A life-long resident of Alabama’s Black Belt, Loretta Wilson has firsthand knowledge of the challenges and potential of rural America. As a healthcare professional, non-profit executive director, church leader, and community volunteer, Ms. Wilson has diligently worked toward achieving health equity for the residents of southwest Alabama. Currently the CEO of Hill Hospital in Sumter County, she has 31 years of experience working in rural hospitals and clinics where she has gained understanding of state and national healthcare policies and their impact on the health of rural residents. Additionally, she is the founder and Director of Rural Alabama Prevention Center, a non-profit organization, where she seeks funding to address social determinants of health issues afflicting west central Alabama. Through her non-profit organization, she manages numerous grant programs and knows the importance of these programs are to addressing health services and new initiatives that would otherwise not be available. She currently serves on the National Advisory Committee on Rural Health and Human Services (NACRHHS) where she provides feedback relative to the challenges rural healthcare providers face in providing quality health care.

Loretta Webb Wilson is a 1985 graduate of Eutaw (Greene County) High School, holds a bachelor’s degree from Stillman College in Business Administration; a master’s degree in Business Administration and Healthcare Management from the University of Phoenix; and a Health Care Executive Program Certification from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Anderson School of Management.

Loretta is a member Greene County Alumna Chapter Delta Sigma Theta and was featured in the Demopolis Times Pink Magazine 2011 Issue as one of the “Most Influential Women” in the community.

Loretta is a member of New Generation Church, where she severs as Church Administrator, member of the Women’s and Inspiration Choirs, and Praise Team. She lives in the Dollarhide community with her husband (Floyd) and two children (Zaddrick and Lauren).
My name is Kyle Boden, and I am a rising senior, majoring in Biology. I was born and raised in California, first in the Los Angeles area and now based in the Bay Area, but my family has deep roots in Alabama and at the Capstone. My path to the McCollough Program has been different than most. After getting introduced to wilderness medicine first in the Boy Scouts (I am an Eagle Scout), I became a certified Wilderness EMT. I have served as a Wilderness EMT in backcountry scout camps, where patients are more than an hour away from definitive care. Working in such remote environments engages everything I have in me in terms of training, resourcefulness, and commitment to helping my patient.

In 2020, I took a semester break from school and worked as a front-line EMT in California's emergency response to COVID, and then transferred to Alabama. Due to the pandemic, my first year at Alabama was a rough year of isolation. What I had always been told about the community and the spirit around the Bama campus was hard to feel during those dark days. Over the past year, I have definitely felt that spirit come alive on campus, capped off by my being able to play on the Bama Water Polo team last year.

The McCollough Program has been a highlight of my experience at Alabama, and is the principal reason I decided to transfer here. My favorite part of the program has been the seminars, such as IDMD 102 Medical Foundations II, that have really opened my eyes to the complexity and nuance of many issues facing medical practitioners and patients.

My future plans after undergrad are to continue my studies in medical school, eventually becoming an emergency physician in backcountry/remote environments.

Hey! My name is Elayna Griffaw and I am from Peachtree City, GA. I am a second-year student in the McCollough Institute for Pre-Medical Scholars, and I am a part of the Leadership Board. Being accepted into this program is one of the main reasons I chose to come to Alabama for college and it has been everything I hoped it would be and more. I love the community that McCollough has brought me with other pre-med students. It is always encouraging to have other McCollough Scholars in my classes because I always have someone to sit with in class, study with, and ultimately reassure me when classes and life get complicated. I have met some of my best friends in this program and am truly honored to be a part of it.

Aside from McCollough, I am in the Symphonic Band here at Alabama and I play the flute. I love playing music and am so excited to be able to continue playing in band in college. I also have an internship in Project Health, and I am a topic coordinator for the program. In Project Health, we focus on educating our peers on various health topics in casual face to face conversations around campus. There are many McCollough Scholars in Project Health with me, and it is always so fun to work shifts with my friends. Aside from Project Health and Symphonic Band, I am also starting research in Dr. Earley's lab this semester! I am thrilled to start my sophomore year at the capstone and get more involved in my sorority and get inducted into Psi Chi, the national psychology honors society. This summer, I was able to work as a medical assistant at an OB/GYN office and shadow some physicians within the practice at the hospital and office. I would love to become an OB/GYN doctor in the future because I am passionate about women's health.

This summer, I also enjoyed taking my dog for golf cart rides around Peachtree City, going to the beach, and hanging out with my friends! I can’t wait for another year as a McCollough Scholar.
Admission to the McCollough Premedical Scholars Program solidified my decision to attend the University of Alabama in the Fall of 2019. Throughout the application process, I had plans to capitalize on my scholarship and to pursue a biology degree, gaining as much medical exposure as possible. At that time, there was little known about the program as I was set to become a member of the inaugural class. I can confidently say that the McCollough Scholars Program has been an invaluable experience, allowing me to grow both as an individual and a future physician.

The McCollough Scholars Program has had a major impact on guiding my pursuit of medicine, and I am grateful for the opportunities it has provided. In addition to surrounding me with a strong community of diligent scholars all striving for excellence, the McCollough Program has connected me with countless physicians and medical students alike. The program has heightened my medical exposure, opening doors to numerous shadowing, research, leadership, and service opportunities. Further, I have had the benefit of astute professors such as Dr. Poston who have engaged me in an interdisciplinary study of medicine, imparting on me the importance of being a knowledgeable, well-rounded physician.

Over the past 3 years, I have found success in multiple facets of my life, in part thanks to opportunities provided by the McCollough Program. In addition to sustaining academic excellence, I found many ways to get involved. I was a member of the STEM Path to MBA program, a program designed to allow STEM students to attain an accelerated master’s degree in business. I served as a research assistant with Dr. Anathbandhu Chaudhuri in his Herbicide Induced Disorders Lab using fruit flies as a model organism and conducted research in coordination with WakeMed Hospital. I was also a member of the club tennis team, a private tutor, and a volunteer coach at local high school tennis tournaments in my spare time. These academic, research, service, and leadership experiences have helped mold me into a well-rounded medical candidate.

This Spring I graduated Summa Cum Laude with honors and a 4.0 GPA. I received a Bachelor of Science in Biology and a minor in interdisciplinary medical studies. I will be finishing my MBA in healthcare management as a member of the Manderson College of Business. I plan to apply to medical school with hopes of beginning my medical journey the subsequent year.

MCCOLLOUGH’S COMMUNITY OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

McCollough Institute for Pre-Medical Scholars encourage UA Early College - LEAP students to explore careers in medicine

On June 8th, 13th, & 27th the McCollough Institute for Pre-Medical Scholars Program hosted the UA Early College – LEAP Program in an hour-long medical informational event. The LEAP Program’s high school students received insight on what is the McCollough Pre-Medical Scholars Program and how the scholars commit to community service while learning. The students engaged in conversation and asked questions about possible career paths in medicine and what classes they should take to prepare them for college and the medical profession. The high schoolers also had the opportunity to enjoy refreshments, an indoor game of medical Jeopardy, medical equipment station, an indoor/outdoor medical trivia game, and end each session with a recap of what the students learned today using an interactive quiz game.

(Photographed from left to right: Ty Murphy, Wes Bryant, Reagan Woodward, Claire Bennet, Amiyah Aldridge)
McCollough Institute for Pre-Medical Scholars Partnered with Hill Hospital’s Beautification Project

On Saturday, April 9th, the McCollough Scholars went to Hill Hospital in rural York, Alabama and spent the day doing various renovations around the hospital. They painted walls, replaced ceiling tiles, and got to connect with the hospital management. This experience was a great way for the scholars to build connections with the York community.

(Photographed from left to right: Tiffany McHenry, Kaitlyn Camp, Gianna Butler, Madison Hasnani, Ty Murphy, & Kyle Boden)

Integrating the Art and Science of Birth Conference

Two of our scholars had the opportunity to attend Integrating the Art and Science of Birth, an international research conference held this year in Puerto Rico. Mia Liacopoulos and Emmily Mobley, along with some of our other scholars, are researchers in Dr. Horan’s Collaborative Care Lab. To learn more about their projects, visit hhoran.people.ua.edu!

(Photographed from left to right: Mia Liacopoulos, Dr. Holly Horan, Emmily Mobley)

UA Honors College Big Ideas Competition

Five of our scholars participated in the UA Honors “College Big Ideas Competition”! Our scholars got to pick a topic in which they researched and presented on. They chose to focus on improving health literacy to positively impact the well-being of society. We are so proud of them!

(Photographed from left to right: Maddison (Maddi) Surles, Aidan Flanagan, Zara Jadol, Taylor Schnorbus, & Ty Murphy)