



# SPOKES

Newsletter of the Rotary Club of Hattiesburg



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David Owens  
Lucy Parkman  
Valencia Williamson

Rotary Club of Hattiesburg  
629 North Main Street  
Hattiesburg, MS 39401

[www.rotaryofhattiesburg.com](http://www.rotaryofhattiesburg.com)

Pictured L-R: Wes Brooks, Benjamin Morris,  
and Jerome Brown



## Minutes: February 10, 2015

President Wes Brooks presided over the meeting. Thanks to Rusty Edwards who gave the invocation and Anthony Harris who led us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Thanks to John Cooper and Maura McLaughlin for serving as our greeters today.

Aaron Ladner introduced our guests today. Toxey Morris has as his guest today John Jackson. Bill McLeod introduced Chase Munro's guest, Joyce Bradley. Charles Brown is a guest of Jerome Brown. Scott Hummel introduced Dennis Fiveagh, whose membership application is now before the board of directors.

Wes thanked Johnny Stevens for providing two tickets to the opening game of the USM Golden Eagles baseball team. Aaron Ladner was the high bidder at \$20. The money will go to the Rotary Foundation.

Prayers and thoughts are requested for Bryan Moore and his family as their son prepares to undergo what is hopefully the last of a series of surgeries. The surgery is scheduled for next Tuesday, February 17. Wes also thanked Holt McMullan for picking up the SPOKES newsletter today.

Wes reminded Red Badge members to keep checking the website ([www.rotaryofhattiesburg.com](http://www.rotaryofhattiesburg.com)) for information about the upcoming Kollege of Knowledge.

Jerome Brown introduced our guest speaker today, Benjamin Morris. Benjamin is a native of Mississippi and is a writer and researcher. He is also the son of Rotarian Toxey Morris.

Ben recently published *Hattiesburg Mississippi: A History of the Hub City* which is now available through the History Press.

Ben thanked Rotary for the opportunities that have been provided to him through the years. He maintains that he would not be standing here today had it not been for the support of our club and many of our members.

His most recent work began in the spring of 2013 with a call from a friend letting him know that a company was interested in finding someone to publish a book about Hattiesburg's history. After many months of literary review, personal interviews and chasing documents, the book is now in print.

During his research Ben noted how quickly service clubs moved into the newly established town of Hattiesburg, the town was incorporated in 1884 and before the end of

that decade a number of service organizations had been formed. Ben says he believes it is the kind of spirit of those volunteers that helped form Hattiesburg into the community that it has become.

One of his many interviews was conducted with Charles Brown, father of Rotarian Jerome Brown. Mr. Brown was raised in Hattiesburg and discussed the life of an African American living in the area in the 1940's and 50's, a portion of our history that has never been published before.

When Colonel William Hardy arrived in 1882 there was only a train depot and two or three other buildings. It took him a couple of years to raise the money and find the support to build Hattiesburg. In later years he would move his law office to Hattiesburg. Mayors were elected to serve a one-year term. That term was expanded to two years in 1893 and in 1913 a four year mayoral term was begun.

In 1893 a major fire destroyed much of Hattiesburg. A total of 26 buildings were burned. Shortly thereafter the city passed an ordinance that mandated that structures built in Hattiesburg has to be built out of a more durable product, such as brick. Thankfully because of that ordinance, much of our history is preserved in the downtown area.

Religion was a major part of the life of an early Hattiesburg resident. Within just a few short years of being incorporated the city had 8 churches and it was reported that five/eighths of all residents belonged to one of those churches.

Although religion was a significant contributor to our heritage, nightlife also played a role. Profanity, gambling and liquor abuse were the top three offenses reported in late 1880's. The next two highest reported offenses included assault and battery and disturbing the peace. According to Ben, his research convinces him that Hattiesburg was no place for sissies in the very early years.

To get a copy of Ben's book visit Main Street Books in downtown Hattiesburg or contact the History Press at [www.historypress.net](http://www.historypress.net).

*Minutes courtesy of:  
Lamar Evans, Executive Secretary  
Rotary Club of Hattiesburg*

# Our Guest

**Dr. Ben Burnett**  
**Dean of Education**  
**William Carey University**

From [www.wccarey.edu](http://www.wccarey.edu)-

*After serving 28 years in the K-12 education system of Mississippi, it is an honor to be serving education in another capacity as Dean of the School of Education at William Carey University. This is probably the most important time in education in our nation's history as we strive to prepare our students so they can not only compete on a national basis but also globally. To accomplish that, we will have to have quality and innovative teachers graduating and entering the field of education.*

*One of the many reasons I came to work at Carey was the relationship that I was able to develop with the School of Education as a principal and superintendent for over 17 years. The quality of the Carey education graduates along with the tremendous partnership that the School of Education forged with local school districts made WCU my most valuable resource as a school leader. Having served as an adjunct professor at WCU for over a decade, I also knew that there are many qualified, caring, experienced and talented teachers here who are always willing to be there for their students.*

*With an enrollment of over 1,000 students, the WCU School of Education is growing to be one of distinction with the many programs and degrees that are available to our undergraduate and graduate students. We currently boast 17 graduate and 9 undergraduate programs and offer a total of 5 online degrees (4 graduate and 1 undergraduate). Our students have also had the opportunity to have international internships in London, South Africa, China and Mexico.*



- 2014—present**  
 William Carey University  
 Hattiesburg, MS  
 Dean, School of Education
- 2008—2014**  
 Lamar County School District  
 Superintendent of Education
- 1997—2008**  
 Lamar County School District  
 Principal, Oak Grove Middle School
- 1988—1997**  
 Lamar County School District  
 Director of Bands Oak Grove High School/  
 Middle School
- Ph.D., Educational Administration,  
 University of Southern Mississippi, 2002
- Masters, Music Education, University of  
 Southern Mississippi, 1989
- Bachelors, Music Education, University  
 of Southern Mississippi, 1986

# Next Week

**Special Agent Joseph “Blair” Lobrano**



# UPCOMING

<b>FEB 24</b>	Jimmy Herzog & Blair Lobrano (Special Agent, ATF)
<b>MAR 3</b>	Susan Yarrow - Hattiesburg Clinic, Rise & Shine Half Marathon
<b>MAR 6-7</b>	Ole Man River P.E.T.S. (President-Elect Training Seminar)
<b>MAR 10</b>	Elizabeth Van Zant - Rotary Youth Exchange
<b>MAR 24</b>	Jermaine Brown, Principal, Hattiesburg High School
<b>MAR 31</b>	Dr. Cynthia Scott, Chair, Mississippi Board of Physical Therapy
<b>APR 10-12</b>	2015 Rotary District Conference - "Rotary Rivage"
<b>JUN 6-9</b>	Rotary International Convention - Sao Paulo, Brazil
<b>JUN 20</b>	District 6840 Awards & Installation Ceremony



**On March 6 & 7 Ole Man River Multi-District President-Elect Training Seminar (PETS) will be held at the Jackson Convention Complex, Jackson, Mississippi. Registration and other information will be announced later.**



SPOKES

Rotary Club of Hattiesburg  
629 North Main Street  
Hattiesburg, MS 39401

*A Night in Italy*



APRIL 21

The Children's Center  
FOR COMMUNICATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI