

# the Crimson Crier

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## Designing Disney

Alumna shares experience working in the happiest place on earth



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## Bowl for Gold

Team wins inaugural bowling championship

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# building ROCKET city

## Small farming community becomes national epicenter

Victoria Lewis  
Lifestyles Editor

Most think of Huntsville and picture the big rocket in the skyline or the beautiful downtown scenery. Many do not know about Huntsville's humble beginnings as a little farm town.

Established in 1811, Huntsville was known for its cotton industry and textile mills. After World War II, German rocket scientists and engineers flocked to Huntsville, transforming it into "Rocket City, USA", and the growth of the city has not ceased. Resident and author Homer Hickam first came to Huntsville in 1969 after serving in Vietnam and began working at NASA in 1981.

"I fell in love with Huntsville and its people when I first came here and I still love this town. It has become home," Hickam said.

Huntsville persuaded Hickam with its numerous positive attributes and ideal southern atmosphere. For Hickam, and every 'Hunsvillian', the great city has more to offer than what meets the eye.

"I think Huntsville is in a good position to prosper. It has a great climate, low taxes, good schools and a solid reputation as a place that is business-friendly," Hickam said. "[It] has more than doubled in population since I first came here and Madison has mushroomed into a major bedroom community for people who work on Redstone Arsenal and at Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC) and businesses across the county."

### NASA

The forthcoming of NASA made many changes including but not limited to: new public schools, bigger, newer Huntsville Hospital, Von Braun Civic Center, Cummings Research Park and The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH).

Karla Kochevar, a graduate of Sparkman, went on to complete a degree in Math and Computer Science from UAH in 1984. After interviewing with NASA and Teledyne Brown Engineering for the same type of position, a few weeks later she became a NASA employee and has been with NASA/MSFC for over 31 years as an Aerospace Engineer.

"I am currently working Core Stage Engine in the operations area of the Mission Operations Lab for the new

Space Launch System – the most powerful rocket we've ever built. When completed, SLS will enable astronauts to begin their journey to explore destinations far into the solar system," Kochevar said.

With MSFC/NASA's continuing involvement in Space Station Operations, mission to Mars, Space Launch Vehicle development and much more, Huntsville will remain strong in providing jobs, schools, medical care and a home for people for many years to come. Kochevar believes that because the President recently approved the budget for NASA for the year 2017 it shows the confidence that the government has in the future of NASA and what it can do for mankind.

"It makes a statement that they are continuing to support the work NASA does and they believe that NASA continues to offer many new ideas and concepts to our country. All of this will contribute to the strength of the Marshall Space Flight Center, provide jobs for the Huntsville area and continue to make Huntsville one of the best places to live in the U.S., according to recent surveys," Kochevar said.

To Kochevar, the space program is the epicenter of Huntsville. Without the programs and opportunities created by NASA/MSFC, the city would not be near as special and productive as it is.

"NASA/MSFC has definitely helped in putting Huntsville on the map. The number of jobs, both civil servant and contractor, that NASA has brought to the area is huge. This has impacted the growth rate of Huntsville and surrounding areas and brought about many changes and needs economically. NASA has helped make the Huntsville area more progressive which has brought about a lot of national attention," Kochevar said.

Hickam shares that the Space & Rocket Center has seen rapid growth with the U.S. Space Camp and Space Academy becoming a destination for technically-minded young people of the country and the world. NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center is a magnet for aerospace and high tech companies for relocation, creating a competitive job market in Huntsville.

### Rocket City

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Photo illustration by Savannah Bullard and Erin Stender

## Basketball manager celebrates at senior night game, leaves lasting legacy

Savannah Bullard  
In-Depth Editor

No complete team without a good manager: a coach's right-hand man, someone who knows the game inside and out, a motivator and – most of all – a leader. For the varsity men's basketball team, there is no one more capable for the job than senior Erik Daneri.

Erik was brought to coaches Jamie Coggins and David Hughes' attentions in his freshman year. Coggins

knew from the beginning that Erik would make for an excellent manager.

"[He] was a guy that



HEAD IN THE GAME. On senior night, Erik Daneri is recognized for his years of dedication to the team. Later that night, Erik went on to score the final two points of the game. Photo by Savannah Bullard

was shy, and somewhat an introvert. A teacher came to me and asked if I had a place

for him in this organization and I said yes, and it's done wonders for Erik," Coggins said. "It's opened him up to a new set of friends and it's been quite an experience for him."

Four years later, Erik has made quite the name for himself on the basketball court. He is loved by his team, and never fails to bring his all to each practice and game. His father, Conrad Daneri, says

the experience is not about what Erik has given to our school, but "what the school has given to him."

"Giving him this opportunity to come out and manage by Coach Hughes and Coach Coggins has made such a difference in Erik's personal growth," Conrad said. "[It is] not just the ability to socialize in school, become part of the school spirit and the whole aura that comes with being in high school, but the fact that it's allowed him to grow and improve on his social skills and be able to interact in a way that he never would have been able to in a different type of environment."

Through basketball, Erik has learned to conquer any challenge that has been thrown at him, physically, emotionally and socially. Erik was diagnosed with autism at an early age, and has since mastered being able to put any challenge over his disability.

"He has worked so hard and we just want him to continue to do that and get what he wants," Erik's mother, Sandra Daneri, said. "It's always been about him being self-sufficient and independent of us. From the moment we found out he had autism to this moment now, it's always been the same."

Regardless of his disability, Erik has made friends with his teammates, teachers and dozens of classmates. It is no secret that he is beloved by all. Junior Maurice Anderson considers Erik a "brother away from home," and values everything he brings to the court.

"He's always good with everybody, he loves everyone and he always hangs with us. It's so easy to get along with him because he's so friendly," Anderson said.

### Erik

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