



SAR Alabama



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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I am humbled. I look at all of you and I think about the collective accomplishments and leadership that each of you has brought to the Alabama Society and ponder the future while asking myself, "How can I use these talents to make this great organization even greater?"

I was asked how it felt to be "taking over the reigns" as president. To which I jokingly replied, "The first thing you always have to ask yourself when 'taking over the reigns' is whether the horse is lame or not." But that is an easy question to answer in this society. This society is anything but lame. In fact, I would say, "This horse is a thoroughbred!"

Under the leadership of my predecessor, Jim Griffith, the Alabama Society was able to turn a trend of decline in membership into one of growth. We fostered a culture of evangelism and pride in the mission of the Sons of the American Revolution. We began work on the development of educational programs centered around a one-of-a-kind Washington War Tent showpiece. We began watching and listening to Revolutionary War Rarities as SAR further embraced technology and our mission.

Members from across this state came together to honor patriot ancestors by talking in schools,

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Martin installed as ALSSAR president



—Photo by Janice Jennings

Outgoing Jim Griffith places president's ribbon on Michael Martin

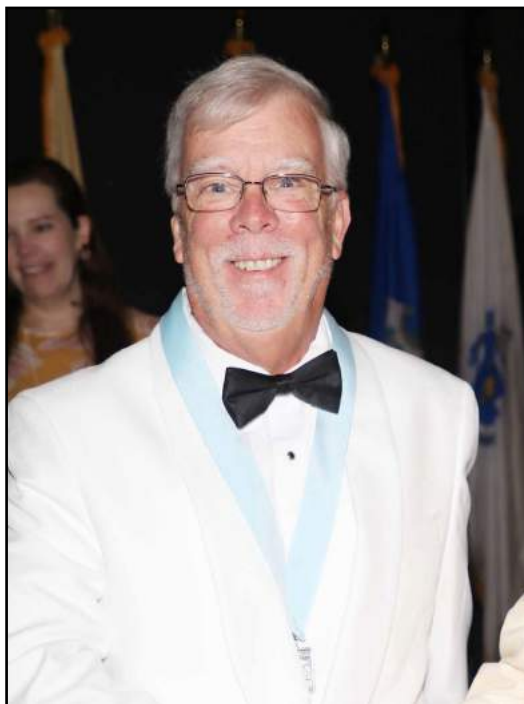
The ALSSAR state convention was held on Feb. 23-24 at the Embassy Suites in Hoover, featuring NSSAR Secretary General Darryl Addington, Medal of Honor recipient Mike Rose and past NSSAR president Bruce Pickette.

The convention included a business meeting on Saturday, followed by the annual youth awards luncheon. On Saturday night, the annual dinner banquet featured the installation of new officers for 2024 as well as the annual awards ceremony.

ALSSAR president Jim Griffith, who made membership recruiting efforts a cornerstone of his year in office, recognized chapters and individuals with recruiting milestones.

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Former Minuteman winner Fred Olive passes



Dr. J. Fred Olive III, past recipient of the Minuteman Award and a lifelong supporter of the Sons of the American Revolution, passed away on Feb. 1. He was 68.

A memorial service was held, fittingly, on April 19 or "Patriot's Day," at Vestavia Hills Baptist Church. Past ALSSAR president Jim Griffith described Olive's life as "impactful," particularly in his 47-year service to the SAR.

"I find it very difficult to put words together that would adequately describe what Fred Olive has meant to each of us here today," Griffith said. "I find it very difficult to put into words what Fred Olive meant to the Sons of the American Revolution. We have all experienced the death of someone who has been close to us. There are people that we have all known that pass through this life and they are certainly missed. But, then there are people who pass through this life and leave an incredible and everlasting mark, a positive mark, an impact, a difference.

"And you know that you are a better person for having known them in the first place. And you know that the world is a better place for them having been here. And in some crazy sense, I think we as completely grown-up people somehow find ourselves wanting to grow

Past ALSSAR president Fred Olive was a 2022 recipient of the SAR's prestigious Minuteman Award.

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Message

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celebrating veterans, promoting the love of country, appreciating first responders, demonstrating history, and illustrating that the United States, as Jim said so well in his acceptance speech last year, “The greatest nation in the history of the world and we are the ones who are not only blessed to live within it but blessed to be the offspring of the founders.”

So what about the future? Let me start with this illustration...

You see here a picture of the first United States dollar and cent. It was designed by Benjamin Franklin and it is called the “FUGIO.” Fugio is Latin for “I fly” and I have created a small token as we fly together to fulfill the SAR mission.



FUGIO DOLLAR

This Fugio ALSSAR Challenge Coin has three areas I want you to notice. The top front is emblazoned with our Sons of the American logo and the three primary goals of our organization — Education, History, and Patriotism. However, what I want you to notice most is the Sun and Compass. These symbols represent the letter “F” for FOCUS. For goals without focus are of little importance. Let us remember why we all joined SAR, tap into everyone’s diverse talents, help all our members find their niche, tell our story, and have a little FUN in the process.

The second area is the back of the coin. On this side, you will find the initials of all 13 chapters of the Alabama Society. From north to south and everywhere in between let’s remember the letter “U” and UNITE to illustrate the old saying “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” As the 13 original colonies had to “Unite or Die,” so must our 13 chapters come together, improve communication throughout, encourage an exchange of ideas, build on common ground, and embrace our differences.

Finally, on the bottom front, are the words “MIND YOUR BUSINESS.” This phrase is also on the original Fugio coin. The phrase isn’t being rude BUT it is a reminder that we need to concentrate on our business and not all the diversions and chaos that surrounds us every day. As the top of the coin lists our goals and gives us guidance, the bottom tells us to Nourish (or “N”) our organization and ourselves.

We need to spread the good news of SAR. Tell others “Who we are!” and “What we do!”. Encourage new members to join. Connect and retain existing members. And most importantly, don’t get burned out! In the end, remember why you became a member of the Sons of the American Revolution and why you got fired up to be a member and, while you are at it, have a little FUN (Focus Unite Nourish) in the process.

—Michael Martin



Olive

(Continued from Page 1)

up and be just like that person. And that person was Fred Olive. So what was Fred? Fred was what we all want to be! He was a dedicated, loved, impactful, difference maker. That is what Fred Olive was. But the English language doesn’t really support the words that need to be said.”

Olive was born on Oct. 6, 1955 and spent all of his professional life in education and genealogical research. He was head of Educational Technology Services for over 25 years at the University of Alabama Birmingham before retiring as interim Director of Library Services for the university.

Olive became a member of the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution in 1976 and found his passion in life. He held numerous offices at the local, state and national levels and was active in many committees within SAR.

At the local level, he was a member of the Birmingham chapter and assisted in the creation of the Cahaba-Coosa chapter.

At the state level, he worked his way up the ladder of officers and finally reached the top as the ALSSAR president in 2016.

At the national level, he has been a fixture in Louisville for the past decade, including his participation on the NSSAR executive committee in 2019 and 2020 and serving as the Librarian General in 2021. He was reelected in 2022 and 2023.

He became just the 16th ALSSAR compatriot to receive the National Society’s highest honor, the Minuteman Award, in 2022. At the time, he had served on the Library & Archives Committee for nine years, the Protocol Committee for seven years, the Americanism and Patriot Biographies committees for six years each and the Council of State Presidents for five years.

In addition, he served on the Headquarters Building and Maintenance Committee for two years, the Patriot Records and Education committees for one year each and the Museum Board digitization program to preserve the SAR historical institutional records collection.

Despite his tireless work at the national level, he never forgot his roots, working to secure a home for the annual ALSSAR convention in Hoover in 2022 after two years of Covid isolation at the American Village.

He was a George Washington Fellow and a life member of the SAR Friends of the Library.

Olive loved his church as well. He was active in several roles at Vestavia Hills Baptist Church and served as a greeter to ensure you knew you were welcome and loved.



—Photo by Janice Jennings

Outgoing president Jim Griffith, center, handed out distinguished service certificates to his 2023 officers, from left: Michael Martin, Paul Petznick, Benny Hannah, Ron Bearden, Jay Maples, Earl Gillian, Mark Hobbs, Rev. Buddy Irving, Joseph Barker and trustee Bill Daniel.

Convention

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Ray Vaughn Cassell was honored as the ALSSAR compatriot with the largest number of first line sponsorships of new members (32) approved in 2023. William Holcombe Pryor Jr., was recognized as the compatriot with the largest number of new supplemental applica-



—Photo by Janice Jennings

Jim Griffith presents Patriot Medal to Bill Daniel.

tions approved in 2023.

The Tennessee Valley chapter had the largest number (30) of new applicants, while the Cheaha chapter had the largest percentage of retained membership, losing just two compatriots in the past year, and the largest percentage of new members — a 26 percent increase from 46 to 58. The Cahaba-Coosa chapter had the largest number (nine) of supplemental applications approved in 2023.

Past ALSSAR president Bill Daniel was awarded the Patriot Medal, the highest medal that can be awarded by a state society. It is presented to someone who has demonstrated long, faithful and outstanding service at the state and/or chapter level.

Griffith awarded Benny Hannah Jr., the SAR State Medal of Distinguished Service in recognition of Hannah’s conspicuous service to the state society and to the state president.

Michael Martin and Cade McCool were presented the Silver Roger Sherman Medal, which is awarded to a compatriot in recognition of, and in appreciation of, outstanding services rendered to the state society.

Arnie Burris and Joseph Barker were awarded the Meritorious Service Medal, presented in recognition of faithful and meritorious service to the ALSSAR.

Other awards presented include:



—Photo by Janice Jennings

ALSSAR president Michael Martin addresses convention.

- The SAR Medal of Appreciation, which is presented to a DAR member in recognition and appreciation for outstanding services to the Alabama Society, went to Rita Pickette.
- The Lydia Darragh Medal, presented to a woman who works behind the scenes supporting SAR programs, was awarded to Mary Taylor Griffith.

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In Memory...

John Robert Walker

The Cahaba-Coosa chapter lost a valuable compatriot recently when **JOHN ROBERT WALKER** passed away on April 6. He was 95.

Walker was born at Princeton Baptist Hospital on Feb. 8, 1929, to parents John William Calhoun Walker and Eunice Ann Green Walker Stubbs.

He served in the U.S. Air Force after high school, then went to work for U.S. Pipe and Foundry until 1994.

In addition to his work with the Sons of the American Revolution, Walker had been a long-time member of the Blue Star Salute Foundation, a member of the support committee for the Alabama National Cemetery and an ardent

supporter of the Shelby County Historical Society.

Walker is survived by his daughters, Laura Lee Walker Turner and Melinda Ann Walker Parks, grandchildren Allison Marie Turner, Charles Garrett Turner, Corey Robert Parks, Hunter William Parks and Hayden Walker Parks; great-granddaughters Piper Marie Reiser and Raelynn Melinda Parks and great-grandson, John Weston Wyatt.

Services were held on April 13 at his church, First Baptist Church of Birmingham in Homewood.

Burial followed at Birmingham's Elmwood Cemetery. Among those in attendance was the Alabama Society Color Guard.

Convention

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- The Outstanding Citizenship Award, presented to a deserving student in recognition of high ideals of character and citizenship, was awarded to Amelia Armstrong.
- The Youth Education Medal, presented to a compatriot who has made 15 educational presentations over a three-year period is awarded to Robert Anderson Jr., who has made 53 classroom presentations over that period.
- The Bronze Color Guard Medal, awarded for Color Guard service to the ALSSAR, was presented to William E. Daniel Jr., Allen Herrod and William J. Sommers Jr. Sommers also won the Silver Color Guard Medal.
- The Patriot Grave Marking Medal, recognizing each compatriot's SAR contributions in honoring our deceased compatriots, was presented to Scott Martin and Joseph Barker Jr.
- The Silver Henry Knox Medal, awarded by a state society to a compatriot or non-SAR member to recognize a specific outstanding contribution, achievement, accomplishment, deed, performance or effort that advances the mission, governance, programs or activities of the state society, was awarded to Benny Hannah Jr., David Jones, William E. Daniel Jr., Ron Bearden, Edwin Dudley Burwell III, Price L. Legg, Scott Martin, Paul Petznick and Jim Maples.

The highlight of the banquet, of course, was the installation of new officers for 2024. Michael Martin of the Cahaba-Coosa chapter was installed as the new president.

Other officers included vice-president Benny Hannah, Tennessee Valley chapter; secretary Ron Dains, Gen. John A. Elmore chapter; recording secretary Bill Carter, Cahaba-Coosa chapter; treasurer Scott Martin, Cahaba-Coosa chapter; registrar Ron Bearden, Little River chapter; genealogist Earl Gillian, Gen. John A. Elmore chapter; chaplain Rev. Buddy Irving, Black Warrior River chapter; chancellor Jay Maples, Tennessee Valley chapter; historian Bill Dean, Gen. John A. Elmore chapter; and sergeant-at-arms Joseph Barker, Gen. John A. Elmore chapter.



—Photos by Janice Jennings

Former NSSAR President General Bruce Pickette and his wife Rita were among the featured guests.



Jim Griffith presents a lifetime member certificate to Gary Michael Rose at the convention.



—Photo courtesy of Michael Martin

Alabama History Day winners with ALSSAR president Michael Martin are, from left: Kaiya Rippey, Valerie Pugh, Meagan Gentry and Megan Boyle.

Four students receive recognition from ALSSAR in statewide competition at Alabama History Day

The Alabama Humanities Alliance presented its annual Alabama History Day contest featuring statewide history research competition for middle and high school students at the Auburn University Montgomery campus on March 8.

A total of 167 students competed in the event and eligible first- and second-place winners will represent the state at National History Day in Maryland and Washington, D.C., on June 9-13.

Throughout the 2023-2024 academic school year, Alabama teachers incorporated History Day as a project-learning tool in their classrooms. Students conducted primary research on topics of their own choosing related to this year's History Day theme: Turning Points in History.

Alabama History Day is supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities' "A More Perfect Union" initiative and from Alabama Power. The Alabama Humanities Alliance also awarded 2024 special topic prizes of excellence thanks to partnerships with the Alabama Department of Archives and History, Alabama Historical Association, Alabama Public Television, David Mathews Center for Civic Life, Interstate Character Council, National Maritime Historical Society and Sons of the American Revolution.

The ALSSAR recognized four students for their Revolution-

ary War-era themed reports.

Megan Boyle of Stanhope Elmore High School won first place in the Senior Division for her paper on "Firsthand Accounts of the First Settlers of the American Colonies." She received an ALSSAR Senior Level Award (\$100) from representatives of the Gen. John Archer Elmore chapter on April 4.

Kaiya Rippey and Valerie Pugh of Phillips Preparatory School in Mobile won first place in the Junior Division on their exhibit "The Madness of King George III." The pair earned an ALSSAR Junior Level Award (\$100) from the Gen. Galvez chapter at April 4.

Meagan Gentry of Montevallo High School won second place in the Senior Division for her exhibit on "The Boston Massacre." She was awarded an ALSSAR Senior Level Second Place Award (\$50), which was presented to her during her school's award day on April 24.

"A program like Alabama History Day provides an invaluable opportunity for students from diverse backgrounds to delve into a history topic of their choice," expressed Dr. Idrissa N. Snider, coordinator of Alabama History Day. "Through this process, we aim to cultivate more informed and responsible citizens who understand the complexities of history and its relevance to contemporary society."



—Photo courtesy of Jess Brown

Tennessee Valley chapter, DAR join forces to promote Patriots Day

Penny Chilton, regent of the DAR's Maple Hill chapter in Huntsville, organized a four-minute segment about Patriots Day for WAFF, Huntsville's NBC affiliate, which aired on April 19. Regent Chilton included Tennessee Valley chapter compatriot William "Bill" Sommers as part of the DAR's effort. Sommers joined DAR representative Staci-Jill Burnley on set. Sommers explained the history of Patriots Day, while Burnley highlighted the forthcoming grave marking of patriot William Walling in Huntsville's historic Maple Hill Cemetery.



—Photo by Dale Crawford

History Teacher of the Year

Loretta Roden Wright was selected as the "History Teacher of the Year" by the Little River chapter and was the featured speaker at the chapter's April meeting. She taught 30 years at Pisgah High School before accepting a history teaching job at Northeast Community College.



—Photo courtesy of Jason Williams

Retired colonel speaks at R.H. Lee chapter meeting

Col. Tom Wynn (USAF-Retired) was the featured speaker at the April meeting of the Richard Henry Lee chapter. Wynn spoke on "SS Mayaguez Incident: Assault on Koh Tang Island." This event occurred after the fall of South Vietnam when, in 1975, the Khmer Rouge navy seized an American ship in international waters. Wynn, right, is pictured with chapter president Will Mooty.



—Photos courtesy of William Rozier

Cheaha chapter welcomes speaker at March meeting, then installs new compatriot

The March speaker for the Cheaha chapter was Joan Frazier, above left with chapter president Eric Sloughfy. Frazier, a local educator and a member of the DAR's Bienville chapter, presented a program on the curriculum used in Alabama's primary and secondary education system. Also installed during the meeting was Rev. Dr. Steve West, above right with Sloughfy, pastor of First United Church in Jacksonville.



—Photo by Dale Crawford

ALSSAR president speaks at Little River meeting, then installs chapter officers for 2024

ALSSAR president Michael Martin discussed preserving and growing the state's chapters in the March meeting of the Little River chapter, then installed the chapter's officers for 2024. They are, from left: president Jerry Haynes, vice president Billy Day, secretary Ron Bearden, recording secretary Rob Stone, Martin, treasurer Nelson Wilkes, historian Barry Norton, chaplain George Cobb and sergeant-at-arms Russ Hare. Not pictured is registrar Stan Rogers.



—Photos courtesy of David Jones

SAR exhibit at Tuscaloosa museum draws interest

Black Warrior River compatriot David Jones discusses the newest exhibit at the Murphy House African American Museum with visitors. The Murphy House Museum was the key exhibit at the Tuscaloosa V.A. Medical Center’s “Black History Month” celebration in February. Curator Ruby Simon asked Compatriot Jones to join them to explain the exhibit. Numerous visitors walked away with more knowledge about black American’s role in the American Revolution. The 1st Rhode Island Regiment captured the interest as well as patriot Jim Capers. Each visitor received a Revolution Rarities card, a SAR Youth Programs brochure and a membership card.



—Photos courtesy of Jason Williams

Rev. Klein speaks on church’s role

Rev. John Klein, rector of Saint James the Great Anglican Church in Smiths Station and a retired Army chaplain, discussed “The Church of England in the American Revolution” at the March meeting of the Richard Henry Lee chapter. Klein is pictured with chapter president Will Mooty, left, after making presentation, right.





—Photo courtesy of William Rozier

Cheaha chapter installs compatriot
 At the Cheaha chapter’s Jan. 10 meeting, chapter president Eric Sloughfy, right, installed Lineville resident Daniel Thomas, center, as the chapter’s newest compatriot. Chapter vice president Ron Burson, left, was the guest speaker, delivering a special presentation on the SAR’s “Revolutionary War Rarities,” a podcast series conducted by current ALSSAR president Jim Griffith and past ALSSAR president Jim Maples.

—Photo courtesy of Jason Williams

History professor speaks at Richard Henry Lee

Dr. Gene Allen Smith, professor of History at Texas Christian University, was the featured speaker at the February meeting of the Richard Henry Lee chapter. Smith provided a very informative presentation on “George Washington: The Character of a Founding Father.” Dr. Smith is pictured with chapter past president Bob Harris, left, and chapter president Will Mooty.



—Photo courtesy of William Rozier

‘Pete the Patriot’ returns to Cheaha

The Cheaha chapter’s guest speaker at February’s meeting was local favorite “Pete the Patriot” Leavitt, presenting “Patriotism and the American Revolution.” Leavitt, center, is pictured with, from left: chapter vice president Ron Burson, new members Lamar Yarbrough and Daniel Thomas and chapter president Eric Sloughfy.



**ALABAMA SOCIETY, SONS OF
THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION**

NEWSLETTER OF THE ALSSAR

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If you're submitting material for the next newsletter, please e-mail your pictures and information to timgaylesar@gmail.com or send information about your chapter's activities or upcoming events by June 10 to Tim Gayle at 3104 Cabot Street, Montgomery, AL 36110.



—Photo courtesy of Jess Brown

Tennessee Valley chapter brings Presidents Day celebration to television

The Tennessee Valley chapter teamed up with the DAR on Presidents Day to remember some presidents during Channel 48's midday show "Tennessee Valley Living." ALSSAR president Jim Griffith, left, joined Maple Hill chapter regent Penny Chilton, right, and the show's host, Payton Walker, to link foods to six Presidents. Foods highlighted include Reagan's Jelly Beans, Eisenhower's Million Dollar Fudge, Lincoln's Almond Cake, Madison's Cinnamon Teacakes, Jefferson's Molasses Cookies and Washington's Gingerbread.