



Shelby Scholars Lecture Series

ALABAMA WATER INSTITUTE (AWI)

Mike Gremillion, Director of the Global Water Security Center
Matthew Womble, Executive Director of the AWI



ABOUT AWI

The University of Alabama (UA) took a proactive step in 2017 by founding the Alabama Water Institute (AWI). Today, in collaboration with on-campus federal partners from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), UA and AWI stand as a national epicenter for groundbreaking water-related research and the development of cutting-edge water technology products.



AWI oversees three influential research programs: (1) the NOAA Cooperative Institute for Research to Operations in Hydrology, (2) the Global Water Security Center, and (3) the CONSERVE Research Group. Each of these programs acts as a catalyst for interdisciplinary collaboration among UA's colleges and partner entities, uniting experts in engineering, computer science, biology, social science, economics, and more. Together, they address a broad spectrum of water-related challenges on local, regional, national, and global scales, generating crucial information and pioneering solutions essential for shaping a safer and more sustainable water future.



ABOUT OUR GUESTS

For more than 27 years, **Mike Gremillion**, Colonel USAF (Ret.), provided scientific leadership and expertise for national security environmental support under the U.S. Department of Defense. Mike came to the University of Alabama from the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, where he was the senior meteorology and oceanography officer.

Mike worked nearly seven years at the U.S. Air Force Headquarters in the Pentagon with his last assignment as Deputy Director of Weather. He held posts of increasing responsibility and influence within the Air Force since joining in 1993. He has engaged the White House, Congressional leaders and senior personnel

within the national security, defense and intelligence communities on environmental policy issues throughout his career.

Some of Mike's career achievements include facilitating procurement of a \$30 million high performance computer installed at Oak Ridge National Lab that improved numerical weather prediction and will operate the first-ever operational global hydrological model. He also initiated development of a climate analysis, monitoring and prediction system that provided strategic indications and warnings to prepare leaders for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions, security instability, disaster risk reduction and public health contingencies.

Mike earned a bachelor's degree in atmospheric science from the University of Kansas, a master's degree in meteorology from Texas A&M University and a master's in business administration from Regis University.

Matthew Womble is a recognized innovator and leader in the field of weather- and water-related data science. Recently appointed as the executive director of the Alabama Water Institute (AWI) at The University of Alabama, Womble is poised to advance the university's mission of becoming a premier research and education institution addressing critical water issues. With a robust background in federal programs and a commitment to sustainability, he aims to steer AWI towards becoming a world-class interdisciplinary research institute focused on developing innovative solutions for clean water access and resilience against extreme weather events.

Womble joined AWI after a notable tenure at Sairdrone, a California-based company renowned for its autonomous surface vehicles designed for ocean data collection. As the director of ocean data programs, he was responsible for business development, government relations, and mission planning, enhancing the company's capability to deliver cost-effective oceanographic data.

His career includes significant experience in the public sector, notably as a professional staff member on the U.S. Senate Appropriations

Committee, where he played a key role in formulating appropriations legislation for various federal agencies, including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Womble's expertise in legislative processes and funding mechanisms has uniquely positioned him to drive AWI's initiatives and collaborations with federal agencies.

In 2016, Womble was selected as a John H. Knauss Sea Grant Fellow, working directly in the office of the NOAA chief scientist. During this fellowship, he led efforts to evaluate and enhance NOAA's research and development portfolio, which further cemented his reputation as a forward-thinking leader in environmental science. Following the fellowship, he continued his work with NOAA, contributing to the National Water Center, which is also located on the University of Alabama campus.

Womble holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Mississippi State University and a Master of Science from Auburn University, both of which provided him with a strong foundation in the sciences. His return to Tuscaloosa represents a homecoming and an opportunity to leverage his extensive experience and relationships within the water research community. With his leadership, the AWI is set to embark on an exciting new chapter dedicated to impactful research and education.

*Thursday, October 10, 2024
4 PM at Tuomey Hall*