 Quarterly Report
January 2021

Alabama’s 2020 Electoral College Ceremony

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Secretary Merrill Travels to Washington D.C.
Alabama’s 2020 Electoral College Ceremony

On December 14, 2020, Alabama’s 201st birthday, the country’s Electoral College was set by law to meet across the United States to cast their votes for the President and Vice President. In Alabama, the meeting of the Electoral College took place in the State Capitol’s Old House Chamber at 12:00 p.m. and was hosted by the Alabama Secretary of State’s Office. Alabama has nine electoral votes and therefore nine electors, who were:

Dennis H. Beavers of Blountsville (At-Large)
John Wahl of Athens (At-Large)
Jackie Gay of Brewton (Congressional District 1)
Jeana Boggs of Deatsville (Congressional District 2)
Joseph Fuller of Alexander City (Congressional District 3)
John Killian of Fayette (Congressional District 4)
J. Elbert Peters of Huntsville (Congressional District 5)
Joan Reynolds of Shoal Creek (Congressional District 6)
Commissioner Rick Pate of Lowndesboro (Congressional District 7)

At the start of the ceremony, Secretary Merrill, Congressman Robert Aderholt, Congressman-Elect Barry Moore, Attorney General Steve Marshall, State Treasurer John McMillan, and the nine Electors led by Uncle Sam (portrayed by J. Danny Cooper of the American Village) formally entered the Chamber floor, while the Homewood High School Band, led by Director Christopher Cooper, played The Washington Post March from the third floor balcony. After Secretary Merrill gave the opening remarks, the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Treasurer McMillan, which was followed by a beautiful performance of the National Anthem sung by Malia Thibado, a student of Victory Christian School in Pell City. Pastor Mark Bethea of Montgomery First Baptist Church led the prayer, and the guests heard remarks by Attorney General Marshall, Congressman Aderholt, and Uncle Sam before the casting and canvassing of the Electors’ votes began. As a result, President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence both received all nine of Alabama’s electoral votes. The event concluded around 12:45 p.m.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Electors, guest speakers, and audience members were required to wear masks and were adequately distanced per the CDC’s guidelines. Unlike the 2016 Electoral College Ceremony, the event was not open to the public due to the circumstances, but hundreds were able to watch within the comfort and safety of their homes thanks to the live stream service by Southern Stream Live, paid for by Chairman Terry Lathan and the Alabama Republican Party. The event is still available to watch at https://algoplivestream.onsll.tv/.
November 3, 2020 marked one of the most historic General Elections in the country’s history. In Alabama, where the candidates for the presidency and a state senate seat were both on the ballot, the counties reported a 62.19% voter participation rate.

Due to the pandemic, thousands of voters applied for and cast an absentee ballot to avoid the crowds at the polls. With 3,708,804 registered voters confirmed at the time, a new record that was broken right before the close of the October 29th registration deadline, 2,306,587 voted in the election on November 3rd.

When the polls closed at 7:00 p.m., Alabama’s 67 counties began counting and reporting their individual results, which were available live to the public on the Secretary of State’s Election Night Reporting online system. As a result, Tommy Tuberville claimed the state’s senate seat with 1,392,076 votes, while Doug Jones received 920,478 votes. President Donald Trump received 1,441,170 votes in Alabama, which earned him all nine of Alabama’s electoral votes. Nationwide, former Vice President Biden earned a total of 306 electoral votes, declaring him the new President-Elect.

The Secretary of State’s Office officially certified Alabama’s election results at the state canvassing board meeting on November 23, 2020, which consists of the Governor, Attorney General, and Secretary of State. The meeting of the Electoral College was held in the State Capitol’s Old House Chamber on December 14th, where Alabama’s nine electors cast their votes for president and vice president (see page 1).

President-Elect Biden is scheduled to take his oath of office on January 20, 2021 on the West Front of the United States Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. This will mark the country’s 59th presidential inauguration.
Six Agencies Receive the NASS Medallion Award

On December 2, 2020, Secretary Merrill awarded six NASS Medallions to the power cooperatives and state agencies that were instrumental in restoring power to the State of Alabama, which are the Alabama Emergency Management Agency, the Alabama Office of Information Technology, Alabama Power, the Alabama Rural Electric Association, Electric Cities of Alabama, and PowerSouth.

Hurricane Zeta made landfall in Alabama on October 29, 2020, which was the Thursday before the historic November 3rd General Election, and thousands were left without power throughout the state. As a result, hundreds of polling locations were affected and left without electricity, as well. Due to the diligence and dedication of these outstanding organizations, electricity was quickly restored to hundreds of polling locations throughout the state, which ultimately led to the successful administration of the 2020 General Election in Alabama.

Pictured left to right: Secretary of Information Technology Marty Redden, Electric Cities of Alabama Executive Director Jon Hand, Alabama Rural Electric Association President Fred Braswell, Alabama Secretary of State John H. Merrill, PowerSouth Director of Transmission & Distribution Operations Terry Wilson, Alabama Power Chairman, President, and CEO Mark Crosswhite, and Alabama Emergency Management Agency Director Brian Hastings.
From December 15th through the 18th, Secretary Merrill and Mrs. Cindy Merrill traveled to Washington D.C., where the Secretary attended a series of meetings and special functions. On December 16th, they visited Arlington, Virginia to attend the funeral of Vietnam Veteran and Medal of Honor recipient Bennie G. Adkins, who passed away on April 17, 2020 after complications from Covid-19. He was laid to rest in the Arlington National Cemetery at the conclusion of the funeral.

After the memorial, Secretary Merrill met with Congressman Gary Palmer, Congressman Robert Aderholt, and Congressman Mo Brooks separately to discuss the successful administration of the election in Alabama and the many election failures that were introduced across the nation. Secretary Merrill also met with Doug Hoelscher and William Crozer at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building next to the White House, who have served President Trump in the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs for the last four years. On the afternoon of December 17th, the Secretary visited with Congressman Rodney Davis, who represents the 13th Congressional District in Illinois and is the ranking member on the House Committee on Administration.

Early the next morning, Secretary Merrill completed a phone interview with Tony and Corey on The Morning Show of WBHP Radio in Huntsville to discuss the concerns related to the election challenges before Congress and his meetings with key leaders in Washington. He then spoke with Election Assistance Commissioner Don Palmer about federal election legislation and ensuring the successful administration of elections in all 50 states in the future. At the end of the trip, Secretary and Mrs. Merrill attended the last White House Christmas party of the season.
Quarterly Accomplishments

- As of December 23, 2020, 1,777,554 people have registered to vote since Secretary Merrill took office on January 19, 2015, which sets the total to 3,724,701 registered voters in Alabama.

- Secretary Merrill traveled to each of Alabama’s 67 counties at least once for his eighth consecutive year, with 374 unique visits in 2020.

- Starting December 1, 2020, the SOS Office began its tour of all 67 counties in an effort to evaluate the performances of all 201 Registrars in the State of Alabama.

- In October 2020, following his appointment to Chairman of the Economic Development Committee for the United States Heartland China Association (USHCA), Secretary Merrill secured masks for 17 of Alabama’s hospitals amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 63 of Alabama’s 67 counties utilized the electronic poll books to check in voters at the polling locations for the November 3rd General Election.

- The SOS Office distributed more than 3.2 million dollars to Alabama’s counties to help them make the polling locations safe for the General Election due to Covid-19.
Attention All Undergraduate Students!

Alabama Secretary of State John Merrill is looking for interns to work within the office during the Summer of 2021. If you are 18 years or older and currently enrolled as an undergraduate student, or if you know someone who fits this criteria and may be interested in applying, please see our internship application at https://www.sos.alabama.gov/sites/default/files/SOSInternshipPacket2021.pdf.

FAQs:

When is the deadline to apply?
All applications and requested materials must be received by February 1, 2021.

Are the essay and recommendation letter mandatory?
Yes. Applicants who do not submit a completed essay along with at least one letter of recommendation from their school advisor or professor will be immediately disqualified. Essays that do not adhere to the assigned topic and word count are also subject to immediate disqualification.

Is this a paid internship?
Yes. All interns will be paid on an hourly basis. The pay will be approximately $8.44 per hour worked.

How long will I have to work each day?
The office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and other times as designated, and each employee and intern is allowed a one-hour lunch break each day. Interns must set their work schedules with the Chief of Staff to fit within this time frame. Regardless of the number of hours worked each day and week, all interns are required to work at least 360 total hours (9 weeks) to complete the internship.

Do I have to be a resident of Alabama to apply?
No.

Where can I stay if I don’t reside within or near Montgomery?
Please see the page on “Housing Arrangements” in the internship packet. You will be responsible for arranging your housing.

When will I be notified about whether or not I was chosen for the program?
You will receive an emailed and mailed copy of your internship status letter no later than March 1, 2021. Please be sure to include a valid email and mailing address in your application.

If chosen, which Secretary of State Division will I be assigned?
Your assigned division depends on your preference, as well as the demand of assistance needed within the office. Most interns work within the Elections and/or Executive Divisions, but some may work within Business Services, the Legal staff, or Information Systems.

If you have additional questions, email Brittany Hamilton at Brittany.Hamilton@sos.alabama.gov or call the Secretary of State’s Office at 334-242-7200.

Internships are limited! Apply today!
Stay up-to-date with all the latest news from the Alabama Secretary of State’s Office.

Don’t Miss Volume 7 Issue 1, Coming April 2021!