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2016-2017 Alabama State Officer Team

Sierra Goodwin, President; Ethan Mobley, Vice-President; Ben Castleberry, Secretary;
Becky Hawkins, Treasurer; Hannah Black, Reporter; Torran Smith, Sentinel





by **Becky Hawkins**
Treasurer

A Year Of Service

Reflecting on this past year, our team has shared so many incredible moments together. From our dreams coming true June 10th, 2016 and standing on stage for the first time as a team to playing Dirty Santa at our Christmas party where I beat Ben in pool (rarely beat anyone). We have conquered 7 conferences, 2 state meetings, 3 District Eliminations, several cities and 3 states, toured our nations capital, and stretch across this state with a total 294 miles from the farthest north and all the way to the South. We have traveled to Auburn and Montgomery too many times to count and have spent nights in hotel rooms where we seem to get more laughter than sleep. Sierra has taught us everything about horses and any fact we would ever need to know. Ethan carried his jokes that aren't very good, along with his ability to talk to anyone with him everywhere we went this year. Ben brought his truck and strong leadership with him whenever we needed it. Hannah may have loved sleep sometimes more than us but her willingness to share our Saviors love has kept us grounded this year. Torran's strong speaking voice and strength has carried us through. Every moment has been transformational but when I look back on this year there is one week that I will never forget.

National Convention was held in Indianapolis, Indiana on October 19-22, 2016. Alabama was represented in the delegate sessions by 10 people: the 6 state officers, 3 district presidents, and 1 at large. We all met in Atlanta, GA to start one of the most tiring yet most rewarding weeks we could have ever asked for. Our flight held so much anticipation as we couldn't wait to see the Sea of Blue. This was Hannah Black's (State Reporter) first trip to National Convention and couldn't wait to see her to see the 64,000 FFA members walking together. We landed and made our way to the hotel where the rest of the 430 delegates and national officers were staying. It was so good to see the state officer teams we met at NLCSO and develop new friendships as well! We made our way to eat lunch as Cowboys and tour the city. We made our way to a beautiful church and see the FFA Way! We even found a few coffee shops along the way. That night we spent time going over what we as delegates would be responsible of doing that week. For the next 2 days, committee meetings were conducted and the final delegate session came. All of the work and thoughts were placed in front of all delegates to either pass or to fail the amendments to the National FFA Organization. We listened, learned, and voted to the best benefit of the

members of the Alabama FFA Association and National FFA Organization. We, as delegates, created many friendships in which we are truly grateful. Throughout the week we heard inspirational speeches from the 2015-2016 National Officers and heard the National FFA Band and Chorus as we danced the way through the "no sleep" week. Delegate business was complete and Dunkin Doughnuts had an overload of business that week. The final session was Saturday afternoon, and we couldn't wait to see which 6 would lead this organization and watch the final moments of the national officers as they retired.

This week was filled with moments that cannot be all told in one article, so if you ever see one us just ask what we thought of this week and different perspectives will be told.

I learned so much about myself and my team as we placed no just our thoughts but what would best benefit the people we serve. I saw that there are people who speak different languages, have different political beliefs, different accents, small states with 3 delegates to a state with 68 come together to serve. Seeing blue jackets all come together from across this country reminds me of my passion and gives me a purpose to be who I am. I cannot say how thankful I am for this year and every memory but this one will have to be my favorite.



Advisor Spotlight

By Sierra Goodwin
President

Mr. Mckinney is the Agriscience teacher at Colbert County High School. He has an extremely successful chapter that embodies the FFA Motto especially the line "...Living to Serve." Mr. Mckinney teaches his students that one of the most important things in the world that we can do is to give back to our communities. Each year his chapter hosts a Christmas event for the special needs and pre-k students of their school, and they host an Easter egg hunt as well. The students help with these events by dressing up as elves, playing with the kids, and assisting Mr. Mckinney with anything that he needs (especially when he is playing the conductor from the Polar Express). Mr. Mckinney is an outstanding Ag teacher who is growing strong leaders for the next generation. Thank you Mr. Mckinney for all that you do!





By Hannah Black
Reporter

Year in Review Q&A

As our year of service comes to a close I want to share a few favorite memories, stressful moments, and overall wonderful experiences from the other state officers. This year has been a crazy ride, but it has been so impactful for each of us. We all have different moments that stick out and will last for a lifetime. The first question I asked my teammates was this: "What has been one high and one low of your year of service?" Our State Secretary, Ben Castleberry had this response, "My year has been packed full of great experiences and memories, and it would be very hard to sum up into one. From taking unexpected, yet crazy road trips with the team, to watching FFA Members pursue and achieve their goals, it has been the best year ever. One low from my year was that it just simply went by way too fast! It seems like just yesterday we were unboxing our first Alabama FFA Association jackets." All of our years have been so special but this response really sums up all of our individual emotions into one.

Another question asked was: "How have you changed over the past year?" Sierra, State President had a wonderful response about herself. She said, "I feel like I have grown as a person and leader throughout the year. I feel much more confident in myself no matter what I am doing. I am definitely not the same person I used to be." The third question I asked was, "What have you seen that has inspired you the most?" Becky, State Treasurer, gave the most heart-warming response telling this story, "Over this past year, I have had so many moments that inspired me. Every member, advisors, and person I have meet within this past year have shaped my life more than they will ever know. If there is one that has inspired me the most it would have to be when I met Taylor Jones. It was a few weeks ago at the Central District Eliminations and she was competing in the Creed Speaking LDE. Hannah and I were working registration and were able to get to talk with Taylor before the day began. After she finished her competition we were able to get to know Taylor and her mom and her grandmother a little bit more. She started asking about how we became state officers and the whole process. We would soon learn that her chapter has a total of 12 members and that this was her 2nd year competing in Creed. After the conversation we had with them, I was reminded of why I wear the blue jacket. Later we found out that she placed 2nd in Creed and will be advancing to State! Hannah and I both were filled with

joy in watching members, like Taylor, be successful and how they show their passion for FFA and agriculture. Taylor may have just been a short conversation and a "nice meeting you!" but it reminds me of my purpose and showing members that they can do it too." And moments like these are what it's all truly about.

Our State Sentinel, Torran Smith, recalls his favorite memory of the year saying, "It was when we took three trips to Walmart during DOLC in Sierra's car and I ate six Bomb Pops within 5 minutes and drove from Sylacauga to Columbiana with a massive brain freeze." This year has been a ton of fun and this story is just one of the many we all have. Finally, Ethan's response to "what will you cherish the most about this year?" is, "At the end of this year I will cherish the family that my team has become, and the jacket that I'll take off for the final time." We really have become a family and I would just like to take this moment to say thank you Alabama FFA. All of these memories and moments were made possible because of you. You are what makes our Association great and you are the ones that will continue this tradition when our year is up.





by Ben Castleberry
State Secretary

Outstanding Chapter

Across our country, plus Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, thousands of FFA Chapters are working everyday to help make Agriculture a better industry, their communities better places, and their members stronger leaders. And this is exactly what the Lincoln FFA Chapter is doing everyday. During my year of service, I have been fortunate enough to spend a good bit of time with this chapter. Located just a few minutes down the road, I always took every opportunity to hop on down the road and hang out with them every chance I got.

Looking back on my career as an FFA officer, I remember my first chapter visit as a District Officer, and believe it or not, it was to the Lincoln FFA Chapter, and that day certainly gave me confidence that would help me during my entire FFA career. The students that day were interactive, fired up, and ready to learn more about Agriculture and FFA, and it just made me more pumped about the amazing things this organization does everyday.

This past year, the Lincoln FFA Chapter has participated, put on, and experienced numerous great things. Starting out the year, they attended COLW, JLDC, and many other leadership workshops to

help their officers prepare themselves to be better leaders for their members. Throughout the year, these officers used the skilled they had learned to host monthly meeting for their members, that everyone enjoyed attending. They were able to incorporate games, conduct business, and of course always serve food.

While all these things are great and awesome things, this chapter always kept what really matters in the front of their minds, and that is serving others. The members in this chapter conducted a toy drive during the beginning of the year for needy children in their community. And they also gave a donation of their fruit sale to the local Teen Challenge program in Lincoln. What an awesome example of servant leadership.

FFA Chapter across our state and country are doing things like this everyday. The National FFA Organization is truly working to Grow Leaders, Build Communities, and Strengthen Agriculture. If you or someone you know would like to get involved with these projects conducted by FFA Chapters, contact your local Ag Teacher to see about helping out. "There is nothing more beautiful than someone who goes out of their way to make life more beautiful for others."



FFA DAY ON THE HILL

by Torran Smith, Sentinel

Each year the Alabama Farmers Federation invite Alabama FFA members across the state to our nation's capital Montgomery, Alabama for the opportunity to meet their respective legislators in the Senate and House of Representatives of Alabama. First, a picture of all FFA members in attendance is taken on the capitol steps. Next, the members are have the opportunity to listen to speakers from the Federation staff who work with the legislators to hearing from the legislators themselves. The Alabama FFA members are offered the opportunity to see the offices of their Senators and Representatives. In addition, they are also able to see what history of Montgomery looks like inside the historic buildings and museums. At the 2017 FFA DAY ON THE HILL, FFA members heard from Senator Tom Whatley and many, many more. The members also had the opportunity to hear from a former National officer and Alabama Farmers Federation staff member Ms. Jennifer Himburg as she explained the importance of having contact with your representative and Senators. Overall, experiencing FFA day on the hill is a great opportunity for your chapter to create memories as well as offering your members the opportunity to see who represents them on the state level; furthermore, it allows your chapter to expand it's knowledge on agriculture within legislations and government. I hope that one day everyone has the opportunity to experience Alabama FFA day on the hill because it is an opportunity of a lifetime for members to meet the individuals who represent them everyday.



Alabama State Department of Education, Michael Sentance, State Superintendent of Education

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