

Congratulations
to the
Graduates of
Mary Persons High
and
Monroe Academy.

For Graduation
Photos See Pages
A12 and B1.

The Monroe County Reporter

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Local government officials and residents along with Department of Corrections officials gathered on the Tift campus last Tuesday for a ground breaking ceremony for the new DOC headquarters planned for the 157-year-old college. Gov. Sonny Perdue was the featured speaker.

Tift Reborn

BY MICHAEL STONE
Gov. Sonny Perdue, along with several state and local officials, broke ground last Tuesday on a renovation project at the campus of Tift College in Forsyth. Once complete, the Georgia Department of Corrections (DOC) will move its five metro Atlanta headquarters locations into the renovated facilities in here, Governor Perdue was joined by officials from the Forsyth-Moore County Chamber of Commerce, the City of Forsyth, DOC and members of the Board of Corrections.

"Moving the Department of Corrections headquarters to central Georgia is a wise business decision," said Governor Sonny Perdue. "Not only will this relocation save taxpayers dollars, but the department will be better positioned to protect the people of Georgia because its headquarters will be closer to most of its facilities."

Gov. Perdue said that he was pleased that the state found a way to use the campus because he felt the school's historic legacy and contribution to the state were important.

Forsyth Mayor Jimmy Pace welcomed guests to the Tift campus and introduced speakers, including Harold Carlisle, Chairman of the Monroe County Board of Commissioners.

"It's my pleasure and my privilege to welcome you to this beautiful campus on this Sonny day, you spell that S-O-N-N-Y," Carlisle said. "We've looked forward to this day for a long time and it's finally here. We see action instead of promises. On behalf of all the citizens of Monroe County I want to thank Gov. Sonny Perdue, Commissioner James Donald, our state representative Jim Cole, our senators Ronnie Chance and Cecil Stator, our other representative Robert Ray, and there's many, many, many more citizens who worked behind the scenes to make this day possible. We all look forward to this campus coming alive again and this campus becoming a part of our great community. We have a signature city, we have an elite school system, we have a great county and now we've got the premiere state agency, the Department of Corrections."

The Commissioner of the Department of Corrections,

James E. Donald, said that it was also a great day for the Department of Corrections.

"This a dream come true for the citizens of this community, but this is just a good fit for the Georgia Department of Corrections," Donald said. He also praised local officials and the "field leadership" of Gov. Perdue in supporting the move.

"It is absolutely the right decision," Donald said. "As you look at the geography of Georgia, middle Georgia makes sense about a lot of things and we're excited about our future and our relationship with the community. Today is an historic event. Indeed our transition to this site will preserve the rich Tift College legacy."

The new Forsyth headquarters will be closer to the department's geographical center of operations. The DOC has five prisons located north of Atlanta and 35 prisons south of Macon.

Moving the DOC headquarters to Forsyth will relocate up to 400 central office staff to



Gov. Sonny Perdue

the Tift College campus, an estimated annual payroll of \$25 million. The consolidation and reduced rent payments will save the DOC \$4 million annually, according to state estimates.

Renovations of the campus will begin in fall 2006. Governor Perdue included \$7.5 million in his 2007 budget for design and abatement planning for the renovation project. P-

nal consolidation of the DOC headquarters will occur in 2006 and 2009.

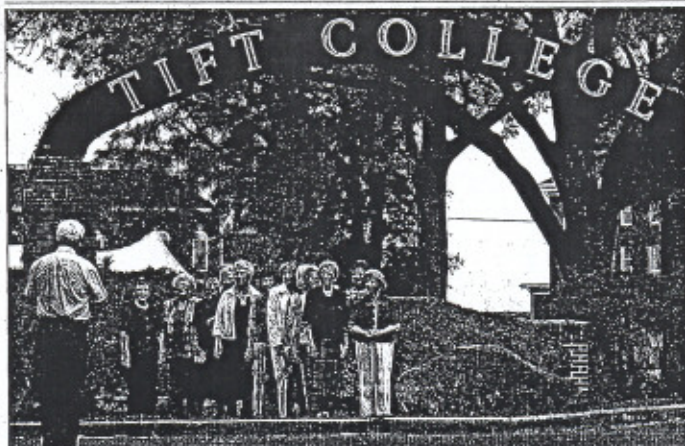
The new site will free critical housing and training facilities currently at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center (GPSTC) for other municipal and state law enforcement training requirements. Some 12,000 DOC employees will be trained and more than 200

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State and local officials participating in the symbolic ground-breaking at Tift College last Tuesday included (l-r) Senator Ronnie Chance, Representative Robert Ray, Senator Cecil Stator, Department of Corrections Commissioner James Donald, Governor Sonny Perdue, Representative Jim Cole, Monroe County Commission Chairman Harold Carlisle and Forsyth Mayor Jimmy Pace.

Photos by Gina Herring and Michael Stone



The Tift graduates who attended the Department of Corrections' groundbreaking ceremony at the Tift campus posed for a group picture to remember the special day. Pictured are: Cathryn Futral, class of 1949; Joan Desvours Cordell, class of 1952; Gailya Raines, Betty Wagner Hammond, Shirley James Campbell, Mimi Sheffield Stone, Dorothy Hines Harris, Gloria Maddox Copeland, Louise Kirkland Greenham, Jackie Chapman Mann and June Devorsh Washam, all from the class of 1954; and Teresa Snowden, class of 1978.

Looking Back, Looking Forward Tift Ladies Reminisce and Applaud Future of Campus

BY GINA HERRING

For some of them it has been more than 50 years since they roamed the halls of Upshaw and walked through the gardens of the Tift Campus, but last Tuesday it was like coming home again for 11 "Tift Ladies."

They were once again giggling and chattering like school girls as they recalled the memories of their college years at Tift.

"WE ARE so glad to see something happening here again," said June Devorsh Washam, class of 1954, who now lives in Thomaston. "We are very excited that they are going to keep the name as well."

During the groundbreaking ceremony, Department of Corrections Commissioner James Donald announced that when the DOC offices relocate to the Tift College campus, the name will not change all that much. The location will be called the Department of Corrections at Tift College.

"That's important to us. We have so many memories here," said Gailya Raines, also class of 1954. "June's husband Grover and my husband, Tom came with us today because they spent so much time here when we were here that they could have been students. They both graduated from Mary Persons in 1947. They lived in Forsyth and came around Tift quite often."

Gailya's Aunt Gemmie Crutchfield ran the restaurant on the corner of Main St. and Jackson St. where Uncle Frank's is today. She said Forsyth has changed a lot since then, but the Tift Campus still looks the same, although a little worn by time.

"I had my first date with my husband here at Tift," said Shirley James Campbell, also class of 1954.

"I did too," said Gailya. "But we had to get permission first, before we could ride in a car with a boy."

An all women college, the rules were strictly enforced at Tift. The ladies recalled an English teacher named Mrs. Wainman who was particularly strict. Ironically, most of the ladies who graduated from Tift also went on to become teachers.

"Because of what we learned at Tift, we were able to go on to touch many other lives,"

said June.

An old handbook for Tift students, brought by one of the ladies was the source of many laughs as they combed the pages of rules.

"You don't see rules like this today," said June.

"Lights must be out at 10 o'clock," Gailya read aloud from one of the pages. Another page in the handbook proclaimed, "No smoking, no drinking and no card playing."

More laughter.

"This was a no smoking environment long before the state came out with the rules against smoking," said June.

THE LADIES walked through the mid afternoon heat to get a group picture made under the Tift arch. As husbands positioned themselves to snap a shot, orders came, "Make sure you get the arch!"

Each one has special memories of college at Tift and wanted to preserve a memory of this day as well.

They said once they heard about the ceremony, they knew they had to be there.

"Our thanks go to Jim Cole, Carrie Fisher from the Governor's office and Carmen at the Chamber," said June. "They helped make it possible for us to get the tickets to come today."

The Tift Ladies say they wouldn't have missed it for the world.

"It's been a great day for us," said June.

"I'm glad they're doing something here, I really am," said Shirley. "We were worried when we first heard about this, that it would all be changed. But now we are so pleased because they are going to do a lot to maintain the history of this campus and still use it for something productive. I think Governor Perdue is a very wise man and he checks with God before making decisions."

Clubs Sponsor September Trip To N. Orleans

The Starlet and Men's Club will sponsor a trip to New Orleans September 1 - 4, 2006. Anyone interested in going, please contact Dorothy Brantley at 478-994-3593 or Jackie Smith at 994-2237.

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classes will be offered for staff development at the new DOC training academy, which will also be a part of the complex on the Tift campus. With the exception of firearms training, DOC will be able to perform all Corrections and Probation Officer training at the new headquarters location.

More than 200 DOC employees already work in the Forsyth-Monroe County community. The Al Barras Correctional Training Center, located in Forsyth, currently houses 800 inmates and will support the new headquarters. The Georgia Corrections Training Academy and the Care and Custody Warehouse are also located in Forsyth-Monroe County.

"Our core mission is to incarcerate inmates and supervise probationers and maintain public trust by the level of excellence we invest in our work," said Commissioner Donald. "We're committed to making Corrections the best managed agency in the best

managed state in the nation." The Department of Corrections is responsible for supervising more than 65,000 state prisoners and 140,000 probationers. It is the largest law enforcement agency in the state with nearly 15,000 Corrections professionals.

"THIS IS a great opportunity for Forsyth and Monroe County," Chamber of Commerce President Tiffany Andrews said. "It will be a great asset and we look forward to seeing new things at the Tift campus."

Representative Jim Cole said he was excited about the groundbreaking and what it meant for the future of Forsyth and Monroe County.

"Today is a watershed moment not only for Forsyth and Monroe County but also for the Department of Corrections and this great state of Georgia," Cole said. "Today is a great day, but tomorrow and the years to come are even bigger and brighter for everyone involved."