

## **Legacy Award 2012**

The Legacy Award was established to honor an alumnus who made an institutional changing impact on the university. This year's recipient of the Legacy Award is Gene Ayers. Ayers is a native of Grenada, MS and a graduate of Delta State University with a bachelor's of music education and a master's of music education. He began working in the Music Department at Delta State in 1974. He is best known for forming and directing Renaissance, a musical group that is known for performances throughout the Mid-South, Europe, Mexico, and several Caribbean Islands. He was the director of Renaissance for 34 years.

Ayers is a member of the National Association of Jazz Educator's National Conference, Omicron Delta Kappa, and Phi Mu Alpha Music Fraternity. Ayers has served as president of the Mississippi chapter of the National Association of Jazz Educators from 1984-1987. In 1977, 1980, and 1982, he was selected to the annual edition of Personalities of the South. Ayers is a member of the Leadership Mississippi Alumni Association and has also served as an adjudicator for musical events in Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Louisiana. Ayers has one daughter, Madelyn Elizabeth Marley and two grandsons – Leyton, 3 and Hunter, 1. He retired in 2008 and now resides in Biloxi, MS.