

ALABAMA POWER



Alabama Power's Eastern Division VP Mr. Terry Smiley with Talladega College President Dr. Billy C. Hawkins.

Talladega College is receiving \$150,000 from Alabama Power and its parent, Southern Company, to support technology and infrastructure needs.

“We are so grateful to receive this generous grant from Alabama Power and Southern Company,” said Talladega College President Dr. Billy C. Hawkins. “With record-breaking enrollment increases and three new buildings on campus, our technology needs have increased significantly. In addition, the coronavirus pandemic has altered the way we serve our students and created new challenges. This grant will help us continue to provide an outstanding academic experience for students by expanding our technology capabilities.”

“Our hope is that this funding will draw further recognition to schools like Talladega College and deepen partnerships between business and civic leaders and these vital institutions,” said Alabama Power Eastern Division Vice President Terry Smiley, a Talladega College trustee. “HBCUs are at the forefront of innovation and academic excellence in Alabama, and across the country, and we hope that our company’s investment will only accelerate this important work.”



Newly elected South Carolina Representative **Chardale Murray '98**, a prominent business leader and proud graduate of Talladega College, will be the first woman to represent House District 116.

MILESTONE IN MEDIA



For almost 30 years, Lee Pitts '82 has hosted *Lee Pitts Live* on FOX 4 in South Florida. His award-winning program is the longest-running TV talk show in the area's history. Mr. Pitts, who grew up in the Collegeville public housing community in Birmingham, Alabama, has interviewed many of our nation's most prominent politicians, celebrities, and athletes.

The multi-talented Mr. Pitts is also an award-winning swim instructor who created a groundbreaking swim DVD program that catapulted him to fame in the 1990s. He has been featured on national television programs such as *Good Morning America* and highlighted in *Essence* magazine, *USA Today* and other publications.

During his Talladega College days, he helped hundreds of his classmates learn to swim in order to pass the swim requirement for graduation. After completing a bachelor's in business administration, he obtained his master's in economics from Clark Atlanta University. He launched a successful career in banking in Detroit, Michigan and became a vice president at First Union in Florida by age 29. By the age of 32, he was named a senior vice president.

He opened the Lee Pitts Swim School in Fort Myers, Florida in 1991. His public service announcements promoting swim and the visibility he gained as a bank VP led to his career in television.

"You never know what you're training to be, so continue to set your goals high and dream," said Mr. Pitts.

In February, 2021, *Lee Pitts Live* will officially turn 30.



TRANSFERRING KNOWLEDGE

Talladega College Mass Media Studies Chair Dr. Luis Camillo Almeida recently produced a dynamic contemporary video for the Birmingham Zoo's Glow Wild Event. The video, which was shared on the zoo's social media channels and viewed by thousands, exemplifies the type of cutting-edge work that Dr. Almeida is training his students at Talladega College to produce.

Dr. Almeida, who has been ranked among the top 8 Best American Photographers in the social sharing platform YouPic and #1 among YouPic's landscape photographers in the United States, stated, "The Birmingham Zoo's Glow Wild Event was fantastic. Taking the photos for the event was a magical experience. Having my production curated by the Birmingham Zoo's leadership and shared in two of their social media channels was a bonus."

Talladega College President Dr. Billy C. Hawkins added, "We take pride in attracting faculty members who are experts in their fields and committed to teaching, research and service. Whether our graduates choose to pursue advanced degrees or go directly into the workforce, they are better equipped for success because of the caliber of instruction they receive at Talladega College."

Make your EPV gift today!

MR. HENRY COAXUM JR MAKING A DIFFERENCE



MAYOR DONATES TO MISS UNCF TALLADEGA COLLEGE



Talladega Mayor Timothy Ragland presented Miss UNCF Talladega College Brittany Wynn with a \$500.00 check to support her fundraising efforts.

“The United Negro College Fund (UNCF) taught us that ‘a mind is a terrible thing to waste.’ UNCF puts that motto to work by providing resources to help students in need at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, specifically those at Talladega College,” said Mayor Ragland. “At a time when social, health, and economic issues are at the forefront of our national conversation, I am honored to play a role in the education of students at our beloved Talladega College.”

Brittany stated, “I am so thankful that Mayor Ragland and the City of Talladega contributed to my campaign to raise funds for UNCF scholarships. Many scholarship recipients would not be able to finish college without financial assistance. I am grateful to live in a city that cares and desires to make a difference.”

Mr. Henry L. Coaxum Jr. ’73, president of Coaxum Enterprises, Inc, was awarded the prestigious Boy Scouts of America 2020 Whitney M. Young Jr. Service Award in recognition of his outstanding contributions to his community. He is pictured above at the Essence Day of Service.

Mr. Coaxum, who serves as chairman-elect of the Business Council of New Orleans, is a prominent business leader who has created opportunities for countless youth throughout his community. He is owner/operator of three McDonald’s restaurants in New Orleans, Louisiana, and past chairman of the New Orleans Business Alliance - the city’s first-ever public-private partnership for economic development.

He has also served tirelessly on numerous impactful boards, and is a recipient of the United Way’s Alexis de Tocqueville Award, McDonald’s Ronald Award and 365Black Award, Young Leadership Council’s Role Model Award, Junior Achievement Business Hall of Fame Laureate, New Orleans Council for Community Justice’s Weiss Award and the Chairman’s Award for Lifetime Achievement from the International Economic Development Council.



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NATIONAL CROWN FOR MISS TALLADEGA COLLEGE

Miss Talladega College 2020-2021 Patria Gatson is the newly elected Miss National Black College Alumni Hall of Fame 2020-2021. Although her royal duties have doubled now that she wears two crowns, the biology pre-med major juggles her responsibilities with grace and ease.

“Talladega College gave me the reassurance that I am capable of accomplishing whatever I want to accomplish. I feel that I can reach my goals and fulfill my dreams because my HBCU told me that I can,” said Patria. “I always take a heavy course load, and I understand the importance of balancing my studies, homework, and meetings. I take at least 18 credits every semester and I am involved in many clubs and organizations.”



DR. BESS JONES '57



Proceeds from [Tales From My Father: Survival and Hope](#) by Bess Jones, MD will benefit Talladega College and Morehouse College of Medicine.

BRANDON '15 RELEASES NEW MUSIC VIDEO



A music video featuring Brandon Roberts '15 is making waves on social media and streaming platforms. While Brandon did not sing in the choir during his college years, he sang in his church choir as a child. Initially he was too timid to consider a career in entertainment and chose to earn his bachelor's degree in psychology. However, as the video for [Those Dayz](#) illustrates, he has finally embraced his gift.

“I started making music in 2018. I decided to begin recording as Brandon R. I started posting on social media and coming up with video concepts. I eventually hired a videographer,” said Brandon, who was recently featured in *VoyageATL* magazine.

Brandon is impressed by the transformation taking place at Talladega College. He believes the opening of the Dr. Billy C. Hawkins Student Activity Center is providing students with much more than a place to dine and watch home games. “The new student center is giving students more opportunities to network and collaborate,” he states.

Brandon's full-time job as an electronics mechanic, like his budding music career, is unrelated to what he studied in school. Fortunately, he is both gifted and flexible.

Brandon has two children and admits that juggling parenthood, a new music career, and a full-time job is challenging. However, he plans to continue his studies. “I've considered enrolling in the Master of Science in Computer Information Systems at Talladega. It would be difficult for me to do a traditional master's degree program, but an online program would give me the flexibility I need.”

In any event, Brandon intends to keep making music.

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Today!



HEADED TO SSAC

The Southern States Athletic Conference Board of Presidents unanimously approved the addition of Talladega College to SSAC effective July 1, 2021, with competition to begin during the 2021-2022 academic year. SSAC noted that Talladega's men's and women's basketball, baseball and softball teams have all had recent success at the national level, with men's basketball earning national tournament bids six of the last seven years, women's basketball earning five bids in the last seven years, baseball reaching three-straight NAIA Opening Rounds and softball earning an opening round bid in 2018.

“We are excited to join the Southern States Athletic Conference as it will allow us to expand our team sport competition, reduce travel, and create great visibility for our institution. Talladega College has experienced record-high enrollment increases for three consecutive years and we recently constructed three new buildings. Our unparalleled growth has shined a spotlight on our outstanding academic programs as well as our conference-winning athletic teams,” said Talladega College President Dr. Billy C. Hawkins. “Moving up to SSAC will allow our athletes to compete in a more culturally diverse arena.”

Athletic Director Kevin Herod added, “I am extremely excited about Talladega College becoming a member of one of the best athletic conferences in the country. Commissioner Mike Hall has been amazing during this exciting transition and I look forward to working with him and the SSAC staff. I also want to thank our president, Dr. Billy C. Hawkins, for his vision. The caliber of our student athletes has continued to rise and, under Dr. Hawkins's leadership, we are continuing to elevate Talladega College Athletics.”

APPLE INITIATIVE

Talladega College will become a community center for Coding and Creativity as part of Apple's Community Education Initiative and Tennessee State University's HBCU C2 initiative designed to bring coding and creativity experiences to historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and their communities.

Faculty leaders from Talladega College will participate in Apple's ongoing Community Education Initiative Learning Series to learn about coding and app development. As part of that ongoing professional development, educators will explore innovative ways to engage with learners using Apple's comprehensive curriculum, which utilizes its easy-to-learn Swift programming language.

As part of its Community Education Initiative, Apple is supporting Talladega with equipment and professional development to help the college become the pre-eminent HBCU C2 community center to bring coding and creativity to the city of Talladega.



AT THE ROUNDTABLE

Talladega College Mass Media Studies Chair Dr. Luis Camillo Almeida and mass media major Kirsten Crook participated in a virtual roundtable with Senator Elizabeth Warren and a select group of representatives from colleges and universities around the nation on December 7, 2020.

“Having the privilege to receive an invitation to join Senator Warren on a student journalist roundtable to address college affordability and student debt issues was great. The fact that Talladega College students were a part of the meeting was awesome,” said Dr. Almeida.

Kirsten, who received a basketball scholarship to cover most of her undergraduate tuition, found the session to be life changing. The roundtable led her to reexamine her plans for graduate school.

“I learned how student debt affects our generation. Student debt can affect us throughout our lives. Some people never recover from student debt,” said Kirsten, who plans to become a sports broadcaster. “This made me question how I will pay for graduate school.”

She added that the roundtable inspired her to more aggressively search for graduate school scholarships or find an employer who will help finance her advanced degree.

Submit TC Update story ideas to:
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DR. HAWKINS HONORED

When the HBCU Campaign Fund named Talladega College President Dr. Billy C. Hawkins #1 among the 10 Most Dominant HBCU Leaders for 2020, the Fund’s President and CEO, Mr. Demetrius Johnson Jr., planned to hand deliver a commemorative plaque to Dr. Hawkins.

The pandemic derailed Mr. Johnson’s plans. However, nearly nine months later than he had intended to come, he was finally able to visit campus and present the prestigious award to Dr. Hawkins.



TALLADEGA COLLEGE
Merry Christmas



On behalf of the Talladega College family,
Dr. and Mrs. Billy C. Hawkins wish you
joy and peace this
Christmas and throughout the
New Year!