

# Yerkes Named Inaugural Holder of the Thomas J. Adams Sr./AutoTec Endowed Professorship in Risk Management and Insurance

by Morgan Black

**In April, Rusty Yerkes, an associate professor in Brock School of Business, was named the Thomas J. Adams Sr./AutoTec Endowed Professor in Risk Management and Insurance (RMI).**

The establishment of the professorship is part of a multipronged initiative to prepare students for careers in the risk management and insurance industry. Understanding the current and projected need for new talent in this field, leaders in Brock School of Business, with Yerkes at the helm, created a strategic plan to launch the program with a vision for long-term student success.

A major part of ensuring that success is the newly established professorship, endowed by the Adams family. It is named for Thomas J. Adams Sr. who attended Howard College and was instrumental in the continued growth and expansion of AutoTec, a sixth-generation insurance and technology company that started in Birmingham in the late 1880s and continues to thrive.

The Adams family has many historic connections to Samford. Richard and Tom Adams Jr. are the great nephews of Chapman Fuller Manly, who was instrumental in securing the Homewood, Alabama, property for Howard College. They are also the grandsons of William Hester Manly, for whom a long-standing business scholarship is named.

Richard M. Adams, vice president of AutoTec, said, "Samford is a vital part of the community where our employees live and where our business has thrived. We applaud and share Brock School of Business' emphasis on integrity and ethics and are honored to support the university and the business school in this way."

The appointment of Yerkes will ensure sound leadership of the program which aims to produce high quality professionals in risk management and insurance for many generations.

"I am grateful to Richard Adams and Tom Adams Jr., Chuck Redden, Charlie Adams and the entire Adams/AutoTec family for their generosity in supporting this program," Yerkes said. "Thomas J. Adams Sr. launched, in Birmingham, Alabama, what has become an industry leading provider of data and insurance products and services for the automotive and numerous other industries across the country and around the world. I am honored to be associated with the Adams/AutoTec legacy." ▮



Yerkes with Richard A. Adams