



Magazine

FALL 2012



ALSO INSIDE

Greenhouse and green power PAGE 12

PARTNERSHIP WITH LEADING  
INDUSTRY ORGANIZATION  
CREATES A WIN-WIN PAGE 8

Student, professional baseball player, Marietta lawyer:  
Frank Ward tells his story PAGE 26

# CONTENTS



*Student, professional baseball player,  
Marietta lawyer: Frank Ward tells his story*



*Partnership with leading industry  
organization creates a win-win*



*Greenhouse and green power*

## FEATURES

- 8 Partnership with leading industry organization creates a win-win
- 16 International program leader readies for retirement
- 18 Making a monumental difference through mentoring
- 26 Student, professional baseball player, Marietta lawyer: Frank Ward tells his story

## STUDENT EXPERIENCE

- 24 Mock fraud trial creates an eye-opening experience

## ACADEMICS

- 12 Greenhouse and green power
- 22 Preparing the next generation of leaders in nuclear power

## ATHLETICS

- 30 Hornets athletics gets revamped

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

**Greetings from SPSU!**

I am excited to tell you that our fall 2012 enrollment increased nearly 7 percent compared to last fall, and we are now the second fastest-growing institution in the University System of Georgia with more than 6,200 students. We have enrolled nearly 27 percent more new freshmen, and our evening engineering programs and programs in new media arts, accounting, and computer game design and development have proved very popular.

One thing that helps Southern Polytechnic stand out from other schools is the mentoring that students receive from dedicated faculty members, interested alumni, and local industry representatives. In this issue of the magazine, you'll read about the life-changing effects these mentoring relationships can have. You'll also read about an example of another factor in attracting students – industry partnerships that offer opportunities for students to apply their education to solve some of the most important issues facing society today.

SPSU is also one of a very few schools in the country that help accounting students with an interest in fraud examination test their knowledge in mock trials with real prosecutors, defense attorneys, and judges. This issue will give you an idea of what a rewarding challenge this opportunity is for students.

As I interact with the larger community, one of my favorite things to hear about SPSU is, "I just hired one of your graduates." Fortunately, I hear this all of the time. SPSU has a longstanding reputation of providing future employees who are ready to work – thanks to their hands-on, applied education, SPSU graduates can find creative, practical, and sustainable solutions to the problems facing our world today. SPSU students are widely recognized as great employees. They have a strong education, they have a terrific work ethic, and they are prepared with both the knowledge and the skills that make them successful.

These characteristics help SPSU graduates get jobs, and many of them work in the metropolitan Atlanta area. By living and

working in this region, graduates give back to the community. In the last fiscal year, Southern Polytechnic's annual economic impact on Georgia was calculated at nearly \$200 million. We now have more than 20,000 alumni, many of whom remain in the region and contribute to the economy and their communities. These alumni are architects, engineers, scientists, writers, CEOs, teachers, musicians, race car drivers, fire chiefs, and district attorneys. In this issue of the magazine, you'll meet a former SPSU student and professional baseball player who practices law in Marietta. You'll also read that SPSU expects to supply engineers to new nuclear power plants being built in Georgia and South Carolina.

This fall, I have also appreciated having people tell me, "My company gave to PolyDay." On Oct. 8, we celebrated our first annual PolyDay, the conclusion of a month-long campaign in which we gathered funding support for SPSU from our faculty and staff and our external constituents in local industry and business. We celebrated gifts and pledges of more than \$170,000. We more than met our goal, thanks to the generosity of so many individuals and companies, especially Lockheed Martin, with which we have a great partnership and which has historically been one of the top employers of our graduates.

As you can see, this academic year is off to a great start.

I hope to see you around campus soon!

**Lisa A. Rossbacher, Ph.D.**  
**President**

# UNIVERSITY NEWS BRIEFS



## University’s economic impact estimated at \$198M

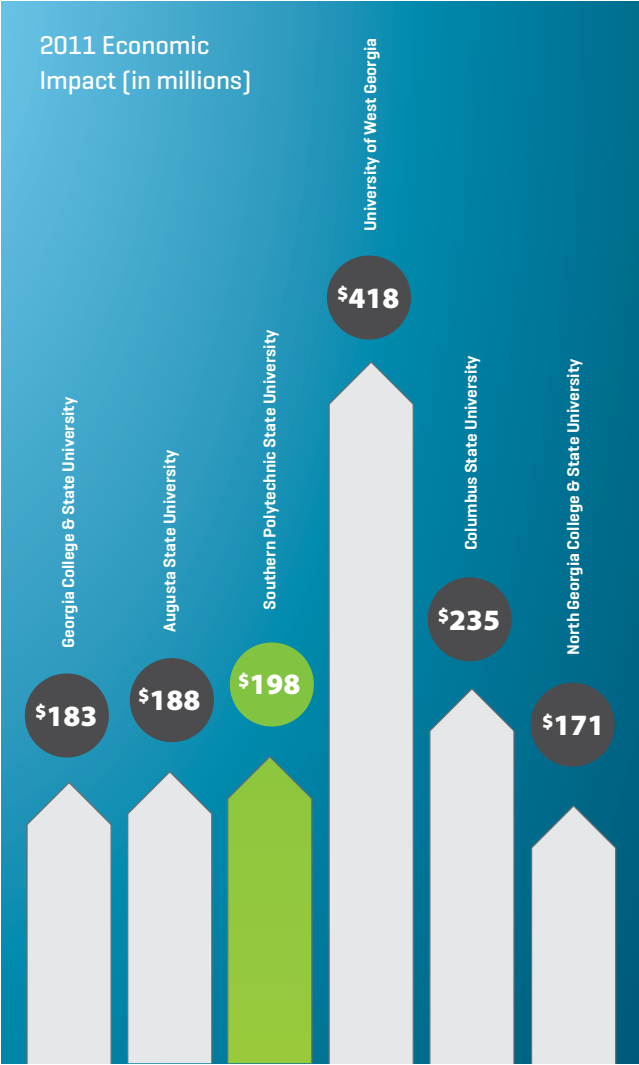
**S**outhern Polytechnic State University’s impact on Georgia in fiscal year 2011 totaled more than \$198 million, according to a newly released study by the University System of Georgia’s Board of Regents.

The previous report, based on fiscal year 2010 data, placed SPSU’s economic impact at \$192 million. The current report’s data represent an increase of more than 3.5 percent in the university’s economic impact in the last year and a 20 percent increase in the last two years.

The numbers in the report were calculated based on sales, gross regional product, income, and full- or part-time jobs. SPSU provides an economic influence to its surrounding community by contributing 1,826 jobs and adding millions of dollars to the local and regional economy in personal services, construction expenditures, and student spending.

The study determined that the economic impact to the state of Georgia by all 35 institutions in the University System of Georgia totaled \$13.2 billion in fiscal year 2011. The study also indicated that Georgia’s public higher education system generated nearly 132,000 full- and part-time jobs.

The full report was produced by the Selig Center for Economic Growth in The University of Georgia’s Terry College of Business for the Board of Regents’ Office of Economic Development. The report is available at [www.usg.edu/economic\\_development/documents/PS-USGImpact2011.pdf](http://www.usg.edu/economic_development/documents/PS-USGImpact2011.pdf)





SPSU President Lisa Rossbacher celebrates PolyDay with Shan Cooper of Lockheed Martin, and SPSU Foundation Board President Daryle Higginbotham '89

## First Poly Day campaign generates local community support

Southern Polytechnic State University wrapped up its first-ever corporate-community-campus fundraising campaign on PolyDay, Oct. 8, with a reception attended by the university's community partners in addition to trustees, alumni, and faculty and staff members.

Shan Cooper, vice president and Marietta site general manager of Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company – one of the top employers of SPSU graduates – delivered a ringing endorsement of SPSU during the celebration at the Globe. She noted that when Lockheed hires an SPSU graduate,

"We know that we're getting the best of the best, the best and the brightest."

Total giving to the campaign amounted to \$172,150, including \$60,000 contributed by SPSU faculty and staff and \$112,150 from alumni, civic and professional organizations, and businesses in the Cobb community.

The faculty and staff annual fund recorded its highest gift total ever under the leadership of Prof. Scott Larisch of electrical and computer engineering technology (faculty chair) and Kenneth Shelton of facilities (staff chair). The participation rate was 52 percent.



"We look forward to making PolyDay an annual event and to celebrating continued private support for higher education – a vital piece in the overall funding of Southern Polytechnic," said Dr. Rossbacher.

## Five SPSU students win Women in Electronics Scholarships



The Atlanta Chapter of Women in Electronics (WIE) awarded six scholarships in May to bright, promising females from Atlanta-area col-

leges and universities, and the organization chose to award all but one of them to Southern Polytechnic State University students.

WIE is a nonprofit regional organization that provides a professional network for women involved in all segments of the electronics industry. Membership includes business owners and women working in such areas as engineering, manufacturing, purchasing, sales, human resources, and administration.

WIE scholarships are awarded based on financial need, academic achievement,

and participation in extracurricular activities. Invitations to apply were extended to universities and colleges throughout metro Atlanta. To date, the organization has donated more than \$200,000 in educational assistance for women, including scholarships.

Congratulations to the SPSU recipients: Marian Alicea, civil engineering technology; Nicole Banks, industrial engineering technology; Kassandra Carman, industrial engineering technology; Yasmine Jonaidi, industrial engineering technology; and Sonia Vanegas, mechanical engineering.

## Construction Management students earn praise for work with HouseProud Atlanta



Students in Southern Polytechnic State University's Construction Management (CM) department joined the community service organization HouseProud Atlanta this summer in staging its annual "House Party" of home repairs.

The CM students have also assisted the organization with smaller-scale projects on a monthly basis and earned praise from both HouseProud and the homeowners who benefitted from their industrious work.

"I am a 72-year-old senior raising a granddaughter," said one woman. "I am grateful to you for assisting HouseProud with the removal of carpet from my floors because it was not healthy for my respiratory issues. The high energy and positive attitude of the volunteers has made a difference in my life; I can now breathe easier and live in a cleaner environment."

The board of directors of HouseProud, which provides low-income senior and disabled homeowners with no-cost home repairs designed to keep them warm, safe, and dry, also called the SPSU team's organizer, Brian Hogue, to add thanks for the team's skilled volunteer efforts.

"I told them that we are honored to be helping out the local community and that we look forward to completing more projects in the future," said Hogue, who, as vice president for Community Outreach for CM's Contractors Guild, is always looking for additional volunteers.

## UNIVERSITY NEWS BRIEFS

## Inaugural Rossbacher Scholar announced



Elizabeth Stephenson, a Zell Miller HOPE scholar from Wrightsville, Ga., has been selected as the



inaugural recipient of the President Rossbacher Endowed Scholarship.

Stephenson graduated as a dual-enrollment student from the Georgia Academy of Aviation Mathematics Engineering & Science (GAMES) program at Middle Georgia College (MGC) in Cochran, Ga. At age 18, she had earned both a high school diploma from Trinity Christian School in Dublin, Ga., and an associate's degree in mathematics from MGC, and she enrolled at Brenau University in Gainesville, Ga.

However, this fall, she transferred to SPSU. During orientation, the university's U-Teach program captured her interest. Stephenson is now in Step 1 of the program, on her way to earning a degree in mathematics (education) in two years. She has already taken on the task of establishing a student organization for the SPSU teacher-education program.

The President Rossbacher Endowed Scholarship is a newly endowed scholarship designed to benefit women who are majoring in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (the STEM fields) and have a record of outstanding academic success. The scholarship was created by SPSU faculty and staff on the occasion of Dr. Rossbacher's inauguration as president, and contributions by faculty and staff members fully funded the endowment around the time of Dr. Rossbacher's 10th anniversary as president of the university.

A geologist by profession, Dr. Rossbacher is committed to encouraging more women students to attend and graduate from SPSU and providing them with financial assistance at the same time.

Stephenson will receive scholarship support to pay for student fees no longer covered under the HOPE scholar program.

## Prof. Rich Cole appointed interim dean



Prof. C. Richard Cole has been appointed the interim dean of the School of Architecture and Construction Management (ACM).

"Rich has had a long and distinguished career, both in professional practice and in academia," noted Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Zvi Szafran.

Prof. Cole is a licensed architect with a master's degree in architecture from Georgia Tech. He earned a certificate from the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) and has maintained an architectural consulting practice in the area of commercial design since 1989. He served as vice president and project manager at Wise, Simpson, Aiken, and Associates from 1978 to 1989.

Prof. Cole has taught second-, third-, fourth-, and fifth-year Design Studio courses at Southern Polytechnic State University since 1987, as well as the architecture core course Professional Practice and Ethics. The Student Government Association chose him as the Outstanding Faculty Member of the Year in 1989 and 1990, and he served as moderator of the SPSU Faculty Senate from 1989 to 1990.

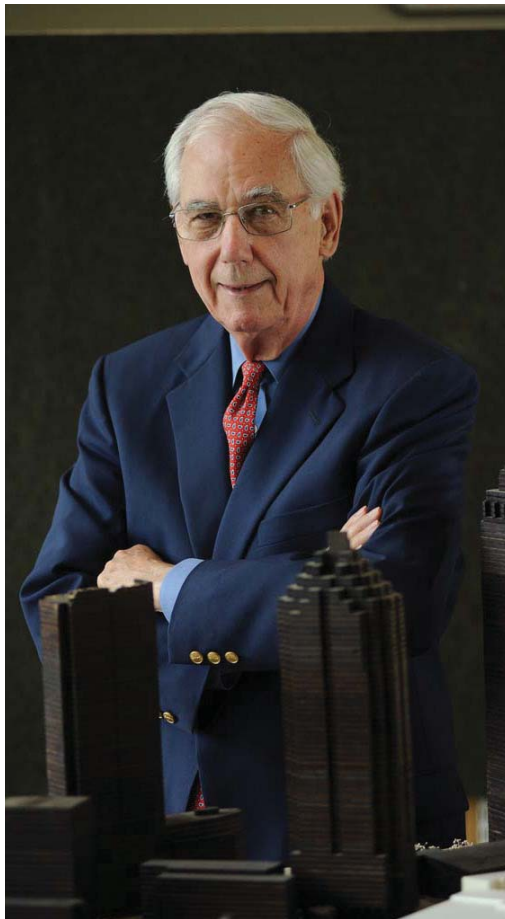
During the 2011-12 academic year, he chaired the Architecture department's Academic Council, which developed the department's newly adopted strategic plan.

The search for a permanent dean will commence in the fall of 2013.



## UNIVERSITY NEWS BRIEFS

### Former dean remembered



Dr. Wilson "Bill" Barnes, who retired this past June as dean of the School of Architecture and Construction Management (ACM), passed away on Sun., Sept. 9, in Pittsfield, Mass.

Dr. Barnes joined the faculty of Southern Polytechnic State University in 1995 as an associate professor of construction. Since that time, Dr. Barnes "remained a superior teacher and continued to show an extraordinary commitment to the university, and his focus on the professional development of his school was dynamic throughout his career," according to Dr. Zvi Szafran, vice president for Academic Affairs.

Dr. Barnes was appointed as dean of what was then the School of Architecture, Civil Engineering Technology, and Construction Management in July of 2001 and served in that capacity for 11 years.

ACM boasts the only nationally accredited professional Bachelor of

Architecture degree in Georgia – a five-year program that includes two years of design foundation and three years of professional courses. The school includes one of the longest-running construction management (CM) programs in Georgia. ACM also boasts high-profile student competition teams, a fact illustrated by a huge victory this spring when CM students won the national Mechanical Contractors Association of America Student Chapter Competition.

"Bill's focus was always on the built environment, especially in the area of adaptive reuse," said Dr. Szafran. "When everyone was talking about tearing down Building I and replacing it with an engineering technology building, Bill had a different vision of adaptively reusing it as studio space. The I-1 and I-2 design studios on this campus are the result, with I-2 having won multiple awards and I-1's renovation scheduled for completion in a few weeks. That is a fine legacy."

### SPSU, GHC extend collaborative partnership



Southern Polytechnic State University and Georgia Highlands College (GHC) have agreed to extend their collaborative partnership for at least three more years. GHC has offered classes on the SPSU campus since 2005.

The collaboration benefits both institutions. GHC students can experience a more traditional campus that offers residence and dining halls while participating in the multitude of student organizations on the SPSU campus. SPSU benefits from the infusion of additional students with diverse interests that GHC students

bring to the campus. In addition, students who complete a minimum of 30 hours with Georgia Highlands may transfer seamlessly into SPSU's academic programs.

SPSU President Lisa A. Rossbacher welcomes the continued collaboration. "This partnership is a true success story in the University System of Georgia. By working together, we are enriching the academic experience for students, expanding the classes available to them, and making the most effective use of facilities. The alliance of Georgia Highlands and Southern Polytechnic benefits all our students."

Interim GHC President Renva Harmon Watterson believes such collaborative arrangements among University System of Georgia institutions strengthen the system by offering a greater variety of options to students. "Southern Poly and its staff have been very welcoming to everyone at Georgia Highlands. They have been a very gracious host. Our students enjoy the resources and campus life of a premier state university, while maintaining the benefits of a small college."

## Kia Motors donates cars to SPSU's School of Engineering



The SPSU student chapter of the International Society of Automation (ISA) played a "key" role in establishing a relationship between the university and carmaker Kia-Georgia. From left to right SPSU Professor Dr. Cyril Okhio, SPSU student Robert Baldwin, KIA Motors Vice President Dr. Randy Jackson, students Zina Ait-Yahia, Bahati Gitego, Favio Hernandez, Harold Catt, and SPSU Professor Dr. Florian Misoc.

The School of Engineering recently took delivery of two cars donated by the Kia Motors Manufacturing Facility in West Point, Ga. (Kia-Georgia). The vehicles will be used for hands-on research involving the university's electrical, civil, mechanical, systems, and mechatronics engineering programs, along with the electrical and computer engineering technology program.

Kia-Georgia has pledged to supply Southern Polytechnic State University with cars every 12-24 months. This marks the establishment of a relationship that will have far-reaching benefits for SPSU students and faculty, according to Dr. Cyril Okhio, an associate professor in electrical and mechatronics engineering who approached Georgia representatives of the South Korea-based automaker on behalf of the university.

The relationship with Kia-Georgia "will have a long-term impact on the recruitment, nurturing, retention, graduation, place-

ment, and tracking of our engineering and engineering technology students," he said. "It will also have a long-term impact on sharpening and renewing the teaching and research capabilities of our faculty members. And it will provide the university with much-needed teaching and research materials at little or no cost."

Dr. Okhio is the faculty adviser for the campus chapter of the International Society of Automation (ISA) and the SPSU Undergraduate Research Club (URC). His goal in contacting Kia-Georgia was to arrange field trips for the organizations and, at the same time, pursue a training/education relationship with the company.

"During one of our field trips, Kia personnel expressed interest in collaborative work with Georgia universities, and especially with SPSU, because the SPSU graduates among their employees have been outperforming graduates from other colleges, both in Georgia and nationwide," said Dr. Okhio,

noting that he spent 100 days helping to shape the agreement with Kia.

For SPSU, Dr. Okhio sees the relationship facilitating the growth of the School of Engineering's applied research and education in five initial focus areas:

- vehicle thermal-cooling management research;
- vehicle dynamics and performance (vibration and noise);
- hybrid architecture, design, and energy management optimization;
- hybrid and alternative-fuel technologies; and
- vehicle computer-integrated manufacturing, protocol, architecture, and logistics.

"Specific benefits to SPSU students include internships, and co-op and employment opportunities close to home," he added.





# PARTNERSHIP WITH LEADING INDUSTRY ORGANIZATION CREATES A WIN-WIN

## When Novelis

*the world's largest manufacturer of rolled aluminum and largest recycler of aluminum cans*

*called on the expertise of Southern Polytechnic State University's Mechanical Engineering Technology (MET) department to help put the finishing touches on its new Global Research and Development Center in Kennesaw this past spring, a partnership gelled and appears to be destined to mature into a beneficial long-term relationship for all concerned.*

Dr. Simin Nasser (front left) and SPSU President Lisa A. Rossbacher (front right) pose in front of the robot SPSU students designed at the grand opening of Novelis' Global Research and Development Center with (back row, left to right) student Chris Cutter, Novelis Vice President Stefan Erdmann, and students James Smith, and Timothy (T.J.) Del Rocco.



*Dr. Nasseri and three of her students – Chris Cutter, James Smith, and Timothy “T.J.” Del Rocco – designed an imposing 10-foot tall all-aluminum “robot” using mainly the company’s aluminum sheeting.*

Novelis officials invited MET Associate Professor Simin Nasseri to design a statue for the lobby of the company’s ultra-modern center, which is now the hub of Novelis’ global network and research and development (R&D) activities. Using computer modeling and drafting software, Dr. Nasseri and three of her students – Chris Cutter, James Smith, and Timothy “T.J.” Del Rocco – designed an imposing 10-foot-tall all-aluminum “robot” using mainly the company’s aluminum sheeting.

“The Future of Recycling and Engineering Developments,” or FRED as he is unofficially known, illustrates Novelis’ mission of transforming raw aluminum into useful products, according to Dr. Nasseri. “You see a transformer emerging from an aluminum block containing crushed cans, showing that these cans can be recycled into useful products,” she explained. “FRED is the collision of art and engineering and represents the future of recycling and engineering developments.”

The statue contains approximately 300 parts – not counting screws, bolts, washers, and rivets – and the team incorporated hexagonal elements representing SPSU into the design.

There’s another SPSU connection to the statue as well. After months of engineering and artistic design by Dr. Nasseri and her team of students, Marietta Non-destructive Testing Inc. – owned by SPSU Foundation Board of Trustees Chair Daryle Higginbotham (MET, ’89) – fabricated the work of art in the tight time constraints of less than a month. Frank Ferguson, a specialty project manager at Marietta Nondestructive Testing Inc. (and former SPSU student), “handled the artistic side of making it happen,” Higginbotham said. “He was responsible for the metal forming and shaping and the finished presentation of the piece.”

Novelis Vice President of Global R&D Stefan Erdmann said, “I could not imagine a better outcome – I am very proud of the result, and FRED is a great addition.” He contacted Dr. Nasseri about building the statue on the recommendation of a colleague.

“This project significantly enhanced [our] impression that SPSU is a player in the region that could help us significantly with problem-solving in our technology area,” Erdmann continued. “I think the university’s students and faculty are extremely well educated and understand industry needs very well.”

*"The Future of Recycling and Engineering Developments," or **FRED** as he is unofficially known, illustrates Novelis' mission of transforming raw aluminum into useful products...*



*"It is quite obvious that SPSU can help Novelis to deal with current technical challenges on the process side as well as our current expansion projects."*

*Stefan Erdmann, Vice President of Global R&D*

During the center's grand opening in June, Novelis officials said their new 160,000-square-foot center will create approximately 150 additional jobs in Cobb County, among its materials development and testing laboratories, beverage can production line, and meeting space.

"At this facility, we will develop new products, and we will also focus on improving our manufacturing system to process more scrap aluminum and achieve 80 percent recycled content by 2020," said Novelis President and CEO Phil Martens.

Erdmann told the crowd at the center's grand opening that the ongoing partnership between Novelis and SPSU will involve research and internship opportunities as well as jobs for graduates.

He and other Novelis officials met in August with SPSU deans Jeff Ray (Engineering Technology and Management), Thomas Currin (Engineering), and Han Reichgelt (Computing and Software Engineering) and faculty members from several departments to compare notes on Novelis' needs and SPSU's capabilities.

"It is quite obvious that SPSU can help Novelis to deal with current technical challenges on the process side as well as our current expansion projects," Erdmann said after the meeting. "I hope that this is a great start for collaborations between SPSU

and Novelis and a sign to future students that Novelis is really interested in exceptional and talented students."

Dr. Nasseri said, "This collaboration will enhance the success potential of SPSU-Novelis projects, the quality of the research work produced, and the quality of young future engineers." She attended the center's grand opening with SPSU President Lisa A. Rossbacher and other local and state government and Chamber of Commerce dignitaries.

"The new Novelis Global Research and Technology Center will bring together some of the world's leading metallurgists, materials scientists, engineers, and technologists. The center will tackle challenges ranging from increasing fuel efficiency in automobiles to making consumer packaging and electronics products more sustainable," said company CEO Martens.

Novelis – which operates in 11 countries and has more than 11,000 employees worldwide – supplies aluminum sheet and foil products to automotive, transportation, packaging, construction, industrial, electronics, and printing markets. Among its customers are Apple, which uses Novelis aluminum on the backs of its iPads, and Coca-Cola.

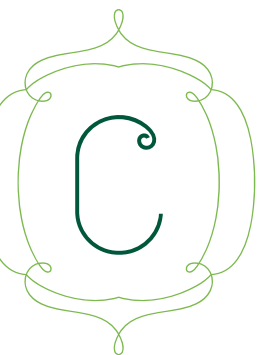
# GREENHOUSE



and green power



Southern Polytechnic State University's newest building is green in more ways than one.



onstruction of the university's first greenhouse, which was completed at the end of August, includes a set of solar panels that are expected to supply the building with power year-round.

"The new greenhouse will be used by biology students to conduct research in areas such as the effects of pollutants on plant growth; phytoremediation (the ability of plants to efficiently remove pollutants from air and water); and plant bioengineering, which looks at plants' ability to produce new drugs and medical products," explained Dr. Tom Nelson, dean of the School of Arts and Sciences.

"Until now, the students and professors didn't have a greenhouse, so there was a lot that they couldn't do that they wanted to be doing. This will enable them to do a lot more in terms of research," said Steve Kitchen, SPSU's facilities director.

Plans were already underway for the greenhouse when the university was offered the opportunity to install solar panels by Marietta Power and Water, which was looking for organizations that would benefit from grant funds provided by Marietta Power and Water, and Electric Cities of Georgia (ECG). The grant was awarded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009.

"We were planning the greenhouse before we got the grant for the solar panels. Marietta Power stopped by and said, 'We have a little bit of grant funds left over; do you want it for solar?' We said, 'Sure, we can use that,'" Kitchen added.

The offer came from Rusty Smith, the account manager at Marietta Power and Water, who handles the university's billing questions and energy-savings initiatives. Smith said he knew the university was planning a greenhouse project, so when the funds became available, SPSU came to mind.

"Through our relationship with Steve and everyone else, I thought Southern Poly would be a great fit," Smith said. "The timing seemed to be about perfect to do this for one of our customers."



"Until now, the students and professors didn't have a greenhouse, so there was a lot that they couldn't do that they wanted to be doing. This will enable them to do a lot more in terms of research."

Steve Kitchen,  
SPSU's facilities director



Biology Professor Matt Weand and students from his Evolution class examine various types of flowers and plants in SPSU's new solar-powered greenhouse.

Solar energy is expected to provide lighting, heat, and electricity throughout the year for the new 750-square-foot greenhouse.

Because the solar panel project did not include a backup system to store energy, solar power will only be available in the greenhouse during daylight hours, Kitchen said. The building is also wired for traditional electricity, which can be used to supplement solar energy. Those using the greenhouse will not be able to tell the difference between solar-powered light and traditional electricity because both sources of light emanate from the same light fixtures.

"Unless you have a dark day, solar could power all of the electricity you'd need for the greenhouse," Kitchen said.

SPSU paid about \$100,000 to construct the greenhouse on what was previously vacant land. The grant from Marietta Power and Water covered about two-thirds of the additional \$80,000 cost for solar panels.

ECG received nearly \$461,000 in all through the ARRA grant, said Doug Moore, principal engineer at the organization. Most of the funds were used to install solar panels and solar water heaters at city-owned facilities, he said.

In addition to providing cost-savings opportunities – Moore estimated that SPSU's portion of the solar panel purchase will be paid back in 10 to 15 years – "the bigger part of it was really to put in some smaller systems for demonstration value. We felt like the systems would have a really good educational value because of where they are."

The solar panels on the ground produce 5 kilowatts of energy, enough to power the equivalent of 85 household light bulbs.



The panels are 6 feet high, 42 feet long, and 7.5 feet wide.

Dr. Nelson said the greenhouse offers collaborative opportunities for environmental science, biotechnology, and electrical engineering technology students.

"The new structure also opens the doors to establish new outreach programs. For example, school groups might learn about plants and the environment while visiting the greenhouse," he said.

Now that SPSU's greenhouse is open, Kitchen said maintenance for the new facility will mostly entail keeping the greenhouse and the solar panels clean. By keeping dust off of the panels, "they will produce the largest amount of energy possible," he said.

SPSU's other solar panels sit atop the Engineering Lab Building (Building G) and have been used for teaching purposes, as well as to supply power to an electric bicycle recharging station that's already in place. A second set of panels, positioned out of sight on top of the Engineering Technology Center (Building Q), which is located beside the greenhouse, is also functional and can produce twice the power of the panels for the greenhouse.

Kitchen said there are no immediate plans to add more solar panels to the

campus, but the possibility exists for future projects.

"I think you might see something down the road if we add to existing buildings or if we have money to do new construction," he said. "Unless, of course, we get another grant to cover the costs. Then, sure, we'd do more."

In addition to municipal projects, Marietta Power and Water's Smith said the grant also funded solar panels in a courtyard at Marietta Sixth Grade Academy.

He conceded that it might seem unusual for an electric company to fund projects that will lower the cost of electricity, but he said such efforts help better serve customers who want to save money or take steps to become more environmentally friendly.

"We realize that in today's environment, it's something people want," Smith said. "Sometimes it doesn't make sense from a revenue standpoint, but it does make sense in being a good member of the community."

"We're excited that it's up and running," Smith added. "To be able to do something to save energy for an organization as prominent as Southern Poly ... it just makes sense."

# INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM LEADER READIES FOR RETIREMENT



*"The expertise he has shared with our administration and students has given the university a global presence that we hadn't known before. We have a strong international program that will continue into the future thanks to his leadership."*

Dr. Zvi Szafran, VP for Academic Affairs

The man who expanded Southern Polytechnic State University's international presence is preparing to retire at year's end, but he has no plans to curtail his globe-trotting ways.

Dr. Richard Bennett, director of SPSU's international programs, will retire in December after 20 years of teaching a variety of subjects, including history, world religion, and cross-cultural studies, as well as developing the university's international education activities.

In the past decade, SPSU has created student and faculty exchange programs, initiated articulations for degree programs, and begun various other activities and programs with partner universities in Cameroon, China, Germany, Italy, and Jamaica. SPSU is currently developing additional types of partnerships with foreign institutions and is now offering a degree program in political science.

"In some situations, we are educating men and women who will be future leaders of business, industry, or even governments in their home countries," said Dr. Bennett, who has a doctorate in Middle Eastern history. "As such, we have the opportunity to be an influence in a wide range of venues in the future. And our areas of expertise in science, engineering, technology, and computing are perfectly matched to the educational and developmental needs of countries around the world."

"On campus our programs allow students to interact with people and cultures from diverse international locations," he said.

"As the world increasingly becomes a 'global village,' such experiences and knowledge become increasingly important. Many of our graduates will work with, work for, or

work in other cultures and alongside people from other cultures. Thus this is a cultural 'hands-on' education."

Dr. Bennett said SPSU's international students have helped spread its reputation into the global arena.

"Today, SPSU enjoys an enhanced recognition both domestically and internationally over what we had even a decade ago," he said. "At least some part of this recognition can be associated with our international programs."

Dr. Zvi Szafran, vice president for Academic Affairs, said Dr. Bennett's contributions to SPSU have been invaluable.

"The expertise he has shared with our administration and students has given the university a global presence that we hadn't known before," Dr. Szafran explained. "We have a strong international program that will continue into the future thanks to his leadership."

***Bennett originally planned to retire in 2008, but when the international program started to "spread its wings," he elected to put retirement on hold.***

Dr. Bennett began traveling internationally in 1994, after taking a group of students on a study tour of Israel, and soon was teaching overseas.

"So my interest in international involvement, long a deeply seated part of my life, was already being shaped before any on-campus involvement began," he said.

SPSU's first international partnership with a consortium of German universities began in 1994 and interested Dr. Bennett because of his life-long fascination by all things German.

When the university created the Office of International Programs in 2001, he was named as director.

"By then, I had been participating with

the International Student Association on campus for almost a decade, taught some German students in my courses, and began to develop some definite ideas for international activities on a university campus," he said.

Bennett said he is without a doubt most proud of developing the university's international program and international "footprint" during his tenure.

Today, SPSU has 22 active or developing partnerships with universities in 11 different countries.

Bennett originally planned to retire in 2008, but when the international program started to "spread its wings," he elected to put retirement on hold.

"By 2008, I had already decided to wait a while longer to retire – a good decision, as it turned out, since that was the year of the economic meltdown in the U.S.," he said.

But with his wife, Virginia, retiring in

February 2013, he figured the timing was right for him to retire, too.

"This is still an exciting time to be at SPSU, but with our overall personal situation changing early next year, this seemed to be the right

time," he said. "I am still young enough to do more internationally, and I hope to actually increase my international presence after retirement."

Bennett would like to spend most of each year teaching overseas; to focus on his second area of expertise, cross-cultural studies; and perhaps to do cross-cultural consulting for companies doing business internationally.

"Of course, I also will continue to be interested in SPSU's international efforts and be glad to be available in whatever appropriate and useful ways I can to help the university maintain and enlarge its international footprint and continue its program development," he said. "We have a

#### **DR. RICHARD BENNETT**

**Age:** 63

**Resident:** Cobb County

**Native of:** Miami, Fla.

#### **EDUCATION**

Bachelor's degree in electrical engineering, 1970, Stevens Institute of Technology (Hoboken, N.J.); master's of divinity degree, 1985, Asbury Theological Seminary (Wilmore Ky.); graduate certificate in historical geography, 1986, Jerusalem University College (Rockford, Ill.); doctorate in history, the modern Middle East, 1992, Florida State University (Tallahassee, Fla.)

#### **PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT**

Taught at Florida State University and Tallahassee Community College; served as pastor-in-charge of various United Methodist churches in Alabama and Florida

#### **FAMILY**

Wife, Virginia C. Bennett; son, Chris Bennett; daughter, Joy Long; two grandchildren

good, stable, supportive environment on the SPSU campus for our international efforts now, meaning there is a period of stability for SPSU to follow whatever transition it may decide is appropriate."

Besides his international work, Bennett has become SPSU's resident historian. In the mid-1990s, he was asked to write the history of the university, then called Southern College of Technology, as it approached its 50th anniversary.

"I spent some time researching the history of SPSU, beginning from the days when it was just an idea until the reality of SPSU in 1997 and 1998," he said. "I'm proud to know that the work I have contributed to in the international programs will be added to SPSU's continuing history."

# MAKING A MONUMENTAL DIFFERENCE THROUGH MENTORING

***A good mentor can literally change a life with his or her steady guidance, quiet words of advice, passionate enthusiasm, and willingness to serve as a role model.***

*Just ask recent Southern Polytechnic State University graduate Thuy “Cindy” Nguyen and students of the late Prof. Glenn Allen, an SPSU alumnus who founded SPSU’s Mechatronics Engineering program and posthumously earned the International Society of Automation’s [ISA] Exceptional Student Mentor Award in September.*

## FEATURES



## Thuy “Cindy” Nguyen ’11 & Alda Stephens ’86, ’95

*Nguyen received her degree summa cum laude in industrial engineering technology (IET) in December 2011.*

She was president of the student chapter of the Society of Women Engineers, vice president of the engineering honor society Tau Alpha Pi, and a member of the Institute of Industrial Engineers student chapter.

By the beginning of her junior year, Nguyen had experienced plenty of academic success. However, she still lacked the confidence to go after the full-time jobs she really wanted at large firms.

Fate stepped in when Nguyen was selected to receive SPSU's Shaw Industries Scholarship and was invited to attend a scholarship dinner hosted by the SPSU Foundation. There, she met Alda Stephens, an SPSU alumna with degrees in IET ('86) and management ('95), who is a senior systems engineer at Lockheed Martin Aeronautics.

Nguyen has no idea how she found the courage to do so, but during their conversation, she asked Stephens to meet her for lunch. There were many more lunches after that, providing Nguyen with opportunities to ask for advice on professional decisions.

They shared the experience of often being among the few women in an engineering environment, and Nguyen could ask Stephens for her advice on leadership issues within the organizations she was interning.

Now Nguyen calls Stephens “Mama Alda,” and when Nguyen

graduated in December 2011, Stephens was right there to cheer her on.

Stephens also provided weekly support by telephone and email as Nguyen completed summer internships hundreds of miles away. After spending the summer of 2010 as an intern with Rockwell Automation in Wisconsin, Nguyen and two other SPSU students entered and ultimately won an international student competition sponsored by Rockwell.

Nguyen's successes in 2010 contributed to her being offered an internship in the summer of 2011 with Colgate-Palmolive in New Jersey. Finding herself hundreds of miles away from Atlanta again, Nguyen continued to check in with regular Sunday phone calls to Stephens.

Stephens' mentoring enabled Nguyen to talk with her manager, which led to her achieving great success as an intern that summer.

All of Nguyen's hard work paid off because after graduation she accepted a full-time job with Colgate-Palmolive as a global supply chain associate. She is currently participating in a highly competitive leadership program that includes training in different areas of the company in four-month intervals.

“My whole life changed when I met Alda,” Nguyen said. “I was at my lowest point and was very close to giving up [on competing for a big-city job with a well-known company] and just interning for a local company, but with Alda's encouragement, I continued to push, and I was successful!”

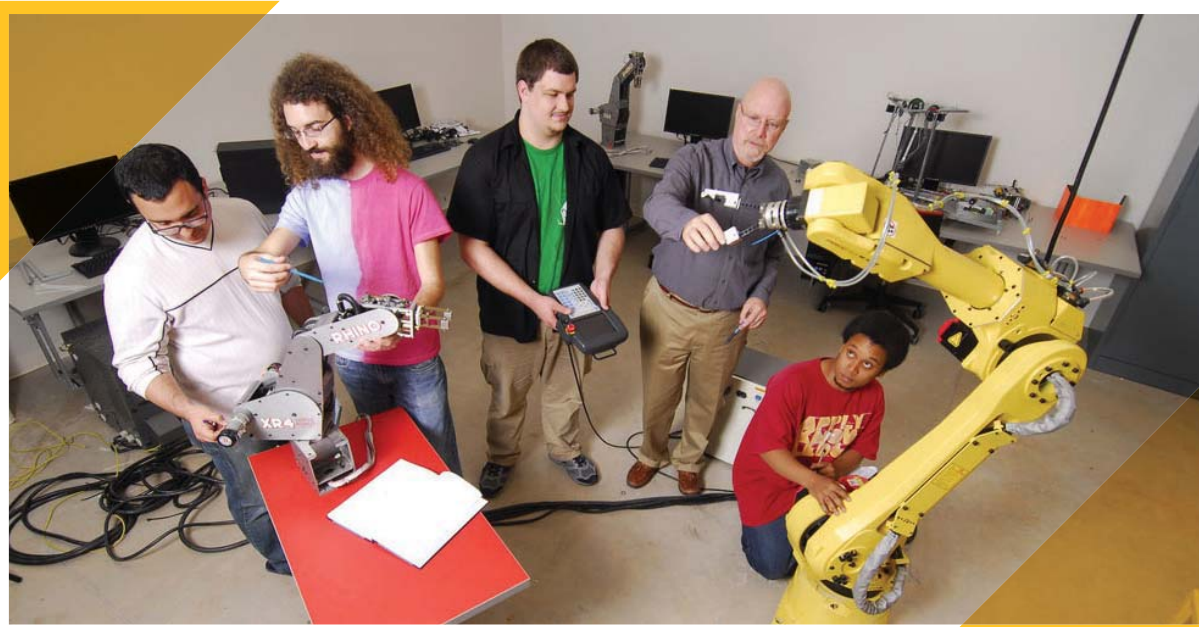
She added that having the advice of an experienced female engineer has been invaluable. “I have another mentor, a male engineer, who always gives great advice about what to do, but with Alda, she listens and helps me figure out my own approach to the problem. It's different with a female mentor.”

“Alda was someone I could share work challenges with, but she was also someone who could help me with emotional challenges,” Nguyen continued. “She helped me decide which job to accept! When I was deciding whether to accept a job in the field of electronics or in consumer products, Alda was able to help me understand how different each environment would be.”

SPSU President Lisa A Rossbacher is a strong proponent of mentoring, particularly when it comes to female students, faculty, and staff. Men still outnumber women on the SPSU campus, especially in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. Dr. Rossbacher's encouragement and the story of Nguyen's meaningful ongoing relationship with her mentor influenced the Office of Alumni Relations at SPSU to form a Women's Mentoring Program in the spring of 2012, bringing together interested female students, alumnae, faculty, and staff.

The program matches students with experienced professionals for career and life guidance and development, and to foster an exchange of ideas, friendship, and expertise.

## FEATURES



## Prof. Emeritus Glenn Allen

***Meanwhile, some of SPSU's mentors inspire students by communicating their passion for their field. That was certainly the case with the late Prof. Emeritus Glenn Allen.***

When Prof. Allen lost his battle with brain cancer last April, the many engineering students he had encouraged and inspired throughout his 16 years of teaching at SPSU knew they had lost someone truly pivotal in their lives.

Prof. Allen's history with the university dates back to the late 1970s. He earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering technology (MET) in 1980 and a master's in computer science in 1995 from what was then known as Southern College of Technology. Then, he taught MET for 12 years before launching the Southeast's first degree program in mechatronics engineering (and only the second one in the nation) in July 2007.

But inspiring the students who showed up for his classes wasn't enough for Prof. Allen.

In addition to making himself available day and night to any engineering and engineering technology students who sought his help, he also worked closely with the student chapter of the International Society of Automation (ISA) to connect its members with industry officials and expose them to every facet of automation. He also made sure they had opportunities to work on undergradu-

ate research projects for the Mechatronics Engineering Research & Education Center (MeREC), which serves as a resource for industry.

"Mechatronics engineering is the reason I decided to attend Southern Poly," said alumnus Ronald Rodriguez, the state's 2011 Engineering Student of the Year, who was president of the ISA chapter that year, graduated in May 2011, and is now employed by AMEC in Spartanburg, S.C.

Though Rodriguez only had one freshman class with him," he said, "Prof. Allen was a friend and mentor throughout my college career. I sincerely owe much of my success as an engineering student to him. No matter how busy he was, he always made time for students. He continuously motivated and expected great things from all of us and accepted nothing less. He cared about the future of his students and their goals of becoming future innovators, knowing that one day they too could change the world."

"Prof. Allen's hard work and dedication in creating the curriculum has truly impacted and changed the futures of many students," Rodriguez added. "I feel prepared and ready to take on every engineering challenge thrown my way."

Prof. Allen believed in attracting students early to science, engineering, and technology as career paths. From 2003 to 2011, he spearheaded an annual competition for middle and high school students called Georgia Boosting Engineering, Science, & Technology (BEST) Robotics, enlisting the help of many SPSU students.

## FEATURES

*Prof. Allen believed in attracting students early to science, engineering, and technology as career paths. From 2003 to 2011, he spearheaded an annual competition for middle and high school students called Georgia Boosting Engineering, Science, & Technology (BEST) Robotics, enlisting the help of many SPSU students.*

"Thanks to Prof. Allen's wonderful idea of starting a mechatronics engineering degree, now I'm a mechatronics engineer," said Margaro Rivera, an alumnus from Puerto Rico who competed in BEST Robotics in high school and received his SPSU degree in May 2012. "He made me believe that I could achieve it, even though I barely spoke English when I first met him. I thank him for opening the door for me to this unique, life-changing opportunity."

"Without Prof. Allen, there would not be a BEST Robotics program in Georgia," Rodriguez observed. "I volunteered many hours to this program, and I saw the great technological impact he had on middle and high school students."

"You have been such a guiding force in my life," wrote Blake Neal in a post on Prof. Allen's blog shortly before the professor's death. "Even as far back as my senior year of high school, when I came to visit SPSU, you gave me a direction for my future. I can honestly say that I would not be the person I am today if you had not convinced me to join the mechatronics program," said Neal, now an SPSU senior. "I'm pretty sure I can speak

for us all when I say that we are proud to have had you as our teacher, mentor, and friend. Thank you for being my inspiration."

Prof. Allen inspired everyone around him, not just his students.

John Cochran, ISA-Atlanta's student chapter liaison, said of Prof. Allen, "I personally witnessed the depths of his mentoring and consider his vision to be the primary reason that SPSU's student chapter has been such a success in preparing young minds for their careers and connecting them with industry. Glenn gladly went the extra mile, spending his precious and valuable time [after his illness was diagnosed] with the students. He served as their teacher, guide, friend, father, confidant, mentor, and inspiration."

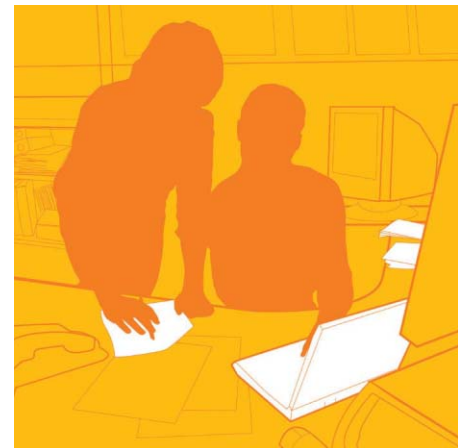
This past summer, the student ISA chapter joined with Cochran in nominating Prof. Allen for the national organization's Student Mentor of the Year Award and voted for him every day during a 30-day period in which all ISA student members were asked to vote for their favorite nominees. Prof. Allen led the nominations until the final week.

The SPSU chapter is small compared to many other universities, and their voting bloc was overwhelmed by a late surge from the much larger Houston Section of ISA, so Prof. Allen came in second in the voting.

However, the ISA's executive awards committee took notice of this massive effort by a small but scrappy chapter that – in the name of its late mentor – managed to amass an amazing 44 percent of the votes cast in the competition.

The committee decided to honor Prof. Allen by bestowing on him a rare posthumous recognition during the association's National Automation Week in late September.

The student ISA chapter, along with ISA-Atlanta, raised funds to send Prof. Allen's widow, Lisa, and children, Robbie and Becca, to Orlando, Fla., to accept the ISA's 2012 Exceptional Student Mentor Award honoring him for "dedication and devotion in mentoring students."



*"I personally witnessed the depths of his mentoring and consider his vision to be the primary reason that SPSU's student chapter has been such a success in preparing young minds for their careers and connecting them with industry."*

– John Cochran, ISA-Atlanta's student chapter liaison

# PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS IN NUCLEAR POWER

A renewed national interest in nuclear technology has Southern Polytechnic State University focused on preparing the next generation of nuclear-industry professionals.

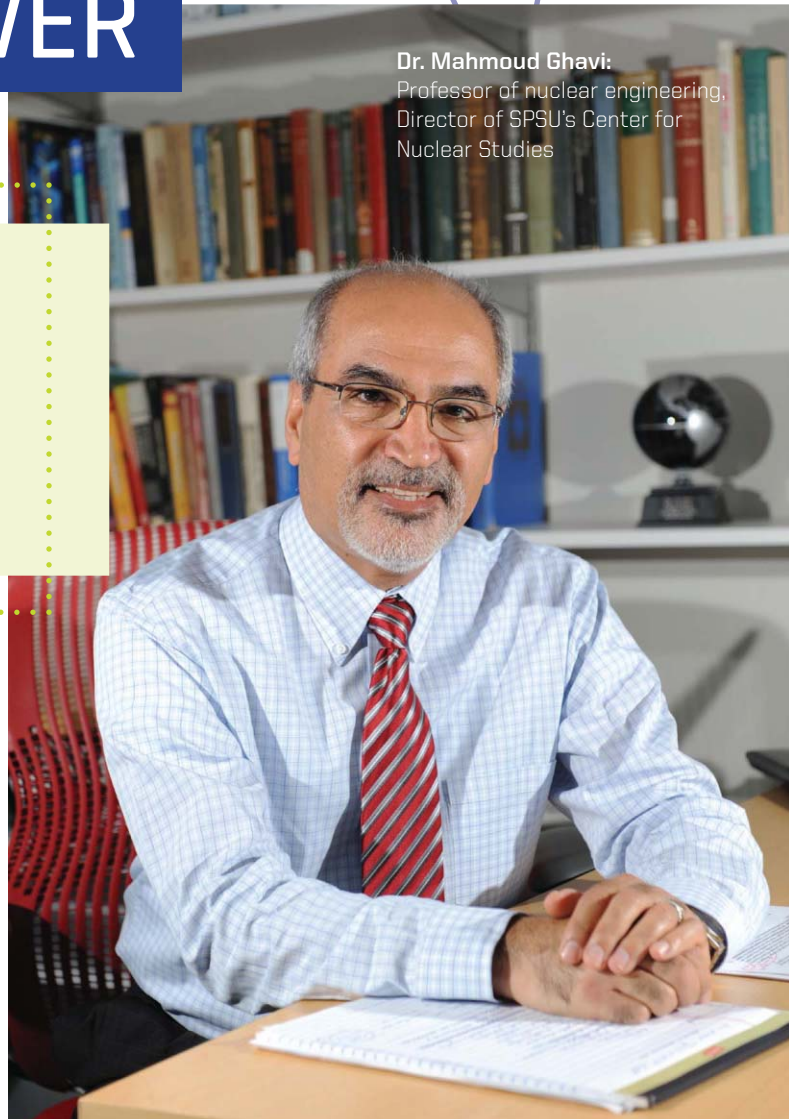
SPSU's Systems and Mechanical Engineering department is offering undergraduate academic courses leading to a minor in nuclear engineering. Professional-level nuclear engineering workshops are also offered through the Continuing Education Center to provide the knowledge and practical skills needed to seek a rewarding career in the nuclear industry.

SPSU hopes to fill a void by training well-rounded future employees for an industry that fell out of favor for several decades after the nuclear accident in 1979 at the Three Mile Island (TMI) power plant in Pennsylvania.

"After TMI, existing plant orders were cancelled; no new orders were placed; and for all practical purposes, with the exception of the operating plants, the industry was somewhat mothballed," said Dr. Mahmoud Ghavi, professor of nuclear engineering and director of SPSU's Center for Nuclear Studies. "A lot of schools curtailed their nuclear programs. As a result, we don't have anywhere near the number of nuclear engineering graduates we used to produce in the past throughout the U.S."

"And we're getting hit with a double whammy in the sense that not only are we faced with a shortage of skilled personnel, but also those professionals who graduated 25 to 35 years ago have either retired or are about to retire. The industry does not have enough personnel to replace the attrition that's taking place."

**Dr. Mahmoud Ghavi:**  
Professor of nuclear engineering,  
Director of SPSU's Center for  
Nuclear Studies



Due to the development of safer and more efficient nuclear reactors, an increased demand for energy, and the quest for cleaner power generation, "the industry has been experiencing a certain degree of rejuvenation as of several years ago," Dr. Ghavi explained.

"The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) approval earlier this year for construction of four nuclear power plants at the Southern Company's Vogtle Electric Generating Plant site in Georgia and the Shaw Group's V.C. Summer Nuclear Station site in South Carolina is the latest indication of

## Systems and Mechanical Engineering, Nuclear Engineering minor program:

**Number of students enrolled:** about 45

**Number of classes:** 6

**Number of academic credits:** 3 per course

**Course titles:** Fundamentals of Nuclear Engineering  
Radiation Detection and Measurement  
Nuclear Power Generation  
Radiation Protection and Health Physics,  
Nuclear Fuel Cycle  
Internship

**Completion:** Taking 5 of 6 classes earns students a minor in nuclear engineering

**Grant money received:** More than \$1.2 million

## ACADEMICS

"The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's [NRC] approval earlier this year for **construction of four nuclear power plants** at the Southern Company's Vogtle Electric Generating Plant site in Georgia and the Shaw Group's V.C. Summer Nuclear Station site in South Carolina is the latest indication of serious renewed interest in this industry."

serious renewed interest in this industry," he explained. "These approvals are among the first since 1978 and will result in the creation of thousands of well-paying construction and operations jobs in Georgia and South Carolina."

Interest in nuclear technology is "not just limited to nuclear power generation alone," he added. "Nuclear technology plays an important role in a number of other industries, including medicine, food, defense, research, and other industrial applications."

SPSU's nuclear program was launched in October 2009 using a \$200,000 grant from the NRC with two continuing education courses. "The plan was to eventually upgrade the program and merge it into the School of Engineering," Dr. Ghavi said.

In 2010, when the school was ready for this transition, Dr. Ghavi, who has advanced degrees in nuclear engineering, was brought in to develop the academic program and manage the program changeover.

"In my career, I've taught; provided consulting and engineering services to commercial nuclear plants and government nuclear facilities; developed a number of nuclear products; and founded and run several technology companies," he said, noting he has more than 30 years of experience in the field. "It was a perfect fit."

With the strong support of the School of Engineering, an academic program that leads to a minor in nuclear engineering was added to SPSU's academic offerings in spring 2011.

Established through the Systems and Mechanical Engineering department, the nuclear engineering minor requires completion of five of the six academic courses: Fundamentals of Nuclear Engineering, Radiation Detection and Measurement, Nuclear Power Generation, Radiation Protection and Health Physics, Nuclear Fuel Cycle, and an internship.

"Students who take five of the six courses will earn a minor in nuclear engineering as part of their degree program in engineering," Dr. Ghavi explained.

There are currently 45 students enrolled in the program.

"SPSU is one of only two universities in Georgia that offer programs in nuclear engineering, and one of a very few schools nationwide," Dr. Ghavi said.

"Since the initiation of the program at SPSU, it has attracted more than \$1.2 million in grant funding from the NRC.

"We offer tuition reimbursement scholarships sponsored by NRC to students who choose to pursue the program," he said. "They enroll in our nuclear studies program,

and the NRC picks up their tuition for the semester. In exchange, students commit to seeking employment in the nuclear industry when they graduate."

Thousands of high-paying technical and professional positions will be available for well-trained individuals once work begins on the 16 nuclear power plants slated for construction in the Southeast in coming years, Dr. Ghavi said.

"It happens that nuclear power is quite popular in the Southeast," he said. "It's incumbent upon educational institutions to take the initiative to make preparations and start training our students for these exciting and well-paying jobs. That's why the NRC is so keen on schools that take the initiative to train the next generation of nuclear engineers. They're very supportive of such programs."

Though still in early stages, SPSU's nuclear program has already gained industry attention, drawing guest speakers from nuclear power companies, the Institute of Nuclear Power Operations, nuclear industry suppliers, and architect engineering firms.

For information on the program, visit [www.spsu.edu/nuclearstudies](http://www.spsu.edu/nuclearstudies).

# MOCK FRAUD TRIAL CREATES AN EYE-OPENING EXPERIENCE

## *The tension in the courtroom was palpable.*

Some of the trial participants had stayed up all night nervously going over their testimonies again and again. Others had spent weeks researching the case and building or deconstructing a defense of the charges. All their work came down to this day. All eyes focused apprehensively on the prosecutor, the defense attorney, and the judge, who controlled the flow of information provided about the case with matter-of-fact ease.

At stake was not a conviction and a sentence, but a grade. This grade is earned by students in Prof. William Beecken's Fraud Examination accounting class at Southern Polytechnic State University each spring and fall, and it hinges on a mock trial involving allegations of financial fraud.

Two of the students serve as expert witnesses in each mock trial, grilled on the stand by real court officials to simulate actual conditions faced by fraud examiners and forensic accountants on such occasions. Two other students provide litigation support to the attorneys. Working behind the scenes as part of either the defense or prosecution team, the rest of the students use skills learned in the classroom to examine the evidence and the opposing accountants' working papers. They then provide the attorneys with ongoing analysis of the testimony of the opposing expert witness.

Nationwide, more than 450 schools teach fraud examination to their accounting students. Yet SPSU is one of only three institutions that offer students a mock-trial experience – the others are West Virginia University (Morgantown, W. Va.) and Stevenson University (Stevenson, Md.) – according to Fraud Magazine, a publication of the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners.

Why so few simulations of real-life situations?

"Because it's a big undertaking. It takes so much effort to pull this off," said Prof. Beecken. In addition to teaching part-time, he is a certified public accountant (CPA) and a certified fraud examiner (CFE) in private practice. He is also a retired supervisory auditor and investigator for the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) and senior forensic auditor for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF). Along with his extensive personal experience providing expert testimony in federal and state courts on cases involving arson-for-profit, bank fraud, bankruptcy fraud, check kiting, and mail/wire fraud, Prof. Beecken has taught a week-long Expert Testimony School for the ATF that concluded with a mock trial.

A resident of Jasper, Ga., Prof. Beecken regularly calls on colleagues he has worked with for many years in staging

the mock trials: Scott Poole, an assistant district attorney for the Appalachian Judicial Circuit, who serves as prosecutor for the mock trials; John Capo, a Jasper private-practice attorney who serves as the defense attorney; and Allen Wigington, chief magistrate of Pickens County, Ga., who presides over the mock trial in his judge's robe. Prof. Beecken's connections even resulted in one of the mock trials being held in an actual courtroom, which contributed to the realism of the experience.

Also present to help the students during the trial are Lew Brendle, a retired assistant commander of the Georgia Bureau of Investigations who teaches interviewing to the class; and Laurie Dyke, Michele Bruce, and Karen Fortune, CPA/CFE with Investigative Accounting Group Forensics in Cobb County who regularly testify as expert witnesses on a multitude of fraud and litigation matters.

Prof. Beecken pulls no punches with his students on the realities of fraud examination and serving as an expert witness. But no

*On the eve of one of the mock trials, an unexpected snag sent the student defense team into crisis mode – its designated expert witness was hospitalized and would be unable to testify.*

amount of classroom preparation, personal stories, and visits from colleagues from the field can match subjecting students directly to the pace, restrictions, and sheer sobriety of seeing the legal system at work on an average day.

On the eve of one of the mock trials, an unexpected snag sent the student defense team into crisis mode – its designated expert witness was hospitalized and would be unable to testify. With less than 24 hours to prepare and plenty of apprehension, Patricia Rongo, then a junior majoring in business administration, stepped in to pinch-hit for her classmate. She and the prosecution's expert witness, Nerine Burke, then a senior accounting major, each stayed up nearly all night, separately rehearsing their direct-examination testimony and working with team members to anticipate cross-examination questions from the opposing counsel.

Even so, shock and awe best described the reactions of all of Prof. Beecken's students to the grilling Rongo and Burke received (lasting approximately 90 minutes apiece) at the hands of Assistant District Attorney Poole as prosecutor and attorney Capo as defense attorney.

"I was nervous – I couldn't remember my information. I knew I needed to be prepared, but I needed to have prepared a lot more. [Defense Attorney Capo's] cross-examination really threw me," said a chagrined Burke, who was prompted several times by the judge to "answer the question" when she paused for long moments.

Rongo said afterward that she "expected worse" from Prosecutor Poole in his efforts to discredit her testimony on cross-examination. "I expected him to be more vicious," she said, prompting Poole to assure her that, in a real court case, he would have put up a much tougher fight than in this learning experience.

Capo praised Rongo for "sticking to her guns and not being intimidated" by Poole's attempts to confuse or challenge her.

Dyke, whose expertise as a CFE has led to appearances on the television show *Swift Justice* with Nancy Grace, told the class after the trial that she felt "both witnesses did very well for their first time at trial," particularly in listening carefully to the questions that were asked and answering succinctly.

She and the other professionals who either participate in or observe the mock trials spend time afterward giving the students tips and pointers for future occasions.

"You need to know your material," Bruce with Investigative Accounting Group Forensics stressed, noting that there should be no fumbling to locate the right page of a document or the exact amount of a check called into question. "You need to prep. You need to prep. You need to prep."

As nerve-racking as the mock trial can be, the course is encouraging SPSU students to become CFEs, Prof. Beecken explained. "At least three students who've participated in the mock trials now work in the field, and several have interned with auditing, forensic



Prof. William Beecken; Laurie Dyke, CPA/CFF CFE with Investigative Accounting Group Forensics in Cobb County; Judge Allen Wigington, chief magistrate of Pickens County, Ga.; Michele Bruce, also a CPA/CFF CFE with Investigative Accounting Group Forensics; and Scott Poole, an assistant district attorney for the Appalachian Judicial Circuit who served as prosecutor for the mock trials.

accounting, and investigative agencies, including three with the University System of Georgia's Office of Internal Audit and Compliance."

One current student spent the last eight months interning with the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, which conducts major Department of Defense procurement fraud investigations, and another has interned with the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) and Diplomatic Security Service (DSS). FLETC trains ATF and Secret Service agents, among others, while DSS protects U.S. and foreign diplomats here and abroad and conducts visa and passport fraud investigations.

Prof. Beecken is particularly proud of one former student – his son, Clark, who graduated in 2011 and testified last year as an expert witness during the criminal trial of an accountant for Vidalia High School.

Clark Beecken now serves as a senior forensic auditor with the Georgia Tech Department of Internal Auditing.

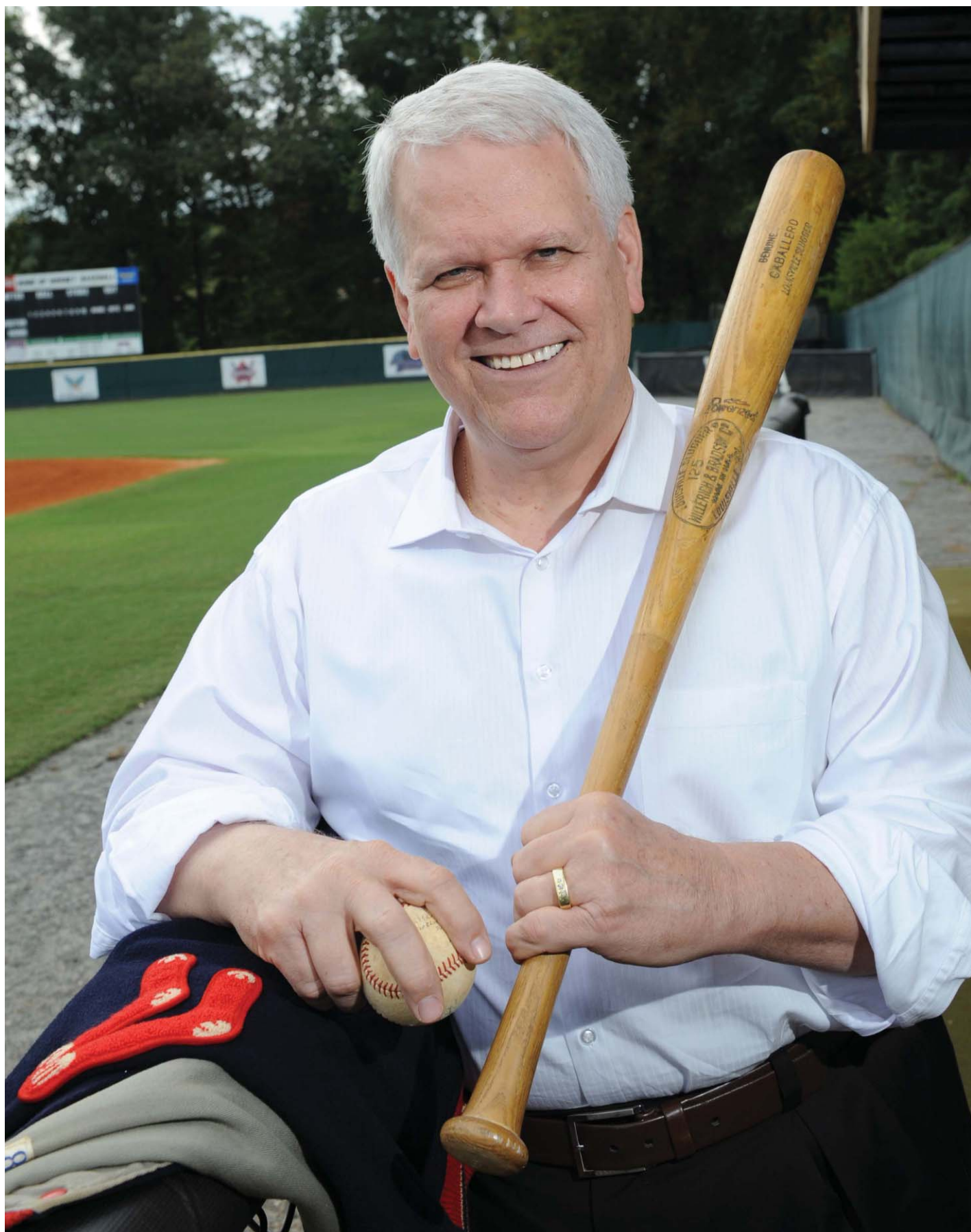
He found his father's course good preparation for the real world.

"It's still nerve wracking even now, but the mock trial brought to light – in a way that books and lectures can't – how careful you have to be in phrasing what you say and anticipating how your words might affect the outcome. How you got [to a conclusion about the evidence in your testimony as an expert witness] is just as important as your actual findings."

"SPSU students are attracted to applied learning, and mock trials offer a great glimpse into the fraud investigation field. CFEs are one of the highest paid positions available to accounting graduates," Clark Beecken noted.

Prof. Beecken has guided a total of 40 SPSU students through the mock-trial experience since 2010. The next one will be held in May 2013.

For more information on the accounting program, visit [www.spsu.edu/business](http://www.spsu.edu/business).



## *STUDENT, PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL PLAYER, MARIETTA LAWYER:*

# *FRANK WARD TELLS HIS STORY*

### ***SOME BOYS DREAM OF PLAYING IN THE MAJOR LEAGUES...***

With the players along the baseline, “The Star-Spangled Banner” is sung proudly and followed by the roar of the crowd. The ball cracks against the wooden bat. Teammates rush out of the dugout to greet the batter who just hit a home run.

While the odds are slim for most, Frank Ward knows exactly how this feels. Today the Marietta lawyer is an expert on estate planning, but in 1967 he was a student at Southern Polytechnic State University – then called Southern Technical Institute – who became a fifth-round Major League Baseball draft pick in 1968.

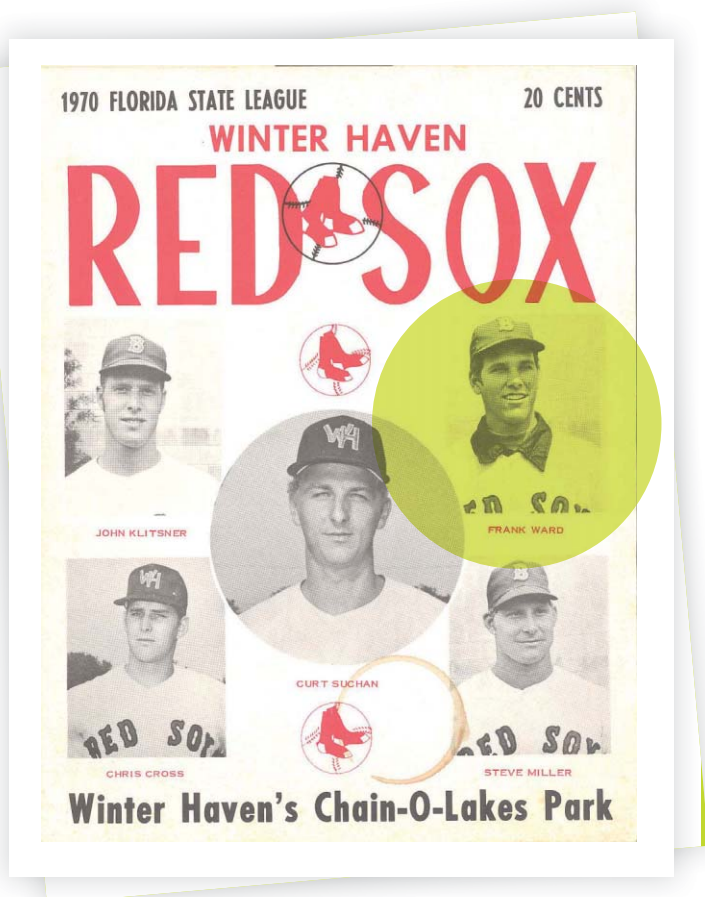
“Since I was 10 years old, I had wanted to be a professional baseball player,” he said. “The very first book I ever picked up and read

through was a book about the 1927 Yankees of Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig. Later on, Mickey Mantle became my idol. I was crazy about it. That’s what I wanted to do with my life.”

Ward was majoring in industrial management. Since SPSU didn’t offer baseball scholarships at that time, Ward was offered a basketball scholarship to play baseball. He accepted.

“The first year, Harry Lockhart was the basketball and the baseball coach,” Ward said. “He had to give me a basketball scholarship to

## FEATURES



get me on his baseball team. The very first year, I was practicing on the basketball team but as baseball season rolled around, I then played my true game.”

Ward’s second year at Southern Tech did not come with a requirement that he play basketball, so he was able to concentrate on his pitching. In the summer of 1968, he was drafted by the Montreal Expos organization (now the Washington Nationals). However, he would never play with the team.

“They came to scout me a little bit. They did not offer very much money at all,” Ward said. He and the team disagreed about the amount of up-front money, so Ward chose not to sign with them. He returned to campus to complete his second year.

A supplemental draft was conducted that winter for players who either had never been drafted or who were drafted and chose not to sign. The Cleveland Indians drafted Ward in the first round. Again, disagreements over money resulted in another rejection from Ward.

The 1969 summer supplemental draft resulted in another first-round pick and contract offer – but this time accepted by Ward. He was going to the Boston Red Sox.

Ward pitched in the team’s minor league organization for three years – having one very good year and two average years – until he was released in the winter of 1971. Still determined to play, Ward

sought out other teams. He was invited to the Pittsburgh Pirates’ minor league spring training camp.

An arm injury over the winter prevented him from pitching at all in the spring training camp of 1972. Ward said, “I hurt it and then was trying to rehabilitate it over the winter, but by the time I got to spring training, it still had not responded, and I could not pitch. I was there for a couple of weeks. They had no choice but to release me.”

Ward continued to play in leagues around Atlanta as his arm improved. Ward found himself back at minor league spring training camp again with the Pittsburgh Pirates in the spring of 1976 at the age of 27.

“I was assigned to the Triple A team roster,” he said. “I pitched pretty well, I thought. I could hold my own against the other farm teams.”

However, Tim Murtaugh, son of Pittsburgh Pirates former manager Danny Murtaugh and assistant general manager of the minor leagues at the time, let Ward down easy.

“Tim came over to me and said, ‘Frank, we think you’ve done pretty well this spring, and normally we’d keep you, but we’ve got a lot of young kids coming in. We’ve decided to go with the young kids and see what they can do.’” Ward said he thanked Murtaugh and left.

“I’d done my best, but it was time to pack up and live a regular life,” he said. Ward hung up his glove and continued his education. He graduated in 1975 from Georgia State University before his last stint in the minors, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in political science. He later earned a law degree from Oglethorpe University’s Woodrow Wilson College of Law in 1979.

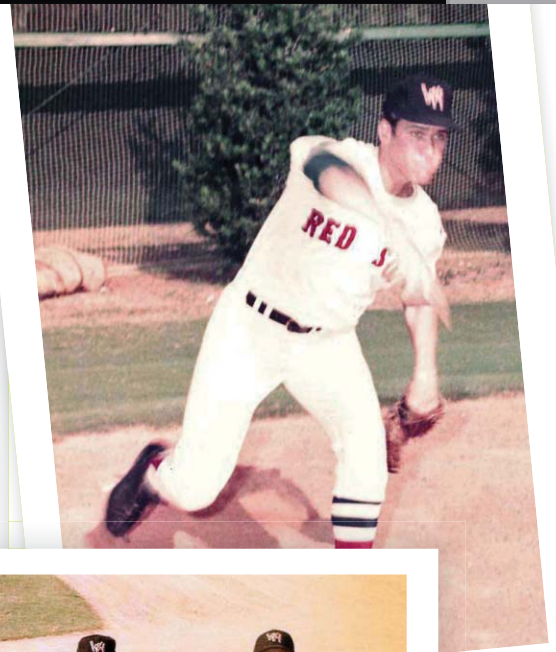
Highlights of Ward’s baseball career include hitting the field with players such as Dwight Evans, Rick Burleson, Cecil Cooper, Hall of Fame catcher Carlton Fisk (during a winter instructional league season), and Cy Young award-winner Jim Lonborg. He also had one stretch of 27 consecutive scoreless innings in 1970 in the Florida State League with the Winter Haven Red Sox.

Although baseball was his first passion, Ward said government, politics, and the law also interested him. While working as an insurance agent during his law school years, a sales manager encouraged Ward to pursue an insurance career using his law degree in order to further himself in that industry. He did that until 1993, when he decided to get back into the law profession.

Reinvigorated, Ward took a two-month bar review course that spring, took the bar in June 1993, and learned he passed it that October. He said, “It was incredible for me. I had been out of the classroom for so long.” In his mid-40s at the time, he said getting hired was difficult so he decided to take another route.

“

Since I was 10 years old, I had wanted to be a professional baseball player. The very first book I ever picked up and read through was a book about the 1927 Yankees of Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig.”



Frank Ward with the Winter Haven Red Sox, a Boston Red Sox minor league team, in 1970.

“The only thing I really knew about the law was from my previous insurance career. That was estate planning and financial planning,” Ward said. “That became the core of my law practice.”

On Jan. 15, 1994, Ward opened his own solo law firm in Marietta. Nearly 19 years later, the firm is thriving – just like SPSU’s baseball program.

To date, 25 baseball players have been drafted to play professionally. Matt Griffin, SPSU’s athletic director, is one of them.

Griffin attended SPSU from 1995 to 1998 and played for the Chicago Cubs’ minor league team as a shortstop for two years, beginning in the spring of 1998.

He said SPSU takes care of its athletes,

both on the field and off. A good education and coaches’ knack for recruiting good players are among the factors Griffin cited for the success of the program.

“There will be life after baseball.

Students will have a great career in whatever field they choose major-wise here at Southern Poly,” he said. “The administration here is great to work with and they offer full support of the athletic program.”

This year, Casey Shiver and Matt Kimbrel were drafted to the Texas Rangers and Atlanta Braves, respectively. However, Ward still holds the record as the highest draft pick in the school’s history.

He credits SPSU for being able to fulfill a dream.

“I did not become professional material until that first season with [SPSU],” he said. Although Ward’s claim to fame is still relevant at SPSU, he said he didn’t think about his record until recently.

“It’s kind of amazing to me. It’s been a lot of years since that happened. I’ve always considered myself a jock,” he said, noting he plays basketball at least three days a week. “It’s a bit of a tickle to my ego to know that back in my day, I did well enough that someone thought enough of me to draft me.”

“It was a tremendous three to four years of my life. I wouldn’t give it up for anything.”

# HORNETS ATHLETICS GETS REVAMPED



This year big changes have occurred in the Southern Polytechnic State University Athletics department.

1

Former head baseball coach Matt Griffin has been named the new athletic director

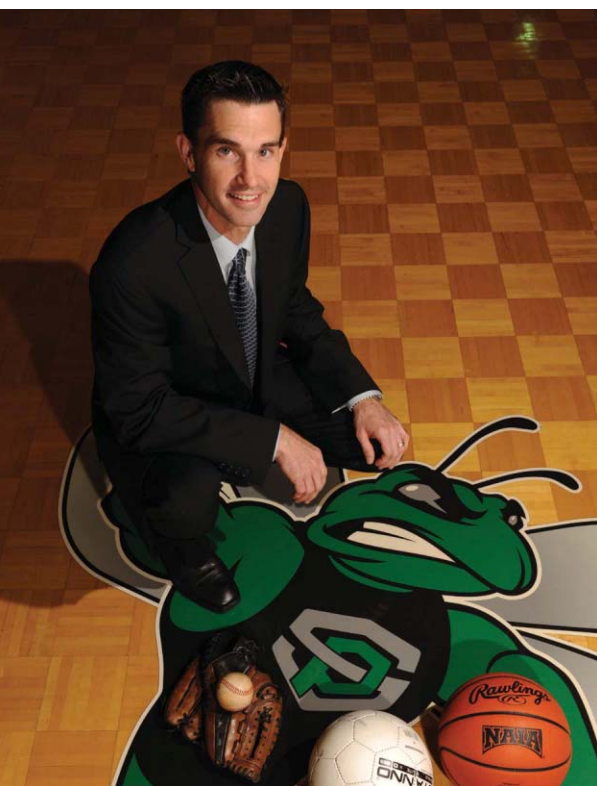
2

Marty Lovrich takes the reins as the new head baseball coach

3

Jeffrey Pourchier returns to SPSU as the new men's head basketball coach

*Griffin steps up as the new athletic director, a position previously filled by Karl Staber, who is now focusing full-time on his role as the director of recreation sports. The role of athletic director and director of recreation sports was handled by Staber before the department decided to split the roles.*



## MATT GRIFFIN

Griffin steps into the position of athletic director after serving seven years as assistant athletic director and nine years as head baseball coach.

In 1998, Griffin graduated from the SPSU baseball field with a degree in business administration and joined the Chicago Cubs organization. He played in the Cubs' minor league for two years before returning to SPSU as a member of the baseball team's coaching staff.

He won multiple awards including being named the 2007 Southern States Athletic Conference (SSAC) Coach of the Year; He won multiple awards including being named the 2007 Southern States Athletic Conference (SSAC) Coach of the Year; 2007 and 2008 National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Georgia Dugout Club Coach of the Year; and the 2009 NAIA American Baseball Coaches Association Regional Coach of the Year.

***In 2009, his team set a school record in wins in a season [53] and recorded the highest ranking in SPSU baseball history [4th]. Griffin also has nine straight 30+ win seasons.***

Under his leadership, 10 Hornets have been drafted to play professional baseball, including recent 2012 players Matt Kimbrel and Casey Shiver.



## MARTY LOVRICH

Lovrich takes over the Hornets baseball program that Griffin led to six consecutive NAIA Regionals and a fifth-place NAIA World Series finish in 2009.

Lovrich spent the last 20 years as the associate head coach at Auburn University at Montgomery (AUM), where he helped lead the Warhawks to a winning season each of those years. He also led the team to five conference championship wins, 18 NAIA Regional appearances, and three trips to the NAIA World Series with a runner-up finish in 1990. Lovrich received both his MBA and undergraduate degree from AUM.

***During his tenure at AUM, he recruited 33 All-American, 66 All-Conference, 40 All-Region, and 18 players who went on to play professional baseball.***

"Marty's 20 years of successful experiences, as well as his knowledge of the game and recruiting, are ideal for the baseball program here at SPSU," said Griffin.

"I have enjoyed my first few months at SPSU," said Coach Lovrich. "I am very impressed with the recruiting class that Assistant Baseball Coach Gary Bohannon has brought in, and I feel like our pitching is the focal point of this team."

"If our pitching staff stays healthy and we can keep them together for the entire year, we should be very competitive when the season begins in the spring."

## JEFFREY POURCHIER

Jeffrey Pourchier, former Reinhardt University (Waleska, Ga.) basketball coach, is the new head coach of the Runnin' Hornets men's basketball team.

Serving as head coach of the Reinhardt Eagles from 2007 to 2012, Pourchier led the team to three consecutive winning seasons and back-to-back appearances in the Appalachian Athletic Conference tournament championship. He also spent two seasons at Valdosta State University (VSU) as the assistant men's coach, helping the team earn a 37-19 record. He capped his final season at VSU with an appearance in the NCAA Division II National Tournament in 2007.

Pourchier also has experience with the SPSU basketball program. He served as an assistant coach for two seasons from 2003 to 2005 under Coach Mike Helfer. During the 2004-05 season, the team clinched both the SSAC regular season and tournament championships, went 32-4, advanced to the third round of the NAIA tournament, and, at one point in the season, were ranked No. 1 in the country – a first for any sport in the school's history.

***"It is a tremendous honor to be named the new head men's basketball coach at SPSU," said Coach Pourchier. "Thanks to Dr. Lisa Rossbacher, Dr. Ron Koger, and Athletic Director Matt Griffin for the opportunity to lead the Hornets Basketball program."***

"I am extremely excited to once again be a part of this special university and Hornets Athletics. With the continued support of all Hornets fans, I am confident that we will have the opportunity to



succeed on and off the court and continue to build on the Southern Poly championship tradition. We have a great group of young men who expect to play at a high level. We are looking forward to this season – it should be an exciting year. It will be fast-paced and fun to watch."

The Lawrenceville native attended LaGrange College (LaGrange, Ga.) and was a stand-out on their basketball team, accumulating more than 1,000 points and 500 rebounds in his career. After earning a business management degree from LaGrange, he earned his MBA from SPSU.

## BRIGHT FUTURE

With enrollment at 6,202 this fall and the increased focus on developing the Athletics department, "It's a great time at the university, and I'm looking forward to the new coaches we hired on, in addition to the ones that have already been here," Griffin added. "We want athletics to grow as the university grows."



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## Save These Dates

### Saturday, December 15, 2012

#### Fall Graduation

**10 a.m.** School of Arts and Sciences and School of Engineering Technology and Management

**2 p.m.** School of Architecture and Construction Management, School of Engineering, and School of Computing and Software Engineering

Both sessions will be held in the SPSU Gymnasium.

### Saturday, January 12, 2013

#### Alumni Night at the Gwinnett Gladiators

**6:00 p.m.** Pre-game event

**7:30 p.m.** Game at Gwinnett Arena in Duluth vs. Kalamazoo Wings.

Bring the whole family to this great venue for a fun night of hockey. Parking is free! Center ice tickets are \$10 and include one drink ticket and entry into a Gladiators raffle. Purchase tickets by calling 678-915-7351.

### Monday, January 21, 2013

#### Alumni Day at Charlotte Bobcats

Enjoy two SPSU basketball games at the Time Warner Cable Arena in Charlotte, plus a Bobcats game, all for the price of \$12.

### January 27 – February 2, 2013

#### Homecoming Week

Graduates of the Last Decade – GOLD Tailgate Party on Saturday, February 2. Bring the whole family and enjoy baseball games, basketball games, and carnival games.

### Wednesday, February 27, 2013

#### SPSU Spring Career Expo

**12-4 p.m.** on campus at the Recreation and Wellness Center

### April or May 2013

#### Alumni Night at the Atlanta Braves

Date TBD. Join SPSU alums for a private pre-game reception before the gates open to the public.

### Saturday, May 11, 2013

#### Spring Graduation



For more information about these events and dates, please contact the Advancement Office at 678-915-7351 or go to [alumni.spsu.edu](http://alumni.spsu.edu).



To stay connected, find the SPSU Alumni Facebook page at [facebook.com/spsualumni](https://facebook.com/spsualumni).