

LOCAL NEWS » TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT » WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 2017

SCHOOL & FAMILY
T&H
LOCAL

CAMP 100

Nearly
300
young
musicians
march at
FAMU's band
camp

AMANDA KARIOTH THOMPSON
COUNCIL ON CULTURE & ARTS

They came from far and wide with a desire to be part of something larger than themselves, wanting to learn and grow from those who have come before. Drawn by a long tradition of innovation and a history of acclaim, nearly 300 young musicians participated in the 2017 Florida A&M University band camp.

"The Marching 100 is very well noted as an outstanding marching machine," said Dr. Shelby Chipman, director of bands at FAMU. "The summer band camp is a component that came about 25 years ago, conceived by the band members at that time to provide a comprehensive instrumental and leadership program for middle and high school students."

Chipman is part of a legacy that began in 1946 and, as the fourth band director in FAMU's history, he has a deep understanding of the generational aspect of the program. "I was in the Marching 100 and I went on to become a high school band director in Miami. Every year my students participated in this camp." Chipman joined the FAMU band staff in 1998 and took over as director two years ago.

Benjamin Eubank, band director at Royal Palm Beach High School in West Palm Beach, followed a similar trajectory. He

See Camp 100, Page 4C

JOE RONDONE/DEMOCRAT
High school sousaphone players line the field at Bragg Memorial Stadium before performing as part of the FAMU Marching 100 Summer Band Camp earlier this month.

Camp 100

Continued from Page 1C

attended FAMU's band camps as a kid and later became a student at the university and a member of the Marching 100. He now volunteers during the camp and several of his high school students are campers. "Coming here and then hearing from someone else the same things I say every day, my students are like, 'Oh, well he must know what he's talking about.' It reinforces the teaching I've done throughout the year," said Eubank.

During the weeklong camp, students gain considerable knowledge from 25 resident and visiting staff members and high school band directors that hail from all over the country. Campers participate in a full marching band and perform in a half time style show. There are also three concert bands and a drum major leadership clinic. While designed to help musicians become technically proficient, the camp also places a strong emphasis on character.

"There are some things that we're trying to develop beyond the music," said Chipman. "Those things such as discipline and the general approach to teamwork that's so valuable. We talk a lot about respect and treating others as you would want them to treat you and learning from the wisdom that's been passed down to you."

Seventeen-year-old Victor Spuck likens his music education experience to playing a never-ending video game. "Most games, you play a few levels and the game's over but this is levels that keep happening and the better you get the harder it gets. You see that there's so much more you can learn." As a recent high school graduate from Fort Lauderdale, Victor is bound for the Berklee College of Music to study contemporary writing and production but he felt compelled to explore FAMU's band camp first.

"There's only so much you can do in a high school setting and you come to something like this and it expands your horizons. At home, I have a six piece section and here it's a 30 piece section. This is the stuff you dream about," Victor said.

Kyle Snipes came from Atlanta to expand his musicality and to stretch himself in a new direction as a drum major. "After a while, you become a leader with your instrument, you lead your section but sometimes some people want to step up in the ranks and drum major is the highest you can possibly get," said the seventeen-year-old. "It's great to be able to give back knowledge but also gain knowledge from the people

you're giving it to."

For some campers, an exploration and commitment to music allows for personal growth. This is especially true for 18-year-old Atlanta resident Tima Williams, who said "music helps identify who you are. You don't play just the notes, it's something beyond that. It's all about your expression. Every time I pick up my instrument, it's a relief. As long as I have my instrument and I'm in my chair, playing, I feel like I'm unstoppable."

Isaac Sepulveda, 16, is from Fort Lauderdale and within music, he has found a catalyst for healing and an unrivaled support system. "Without music, I wouldn't be the same person. I feel like that's mostly because music saved my life. I was going through a really hard time. My parents were struggling and I was struggling. I felt like when I went to band, I had an alternate family where everyone was happy. I felt like that rubbed off on me and it honestly did affect me and my family."

There is incredible power in music and Chipman is well aware of it. He hopes to show others its value and teach them that it is an essential part of the human experience. "Through music, we help to nurture the souls of others. Yes, we're keeping kids off the street, yes we're moving them in a positive direction so they'll improve from a musicianship perspective and possibly go on to college, but more importantly, we want to create better citizens that will respect each other and have a genuine love for music. That's what it's all about."

Amanda Karieth Thompson is the Assistant Director for the Council on Culture & Arts. COCA is the central capital area's umbrella agency for arts and culture (www.tallahasseearts.org).

OBITUARIES

Mildred Stephenfield

Mildred Lowe Stephenfield, truth-seeker, life-giver, and precious friend, passed away peacefully at home on July 23, 2017. Mildred was an ongoing student, teacher, and celebrant of the beauty, mystery, and adventure of life. She was generous in sharing her life's journey with others - whether one on one, in the classroom, or in the many spiritual direction groups she founded. She relished the challenge of self-exploration and helped many others to find a confident and strong inner peace. Her calm, yet passionate demeanor was balanced with levity to enjoy the curiosities of the world and to breathe through its challenges. She encouraged these qualities in others by modeling integrity, mindfulness practice, and kindness throughout her life.

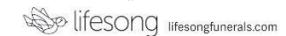


Mildred was born on February 3, 1930 in Nashville, TN to Nan (McRae) and William Robert Lowe Sr. As a teenager her family moved to Eagleville, TN where she graduated high school. She went on to college, ultimately earning a Master's degree in Physical Education and Dance at the University of Tennessee. While teaching at Stetson in Deland, FL, Mildred met her first husband, Addison "Ad" Gilbert. They settled in Sarasota where both taught at the high school and Ad coached the Sarasota Sailor Circus. In 1959 they moved to Tallahassee where Ad became director of the FSU Flying High Circus and their two children, Margo and Robert, were born there. In 1965, Mildred earned a Master's degree in Counseling from FSU and began work as a guidance counselor.

After her first marriage ended, Mildred took a job at the University of Alabama directing the Student Union. During her second year there, she married Denton "Dan" Arthur Stephenfield to whom she was married for over 35 years. She and Dan traveled all over the world and lived for several years in Saudi Arabia and Bolivia while Dan worked there. They settled back in Tallahassee and in their later years, became schoolteachers for Leon County, active in many social causes, and beloved in the Tallahassee community. They remained together until Dan's death in 2003.

Besides her husband and parents, Mildred was preceded in death by her brother, William Robert Lowe Jr., her sister, Clara Lowe Ford, and her stepdaughter, Dawn Stephenfield. She is survived by her beloved children, Margo Kay Gilbert and Robert Addison Gilbert of Tallahassee; her brother, C.J. "Buddy" (Madge) Lowe of Black Mountain, NC; sister-in-law Joan Lowe of Lewisburg, TN; her grandchildren, Robert (Kallie) Gilbert and Ashley Gilbert of Sarasota and four great-grandsons: Eli, Jaxon, Bowen, and Aaro. Mildred also leaves a much-beloved stepdaughter, Sally Stephenfield Murphy of Geneva, as well as Sally's children: Ryan, Eric and Jennifer Bleichner and her great-grandson, Bryan.

Join us for a celebration of Mildred's life at Unity Eastside Church, 8551 Buck Lake Road, Tallahassee FL 32317, on Saturday, July 29 at 2:00 pm. In lieu of flowers, contributions to Unity Eastside Church are appreciated. Online tributes and memories may be shared at: www.lifesongfunerals.com.



Bailey "Dan" Stokley

Bailey "Dan" Stokley, age 57, passed away on July 22, 2017.

Dan lived in Monticello his entire life, where he worked for the family business, Stokley Pecan. His main enjoyment during the day was working with his cows. Among his hobbies, Dan was an avid arrowhead collector. He also enjoyed his off time, fishing down at the Wacissa River.



Preceded in death by his wife of 32 years, Leola Brock Stokley; his parents Bailey & Carmela Stokley; 2 sisters Jo Stanley and Janet Stokley; Survivors include his older brother, Louis Stokley; 1 son, Justin Stokley; 1 daughter, Josie Bridges (Cole) and 1 granddaughter, Bailey Kate Bridges.

The service for Mr. Stokley will be held Graveside at Sardis Cemetery in Monticello on Thursday, July 27, 2017 at 10:00 am. There will be a visitation from 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm Wednesday July 26, 2017, the night before at Beggs Funeral Home Monticello Chapel 485 E. Dogwood St. Monticello, Florida.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Big Bend Hospice House. (Service handled by Beggs Funeral Home Monticello Chapel 850-997-5612)



AMANDA THOMPSON
Camp participants marched through FAMU's campus.



AMANDA THOMPSON
Young musicians come from all over the nation to attend FAMU's band camp



JOE RONDONE/DEMOCRAT
The week-long Marching 100 Summer Band Camps culminated with a student led parade down Wahhish Way on FAMU's campus.