



## Alabama D puts ‘finishing’ touches on pass rush

SPORTS, 1B

# The Tuscaloosa News

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## Alabama’s official state food revealed

**Jennifer Lindahl**  
Montgomery Advertiser  
USA TODAY NETWORK

You’ve heard of state birds and state flowers, but what about state foods? Reader’s Digest rounded up the most

iconic foods officially tied to each state. In Alabama, that honor goes to a boozy, sugary treat that even got a shout-out in a classic novel.

What is Alabama’s official state food? This award-winning treat might surprise you.

### What is Alabama’s official state food?

Known as “prize cake” or “Alabama Lane cake,” Lane cake is a bourbon-soaked layer cake filled with rich custard and topped with fluffy white frost-

ing, pecans, coconut and raisins. Over the years, bakers have created countless variations, but most Lane cakes stick to these classic ingredients.

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## 15% rise in teacher retirements sparks worries

**Jennifer Lindahl**  
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USA TODAY NETWORK

Alabama is experiencing a 15% increase in teacher retirements this year, raising concerns about school staffing, classroom stability and student support across the state.

According to State Superintendent Dr. Eric Mackey, approximately 3,500 teachers are expected to retire in 2025. This number is up from 3,094 in 2024 and 2,810 in 2023, according to reports.

Most of Alabama’s recent teacher retirements are coming from educators who have delayed leaving the profession in order to take advantage of better retirement income opportunities.

A 2022 law passed by state lawmakers offered significant pay raises for experienced teachers. Some saw up to a 20% increase. The increase prompted many educators to delay their retirement and reset their pensions.

In Alabama, monthly retirement benefits for educators are calculated using their highest three to five years of salary, depending on when they were hired. That means recent pay raises, especially the 2022 increase, can have a significant impact on retirement income. For many longtime educators, staying in the profession a little longer meant a better pension and more financial security in retirement.

Those retiring this year do have the option to return on a part-time basis through agreements with their local school districts.

### Educators say the pay doesn’t match the pressure

Still, educators say the pay bump hasn’t solved deeper issues. Many are dealing with high stress, worsening student behavior and growing

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The University of Alabama presented 1,240 degrees during the Summer Commencement 2025 in Coleman Coliseum. PHOTOS BY GARY COSBY JR./TUSCALOOSA NEWS

## New UA president presides over 2025 commencement

**Jasmine Hollie**  
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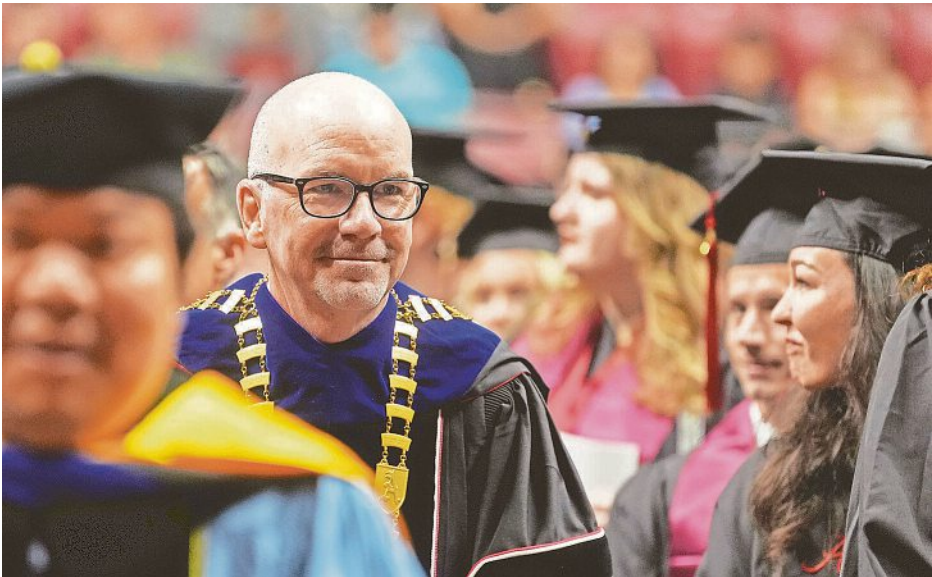
Friends and family gathered Aug. 2 in Tuscaloosa to celebrate summer graduation for the class of 2025.

Around 1,240 students became University of Alabama graduates during summer commencement exercises at Coleman Coliseum on the UA campus. Nine college-specific ceremonies were held in total.

The summer 2025 commencement ceremonies also marked the first commencement for new UA President Peter J. Mohler, who replaced Stuart R. Bell. Bell retired as UA’s president in July after leading the Capstone for 10 years.

The University of Alabama System board of trustees approved Mohler’s hiring on June 16. Mohler is the 30th

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The University of Alabama presented 1,240 degrees during the Summer Commencement 2025 in Coleman Coliseum. New University of Alabama President Peter Mohler enters the coliseum for this first commencement at the Capstone.

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