

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

United Way of West Alabama Names Dr. Stuart Bell as 2026 Campaign Chair

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. (March 24, 2026) – United Way of West Alabama (UWWA) proudly announces that Dr. Stuart R. Bell, former President of The University of Alabama, will serve as Campaign Chair during the organization’s 80th Anniversary year.

Bell is a nationally respected leader in higher education whose career has been defined by service-driven leadership institutional advancement, and community partnership. As the 29th President of The University of Alabama (2015-2025), he guided the University through a period of historic growth, including record enrollment, record research activity, and unprecedented philanthropic success. Under his leadership, the Rising Tide Capital Campaign surpassed its goal, generating more than 1,100 new endowed scholarships and establishing nearly 70 endowed faculty support funds.

Bell, along with his wife, Susan, have long demonstrated a strong commitment to United Way and giving back, predating their move to Tuscaloosa. Since coming to The University of Alabama, they have helped strengthen the University’s annual United Way campaign and reinforced the institution’s role as a leading supporter of local nonprofits serving children and families across the region. The University has continued to be number one in employee participation in their United Way campaign amongst other SEC schools.

“Susan and I have been champions of United Way for many years, and I am honored to lead this year’s campaign at a pivotal and important moment when so many organizations are dependent on these funds to provide critical services,” said Dr. Bell. “With the growing needs in our community, we are prepared to do whatever it takes to meet our goal this year.”

Throughout his career, Dr. Bell has emphasized collaboration and responsible stewardship. His leadership reflects a clear understanding that thoughtful stewardship of resources creates lasting opportunity for individuals and families across West Alabama.

“Having Dr. Bell as our Campaign Chair is an honor, and the respect for him in our community will help us open new doors and build new relationships that will have a lasting impact for our United Way,” said Jackie Wuska Wear, UWWA President & CEO. “He has a proven history of building strong fundraising foundations and surpassing large goals and we look forward to learning from him as he guides our campaign.”

The 2026 UWWA campaign will kick-off with a luncheon at Bryant Conference Center on August 11, 2026. More information and tickets will be available closer to the date at uwwa.org.

United Way of West Alabama strengthens education, builds a healthy community, supports financial stability, and ensures resiliency through disaster relief and recovery across nine counties.

United Way of West Alabama Announces 2026 Board of Directors

Phyllis Belcher, Greene County IDA
Stuart Bell, Former President, University of Alabama
Karen Burklew, Alabama Power Company
Marcus Campbell, Commissioner, Sumter County
Johanna Cole, Community Volunteer
David Coleman, Hunt Refining Company
Erwin Dudley, Sr., Alabama Basketball
Willie Forte, Tuscaloosa Housing Authority
Kelli Gant, Warrior Met Coal Mining, LLC
Shawn Gilliam, Mercedes Benz U. S. International
Brian Groeschell, SmartBank
Chris Gunter, Buffalo Rock
Schnavia Hacher, University of Alabama School of Social Work
Josh Hayes, Prince Glover Hayes
Alison Hewson, Hewson Family Foundation, Inc.
Steven Hood, University of Alabama Student Affairs
Briana Houston, DCH Health System (*Young Leaders Society President*)
Brock Jones, Thornhill Capital Management (*Board Chair*)
Katrina Keefer, DCH Health System
Stephanie Kemmer, Bibb County Probate Judge
Jonathan Koh, Shelton State Community College
Barbara Kucharski, Community Involvement
Tim McCool, McCool, Owens & McCool, Pickens County
Yolanda Page, Stillman College
Brian Phillippi, Nucor Steel
Pam Pruitt, Community Involvement (*ReUnited Chair*)
Sandra Hall Ray, Community Involvement
Misty Renfro, Pickens County DHR
Jerry Smith, County Extension Director, Lamar County
Justice Smyth, IV, Tuscaloosa County EDA
Chad Tindol, University of Alabama Partnerships & Strategy
Mark Vaughn, BF Goodrich Tire Manufacturing
Terri Wallace, Publix Super Markets