

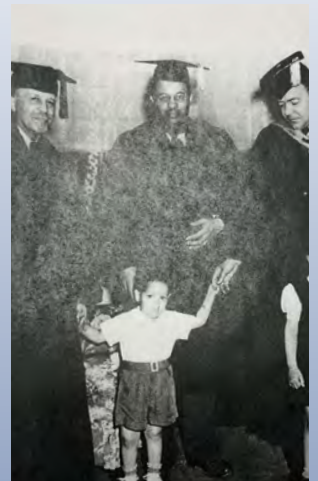
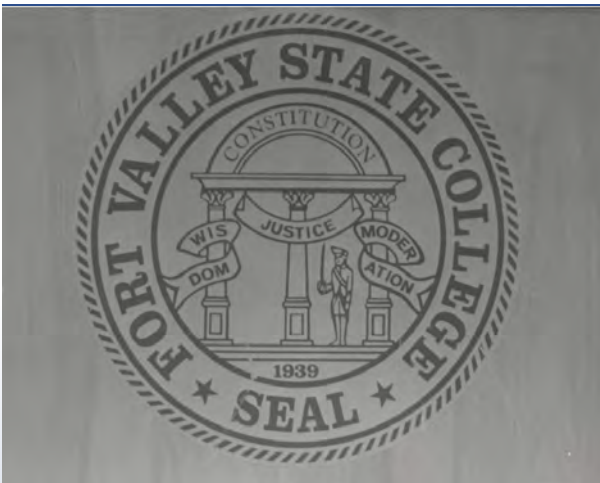
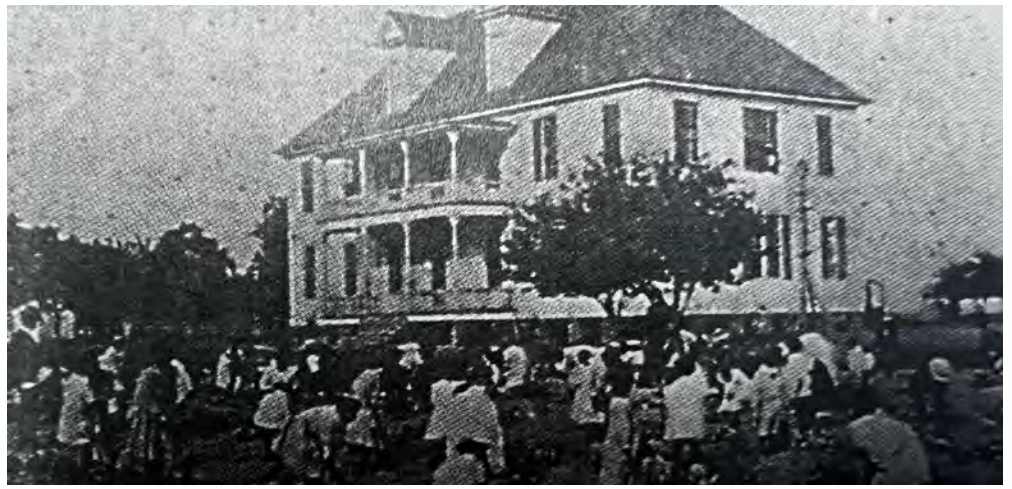
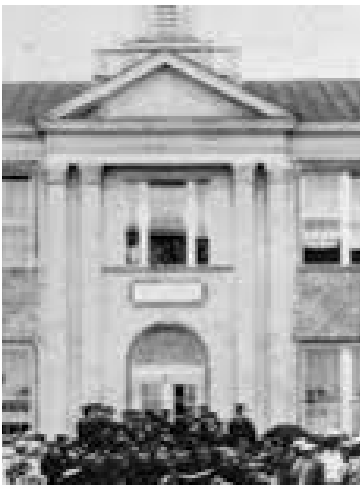
FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

30th Anniversary



CELEBRATING A LEGACY

FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT & FOUNDATION
ANNUAL REPORT 2024 - 2025



135

YEARS

FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

1895-2025



*130 years
of harboring a legacy.*

This wouldn't be possible without our Wildcats.

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FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT TEAM



Karen Wright

Vice President of University Advancement and Executive Director of FVSU Foundation



Karyn C. Nooks

Director of Alumni Relations



Jaron Lucas

Director of Development



Mario Cherry

Strategic Management Leader



D'Asia Guider

Accounting Specialist



Dorothy Stripling

Account Manager



A MESSAGE FROM FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY'S PRESIDENT

As we reflect on the progress and purpose that defined the 2024-2025 academic year, we do so during a truly historic moment—Fort Valley State University's celebration of 130 years of unapologetic excellence. Throughout this milestone year, I have been deeply grateful for the steadfast generosity that continues to propel our institution forward. Your support is a powerful affirmation of belief in our students, our mission and the enduring promise of an FVSU education.

For 130 years, Fort Valley State University has been transforming lives through education, opportunity and service. Today, that legacy is strengthened by measurable outcomes and national recognition. Fort Valley State University is proud to be ranked the #1 public HBCU in Georgia for eight consecutive years and #1 in the region for social mobility, affirming our long-standing commitment to access, student success and upward mobility.

In addition, our designation as a Carnegie research institution reflects the growing impact of our faculty, students, and scholars whose work addresses real-world challenges and advances knowledge across disciplines. These achievements are made possible through strategic investment and philanthropic partnership.

This Annual Report of Giving reflects the collective impact of supporters who understand that investing in Fort Valley State University is an investment in academic excellence, workforce readiness and community advancement. Each contribution strengthens our foundation and ensures the sustainability of our legacy.

On behalf of our students, faculty, staff, alumni and supporters, thank you for being an essential part of our journey. Your belief in our future honors our past and secures opportunity for generations to come. Together, we will continue to advance excellence, expand access and fulfill the promise of this great institution.

With sincere appreciation,

Paul Jones Ph.D.
President,
Fort Valley State University

PRESIDENTS LEADERSHIP

LEADERSHIP

Derrick Scott, Ed.D.

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Timothy L. Hatchett, Ph.D.

| VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS AND ENROLLMENT
MANAGEMENT

Michelle Martin, MBA

| VICE PRESIDENT FOR BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Karen Wright

| VICE PRESIDENT OF UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT AND EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR OF FVSU FOUNDATION

Keith M. Howard, Ph.D.

| INTERIM VICE PRESIDENT FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND LAND
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Emma Bennett-Williams, ESQ

| CHIEF OF STAFF AND INTERIM CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER



Nirmal Joshee, Ph.D.

| INTERIM DEAN OF GRADUATE EDUCATION

Eyualet Abebe, Ph.D.

| DEAN, COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Karin Vinson

| GENERAL COUNSEL AND DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS



Beth Day-Hairston

| DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND
PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

Britney Smith

| EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MARKETING
AND COMMUNICATIONS

Ndidi Akuta

| CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

Antonio Fletcher

| CHIEF OF POLICE

Daphnie Johnson

| DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS



THE FOUNDATION'S MISSION

1895



The Fort Valley State University Foundation, Inc. was established in 1972 with the specific mandate to serve as custodian of contributions from the private sector, alumni, friends, industries, and foundations; to receive, invest and administer funds; to act as trustee; and in general, to exercise the powers of a not-for-profit organization under the laws of the State of Georgia.

The purposes for which this corporation is organized are as follows:

1. To encourage, solicit, receive, and administer gifts and bequests of property and funds for scientific, educational, and charitable purposes, all for the advancement of Fort Valley State University and its objectives and purposes; and, to that end, to take and hold, either absolutely or in trust, funds and property of all kinds for such purposes, subject only to any limitations or conditions imposed by law or by the instrument under which they are received; to sell, lease, convey, and dispose of such property; to invest and reinvest the proceeds and other funds; and to expend the principal and income for any purposes herein authorized; to act as trustee; and, in general, to exercise any and all powers, including trust powers, which a nonprofit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Georgia may be authorized to exercise for the foregoing purposes.
2. To promote and support education; to provide:
 - (a) Funds which are not provided from public sources for use in the furtherance of education and welfare of Fort Valley State University, its faculty, and students;
 - (b) Funds to be used in attracting experienced, and outstanding instructors, educators, and scientists to such university;
 - (c) Educational facilities, including dormitories;
 - (d) Scholarships, and other activities subject to amendment.
3. To do and perform any acts and expend its funds in any manner which the board of directors shall determine will be beneficial to education and the university.
4. Upon specific approval of the Board of Directors or executive committee, to borrow search sums, on such terms and with such security, if any, as may be prescribed in such approval, but no trust assets may be pledged or committed in a manner that would violate the trust upon which held.
5. All of the assets and income of the foundation shall be used only for the purpose hereinabove set out, including the payment of expenses incidental thereto; and no part of its assets, income, funds, or property shall inure to the benefit of its members, directors, or officers, and no part of its activities shall be for the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the foundation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.
6. In the event of dissolution or other termination of the Foundation, title to all its assets shall vest in The Fort Valley State University or its successor, to be used exclusively for the purpose herein above set out, it being intended that no distribution or payment shall be made which will impair or destroy the tax exempt status of donations, contributions, legacies, bequests, or dues received by this Foundation, to the extent that such tax exempt status shall be allowed under any applicable laws or regulations.





OUR OFFICERS

Kenneth Howard

INTERIM CHAIRMAN

Charles Robinson

TREASURER

Cynthia Carter

SECRETARY

Karen Wright

VICE PRESIDENT OF UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT AND EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR OF FVSU FOUNDATION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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FVSU PRESIDENT

Isaac Crumbly

Angela Fussell

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Vernard Hodges

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Yewston N. Myers III

**Barbara Hollimon
Palmer**

Andrew A. Reese

Patty James Stinson

Calvin Smyre

PRESIDENT, EMERITUS

**Phyllis Kitchens
Thurmond**

Gwendolyn Reeves

Theodore R. Daniels

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

It is with great pride that I present to you the Fort Valley State University Foundation's 2024-2025 Annual Report of Giving. As you review this report, you will see not only the challenges we have faced, but also the remarkable achievements we have celebrated—all while continuing our steadfast commitment to supporting higher academic standards and creating meaningful opportunities for Fort Valley State University students.

I extend my deepest gratitude to the friends of FVSU, whose generous contributions, alongside the tireless efforts of the Foundation Board of Directors, have made this an extraordinary year. I am pleased to report that during the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the Foundation raised nearly \$4 million from 1,406 donors, a powerful reflection of the confidence and trust placed in our mission.

Because of your generosity, the Foundation awarded 500 scholarships totaling more than \$1.61 million, directly impacting the lives of our students and easing the financial burden of pursuing higher education. Signature events such as Homecoming 2024 produced 24 donor gifts totaling \$788,545, including the largest individual gift of \$100,000 from Kayper Jackson and the largest group gift of \$257,232.40 from the Class of 1974.

Our National Day of Giving surpassed expectations with more than \$20,000 in unrestricted support from over 90 donors, while the annual Scholarship Luncheon raised an impressive \$826,192.40. We are especially grateful to Aflac, Incorporated, whose sponsorship and the inspiring keynote address by Virgil Miller, President of Aflac, underscored the importance of corporate partnership in advancing student success.

Thanks to the unwavering dedication of our board members, business partners, and the continued support of our Wildcat family, we have once again exceeded our fundraising goals. Your commitment allows us to navigate ongoing challenges while expanding access, opportunity, and excellence at Fort Valley State University.

As we move forward, our mission remains our guiding light. Every member of the Foundation Board is committed to strengthening our charitable impact throughout Middle Georgia, across the state, and beyond. The culture of generosity and collaboration within our community empowers us to face challenges with confidence and continue building a brighter future for our students.

I am deeply appreciative of the passion and dedication shown by our Wildcat family. As we look ahead, I invite you to continue walking with us—investing in lives, dreams, and the enduring legacy of Fort Valley State University. Together, we will achieve even greater things in the year to come.

Thank you once again for an extraordinary year.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Howard
INTERIM CHAIRMAN

A MESSAGE FROM FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY'S
**VICE PRESIDENT OF UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT
& EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FVSU FOUNDATION**

Dear Valued Friends and Supporters,

Warmest greetings from the heart of Fort Valley State University.

As we reflect on the Fiscal Year 2024–2025, we do so with immense gratitude and pride. This year has been one of progress, resilience, and collective impact—made possible because of your unwavering generosity and belief in our mission. Your continued support has been instrumental in advancing student success, strengthening institutional excellence, and preserving the legacy of Fort Valley State University.

Through the Division of University Advancement, we remain steadfast in our commitment to fostering a culture of philanthropy that transforms lives. Because of you, we have been able to expand access to scholarships, invest in student-centered initiatives, and cultivate meaningful partnerships with alumni, corporations, foundations, and friends who share our vision for the future.

This year, we proudly celebrated milestones that underscore the power of giving at FVSU—from the impact of endowed and annual scholarships to the continued growth of donor-supported programs that enhance the academic and co-curricular experiences of our students. Your generosity has opened doors of opportunity, eased financial burdens, and empowered our students to pursue their dreams with confidence and purpose.

As we look ahead, we do so inspired by what we have accomplished together. The challenges facing higher education require unity, innovation, and sustained commitment, and your partnership continues to make the difference. Because of you, Fort Valley State University remains a place where excellence is nurtured, potential is realized, and futures are transformed.

On behalf of our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the entire Wildcat family, thank you for your generosity, your trust, and your belief in Fort Valley State University. We are deeply grateful for your continued investment and look forward to the impact we will achieve together.

With deepest appreciation,

Karen Wright

VICE PRESIDENT OF UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FVSU FOUNDATION





Points of Pride

BY THE NUMBERS



THANK YOU TO OUR **1,406** DONORS
What we do is made possible thanks to your donations.

RAISED
\$4,000,000+
500 SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

TOTALING AROUND \$1.61M



NOTABLE EVENTS AND DONATIONS



NATIONAL DAY OF GIVING

APRIL 29, 2025 WAS NATIONAL DAY OF GIVING
CONTINUING TO EXCEED EXPECTATIONS

\$20,000
FROM 90+ DONORS



HOMECOMING 2024

24 DONOR CHECKS PRESENTED:
TOTALING \$788,545

KAYPERS JACKSON - \$100,000
LARGEST INDIVIDUAL GIFT

CLASS OF 1974 - \$252,232.40
LARGEST GROUP GIFT



SCHOLARSHIP LUNCHEON

\$826,192.40

RAISED THANKS TO GENEROUS DONORS

The event, proudly sponsored by Aflac, Incorporated, highlighted the company's commitment to education and student success. Virgil Miller, President of Aflac, delivered an inspiring keynote address.

130th Celebration

Events from January 1 thru June 30, 2025

130th YEAR KICKOFF



2025
Scholarship Luncheon





Greek Plaza Unveiling



Legacy Apartments Ground Breaking



SPRING COMMENCEMENT

Divers En Bleu

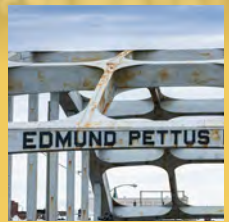




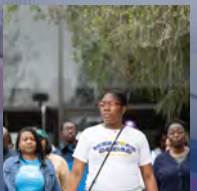
SPRING OPEN HOUSE



"Bloody Sunday"



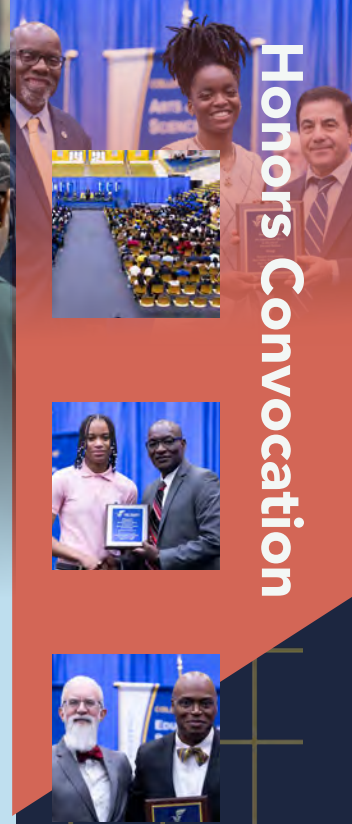
Both Anniversary March



Annual Energy Career Day Conference



Industry Awards Banquet



Honors Convocation



In the Cafe:



The President's Cabinet
Serving the FVSU Community





IN THE NEWS

Fort Valley State University Ranked #1 in Georgia for Social Mobility by U.S. News and World Report

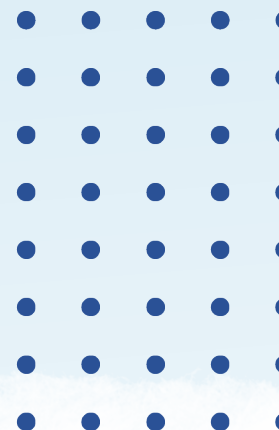
Fort Valley State University (FVSU) has achieved a significant distinction in the 2025 U.S. News and World Report rankings, being recognized as the highest-ranked regional university in Georgia, public or private, for social mobility. FVSU is ranked #8 in top performers in social mobility amongst all regional universities in the South.

Social mobility measures how well universities graduate students who receive federal Pell Grants, typically awarded to students from low-income households. This ranking reflects FVSU's commitment to providing access to higher education and equipping students with the resources and support they need to succeed. By excelling in this category, FVSU continues to demonstrate its role in closing the opportunity gap and ensuring that all students, regardless of background, can achieve their academic and professional goals.

In addition to its achievements in social mobility, FVSU is once again ranked the #1 public Historically Black College and University (HBCU) in Georgia for the seventh consecutive year. The university also climbed to #62 in the Regional Universities (South) category, up from #69 last year. This competitive category includes institutions across a broad region: Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, West Virginia, Alabama, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

FVSU is also ranked #30 in Top Public Schools, up from #32 last year, and #54 in Best Value Schools, a category in which the university is newly ranked. "Our steady climb in these rankings is a testament to the transformative power of an education from FVSU. Being recognized for our leadership in social mobility speaks directly to our mission of providing opportunity and changing lives," said President Paul Jones, Ph.D. "This recognition underscores our dedication to fostering success for every student who walks through our doors, regardless of their socioeconomic background." FVSU's consistent number one ranking among public HBCUs in Georgia, along with its growing recognition for social mobility, reinforces its standing as a leader in higher education and a critical institution in the state's educational landscape.

U.S. News & World Report is the global authority in education rankings. The annual rankings serve as a resource tool for prospective college students and their families when seeking an institution of higher learning. The rankings evaluate 1,500 colleges and universities on up to 17 measures of academic quality, with this year's edition focusing on social mobility and post-graduate success.



Wildcats Prepare for Opening Game of the NCAA NC Tournament



Fort Valley State University's men's volleyball team is making history once again as it heads to the NCAA National Collegiate Men's Volleyball Championship Tournament, hosted by Ohio State University. During a press conference held by Ohio State and the NCAA, Head Coach Larry Wrather alongside Isaiah Fedd, Jaxon Hicks and Kevin Charles talk about team culture and what this means.

"This is a prideful moment for our town, our school, and our conference," said Wrather. "One of the biggest improvements for this team has been understanding that they belong here. It's about setting the culture." Now in just its fourth season, the FVSU program has made remarkable progress, earning back-to-back championship appearances it's a testament to its strong foundation and team unity.



"We started with nothing. Now we're back-to-back champions and 12-0," said Charles. "These guys have each other's backs. If one goes down, the others step up. It's like a family." Charles emphasized the team's confidence and mindset heading into the tournament: "We know our capabilities and how we match up. If we play with confidence, we can regulate the game and show the world what we're capable of at our peak. I'm excited, exhilarated and it's a special feeling."

Fedd, one of the Wildcats' key leaders, highlighted how FVSU competes with heart and intensity, even when undersized compared to upcoming Long Beach State University. "Yeah, we may not have the same height, but we make up for it by competing aggressively and applying pressure with our serve," Fedd said.

With two weeks to prepare since claiming the SIAC title, the Wildcats have been focused on film study and refining their game plan. "It's been about locking in on the details studying film, schemes, and how we want to play," said Hicks.

Coach Wrather pointed to serve receive and handling high-pressure moments as key areas of focus. "We're not trying to be perfect just giving ourselves balls we can fight for," he explained. "Against a server hitting 84 miles per hour, it's about playing smart, playing defense, and sticking together."

"Believing in ourselves and our teammates is everything," said Hicks. Fedd added, "It's okay if people aren't at 100% every day. What matters is having each other's back and that's what makes this team so close. We're family."

The Wildcats kicked off their tournament appearance with Long Beach State in the tournament opener on Thursday, May 8, 2025 at 5 p.m.



Fort Valley State University Names Building in Honor of Distinguished Alumnus Calvin Smyre



Fort Valley State University is pleased to announce that the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia has approved the naming of the building known as the Kell Building, located on South Camellia Boulevard in downtown Fort Valley, as the **"Calvin Smyre Building."**

This decision honors the outstanding service and philanthropy of the Honorable Calvin Smyre, a Class of 1970 distinguished alumnus and longtime supporter of our institution.

The Calvin Smyre Building will house the Center for Agricultural Innovation and Entrepreneurship, a groundbreaking initiative that will serve as a small business incubator to promote agribusiness and entrepreneurship in Middle Georgia. This center will play a crucial role in supporting the commercialization and marketing of agricultural products, providing vital resources for successful business development in our region.

Key features of the Center for Agricultural Innovation and Entrepreneurship include:

- Fostering industry collaborations and manufacturing partnerships to bring agricultural innovations to market,
- Offering opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to develop entrepreneurial skills
- Supporting enhanced farming methods and product development.

While we are excited about this new development, we are still in the planning stages. The Center, which is a USDA funded project, and the renovation of the building, have experienced some project delays. Due to price escalation and other variables, the University is seeking funding to complete the project. The timeline for completion is still being determined as we finalize our plans and resources, and a future date for the naming will be announced.

About the Honorable Calvin Smyre

The naming of this building is a fitting tribute to Calvin Smyre's remarkable legacy: Served as a member of the Georgia General Assembly for nearly 48 years, becoming its longest-serving member. Authored legislation to establish Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday as a state holiday. Smyre was also nominated by President Joe Biden to serve as Ambassador to the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. Appointed as a Representative of the United States to the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. He has served as Chairman of the Fort Valley State Foundation for more than 30 years. Established the Fountain City Classic, which has raised more than \$1,400,000 for FVSU athletics. Joined Synovus in 1976 as a management trainee and retired in 2014 as executive vice president of corporate affairs. Synovus created a scholarship in honor of Smyre that is given annually to a student enrolled at FVSU.

In December 2024, the intersection at Macon Road and Interstate 185 in Columbus, GA was officially renamed the Calvin Smyre Interchange. This location holds special significance, as it was the left turn Smyre took year after year during his 100-mile journey to Atlanta and the state capitol. The interchange, not far from his home, serves as a symbolic tribute to his decades of public service and underscores his deep connection to Columbus. In 2022, the Morehouse School of Medicine held a groundbreaking ceremony for the Calvin Smyre Education Conference Center a \$45 million, 52,300 square foot facility. These recent honors compliment the university's naming of the Calvin Smyre Building, further celebrating his extraordinary contributions to Georgia and our community. Calvin Smyre's dedication to public service, education and our institution makes him an ideal namesake for this important new center. We look forward to honoring his contributions and continuing his legacy of innovation and community support through the Calvin Smyre Building and the Center for Agricultural Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

Fort Valley State University Earns Esteemed Recognition as a Research College and University by Carnegie Classification



Fort Valley State University Receives Inaugural NISS Catalyst Award for Institutional Transformation

Fort Valley State University (FVSU) has earned the recognition of being designated as a Research College and University in the 2025 Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, a milestone that highlights its dedication to research and innovation. FVSU is the only University System of Georgia (USG) institution that moved from the Master's Colleges & Universities: Small Programs classification to this new designation.

The Research Colleges and Universities classification, introduced in 2025, acknowledges institutions that actively engage in research but may not have previously been recognized for their contributions. This new category allows non-doctoral institutions, including tribal colleges, to be acknowledged for their research endeavors, broadening the scope of institutions classified for their research impact.

"Fort Valley State University's recognition as a Research College and University reaffirms our commitment to innovation and scholarship," said President Paul Jones, Ph.D. "With more than \$15.5 million in research expenditures in fiscal year 2023, our faculty, students and staff continue to drive discovery and scholarship that benefit Georgia and beyond. This designation underscores the impact of our work and positions us to expand our research enterprise even further."

The Carnegie Classification's revision aims to highlight research activity at institutions that have historically been overlooked due to the lack of doctoral programs. By setting a research expenditure threshold of at least \$2.5 million annually, this classification ensures that universities like FVSU receive well-deserved recognition for their contributions to research and development.

With its new classification, FVSU is poised to strengthen its research infrastructure, expand partnerships and enhance opportunities for students and faculty engaged in groundbreaking research across various disciplines.

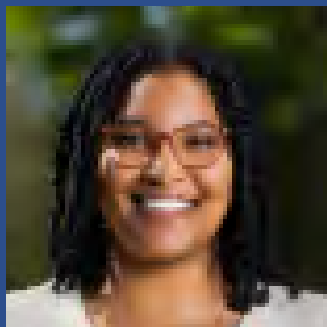
Fort Valley State University (FVSU) was recognized by the National Institute for Student Success (NISS) for the inaugural Catalyst Award for Institutional Transformation. This honor, which includes a \$25,000 prize, was presented at the University Innovation Alliance Summit in Tempe, Arizona, recognizing FVSU's innovative approach to enhancing student success, retention, and overall campus enrollment.

The NISS Catalyst Award highlights the exceptional commitment and visionary leadership shown by FVSU's student success team. Since launching a strategic partnership with NISS, FVSU has set new benchmarks in student support. The university has experienced a notable 5.8% increase in enrollments, established multi-year records for retention rates and the size of its first-year class and expanded campus-wide enrollment. A key driver of these outcomes has been FVSU's enhanced first-year experience, which is designed to provide intentional, structured support for students from the outset of their college journey. This initiative led to a six-percentage-point increase in retention, with 88% of students now enrolled full-time.

"Receiving the NISS Catalyst Award is a remarkable achievement and a testament to the dedication and hard work of our team," said President Paul Jones, Ph.D. "Our partnership with NISS has empowered us to re-imagine and elevate the student experience, and this recognition reaffirms our commitment to every student's success. We are excited to build on this momentum and continue making strides that impact our entire Wildcat family." A standout achievement in FVSU's transformation is the Summer Success Academy. This program provides incoming students with targeted academic support, helping them acclimate to college life while developing strong study habits. Summer Success Academy participants have achieved an impressive average GPA of 3.59, with nearly all students testing out of learning support and earning full academic standing for their freshman year. These achievements underscore FVSU's role as a leading institution in creating effective, timely pathways to student success and illustrate how quickly transformative change can happen.

"This award reflects the intentionality and dedication we put into every student success initiative, said Timothy Hatchett, Ph.D., vice president of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management. "Our Summer Success Academy has been instrumental in preparing students for the demands of college life, as reflected in their outstanding academic performance. With the support of the NISS Catalyst Award, we are ready to expand our reach and make an even greater impact on our scholars' futures." Fort Valley State University's outstanding achievements in student retention, enrollment and student experience showcase the power of intentional, data-driven strategies. As Georgia's #1 public HBCU and #1 for social mobility, FVSU remains committed to setting new standards for academic excellence.

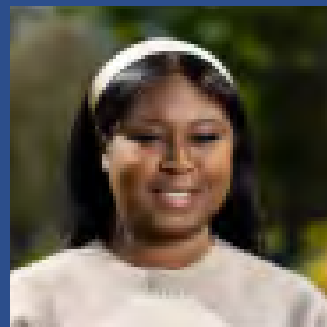
HISTORY IN THE MAKING.



Nadia Ford



Jaelyn Franklin



Sheena Fleurinord



Pheona Mack



Tasnim Mohammad



Chasity Polk

Fort Valley State University Celebrates its Inaugural Cohort of Nurses

History was made at Fort Valley State University (FVSU) as the first cohort of students in the university's Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program graduate and receive their nursing pins. The pinning ceremony will take place on Friday, May 9, 2025, at 4 p.m. at the Agricultural Technology Conference Center, followed by the Commencement on Saturday, May 10, at 9:30 a.m. in the Health and Physical Education Complex.

This milestone marks a personal achievement for the six graduating students, known affectionately as the "Sensational 6" and represents a new era for healthcare access in rural Georgia. The BSN program was launched in Fall 2023 after being approved by the University System of Georgia Board of Regents in 2021, making FVSU the second Historically Black College and University (HBCU) in Georgia to offer a four-year nursing degree.

The pinning ceremony is a time-honored tradition in nursing that signifies the transition from student to nurse. Each graduate receives a pin representing their school and the ideals of compassionate care, clinical excellence and service. For these students, it is more than a symbol; it is the culmination of a pioneering journey.

The inaugural class includes six women who bring diverse backgrounds and inspiring personal journeys to nursing. Nadia Ford is from Fort Valley, Georgia. She is a double Wildcat, having previously earned a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture with a concentration in animal science from Fort Valley State University in 2023. Jaelyn Franklin is from Atlanta, Georgia. She also holds a previous degree from FVSU in biology. Sheena Fleurinord is a mother of two from Miami, Florida. She earned an associate degree in health sciences before entering the BSN program. Pheona Mack is a mother of three from Warner Robins, Georgia. She holds an associate degree in health sciences and worked in healthcare throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Mack expressed her feelings about this remarkable achievement. "I didn't realize how large an impact we are making. This is very monumental. I'm nurturing, and I find joy in helping others. Nursing is a passion, and I feel I was born to heal and care for others."

Tasnim Mohammad is a mother of two and is originally from Jordan. She is a double Wildcat with a degree in biotechnology and a minor in horticulture. Mohammad also works as a research assistant at FVSU. Chasity Polk is from Stone

Mountain, Georgia, and is the mother of one child. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture with a concentration in plant science and a minor in horticulture from FVSU. Polk reflected on her journey, stating, "I think nursing chose me. I've heard my entire life that I 'should be a nurse,' but I was stubborn not to recognize it as my calling. I chose to pursue it because it perfectly combines my passion for science with my deep desire to serve and advocate for others. I've always been drawn to helping people in meaningful, hands-on ways, and nursing allows me to do that daily. After a career pivot from agricultural research, I wanted to work in a field where I could see the direct impact of my work on individuals and families. Nursing offers not just a career, but a calling—to care, lead, and make a difference, even in the most difficult moments of someone's life."

FVSU nursing faculty did not give the opportunity a second thought when asked to apply for positions in the new Bachelor of Science in Nursing program. One faculty member shared the remarkable opportunity. "It is rare to witness the beginning of a legacy, but rarer to be a part of it. The opportunity to stand at the inception and graduate as the first cohort of nurses at this historic HBCU, is not just a milestone. However, we are

here to plant seeds into this fertile ground that will bloom for future generations."

Nursing faculty members didn't just teach nursing to the students; they lived the journey alongside them. Some drove for hours across counties, from city hospitals to rural nursing homes and daycare centers, including FVSU's Child Development Center. They made sure every student had an opportunity to stand at the bedside, a chance to learn, and, most importantly, a chance to care.

Each of the six graduates will earn a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and join the ranks of healthcare professionals ready to serve diverse communities across Georgia and beyond. Their stories are not just individual victories, they are collective proof that access, representation and resilience matter in building the future of healthcare.

Greene added a heartfelt message to the graduating students. "I am incredibly proud of your accomplishments and inspired by your dedication. You are not only making history; you are building a legacy. I am excited to see your lasting impact on the nursing profession and the countless lives you will touch through compassionate care."



A Legacy of Our Wildcat Families

**Celebrating Generations of
Excellence, Pride, and Commitment
to Fort Valley State University**



The Hunter Family

Active for over 55 years with Ft. Valley State University



3 Generations

A story rooted in faith, perseverance, and a deep belief in education as a pathway to a better future -

The Hunter Family stands as one of Fort Valley State University's most enduring legacies. Born the eighth of ten children to Willis and Minnie Jewel Hunter, Dr. Reather (Hunter) Waller '74 overcame economic hardship by working in a factory to save for college. She enrolled at Fort Valley State College in 1970, determined never to return to factory life.

Her determination became the spark that ignited a powerful lineage of achievement. Over the decades, Hunter Family members earned seven degrees from FVSU and rose into leadership roles on campus and beyond. Their legacy includes educators, administrators, and military officers — including Charles D. Waller III, who served as Mister FVSU and was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant.

For over 50 years, the Hunter Family has maintained an unbroken commitment to FVSU, attending every Homecoming since 1970 and establishing scholarships such as the Alesia Boone Scholarship of Merit. Their story is a testament to resilience, purpose, and the truth that while people may pass on, legacies never die.

Family Members

Dr. Reather (Hunter) Waller
1974, 1982

Patricia (Waller) Wynn*
1979, 1983

Alesia Boone*
1992

Dr. Cathy (Boone) Dothard
1997

Charles D. Waller III
2018 (Mister FVSU;
Commissioned 2nd Lt.)

* = Deceased

7 DEGREES EARNED



The Barrett-Brown-Harrison Family

Active at Fort Valley State University from 2006–Present

Family Members

First Generation:

Dr. Stacie Barrett '08 – Assistant Professor of Business

Children (Current Students):

Robert Barrett – Freshman, Media Studies

Robin Barrett – Junior, Liberal Studies

Extended Family:

Allante Harrison '14 – Mathematics (CDEP Scholar)

Rikell Hardaway Harrison '14

Andrea Brown '22

Orianna Watters '24

Jared Johnson '24

Current Students:

Jaylan Pepper – Education

Andrew Brown – Biology

Asha Colvard – Current

Legacy Matriarch:

Mrs. Evelyn Johnson '72

The Barrett-Brown-Harrison Family demonstrates how Wildcat legacy can take root in one generation and flourish in the next. Their story begins with Dr. Stacie Barrett '08, a Mass Communications graduate who served in multiple university roles before becoming an Assistant Professor of Business.

Her children — Robert (Media Studies) and Robin (Liberal Studies) — were raised on campus, attending the Child Development Center and FVSU summer camps long before enrolling as students. Today, they sit in classrooms taught by some of the same professors who taught their mother.

The family's legacy strengthens through Allante Harrison '14, a standout CDEP Scholar who became the first African American to earn Penn State's Master of Engineering in Additive Manufacturing & Design. Now, he serves as Lead Additive Manufacturing Engineer at GE Healthcare/GE Vernova. Anchored by the influence of Mrs. Evelyn Johnson '72, whose encouragement guided multiple branches of the family tree toward FVSU, this family exemplifies how one Wildcat can inspire many.



3 Generations



10+
DEGREES
EARNED



The Street-Reeves Family

Attended from 1949 - Present

3
Generations

The Street-Reeves-Davis Family carries one of the most powerful and inspiring stories in FVSU history. Their legacy began with a sharecropper grandfather who could not read or write but believed fiercely in the life-changing power of education. Sacrificing what little he had, he sold vegetables, lumber, and meat to send four of his children to Fort Valley State College.

That act of love created a chain reaction of opportunity. Over the next 75 years, the family earned more than 17 degrees, producing educators, administrators, scientists, entrepreneurs, scholars, and community leaders. From their earliest graduate in 1949 to their youngest member — Jordan Street, Class of 2028 — this family's multigenerational Wildcat heritage reflects the core values of resilience, unity, and leadership. Their continued involvement in alumni chapters and scholarships, including the Alesia Boone Scholarship of Merit, strengthens the Wildcat community for generations to come.

17+
DEGREES
EARNED

1. Mildred Street – 1949
2. Adell Street-Adams – 1954
3. Vivian Street – 1963
4. Willie Street – 1969
5. Gwendolyn Davis-Reeves – 1970
6. Ventrine Parham – 1972
7. Milton J. Davis – 1984
8. Debbie Davis – 1986
9. Tracy Street-Gilbert – 1991
10. Equilla Burkes – 1996
11. Stacy A. Reeves – 1996
12. Damon L. Reeves – 2000
13. Anyles Clayborn – 2005
14. Angela Thomas – 2007
15. Kea'ya T. Reeves – 2012
16. Rodger Chaney – 2012
17. Jordan Street – 2028 (Current Student, Softball)

FAMILY MEMBERS

The Nooks Family

The Legacy Continues: One Family. One University.

2

DEGREES EARNED
and growing!

At Fort Valley State University, legacy is more than a tradition—it is a philosophy shaped by discipline, faith, and intentional preparation for success. Few stories reflect this truth more powerfully than that of the Nooks family, a true Family of Wildcats whose roots, values, and vision have cultivated excellence across generations. The Nooks legacy at Fort Valley State University began during the 2010–2011 academic year, but its foundation was laid long before—at home. Raised by parents who believed deeply in strategy, preparation, and purpose, the Nooks children grew up learning principles inspired by Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*. Their father, Mark Nooks, often emphasized the importance of knowing oneself, understanding the environment, and moving with intention—lessons that translated seamlessly from life to education and leadership.

That foundation was further shaped by the family's rich cultural and geographic influences. With a father from Brooklyn, New York, and a mother, Catina Nooks, from Miami, Florida, the Nooks household blended grit, resilience, adaptability, and ambition. These influences, paired with their Jamaican roots and Hispanic heritage, created a family ethos grounded in faith, hard work, and excellence—guided always by the principle of keeping God first. It is within this upbringing that the family motto, "Out of Many, One," emerged—not only as a nod to Jamaica, but as a declaration of unity, purpose, and collective strength.

During her senior year at Rockdale Career Academy, Karyn Nooks began applying to colleges across the state of Georgia. As acceptance letters arrived, her parents stepped in with a decisive strategy of their own. Firm believers in the power and legacy of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, they made it clear that her path would lead to an HBCU experience. That journey brought Karyn to the office of Dr. Denise Richardson, then an Assistant Principal and proud Fort Valley State University alumna. Dr. Richardson rolled out what could only be described as the blue carpet, passionately sharing her Wildcat story and speaking highly of her alma mater. After that conversation, a campus tour, and a visit during Homecoming Week, Karyn was sold. She applied—and the rest was history.

In 2015, **Karyn Nooks** graduated from Fort Valley State University with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing and a minor in Logistics. She has since earned an MBA with a concentration in Organizational Leadership and now serves as the Director of Alumni Relations at Fort Valley State University. Her return to FVSU represents both strategy and service—applying the lessons of leadership learned at home and on campus to strengthen alumni engagement and institutional pride.

As Karyn became deeply involved on campus, she began bringing her younger siblings to Wildcat events—from athletic competitions to student organization programs. In those moments, the seeds of legacy were quietly planted, reinforcing lessons learned at home: observe, engage, and prepare for your moment.

Those seeds flourished with **Mark Nooks Jr.**, who graduated as a member of the Class of 2024 with a Bachelor of Science in Education (Middle Grades Education). He currently serves as a Middle School Teacher and Football Coach with the Houston County Board of Education and is pursuing a Master's degree in Middle Grades Education at the University of Georgia. His aspiration to become an administrator reflects the same strategic mindset instilled in him from an early age—lead with purpose and position yourself to serve.

TODAY, THE NOOKS LEGACY CONTINUES THROUGH THREE CURRENTLY ENROLLED WILDCATS:

Makayla Nooks, a junior Psychology major, aspiring to become a pediatrician. **Carissa Nooks**, a freshman Psychology major with a minor in Infant and Childhood Development, who plans to become a child therapist. **Caleb Nooks**, a freshman Biology major and future Nursing major, who aspires to be an anesthesiologist. With two graduates and three current students, the Nooks family embodies a legacy built on preparation, unity, and intentional excellence. Guided by faith, fortified by culture, and shaped by strategy, their story reflects Fort Valley State University's mission to develop leaders who are ready to serve and succeed.

The Nooks legacy is not simply one of attendance—it is one of alignment, strategy, and belief in the power of education. And like any well-planned campaign, this one is far from over. #TheNooksLegacyContinues





Attended from 1950 - Present

20
DEGREES
EARNED

The Ingram Family of Reynolds, Georgia has built one of FVSU's richest and most distinguished multigenerational traditions. Their legacy began in 1950, when Louise Ingram Batts enrolled at Fort Valley State College. Her bold decision paved the way for more than 20 family members to follow in her footsteps.

Their Wildcats include Presidential Scholars, CDEP Scholars, valedictorians, researchers, educators, U.S. Army officers, Divine 9 members, entrepreneurs, and community leaders. The family has supported athletics, alumni initiatives, academic programs, and military scholarship efforts while remaining deeply connected to FVSU's mission.

The tradition continues today with Jada Harris (Class of 2027), representing the next generation of Ingram scholars.

Family Members

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. Louise Ingram Batts – 1950 | 1970 |
| 2. Lorene Ingram – 1956 | 14. Marilyn Gantt – 1971 |
| 3. Sally Ingram – 1956 | 15. Shirley Nichols – 1973 |
| 4. Cecilia Ingram Miller – 1958 | 16. Tracy Bletcher – 1990 |
| 5. Gloria E. Carson – 1960 | 17. Sidney Bletcher – 1992 |
| 6. Gene Ingram – 1961 | 18. Monica Ball – 1998 |
| 7. James Carson – 1962 | 19. Lee Adams – 1999 |
| 8. Arthur Miller – 1963 | 20. Konnye Ford – 1999 |
| 9. Sherenette Jackson – 1965 | 21. Brandy Adams – 2000 |
| 10. Jacquelyn Gooch – 1967 | 22. Charlene Jackson – 2001 |
| 11. Doretha Rogers – 1968 | 23. Shaqeela Jackson – 2001 |
| 12. Marva White – 1968 | 24. Jada Harris – Class of 2027 (Current) |
| 13. Thomas Daniels – | |

THE LUCAS FAMILY

The Lucas Family represents more than four decades of commitment, involvement, and pride at Fort Valley State University. Their legacy began with the late Geneva Andrews, who earned her bachelor's degree in 1980 and later completed her master's degree in 1983, becoming the first in her immediate family to graduate from FVSU. Her achievement laid the foundation for a growing family tradition rooted in education and service.

Inspired by Geneva's example, generations of Lucas family members chose FVSU, becoming active participants in campus life through athletics, performing arts, student organizations, and leadership opportunities. The family's presence has been felt across classrooms, fields, and stages, reflecting a deep connection to the Wildcat experience.

The Lucas Family's relationship with FVSU extends beyond student life. Several members returned to serve the university professionally, contributing to the institution's mission and student success. Today, the legacy continues with Dylan Johnson (Class of 2028), representing the next generation of Wildcats.

With more than 45 years of continuous connection to Fort Valley State University, the Lucas Family exemplifies how one graduate's journey can grow into a lasting legacy of pride, involvement, and service.

15+
DEGREES
EARNED

Family Members

LEGACY STARTER:

Geneva Andrews – Class of 1980 *

GRADUATES:

Nadine Lucas – Class of 1990

Marlena Lucas – Class of 1999

Dion Lucas – Class of 2000

Mikeshia Lucas – Class of 2002 (Softball Athlete)

Kimberly Jackson McGhee – Class of 2004 (Dancing Doll Diva – Blue Machine)

Jeanette Lucas – Class of 2005 (Campus Safety – FVSU)

Michael Lucas – Class of 2006

Maureen Lucas – Class of 2007

Jaron L. Lucas – Class of 2014 (Director of Development, University Advancement)

Alphia Jackson – Class of 2016

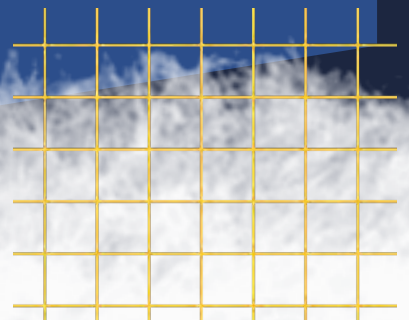
Lamb Andrews – Class of 2020 (Track Athlete)

Latreese Lucas – Class of 2022

CURRENT STUDENTS:

Dylan Johnson – Class of 2028 (Sophomore)

* = Deceased



HOMECOMING CHECK PRESENTATION 2024



Pictured: Kaypers Jackson (Class of 1976) presenting a donation of \$100,000.

FVSU recently held its much-anticipated Homecoming celebration, showcasing the incredible generosity of alumni, corporate partners, and friends who contribute to the university's mission. This year's event raised an impressive total of \$788,545 through various contributions, underscoring the strong bonds within the FVSU community.

In total, 12 contributors stepped up during the pregame, raising \$248,450 to support FVSU initiatives. Each donation not only provides essential funding but also reflects a deep commitment to the university's growth and success. The halftime segment featured 12 contributions, totaling \$540,095. Notably, the contributions from the Class of 1974 amounted to \$257,232.40, with a generous \$100,000 gift from Kaypers Jackson, Class of 1974, highlighting the dedication of alumni who continue to invest in FVSU's legacy and future.

Overall, the event saw a total of 24 check presentations, celebrating the generosity of the FVSU family. This year, the Wildcat Club Tailgate brought together alumni and supporters for a festive atmosphere filled with good food and lively conversations. Special thanks to the Wildcat Club major sponsors: Bluebird, LTC Andrew Reese, Diageo, and Macon Beverage Outlet. Your support helped make the tailgate a memorable experience for all attendees.

"The spirit of giving at Fort Valley State University is truly inspiring," said Karen Wright, Vice President of University Advancement at FVSU. "Each contribution represents a commitment to our students and a belief in the transformative power of education."

As the Homecoming festivities concluded, the FVSU community celebrated not just the financial support but the shared vision for a bright future. Together, the Wildcat family continues to make a lasting impact on the lives of current and future students.



Pictured Above: Class of 1974 presenting a donation of \$130,782.40

Thank you to our donors:

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Arthur & Bernice Johnson - \$11,450	Dekalb County Alumni Chapter - \$51,000
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Donors determine how gifts are administered. When a contribution is not accompanied with specific instructions, it is classified as an unrestricted gift and used in the areas of greatest need at FVSU as determined by the board of directors, the officers of the foundation and the university president. To establish special funds, such as a scholarship in the name of a loved one, the foundation recommends that a meeting is scheduled between the donor and a foundation representative to determine how the funds will be administered and disbursed. Signed documentation that outlines the donor's wishes is strictly adhered to by the foundation.

Give Cash!

The easiest way to give to FVSU is through a cash contribution. Make a donation designated for the university's area of greatest current need. Contribute a large gift for a specific purpose, for scholarships, to enhance facilities, or to support a special activity.

Online

You can make a difference in our students' lives by giving online at <https://www.fvsu.edu/advancement/give-online> or by simply scanning the QR code provided.



Memorial Gift

Remember a loved one, living or deceased, by donating a gift in their name. Often, scholarships are established in memory of an individual to honor them.

Stocks, Bonds, and Other Assets

Stocks or other investments owned for at least one year that have increased in value become a substantial gift and can be donated at a low net cost to you. Appreciated assets can be ideal funding sources for charitable gifts that provide you (or someone you want to support) regular income for life.

Matching Gift

You or your spouse may work at a company that matches its employees' donations to higher education institutions. This program offers a great opportunity to double or triple your gift to the university. Each year, FVSU benefits from corporate contributions initiated by company employees or retirees.

Take a Capital Loss Yourself

If you own securities worth less now than when originally purchased, sell them and contribute the proceeds to the Fort Valley State University Foundation, Inc. Deduct the capital loss on your tax return. A tax break is not available to the foundation if the securities are donated directly to us.

Life Insurance

A contribution to the Fort Valley State University Foundation, Inc. from a life insurance policy can be made either by delivering an assigned ownership of the policy to the foundation, or by naming the foundation as the irrevocable Owner and beneficiary of the policy. The policy provides a definite, large, future gift at a small annual expense, and premiums are tax deductible. Another way to give is to change the beneficiary of an existing policy, if the present beneficiary no longer needs protection. The foundation can be named as the new beneficiary or co-beneficiary.

Personal Property

In most cases, a gift of tangible personal property, such as a painting, antiques, books, artifacts, or jewelry is considered a charitable deduction. The potential capital tax on the property's appreciation can be avoided.

Appreciated Property

It is often advantageous to contribute appreciated property rather than cash. Securities, homes, land, and other assets make ideal gifts. By donating gifts of appreciated property, you eliminate capital gains tax and receive a charitable deduction based on the full market value of the gift.

Outright Bequest

Name the Fort Valley State University Foundation, Inc. as a beneficiary in your will and make a gift of cash, investments, or property from your estate.

Individual Bequest

A residual bequest provides that after specific bequests are made to named individuals, Fort Valley State University receives the "residue" or the amount remaining in the estate.

Codicil

If you already have a valid, up-to-date will, you can have an attorney prepare a codicil to the will naming the university as a beneficiary without rewriting the entire document.





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DON'T MISS OUT ON OUR SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

FVSU BORDER WAIVER

The FVSU Border Waiver is a scholarship offered to residents of states bordering Georgia, such as Alabama, Florida, North and South Carolina, and Tennessee. The scholarship waives out-of-state fees, allowing students to pay in-state tuition costs.

PRESIDENTIAL EXCELLENCE SCHOLARSHIP

The USDA 1890 Scholarship is a \$32,480 offered over four years to students interested in studying agriculture, food, natural resources sciences, and other agriculture-based disciplines.

USDA 1890 SCHOLARSHIP

The USDA 1890 Scholarship is a \$32,480 offered over four years to students interested in studying agriculture, food, natural resources sciences, and other agriculture-based disciplines.



IGNITE your LIGHT
FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY



For more information on scholarships and tips on how to apply to FVSU visit [FVSU.edu/Apply](https://www.fvsu.edu/Apply)



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**CONGRATULATIONS
TO OUR 10TH PRESIDENT
PAUL JONES, PH.D.**
for being named in **Georgia
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We celebrate President Jones on this triumphant honor that reflects his leadership throughout his tenure at Fort Valley State University.



Giving to Fort Valley State University is
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Office of UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT & FOUNDATION INC.

Make a gift today and help the Fort Valley State University Foundation support students to reach their full potential.

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DONOR INFORMATION

☐ Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Ms. ☐ Dr. Name: First _____ Middle: _____ Last: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

Employer: _____ Retired ☐ N/A ☐

Does your employer match gifts?

☐ Yes, and I will have the form sent to you. ☐ No. ☐ Not Sure.

Your relationship to us is: ☐ Friend ☐ Parent ☐ Faculty ☐ Staff ☐ Student

☐ Alumnus (graduation year _____ major _____)

GIFT INFORMATION

Note: Please visit www.fvsu.edu/give to make credit card, electronic funds transfer, recurring, or payroll deduction gift.

Gift Amount: ☐ \$500 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$189.50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$25 ☐ other: \$ _____

Please make checks payable to Fort Valley State University Foundation.

☐ I am interested in making a planned or estate gift. Please contact me.

Gift Designation: (Gifts are unrestricted and go to the areas where there is the greatest need unless specifically designated)

☐ Area of Greatest Need

☐ Wildcat Designation

☐ FVSU Scholarship Luncheon 2025

☐ Other Designation: _____

☐ Marching Band

Any Notes: _____

Thank You!

WWW.FVSU.EDU/DONATETOFVSU



Contact Us:



FVSU.EDU



(478) 825-6474



**FORT VALLEY STATE
UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION, INC.**

1005 STATE UNIVERSITY DRIVE
FORT VALLEY, GA 31030