A Look Back

1946

Jeff DeBlanc, ’46, was the first SLI alumnus to receive the Medal of Honor, the nation’s highest award. President Harry S. Truman is shown presenting the medal during a ceremony in Washington, D.C. In an air battle over the Pacific during World War II, DeBlanc risked his life to help fellow fighter pilots. He died in November 2007.

1954

During the Korean War, Burnett was on active duty in World War II and the Korean War; he served in the Navy Reserve for 38 years before retiring in 1980. Burnett is a fellow in the American College of Dentists and the International College of Dentists. In 1983, he was named Texas Dentist of the Year by the Texas Academy of General Dentistry. He has been married for 57 years. The couple have four children, all of whom attended UL Lafayette.

1966

GAY AND PATRICK BRASHER were recently inducted into the Hall of Fame of the National Forensic League Debate and Speech Honor Society. She directs the forensics program at Leland High School in San Jose, Calif.; their school’s debate team is the largest in the United States, with more than 300 members. Leland High School named its new auditorium in Brasher’s honor. He holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in education from UL Lafayette, where he was a member of the university’s debate and speech team. She is married to Thomas Brasher, ’70. Their daughter, CAROLE LYNN BRASHER HEIDEN, ’96, is a third grade teacher who lives with her husband and two sons in San Jose.

1972

JOSEPH WHITFORD FONTEHOUX has a real estate investment company in Endicott, Texas. He is a former assistant vice president of Bank of America in Addison, Texas. During his tenure, he has been a senior information technology manager and a senior manager at some Fortune 500 companies. He received a bachelor’s degree in business administration from UL Lafayette, where he is married to Margaret Chaplain Fontheux.

1973

DIANNE BROWN WHITTINGTON is a clinical instructor in communicative disorders at UL Lafayette. She holds a bachelor’s degree in communicative disorders from LSU and a master’s degree in communicative disorders from Bowling Green State University.

1977

MARY D. PERRIN was recently honored at the 13th annual Women of Excellence award ceremony by the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi’s Women’s Forum for her contributions to the community and university. She is the only Louisiana artist represented in the prestigious 20th Anniversary Artists Book Exhibit at the National Museum of Women Artists in Washington, D.C. She earned a bachelor’s degree in fine arts degree from LSU and a master’s degree in fine arts degree from Vermont College.

1980

THOMAS COTTEN was recently reelected as a board member-at-large for the Society of Louisiana CPAs. He graduated from LSU Lafayette with a cum laude business administration. He is married to Marguerite E. Cotten, ’66, who is married to Margaret Chaplain, ’77.

1989

A Look Back

1900-1921

Southern Louisiana State Industrial Institute

1921-1960

Southern Louisiana State University

1960-1999

Southwestern Louisiana

1999-Present

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

www.louisiana.edu/Advancement/PRNS/lala/2001-SPRG/alumni.pdf
ALUMNI PROFILE: CYNDIE GUIDRY WILKINS

She's a Big Wheel on Campus

CYNDIE GUIDRY WILKINS, ’73, learned to ride a bicycle when she was 10 years old in Rayne, La. She’s skill today as she would use today as a sixth-grade and seventh-grade family and consumer sciences teacher at Fairhope Middle School in Fairhope, Ala. “At the beginning of my course each year, I ride my unicycle for my students to reinforce the importance of setting goals and working very hard to reach them,” she told La Louisiane.

In 2006, Wilkins was looking for a way to encourage kids to get more exercise after hearing a news report that Alabama had the highest rate of childhood obesity in the nation. So when her students expressed interest in unicycling, she decided to start a club. The group has since tripled its membership.

“We ride in parades, at pep rallies and for various community events,” Wilkins said. The Fairhope Middle School Unicycle Club is the first of its kind in the Alabama public school system. Wilkins also wrote and implemented the first middle school unicycling club physical education curriculum in the state.

This year, she obtained a $2,000 grant to purchase 26 unicycles and gear for the school’s Physical Education Department.

In June, she was chosen Teacher of the Year by the faculty at Fairhope Middle School.

Wilkins holds a bachelor’s degree in vocational home economics education from USL. She is married to Mason Wilkins, ’75.

Hennesy graduated cum laude from USL with a bachelor’s degree in speech and audiology. She earned her master’s degree in communication from U.S.C. two years later. Now a movie stuntwoman, she lives in Van Nuys, Calif.

MELANCON received a bachelor’s degree in business administration from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and completed her master’s in business administration from Loyola University in New Orleans.

ROWLAND holds a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering from the University of Bahrain. He is an architect in Manama, Bahrain. He and his wife, Dawn, live in Winter Springs, Fla., with their two sons.

ALUMNI  PROFILE: CYNDIE GUIDRY WILKINS

1983

JOSEPH J. LAFAYETTE GUIDRY III is an associate professor at UL Lafayette, where he is an architectural firm that designs health care, education, research and technology facilities. He works in the firm’s New Orleans office. Guidry earned a bachelor’s degree in architecture from USL.

KEVIN D. HEBERT is a hydrogeologist for Geosyntec Consultants Inc., Phoenix. His professional duties include project management and groundwater studies. Hebert holds a degree in geology from USL. He is married to Cheryl Harkins; they have a daughter, Dayle, and a son, Chad.

1993

SEAN LAMBERT is a sound engineer and mixer for “Fox and Friends.” Lambert is married to Nora Elizabeth. His son is a six-year-old daughter, Dayle, and a son, Chad.

1996

TODD L. CLARK is recently opened the law firm of Todd Clark and Associates in Lake Charles, La., where he has practiced law for 20 years. He has served as a prosecutor with the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Louisiana. Clark is an attorney for Bank of Louisiana, Todd Clark and Associates, and the court for a three-year term. Clark earned a master’s degree in business administration from USL and graduated cum laude from Southern University Law Center. He is a member of the the board of directors of Big Brothers/Sisters of Southwest Louisiana.

JOHN N. FELSHIER was recently promoted from manager of marketing and promotions to associate editor at Sport Fishing magazine, based in Orlando, Fla. In this new capacity, he does more writing for the magazine, which is dedicated to salt water fishing. As a freelance writer, he has published more than 1,100 articles in more than 90 publications and contributed to four books. He holds degrees from Loyola and the University of New Orleans. JohnFelsher@unsports.com Felsher holds a bachelor’s degree in English from USL and a master’s degree from Webster University. He and his wife, Doreen, live in Winter Springs, Fla., with their two sons.

1998

SUSAN CONNOR BEGNAUD holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration from LSU. She is a national, rather than regional, influence. If you’re a UL Lafayette graduate, attended the university in the past 10 years and would like to submit a biographical sketch of yourself, please contact Dr. Ray Authement at the Office of University Advancement.

AUTHEMENT has been its president for 13 years.

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IN 2007, THE University of Louisiana at Lafayette launched a statewide, multi-million dollar, economic development initiative designed to attract high-growth, high-wage businesses to the area. The project, known as the “SmartZone,” is a unique, university-based business incubator that provides entrepreneurs with access to cutting-edge technology and support services, including assistance with funding, marketing, and technology transfer.

Over the past three years, the initiative has helped to secure 25 new businesses that will create over 450 new jobs and generate more than $40 million in business revenue. The program has been so successful that it has been recognized by both local and national media outlets as a model for economic development.

In addition to the SmartZone, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette is also home to several other innovative programs and initiatives that are designed to support economic growth and development in the region. These include the Louisiana National Marine Sanctuary, the Louisiana Center for Applied Research and Development, and the Louisiana Science and Technology Park.

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette is committed to supporting the economic development of the region and to helping to create a strong, vibrant community that is poised for continued growth and prosperity. Through its various programs and initiatives, the University is working to create a better future for all of its citizens.

You can send a letter or card to this address:

ATTN: RETIREMENT COMMITTEE

P. O. BOX 60

LAFFAYETTE, LA 70504

Or, you can email a message to him at

pscy@louisiana.edu

More than 65,000 men and women have graduated from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette while Dr. Ray Authement has been its president. He’s the longest-serving president of any public university in the United States. Authement will retire this spring after serving as UL Lafayette’s president since 1974. Under his leadership, the university has made impressive progress. For instance, it has

- implemented selective admissions; and
- designated the Carnegie Foundation as a Research University with High Research Activity.

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member of Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal’s staff. She focuses on initiatives related to people with disabilities. She served in that capacity in former Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco’s administration. Dunbar, who holds a bachelor's degree in political science (pre-law) from UL Lafayette, received a juris doctor from Southern University Law Center.

If you enjoy reading about where your former classmates are now and what they’re doing since you last saw them, also please fill out the form below and mail it back to UL Lafayette or go to www.louisiana.edu/lalouisiane to submit the information online.

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FAX

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B.A.
M.S.
M.A.
D.
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