

Janice Tolbert Phillips '78 – Hugh Ellis Walker Alumni Service Award

Growing up in the rural town of Coldwater, Janice Tolbert Phillips was a well-rounded youth. By the time she graduated with honors from Coldwater High School in 1973, she had been involved with the drama club, FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America), Beta Club, yearbook staff, marching band as a majorette, and student council officer.

After receiving an associate degree in business from Northwest Mississippi Junior College, Phillips enrolled at Delta State to pursue an education degree and immediately discovered the thrill of rallying the Statesmen to victory from Section 13 at the campus stadium with classmates and what would become lifelong friends. Those memories motivated Phillips to reconnect with fellow alumni following the death of a friend's spouse in 2009. After the funeral, she began networking to ensure a successful "Class of the 1970s" reunion in Ridgeland, which culminated in a robust local gathering with successful recruiting and fundraising for the Delta State Alumni Association, and a road trip to Horace McCool Stadium at Delta State, where 40 alums cheered the Statesmen once again from Section 13.

After earning an education degree from Delta State in 1978, Phillips had planned to pursue a career in education. Instead, she joined the U.S. Postal Service in Jackson nearly 29 years ago, where she is a customer service assistant and certified U.S. passport processor. She and Ralph, her husband of 33 years on Nov. 8, reside in Madison, where they are faithful members of the Morning Star Baptist Church. Her motto: *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me* (Philippians 4:13). The Phillips have two grown children, Nuenzo Phillips and Melissa Phillips Williams, and a 4-year-old granddaughter, Caleigh Phillips, of Greenwood.

***Presented to recognize outstanding service and contributions to Delta State University by an alumnus.**