

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY NAMES
F&M's TIM PETTUS A DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS**

COLUMBIA, Tenn., (October 10, 2008) – The president of First Farmers & Merchants Bank, has been named a Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) Distinguished Alumnus for 2008-2009, it was announced recently by the university's Alumni Association.

Tim Pettus, who has been with F&M Bank since 2002, was selected in the Service to the Community category.

“MTSU couldn't have picked a more deserving alumnus for this honor,” said Randy Stevens, chairman and CEO of First Farmers & Merchants Bank. “Throughout his 36-year banking career and, especially, during the time he has been with F&M Bank, Tim has been a strong advocate of reaching out to the customers in the communities where we live and work. He's also actively demonstrated that tenet in his personal service to a number of social service agencies and causes throughout middle Tennessee. Tim's a fine representative of both MTSU and F&M.”

The MTSU Alumni Association annually seeks and accepts nominations for the award for alumni who have distinguished themselves by obtaining a high level of service to their profession, their community and/or MTSU. Twenty-seven different individuals nominated Pettus for the award.

Pettus received a Bachelor of Science degree from MTSU in 1973. He also studied Management and Economics at Louisiana State University. Named Lawrence County Citizen of the Year in 1993, he was also named Lawrence County Kiwanian of the Year in 1983, helped form the Lawrence county MTSU alumni chapter and served on the MTSU Foundation.

He is a board member of the Tennessee Housing Development Agency. Additionally, he is director of God's Storehouse, chairman and trustee of the Columbia State Community College Foundation and treasurer of the Crossroads of Dixie Tractor Club. In 2008 he was awarded the Tennessee Board of Regents Award for Philanthropy.

The F&M executive will be honored along with other 2008-2009 award recipients at the school's homecoming festivities on Saturday, November 8th. His award will be presented to him during the President's Celebration of Excellence dinner on April 18, 2009.

About First Farmers & Merchants Bank

Founded in 1909, First Farmers & Merchants Bank (Member FDIC) is one of the most successful independent banks in Tennessee, with total assets of more than \$879 million and deposits in excess of \$721 million. An additional \$2.7 billion in assets is held by its Trust & Financial Management Department. Headquartered in Columbia, Tenn., the bank operates 19 offices in a seven-county area that includes Lawrence, Maury, Marshall, Hickman, Dickson, Giles and Williamson counties. It is distinguished by its commitment to traditional, personal banking relationships that incorporate state-of-the-art technology to provide the highest possible level of service. For additional information, visit www.fandmbank.com or call the main office at 931.388.3145.

MEDIA CONTACT: Frank Limpus C: 615.668.9938 E: frank.limpus@jathinking.com