

Claude Thompson, William E. Lutrick, Thomas Eaves, Jordan Hillman, Alan Hoops, and Aaron Ruffin pose for a photo at the Landscape Architecture 50th anniversary. (Photo by Karen Brasher)



A BROAD LANDSCAPE

Landscape architecture alumni discuss varied careers

By Vanessa Beeson

IN 2016, the Department of Landscape Architecture celebrated 50 years. In April, faculty, friends, students, and alumni from around the country returned to Starkville to celebrate the milestone. The department's mission to "foster the will and ability to plan, design, build, and manage regenerative communities" was built on the foundation laid by such innovators as Ed Martin, who spent 45 years at MSU building the program. Others include Cameron Man who helped elevate that program by working to add a Master of Landscape Architecture to the curriculum and Robert Callaway, whose vision helped establish a landscape contracting and management program within the department. Still, the leadership of current faculty like Sadik Artunc, professor and department head, continue to propel that vision forward in a new era. While current faculty and students are focused on design, planning, building, and managing landscapes, there is a growing emphasis on community, with much of the current student work centered on helping local communities. Influence had the opportunity to interview a cross section of landscape architecture professionals who graduated at various times throughout the program's history. Visit www.cals.msstate.edu/alumni/influence for a full length Q&A with each of these alumni to discover how their time at MSU helped shape their careers and their place in the communities they serve.

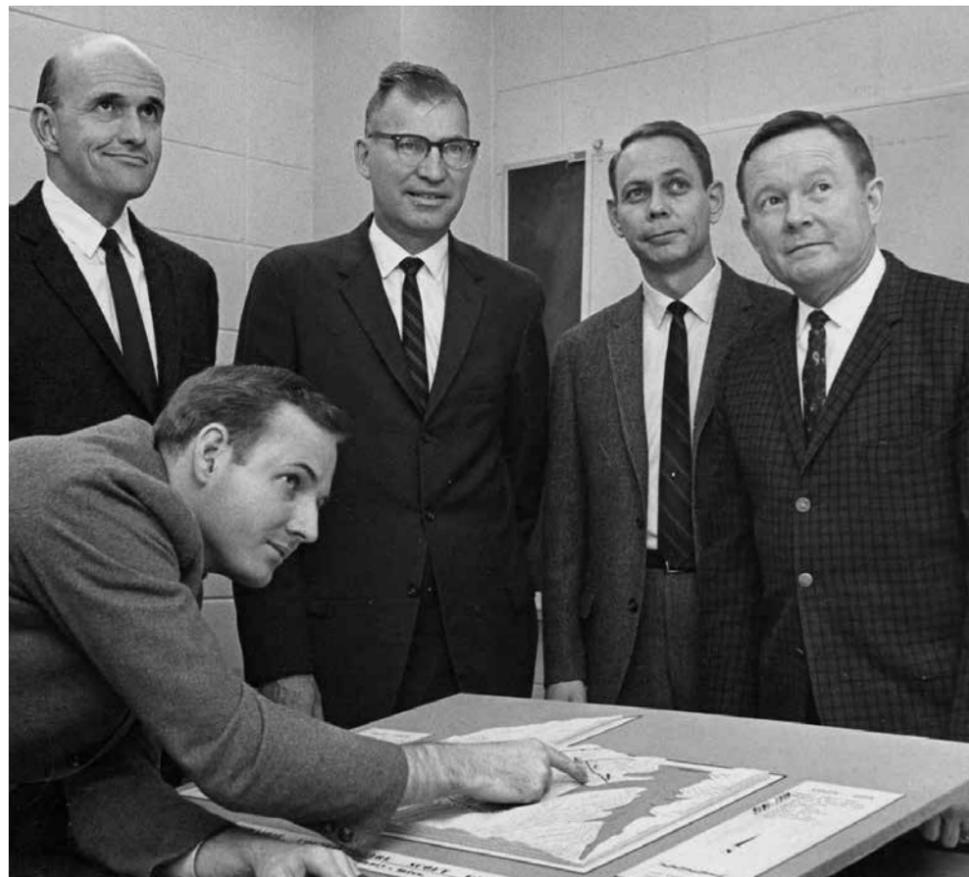
Claude Thompson

Claude Thompson earned a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture with a horticulture concentration in 1967. He was the first student to begin the landscape program, which became accredited a semester after he graduated. (While fellow classmate, Bill Lutrick, is considered the first official graduate of the accredited program, both Thompson and Lutrick had an identical course load despite their different degrees). Learn about how Thompson's journey to the new degree program back in 1967 shaped a long, illustrious career in the public, private, and academic sectors. Also find out how a stint as an editorial cartoonist for the Reflector got Thompson more than he bargained for.

Thomas Eaves

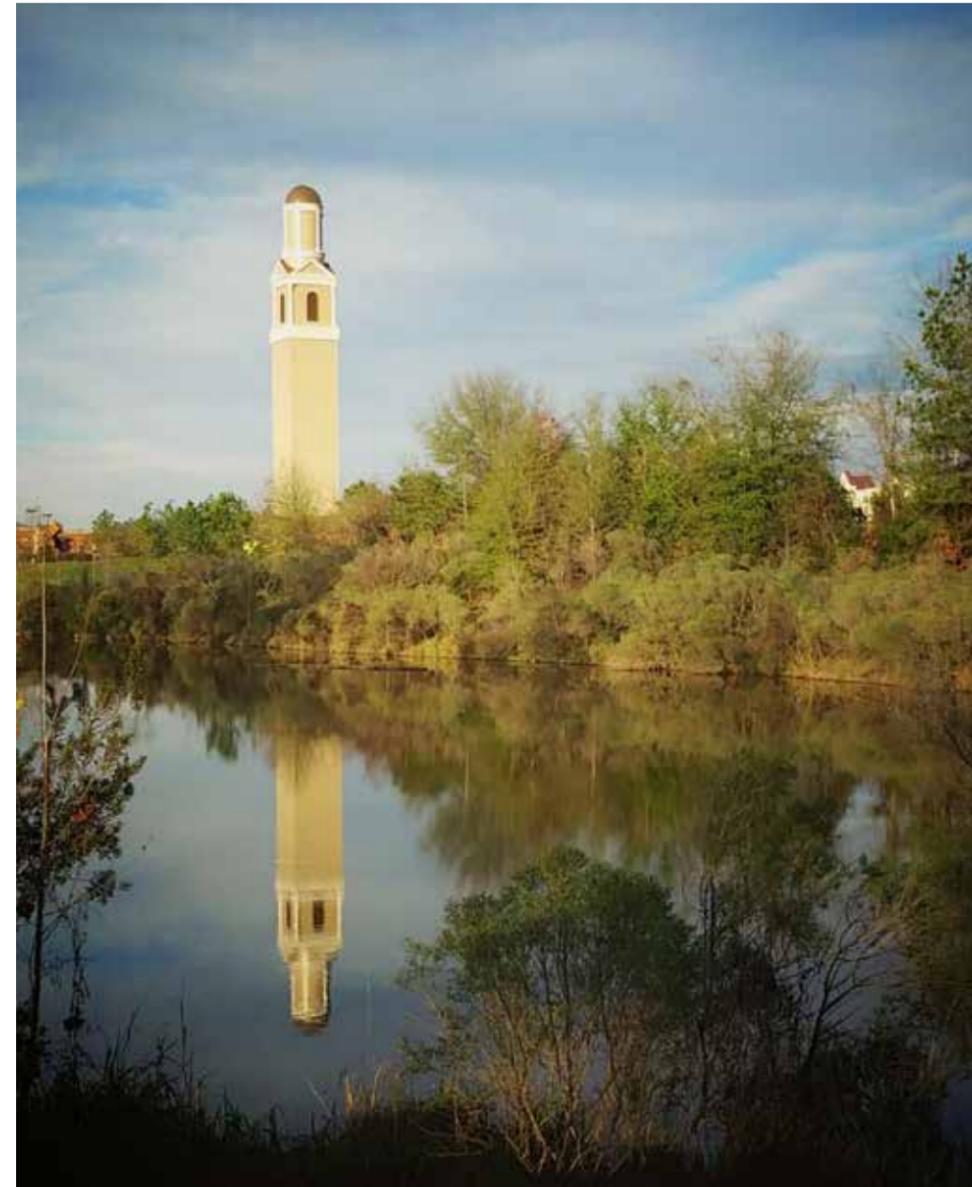
Thomas Eaves graduated with a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture in 1973 after a four year stint in the United States Air Force. He grew up on a farm in Louisville, Mississippi where he loved scouting and became an Eagle Scout. He was married with a child when he began his academic career at MSU. Discover how Eaves traveled the country designing the most unlikely of spaces—cemeteries—and how that work helped inform a long career as a principal in a landscape architecture firm that serves the Hattiesburg area.

A young Bill Lutrick (left) meets with representatives from the Girl Scout Council to discuss his senior project, a master plan for a 360-acre program center for the area council. (Photo submitted)



William E. Lutrick

William E. (Bill) Lutrick, graduated with a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture in Fall 1968, becoming the first student to be awarded the BLA degree. Originally, Lutrick wanted to be an architect, however, during the 1960s, no colleges in Mississippi offered an architectural degree. He started at MSU as a liberal arts major, but once he heard about the new landscape architecture department, he switched majors and has spent nearly 50 years in a career he loves. Discover how Lutrick's career as a landscape architect spanned various industries beginning with the Girl Scouts of America and ending with aviation design. Also learn about Lutrick's second act helping to preserve historical landscapes across the country.



Alan Hoops

Alan Hoops graduated with a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture in 1985. He started out as an architecture major at the University of Cincinnati and transferred to MSU to pursue engineering. While neither of those majors proved a fit, he learned about landscape architecture, with elements that combined the two and felt right at home. Learn how a chance meeting in college with a world-renowned landscape architect changed Hoops' outlook on the field. Also discover how a leap of faith turned into one of the best decisions of his career.

A cell tower in Madison, MS designed by Alan Hoops. (Photo by MSU alumnae Kim Crothers)

Aaron Ruffin

Aaron Ruffin graduated with a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture in 2005. He continued on at MSU earning a Master of Public Policy and Administration in 2007. Ruffin works as a network real estate manager for Mobilitie, a telecommunications infrastructure company. He is a member of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) Diversity Summit, which brings a dozen landscape architects from around the U.S. together to discuss ways the ASLA can expand the profession as more ethnically and culturally diverse. Learn more about Ruffin's mission as a champion of diversity and how he seeks to leverage the broad nature of the profession to diversify his own skills.

Jordan Hillman

Jordan Hillman graduated with a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture in 2009. She began working at a garden center in high school where two coworkers—landscape architects and MSU alums—mentored Hillman toward the profession. She is the community development director of Brandon, Mississippi. Find out how encouragement from professors coupled with her involvement in ASLA student chapter as an undergrad helped shape Hillman's career in the public sector.