



Rotary
Club of Jackson,
Mississippi



Rotagram

September 16, 2024

The Rotary Club of Jackson welcomed Dr. Tracy Cook, President of Alcorn State University. The title of his presentation is “Always Alcorn: Our Vision, Our Progress, Our Future.”



L to R: Neddie Winters, Past Rotary President; Past Rotary Assistant District Governor; President Mission Mississippi, Retired; Dr. Tracy Cook, President, Alcorn State University; Phillip Carpenter, Rotary President; Owner, Carpenter Properties; and Pelicia Hall, Executive Vice President, ViaPath Technologies

President Phillip Carpenter welcomed Rotarians and guests.

Seth Dickinson, Special Assistant Attorney General, Mississippi Attorney General's Office, delivered the Invocation; Ted Jackson, Stephens Investment Banking, led club members in the Pledge of Allegiance; and President Phillip led members in the Four Way Test.

Tony Webb, President of Jackson Metro, Southern Bancorp, introduced visiting Rotarians and guests:

- Donald Tassin, Sr. VP - Corporate Banking, Cadence Bank
- Rosemary Cargin, First VP – Relationship Banking, Cadence Bank
- Tommie Winters, guest of Neddie Winters
- Maxine Greenleaf, Interim Vice President of Marketing, Alcorn State University guest of Neddie Winters

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Congratulations to Meade Mitchell, who was recently installed as the president of the Mississippi State Bar at the Mississippi Bar Annual Meeting.

Congratulations to Tina Clay, who will be running for the Ward 2 City Council seat – the City of Jackson

Congratulations to Yolanda Singleton for being named 2025 Queen Select for the Mystic Krewe of Femme Fatale. Yolanda will be crowned on January 4, 2025, in New Orleans.

Congratulations to Karla Tye, who was invited to participate as a panelist of non-profit leaders at the Women's Summit hosted by Attorney General Lynn Fitch in Oxford, MS.

Congratulations to Deonte Oscar on becoming a 2024 Men Wear Pink Ambassador for Central Mississippi.

Past District Governor Mark Fields recently attended the Heart of America Rotary Zone Institute in Huntsville, Alabama, where he ran into **Past Rotary Club of Jackson President Janet Scott**, who was also in attendance. She has joined the Oxford Rotary Club and is already engaged and active.

On September 10-11, **Rotarian Gerard Gibert** was a guest speaker at the 3rd Annual “It’s All Relative” Family Business Symposium organized by the University of Mississippi’s Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

District 6820 is now accepting applications for District Governor for Rotary year 2027-2028. For more information or to access the application, please visit <https://www.rotary6820.com>. The deadline to apply is October 31, 2024.

Save the Date: On Monday, October 14, the JMM Satellite Club is hosting a golf scramble at the Pete Brown Golf Course. The cost is \$75 per player or \$275 for a team of three. For more information, please email President Erica Reed at ejohnson@jacksonmedicalmall.org.

Save the Date: October 24, 6:00 p.m. - District 6820 End Polio Now 5k Run and Walk. Flowood Family YMCA, 690 Liberty Road. Questions? Email Dr. Nelson Atehortua, Committee Chair, at nelson.atehortua@gmail.com.

Fourth-quarter invoices are now in your inbox. Please make these a priority.

BIRTHDAYS:

Tony Sanders	September 20
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ROTARY JOIN DATES:

Beau Bettiga (1 year)	September 20
Naomi Jackson (1 year)	September 20
Dr. Billy Long (1 year)	September 20
Bill Blackwell (9 years)	September 21

Please plan to join the Rotary Club of Jackson on Monday, September 23. Our speaker will be Steve Jent, Executive Director, Sanderson Farms Championship.

Pelicia Hall, Executive Vice President of ViaPath Technologies, introduced Dr. Tracy Cook, President of Alcorn State University.

Dr. Tracy Cook’s presentation title was “Always Alcorn: Our Vision, Our Progress, Our Future.”

For over 150 years, Alcorn State University has embraced its students and immersed them in a college experience like none other. It is the oldest public historically Black land-grant institution in the United States and the second-oldest state-supported institution of higher learning in Mississippi. “Beneath the shade of giant trees” lies a beautiful landscape with historic buildings and innovative new facilities. An Alcorn education prepares students to join the workforce immediately and have an impact.

Since its beginning, Alcorn State University has been a leader among our nation’s HBCUs. Our diverse community of 3,000 students comes from 37 states and 22 countries. Alcorn has a focus on the future, strengthened by its rich history of trailblazers and innovators — from NFL giants to top industry executives.

Alcorn is known to many as a home away from home and a place where students can find their purpose.

The University has earned nationwide recognition not only for being affordable but also for its excellence in nursing, music, STEM, education, agriculture, and the liberal arts. Outside the classroom, students can get involved in NCAA Division I athletics and more than 85 organizations and clubs, including student-run radio and television stations and the Sounds of Dyn-O-Mite Marching Band featuring the Golden Girls. At Alcorn, we have generous grant and scholarship opportunities to lessen the burden of pursuing your education.

Dr. Cook’s Background

Dr. Tracy M. Cook was appointed by the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning Board of Trustees as the President of Alcorn State University, effective April 1, 2024. He had been serving as interim president since July 8, 2023.

He previously served as Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management at Alcorn State University.

His responsibilities included directing and supervising the units and directors within the Office of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, including Admissions and Recruiting, Career Services, and Residence Life. In this role, he developed vital collaborative relationships with campus administrative areas, faculty, and campus and community leaders to plan and implement strategic initiatives.

Dr. Cook has more than 25 years of administrative experience in education.

He returned to Alcorn in 2015 as Chief of Staff. In 2018, he was appointed interim Vice President for Student Affairs. After successfully serving in the interim role, he was promoted to Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management in 2019.

Before joining Alcorn, Dr. Cook served in various roles, including superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal, assistant principal, athletic director, and teacher in the Jefferson and Claiborne County School Districts.

He is a committed administrator with significant experience in financial management, project management, negotiation and conflict resolution, data analysis, and professional development.

While employed at the Jefferson County School District, Dr. Cook successfully managed a budget of more than \$50 million and secured an additional \$2 million to support student outcomes.

Dr. Cook's attention to detail and general aptitude have allowed him to serve as a member of several professional organizations, namely, the Mississippi Association of School Superintendents Board of Directors, Mississippi Alliance of Black School Educators Board of Directors, Mississippi Association of School Administrators, Mississippi School Board Association — Board of Directors, and AP&C Trusts, a trustee/board member for Copiah-Lincoln Community College, and the Natchez-Adams School District as a board advisor.

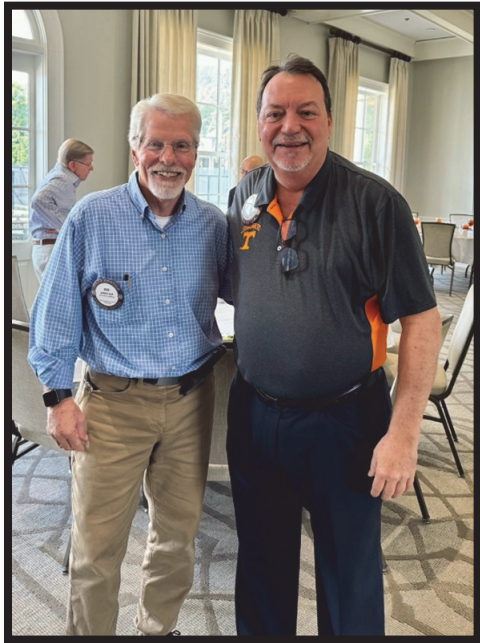
In addition, he served on the Southern Regional Educational Service-Agency Consortium Board of Directors, Program of Research & Evaluation for Public Schools Advisory Committee, Parents' Campaign Better Schools-Brighter Future, Southwest Junior High Athletic Conference — Secretary; Mississippi High School Activities Association's Legislative and Executive Board of Directors, and the Copiah-Lincoln Community College Board of Trustees. Dr. Cook also co-founded the Southwest Mississippi Educator Conference.

He was recognized as one of Alcorn's 40 Under 40 honorees in 2012 and ranked among the University's Top 50 Greatest Football Athletes (2014). In 2015, Dr. Cook was inducted into the Alcorn Sports Hall of Fame. Most recently, in 2023, he received the Southwestern Athletic Conference Alumni Association's Lifetime Achievement Award.

A native of Fayette, Mississippi, he graduated from Jefferson County High School and embarked upon a rewarding athletic and scholastic journey at Alcorn. A scholar-athlete, Dr. Cook received a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics in 1994, a master's degree in agronomy in 1996, and educational administration and supervision in 1998. He went on to earn his specialist and doctoral degrees from William Carey University.

He is married to the former Dr. Crystal N. Smith, and they have two children, Kennedy and Casey.

More Photos



Rob Salley and Michael Van Velkinburgh



Maxine Greenleaf and
Past President Neddie Winters



Past President Neddie Winters, Tommie Winters, and Tina Clay



Al Underwood, Phillip Carpenter, and Ted Jackson



Dr. Tracy Cook and Pelicia Hall



Dr. Tracy Cook