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## **Looking to Hire? ASU Mid-South is a Great Resource**

*This story was submitted to ASU Mid-South by Jeff Tacker of Big John's Shake Shack.*

When organizations work together to help grow the community good things happen for all. And good things are happening at Arkansas State University Mid-South's Jeremy Jacobs Hospitality Center and at Big John's Shake Shack in Marion

In 2015-2016, Jeff Tacker, General Manager at Shake Shack, taught a cooking class to concurrently enrolled high school students at ASU Mid-South's Jeremy Jacobs Hospitality Center. Through the class, he met Olivia Sanders, a senior in high school at the time. "I told the class," says Tacker, "that this is not just a class, but an interview and if it goes well, you may get hired to work in our restaurant."

Sanders impressed Tacker so much with her work ethic and personality that he hired her to work at the Shake Shack. She has been a front cashier for almost two years now, but she is trained to do just about everything in the restaurant. "Olivia is one of those employees that is open to learning new things and that you feel comfortable training them in a variety of things."

Tacker also met Adam Stephens who was in the beginning class of the hospitality program. Although they were not regularly in the same class, Tacker substituted on occasion and came to know Stephens and his desire to become a chef. Recently, Tacker met Stephens again, working at a local hardware store. But this time, he was looking to hire a cook position.

"What are you doing in hardware if you want to cook?" Tacker asked Stephens. "Come work for me and you'll learn to cook and use what you've learned in class." Stephens' desire is to graduate from ASU Mid-south with an associate degree then transfer to the University of Memphis to complete his hospitality degree. From there, Stephens hopes to attend cooking school to become a chef.

"Our community is very blessed to have this high-caliber program right here at ASU Mid-South providing training and mentoring for students who desire to grow their culinary and hospitality skills," says Tacker. "I know Marjorie Gardner has high expectations for her students. And for students who work hard, develop their skills and have a good work ethic, the future is bright. There are many opportunities in the culinary and hospitality industry for them throughout the world. And it's a growing industry!"

### **About Tacker's Shake Shack**

Big John's Shake Shack began grilling burgers in 1977 when John and Loretta Tacker bought a former Tastee-Freeze® and turned it into what is now one of the oldest operating restaurants in the county. Now

after almost 40 years of service Big John’s Shake Shack continues to grow and serve burgers, sandwiches and dinners to an even larger community of locals and travelers alike.

### **About Arkansas State University Mid-South**

Arkansas State University Mid-South is a public two-year institution of higher education with an open-door admission policy, serving Crittenden County, Arkansas, and the surrounding areas with a comprehensive educational program. The College is committed to economic development in the Arkansas Delta through the provision of quality, affordable, and convenient learning opportunities and services consistent with identified student, community, and regional needs.

To meet these needs, the College provides quality academic and support programs, personnel, technology, administrative services, and facilities necessary to respond in a timely and effective manner.

For more information about ASU Mid-South, visit <https://www.asumidsouth.edu>.



CAPTION: l to r Adam Stephens, Jeff Tacker and Olivia Sanders of Big John’s Shake Shack



CAPTION: Olivia Sanders



CAPTION: Adam Stephens

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