UT Martin's yearlong 125th anniversary celebration got underway Oct. 10 with a formal ceremony in Phillip W. Watkins Auditorium on the main campus.

Those in attendance for the ceremony were UT System President Randy Boyd, Chancellor Yancy Freeman Sr. and his cabinet members, local and state government officials and former UT Martin chancellors **Dr. Philip Conn** (1998-2000), **Dr. Nick Dunagan** (2001-07), **Dr. Robert Smith** (2015-17) and **Dr. Keith Carver**

(2017-23).

Boyd led off a series of speakers and talked about several "firsts" involving UT Martin, including being the first campus incorporated into the University of Tennessee, officially making UT a "system."

He also recognized **Dr. Margaret N. Perry** as the first UT Martin graduate to serve as UTM chancellor (1985-97) and the first woman appointed to head a four-year public university in Tennessee. Most recently, Freeman became UT Martin's first African-

American chancellor.

Freeman told the audience how the university had faced many challenges, including world wars, economic downturns and global pandemics to achieve what it is today. He said that UT Martin's story is one of perseverance, purpose and of people believing in the power of education.

Freeman added the university is positioned to address new challenges, opportunities and possibilities that lie ahead.

**Continued on PAGE 3**

# YoUTMs

highlighting the excellence of our faculty and staff

**Dr. Erik Nordberg**, dean of the Paul Meek Library, was co-organizer of the 2025 Fall Tour with the Society for Industrial Archeology (SIA).

The three-day event, based in Knoxville, included tours of active and historical industrial sites in East Tennessee.

These include the Tennessee Valley Authority's Norris Dam and Fort Loudon lock, the 1943 graphite reactor at the Oak

Ridge National Laboratory, the Bush's Beans factory, former quarries of Knoxville's famed pink marble industry, museums that document the use of prison labor in Appalachian coal mining and an automated Italian-owned factory that uses Weakley County ball clay to make floor tile.

Nordberg is a former SIA board member and currently chairs the group's communications committee.



**Nordberg**



**Cox**

**Ronne Cox**, assistant professor and electronic resources and discovery librarian, was a co-presenter of the session "Collaborative Voices: Expanding Engagement Through Summer Reading and Discovery Camp: Library Ed" at the 2025 Kentucky Library Association Conference, held Oct. 2-3 in Louisville.

The presentation shared the Paul Meek Library's work

with Martin Public Library on encouraging lifelong reading and community engagement.

Cox also participated in the poster session, presenting "The Power of Experiential Learning through Dungeon & Dragons."

She highlighted the collaborative work of the library and UTM's D&D club to help students learn through a traditional role-playing game.

**Brian Johnson**, lecturer of and chair of the Department of Psychology, gave a talk titled "Understanding Social Psychology in Elder Abuse" at the Northwest Tennessee Elder Justice Coalition's conference on elder justice on Oct. 2.

The conference was held Oct. 1-2 at Discovery Park of America in Union City.

Johnson spoke about different social psychological factors that play out in actions leading to elder abuse, including perceptions, conflict, persuasion, rationalization/self-justification, deindividuation and factors involved in decisions to help or not help or to intervene or not intervene.



**Johnson**

## Upcoming Skyhawk Home Events

**Friday, Oct. 17**

- \*Volleyball vs. SIUE, 5 p.m., Skyhawk Fieldhouse.

**Oct. 18-19**

- Rifle vs. Murray State, 9 a.m. daily, Skyhawk Rifle Range.

**Saturday, Oct. 18**

- \*Volleyball vs. SIUE, 11 a.m., Skyhawk Fieldhouse.

**Sunday, Oct. 19**

- \*Soccer vs. Western Illinois, 2 p.m., Skyhawk Soccer Field.

**Sunday, Oct. 26**

- \*Soccer vs. SIUE, 1 p.m., Skyhawk Soccer Field.

**Wednesday, Oct. 29**

- Women's basketball vs. UT Southern (exhib.), 5:30 p.m., Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.

**Friday, Oct. 31**

- \*Equestrian vs. South Dakota State, time tba, Ned McWherter Agricultural Complex.

**Saturday, Nov. 1**

- Equestrian vs. South Carolina, time tba, Ned McWherter Agricultural Complex.

**Friday, Nov. 7**

- \*Volleyball vs. Southern Indiana, 4 p.m., Skyhawk Fieldhouse.

**Saturday, Nov. 8**

- \*Football vs. Tennessee State, 1 p.m., Hardy M. Graham Stadium.

\* - conference competition.

Full athletics schedules can be found at [utmsports.com](https://utmsports.com).

Dates and times are subject to change.

**Submit a YoUTM or question  
to [addenda@utm.edu](mailto:addenda@utm.edu)!**

# Paul Meek librarians present at WeTALC meeting



Three faculty from the Paul Meek Library were involved in the fall 2025 meeting of the West Tennessee Academic Library Consortium (WeTALC) held Oct. 10 in McKenzie. Ronne Cox (left), assistant professor and electronic resources and discovery librarian, and Conrad Pegues, assistant professor and public service librarian, co-presented at the session “More than Books: The Library as a Campus Community Hub.” The presentation shared library programming to actively cultivate collaborations and partnership across campus. Bridgette Whitt, assistant professor and acquisitions and collection development librarian, is currently serving as WeTALC’s elected chair.

## ANNIVERSARY from PAGE 1

Dr. Chandra Alston, former vice chancellor for human resources at the UT Health Sciences Center and a 1991 UT Martin alumna, spoke to the university’s past, talking about her experiences at UT Martin and how the university affected her education and her life.

Ashlee Mallon, a junior finance major from Dresden and the student trustee for the UT Board of Trustees, and Dr. Sandy Mehlhorn, Faculty Senate president and professor of agricultural engineering, spoke about the university’s present, including their experiences as a student and faculty member, respectively, and what UT Martin has meant to them.

Art Sparks of Union City, the chair of the UTM Advisory Board and a 1976 UTM alumnus, spoke on the university’s future and goals,



including its enrollment growth over the last two years. UT Martin had an 8% enrollment increase in fall 2024 and a 7.9%

increase in fall 2025, currently at 8,101 students, the second-highest UTM enrollment ever.

On Oct. 2, 1900, the cornerstone was laid for the administration building, the institution’s first building, and on Sept. 2, 1901, the first Hall-Moody Institute classes were held.

The institute would become the Hall-Moody Normal School in 1917 and Hall-Moody Junior College in 1922. In 1927, the state assumed ownership of the campus and the name was changed to UT Junior College before becoming the University of Tennessee Martin Branch in 1951 and, finally, the University of Tennessee at Martin in 1967.

Several events are planned for the yearlong 125th anniversary celebration. Learn more about the 125th celebration at [alumni.utm.edu/celebration](http://alumni.utm.edu/celebration).

# 2025 Homecoming king and queen announced



Homecoming Queen Cara Brooke Hatler (second from left), a junior English major from Martin, sponsored by Alpha Omicron Pi, and Homecoming King Jeb Graves (third from left), a sophomore accounting major from Parsons, sponsored by Kappa Alpha Order, were crowned during halftime of the UT Martin Homecoming game against Western Illinois. The Skyhawks won the OVC-Big South Football Association game 32-31 with a thrilling come-from-behind victory. The Homecoming royalty are shown with first lady Rafielle Freeman and Chancellor Yancy Freeman Sr.

## Students have fun with the kids next door

UT Martin students, faculty and staff got a fun break Oct. 8 with a chance to pet and snuggle with young goats. The Goat Snuggles event was sponsored by the UTM Care Team and was held Oct. 8 on the Crisp Hall lawn. Members of the Care Team were on hand to provide health and safety information. Letting students enjoy petting baby goats was designed to help them relieve stress during midterm exams week. Many of those who got into the fenced-in area with the animals thought they were the greatest of all time – no butts about it.



# Pauline Pusser case files made public through UTM

The case file in the investigation into the death of Pauline Mullins Pusser – the wife of the late sheriff Buford Pusser of McNairy County – were made public Friday, Oct. 10, through the University of Tennessee at Martin.

Pauline Pusser died Aug. 12, 1967, while riding with her husband. According to officials, Buford Pusser told investigators that his wife wanted to go with him on a domestic dispute call and his car was ambushed by men who shot into the car, killing his wife and injuring him.

That account was the basis of a number of “Walking Tall” movies.

District Attorney General Mark Davidson of Tennessee’s 25th Judicial District held a news conference Aug. 29 with members of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) at the UT Martin Somerville Regional Center to announce court filings that would make the Pauline Pusser case file public.

Officials added that due to new evidence, forensic testing and expert analysis, were Buford Pusser alive today, an indictment would have been presented to the McNairy County grand jury for its consideration against Buford Pusser for the murder of his wife.

Some of the new evidence came from an autopsy performed in February 2024. An autopsy was not performed immediately following Pauline Pusser’s death.

UTM Chancellor Yancy



**UT Martin Chancellor Yancy Freeman Sr. speaks at a joint media conference Aug. 29 with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation and the 25th Judicial District of Tennessee regarding the investigation case file in the death of Pauline Pusser. Shown in the background of the media conference are (l-r) TBI Assistant Special Agent in Charge Mike Parson, TBI Assistant Director Josh Melton, Special Counsel Amy Weirich, District Attorney General Mark Davidson of the 25th Judicial District of Tennessee and TBI Director David Rausch.**

Freeman Sr. spoke at the media conference.

“We are honored to assume the stewardship of the historical case files regarding Pauline Mullins Pusser, a process we approach with care to ensure with transparency for the public,” he said.

“At UTM, we see this as more than a transfer of documents. It is a powerful teaching and research opportunity. ... These files provide our students with an invaluable real-case study.”

The file is currently in process as part of the UT Martin digital archive initiative. This ensures the public will ultimately have high-quality, searchable online access to the records. Because this is a careful and ongoing process, online availability will

take time to develop.

Those wanting to gain access to the case file should visit [www.utm.edu/selmer](http://www.utm.edu/selmer) to schedule an appointment to view the printed case file at the UTM McNairy County Center/Selmer at 1269 Tennessee Ave. in Selmer and to request a printed reproduction copy.

Through its six regional centers – including the UT Martin McNairy County Center/Selmer – the University of Tennessee at Martin offers a Bachelor of Science degree in

criminal justice and an online Master of Science degree in criminal justice.

The newly-acquired case file will enrich learning opportunities for students and foster interdisciplinary research across fields such as communication, history, political science, sociology, and more.

For more information about degree programs, internships or outreach opportunities, email [outreach@utm.edu](mailto:outreach@utm.edu) or visit [www.utm.edu/distanceed](http://www.utm.edu/distanceed).

Submit a YoUTM or question  
to [addenda@utm.edu](mailto:addenda@utm.edu)!

| October 2025 |    |    |    |    |    |    |
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# Photos for the 2025 Homecoming album



First lady Rafielle Freeman (center) joins in the fun with some high-stepping exercises at the Homecoming morning workout Oct. 7 at the Student Recreation Center. Hosted by the Office of Campus Recreation, the workout included music, a free T-shirt and a grab-n-go breakfast.

Chi Omega participates in the annual Flight Crew Lip Sync competition held Oct. 9 on the Martin Public Library Stage. Zeta Tau Alpha won the sorority competition, and the Kappa Alpha Order won the fraternity competition.



## Campus Calendar

### Thursday, Oct. 16

- Clerical and support staff coffee with the chancellor, 9 a.m., 206 Boling University Center.
- Phi Kappa Phi Faculty Lecture, Dr. Kellie Ashburn,

6 p.m., Daugherty Tennessee Room, McCombs Center.

### Tuesday, Oct. 28

- Featured Faculty Scholar Dr. Adnan Rasool. 4 p.m., Paul Meek Library North Reading Room.

### Thursday, Nov. 6

- Legacy Series featuring James E. Cherry, 6 p.m., Paul Meek Library.

### Monday, Nov. 17

- Building Conversations and Coffee, 3 p.m., 101 Latimer-

Smith Engineering and Science Building.

*Events are subject to cancellation; dates, times and sites are subject to change.*

## You Tell Me

• **Question** – With parking on the east side of campus at a premium, has there been any consideration to adding parking in the grassy area by Gooch Hall and the Business Administration Building? You could keep the grass area closest to University Street, but add parking closer to the Business Administration Building to help alleviate some of the parking frustrations for students and staff.

• **Answer** – Two new east campus parking areas are coming. One is in design now and located near Student Health and Counseling Services. The other property purchase is being finalized this semester, with design to start as soon after as possible. The area near Gooch Hall could potentially be part of the new Business Administration Building parking if needed at that time.

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

# Photos for the 2025 Homecoming album



Members of the Eta Xi Chapter of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. perform in the annual National Pan-Hellenic Council Step Show competition, held Oct. 11 at the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.

Sigma Alpha Epsilon works through its routine in the annual pyramid competition held Oct. 10 in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.



## addenda

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