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## Important Dates

**May 21****Board of Trustees Meeting****May 25****Campuses Closed for Memorial Day Holiday****June 1-7****BRTC London Trip****June 8-11****Kid's College****June 11****Foundation Board Meeting****June 13****REACH Sites Open****ACT Testing****Paragould Rotary 5K at BRTC Paragould Campus**

## BRTC Holds Commencement Exercises

BRTC held its Spring Commencement this past Thursday evening in the Randolph County Development Center. BRTC awarded 40 degrees and certificates to 263 graduates. Some students completed more than one certificate. Separate commencement ceremonies were held for nursing and law enforcement graduates.

*Ed Bethune addresses graduates*

Degrees were conferred by BRTC President Dr. Eric Turner and awarded by Vice President for General Education Dr. Roger Johnson and Vice President for Technical Education Angie Caldwell. Degrees awarded included two-year Associate of Arts, Associate of Business, and Associate of Applied Science degrees as well as one-year technical certificates and one-semester certificates of proficiency.

Maranda Light, candidate for the Associate of Arts, served as graduate candidate spokesperson. She reminded her classmates that this degree was their "learner's permit for life" as they began their journey into the future

and that much more was to come.

Former congressman, FBI agent, and lawyer Ed Bethune served as keynote speaker. He reminded graduates that they are "already somebody," they should not wait for the world to tell them who they can and can't be. He also reminded graduates that the most important things in their lives will always be "faith, family, and fellowship" and that no matter

what, to "never turn a blind eye to wrong. Stand for right."

Bethune grew up in and graduated from Pocahontas High School then, after serving in Korea with the U.S. Marines, graduated from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, School of Law with his Juris Doctorate in 1963. He spent three years serving Arkansas in the U.S. House of Representatives then began a long career in law. Retired, he has published two novels and is working on his third. Bethune and his wife, Lana, have two children and eight grandchildren. They reside in Little Rock.

## Practical Nursing Graduation and Pinning

The graduation and pinning ceremony for BRTC's Practical Nursing students was held on May 5. The event included the traditional candle lighting ceremony culminating with a vocal rendition

of "Go Light Your World," performed by Heather Fletcher. Sixteen students received a technical certificate in Practical Nursing.

The guest speaker was Brandi Sharp, Advanced Practice Nurse with Pocahontas Family Medical Center. Brandi congratulated students on their choosing BRTC's nursing program which she feels is one of the best nursing programs in Arkansas. The class spokesman was



Susan Glasgow, class president. She related her experiences and expressed her appreciation for the closeness of her classmates. The opening prayer was given by Misty Jones and

the final benediction was presented by Jeffrey Gatewood. Nicole McBride gave a special, heart-felt thank you to her classmates, the nursing staff, and to BRTC for their support.

BRTC President Dr. Eric Turner conferred degrees, with awards announced and presented by Nursing Director Tonya Hankins and nursing faculty members Bridgette

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## PHS Student Graduating from BRTC Before High School

Parents Holly and Steve Sharp have an extra reason to be proud of their daughter Alaina this graduation season. Not only will Alaina be graduating as a Student of Distinction from Pocahontas High School on May 15, but she will also be graduating from Black River Technical College with an Associate of Arts Degree on May 7. This means Alaina will be graduating from college before she graduates from high school.

Alaina began taking concurrent classes her junior year of high school which allowed her to earn both college and high school credit at the same time. She recommends that every student who plans to attend college take concurrent classes in order to get a head start on college. At this pace, Alaina will be able to earn her master's degree before she is 23-years-old.

Alaina believes concurrent classes have saved her family money as well as have prepared her for the transition to college fulltime. However, she recommends high school students begin concurrent courses before their junior year. Doing so would have given her more free time, especially during her senior

year while also worked as a bank teller at RiverBank.

In the fall Alaina plans to attend Arkansas Tech University in Russellville where she will begin working towards her bachelor degree in electrical engineering. She then plans to obtain a Master of Engineering. Alaina also hopes to be awarded an internship at NASA and eventually use her degrees and knowledge to design and invent new technology at NASA.

For more information about concurrent classes at Black River Technical College, contact Sarah Waltermire at (870) 248-4157 or [sarah.waltermire@blackrivertech.edu](mailto:sarah.waltermire@blackrivertech.edu).



*Alaina Sharp*

## Faculty and Staff Award Ceremony

At the annual end-of-the-semester spring potluck on May 6, BRTC held its yearly Faculty and Staff Award Ceremony. Dr. Eric Turner, president of BRTC, and Ruth Ann Ellis, BRTC Board of Trustees member, presented the awards.

Each year, BRTC faculty and staff vote on several awards. They chose Donna Statler, Division Chair for General Education, as the BRTC Outstanding Faculty member; Kimberly Bigger, Registrar, as the BRTC Outstanding Staff member; and Jared Bassham, law enforcement instructor, as the BRTC Outstanding Alumni. These individuals, along with the student also chosen as the Academic All-Star, will be honored in Hot Springs at the annual conference of the Arkansas Community Colleges held this coming October.

Recipients of the 5-year service award were Carl Dyer, law enforcement instructor; Sandra Williams, Paragould math instructor; Margaret Manning, cafeteria; Amber Richbourg, Paragould security; and Katarina Bozarth, Paragould Corporate and Continuing Education administrative specialist.

Recipients of the 10-year service award were Kim Adams, developmental instructor; Bert Clevenger, Paragould Corporate and Continuing Education Director; Crystal Clemmer, Paragould Corporate and Continuing Education administrative specialist; and Jim Thielemier, skilled tradesman, electricity.

Recipients of the 15-year service award were Tammie Lemmons, Director of Adult Education; Mary Anderson, academic advisor; John Wren, institutional services; Mike Greene, Director of Computer Services; and Patti Blaxton, Director of Continuing Education.

Retirements included Norma Ashburn, aviation administrative assistant, and employee of 18 years and Sue Bentley, instructor of adult education, and employee of 24 years.



*Outstanding Staff: Kimberly Bigger*



*Outstanding Faculty: Donna Statler*



*Outstanding Alumni: Jared Bassham*



*Sue Bentley, retiring*



*Norma Ashburn, retiring*



## Poetry Contest Winners

Approximately thirty entries were received from BRTC students for the recent poetry contest held in honor of Poetry Month. Cash prizes were awarded by the English Club for first, second, and third place poems. A web page has been added to the BRTC website for the poetry contest, which will allow a legacy of contest winners to be displayed as well as allow for next year's contest submissions to be entered.

William Retherford placed third for his poem "A Haiku" and received \$25.00. William attends class at the Paragould campus and is seeking an Associate of Arts--Teaching degree. When he graduates he hopes to transfer to Arkansas State University and pursue his dream of becoming a high school history teacher. Although this is the first time that William has been recognized for his poetry, he has been writing since he was in the tenth grade.

Serena Owens placed second for her poem "Pulse" and received \$50.00. She

has been writing since she was twelve-years-old and plans to continue sharing her work with others. She is currently attending BRTC at Pocahontas and is working towards her Associates of Arts degree in General studies. Serena hopes to become an English teacher but is unsure of which four year college she will transfer to; however, she plans to remain close to home.

Cheyenne Richey received \$100 for her first place poem "Four Petals" which she originally wrote when she was twelve-years-old. Although, she has been writing since she was ten, this is the first time she has entered any of her work in a contest. Cheyenne believes writing is a great way for people to express and deal with their feelings. She is currently working to receive her Associates of Arts degree in General Studies and plans to continue studying and become a social worker, which she hopes will allow her to help others.

## Poems

### Four Petals (1st Place)

I am like a flower  
I have four petals and a stem  
Each petal has a purpose  
One is hope  
One is joy  
One is love  
One is strength  
One night I wish upon a star  
It never comes true  
Hope falls  
One morning my friend vanishes  
She never comes back  
Joy fades  
One noon my dad runs  
He never visits  
Love dies  
One afternoon I fall  
I never get up  
Strength ends  
Now all I have left is a bland  
stem  
What person sees that pretty  
My body crumbles



*By Cheyenne Richey*

### Pulse (2nd Place)

The people  
They Walk  
Backs to the known  
Feet cracked  
They Reach  
They Try

Look for something  
Solid  
Holding them up  
But they fall  
They miss  
The edge above  
The perfect way  
Falls short

You are stuck  
Dizzy  
Sinking into nothing  
Beat against this time  
Move your body  
You try  
They try  
For something  
To fill this space.

The edges will haze  
It will seem dim  
They wait in the corners  
They rest in the cracks

Some will fall away  
Break from the past  
Waves upon waves  
Never ending

A circle of cycle  
They form in groups  
They go alone

Wildly they beat  
Swirling in motion  
Never reaching  
Never Enough

It ends Unknowing  
It ends slowly  
They go until done  
Over an end

Jumping again  
Letting go  
Either and Or  
The current will stop



*By Serena Owens*

### A Haiku (3rd Place)

The bacon sizzles,  
The ham rapidly darkens,  
The barn is empty.



*By William Retherford*



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## BRTC Mission Statement

*Blending tradition, technology and innovation  
to educate today's diverse students  
for tomorrow's changing world.*

## Practical Nursing (Cont'd. Pg. 1)

Kasinger, Jennifer Hibbard, Nancy Felts, Tina Stroud, and Kelsie Cagle. Also assisting in the presenting of diplomas was VP for Technical Education Angie Caldwell.

PN awards included Nursing I Theory Highest Overall Average: Autumn Taylor; Pharmacology Highest Overall Average: Autumn Taylor; Best IV Nurse: Susan Glasgow; Best Geriatric Nurse: Jeff Gatewood; Nursing II Theory Highest Overall Average: Felecia Earls; Best Medical Surgical Nurse: Emily Anderson; Nursing III Theory Highest Overall Average: Autumn Taylor.

Additional PN awards included Community Service Award: Autumn Taylor; Professionalism Award: Jeff Gatewood and Jessica Halcomb; Florence Nightingale Award: Autumn Taylor and Felecia Earls; Faculty Choice Award: Emily Anderson.

The Spring 2015 PN Nursing class has set up the Legacy Scholarship to help future Nursing 3 students offset expenses of the program. The BRTC nursing faculty presented a sponsorship to the students for the fundraiser for the Legacy Scholarship, a 5K Run and Walk to be held on Saturday, May 9.

A reception following the ceremony was sponsored by several facilities, three of which are the location BRTC nursing students attend in order to complete their clinicals: Harris Hospital, Pocahontas Health and Rehab Center, Randolph Home Nursing Center, and Pinnacle Frames of Pocahontas.

## May Graduate Awarded Free Trip to Italy

Kaylan Hutsell has been chosen as the recipient of an all-expenses paid trip to Italy for March of 2016.

The Student Government Association (SGA) of the college provided funding for the two randomly chosen BRTC graduates to attend the trip, one chosen from December graduation and one from May graduation. Mackenzie Hibbs was chosen as the December graduate winner. The graduate winners were chosen at random by a drawing of numbers.

A group of 51 travelers, led by Fine Arts Instructor Dr. Sandy D. Baltz, will travel for a 7-day tour of Florence, Pisa, Assisi, and Rome over Spring Break of next year. Highlights of the trip include the Florence Leaning Tower of Pisa, St. Francis of Assisi Basilica, Pantheon, St. Peter's Basilica, Sistine Chapel, and the Colosseum. "This was a dream come true for many students. To travel overseas will be unbelievable! BRTC and SGA have given our students an amazing opportunity and gift," stated Baltz.



*Kaylan Hutsell*