

# Zheng, Pitters Recognized as MVSU's 2020 HEADWAE Honorees

Outstanding students and faculty members from thirty-four Mississippi public and private universities and colleges were recently honored Monday, March 2, at the state capitol during the annual Higher Education Appreciation Day—Working for Academic Excellence (HEADWAE) program.

HEADWAE was established by legislative resolution to honor individual academic achievement and the overall contribution of the state's public and private institutions of higher learning.

Among the honorees were Mississippi Valley State University's English department chair and professor, Dr. John Zheng and student Derica Pitters, an English major.

Dr. Zheng expressed how great it felt



**Zheng and Briggs**

to be recognized and how proud he is of Pitters as well.

"It was a great honor to be recognized as a HEADWAE honoree. I deeply appreciate MVSU President Dr. (Jerry) Briggs and Provost Dr. (Kathie) Golden for their appreciation of my academic contributions to the university. I surely feel proud to be an MVSU team member," Zheng said.

"I'm also proud of our student honoree, an English graduating senior from New York by way of Jamaica who is also a student-athlete on the women's track and field team. She has also published a short essay in The Right Words magazine from Missouri Baptist University," he added. **DBJ**

# Silicon Valley Partnership Pioneers RPA Center of Excellence in Delta

The Economic Development Authority of Coahoma County has announced the opening of the first RPA Center of Excellence (CoE) in Mississippi. The Center is dedicated to bringing more than 200 jobs to the region by retraining and upskilling workers through a partnership with Automation Anywhere, a global leader in Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and PeopleShores, a Public Benefit Corporation.

The announcement, to an audience of more than 200 state, regional, and local leaders, who joined top executives of Automation Anywhere and PeopleShores from California's Silicon Valley, was made at the inauguration of the Automation Anywhere/PeopleShores RPA Center of Excellence.

The RPA Center, located within the PeopleShores building at 1540 Desoto

Ave., in Clarksdale, will serve as a research, design, training, and development base for RPA and is expected to generate hundreds of high value tech-enabled jobs in the Mississippi Delta. Clarksdale, as well as many communities in rural America, has suffered depopulation in recent years which has created economic stress felt throughout the community. The significant number of new job and educational opportunities in Clarksdale created by the Center will help stop depopulation and have a transformative economic impact on the lives of its citizens.

In an additional development, Horne CPA Group, a certified public accounting and business advisory firm, with clients across the southeastern United States,



**Levingston**

announced that they will offer RPA services produced by PeopleShores to their client base, leveraging the new RPA CoE. This announcement underscores the success PeopleShores has had in developing a skilled workforce in Clarksdale, as well as the trust and confidence they have engendered to clients across

the region.

Jon Levingston, executive director of the Economic Development Authority of Coahoma County, said: "The RPA Center of Excellence is the first of its kind in this part of the United States. The fact that these outstanding companies chose Clarksdale, in the Mississippi Delta, is a testament to their belief in our labor force. **DBJ**