

Marion Military Institute  
Alumni Brigade Board of Directors Meeting  
July 27, 2019

**Officers:**

Mrs. Camie Salter Jones, President \*  
Dr. Daniel M. Hartzog III, Executive Vice President  
Mr. Logan Gray, Treasurer  
Mr. B. King Curry, Secretary \*  
Mr. Samuel P. Givhan, Vice-President for Joint  
Fundraising Initiatives \*

**Ex-Officio Members:**

Mr. Edward A. O'Neal, Jr. \*

**MMI Staff:**

COL David J. Mollahan, MMI President \*  
Mrs. Suzanne McKee, Vice President for  
Advancement \*  
Mrs. Dawn Curtis, Executive Director \*

**Board of Directors**

Mr. John Anderson \*  
Mr. Carl E. Ardrey \*  
COL William "Bill" S. Bittner, Jr. USA (Ret)\*  
Dr. Sean Bohannon  
Mr. David Bone \*  
Mr. Bill Bright \*  
Mr. David Coleman \*  
Mr. Gus Colvin \*  
Mr. Robert H. Fuller \*  
CAPT L. Ethan Hamilton, USAR  
Mr. H.D. Hibbard \*  
Mr. Lennie Jeffrey Logan  
MAJ H. Wayne Norton, USA (Ret) \*  
LTC James "Pat" Rudicell, USA (Ret) \*  
LTC Jody S. Sanders, USA (Ret) \*  
COL Curtis S. Strange, USAR \*

\*Present

**Welcome**

Camie Jones called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM, welcomed and thanked everyone for their participation, and opened the meeting with prayer.

**Approval of Minutes**

Jody Sanders made a motion to forego the reading of the minutes and approve as provided; John Anderson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**President's Report**

Mrs. Jones reminder every one of the passing of alumnus and former Alumni Brigade President, Lewis Shirley. Mrs. Jones reported that Mrs. Shirley Shirley was very appreciative of everyone's support and prayers during this time and Mrs. Jones asked that everyone continue to remember Mrs. Shirley during this difficult time of transition.

Mrs. Jones announced that Ms. O'Neal Crawford had recently taken a job in Birmingham and introduced Dawn Curtis as the new executive director. Suzanne McKee also added that the Advancement department would be hiring a new Advancement Services Officer to process gifts and maintain the database and Mrs. Curtis would be responsible for training the new hire. She said Mrs. Laura Dunfee would be shifting to the roll of Executive Assistant to the President but would be retaining her duties as Foundation Comptroller.

**Regional Events:** Mrs. Jones reported on regional events in Birmingham, Montgomery, and Greenville, SC. Mrs. Jones asked David Coleman to speak on the Birmingham Lunch and Learn. Mr. Coleman reported that the event went well. The cadets, as well as the alumni, were very engaged and lessons were learned by all in attendance. Mrs. Jones expressed a desire to expand the Lunch and Learn to additional cities. Mrs. McKee mentioned that she would like to format the November Presidential Advisory Council meeting after the Lunch and Learn. She also reported that Eva Painter, MMI's Career Counselor, had already reached out regarding future Lunch and Learns and would be coordinating with Mrs. Curtis. Mrs. Jones reported that COL Mollahan and Suzanne McKee had attended the Greenville, SC mixer. Mrs. McKee added that Britt Goodson, class of '80, hosted the event. She noted that while the crowd was small, it was very enthusiastic and Mr. Goodson is very interested in hosting this mixer annually. Mrs. Jones noted branching out to new cities is key to engaging alumni. Mrs. Jones also reported

that she had attended the Montgomery Mixer held in May. Mrs. Jones stated that the event went well and was well attended by legislators as well as other alumni and friends.

**Campus Events:** Mrs. Jones reported that campus had been very busy with various events, including the Marion Made Challenge (MMC), SAP convocation, Graduation, and Alumni Weekend. She reported that the MMC, sponsored in part by the Brigade, was a great event. She thanked Mrs. McKee, Mrs. Curtis and the rest of the Advancement staff for a very successful Alumni Weekend. Mrs. Jones also noted that Mr. Ed O'Neal was an incredible commencement speaker at graduation.

**New Initiatives:** Mrs. Jones reported that Baseball and Softball would be hosting reunions January 31<sup>st</sup> and February 1<sup>st</sup>. She also noted the dates for the upcoming Dove Shoot, Move-In Days, and the Marion Made Golf Tournament. She asked for volunteers for the Dove Shoot and reminded board members that door prizes for the Dove Shoot were needed. A volunteer sign-up sheet for the Dove Shoot and Move-In Days was circulated around the table.

### **MMI Update**

COL Mollahan presented the highlights of the 2018-2019 academic year to include the following:

- Leadership theme for the year was GRIT
- There were 120 Associate Degrees, 91 Service Academy Appointments Offered, and 26 Army ROTC ECP officer commissions (spring).
- Retention increased by 4%
- Combined graduation transfer rate of 83%

The following events took place:

- Parents Weekend
- Dove Shoot Fundraiser – (raised over \$85,000)
- Marion Made Golf Tournament – (held in Huntsville and raised over \$7,000)
- Donor Recognition Ceremony – (largest donor participation to date, special guests included Jimmy Rane and Finley McRae)
- Alumni Weekend – (Bob Geddie was Alumnus of the Year)
- Marion Made Obstacle Course Race – (3<sup>rd</sup> annual race with over 200 state and national entrants; it is now designated as a North American Obstacle Course Race Qualifying Event)
- MMI Capstone Leadership Symposium – Leadership Growth through Grit
  - Jimmy Rane, Great Southern Wood: Key Note Speaker
  - Alyssa Godesky, Professional Triathlete: Women's Leadership Forum
  - COL Randy Zeegers: Army ROTC ECP Forum
  - LTG Ron Burgess, Auburn University: Civic Leadership Forum
  - Timothy Alexander, UAB: Panel: Leadership Growth through Grit
  - Eleven Recent Service Academy graduates: Panel: Service Academy Program

Distinguished guest speakers included the following:

- Rep. Rich Wing – Authentic Leadership
- Former Madison, AL Mayor Troy Trulock – Being A Good Citizen
- Cliff Judkins, Class of '56 and former Marine Corps Aviator – GRIT
- BG Steve Gilland, Commandant of Cadets, USMA– Leadership and Character
- Ed O'Neal, Class of '80 – 2019 Commencement Speaker

Co-curricular and extra-curricular education leadership and learning activities included:

- Leadership Conferences – 40 cadets attended various conferences:
  - US Air Force Academy –
  - US Military Academy at West Point
  - US Naval Academy
  - Virginia Military Institute

- The Citadel
  - The College of the Ozarks – *Free Enterprise Forum*
  - YMCA College Legislature Alabama
  - Alabama State Bar and Montgomery College Minority Pre-Law Conference
  - Texas A & M
- Ethics Bowl
  - Organized as an intra-Company competition
  - 5 cadets selected to compete in Two Year College National Competition in Ogden, UT
  - Placed 8<sup>th</sup> out of 28 schools
- Emergency Services Program – Partnered with the Alabama Fire College
  - Basic Fire Fighter Program: Five cadets completed
  - EMT: Two cadets passed national certification
  - 5 Cadets participated in three real world response calls with Marion Volunteer FD
  - 5 Cadets completed full segment of Wildfire Response Training, provided by AL Forestry Commission; now certified to complete fire jumps
- Ireland – Gaelic Study Abroad
  - Eight cadets participated during Summer 2019
- Greece – Cultural and Environmental Enrichment
  - 13 cadets and two faculty members participated during Spring Break 2019
- Leaders Club Community Service – Over 100 cadets participated:
  - Six Community Service Saturdays
  - Francis Marion School Garden plot clean-up
  - Main Street Marion projects including clean-up of the old jail
  - Keep Alabama Beautiful city project in downtown Marion
  - Faunsdale Community Center project
  - Nation Park Service Volunteer Day- clean-up of Selma to Montgomery Trail Interpretive Center
  - Sponsored three American Red Cross Blood Drives
  - Sponsored Relay for Life – raised over \$1,500 for the local ACS office
- Flying Tiger Aviation:
  - 21 cadet participants
  - Six solos
  - Two Private Pilot License
- Scuba Club
  - 18 cadets open-water diver certified
  - 7 Dive Trips
- Life After MMI series
  - Panel discussion on what to expect upon transfer
  - Panel included 2 recent MMI grads along w/ representatives from Auburn and Alabama
  - Small panel discussions discussed: time management, housing considerations, and personal finances/budgeting

Some athletic highlights include:

- 69 Student athletes named to Conference Commissioner's Fall Honor Roll and 79 named in the Spring (minimum of 3.0 GPA)
- 20 NJCAA Academic Student Athlete Awards
- 1 International Tennis Association All-Academic Team
- 5 ITA Academic All Americans
- Six teams will be identified as NJCAA All-Academic Teams (team cumulative GPA is 3.0 or higher)
- Overall GPA for Student Athletes: 3.13 (Fall: 3.05 and Spring 3.22)
- All teams finished with above 500 records
- All teams qualified for conference post season tournaments
- 1 Conference and NJCAA Region 22 Coach of the Year: Jeff Benson, Softball

Some current and/or completed projects include:

- Interior Renovation of the Chapel—expected to be completed end of Fall Semester 2019
- Water Intrusion Project in Academic Wings—epoxy added to concrete walk ways
- Concrete sloping added to Biology Lab and ROTC to prevent water intrusion
- Gutters replaced around Trustees
- Tennis Court resurfaced
- Sidewalk project (Mrs. McKee thanked the brigade for the donation and noted that she would be adding signage in time for Move-In Days)
- Additional security in the form of cameras will be added to the barracks
- Library steps will be refurbished.
- Bookstore roof and windows replaced
- Excess House kitchen renovated
- Mrs. McKee pointed out that all of these renovations are being completed with Capital Campaign funds.

Current turnover in staff:

- Longtime Director of Performing Arts Deborra Street retired—position has been filled
- Director of Alumni Affairs, O'Neal Crawford—position has been filled
- Athletic Director position vacated—still working to fill that position
- Cross Country Coach position vacated—position has been filled
- 2 Admissions recruiter positions—both now filled by recent MMI and UA Grads (one ECP and one LEP)
- Enrollment Administrator position vacated—position has now been filled
- 4 or 5 adjunct professors positions vacated—still searching for Economics and Math Instructors
- New PMS coming on board for Fall

COL Mollahan recognized Mrs. McKee and Mrs. Curtis for the incredible amount of work that is accomplished by the Advancement Department. He noted that MMI's Advancement Department is the most sophisticated in the 2-year system and is comparable to that of a four-year school—minus the large staff. He encouraged everyone to garner support from fellow alumni for events, fundraisers, etc. to assist the Advancement Department.

Pat Rudicell asked how many incoming cadets register for the spring semester. COL Mollahan responded that the number is usually small—around 20. He noted that 29 was the largest group he had seen in his time at MMI. COL Mollahan added that he feels the Academic Success Center is helping with the increase in retention rates. He noted that the PMS is focused on enlarging the Early Commissioning program. COL Mollahan also noted that the Service Academy program is really strong this year due to the efforts of the program director, LTC Tom Bowen. The number of SAP cadets is expected to be around 134, compared to 118-120 from the previous year. COL Mollahan briefly touched on the possibility of a new dining facility in the future. John Anderson asked about the status of the Gateway project and the plans. Mrs. McKee made note that a grant was received to create and pave a road. COL Mollahan noted that there are still plans to turn the Gateway into a conference center but the scope of the project is still undecided.

### **Treasurer's Report**

In Logan Gray's absence, Suzanne McKee gave the financial report. Mrs. McKee reported the following balances from all accounts: MMI Foundation- \$45,998; RSA (Alumni Brigade) - \$85,449; RSA (Lifetime Membership Restricted) - \$1,549; and the Arthur Wilkerson CD at Marion Bank & Trust- \$11,000; with total assets of \$143,996. Mrs. McKee stated that the \$7,000 donated by the Brigade to the Leadership Center should be moved from a Fundraising expense line to a Program Expense, as it was not an expense incurred from Fundraising but rather School Support. Mrs. Jones agreed. Mrs. McKee presented the proposed 2020 budget and noted that very little had changed. A proposed decrease in merchandise sales was highlighted. Mrs. McKee noted that the brigade was advised to not carry merchandise. Bill Bittner asked why there was a proposed decrease in income for the

Lifetime Member Restricted Account. Mrs. McKee responded that it was an attempt to be conservative with the numbers.

H.D. Hibbard made motion to accept the Treasurer's report as read and Jody Sanders seconded. Motion passed.

### **Executive Director's Report**

Suzanne McKee provided the executive director's report. She stated that the Alumni Affairs position has been restructured to focus primarily on Alumni Affairs. Mrs. McKee encourage everyone to sign up for Alumni Connect. She noted that it is a great tool for connecting with classmates. Mrs. McKee reported that an Annual Fund mailing went out in June and was met with a good response.

**Events:** Mrs. McKee reported the upcoming events:

Huntsville Mixer – August 8<sup>th</sup> –welcome dinner for incoming cadets in the Huntsville Area

Auburn Mixer – September 19<sup>th</sup> – hosted by Jerry & Nancy Smith and RADM Paul and Jeanne Robinson at the Saugahatchee Country Club

Family Weekend – formerly known as Parents Weekend and scheduled for October 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>

Dove Shoot Mixer – October 24<sup>th</sup>

Maryland Mixer – hosted by Gene McCollum and tentatively scheduled for October 27<sup>th</sup>

Alumni Brigade Board Meeting – November 16<sup>th</sup>

Give Day – December 3<sup>rd</sup>

Holiday Reception – December 5<sup>th</sup>

Alumni Brigade Board Meeting via Conference Call – January 25<sup>th</sup>

Baseball/Softball Reunions – January 31<sup>st</sup> and February 1<sup>st</sup>

Marion Made Challenge – March 7<sup>th</sup> (Curtis Strange asked about corporate sponsorships for this event)

Leadership Symposium – March 11<sup>th</sup> (guest speaker is Lauren Sisler, ESPN broadcaster)

Marion Made Golf Tournament – March 30<sup>th</sup> in Huntsville

Alumni Weekend – April 16<sup>th</sup> – April 18<sup>th</sup>

Mrs. McKee reported that James Patterson of Dallas Air and Heating was once again the Diamond Sponsor for the Dove Shoot. She also noted that the shotgun had been secured with the help of alumnus Hal Hamilton and Caliber out of Homewood, Alabama. Mrs. McKee stated that the gun—a special order gallery Beretta 687 EELL over/under with both .410 and .28 gauge barrels—had a value of approximately \$12,995. She noted that shotgun ticket prices would be increasing from \$20 to \$25. Mrs. McKee reported additional prizes for the bonus drawings had been secured.

Mrs. McKee noted that the Marion Made Golf Tournament date and location had been changed. Curtis Strange stated that there was a need for more alumni participation in the tournament.

Pat Rudicell asked for a breakdown in Lifetime Memberships—deceased vs. living. Wayne Norton offered to assist in recruiting alumni for the baseball reunion. Jody Sanders asked if the football theme for Alumni Weekend was still being considered. Mrs. Jones stated that there had been a lot of interest in a football reunion and it was scheduled for Alumni Weekend 2020. She also noted that there are plans to honor those alumni who served in Vietnam on Friday evening of Alumni Weekend. Mrs. Curtis offered a few options to consider for an Alumni Weekend Football Reunion.

Mrs. Jones reminded everyone that they had been assigned to a committee. She noted that it was important that the nominating committee and the football committee meet soon. New board members were asked to stay after the meeting for a brief orientation.

With no other business, Sam Givhan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Robert Fuller seconded the motion. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Dawn Curtis, Executive Director

