

# The Ledger

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## NEW COLLEGE PRESIDENT

# Polk State board revises profile, hires search firm

**Gary White**  
Lakeland Ledger  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Polk State College has officially launched the search for the sixth president in the school's 62-year history. The District Board of Trustees ap-

proved the hiring of a search firm at its March 30 meeting, as Chair Ann Barnhart advised her fellow trustees that the search process will be different than it was when Polk State hired Angela Garcia Falconetti in 2017.

Trustees voted 7-0 to sign a contract with Myers McRae, a New Jersey-based

company, to coordinate the search for a new president.

Falconetti left in February and is now interim president at the University of North Florida in Jacksonville. Polk State trustees appointed Anne Kerr, the

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**Ann Barnhart, chair of the Polk State College District Board of Trustees, joined other trustees in voting to amend a rule governing the appointment of a college president at the March 30 meeting in Bartow.**  
GARY WHITE/THE LEDGER

# AWARD-WORTHY ART ON DISPLAY



Art works fill the George W. Jenkins Student Gallery at the Ashley Gibson Barnett Museum of Art in Lakeland. The largest student exhibition ever held at the museum will run through April 26. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY AGB MUSEUM OF ART

## AGB Museum stages largest student exhibit

**Gary White**  
Lakeland Ledger  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Visitors to the Ashley Gibson Barnett Museum of Art are accustomed to seeing well-known artists displayed in the main hallway, formally known as the Perkins Gallery. Works by the likes of Andy Warhol and Jasper Johns might hang on the two walls.

At the moment, those walls hold a range of pieces by Polk County students. One of the works, a mixed-media creation called "Blast of Emotions," depicting the artist looking forlorn while wearing clown makeup.

The artist, Sophia De La Cruz, is an eighth-grader at Davenport School of the Arts. The colorful work has been selected for the annual AGB Museum of Art

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**Sophia De La Cruz, an eighth-grader at Davenport School of the Arts, holds her mixed-media work, "Blast of Emotions." The colorful work has been selected for the annual Ashley Gibson Barnett Museum of Art Purchase Award.**

# Former elections supervisor dies at 98

**Gary White**  
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USA TODAY NETWORK

Helen Gienau, who served as Polk County Supervisor of Elections for 24 years, died March 31 at age 98.

Gienau, a Bartow native, was first elected as a Democrat in the bicentennial year of 1976, succeeding Blanche Work. Gienau directed the county's elections until her retirement in 2000.

Before becoming Supervisor of Elections, Gienau spent 15 years on the staff of U.S. Rep. James A. Haley, according to previous Ledger reporting.

Former employees credited Gienau with updating machinery and procedures in the Polk County Elections office.

"She'd been through several recounts in the prior years, leading up to 2000, and so she wanted to modernize in advance of what she knew would be a big election," said Christine Goding, who worked in the elections office from 1991 to 2018. "And so she pushed the County Commission to get new voting equipment."

An article in The Ledger from 2000 detailed some of the improvements that Gienau oversaw. Polk was the first county in Florida to store records on optical disk and later to transfer them to a hard drive, the report said. Gienau also directed the transition to paperless filing, putting all of the office's reports and data into a computer database.

Gienau's office installed its own mapping system, making it easier to

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**Polk County Supervisor of Elections Helen Gienau is seen answering questions about the 2000 presidential election at the county elections office in Bartow. Gienau, who held the position for 24 years, died March 31 at age 98.**

CALVIN KNIGHT/THE LEDGER ARCHIVE 2000

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