

# Tiger Talk

❖ March 2009 ❖

## Dr. Virginia Carson Named SGC President

**A**fter nearly 11 months of service to South Georgia College as interim president, the University System of Georgia Board of Regents named Dr. Virginia Carson permanent president on January 13, 2009.

"I am very pleased to be named president of South Georgia College," Dr. Carson said. "I look forward to continuing the pattern of growth we have established in recent years."

Dr. Carson came to Douglas as vice president for academic affairs at Georgia Highlands College (GHC) in Rome. Her appointment as interim was effective March 1, 2008.

A Macon native, Dr. Carson was named to her position at Georgia Highlands College in 2001. She previously served as dean of academic services for Georgia Perimeter College's (GPC) Clarkston, Ga., campus from 2000 to 2001.

Dr. Carson spent the 1999-2000 academic year as a fellow of the American Council on Education (ACE) at Northern Virginia Community College in Annandale, Va., under the direction of President Belle S. Wheelan, who is now president of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commission on Colleges.

Previously, Dr. Carson served as chair of the Department of Mathematics, Computer Science & Engineering, also on GPC's Clarkston campus. Her years as a math professor at GPC (formerly DeKalb College) extend back to 1982.

Dr. Carson is president of the National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs (NACCTEP). Until 2009, she represented Georgia on the executive council of the SACS Commission on Colleges and served as state chair of the Georgia SACS commissioners. Dr. Carson is a member of the American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges (AMATYC) and edited *The AMATYC Review*, a semi-annual refereed mathematics journal, from 1998 to 2003.

Dr. Carson holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Georgia, and a M.Ed. and Ph.D. in mathematics education from Georgia State University. She always enjoyed math, and remembers the exact day as a tenth grader when she decided to major in mathematics.

"I liked math so much in school, and I've never regretted making it my career," she said.

In her spare time, Dr. Carson enjoys playing bridge and walking. She is a reader, preferring mysteries and books pertaining to history.

She has also taken up gardening in recent years. It's a skill she's still learning, but enjoys immensely.

Traveling is another of her favorite activities. Dr. Carson recently journeyed to England with her cousin, and two years ago embarked on a walking tour of Tuscany.

"I loved it. It was great fun," she said.

Dr. Carson and her husband, Francis, a retired engineer, have two sons and a daughter. She is quite fond of saying that all three of her children are married and gainfully employed. She and her husband also have two granddaughters, and they spend as much time as possible with them.

"Family is very important to us. We find plenty of opportunities for family time," she said.

In fact, it was family that led Dr. Carson into her first teaching position at DeKalb College. She had been a stay-at-home mom; a position she said she was fortunate to hold. However, the opportunity at DeKalb College had a schedule that was very accommodating to a mother with young children.

"My career progressed from there," she said.

Dr. Carson believes in supporting her community, and has always been very active in organizations — particularly Rotary Club, education support groups, and those that promote good health. In Douglas, she immediately became very involved in the local Rotary Club.

"This community has welcomed my family and me, and we are pleased to be able to remain here and call Douglas and Coffee County home," she added.



*Dr. Virginia Carson*

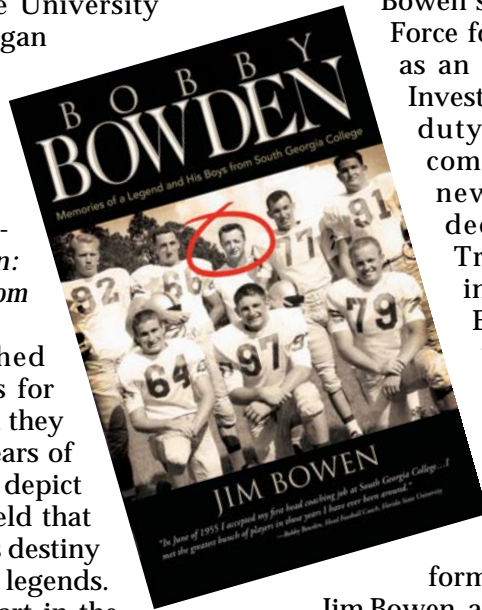
# Alumnus Jim Bowen publishes Bowden book

## CLASS OF 1957

It's no secret that Florida State University coaching legend Bobby Bowden began his career at South Georgia College. However, few are familiar with the details of Bowden's tenure at SGC. Jim Bowen, one of Coach Bowden's players in 1956 and a personal friend, has written an early-years biography: *Bobby Bowden: Memories of a Legend and His Boys from South Georgia College*.

While the country has watched Bobby Bowden's continued success for more than 30 years, few can say that they knew the man during the earliest years of his coaching career. Even fewer can depict the struggles and setbacks on the field that could have changed Coach Bowden's destiny to become one of America's gridiron legends.

Author Jim Bowen found his start in the printing room of South Georgia College's newspaper, where he worked as a member of the staff and as a sports reporter. Despite his talent and proficiency in teaming these two subjects, he would not publish his first book for nearly 50 years.



Upon graduating in June of 1957, Bowen served on active duty with the U.S. Air Force for more than 12 years, working mainly as an investigator for the Office of Special Investigations. Even while committed to his duty, Bowen still found time to write, composing short stories for several base newspapers. Over the next couple of decades, Bowen worked for the U.S. Treasury Department as a criminal investigator, and for the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center as a training instructor, where he wrote and contributed to several training manuals.

Since his graduation from South Georgia College, he has maintained a close, personal relationship with Coach Bowden and many of his former teammates.

Jim Bowen, and wife Dell, currently live in Louisville, Kentucky.

*Bobby Bowden: Memories of a Legend and His Boys from South Georgia College* is now available for purchase online and at book retailers near you.

## CLASS OF 1974

**Dr. Jim Cottingham** was honored by South Georgia College for 30 years of service in 2008. Dr. Cottingham currently serves as Vice President for Student Affairs at the College.

## CLASS OF 1978

**Dennis Blanton**—Curator, Native American Archaeology at the Fernbank Museum of Natural History in Atlanta since 2005—obtained his undergraduate degree in anthropology at the University of Georgia (1980, Phi Beta Kappa) after graduating from South Georgia College. He completed a master of arts in anthropology at Brown University (1983) and is currently finalizing his doctorate in anthropology at the University of Virginia. Blanton has received wide recognition for his research, including articles in *The New York Times* and *In Science* magazine, and appearances on the television programs *Scientific American Frontiers* (with Alan Alda) and *ABC World News Tonight*. He and his wife Ingrid have one son, Riley, a senior at Brown University.

## CLASS OF 2007

**John Robert McDonald** graduated with honors from Georgia State University in December 2009. He obtained his bachelor's degree in history.

## IN MEMORIAM-SGC Faculty

**Libbo Belger**, who died September 10, 2008, began teaching business courses at South Georgia College in 1937. She retired from the College in the mid-1970s, but remained Assistant Professor Emerita.



**Email us newsworthy happenings in your life such as weddings, job promotions, civic awards or stories you would like to see in Tiger Talk. Also visit the SGC website and update your contact information at this link:**

[www.sgc.edu/forms/alumni/questionnaire.html](http://www.sgc.edu/forms/alumni/questionnaire.html)



# Former SGC Player Jason Childers inks deal with Tampa Bay Rays

Former South Georgia College standout Jason Childers signed a minor league deal with the Tampa Bay Rays — his second stint with Tampa — in December 2008.

The right-handed pitcher is coming off an excellent season with the Triple A Charlotte Knights of the Chicago White Sox organization in which he went 4-2 with a 1.22 ERA with 61 strikeouts in 50 games.

Childers spent two years with South Georgia College, pitching for Scott Sims' Tigers from 1993-1994. He transferred to Kennesaw State University, where he continued his playing career. Childers was named First Team All American in 1996 — the same year he helped Kennesaw State win a national championship.

Childers was granted free agency in the fall. Three or four teams were interested in him, and his agent planned on talking with those teams at the Winter Meetings. Enter the Tampa Bay Rays, who contacted Childers' agent and wanted him back badly. Tampa has some open spots in the bullpen in 2009, giving Childers a solid chance to make the big league club.

"They said they wanted me back, and I already know the staff, which is a big plus for someone in my position. It means I don't have to prove myself all over again," said Childers. "I feel like I'll be one of the guys in the mix."

The contract includes an invite to Spring Training with the Major League club.

In June 1997, the Milwaukee Brewers selected Childers as an undrafted free agent. He has worked his way up the minor league ladder, eventually earning a shot in the big leagues with the Tampa Bay Rays in 2006. Childers spent the first month of the season with Tampa, where he went 0-1 with a 4.70 ERA in five games before going to Triple A Durham.

He landed with the Charlotte Knights in 2007, where he went 3-2 with a 3.91 ERA. A great first half of the 2008 season (3-1, 1.40 ERA, 31 strikeouts) earned him a spot on the International League's All Star team.

In the eighth inning of the All Star Game, Childers was called on to preserve a 2-0 lead over the Pacific Coast League. He ran into a little trouble, but was able to end the inning with the lead intact.

Unfortunately, the International League would give up six runs in the top of the ninth to fall behind 6-2. In the bottom of the frame, the International League got three of those runs back, but lost the game by a run.

*Jason Childers, during his SGC playing days:*



Childers, his wife Stephanie, and their children call Douglas home. He's never forgotten South Georgia College or head baseball coach Scott Sims.

"It all started right here at South Georgia. I come back every off-season and work out with the team. I also work with the pitchers, mainly on mechanics and the mental aspect of the game. I don't have overpowering stuff, so I have to be smart on the mound," he said.

Childers reported to Spring Training on February 14, 2009.

### Professor Charles Ward:

*‘SGC one of best things that ever happened to me’*

Charles Ward’s life has been one of firsts: He was one of the first African-American students at South Georgia College. He was also the first African-American instructor on campus and one of the first members of the SGC community to address cultural awareness. Most recently, he is also the first full-time math instructor hired at the SGC Entry Program at Valdosta State University.

Ward came to SGC in 1967. He was valedictorian of the Carver High School Class of 1967, and as such, was a member of the President’s Club on campus (the President’s Club was reserved for those who were valedictorians of their respective high schools). He arrived soon after Oscar Street, who was the first African-American student to attend SGC.

What Ward didn’t realize at the time was he was just beginning what would be a long, and in some ways historic, relationship with SGC. He became president of his class, and moved on to Valdosta State College in 1969. At VSC, he earned a double major in physics and math. After a two-year stint teaching at Lowndes High School, he returned to South Georgia College in 1973.

He taught at SGC for six years, and in that time, helped usher in several important changes. For Ward, college is about so many things, not the least of which is a sense of belonging. As a faculty member, Charles was instrumental in starting the Student Organization for Black Awareness (SOBA).

“The club helped black students understand their cultural differences,” said Ward. “We had black and white members. We were very active on campus.”

The club sponsored service projects both on campus and within the community, and took time to honor a community member each year. Among the recipients of

SOBA’s award is Douglas City Commissioner Johnnie Lee Roper, a former SGC employee.

SOBA became the Student Organization for Multicultural Unity (SOMU), which continues to address diversity in a positive way.

“We need to use the strengths of all our differences and pull



**Charles Ward**

together to create a better world,” Ward said. In the early 1970s, he also began working with students in remedial classes. At the time, he said, there was a negative stigma that went with taking remedial courses, something that Ward didn’t like.

Almost all of the remedial classes were lab-based and involved little interaction with instructors. Ward went in once a week and lectured to the students. The personal attention paid off; soon, he said, 70 percent were passing their exams immediately after completing remedial classes.

“I looked at remedial classes as a second chance, not something to be looked down on,” he said.

He left SGC in 1978 and since then has taught throughout the region, including 18 years at Brooks County High. Ward must have an interesting idea of retirement — soon after, he found employment as a full-time math instructor at the SGC Entry Program at VSU. And he still teaches part-time for VSU.

Throughout his career, Ward has wanted to help students find out who they are and how they fit into their community. All these years later, that desire is still there. One thing he would like to see is the students at the entry programs in Valdosta and Americus visit the main SGC campus.

“Many of them have never seen our campus. Spending time on campus would help them feel more connected and included, even if it was just one day a semester,” he said.

“*I would just like to paraphrase one of my favorite songs and say that, ‘If anyone should ever write my life’s story, for whatever reason there might be, South Georgia College is one of the best things that ever happened to me!’ I shall forever be grateful for the start in life that it gave to me.*”

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# Foundation News



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**Russell Durden (third from right) was the recipient of the PCC Airfoils of Douglas Scholarship for the 2008-09 year. PCC Airfoils—a worldwide manufacturer of complex metal components and products for aerospace and power generation companies—has been located in Douglas since 1980.**



**In September 2008, Romeo Reyes (right), Satilla REMC's District Manager and SGC Foundation member, presented Dr. Virginia Carson (center) and SGC Foundation President Grace James with a \$12,500 check to endow the utility company's ninth scholarship at the College.**



**Tamarrai Smith (third from right), a sophomore majoring in business administration at South Georgia College, was recently selected to receive the Wine and Spirits Wholesalers of Georgia Foundation Scholarship.**



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**In November 2008, Maudine Wright ('74), co-founder of Douglas Electric and Plumbing, and family completed an endowment in memory of her late husband—Rudolph Malphus. Dr. Virginia Carson personally thanked her for this second scholarship endowment at SGC. Appointed vice-chairperson of the Georgia Construction Industry Licensing Board by Governor Sonny Perdue, she is a past member of the SGC Foundation.**

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## Upcoming Events

### *An Evening with Coach Bobby Bowden*

The South Georgia College Foundation is proud to host "An Evening with Coach Bowden" on Thursday, May 28, 2009. This event will provide an opportunity for fans to meet and hear legendary football coach Bobby Bowden.

The proceeds from this evening will benefit the SGC Foundation General Fund. Sponsorships are available. To reserve your spot or for more information, contact: Walda Kight, 912.260.4274 or [walda.kight@sgc.edu](mailto:walda.kight@sgc.edu).



*Coach Bobby Bowden  
during his tenure at  
South Georgia College*

### .....DATES.....

**APRIL 15**  
**HONORS DAY**  
12 pm, Peterson Hall  
McGouirk Auditorium

**APRIL 23**  
**INAUGURATION CEREMONY**  
for Dr. Virginia Carson  
2 pm, Peterson Hall

**MAY 1-2**  
**Region XVII**  
**BASEBALL TOURNAMENT**

**MAY 7**  
**GRADUATION**

## Travel the U.S. and Europe with SGC

*SGC Continuing Education is  
offering three exciting travel  
opportunities in 2009*



### **May 23-31, 2009 \* Trains of the Colorado Rockies**

Highlights of this nine-day tour are Denver, Rocky Mountain National Park, Georgetown Loop Railroad, Vail, Grand Junction, Durango and Silverton Railroad, Durango, Mesa Verde National Park, Royal Gorge Railroad, Colorado Springs, Pike's Peak Cog Railway, and Garden of the Gods.

### **December 3-10, 2009 \* Enchanting Christmas Markets**

This eight-day tour will visit the enchanting Christmas markets of Salzburg, Linz, Vienna, and Prague. It will include Mozart's birthplace in Salzburg and the Schoenbrunn Palace in Vienna. The trip concludes in the Czech Republic's Golden City of Prague with its architectural gems.

### **October 15-22, 2009 \* New England Back Roads**

This eight-day fall foliage trip to New England will explore the abundant charms of New England. This tour includes historic Boston, Bennington, and the Molly Stark Trail. Visit Adams Farm and Shelburne Museum, and sample Cold Hollow Cider and Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream. Discover the communities of Boothbay Harbor and Kennebunkport.

*For more information on these travel adventures or to place your name on a mailing list for future trips, contact Amy Hancock, Continuing Education Director, at 912.260.4461 or [amy.hancock@sgc.edu](mailto:amy.hancock@sgc.edu).*

# Reunions

*South Georgia College is pleased to welcome back our alumni and to host the following alumni reunions and events. If you would like more information on any of our events, please call Cathy Hand, Alumni Relations Specialist, at 912.260.4269 or email your request to [cathy.hand@sgc.edu](mailto:cathy.hand@sgc.edu). Reservations for all events must be made in advance.*

## Alumni Reunion Honoring Coach Scotty Perkins

Were you an athlete on Coach Perkins' team while you attended SGC? Or, were you a cheerleader for one of the teams? If so, please make your plans to attend the Perkins Reunion on March 20-21, 2009.

Reunion Events include:

- ❖ Casual gathering in the Clower Center on Friday evening
- ❖ Campus Tours Saturday afternoon
- ❖ Dinner/Dance in the Engram Ballroom Saturday evening

## Alumni Reunion of SGC's Classes of the 1950's

Wonderful memories, wonderful people and great times are what this group is all about! If you attended SGC anytime between 1950 and 1959, please come and join us for the upcoming 1950's reunion on April 17-18, 2009.

Reunion Events include:

- ❖ Casual "Meet & Greet" on Friday night at the Hampton Inn
- ❖ "Lunch & Laughter" in the Clower Student Center on Saturday
- ❖ Campus Tours Saturday afternoon
- ❖ Dinner/Dance in the Engram Ballroom on Saturday evening

## Alumni Reunion Honoring Coach Bobby Bowden

Coach Bobby Bowden coached at South Georgia College from 1955 to 1958, and each year the alumni that were members on his teams gather to share memories and great times. If you played on one of Coach Bowden's teams, the coach would like to see you! Please make your plans to join us on May 29-31, 2009.

Plans include:

- ❖ A "Backyard Barbeque" on Friday evening in the Clower Student Center
- ❖ Golf Tournament at the Douglas Golf & Country Club on Saturday morning
- ❖ Campus Tours on Saturday afternoon
- ❖ Dinner in the Engram Ballroom on Saturday night

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## TIGER TALK is published by the SGC OFFICE OF ADVANCEMENT

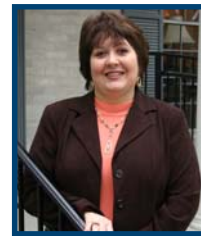
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*Meet our staff, who are here to serve you!*

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# *Think you know us....Think again!*

- ❖ South Georgia College now has four campus locations—Douglas, Valdosta, Americus, and Waycross. Approximately 1,865 students began pursuing degrees at SGC in fall 2008.
- ❖ Overall enrollment increased 6.3% in fall 2008, with a 9.1% increase on the Douglas campus. Over 30 international students attend SGC from 12 different countries. The average student age is 22.6.
- ❖ Due to the addition of Tiger Village in 2007, SGC housed over 300 students on campus in fall 2008, a 68% increase since 2006. SGC has over 20 clubs and organizations, intramural sports, planned social activities, and a Study Abroad program.
- ❖ The most popular academic major at SGC is Nursing, which has been offered for 40 years. The second most popular choice is Education. The SGC Foundation awarded over 80 scholarships to students in fall 2008.
- ❖ All four SGC athletic teams—baseball, softball, men's and women's soccer—competed in the Region XVII playoffs in the 2007-08 season. The women's softball team won state and participated in the national tournament.
- ❖ South Georgia College contributes approximately \$40 million to the Coffee County economy. In community outreach, SGC's "Plant Their Feet" program focuses on encouraging local middle school students to graduate from high school and attend college.



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