THE TENTH ANNUAL alumni awards gala brought together almost 400 students, staff, faculty, and alumni at the Knoxville Convention Center Friday, November 9. The evening recognized three alumni and one corporation for outstanding contributions to the college and to business in the state.

The gala began with a cocktail reception and silent auction benefitting the College Fund for the Haslam College of Business. Mack Dove was honored as the college’s 2018 Distinguished Alum. Ed Pershing received the Outstanding Entrepreneur award. Farm Bureau Insurance of Tennessee was recognized as Outstanding Corporate Partner, and Mason Jones was named Outstanding Young Alum.
IN 2006, MASON JONES (HCB, ’04; Law, ’07) co-founded Volunteer Traditions, an apparel company focused on simple, classic products that convey a love for Tennessee. “A lot of alumni started wearing our merchandise at UT games because they liked the distinctive look,” says Jones. “Over the next few years, we developed a website and the business continued to grow.”

At first, Jones juggled running the business after hours while finishing his law degree and later working full-time. In 2010, he realized he wanted to give Volunteer Traditions his full attention. “I’ve always loved small business,” he says. “My dad owned a pharmacy, so I grew up around it.”

As Jones moved forward with Volunteer Traditions, he leaned heavily on his Haslam education and on his past experience working for his father. “My education provided a base knowledge that was very valuable when I started running the business full-time and bringing people on to help,” he says. “Being around other people at Haslam who were working hard really pushed me to be self-motivated.”

Jones and his team have since worked to identify their core customer base. “I always want to make sure our designs are clean and simple, such as the classic interlocking UT symbol and the Tennessee Tristar,” he says. “Those designs are timeless.” The company designs a wide variety of Tennessee themed products, from shirts to outerwear and jewelry. Customers connect with the brand through its flagship store in Nashville, retailers across the state, and its website.

Since the success of Volunteer Traditions, Jones has returned to campus a number of times to speak with students about his experiences. “Tom Graves at the Anderson Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation has invited me to speak to his classes, and I’ve tried to do that twice a year,” he says. “I really enjoy that, and I’ve been able to work with individual students who are interested in starting businesses.” For the past two years, Jones and his team have partnered with the college’s undergraduate office to design a special edition shirt for incoming freshmen at Haslam. Jones has also established a scholarship at Haslam for students from his hometown of White House, Tennessee.

For his continued involvement in the college and generous support of students, the Haslam College of Business is proud to name Mason Jones the 2018 Outstanding Young Alum. 
OUTSTANDING CORPORATE PARTNER AWARD

SINCE 1948, FARM BUREAU INSURANCE has grown from a small business to become one of the largest multi-line insurance companies in Tennessee.

Farm Bureau Insurance began selling property and casualty insurance in 1948 and added life insurance in 1973. Today the company has 500 agents in 190 sales offices, with at least one office in every Tennessee county. In addition, there are 16 regional claims centers and more than 350 claims professionals working throughout the state.

“We cover more homes and automobiles than anyone else—about 1.9 million units in the state,” says Jeff Pannell, CEO. “We also are the second largest writer of individual life insurance policies in Tennessee.”

The insurance giant’s link to the Haslam College of Business traces back several decades. “We have quite a few alums working for our company and many of our senior leadership attended the college,” Pannell says.

Neal Townsend (HCB, ’80), a former chief marketing officer, put tremendous effort into strengthening the relationship between the company and the college. In 2011, Townsend started speaking at senior level marketing classes about the Farmer Charlie branding campaign.

“Shortly after that, we created the Farm Bureau Insurance of Tennessee Insurance/Risk Management Lecturer Endowment to support insurance education at Haslam,” says Pannell. “The endowment is used to recruit outstanding insurance and risk management faculty members.” There’s also a team room named for Farm Bureau Insurance inside the Haslam Business Building.

Pannell sees an intrinsic connection between Farm Bureau Insurance and the college. “They’re a perfect partner as the flagship business school in the state,” he says. “Both Farm Bureau Insurance and the Haslam College of Business are invested in the success of our state’s students. It’s natural for us to invest, leading to a mutually beneficial relationship as those connections continue to grow.” The company recruits on campus and regularly hires graduates from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and Haslam.

Pannell says he hopes the partnership will continue to flourish. “We look forward to a lasting relationship,” he says. “I think the college is a tremendous asset to the state of Tennessee, and that’s evidenced by the quality of people we’ve hired who are alumni.”

The Haslam College of Business is proud to name Farm Bureau Insurance of Tennessee the 2018 Outstanding Corporate Partner.

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ED PERSHING (HCB, ’74) grew up in Alcoa, Tennessee, surrounded by a supportive family. His two older brothers attended the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, before he and his youngest brother followed three years later. “I witnessed firsthand how much they enjoyed and valued the experience,” Pershing says. “I never considered going anywhere else.”

An excellent student, Pershing received offers from each of the big eight accounting firms after graduation. He joined EY and was soon selected to participate in an education program on healthcare consulting. It was 1976, a time when consulting was not usually identified as a viable career, but Pershing had discovered his calling. “I was very blessed to participate in that program,” he says. “It set the foundation for my career and allowed me to pursue a path I’m very passionate about: healthcare and public health.”

Pershing co-founded Pershing Yoakley & Associates with fellow Haslam graduate Doug Yoakley (HCB, ’78) in 1983. “I started PYA with the idea of establishing a strong consulting practice but operating as a CPA firm to convey our commitment to sound business practices and ethical conduct,” Pershing says. Pershing’s focus on healthcare consulting led PYA to become a leader in the niche, recognized by Modern Healthcare as the ninth largest privately-held healthcare management consulting firm in the country. Today, approximately 80 percent of PYA’s practice is related to the healthcare industry, and consulting accounts for more than two-thirds of their work.

PYA also founded a number of affiliate companies in other sectors, including real estate, investment advisory services, healthcare claims analysis and auditing, and most recently, advanced analytics. “These ongoing opportunities to create new business enterprises have been extraordinarily satisfying for me,” says Pershing. “They allow us to expand our impact and our business footprint.”

Over the years, Pershing has retained firm ties to the Haslam College of Business, serving in the past as a member of the Chancellor’s Associates and currently on the Dean’s Advisory Council at Haslam. “Right here in our backyard, we have the ability to connect with students and professors in a way that enables us to attract the best and brightest to join us at PYA,” Pershing says. “Haslam is a pipeline for us for being able to identify and retain remarkable talent.”

The road to success as an entrepreneur can be summed up in one word, says Pershing: perseverance. “You need personal discipline and diligence each day,” he says. “Even when you don’t see progress, you’re building a foundation that will result in progress.”

The Haslam College of Business is proud to honor Ed Pershing with the 2018 Outstanding Entrepreneur Award.
A native of Dothan, Alabama, Mack Dove (HCB, ’58) came to the Haslam College of Business in 1954 to pursue an education that would support his family’s business, AAA Cooper Transportation. Dove originally planned to study law after earning an undergraduate degree in logistics, but changed course in 1958 to dive into the business with his brother, Earl Dove (HCB, ’56).

When the trucking industry deregulated in the 1980s, Mack Dove was able to vastly grow the company with the knowledge of logistics, supply chains, cost management, and employee training he gleaned during his undergraduate experience. AAA Cooper Transportation entered the 1980s with $43 million in annual sales. At the end of the decade, sales had grown to more than $136 million.

Since then, the company has expanded to serve the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Today, AAA Cooper Transportation employs 5,200 people and operates a fleet of 2,600 tractor units and 6,000 dry trailers, with more than $500 million in annual sales. Reid Dove, Mack’s son, now serves as president and CEO of the privately owned and family-run business.

Valuing people is at the forefront of Mack Dove’s business philosophy. “You have to communicate with your people and give them the right knowledge and tools,” he says. “You concentrate on keeping your people safe and making sure that they understand their jobs. Good people sense is good business sense.”

Dove says his education at Haslam broadened his understanding of the transportation industry. “My focus was primarily on trucking, and here I was introduced to rail and water as well,” he says. “I’ve maintained relationships with associates and fellow students I met at the time, and they have excelled in other parts of the industry. Those friendships are invaluable.”

Over the years, Dove has chaired the Dothan, Alabama, Chamber of Commerce and served on the board of directors for a number of industry and business organizations. He also has stayed connected with his alma mater by serving on the University of Tennessee, Knoxville’s, Development Council and the Dean’s Advisory Council at Haslam.

“The University of Tennessee was a big part of my life and I try to show my appreciation and honor the school in the ways that I can,” he says. Dove and his wife, Nancy, support the John H. Dove Transportation Excellence Endowment, the G. Mack and Nancy R. Dove Foundation Scholarship Endowment, and the John Dove Professorship Endowment.

For his outstanding career success and continuing investment in the college, the Haslam College of Business is proud to name Mack Dove the 2018 Distinguished Alum.
Cardinal Capital Management, whose president and CIO is Glenn Andrews (HCB, ’74, MBA, ’77), was named to the 2018 edition of the FT 300 Top Registered Investment Advisers.

Pinnacle Financial Partner’s Rob McCabe (HCB, ’72, ’78) was named to the American City Business Journals’ list of the nation’s biggest influencers in finance.

Molly Adams (HCB, ’84) joined Caleres as president of Famous Footwear.

Russell Lamb (HCB, ’87) and Jennifer Lamb established a $100,000 endowment for the Haslam Experimental Economics Lab.

Andy Dishner (HCB, ’91), and Ken Evans (HCB, ’91), COO and CEO, respectively, of Konexial, donated nearly $3 million worth of software to help Haslam students in understanding the complexities of fleet management.

Donald E. Frieson (HCB, ’90) joined Lowe’s as executive vice president of supply chain.

Bruce A. Meyer (MBA, ’99) became president of Jefferson Health at Thomas Jefferson University.

Forbes Magazine named BrightStar Care, whose CEO and co-founder is Shelly Sun (MBA, ’92), the nation’s leading in-home care franchise for the fourth year running.
ALUMNI UPDATE // ALUMNI NEWS

Ray Roberge (PROMBA, ’05) is now vice president of customer care with Overhead Door Corporation.

Ascension made Peter Sanderson (PEMBA, ’08) senior director of clinical informatics for the Wisconsin region.

Jerri Schmidt (PROMBA, ’07) was promoted to IS site leader over four Arconic plants in Iowa.

Bush Brothers promoted Mike Smith (PROMBA, ’08) to director of operations of its Chestnut Hill, Tennessee, plant.

Marty Weems (PROMBA, ’06) has become vice president of strategic business for Advanced Genomic Solutions.

’10s

United Technologies promoted DeWayne Allen (AD MBA, ’17) to director of special projects.

Gridsmart brought Ian Anderson (PROMBA, ’11) on as supply chain manager.

Daniel Aycock (HCB, ’13, MAcc, ’14) is now an MBA candidate at the University of Virginia’s Darden School of Business.

Ardo Ba (PROMBA, ’15) was selected to the Knoxville Business Journal’s 2018 40 Under 40 list of outstanding young professionals.

The US Army promoted Christina Bell (AD MBA, ’17) to product manager for Special Operations Forces Training Systems.

Abingdon Memorial Hospital promoted Fernando Bonanni (PEMBA, ’18) to vice chairman of the department of surgery.

CWO Christopher Briasco (ADMBA, ’18) of the Georgia Army National Guard participated in Operation Noble.

John Campbell (PEMBA, ’11) and Rand Schleusener (PEMBA, ’11) launched a new website for their company, Synergy Surgeonists.

Ameriflight made Paul Chase (ADMBA, ’15) CEO of the nation’s largest Part 135 cargo airline.

HCA Sunrise Health GME Consortium, Mountain View Hospital Surgical Residency, tapped Brian Citro (PEMBA, ’14) as associate program director.

Keel Coleman (PEMBA, ’16) founded ArchiveCore.

Blake Connolly (HCB, ’17) finished a 15-month stint as a research economist at the Council of Economic Advisers in Washington, DC, and joined Alliance Bernstein as a senior analyst.

Jay Deluca (PROMBA, ’16) is now business director of card and decorative for Klockner Pentaplast.

Jeffrey Dryer (PEMBA, ’11) founded CarePulse Software.

Reynolds American promoted Kristal Forbes (PROMBA, ’13) to senior key account manager.

Metro Health Hospital promoted Peter Hahn (PEMBA, ’14) to CEO.

Emileigh Harmon (BSBA, ’14) joined Highway Transport Chemical, LLC, as a recruiter.

Miah Hatch (PEMBA, ’17) became staff anesthesiologist at Anesthesia Medical Group, PC.

David Hawkins (EMBA-SL, ’17) is now a patent engineer with Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton.

Parker Henry (HCB, ’18) won the SEC’s H. Boyd McWhorter Scholar-Athlete of the Year award and was Haslam’s top graduate in May 2018.

The International Federation for Emergency Medicine awarded the “Order of the IFEM” Fellowship to Brian Holroyd (PEMBA, ’11).

Alton Health appointed Steve Holtzclaw (PEMBA, ’18) as its CEO.

Mary Jackson-Hammond (PEMBA, ’12) is now president of Global Health IPA.

The Feinberg School of Medicine at Northwestern University named Narasimhan “Sim” Jagannathan (MBA, ’17) professor of anesthesiology.

Matt Jessewits (ADMBA, ’17) contributed to an article in MRO Network and was promoted to director of propulsion and engines at Aviall, a Boeing company.

Raina Karanjeet (PEMBA, ’16) became medical director of the internal medicine ambulatory practice at Carilion Clinic.


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BAE Systems promoted Kenita Rainey (ADMBA, ’18) to chief of staff.

Cody Rhodes-Dawson (PROMBA, ’09) was promoted to plant manager at the Waupaca Foundry.

TeamHealth named Hammad Risvi (PEMBA, ’12) senior vice president.

Julia Ross (HCB, ’16), a law student at New York University’s School of Law, spent the summer as an intern at the United States Senate Judiciary Committee.

Trinity Health elected Jeffrey Sather (PEMBA, ’18) to a two-year term as chief of medical staff.

Justin Short (HCB/PND, ’18) accepted a faculty position at Emory University’s Goizueta Business School.


The USDA is working with Geogy Thomas’ (PEMBA, ’15) clinic to find treatments for substance abuse in rural communities.

Thomas Tobin (PEMBA, ’13) became chief medical officer for Colorado West Healthcare System, DBA Community Hospital.

OEWaves announced Skip Williams (AD MBA, ’17) is now its CEO.

Bechtel promoted Steven Wood (PROMBA, ’13) to executive assistant to the president of its Nuclear Security and Environmental Global Business unit.