



# perspectives



Deloris  
McMullen:  
A Chamber  
Fixture  
Page 6

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# perspectives

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Deloris McMullen is manager-education development at The Chamber. Her responsibilities include managing the Adopt-A-School Program and the CHOICES Program, which is a special initiative with 8th grade students. See the articles on Pages 6-7.

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We just recently observed Adopt-A-School Week in Tuscaloosa County. Most of the celebration focused on the partnership displays at University Mall. I hope you had the opportunity to browse among those displays. If you did, I'm sure you were impressed with the wide variety and sheer number of projects and activities our schools and their business adopters are involved in.

Elsewhere in this issue of Perspectives is an article on The Chamber staff person who, more than any other one person, is responsible for the remarkable success of the Adopt-A-School program. Deloris McMullen is in her 13th of managing the program—a program that has been in operation for 20 years now.

I want to thank all of the businesses, industries and organizations that are actively involved in the Adopt-A-School program. I also want to thank the dozens of volunteers from education and business who attend the meetings, plan the projects, work on those projects, and just generally make the program work.

## Skills for Successful Networking

One of the real benefits of membership in The Chamber are the networking opportunities that come along during the year. The Chamber Ambassadors are planning several such events for 2005.

So, how does one network successfully? Here are some tips:

- Arrive early and stay late. Plan your visit to a networking event to stay as long as you can. The longer you're there, the more people you can talk with.
- Come prepared and with a plan. Think ahead of time. Perhaps setting a specific number of people you want to network with. Or people from certain businesses or industries you want to make sure you contact. Look 'em up.
- Approach groups of two. People in a larger group might think you're interrupting them. So large groups aren't especially easy to join. Approaching a single

## Chairman Howard Garrison's Message

There are a number of businesses or industries who don't actively participate in Adopt-A-School, but they help sustain the program by donating funds and goods and services. Our thanks to them, also.

Even now, though, the program can use more support. Some of our schools could use an additional adopter to strengthen their partnership. If your business or industry would like to join a partnership with another business or industry, call Deloris at 391-0563.

I don't think there's a more important set of programs and activities than those our Chamber has undertaken to help improve our educational system and to help build a better workforce for our growing economy.

We all need to work together. And Together We Win!

Howard Garrison, 2005 Chairman of The Chamber's Board of Directors, recently was named regional president of the Tuscaloosa Division of The People's Bank and Trust Company. Garrison replaces Owen Skinner, who has retired, but who remains on the bank's local Board of Directors. Garrison has been active in the Tuscaloosa community for a long time. A graduate of the University of Alabama, he joins People's Bank after leaving Duckworth Morris Garrison Real Estate. Among his civic involvement was a stint as president of the Rotary Club of Tuscaloosa.

individual and engaging them in conversation can leave you trapped, if you don't have a 'comfortable' reason to move on.

- Make notes on the backside of the business cards you collect. Notes such as date of the event, and some kind of memory jogger to help you recall the person and what the two of you discussed.
- Follow up. Soon after the event, follow up with those contacts you consider important to your business. Write them a note. Call them. Send them an e-mail.
- Be selective about making your own referrals. If you refer someone to a new contact, make sure that person can really help the contact.
- Remember to treat people as people, not just contacts. Be genuine with people, all the way from the first handshake to and through any follow-up you make.





## Business Seminars

### 2005 Spring Business Growth Series

**Members take note: the following seminars may be helpful to you, your organization and your employees. Chamber seminars offer good training at reasonable prices, Also, the seminars are ideal opportunities to network with fellow Chamber members and non-members.**

#### Business Breakfast Series

(7:30 am to 9:30 am) at Tuscaloosa Public Library

April 19th - QuickBooks and Your Business II - Intermediate  
(Kim Bannerman – Jamison, Money and Farmer)

May 17th - Microsoft Excel and Access - Basics  
(Gulf States Institute Trainers)

#### Lunch and Learn

(11:00 am to 1:00 am) at Four Points Hotel

April 27th - Exceptional Customer Service  
Dr. Randy Jarrell - Shelton State Community College  
Donny Jones - Chamber of Commerce  
May 5 - 11:30am - Entrepreneur of the Year Awards

May 11 - Leadership Tuscaloosa Graduation Luncheon

#### Half Day Seminars

April 13th - (1:00 pm to 5:00 pm) – Legal Issues & Business  
(Tuscaloosa Library)

Speakers: Carol Entelisano – Tanner & Guin LLC  
DW Wilson – Tanner & Guin LLC

#### Entrepreneur Institute

Morrow Conference Room at The Chamber  
(3:30 pm to 6:00 pm April 5th)

The third seminar of a three-part series for business leaders who have been in business for more than five years. The session will be led by Ken DeWitt. The session will be very interactive and include a “mentor” leader as well.

Session Topic – 10 Steps to a Profitable Business.  
Round Table Guests:

Chamber members: Come to the big networking event on Thursday, April 28, 5-7 p.m. at the Peters Home in Northport (near City Café). Bring your business cards, have some food and drink, and have some fun. The Chamber Ambassadors will be looking for you.

## Chamber Calendar

### March

**March 24**, 10:45 am: Chamber Board of Directors  
(The Chamber)

**March 24**, 4:00 pm: President's Council  
(The Chamber)

### April

**April 4**, 6:00 pm: Northport Advisory Council  
(Northport Medical Center)

**April 5**: Entrepreneur Institute (The Chamber)

**April 6**, 4:00pm: Adopt-A-School Steering Committee  
(The Chamber)

**April 7**, 8:00am: CHOICES Training  
(The Chamber)

**April 7**, 7:00 am: West Alabama Leadership Prayer Breakfast (Bryant Conference Center)

**April 13**, 1:00 pm: Legal Issues and Business Seminar  
(Tuscaloosa Library)

**April 13**, 3:30pm: Finance Committee  
(The Chamber)

**April 14**, 8:15am: Public Affairs Council  
(The Chamber)

**April 18**, 11:30am: Executive Committee  
(The Chamber)

**April 18 until May 6**: Adopt-A-School Sustainer Drive

**April 19**, 7:30am: Breakfast Series – QuickBooks  
(Tuscaloosa Library)

**April 20**, 4:00pm: Chamber Ambassadors  
(The Chamber)

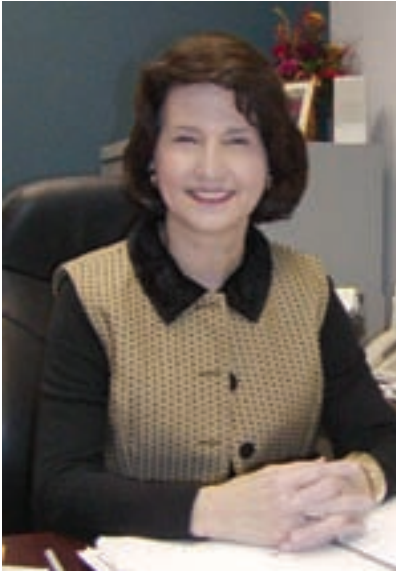
**April 26**, 6:00pm: Civic Hall of Fame Dinner  
(Four Points Hotel)

**April 28**, 5:00pm-7:00pm: Networking Event  
(Peters house – Northport)



## Staff Profile

# Deloris McMullen



When a person is described as a “fixture” around some place—like an office—a particular word often pops into one’s mind: “old.”

However, at the offices of The Chamber of Commerce, there’s a fixture that’s as fresh as the daffodils that will soon be popping out of the ground. Fresh in enthusiasm daily. Fresh in ideas. Fresh in energy.

The fresh fixture at The Chamber is Deloris McMullen, manager of the Education Division, which means she manages the Adopt-A-School Program and the CHOICES program for 8th graders.

Deloris arrived at The Chamber in 1992, seven years after the program began. This year, Deloris is leading the program’s 20th year.

“I love working with the wide variety of people who fill many roles in our community,” she said. “It’s fun to get ‘up close and personal’ with so many people who are instrumental in making our program work.

“I also have the opportunity to get the ‘big picture’ of Adopt-A-School. The creativity of our business/education partnerships is astounding. The ability of these partnerships to pool their resources to the fullest advantage of the school is absolutely unbelievable.”

Deloris gets a lot of satisfaction out of the CHOICES program also. “This is an eye-opening experience for students in eighth grade. When our volunteers lead them through some exercises that emphasize the importance of making good decisions about their education, the students are nearly bowled over. This is a tremendously important effort on The Chamber’s part.”

Deloris came out of the classroom where she was a teacher. Her husband, Tommy, is president of Madison Masonry Co., where a son, Chason, also works. Chason and his wife, Kim, just recently made Deloris a grandmother three times over when Sara Chase was born. Daughter Laura and her husband, Brandon Farmer, have two daughters, Mary Madison and Olivia. All three get plenty of spoiling from Deloris and Tommy.

Deloris said the business community in Tuscaloosa County has totally embraced the Adopt-A-School program. “The program has become such a part of both school systems that parents and students expect their schools to have an active Adopt-A-School partner,” she said.

“There’s nothing more important to a community’s quality of life than a well-educated workforce,” Deloris said. “By participating in our program, a business or industry—or an organization—can step to the plate and take positive action to improve and enhance education in our community..”

“The Chamber—and the community—is fortunate to have someone with the talent and energy of Deloris McMullen to manage our educational programs,” said Johnnie Aycock, Chamber President. “She has brought our Adopt-A-School Program to a point where it’s envied by educators in other parts of the state and the South.” Through the Adopt-A-School program, schools find some of their needs met that would go unmet without a partner or partners, Deloris affirmed. “And I really believe that, as business people go into the classroom to talk about their business and the skills required to be successful in it, students come to appreciate more the subjects they’re learning. The business people are also great role models for our young people.”

“Another benefit of the program for business is that our program gives companies an opportunity to encourage their employees to be active in the community. That exposure can really make a difference in their personal growth and in their enthusiasm and morale,” Deloris said.

All schools in the Tuscaloosa City and Tuscaloosa County systems have at least one partner, Deloris said. But some of the schools could really benefit by having more than one adopter. “So we’re always on the lookout for adopters.”

Companies that cannot devote employee hours to a school can support the Adopt-A-School program by becoming a “sustainer” of the program. “This simply means that they will contribute some funds to help us operate the program,” Deloris said.

Companies can also help by fielding teams or individuals in the Adopt-A-School golf and tennis tournaments, which will be held on September 29 this year.

For the program’s 20th year, a special theme has been adopted: “Under Construction..Tuscaloosa’s Future.”

