

# Tuck serves her alma mater with pride

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Amy Tuck said Mississippi State University has always been about service to people, and that is her overarching goal as the Executive Director of Campus Operations.

“I am fortunate to have the opportunity to work at my alma mater, Tuck said. “We are working together to be as efficient as possible (and) to be responsive to needs of those on campus. We help create an environment in which faculty, staff and students can do their work in the best conditions possible.”

Tuck began working at MSU in 2008, following her service as Mississippi’s Lieutenant Governor.

As executive director of campus operations, Tuck is responsible for “providing vision and strategic leadership for a portfolio of campus services, including facilities administration, maintenance, utilities, landscape, construction, custodial services, parking, shuttle operations and laundry, sustainability, transportation services and campus planning, design and construction.” This encompasses over 300 employees.

Tuck provides assistance to President Mark Keenum for special projects and events as assigned, and she works with colleagues who are responsible for many phases of the day-to-day running of MSU’s large, complex campus operations.

“I have learned just how many contributions these hard-working, dedicated employees make to Mississippi State University,” Tuck said.

Tuck also was selected as the chairman of the MSU Special Events and Game Day Operations Committee, which helps ensure the many logistics are in place that create a welcoming game day experience for MSU family and friends.

Tuck said her greatest accomplishment was serving as Mississippi's Lieutenant Governor for two terms. Tuck is the second woman elected to statewide office in Mississippi and the first to have been re-elected.

"(It has been) the greatest privilege of my career," Tuck said. "As Lieutenant Governor, I had the opportunity to focus on issues that were important to the future of Mississippi — education, economic development, jobs, public safety and health care. I am very appreciative and humbled by the trust the people placed in me by allowing me to serve."

Tuck said her tenure in public office provided her with valuable experience in state government, teamwork, budget development and management for state agencies and human resources, as well as interactions with people from all walks of life at the local, state, national and international levels. Though there is a huge difference in her role at MSU, Tuck said all of the experiences she has gained has been beneficial.

"Public service is all about people," Tuck said. "In politics, as in any profession, you learn that leadership is about setting the example, clearly defining the goals and providing the tools to reach those goals. That's what I also try to do at Mississippi State. You are only as strong as the people who support you. I am very fortunate to have an outstanding team that is knowledgeable, dedicated and effective."

Keenum said Tuck's Mississippi State roots are deep and it is evident by the enthusiasm with which she does her job.

"She and her team take great pride in making sure the campus looks its best every day, an effort that has drawn praise from so many people who come to visit," Keenum said. "Her wide-ranging duties as executive director of campus operations also require strong administrative and leadership skills. Amy possesses those abilities, and we are fortunate to have her in this key position on our campus."

Bill Kibler, MSU vice president for student affairs, said Tuck's amazing leadership and relationship building skills are invaluable to the university

"Mississippi State has been honored to have Amy Tuck as a part of our team since she left the Lieutenant Governor's Office," Kibler said. "She is clearly as widely respected on the campus of Mississippi State as she was in halls of the State Capitol. She has brought leadership, a sense of enthusiasm, a focus on quality and a fresh team oriented perspective to our campus operations area."

Tuck began her relationship with MSU as a student, receiving a bachelor of arts degree in political science in 1985. She received her doctor of jurisprudence from Mississippi College School of Law in 1989. And in 1994, she received her master's degree in Public Policy and Administration (MPPA) at MSU.

In 2008, Tuck was appointed to the President's Commission on White House Fellowships by President George W. Bush. She is the only Mississippian to have served on this commission.

During the 2008-2009 school year, Tuck received a Friend of the Student Association Award from the MSU Student Association. She was named one of Mississippi's 50 Leading Business Women by the Mississippi Business Journal in 2009, and she received the 2010 Leadership Award for Women in Higher Education Mississippi Network.

She is also heavily involved in the community, recently serving as Greater Starkville Development Partnership board chairman.

"I hope I've made a contribution by giving back," Tuck said. "Because of my role at Mississippi State and because of Dr. Mark Keenum's keen desire to work with the community, I focused especially on ways that MSU can help make a positive impact in the work the partnership is doing. Collaboration and mutual support benefits MSU and the Greater Starkville Development Partnership. I believe that when you live in a community, you have an obligation to give something back."

She serves as the Institutional Representative for Mississippi State for the Women in Higher Education Mississippi Network. For the next two years, she will serve as the statewide coordinator for the Women in Higher Education Mississippi Network.

Tuck said she is so honored to serve on the Friends of Mississippi Veterans board as the MSU representative. The Friends of Mississippi Veterans is a non-profit organization that promotes public interest on behalf of Mississippi veterans.

"My father was a veteran," Tuck said. "He was in WWII and received the Purple Heart. Because of our veteran's service to this great county, we have unprecedented opportunities and freedom. Veterans have my respect, thanks and gratitude."

She has previously served as Honorary Chair for the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure and Go Red for Women with the American

Heart Association.

Tuck is a member of First Baptist Church of Starkville, and said her faith has kept her grounded and focused on the important things in life.

“I am appreciative of all the people who have shared their time, advice, expertise and encouragement with me,” Tuck said. “That involves teachers, preachers, professors, employers, constituents and personal friends.”

But it was her mother, Mary Lou Tuck, who had the biggest influence on her life. She passed away in 2006.

“She was one of the greatest women I have ever known,” Tuck said. “She was my best friend, my mentor and my role model. She inspired and encouraged me. I miss her everyday.”

Tuck said one of the greatest joys of her life is her family, and she finds as many ways as possible to spend time with them.

“I am very blessed to have such a supporting family,” Tuck said. “My father, Grady Tuck, passed away when I was 12. He was a rural mail carrier and also worked at MSU. My mother, Mary Lou, passed away in 2006. My brother, Al, has been like a father to me. Al, Lynda and Beth are very special to me.”

Al Tuck retired as Deputy Director of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks in January of 2010. His wife, Lynda, also retired from MSU. They are actively involved at Center Grove Baptist Church. Their daughter, Beth, lives and works in Tupelo, and is in her sixth year with Itawamba Community College. She is currently the lead online instructor with the Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation.

Outside of work and community involvement, Tuck enjoys sporting events and her Jack Russell Terrier named Abby.

What’s next? Tuck said she is very happy serving the MSU family.

“I believe in the future of Mississippi State and in the significant role it plays in helping advance our state,” Tuck said. “I will continue to support President Keenum in ways that help him realize his vision for this great university and provide opportunities for the future.”