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Ted Mims to receive Achievement Award from Sabine Hall of Fame



Dr. Ted Mims

The 2019 Achievement Award for the Sabine Hall of Fame will be presented to Dr. Ted Mims, retired professor and Head of the Computer Science Department at the University of Illinois at Springfield, according to Chairman Pete Abington.

A native of Many, Ted Mims had a strong desire to achieve a career in education. Not only did he earn a number of degrees, but he returned to teach at his alma mater and then go on to earn a Ph.D. and become Dr. Ted Mims, a professor and Head of the Computer Science Department at the University of Illinois at Springfield. He served as Chair and Department Head for 25 years before retiring in September 2017.

In the beginning

Ted was born to the late Vernice Cutrer Mims and Henry A. Mims on June 30, 1946. He grew up with a sister, Marilyn Mims.

Known as Bussy to his friends

in Sabine Parish and his college buddies, he credits his sister for the unusual nickname.

"I was a little fat baby and she called me Buster Bear," he laughed. "Pretty soon it was shortened to Buster B. and then to Bussy." Few people in the area know him as Ted.

The family resided in the Plainview area during his childhood and he attended the Plainview School for first, second and third grades before the family moved to Many.

Education

He attended Many Schools

and graduated from Many High School in 1964. On campus, he was a four-year member of the Tiger football team, where he played center and middle guard.

Raised in the First Baptist Church of Many, he made a profession of faith at Clara Springs Encampment one summer and was baptized in his home church.

On to College

Following high school graduation, he enrolled at Northwestern State University, receiving both his BS and MS degrees.

Mims began his teaching career as a graduate assistant at Northwestern State University in August 1967.

Career

He stepped out into the public sector and taught at Crowley High School, 1968-1970, and then returned home to Many Junior High and Many High School to teach for eight years, 1970-1978.

It was in 1966 that he took a computer science class at NSU and learned to code. He recalled learning to write programs and becoming interested.

In 1975, when PCs went on the market, Mims became interested in computers. Cecile Lites and Phyllis Murdock, business teachers at Many High, and Mims took a programming class at NSU.

It was during his teaching years at his alma mater, that he was awarded the Outstanding Young Educator of the Year from the Many Jaycees.

In 1978, Mims became an instructor in the Computer Sci-

ence Department at LSU-Baton Rouge. He later became an Assistant Professor of Computer Science at Nicholls State University until 1990, when he moved to Springfield, Illinois to teach at Sangamon State University, now the University of Illinois at Springfield.

Mims also continued his education at Louisiana State University, earning a second master's degree. He also earned his Ph.D. From the University of North Texas.

To Illinois

The University of Illinois at Springfield (UIS) Department of Computer Science flourished under Mims' leadership. Growing from 70 students to over 1,300 majors in 2017.

"Things took off for me when I arrived in Illinois," he noted. "The last two years when I was department head, we made \$10 million each year."

With 600 students from India, he taught 40 percent of the enrollment at UIS.

While serving as chair, his department became a National Center of Academic Excellence in Information Assurance Education. The designation was bestowed by the National Security Agency and the Department of Homeland Security.

Dr. Mims brought cutting-edge technology to UIS through federal and foundation grants. He served as co-principal investigator of two National Science Foundation grants totaling about \$5,000,000. He also received more than \$145,000 in equipment and software from the CISCO Critical Infrastructure Assurance Group and more than \$100,000 from State Farm Insurance.

After two years of negotiation, he obtained special recruit-

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ment status with State Farm, so that the UIS Computer Science Department became one of State Farm's targeted recruiting schools. This status provided students with a number of new opportunities, such as work and research internships, classroom presentations by corporate leaders and campus visits by employment recruiters.

At UIS, Dr. Mims taught both online and on-campus courses including computer architecture, networks, parallel processing, operating systems, and security. In addition, he implemented and taught the CISCO Networking Academy Curriculum to UIS students, local academy high school and community college teachers.

During his years as chair, Dr. Mims maintained an active research agenda, publishing numerous articles and making presentations at national and regional conferences. He also served as a moderator and pan-

el member on NSF grant review panels and attended, by invitation, the Committee on National Security Systems (CNSS), the highest national forum for policy issues, operational procedures and guidelines for the security of national security systems. Among the committee members of CNSS are CIA, Defense Intelligence Agency, DoD, DHS, National Security Agency, Department of State, Department of Energy and the United States Army.

Dr. Mims served on the program committee of the annual Colloquium for Information Systems Security Education, one of the most prestigious forums on security education. He has also been interviewed on National Public Radio about computer science, presented guest lectures at NSF-sponsored workshops on parallel processing, networking and systems security and information assurance.

He has also developed a collaborative program that allowed

students to earn a two-year degree at Illinois community college and then complete a bachelor's degree at UIS.

In 2010, he received the UIS Spencer Award, which recognizes faculty who best exemplify the ideal of the "professor-citizen" through public service and service to the academic community.

Dr. Mims retired as Head of the Computer Science Department of UIS on October 1, 2017.

Scholarship founded

One of his successes was being honored with the Ted Mims Scholarship, which was established at UIS by a former student, Bill Hoffman, and his wife, Ruth.

Hoffman was farming prior to his job at Microsoft, but when a drought resulted in \$50 of bottom-line income, he decided to use his military training in computers to get a job. He became an electronic technician which led to an upper-level management position with Microsoft. He eventually managed over 100 people on four states. He realized that continuing his education would further his success, so he went to UIS to earn a master's degree. Because of other commitments, Hoffman could only take two courses per semester. He rapidly progressed through the program, but when it came time to write his thesis, he hit a roadblock.

Hoffman said, "I ran out of steam."

That's when Dr. Mims stepped in and offered encouragement.

Finishing his master's degree allowed Hoffman to land a job with Microsoft in Franklin, Tennessee, where he rose to consulting practice manager and went on to become a senior director.

"My master's degree in computer science made such a differ-

ence to me at Microsoft," Hoffman related. "I'm happy to fund a scholarship with appreciated securities at Microsoft and continue to add to it."

Dr. Mims could have left Hoffman drift away, but he didn't.

"He grabbed me by the scruff of my neck and shamed me into continuing and then made sure I had the help I needed to finish," Hoffman added.

Dr. Mims is most proud of the scholarship in his name.

Looking back on his career and success at UIS, he stated, "I was very blessed and favored."

Family

Ted was married to his late wife, Elizabeth Holley Mims for 43 years. She passed away on June 8, 2017.

The couple had two children, Holley Easter, who is the mother of Amelia and Soren; and a son, Jonathan, who is the father of Jonathan Jr.

Mims' sister, Marilyn was married to John Fullerton and they had a son, John Fullerton of Many. After their divorce, she married Charles Williams. Sadly, Marilyn died a number of years ago.

Today, Dr. Mims and his nephew, John, own the family farm and have planted pine trees. He enjoys visiting his hometown.

Dr. Mims moved to Normal, Illinois, in August 2018 to be near his daughter and grandchildren.

He is a member of Calvary United Methodist Church, where he teaches Sunday School and serves as a greeter and usher on Sundays.

He enjoys gardening and mowing the yard in his free time.

It is an honor to welcome Dr. Ted "Bussy" Mims home and to bestow the Achievement Award from the Sabine Hall of Fame to a most deserving man.