

HONORS

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Magazine

RESEARCH *for* ANSWERS

Veteran Jake Verhoeff studies stress disorders among returning soldiers

Honors students Kaitlin Beck and Jered Chua also aim to cure societal issues

The Honors
*Learning
Community*

at Mitchell-Neilson schools



MIDDLE TENNESSEE
STATE UNIVERSITY



Spring 2012

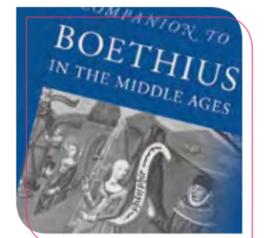
20 RESEARCH FOR KNOWLEDGE
Three Honors College students make the most of their undergraduate research opportunities by focusing on root causes of societal issues.



26 SENSE OF COMMUNITY
A shift in learning methodology creates a deeper, more meaningful classroom experience in the Honors College.



28 BY THE BOOK
Dr. Philip Edward Phillips, interim associate dean of the Honors College, displays scholarly expertise spanning poets to prisons.



30 EPIC AFFAIRS
Honors College founding director Dr. June Hall McCash navigates love and tragedy in her two newest books.



Cover photo:
MTSU senior
Jake Verhoeff
photo: J. Intintoli

At left:
Spring blooms
in Walnut Grove
photo: Andy Heidt

DEPARTMENTS

- 4 Dean
- 5 Students
- 32 Faculty and Staff
- 36 Alumni and Friends



HONORS MAGAZINE is a twice-yearly publication of the MTSU University Honors College, distributed free to faculty, staff, alumni, and friends.

The Centennial Publications of the University Honors College are made possible, in part, by a gift by Paul W. Martin Jr. in honor of the past and present directors and deans:

Dr. June Hall McCash,
Dr. Ron A. Messier, Dr. John Paul Montgomery, Dr. Philip M. Mathis, and Dr. John R. Vile.

DEAN
John R. Vile

EDITOR
Marsha Powers
Marsha.Powers@mtsu.edu

UNIVERSITY EDITOR
Drew Ruble

DESIGNER
Sherry Wisner George

UNIVERSITY PHOTOGRAPHERS
J Intintoli, Andy Heidt

CONTRIBUTORS
Creative and Visual Services,
Philip Phillips, Georgia Dennis, Laura Clippard, Karen Demonbreum, Kathy Davis, Phil Mathis, Hilary Stallings, Ron Kates, Shelley Thomas, Derek Frisby, Tyler King, Adam Emerson, Jade Kastl, Matthew Hibdon, Chad Slaven, Taffy O'Neal, and Patrick Pratt

From the Dean's Desk

A Community of Excellence!

Why, students often ask, should they take Honors classes? Will they improve their grade point averages? Guarantee riches or fame? Get them into graduate or professional school? Assure placement in a study-abroad program?

My first response is to suggest that eligible students are free to "date" us without "marrying" us. That is, students may take an introductory course or two without committing themselves to completing the full 31 hours that are required for an Honors designation on their degrees.

More generally, though there are few guarantees, there are many advantages. With the exception of our lecture series, we cap lower-division Honors classes at 20 and upper-division classes at 15. Enrollment in two Honors classes a semester, if proper paperwork is followed, will guarantee early registration at a time when some classes are in short supply.

Students find the Honors building to be one of the coolest places on campus to hang out. Membership privileges include access to free newspapers, coffee, and an awesome fireplace. Honors students can join the staff of an award-winning literary magazine or a journal of student research.

Honors students are part of an elite group of these writers highly valued by graduate and professional schools. They have direct access to an undergraduate fellowship office with an advisor who has successfully helped students win membership on the USA Today All-Academic Team, obtain Fulbright and Goldwater scholarships, win fellowships from Phi Kappa Phi and Omicron Delta Kappa, and apply for other prestigious awards.

There are, of course, Buchanan Fellowships for the top 20 incoming Honors students each year as well as other scholarships that are exclusively reserved for Honors students. The University also allocates extra money to help Honors students who want to study abroad.

I know few students who regret taking Honors classes. By contrast, many come to me in their last semester or last year expressing regret that they did not join the program.

Thomas Jefferson, who articulated a belief in the equality of human rights, also spoke of the need for an "aristocracy of talent and virtue." We seek to form a similar aristocracy of talent and service. Like the University Jefferson founded, we seek to form our own "academic village" within the larger state university of which we are so proud.

Guarantees? Some. Advantages? Many. Cool? Definitely!

John Vile



2011 Buchanan Fellows Inaugurated

The University Honors College inaugurated a new class of Buchanan Fellows Friday, September 30, in the amphitheater of the Paul W. Martin Sr. Honors Building.

Following instrumental selections by fiddler Kelsey Wells, a 2009 Buchanan scholar, University Provost Brad Bartel joined Dean John R. Vile in welcoming the 20 new Buchanan Fellows, their parents and friends, members of the Honors faculty, and members of the Honors College Board of Visitors. Junior Buchanan

influenced and shaped the Honors College. Six of the new signees are from Murfreesboro: **Jin Kim** and **William Wright** from Siegel High School; **Tandra Martin** from Oakland High School; **Rhi Brown** from Blackman High School; **Carly Davis** from Riverdale High School; and **Nick Myhre** of Gateway Christian School. **Jacob Lea** is from Unionville, Tennessee, and attended Riverdale High School. **Justin Hudson** is from Columbia, Tennessee, and attended Hampshire Unit School.

Franklin County High School; **Garrett Ewers** of Dobyns-Bennett High School in Kingsport; **Reid Wiggins** from Troy, a graduate of Obion County Central High School; and **Allison Daniels** from Bearden High School in Knoxville.

New Buchanan Fellows from out-of-state are **Zachary Dresch** of Powell Valley High School in Big Stone Gap, Virginia; **Cassandra South**, a graduate of Piqua High School in Greenville, Ohio; and **Layne Sanders**, a Discovery Home School graduate from Horse Shoe, North Carolina.



scholars Chelsea Fleet and Evan Craig, recipient of a Goldwater Scholarship last spring, also welcomed and encouraged the newcomers. Philip E. Phillips, interim associate dean of the Honors College, challenged the Buchanan Class of 2011.

The 20 new scholars then signed the Honors College *Book of Town and Gown*, a book containing the signatures of those who have

Other Tennessee high school graduates inaugurated were **Emily Smith** of Morristown-Hamblen High School in Morristown; **Nicholas Walker** of Ravenwood High School in Nolensville; **Elizabeth Chitwood** from Estill Springs, a graduate of Franklin County High School; **Nicole Wolowicz** of Greenbriar High School in Springfield; **Michelle Katz** of Ooltewah High School in Ooltewah; **Thomas Knies**, from Winchester, a graduate of

The Buchanan Fellowship is the highest academic award given to an entering student at Middle Tennessee State University. It is named in honor of MTSU's Nobel Prize-winning alumnus, James M. Buchanan. The scholarship is limited to 20 students per year and is open to incoming freshmen with a minimum GPA of 3.5 and a minimum composite ACT score of 29 (SAT 1,280). A separate application and essay are required. [H](#)

Fall Initiation

The Omicron Delta Kappa Circle (ODK) of MTSU initiated 12 new members in a 7 p.m. ceremony Friday, December 2, in the amphitheater of Paul W. Martin Sr. Honors Building. Three were members of the MTSU administration and nine were students.

The new members are **Brad Bartel, Roy Moore, Philip Phillips, Jordan Dodson, Kathryn Holden, Jordan Holloway, Megan Loftis, Bailey Piercefield, Alissa Ruggle, Ruben Tavakalov, Leland Waite, and Kelsey Wells.** **Jared Adams** was introduced as the circle's newest squire.

Dr. Bartel serves as University Provost; Dr. Moore is dean of the College of Mass Communication; and Dr. Phillips is interim associate dean of the Honors College. Jordan Dodson is a junior professional chemistry major; Kathryn Holden is a junior psychology major; Jordan Holloway is a junior accounting major; Megan Loftis is a junior double majoring in international relations and global studies; Bailey Piercefield is a junior economics major; Alissa Ruggle is a junior double majoring in Spanish and science (pre-med); Ruben

Tavakalov is a senior majoring in biology and chemistry; Leland Waite is a junior aerospace major; and Kelsey Wells is a senior mass communication major with a concentration in visual communication.

Jared Adams, the circle's new squire, is a sophomore economics and political science major. As a squire, he can be involved with ODK although he won't be eligible for full voting membership until he is a junior.

ODK member **Jim Williams**, director of the Albert Gore Research Center, welcomed members, guests, and new initiates on behalf of the Honors College and Omicron Delta Kappa. After a challenge to lead and serve delivered by **Kaylene Gebert**, speech and theatre, Circle officers **Matthew Hibdon**, president, and **Jennifer Johnson**, vice president, renewed their oaths of office. Dr. Williams then read the history of ODK and presented the faculty initiates. Johnson introduced the student initiates. Phillips, Hibdon, and circle advisor **Georgia Dennis** made closing remarks, and Dennis presented certificates of appreciation



Brad Bartel signs the ODK membership book following his initiation.

to the two officers for their outstanding service.

Omicron Delta Kappa, the National Leadership Honor Society, was founded December 3, 1914, at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia. ODK was the first college honor society of national scope to give recognition and honor for meritorious leadership and service in extracurricular activities and to encourage development of general campus citizenship.

The ODK Circle of MTSU accepts applications from juniors, seniors, and graduate students who maintain a 3.5 GPA and who are involved in leadership and service roles on campus and in the community. The society recognizes leadership in five areas: scholarship; athletics; campus/community service, social/religious activities, and campus government; journalism, speech, and the mass media; and creative and performing arts. [H](#)



ODK members at the fall initiation included (L-R) Megan Loftis, Kelsey Wells, Jared Adams (squire), Bailey Piercefield, Leland Waite, Jordan Dodson, Ruben Tavakalov, Jordan Holloway, Matthew Hibdon, Brad Bartel, Philip Phillips, Jennifer Johnson, Kaylene Gebert, Georgia Dennis, and Roy Moore.

Receives Grant



The national Omicron Delta Kappa (ODK) office announced in December that the MTSU ODK circle was selected to receive one of six 2011 Maurice A. Clay Leadership Development Initiative Grants. The \$500 grant was awarded to fund the local circle's March 23rd "ODK True Blue Leadership Day."

Twenty-two circles applied for the six available grants. Other circles that received grants were those at Furman University, Hampden-Sydney College, Florida Southern College, Alfred University, and Samford University.

"ODK True Blue Leadership Day" was created by ODK circle president Matthew Hibdon and advisor Georgia Dennis. It involved a series of workshop sessions to educate students about various aspects of leadership and to highlight the University's core values during the institution's centennial.

Workshop speakers included Major General Terry Haston, Heather Arrington, Dusty Doddridge, David Foote, Jackie Victory, Deana Raffo, and William Respress. [H](#)

Members Make Holiday Visit to Veterans Home

by Matthew Hibdon | *Matthew Hibdon, a senior history major, is president of the MTSU Omicron Delta Kappa Circle.*

Members of the Omicron Delta Kappa Circle of MTSU completed their fall service project on Saturday, December 3, the 97th anniversary of Omicron Delta Kappa's founding. ODK members visited the Tennessee State Veterans Home to deliver Christmas cards to the residents. Our Circle collected over 500 personalized card inserts from students, instructors, and other persons from MTSU and Murfreesboro. These inserts were placed into holiday cards and were hand-delivered to the veterans. The Tennessee State Veterans Home has over 130 residents with very diverse service records.

As we visited with each of the veterans, they shared some intriguing stories. We were fortunate enough to spend time with the home's oldest resident. James Jones, 98, has lived in Rutherford County all his life and shared many stories about growing up here. Born in Smyrna, he moved to Murfreesboro with his family when there were fewer than 15,000 people living in the city. During World War II, Jones served in the U.S. Army. His father, Richmond Jones, actively served on

the home front as Rutherford County sheriff from 1942 to 1946. James Jones lived in a house on East Main Street for over sixty years before moving to the Veterans Home.

Another highlight of the visit was talking to the home's highest-ranked resident, Major Robert Evans. He and his wife, Rita, welcomed us into their shared room and told us their stories. Major Evans served in the Pacific theater in World War II and continued his service after the war. Mrs. Evans served as an Army recruiter and worked under a former Tennessee governor. The couple had nine family members serving our country at the peak of World War II. Their combined service time totaled more than 180 years!

Members of our ODK Circle were honored to spend time with the residents, and the veterans seemed overjoyed to receive the cards and candy we brought. This was our second year to deliver cards to veterans and to let them know they are not forgotten. The service project had a lasting impact on both the veterans and ODK members.

If you would like to get involved with or help support the ODK Circle at MTSU, please contact Georgia Dennis at mtsuoak@mtsu.edu or (615) 898-5645. The Circle is now accepting new membership applications. Qualified

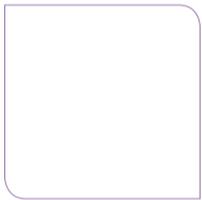
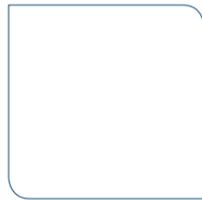
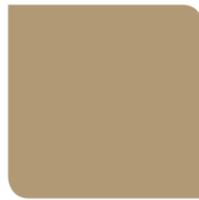
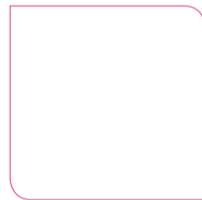


Jennifer Johnson, Leland Waite, and Matthew Hibdon visit with Major Robert Evans and Rita Evans, both veterans of World War II.

Insert: A wedding photo of Major Robert Evans and Rita Evans.

students will have at least a 3.5 GPA and leadership experience in one or more areas on campus or elsewhere. For more information and the application form, go to www.mtsu.edu/~mtsuoak. [H](#)

Fall 2011 Theses Defended



Katelin Bartolomeo¹ History

"The Angel and the Demon: Debunking the Biased Reputations of Queen Amalasantha and Empress Theodora"

Nevada Bianca² Recording Industry

"A Whole Lotta Love: An Examination of Romance in Popular Music"

Jordan Cox³ Chemistry

"An Examination and Comparison of Static and Dynamic Headspace Sampling as Accelerant Extraction Techniques"

Laura Gormsen⁴ Marketing

"The Role of Social Media in Recruitment for Higher Education Institutions"

Daniel Gouger⁵ Foreign Language

(Spanish), Bio chemistry
"Synthesis of a Cyclopropyl Peptidomimetic as a Potential Inhibitor of Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) NS_{3-4a} Protease"

Ryan Hopkins⁶ Mass Communication

(Advertising/Public Relations)

"Building Relationships through Social Media: A Case Study of the Transportation Security Administration's Use of Blogging to Respond to Pat-Down and Advanced Imaging Technology Controversy"

Cari Jennings⁷ Biology

"Evaluation of Bacillus Spore Detection: Fluorescence versus Surface Electromagnetic Wave Shift"

Jennifer Johnson⁸ Psychology

"Integration of Social Stories in Instructional Treatment of Students with Autism"

Brandee Kent⁹ Mass Communication (Advertising)

"The NFL Super Bowl 2011: A Quantitative Case Study of Product Placement and Television Commercial Advertising"

Chelsea Morrison¹⁰ Psychology

"An Examination of Mental Illness Stigma Using the Lost Letter Technique"

Shelby Ragan¹¹ English

"Revisiting Cassandra: Twentieth Century Perspectives"

Amber Ryder¹² Anthropology

"Linking Linear Enamel Hypoplasia to Cultural Pressures in Late Mississippian Populations"

Chad Slaven¹³ Chemistry

"The Effects of Hand Holding on Perceptions of Dental Pain"

Christen Vann¹⁴ Interdisciplinary Studies

"Schools in the Middle: A Case Study of Similar Schools"

Andrew Willoughby¹⁵ Aerospace

"Commercial Pilot Maneuvers and Their Importance in Pilot Training"

Anna Yacovone¹⁶ Global Studies and

Organizational Communication

"Refried Beans and Collard Greens: An Investigation into Hispanic Cultures in Middle Tennessee" 

Foux du Fafa

by Tyler King | Tyler is a junior Buchanan Fellow with a major in International Relations and minors in Global Studies and French.

In the weeks and months leading up to the beginning of my yearlong study abroad to Caen, France, the excitement that I felt built more and more each day. Before this year, I had lived my entire life in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, with my only international trip being a week in Canada at the age of four. However, no amount of preparation could have fully equipped me for this trip, and my first days in France seemed surreal: taking a shuttle from Charles De Gaulle Airport to the center of Paris, meeting the family friends I would stay with for the night, being whisked around Paris by the chattiest French woman in Paris, taking a train to Caen the next morning, and finally collapsing in my dorm room bed. It had been a nonstop whirlwind of activity for nearly forty-eight hours, but my life in France would soon become better.

After settling into a routine, I began to take in everything and everyone around me. I think perhaps my favorite part of my trip thus far has been that no matter what I do or where I go, I am out of my comfort zone and forced to adapt and learn. *Solution de la perspective, solution de nouveaux amis.* Situations that would be normal and routine at home become opportunities to learn about people from all over the world and, of course, to practice my French.

Only here can I go to a small apartment party and be surrounded by people from Greece, France, Russia, Spain, England, and Ireland, or attend a dinner party at my French

host family's home and discuss politics and current events with the residents of the town. These experiences are what truly make a trip abroad special and memorable, not the classes or the day trips to tourist sites, but the everyday encounters that would be incidental at home but here carry more weight than the most difficult of university classes. *Les étudiants français vont être mes nouveaux professeurs . . . j'apprends plus quand je leur parle que quand je suis en classe.*

Setting aside the obvious benefits to my language skills, it has truly been a pleasure to meet and become friends with the young French students here at the University. Talking with someone from a different city or state pales in comparison to speaking with someone from an entirely different country and lifestyle, learning from each other despite language and culture barriers, and working together to break down those barriers.

Et moi, je ferai une spécialité de France. I cherish every moment I have with these wonderful people. They have helped me better understand the world far more than they know, and it gives me a small sense of pride to know that I have done the same for them. When June arrives, I'm sure I will be ready to return to my family and friends, but for now I will continue to live life to the fullest and take advantage of all the opportunities provided by this trip. I encourage each and every one of you to do the same. 



Les étudiants français vont être mes nouveaux professeurs . . . j'apprends plus quand je leur parle que quand je suis en classe.





Study Abroad Program Promotes Respect

by Adam Emerson | Adam is a senior Buchanan Fellow with majors in Psychology and International Relations and a minor in Russian Studies.

“European” is a four-letter word to many Americans. We use words like “welfare state” and “socialist” pejoratively and link these ideas to the financial woes in that region of the world, all as a way of bolstering our own sense of superiority. At the same time, Europeans offer inverse critiques of American society. Ask almost any European citizen what they think of our healthcare system or banking regulations, and you’re sure to receive an earful. So who, if anyone, has the right plan for beating the global recession? I attended the Europeum Institute for European Policy’s summer school in Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic, in order to find out.

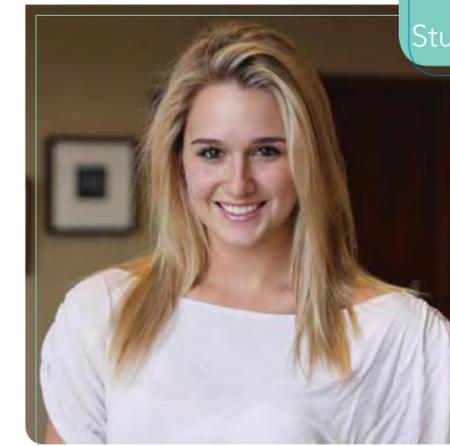
This program, whose intent was to stimulate discussion of the European Union’s policies, consisted of a series of workshops, lectures, and activities among a group of 54 students from 28 countries on 5 continents. Needless to say, there was little consensus among such a diverse group. After debating the merits of socialized healthcare, parliamentary systems, and bailouts of those corporations and governments that are “too big to fail,” the factions of students had reached an ideological stalemate. Despite our inability to agree, we all had one thing in common by the end of the program: mutual respect. After overcoming initial prejudices and preconceived notions, I was able to dispel some stereotypes about Americans, and my European classmates were able to do the same. In the end, I learned more from my peers and their points of view than from the excellent academic program in which I was enrolled!

Yet, my original question goes unanswered. Is there any country with an answer to the financial woes we’ve all endured? Honestly, this program answered that question for me, but I hesitate to share what I have learned in such a limited forum. I do not do so out of some sort of academic selfishness; rather, I do not want to influence my fellow students’ opinions while they still have the ability to go abroad and find their own answers. If you want to know the answer to this question, study abroad, interact with people all over the world, and bring that knowledge back to your classes and communities. All you need is an open mind, a desire to socialize, and a willingness to learn. [i](#)

Adam Emerson and fellow study abroad students in Prague, Czech Republic.

The Young and the Restless

by Jade Kastl | Jade Kastl is a junior majoring in biochemistry.



I was born with two very rare and very serious conditions: chronic overachieving and unremitting boredom. And because these conditions are self-diagnosed, I was probably born a hypochondriac as well. These characteristics allowed me to move through life exceptionally quickly but with a level of indifference that stemmed from a lack of genuine challenge.

By the time I was sixteen and a junior in high school, I was so exasperated by the incessant cycle of secondary education that I decided to graduate early and begin my pursuit of a college degree. Now, at eighteen and on the brink of my senior year, I can reminisce and say it was the best decision I have ever made; however, challenge and reward are partners in change, and my experience was no exception. Starting college at sixteen presented me with unusual obstacles but compensated me with immense knowledge and incentives to better myself as a scholar and as an individual.

Making the choice to start college early was the easy part, but the major decisions and meticulous details that accompanied that choice proved to be the first obstacles. After being accepted to MTSU, I was given the “special case” runaround from advisor to advisor until I thankfully found Ms. Laura Clippard. As the advisor for the Honors College, she was familiar with cases like mine and

offered help with my schedule, AP credits, and scholarships.

When I attended a CUSTOMS session for freshmen that summer, I was given not only a tour of the campus and its facilities but also a chance to meet extracurricular club representatives and peers with similar interests. I quickly discovered that college is so much more than the wild party stories we’re all fed in high school.

It wasn’t long before I settled into college life and began to face the same challenges as everyone else:

MTSU and the Honors College embraced me as a young scholar and provided me with opportunities to excel both in and out of the classroom.

finding the delicate balance between being a scholar and maintaining a social life, living away from home for the first time, and the dreaded college student budget. I was forced to surmount even more hindrances because of my age. For example, the first time I got sick and tried to go to a public walk-in clinic I was denied

for being a minor with no parent or guardian present. Fortunately, I discovered MTSU’s campus clinic, which offers free consultations and discounted prescriptions for MTSU students of any age.

It was also nearly impossible to find anyone in Murfreesboro who would hire a sixteen-year-old and work around my class schedule. I was introduced to Linda Watson of the Blue Raider Athletic Association, and she hired me as a student worker in the office, where I worked for the next two years of college.

Looking back, I cannot imagine choosing anywhere but MTSU. Moving away from my home, my family, and my friends was a scary choice at sixteen, and the challenges that came with that decision are difficult to fully convey. MTSU and the Honors College embraced me as a young scholar and provided me with opportunities to excel both in and out of the classroom. As I move forward, I can say that, thanks to Middle Tennessee State University, I am fully prepared to continue improving myself as an intellectual and as an individual. MTSU challenged me; MTSU rewarded me; MTSU made me. **I’m one!** [i](#)

Honors Students Initiated by Phi Kappa Phi

The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi initiated ten students who have taken three or more Honors classes into its MTSU chapter Tuesday, November 8, and recognized five current members of the Honors faculty as Influential Faculty designated by the student initiates.

Initiated were **Jacob H. Basham** (Mathematics), **Jered Reyes Chua** (Industrial/Organizational Psychology), **Benjamin Conrad** (Psychology), **Jordan G. Dodson** (Chemistry), **Matthew L. Dodson** (Computer Science), **Jonathan E. Driver** (Psychology), **Lucy Estes** (Speech and Theatre), **Emil J. Hirsch** (Mass Communication), **Michael Ripley**, (Criminal Justice Administration), and **Ruben Tavakalov** (Biology and Chemistry). **Philip Phillips** was the faculty initiate.

Influential Faculty recognized were **Ron Bombardi** (Philosophy), **Norma Dunlap** (Chemistry), **Preston MacDougall** (Chemistry), **Ryan Otter** (Biology), and **Jan Zijlstra** (Mathematical Sciences).

Phi Kappa Phi initiated a total of 81 students and recognized 12 influential faculty members during the fall initiation ceremony in the Tennessee Room of James Union Building.

Phi Kappa Phi encourages and recognizes superior scholarship in all academic disciplines. 

Collage Announces Creative Expression Award Winners

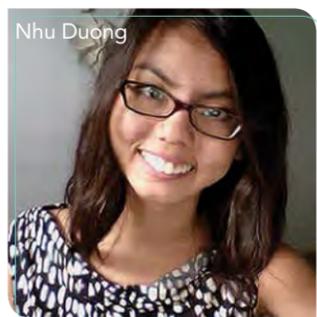


Abigail Stroupe



Shalynn Ford-Womack

Nova Ford



Nhu Duong

Four MTSU students and one graduate won the fall 2011 *Collage* Creative Expression Awards. **Abigail Stroupe**, **Nova Ford**, and **Shalynn Ford-Womack** won Martha Hixon Creative Expression Awards for best literature submissions. **Brian Hutsebout** and **Nhu Duong** won Lon Nuell Creative Expression Awards for best visual submissions.

Abigail Stroupe, a senior English major with a concentration in writing, won a Hixon Award for her poem "Thieving."

Nova Ford, a senior transfer English major from Smyrna, and Shalynn Ford-Womack, an alumna, won for their story "One Afternoon in the House of Numb."

Brian Hutsebout, a senior transfer student from Nashville, won a Nuell Award for his sculpture *Weighting*.

Nhu Duong, a Mass Communication student with a concentration in graphic design, won a Nuell Award for her black-and-white photograph *Untitled*.

Each semester the *Collage* staff participates in a blind-grading process to select approximately 50 pieces for publication from around 300 submissions. The *Collage* Faculty Advisory Board presents Creative Expression Awards for outstanding submissions in four areas: prose, poetry, art, and photography. 

Members of the fall 2011 *Collage* staff on the stairwell in the Martin Honors Building are (front, L-R) Courtney Hunter, Jennifer Johnson, Kaela Armbrister, (second row, L-R) Ashley Sweeton, Kristina Amsler, Bethany Wilson, Taylor Hixson, (third row, L-R) Angela Hallmark, Katie Parker, Sheila Smotherman, (fourth row, L-R) Jessica Harris, Emma Fredrick, (fifth row, L-R) Sam Swift, Jason Ptacek, Patrick Casey.



Student

Collage Wins Coveted Gold Crown Award

In March, the Columbia Scholastic Press Association (CSPA) named *Collage: A Journal of Creative Expression* one of only seven college print magazines to receive a 2012 Gold Crown Award. This is the highest award CSPA gives for collegiate and scholastic publications.

"This is the first Gold Crown Award *Collage* has won since coming under the sponsorship of the Honors College in 2004, and, as far as we know, it is the first Gold Crown Award *Collage* has ever won," said Marsha Powers, advisor. "This award further confirms the commitment of the *Collage* staff and the high quality of visual and literary arts that our students produce."

The 2012 Gold Crown Award is for the fall 2010 and spring 2011 issues of *Collage*. Caitlin Orman, a psychology major, was editor-in-chief of the issues, and Emily Collins, a mass communication major, was the designer. Caitlin, a 2011 Honors

graduate, is seeking a master's degree in psychology at MTSU.

Collage won CSPA Silver Crown Awards in 2007, 2008, and 2011. The journal also received CSPA Gold Medalist Certificates for each of the last six years.

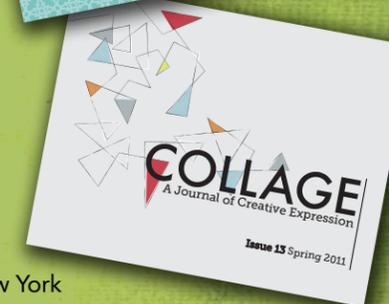
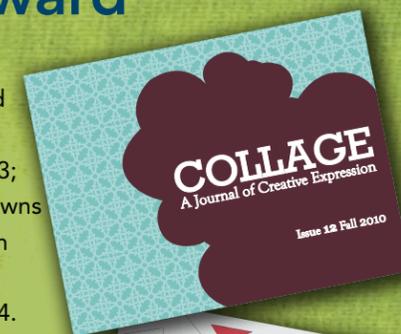
This year, 1,351 print magazines, newspapers, and yearbooks and 182 digital publications of current CSPA members were eligible to enter the Crown Awards competition. Judging for printed publications took place at Columbia University December 17–19, 2011. Publications were judged on writing and editing, design, content, concept, photography, art, and graphics.

Two digital magazines, eight digital news publications, seven college magazines, seven newspapers, and seven yearbooks received Gold Crown Awards. Thirty other college publications received the second-highest CSPA award, the Silver Crown. Gold Crowns have been

presented annually since 1983; Silver Crowns have been awarded since 1984.

The awards convocation took place at the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University, New York City, on Sunday, March 18.

The CSPA, which has been owned by Columbia University since 1925 and operated as a program associated with the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism, is an international student press association uniting student journalists and faculty advisors at schools and colleges through educational conferences, idea exchanges, and award programs. 



Hibdon Historical Exhibit Unveiled in McMinnville

Matthew Hibdon, a graduate of Warren County High School who is on track to earn his undergraduate degree this spring, produced an exhibition called "McMinnville in the Civil War: Life Under Occupation as Observed by L. Virginia French" that he unveiled at a reception attended by 40–60 people at Magness Library in downtown McMinnville December 31, 2011.

In a program that featured comments by city historians and

December 31, 1862. His grave became a symbol for the disappointment many white southerners felt by the end of the war. At first, French, a poet, novelist, diarist, and journalist, had favored reconciliation rather than war but had rallied behind other townspeople because of the mistreatment they faced under Yankee occupation, before concluding that the entire war had been a mistake.

Hibdon's display, which was previously exhibited at the elementary

Hibdon has been president of MTSU's circle of Omicron Delta Kappa and has helped judge National History Day competitions. After earning his degree in history with a minor in leadership studies, he plans to begin work on a master's at MTSU in education and administration for higher education.

Dean John Vile, who attended the reception and gravesite visit, said that Matthew is one of a number of students whose Honors theses have

"We encourage our students to share their work not only in the form of scholarly articles but also through displays and exhibits that will increase understanding of scholarship in public settings."



John Vile, Matthew Hibdon, and Derek Frisby

performances of music from the Civil War period, Hibdon spoke about his research on French, which resulted in the construction of five large panels of photographs, maps, and texts designed to convey the central aspects of his research to the public.

After the speeches and reception, a group walked to the grave of Captain D. C. Spurlock and left roses. Spurlock was a friend of French's who was killed at the Battle of Stones River on

school he attended, may also eventually be presented at MTSU.

Hibdon was intrigued by French after working with MTSU's Gore Center on the papers of the late Robert Womack, which included a rare transcribed copy of French's diaries. Hibdon worked with Robert Hunt and Derek Frisby, MTSU history professors, on the project and was assisted with the exhibit by Jimmy Haley of the Warren County Heritage Alliance Museum.

resulted in exhibitions of value to the local community and in novels and plays. "All our theses have a written dimension," he said, "but we encourage our students to share their work not only in the form of scholarly articles but also through displays and exhibits that will increase understanding of scholarship in public settings." 

MTSU Mock Trial Team Wins 48-Team Tournament

A team from MTSU was crowned champion of the Mid-South Mock Trial Invitational Tournament held at MTSU November 11–12.

The tournament, held annually at MTSU for the last 20 years, is among the largest and most prestigious in the nation. This year's tournament featured 48 teams from 11 states, representing 24 colleges and universities. The tournament was divided into two divisions of 24 teams each. Teams competed in four rounds (two on the prosecution and two on the defense), with ballots from two judges.

In one division, a team from the University of Central Florida took first place with an 8–0 record. The University of Central Florida (7–1), Vanderbilt University (7–1), the University of Georgia (6–2), and Southern Methodist University (5½–2½) took second, third, fourth, and fifth place, respectively.

A team headed by MTSU senior Rachel Harmon (who is from Atlanta) took first place in the other division with an 8–0 record, beating the University of Georgia (7–1), the University of Central Florida (6½–2½), the University of Georgia (6–2), and Rhodes College (6–2).

Because the teams MTSU faced had stronger win/loss records, Harmon's team also won the tournament's traveling gavel. Samantha Farish, on another MTSU team, won a top-ten attorney award.



Samantha Farish, winner of a top-ten attorney award.

In addition to Harmon, the winning team included Zach Barker and Constance Grieves, who also played attorney roles, and Chris Hardman, James Johnson, Curtis Strode, and Chanekka Pullens, who played the roles of witnesses. The team faced Kennesaw State University in the first round, the University of Georgia in the second round, the University of Alabama–Birmingham in the third round, and the University of Tennessee–Knoxville in the fourth.

Dean John R. Vile and local attorneys Brandi Snow and Shiva Bozarth coach the teams. MTSU mock trial alumni and members of the local bar help with judging. For the first time in its history, the tournament offered continuing legal education credit for Tennessee attorneys who were interested.

Dr. Vile said MTSU's 8–0 win/loss record was especially impressive because the team handed UT and Alabama their only losses of the tournament.

Teams competed in other invitational tournaments in December and January and in regional and national competitions February through April. 

MTSU Mock Trial Team Wins Multi-state Scrimmage

An MTSU mock trial team placed first among 14 teams from five states participating in an end-of-year scrimmage at Rhodes College in Memphis December 3–4. A team captained by Zach Barker of Woodbury and Heather Haggard of Greenbrier captured eight of eight ballots in four rounds of competition. They defeated teams from Rhodes, Millsaps College, Washington University, and Mississippi College for the only perfect record at the event.

In addition to Barker and Haggard, Constance Grieves of Nashville played the role of an attorney on the team. Witness parts were played by Thomas Polombo of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Curtis Campbell of Murfreesboro; Alexa Sengupta of Ashland City; and Jessica Seitz of McMinnville.

MTSU students won several individual awards: Constance Grieves won second-place for best attorney closing arguments, and Thomas Polombo received the top award for best fact witness. The team was also runner-up for the Southern Hospitality Award, in a vote by other teams.

Rachel Harmon, of Atlanta, who was on a second MTSU team, received the People's Choice Attorney Award, which was also decided by student voting. Brooke Borchering, from Watertown, was runner-up for the best fact witness award.

Dean Vile and attorneys Shiva Bozarth and Brandi Snow coached the MTSU teams. 

Honors Student Association Fall Activities



Jenna Mayfield, Layne Sanders, Chad Slaven, Daniel Gouger, Adam Emerson, Amy Cook, Garrett Ewers, and Justin Caleb Hudson.



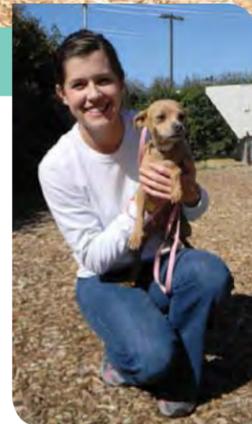
Emilie Aslinger



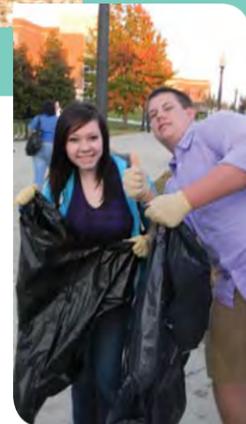
HSA members (L-R), Lindsey Alley, Rachel Wiley, Raymond Dunn Jr., Mary Catherine Robinson, and Garrett Ewers



Left: Raymond Dunn Jr.



Center: Mary Catherine Robinson



Right: Emily Smith and Garrett Ewers



Honors Fall Open House SEPTEMBER 9

- 1 Aline Pellizzaro, Scott Surlis, and Laura Clippard
- 2 Anna Yacovone and Allie Schmidt
- 3 Emily Brown, Miles Metko, and Laura Clippard
- 4 Cody Malone, Chad Slaven, and Haley Pimental
- 5 Jade Figgins, Keith Saporsky, Lora Smith, Katherine Ort, and Scott Jones
- 6 Jake Verhoeff
- 7 Lorel Holsinger and Emilie Aslinger
- 8 Philip Phillips and Tom Strawman
- 9 Cari Jennings, Preston MacDougall, and Blair Harrison
- 10 Rudy Saliba, Megan Baldwin, and Laura Clippard



Honors Worthy {student achievement}

Fall 2012 Interdisciplinary Seminars

Revisiting and Re-visioning the Hometown

UH 3500-001 • MW 12:40–2:05
HONR 116 • CRN#: 87385

In this seminar, Honors students will have a remarkable interdisciplinary opportunity to gain diverse perspectives on their individual hometowns. In this writing-intensive course, students will compile a multigenre portfolio that offers a platform for reflecting on how these places have affected both personal development and future goals.

Students will engage in a project-based relationship with their peers, instructor, and community while creating a portfolio containing creative, nonfiction, historical, and reflective written pieces, as well as projects involving visual and multimedia forms of communication. Each assignment will have an impact on the finished product, including a major project each student will undertake after consultation with the instructor. The course's project-based nature demands that each student synthesize what he or she has learned in other classes to create a suitable and effective approach to the chosen topic or format. The course will have a significant workshop element to enable participants to continually share their work with their peers. During these workshops, students will receive valuable constructive criticism to encourage them to further hone their final portfolios. Full workshop participation is expected and is not optional.

Members of the Deans' Advisory Council (L–R, Juan Zelaya, Samantha Farish, Tandra Martin, and Meredith Holt) meet with Dean John R. Vile and Interim Associate Dean Philip Phillips, right. Members not pictured are Jordan Dodson, Kaela Armbrister, and Sam Mitchell.



Students registering for this course will also register for UH 3001 Service-Learning Practicum and devise and implement a community-based project after consulting with the instructor. Again, this facet of the class is not optional.

This course should particularly interest those who plan to complete an Honors thesis. Students are strongly encouraged to contact Dr. Ron Kates at (615) 898-2595 or Ron.Kates@mtsu.edu or visit his office, Peck Hall 342, before enrolling. He has materials related to the class and will discuss assignments and expectations in more detail with prospective students. The course is open to students who have completed their English general studies requirement, and it may count as three hours of upper-division English credit (Group V or a writing concentration elective) and also toward the English and writing minors.

Folktale and Literature

UH 3500-002 • MW 2:20 – 3:45
CRN# 87386

For hundreds of years, storytellers have spun tales of heroes and villains, magic and trickery, good rewarded

and evil punished. How have these stories twisted and turned over the centuries, and how have they defined our expectations of narrative structure and the elements of "a good story"? Why do these stories endure, anyway—in what ways do their themes and archetypes speak to audiences today?

This seminar is a study of the interrelationship between folktales and contemporary literature. Students in the course will discuss various cultural contexts of what is commonly called "traditional literature" or folk narrative—folk and fairy tales, myths, and legends—and the embedded themes and motifs that mark these tales and give them life. We will also examine contemporary fiction, film, art, and musical versions of some of the traditional stories, and we will consider possible reasons why literary storytellers and other artists continue to build new narratives out of old ones.

This course is open to students who have completed their English general education requirement, and it may count as three hours of upper-division English credit.

For more information, contact Dr. Martha Hixon at Martha.Hixon@mtsu.edu.

Honors Students Earn Lower-Division Certificates

Twenty-one students have completed 20 or more Honors hours and have recently received Lower-Division Certificates of Achievement from the Honors College, according to Honors College administrative assistant Karen Demonbreum. The students represent a wide variety of majors.

From the College of Liberal Arts, eight students reached the 20-hour milestone: sophomore English majors **Hannah K. Boyd, Cody B. Guthrie, Eboni N. Phillips,** and **Peter C. Jones** and junior **Emily E. Randall**; junior history major **Emilie A. Aslinger**; senior foreign languages major, **Rachel B. Nutt**; and junior geoscience major **Aaron A. Morrison**.

Four students from the College of Mass Communication earned certificates: sophomore recording industry majors **Jayme N. Jones** and **Tyler P. Phillips** and junior mass communication majors **Christopher G. Merchant** and **Amy P. Stickel**.

Two students from the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences, **Nicole L. Braunwalder**, a sophomore psychology major, and **Lauren J. Smith**, a social work major, reached the milestone.

From the Jennings A. Jones College of Business, **Juan C. Zelaya**, a sophomore entrepreneurship major received a lower-division certificate.

Six students from the College of Basic and Applied Sciences completed 20 or more Honors hours: sophomore physics major **Katelyn M. Stringer**; junior chemistry major **Jordan G. Dodson**; junior **Cameron L. Crawford**, a biology major; **Rachael B. Gillaspie**, a sophomore mathematics major; and sophomore animal science majors **Felice A. Murden** and **Kristina M. Patt**.

Honors College Maintains Journal List

A database of undergraduate research and creative journals is maintained by the University Honors College as a service to our academic community. All journals included on

the list will consider appropriately submitted materials from MTSU students for publication.

The link for the journal list is www.mtsu.edu/~hcevents/journals.html. Most of the journals do not accept simultaneous submissions. Students should not submit an article to one journal while another is considering it unless both journals specifically give permission.

The journal database is updated frequently to verify links and remove journals that are not currently active. It is the largest, most current and accessible journal listing on the web.

Types of journals listed include those dealing with anthropology and social science; business and economics; creative and original work; ethics, law, leadership, and politics; history; literary criticism and research; mathematics; medicine and health; philosophy; psychology; research (any discipline); and science and engineering. There are also a number of journals that address more specialized areas of study. [H](#)



Anna Yacovone

Amber Ryder presented "Linking Linear Enamel Hypoplasia to Cultural Pressures in Late Mississippian Populations" and copresented "An Evaluation of the Cigarette Butt Litter on the Walkway to Old Main Circle and Kirksey Old Main from Peck Hall, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee" with Tara Clark at the 2011 Tennessee Undergraduate Social Science Symposium November 1 at the James Union Building.

Also at the event, Anna Yacovone presented "Interfaith Dialogues: A Method to Promote Peace in Southern Thailand." Anna received first place for her paper.



Amber Ryder

PATHWAYS TO DISCOVERY

The research of three MTSU Honors College students focuses on root causes of societal issues

The benefits of undergraduate research are undeniable. Students increase their competitiveness exponentially when applying to graduate schools. In addition to cultivating a deep understanding of their chosen field, they also develop lifelong academic relationships with faculty research advisors. And students gain course credit, self-confidence, and experience honing key life skills such as critical writing and presentation.

Students in the MTSU Honors College have near-limitless opportunities to conduct research with faculty mentors in almost every academic discipline represented at the University—from the arts to science, business and math—using a curriculum that lends itself both to research and creative expression. And at MTSU, a budding public research institution, undergraduate research makes a true difference in people's lives.

There are numerous sterling examples of undergraduate research taking place in the Honors College. We couldn't possibly tell every story, but we can tell a few. Here, then, is a look at three Honors students making the most of their undergraduate research opportunities.

photo: J. Intintoli



THE WAR AGAINST PTSD

by Drew Ruble

Research shows that before the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. military's suicide rates were lower than those of the general public. In 2009, however, the Department of Defense reported more than 300 suicides among active-duty and reserve troops from all branches—almost double the number from 2001.

In fact, so pronounced is the problem today that the Tennessee National Guard, under the direction of MTSU graduate Major General Max Haston, recently developed (in concert with the Jason Foundation) a "suicide" app for smart phones targeted at soldiers returning from combat theaters around the globe.

Among other features, the app makes a licensed counselor reachable by phone around the clock.

Hawaiian-born **Jake Verhoeff** has at least some idea of the struggles those returning soldiers face. A veteran of the Iraq war, Verhoeff himself struggled for a time with postcombat issues. He found healing at the VA hospital in Nashville.

"It was through the VA experience that I was helped and counseled and provided an opportunity to get an education," says Verhoeff, who spent 24 years in the Air Force before retiring from active duty in 2008.

Now a 40-something nontraditional student at MTSU, Verhoeff is excelling in the Honors College. His undergraduate research focuses on post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, and its stigma—specifically, how that stigma affects the percentage of National Guard troops who seek help dealing with PTSD symptoms versus the participation rates of active-duty military.

Senior Jake Verhoeff's research helps returning soldiers

Verhoeff wants to determine if there is a difference between the stigmatization of PTSD felt by National Guard troops (think TV programs depicting vets as traumatized and failing to seek out behavioral health cures) and that felt by active-duty soldiers. And if a gap exists, Verhoeff wants to understand why it exists and how to fix it.

He says, "The idea is that we have a problem with stigmatization of PTSD that causes members of military to not seek treatment, or worse yet to commit suicide at a rate that may be higher than first responders like firefighters and police officers. So the question is, 'Why is that?' Maybe if we can find the differences we can find what reduces stigmatization and use that among the different groups."

Explanations for disparity in treatment could range from policies followed by military medical personnel to maintain unit cohesion to military culture itself.

"There are so many different possible answers to this question," Verhoeff says. "It's an incredibly long process to discovery. It's not a simple answer."

Verhoeff plans to use his undergraduate thesis as a springboard to conduct clinical work in graduate school trying to close any gaps in PTSD stigmatization.

"I want to be part of an incredible group to bring these people back and integrate them into society," he says. "We've seen it with every war. After World War II, there was a huge problem within our country in trying to bring about transition back to civilian life. The VA itself came out of that. Now we need to learn from that and say, 'Let us veterans who understand some of what these soldiers have gone through be a part of that transition.'"

As soldiers return home in big numbers, Verhoeff's research has the potential to have a lasting impact—not only on returning soldiers but also on the greater society. [f](#)

According to the Tennessee Literacy Coalition, 14 percent of the adult population in the U.S. does not read well enough to fill out a job application or to understand a newspaper story written at the eighth-grade level.

Closer to home, in Tennessee, First Lady Crissy Haslam has made raising child literacy rates one of her top priorities. In partnership with the Tennessee Department of Education, Haslam hopes to see at least 60 percent of Tennessee schoolchildren reading proficiently by third grade. The current proficiency level is 42 percent.

Research being conducted by professors and undergraduate students at MTSU might be of some assistance to that effort.

The MTSU research hinges on a reader's ability to recognize morphemes—the smallest components of a word or unit of meaningful language (think Greek and Latin roots). Under scrutiny is whether or not individuals are better readers if they can better recognize and quickly translate a morpheme. If the answer is yes, then refocusing literacy efforts more on morphemes could potentially improve reading and the teaching of reading for young students and adult learners alike.

Jered Chua is one of the undergraduate researchers involved in the project. Chua is an Industrial/Organizational Psychology major—part of an MTSU program that the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology routinely ranks among the best nationally in various categories. Chua hopes one day to work in a corporate human resources environment helping to improve work culture. But her current research as an Honors College student involves another passion—understanding how

arguably allows a reader to more quickly understand the word and read through it," she says.

That, in turn, alleviates the potential frustration a student might experience without a strategy to break a word down into more understandable and digestible parts. By contrast, the quicker individuals understand the root, the quicker they identify the meaning of the word, the better they read, and therefore the more they read (without frustration), leading to greater literacy.

Chua's role in the research is testing a new series of questions that perhaps more accurately quantifies an individual's knowledge and understanding of morphology. The Morphological Awareness Task (MAT), created by MTSU psychology professor Dr. Stuart Bernstein and his doctoral student Danielle Thompson, has already been shown to mirror Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) science scores—one of the biggest finds to date. Results like that make a strong case for greater emphasis on teaching reading by using morphemes, if only because schools are searching high and low for strategies to raise TCAP scores.

Chua's hope, and the hope of other undergraduates working on the project, is to help Bernstein get statewide attention for the project, attention that could enable the project to branch out and tackle illiteracy statewide. It's a lofty goal. But consider the advantages. Such research could

...the **quicker** individuals identify the meaning of the word, **the better they read,** and therefore the **more** they read...

morpheme

[mawr-feem]

-noun Ling.

1. any of the minimal grammatical units of a language, each constituting a word or meaningful part of a word, that cannot be divided into smaller independent grammatical parts, as *the*, *write*, or the *-ed* of *waited*.

Jered Chua studies the smallest parts of words, hoping to make the biggest impact on literacy.

What's in a

Word

by Drew Ruble

better and quicker recognition of morphemes makes better readers and curbs illiteracy.

"Take the word photosynthesis, for example. It's a big word—one potentially intimidating to a young reader. But the mind's ability to break the word down into the morphemes 'photo' (from Greek, meaning 'light'), 'syn' (meaning 'with' or 'together'), 'the,' (meaning 'to put or place'), and 'sis,' (meaning 'to process')

potentially undergird attempts to fix what ails education in the state of Tennessee—illiteracy, low graduation rates, and inadequate teacher training, among others—which, in turn, would no doubt help fix other challenges the state faces, from economic development to out-of-control health care costs.

In the end, going back to the roots (of language at least) could pay big dividends in the fight against illiteracy in Tennessee. **W**



TIP of the Iceberg

by Drew Ruble



Buchanan Fellow
Kaitlin Beck
researches the arbitrary
nature of food service tipping

photos: Andy Heidt



It's a topic that never fails to spark a heated discussion: what is the proper amount to tip a server? And what are the appropriate determining factors involved in making that decision?

Senior **Kaitlin Beck** says the reason tipping a food server is such a hot-button issue is that for whatever random reason, we've decided as a society that this is one area where we are going to put our fates in the hands of the people to whom we are catering.

"We are relying on human compassion and sympathy and understanding in order to make a living," Beck says. "If the kitchen undercooks your burger, I didn't have anything to do with that, and I am so sorry, and I'll give you free fries, but will you forgive me, will you please give me my living? Some people say 'yes' and some people say 'no' . . . essentially, we're making a quantifiable, emotional decision about [a] fellow human being."

Put in context of the workplace as a whole, it's an odd thing to put one's earnings at the whim of consumers.

"You don't have auto mechanics saying to you, 'I hope you were happy with the service,'" Beck says. "So it's a strange kind of natural experiment—this one sector where we arbitrarily have decided this is different."

An economics major and also a server at a local restaurant chain, Beck became determined to investigate the phenomenon of tipping and make it the basis for her thesis. What she found is that there are significant gaps in current research. For instance, there are published studies indicating that women are more generous than men but other studies that indicate the opposite.

One hallmark of the existing literature? Much of it is based on research conducted in behavioral lab settings, not actual restaurants. That's where Beck gets excited about her work. She has been gathering data (receipts) from a large cross-section of servers for a lengthy period of time.

Beck's research intends to peer more deeply than gender, skin color, or whether or not a patron has food service experience as factors for determining how we tip. Her research looks at overcoming such demographic likenesses or differences to find the connections that truly steer a person's fateful moment with pen and receipt in hand.

"For instance, I was recently serving an older, black male—which is, demographically speaking, already two strikes against me as a white, female server," Beck explains. "But I saw his last name, and I remembered that name was the name of a professor at MTSU that taught a course my boyfriend took. So I asked this person if he had a connection [to] MTSU and, sure enough, the person's son was the professor, so we suddenly connected."

With data collected and under review at the time of the writing of this article, Beck said she had some conclusions drawn that she wasn't quite ready to share.

"I have some private assumptions about the data now, but I need to analyze it further," she said with a twinkle in her eye.

No doubt when her research is completed, the future law school student will find a way to get her results into the public view, a place where the appetite remains strong for debate on this topic. [H](#)

Honors Learning Community

Integrated, Intentional

by Marsha Powers



Drawing from *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* by William Steig. Used with permission.

The twenty-first century ushered in a shift from individual-focused learning to learning as part of a community. Whereas the twentieth century has been described as the “century of the individual” in educational theory and practice, the twenty-first century trends toward the “era of community.”

Hilary Stallings and Ron Kates, both Honors faculty members, have developed a learning community that is purposeful in integrating classes with what is happening on campus and in the world. Their intent is to carry the themes of civic engagement and civic responsibility into the student learning community; to strengthen critical-thinking skills; and to form a better understanding of self, the world, and one’s role in the world.

The learning community, which combines Honors University Seminar and Honors English 1010, is highly integrated and intentional, according to Dr. Stallings. “Everything about the community has been thought out and analyzed,” she said. This fall, the community classes were held consecutively, and Kates and Stallings could often teach the classes together, stretching them out and making the most of the time. “We want our projects to be deeper and more meaningful,” Stallings said, “and have found we are able to do that with two teachers approaching a topic and extending the class period.”

During the fall 2011 semester, the community classes considered the responsibility implicit in MTSU’s True Blue pledge. The students conducted inter-



Dr. Hilary Stallings reads to students at Mitchell-Neilson.



Dr. Ron Kates reads *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* to students at Mitchell-Neilson Primary School.

photos: J. Intintoli

views incorporating the ideas of the 2011 summer reading selection, *Listening Is an Act of Love*. They read the book *A Prayer for the Dying*, about a small Wisconsin town gripped by a mysterious, deadly epidemic following the Civil War, and saw the movie *Contagion*, the story of a battle against a modern-day, deadly pandemic. The students also read books with pupils at Mitchell-Neilson Primary School, created portfolios, wrote journal articles, listened to special presentations, participated in etiquette sessions, created displays and presentations depicting who they are, and engaged in numerous activities encouraging critical thinking, including reading weekly from the *New York Times*, blogging about current events, and giving state-of-the world reports.

Erica Hightower, a business administration major who took the Honors Learning Community classes in the fall, said, “This learning community has helped me transition into my first year of college. The two classes making up the learning community, Honors English 1010 and Honors University Seminar, are closely integrated. The professors,

Dr. Kates and Dr. Stallings, have worked hard to make sure the material taught in [each class] relates to the other.”

Hightower added, “Aside from the academics, the class definitely has a sense of community. I am an out-of-state student, and I did not know many people when I came here. However, I

The learning community classes are the ones I most look forward to attending.

have made many friends through this learning community. Drs. Kates and Stallings know our names and personalities well, and they work with us to make it a success for every student.”

Michael Kopcsak, a mass communication major in the fall classes, said, “The learning community classes are the ones I most look forward to attending.

Even though I did not know a single person when I first went in, I have made some good friends fairly quickly. As an introvert, I was concerned I would not be able to make friends, but the two-class block has offered me more time to interact with my classmates and form bonds. This class is perfect for me in the social aspect.”

“As for the workload in English 1010/University 1010, the interaction of the teachers and the related topics enable us to stay focused and not feel overwhelmed,” Kopcsak said. “This class has definitely given me a good feel of what I need to do to succeed academically.”

“I love how close our class has gotten—not just the students but the two professors as well,” Kopcsak said. “I enjoy walking into a college class and having everyone in the class, and also the instructors, greet me. The closeness of the community has promoted open discussions in both classes, and I feel like I could speak without being critically judged by everyone else. I do not have these opportunities or intellectual engagement in my larger lecture class.”

Renaissance Man

by Drew Ruble

The scholarly work of Dr. Philip Edward Phillips, MTSU professor of English and interim associate dean of the University Honors College, spans producing a book on Milton, coediting a book on medieval philosopher Boethius, and publishing articles and reviews in leading Poe journals. But before the image of an elitist academic type made uncomfortable outside the walls of a library springs to mind, consider this. Phillips also steers a prison-based literary program that is changing lives in middle Tennessee.

When Milton expert Charlie Durham retired from MTSU in 1999, Phillips seized the opportunity to join MTSU—home of the foremost Milton conference in the world. He was later recruited by John Paul Montgomery, then dean of the MTSU Honors College, to join the Honors faculty. In 2008, Phillips received an MTSU Distinguished Research Award.

His most recent scholarly splash was the spring 2012 publication of *A Companion to Boethius in the Middle Ages*, a collection of essays written by top Boethian scholars that Phillips coedited. The book is destined to become the standard reference work for people conducting serious research on Boethius in the future. (Phillips is also secretary of the International Boethius Society and coeditor of its multidisciplinary journal on Boethius, his age, and his influence, *Carmina Philosophiae*.)

Boethius wrote one of the most important literary works of the Middle Ages, *The Consolation of Philosophy*. Written while Boethius was imprisoned and awaiting execution, the book depicts the narrator's path to realization that his true exile is in fact self-imposed

and who through philosophy learns, or “remembers,” what true happiness is.

Phillips's Boethian fascination began its migration from the abstract to the pragmatic in 2004, when his wife took a job at a YWCA teaching life skills classes in a women's prison. Phillips, who had attended a couple of graduation ceremonies, became interested in the idea of teaching great literature in prisons.

I'm attracted to people who have a desire for learning.

“I found in that environment such profound appreciation for people sharing their time and offering up their talents,” he says. “I saw people who had made some bad choices but wanted to improve their lives. And I'm attracted to people who have a desire for learning. In this place, there was a hunger for it.”

Through the nonprofit women's advocacy group Better Decisions—which supported a book club discussion at the Tennessee Prison for Women—Phillips got his first taste of teaching inmates. And he taught, of course, Boethius.

“Many of the ladies in that class found consolation in that idea that through one's pursuit of the good, or one's devotion to God, one can transcend one's physical surroundings,” he says.

Seven years later, Phillips runs arguably the most successful Great Books in Prison program in America. A partnership between MTSU, the Tennessee

Department of Correction, and the Great Books Foundation (a Chicago-based nonprofit), the program gives inmates the opportunity to read and discuss literary and philosophical works from authors and thinkers such as Flannery O'Connor and Walt Whitman with MTSU English faculty volunteers.

For Phillips, the benefit of offering these courses stems from one statistic—an estimated 97% of all incarcerated felons are eventually released, according to the Tennessee Department of Correction.

“So the question for me is what sort of people do we want them to be?” he says. “Do we want to lock people up and throw away the key, or do we want to try to provide opportunities for people to enrich their minds, to reflect, to empathize, to work well with each other, to be able to listen to different sides of an argument respectfully, to learn how to make one's position clear—all of those things that we're able to achieve in this kind of classroom?”

Phillips's success is getting noticed. A top official with the Great Books Foundation recently visited MTSU and discussed using Phillips' template as a model for other universities nationwide interested in participating.

But Phillips's willingness to reach outside the walls of academia to imprint the role of great literature on the broader society is not confined to his prison program.

Recently, in Boston, Mayor Thomas Menino unveiled design proposals of three finalists in the Edgar Allan Poe Square Public Art Project. Selected from a pool of 265 artists from 42 states and 13 countries, the finalists hope their work will be chosen

for installation at a city-owned plaza now named Edgar Allan Poe Square. And seated front and center at the unveiling of the public art proposals was Phillips.

Also a noted Poe scholar, Phillips is among just a handful of dignitaries—mostly from Boston—on the Poe Square Public Art Committee, the group spearheading the legendary writer's long-overdue public art recognition in his home city. Others include Sam Cornish, poet laureate of the City of Boston.

How does an MTSU professor end up in a position to help guard the legacy of one of America's greatest writers in one of America's greatest cities? Phillips's research on Poe's often-controversial relationship with his home city have garnered well-deserved attention among Poe scholars and enthusiasts. Formerly a member of the editorial board of the *Edgar Allan Poe Review*, Phillips was recently elected to the executive committee of the Poe Studies Association.

Phillips's research on Poe led to his appointment in 2008 to a fellowship from the Athenæum library in Boston. That, in turn, led to an association with Boston College professor Paul Lewis, who initiated the idea of naming a square in Boston after Poe and also convinced the Boston Art Commission to sponsor a work of art commemorating Poe in the city—a new landmark intended to last hundreds of years.

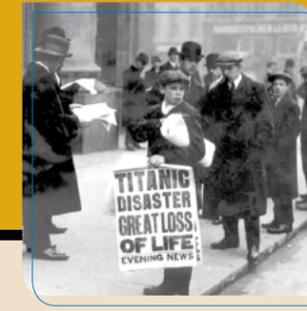
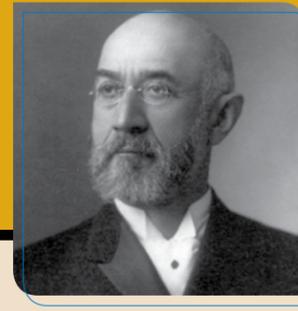
The end result? Whether teaching and conducting research in medieval and early modern literature, Milton and the epic tradition, Boethius or Edgar Allan Poe, Phillips is right in the middle of it all. [H](#)

The Honors College professor's expertise spans poets to prisons.

photo: Andy Heidt

by Candace Moonshower

A TITANIC Legacy



A June Hall McCash, who first came to MTSU in 1967 to teach French, became the founding director of the Honors Program (now Honors College) in 1973.

Now the former chair of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures is in the spotlight for a book she's penned about the sinking of the *Titanic*.

On April 15, 1912, the RMS *Titanic*, a passenger liner on its maiden voyage from England to New York City, struck an iceberg and sank. *Titanic*, the 1997 blockbuster movie version of what happened during the one and only voyage of the great ship, tells the story of Jack and Rose—star-crossed lovers played by young, vibrant, and good-looking Hollywood icons Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet—who spend four enchanted days together before Jack dies in the frigid ocean. The real love story behind Jack and Rose's fictional one may just be that of Isidor and Ida Straus, who were not so young, not so vibrant, and, possibly, not so good-looking. But their love was one built on more than 40 years of marriage and parenting together.

The nonfictional story of Isidor and Ida Straus is coming to life as a result of McCash's newest book, *A Titanic Love Story: Ida and Isidor Straus*, published in spring 2012 by Mercer University Press. The timing is perfect. This spring marks the 100th anniversary of the sinking of *Titanic*.

Years before his fateful voyage, Isidor Straus, businessman and one-time congressman, went into business with the owners of the R. H. Macy store. By 1912, Isidor was turning over responsibility of the store to his sons. He and Ida, 67 and 63 years old at the time, spent several months in Europe on vacation in 1912 and had their return voyage already booked on the *Olympic*, another White Star Line ship.

But because of a coal strike, the White Star Line couldn't fuel both ships, and a return on the *Olympic* would be delayed. Fatefully, Isidor Straus booked their return to the United States on *Titanic*, and the couple, along with Ida's new maid, Ellen Bird, and Isidor's valet, John Farthing, boarded the ship and moved into their first-class accommodations.

As *Titanic* was sinking, Ida boarded a lifeboat, but when she

realized that her husband would not get on the boat while there were women and children still aboard the ship, she returned to the deck. Ida gave her maid her fur coat and her own seat in one of the lifeboats. Like her movie counterpart 100 years later, Ida Straus did stay on the ship with the love of her life; unfortunately, neither survived. They were last seen embracing on the deck. When *Titanic* went down, Ida was one of only four adult women from first class who died.

McCash says Ida and Isidor Straus are much more complete when one examines not just their deaths, but their lives—what they stood for, what they believed in, and what they valued.

"Those values impacted their deaths and why they chose to die together rather than live alone," McCash says. "The more I learned about the Strauses, the more I admired them. They are, I think, role models that could benefit the me-centered world in which we live today. At the end, neither thought of himself or herself, but of others. Honor and loyalty were values that defined them as human beings."

The *Titanic* book isn't the only book available from McCash this year. Named Georgia Writer of the Year for her first novel, *Almost to Eden*, McCash published her novel, *Plum Orchard*, in January 2012. [H](#)

The more I learned about the Strauses, the more I admired them. Honor and loyalty were values that defined them as human beings.

Honors College founding director
Dr. June Hall McCash
navigates love and tragedy in her new books

Honors College Hosts Humanitarian



photos: Andy Heidt

On October 3, the University Honors College hosted **Celal Afsar**, better known as “Uncle Celal,” from Turkey. He presented “A Life of Purpose: From Street Vendor to School Founder” to a group of students, faculty, and community members. President Sidney McPhee, who had met Afsar on a visit to Turkey, introduced him.

Afsar was born in the small town of Niğde, Turkey, in 1934 and had to cut his education short in order to support himself. He began selling parsley in bazaars and chestnut kebabs in front of movie theaters when he was only eight. By 1950, he had opened his first grocery

store in Ankara. Twenty years later he opened a furniture showroom.

Recognizing that he was missing something in life, Afsar met in 1978 with the religious leader M. Fetullah Güglen, who suggested that he should build a school. He moved back to Niğde and established Sungurbey College, a K–12 institution that has since graduated thousands of students. Afsar has found the happiness that comes from serving others and has increasingly dedicated himself to humanitarian and philanthropic concerns.

President McPhee and Dean John Vile presented Afsar with a Distinguished Friend of the University

Honors College Award. It noted Afsar’s “Exemplary Work as a Humanitarian, Entrepreneur, and School Founder.”

Accompanying Afsar were numerous friends and associates from Turkey as well as members of the Society for Universal Dialogue, including Alp U. Levent, executive director, and Elif Sen, who served as a translator. Following the speech and award presentation, Dr. McPhee hosted Afsar and his friends at the President’s Home.

Afsar and his family generously hosted McPhee, Paul Martin, (of the Honors Board of Visitors), and Vile when they visited Turkey over the past two summers. [H](#)

Dean Vile in Greece!

John R. Vile, professor of political science and dean of the University Honors College, recently participated in a comparative constitutional law workshop in Greece. It was sponsored and paid for by the Centre for European Constitutional Law, established by the Themistokles and Dimitris Tsatsos Foundation, which is devoted to theoretical and applied scientific research in Greek, European, and comparative public law and public policies. The workshop was held on the island of Aegina, not far from Athens, and featured discussions of key questions related to the history and processes of constitutional change.

Participants discussed how constitutional change worked in their own countries. Most were from the European Union, but the U.S., Canada, and Switzerland were also represented.

Participants were mostly professors of law and/or political science. They included Christian Behrendt, University of Liege, Belgium; Zenophon Contiades, University of Peloponnese, Greece; Thomas Fleiner, University Fribourg, Switzerland; Jorg Gerkrath, University of Luxembourg; Tania Groppi, University of Sienna; Allan C. Hutchinson, York University, Canada; Markus Kotzur, University of Leipzig; Helle Krunke, University of Copenhagen; Jonatas Eduardo Mendes Machado, University of Coimbra, Portugal; David Gwynn Morgan, University College Cork, Ireland; Tuomas Ojanhen, University of Helsinki; Ioannis Tasopoulos, University of Athens; and Wim J. M. Voermans, University of Leiden, Netherlands.

Several other professors who were unable to attend will be contributing to a volume of essays inspired by the conference. They include Abraham Barrero Ortega, University of Seville; Robert Blackburn, Kings’s College London; Fiona de Londras, University College Cork; Lars-Goran Malmberg, University of Lunds, Sweden; Wanda Mastor, University of Toulouse, France; and Manfred Stelzer, University of Vienna.

Vile said it was a singular honor to be invited to a conference in the birthplace of democracy and featuring such a wide range of scholars and such a remarkable learning experience. Although he has been writing about the constitutional amendment process in the U.S. for more than 30 years, this was only his second experience comparing U.S. methods with those of other countries. (The other was in Mexico City in 1987.) He observed that although amending procedures vary, many nations face the same issues regarding human rights and/or economic policies when considering revisions to their constitutions.

Formal workshop sessions were augmented by shared meals and informal discussions. There was also a day of sightseeing on the island. The group hopes to meet again in Athens this year to talk about the volume of essays. [H](#)



Honors Worthy {faculty achievement}

Medieval Scholar Visits University Honors College

The Honors College was pleased to welcome Timothy Graham (Ph.D., University of Cambridge), director of the Institute of Medieval Studies and professor of history at the University of New Mexico, on September 29, 2011.

Dr. Graham, a world-renowned expert on illuminated medieval manuscripts and coauthor of *An Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2007), gave a classroom lecture to Honors students studying the Arthurian legends and a public lecture in the Honors Amphitheater for students, faculty, staff, and

the general public. He also lectured on John Milton's Anglo-Saxon sources for a gathering of graduate students in English.

Philip Phillips, interim associate dean, arranged for Dr. Graham's visit, which was generously supported by the English Department's Virginia Peck Trust Fund, the College of Liberal Arts, and the University Honors College.

Vile Presents "How to Publish Your Work"

Dean John Vile presented "How to Publish Your Work" to McNair Program students in Peck Hall on

November 1. He pointed out that in addition to traditional avenues, there are many journals open to undergraduate contributors. At MTSU alone are the *McNair Review*, *Scientia et Humanitas*, and *Collage* (for fiction). Georgia Dennis, Honors College event coordinator, has posted a list of such journals from other institutions on the Honors website.

Vile said that publication, especially in refereed journals, is a central currency for those engaged in undergraduate and graduate research and that there are strong ties between the Honors College and the McNair Program (which is aimed at minority and first-generation students who plan to pursue Ph.D. degrees). Many students participate in both programs.

Honors Poets at the 2011 Southern Festival of Books

The Honors College was well represented at the 23rd annual Southern Festival of Books at War Memorial Plaza in Nashville October 14–16. More than 200 authors and many vendors in the publishing industry joined thousands of attendees at the festival, which is billed "A Celebration of the Written Word."

June McCash, D. Michelle Adkerson, Kory Wells, and Philip Mathis, contributors to *Time and Tradition: A Poetry Anthology* (Twin Oaks Press, 2011) gave a poetry reading from the Honors College-sponsored anthology, which commemorates MTSU's centennial, and also signed copies of the book. Linda Barnes, professor of English and coordinator of the honors program at Austin Peay State University, introduced them.



Contributors to *Middle Tennessee State University: A Centennial Legacy* sign copies of the book at the Tom H. Jackson Building in November. Jan Leone (History) edited the book, which began as an Honors lecture series. Contributors at the signing (L–R) were Phil Mathis, Jim Williams, Nancy Rupprecht, David Rowe, Lorne McWatters, Ellen Garrison, Rebecca McIntyre, Fred Colvin, Leone, and John Lodl. (Not pictured: Derek Frisby, Reuben Kyle, Jordan Kirkman, and Kenneth Scherzer.)

Honors Worthy {visitors}



James Leach, chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities, was the special guest at an early afternoon meet-and-greet in the Martin Honors Building conference room on September 13 during Constitution Week. Leach, a former 15-term member of Congress from Iowa, also presented "Civility, the Constitution, and the Courts" in Wright Music Building. His Distinguished Lecture was the keynote of MTSU's Centennial Constitution Week.

Vile, Phillips Represent MTSU at National Honors Conference

Dean John Vile and Interim Associate Dean Philip Phillips attended the 46th annual conference of the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) in Phoenix in mid-October 2011.

It was Phillips's first trip to an NCHC convention. In addition to attending sessions on administrative practices and program assessment, he served as a judge of undergraduate posters. Vile attended a meeting of the large scholarships committee, of which he is a member.

The NCHC brings together educators and administrators from honors colleges across the nation to discuss shared issues. The 2011 theme was "Stewards of Our Colliding Worlds: Rights, Wrong, and Responsibilities." The conference also featured a discussion of immigration issues, which are particularly salient in Arizona, which has recently adopted controversial legislation on the subject.

Vile said that while programs differ in size and emphasis, all share the objective of giving quality educational experiences to high-achieving students. He noted that MTSU ranks high among honors programs and colleges in terms of university and alumni support, enrollment, and number of graduates. 



Gokhan Bacik, associate professor of political science at Zirve University in Gaziantep, Turkey, presented "Politics of Exclusion: Extremism and Imagining the 'Other,'" Tuesday, November 1, in the Honors amphitheater. Dr. Bacik is head of the Middle East Research Center at Zirve and writes weekly columns for *Today's Zaman*.



Honors dean John R. Vile, left, presents an autographed book to **Dr. Richard (Rick) Hardy**, interim director of the Centennial Honors College at Western Illinois University. Hardy visited MTSU to discuss honors education with Dean Vile.

continued on page 41

Board of Visitors Hears from Faculty, Students at Annual Meeting

The University Honors College Board of Visitors met Friday, October 28, for its annual meeting. Joining Dean John Vile and Interim Associate Dean Philip Phillips were board chair Don Midgett and Gordon Bell, Elliott Dawson, Phil Mathis, June McCash, Shane Reeves, Eddith Dashiell, Raiko Henderson, Debra Hopkins, Mary Lee Barnes, and Keta Barnes.

The group convened at 9:00 a.m. in the Honors amphitheater for a continental breakfast, which was followed

by a state-of-the-college address from Vile. Jan Leone and Phil Mathis reported on *Middle Tennessee State University: A Centennial Legacy*, an Honors publication. Board members then toured the recently opened College of Education building.

After the tour, a panel of seven students spoke to the board about their Honors and Undergraduate Fellowships Office experiences. The students were *Jalesa Lowe* (Mass Communication), *Samantha Farish* (Political Science and Psychology), *Christen Vann* (Education), *Constance Grieves* (Political Science), *Ruben Tavakolov* (Chemistry and Biology), *Jake Verhoeff* (Social Work), and *Jason Davis* (International Relations). Following a catered buffet lunch, board members heard a report from Nick Perlick of the Development Office and then reconvened in the amphitheater for the formal business meeting. [H](#)

Board of Visitors chair Don Midgett, left, and Interim Associate Dean Philip Phillips greet one another as board members gather for their yearly meeting.

Jan Leone (History) and Phil Mathis (professor emeritus, Biology) report on their book, *Middle Tennessee State University: A Centennial Legacy*, a publication of the Honors College.

photos: J. Intintoli

Fulbright Winner Learns, Prepares for the Future

by Patrick Pratt | Patrick Pratt is a 2010 graduate with a degree in International Relations. He was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship in 2011 and is now in Tanzania conducting research.

I spent the fall living in Zanzibar, Tanzania, studying Swahili at the State University of Zanzibar with 25 other Americans who also received the same scholarship I did: the David L. Boren African Languages Initiative Scholarship.

Zanzibar is an island off the coast of Tanzania. I lived in the center of Stone Town, which is an old African/Arab trading port city on the Indian Ocean where Persian, Arab, Indian, Chinese, and Portuguese traders have all sailed and traded. The house I lived in was only about 100 years old, fairly young in a town with over 1,500 years of history.

It was fascinating to live in a place that is not quite African, not quite Arab. It is 97 percent Muslim, and even though it's technically part of Tanzania, it has its own parliament, president, and ministries. In this respect, and many others, Zanzibar is unique.

My host family was a very nice Muslim Swahili family. They claim familial ties to one of the old Sultans of Oman. My host mother, Mama Zuleiha Ahmed Mohamed, an older lady who was involved in Zanzibari politics in the 1970s, was imprisoned for three years for (allegedly) plotting a revolution with 18 other people. When I asked her about this, she laughed and shrugged. I still cannot reconcile this with the fact that this woman cooked my meals—and

she is an amazing cook. She has 12 children, but only her youngest daughter, Nuru, lived with us. We also had two nephews (Meru and Ahmed) and a niece (Hadijah) in the house. This is a popular household, and at

the size of a soccer ball, whose fruit is the size of a softball) or a dozen tangerines. Any of these selections cost about a dollar. I usually sat by the beach after class each day just to watch the dhows pass by, with the fishermen carrying their daily



any given time there were several visitors, mostly family and friends. Neighborhood children also stopped to buy strawberry-flavored popsicles from Nuru's in-house popsicle factory, which is quite a large-scale operation.

The highlights of my day were strolling through the meandering stone alleyways of Stone Town, trying—usually in vain—not to get lost. I sometimes stopped by the market to buy a cluster of dwarf bananas or a balungi (grapefruit

catch of fish, crustaceans, and cephalopods. If possible, I tried to arrive in time to watch the sun drop beyond the horizon, disappearing behind mainland Africa. So near the equator, there is so little variation in the time of sunrise and sunset that some Swahili people can tell time by looking at their own shadows. At night, sometimes I walked to

continued on page 41

Finding Common Ground in China

by Taffy O'Neal | Taffy O'Neal is a 2011 graduate who majored in English. She was a member of the inaugural class of Buchanan Fellows and has two published novels, *Stoodie* and *The Last*.

您们好 and hello from Hangzhou, China! Just a year ago, I never would have pictured myself saying that—even though I have heard that a classical education is not considered complete without having studied abroad. Still, it's hard for me to comprehend that when a Chinese foreign exchange student at MTSU (and close friend of mine) told me about a great opportunity to study in China, I applied for and received the Confucius Institute scholarship. I was certainly surprised that, having only studied Chinese for two weeks, I was granted an amazing scholarship to study Chinese in Hangzhou for a year! What a blessing it has been! I am delighted to share with you some of what this trip has meant to me.

I am now a foreign student at the Wenyi campus of Hangzhou Normal University (杭州师范大学) as a part of its School of International Education (ISE). There are at least 20 countries represented and over 200 foreign students here, including four from MTSU! The foreign students represent all levels of Chinese language proficiency and most speak at least a little English. Some have studied Chinese in their home countries for many years; some speak several languages; and some, like me, are beginners. Nevertheless, we all study Chinese for three hours, five days a week, and many of us are enrolled in cultural classes as well. (I, for example, am taking kung fu and calligraphy. Interesting combination, right? I should return to the states both dangerous and ornate!)

Being a part of the ISE, learning about other cultures, and finding common ground with someone from a background completely different from everything I know is an incredible experience. The fact that we are all coming together to learn a new language in an environment alien to us is so interesting. Even if we don't speak each other's language, we manage to communicate through broken Chinese, gestures, random English, and smiles.

I live on the sixth floor of an international student dormitory. There is no elevator, so I get lots of exercise. My roommate is Latvian, and our accommodations are very nice. We each have our own bedroom (my bed is luxuriously large), and we share a common living room, kitchenette, and bath. There is a washing machine in our room, and we hang our clothes to dry. On the roof of our building is a nice observation deck for viewing the night skyline and watching fireworks. The campus is beautiful, and there is a good cafeteria conveniently available. I especially enjoy eating there with a friend from Korea. School activities that incorporate the international student community (such as a university-wide Olympics and a cooking competition) have presented stimulating opportunities for unexpected education and interaction. By the



way, my American apple pie was a *huge* hit at the "Happy Kitchen" event. It was "scarfed up," literally, in seconds!

The formal educational experience here is far different from that found in the U.S. My class is essentially total immersion; the teachers speak almost exclusively Chinese

learning about other cultures, and finding common ground with someone from a background completely different from everything I know is an incredible experience.

with occasional English words or phrases to help clarify important points. In fact, only Chinese and English may be spoken in our classroom. We have homework every day that includes reading, writing, reviewing, and pre-viewing. We have been averaging 100 new Chinese words every week—it is a daunting pace! To put this into perspective, I graduated last May through the Honors program, *summa cum laude* from Tennessee's best university, but I was stoked to get a passing grade on my Chinese midterm! One of the deans explained, "We are feeding you information for you to use in your life here," to which I said, "Dui, you're feeding us, and we barely

have time to chew!" He laughed. Nevertheless, I have come to appreciate Chinese diligence and it has definitely taught me focus and determination in my studies.

For the most part, I love it here. The people are friendly, the food is good, the cost of living is inexpensive, and I'm living comfortably. I have witnessed an unexpected blending of the richly ancient (the Xixi wetlands nature reservation, the relics of Daoist temples near West Lake, the art of papermaking at Fuyang, etc.), the incredibly modern (congenial karaoke bars at KTV and the dazzling cityscape of Shanghai), the universally charming (as in the playful banter of an elderly couple arguing over which bus stop was right for where they were going), and the indubitably strange (ever seen a woman in a dress and heels riding a motorized scooter down the street with a full-face visor and sun-protective sleeves?).

Still, life here has been a huge challenge. I've been missing home, especially during the absence of autumn, but Skype is a wonderful thing! I've also had my share of culture shock, and frustrations come often. For instance, my average-sized American self is nothing less than giant here in China; I wear a 4XL, and my shoe size is around 42. It's difficult enough to stand out as a 外国人 (foreigner), but it's more awkward to be unable to communicate and navigate some of the simplest things, such as finding lemon juice in the nearby supermarket. But this has taught me that the presence of failure accentuates success. My friends and I love to share our minor victories—which are anything but minor to us. We rejoice when we can order food at a restaurant, when we can understand a taxi driver, when we can find a store without having to call a Chinese friend, and when we are able to recognize a word in public that we learned in class.

While we were roaming the streets of the ancient village of Fuyang, one student from New York said, "The more you run away from home, the closer it comes to you." And, man, is that true! From seeing Native American paraphernalia in markets to eating at KFC; from hearing Mat Kearney's *Nothing Left to Lose* (which mentions Nashville) used as ambient music in a store to watching the CMA coverage on CCTV; from meeting random people on the bus who have been to Tennessee to feeding raccoons at the local zoo; from seeing President McPhee's picture in Hangzhou Normal University's magazine to meeting a man who was wearing an MTSU tie—there are connections to home everywhere!

Though I always wanted to study abroad, I honestly didn't think I ever would or could. I kept making excuses; then I was given this extraordinary opportunity, and now I wonder how in the world (literally!) I could have even thought about denying myself this incredible experience. The truth is this: I have learned so much about the world around me and about the person inside me, and I haven't even been here for half of my time yet! Every day brings more than I expected! I am humbled and grateful. If you have ever even thought about *thinking about* studying abroad, please do it 放心, 加油, and find out how to make it happen! 📍

photo: J. Intintoli

Honors College Alumnus Wins duPont Award

Honors College graduate **Phil Williams** (Mass Communication, 1985) leads the investigative news team at Nashville's WTVF-NewsChannel 5, which recently received a 2012 Alfred I. duPont-Columbia Award for excellence in local reporting.

Williams, whose major concentration was journalism, minored in history and political science. His thesis, "Dissent in a Free Society," was completed during Dr. Ron Messier's tenure as Honors director, and Messier was also his thesis advisor.

The local CBS affiliate was one of 14 duPont winners nationwide announced in December. The award, the station's third duPont Award in nine years, was for the news team's investigation of drug interdiction units operating along Tennessee's interstates. The story exposed police agencies using questionable tactics to confiscate money along the interstate from out-of-state drivers who were thought to possess drug money.

"It hit me that very few people can say that they are a three-time duPont winner," said Williams, who joined WTVF in 1998. "So I've got a real sense that this is special, and I don't want to take it for granted."

"The College of Mass Communication at MTSU is very proud of our alumnus Phil Williams and NewsChannel 5 in winning this highly prestigious national award," said Roy Moore, dean of the college. "Phil illustrates the high quality of our electronic media communication program and its graduates, and this award is the latest in the many accolades our alumni and faculty have received over the years. The duPont prize is, without doubt, one of the top awards in broadcast journalism."

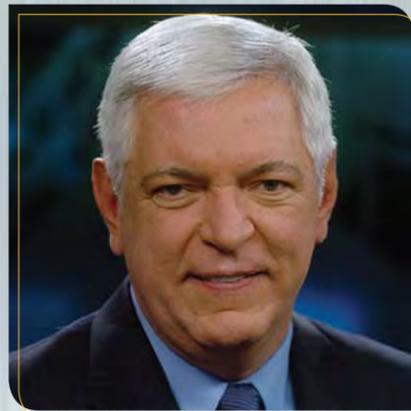
Dean John Vile of the Honors College said that the strength of MTSU's College of Mass Communication

often attracts high-caliber students, including many from out of state. Vile noted that another Honors and Mass Comm graduate, Holly Thompson, a former member of the Honors College Board of Visitors, is a morning news anchor at Channel 4 in Nashville.

In addition to the duPont Awards, Williams has earned two George Foster Peabody Awards, the George Polk Award for TV Reporting, a National Headliner Award and three IRE Awards (including the IRE Medal) from the Investigative Reporters and Editors organization, which works to improve investigative and watchdog reporting around the world. He is in his fourth year of service on the IRE board. In his days as a print reporter, he was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize.

Williams, originally from Columbia, Tennessee, was added to the MTSU College of Mass Communication Wall of Fame in 2003. He returns to MTSU on occasion to speak to students and conduct master classes.

Nashville's NewsChannel 5 Investigates team includes Williams, Bryan Staples and Iain Montgomery, photojournalists; Kevin Wisniewski, producer; and Sandy Boonstra, news director. [H](#)



Fulbright Winner

continued from page 37

Forodhani, the old customs area, to stroll around the different vendors selling seafood, Zanzibar pizzas (banana-chocolate), and sugarcane juice. I usually sat next to a British cannon installed in front of the House of Wonders after the shortest war in history, eating a grilled arm of octopus that I bargained down from roughly \$3 to \$1.25.

The only routine thing in Tanzania was my language class schedule. I was in an intermediate-high course with four other students. The majority of other students were studying at the advanced level. I am so impressed with most of them. We all had different educational and professional backgrounds (linguistics, history, political science, English) and were all at different stages in life in general—from an undergraduate sophomore to a former World Bank program officer to a Ph.D. candidate who will defend her dissertation in December. This was the first time abroad for one girl and somewhat of an African homecoming for a man who lived in eastern Congo for 13 years until war began in 1996. We each had very different career aspirations, but we were all bound by a one-year service requirement in the U.S. federal government. Be very afraid.

Much of my time in the fall was in preparation for Fulbright research, which began in Dar es Salaam in January. The University of Dar es Salaam, which formerly was a member of the University of East Africa (along with two universities in Kenya and Uganda), was a bastion of

African socialist thought in the post-independence era.

It has graduated several recent African presidents, two of whom entered national politics through armed struggle. I am affiliated with the Institute of Development Studies for the eight months I am conducting research. I am living in Dar es Salaam, and I travel to different regions to examine Tanzanian civil society organizations.

It still seems somewhat unreal that just a year ago I submitted my Fulbright application. The first time a professor suggested I apply for it I laughed, thinking, "only smart people apply for that." My advice to anyone who is unsure about whether to apply is this: Never underestimate yourself. The competition is fierce, but the only way to be assured of not getting it is to not apply at all.

I have also been staying busy with graduate school and fellowship applications. I have applied for the Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship and the Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Fellowship. Each of these would cover a substantial portion of expenses for a master's degree in international affairs, an internship on Capitol Hill, and an internship in a U.S. embassy abroad. Each of these fellowships leads to employment as a foreign service officer with the U.S. Department of State. I'm essentially trying to turn graduate school into paid employment with a guarantee of a job at the end. [H](#)

Honors Worthy {visitors}

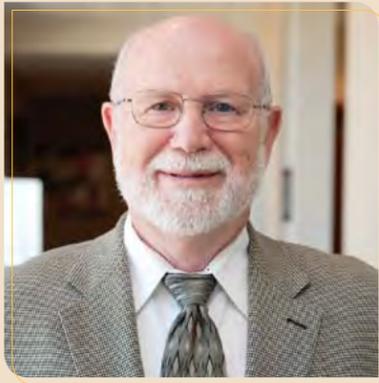
continued from page 35

Fulbright Scholar **Thuraya J. Abdulla**, assistant professor in the Department of Mathematics at the University of Bahrain, is conducting research at MTSU this academic year. She met Honors dean John Vile and advisor Laura Clippard and toured the Honors building in December. [H](#)



Meet Members of the Board of Visitors

photos: Andy Heidt



Gordon W. Bell
Old Fort Academy, Codirector (retired)

Gordon W. Bell, a graduate of MTSU with a B.S. in accounting, worked as an accountant, hospital controller, and financial officer in the medical and automotive industries following graduation. In 1984, he and his wife Sara, (B.S. '72, M.Ed. '85), opened Old Fort Academy (OFA). Gordon became codirector in 1991. OFA, one of the area's largest childcare/preschool facilities, is licensed for 300 students and holds the state's highest rating.

Bell serves on the board of trustees of Oaklands Association and chairs the Building and Grounds Committee. He is a past member of the National Association for the Education of the Young Child, has served as a Baptist deacon, and is a former member of the board of directors of the Preservation of Tennessee Antiquities. An amateur woodworker, antique enthusiast, and antique preservationist, he and his wife restored their 1860s home. After his retirement in 2005, he and Sara built and continue to operate Hylabrook Antique Mall in Murfreesboro. The Bells have two sons, Paul and David, both of whom attended MTSU.

Eddith A. Dashiell

Assistant Dean, Undergraduate Programs and Services
Scripps College of Communication, Ohio University

Eddith A. Dashiell is assistant dean for Undergraduate Programs and Services in the Scripps College of Communication at Ohio University–Athens, where she is also a tenured associate professor in the E. W. Scripps School of Journalism. Even though she has been a faculty member and administrator at Ohio University since 1992, she has strong ties to MTSU and the Honors College.

A native of Shelbyville, Dashiell was part of the Honors Program when she was an MTSU undergraduate. She earned a B.S. in mass communication (1980) and later an M.A. in history (1982). Her professional career brought her back to MTSU as a news and public affairs producer at WMOT-FM (1980–83) and again as an assistant professor in the Department of Mass Communication (1986–1992).

At Ohio University, Dr. Dashiell has held a variety of administrative positions, including director of studies of

the journalism program in the Honors Tutorial College (1996–2005). Her other administrative titles include assistant provost for Multicultural Graduate Affairs in the Office of Graduate Studies (2005–2007), associate dean for Graduate Studies in the College of Communication (2002–2004), associate director in the School of Journalism (1998–2001), and director of the Summer High School Journalism Workshop (1993–2000). She was named an OU University Professor, a student-based teaching award, in 1997–98.



Paul W. Martin Jr.
Chief Managing Member, Clarity Resources, Knoxville

In 1975, Paul Martin received a B.S. degree from MTSU in finance and political science and became the first graduate of the Honors Program. Martin earned a J.D. from Nashville School of Law before beginning his career as an international banking officer with Commerce Union Bank in Nashville. In 1981, he joined Humana Corporation, where he rose to the position of senior development officer. Since then, he has held key posts with several companies. Since 2001, he has been affiliated with Clarity Resources of Knoxville, a “mentor capitalist”

group, where he is director and chief managing member. In 1996, Martin and his brother, H. Lee Martin, were catalysts for the building of the Paul W. Martin Sr. Honors Building. They provided more than half the money to construct the 21,000-square-foot facility. Martin has a lengthy record of community service and has received many awards and honors, including the Stokley Economics Award and the Wall Street Journal Award, and was a Distinguished Alumnus of MTSU (2002). Martin is a past director of the MTSU Foundation and chair of the Foundation Finance Committee.

Don Witherspoon

Director of Logistics, Pfizer Inc. (retired)
Community Volunteer

Don Witherspoon has been involved in various volunteer activities since retiring in 2000 and moving to Murfreesboro. Before retiring as director of logistics for Pfizer, he held several logistics positions in six different locations over a career spanning 33 years. In his last assignment, Witherspoon was responsible for the building and startup of a mega-logistics center in Memphis. The center later housed logistics and other corporate headquarters functions for Pfizer.

During his career, Witherspoon was active on the board of directors for the National Transportation League and the National Small Shipment Traffic Conference and was named member of the year of that organization. He served as director of shipping associations in Atlanta, Dallas, and Los Angeles and for the New York Traffic Club.

Witherspoon has worked in community and civic affairs in several areas, including serving on committees and boards in several states, and has been involved at MTSU since his retirement. He is past president of the MTSU Foundation and the Blue Raider Athletic Association. He is a member of the Next Level Club, the Friends of Music, and the Sixth Man Club. He also served on the Academic Master Plan Committee, the

Athletic Oversight Committee, and the Veterans Memorial Committee. He is a former co-president of the Rutherford County MTSU Alumni Chapter and ex officio board member of the MTSU National Alumni Association. He now serves on the MTSU Community Advisory Council. Witherspoon and his wife, Hanna, were named 2010–11 Distinguished Alumni for their service to the University and were recognized during the spring 2011 commencement ceremony. Both 1964 graduates, they have dedicated their retirement to the betterment of MTSU and the local community.

Witherspoon holds a B.S. in economics from MTSU and management certificates from the University of Wisconsin and the University of Southern California. After MTSU, he was commissioned as a lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps. He received the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat “V” for service in Vietnam and was promoted to the rank of captain during his active service. [H](#)



Class Notes {students}



Troy Berry (Mass Communication [Electronic Media Communication]) is serving as 2011–2012 president of the MTSU Student Ambassadors, the official hosts of the University. He has been a Student Ambassador for three years and served as vice president of the group last year.

Ray Dunn (Anthropology and Mass Communication) was featured in the *Daily News Journal* in October along with his parents and younger brother, Andy, a cancer survivor.

Ray and his family encouraged blood donations for MTSU's "Bleed Blue–Beat WKU" campaign before the MTSU/Western Kentucky football game October 8, and Andy was the official "kickoff kid" at the game. Andy has been cancer free for three years thanks in part to donated blood products.

Samantha Farish (Political Science) was one of two students at the Robert E. Sanders Mock Trial Tournament sponsored by Eastern Kentucky University October 29–30 to get a perfect score as an attorney.

Chelsea Fleet (Speech and Theatre) was assistant stage manager for *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, an MTSU Theatre and Dance production performed in October at Tucker Theatre.

Paige Gober (Speech and Theatre) led nine students in writing 150 pages of material, selections of which were used to create an approximately 70-minute performance piece called *Lady Parts*. The company of artists wrote, acted, designed, and executed the play, which was performed on campus November 4–5. The play covers such topics as body image, sexuality, relationships, family, and personal struggles.

Daniel Gouger (Biochemistry and Foreign Languages) was a coauthor with Norma Dunlap (Chemistry) of "Three-Step Synthesis of Cyclopropyl Peptidomimetics," published in *Organic Letters*, vol. 13, no. 18, in 2011. **Jessica Taylor** (Chemistry, 2011) was also a coauthor, and the paper comes in part from their Honors theses.



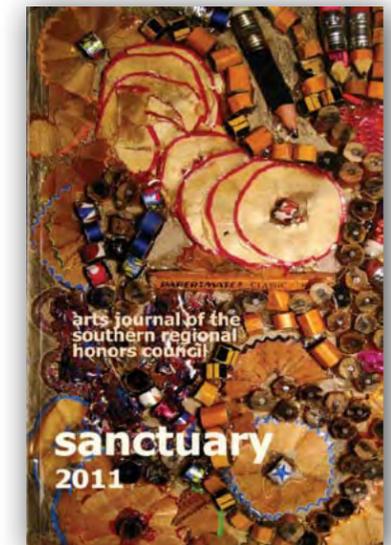
Newly selected members of the spring 2012 *Collage* staff joined members of the fall 2011 staff for lunch on Study Day in December. (L–R, front) Biven Alexander, Kaela Armbrister, Emily West, Jennifer Johnson, and Katie Uselton; (L–R, back) Bethany Wilson, Tatiana Silvas, Sheila Smotherman, Katie Parker, Annise Blanchard, and Taylor Hixson.

Dr. Hugh Berryman gives fifth-grade students from the Discovery School in Murfreesboro a lesson in forensic science during their November visit to the Honors College. The class also visited in October and participated in a creative problem-solving activity with advisor Laura Clippard.



E. J. Hirsch (Mass Communication [Journalism]) was published in the November 10 issue of *The Tennessean*. His article, "War hard to comprehend; soldier's values are not," appeared in the Opinion section of the paper. E. J. is a senior Honors student who served as a sergeant in the U.S. Army in Iraq and Afghanistan. He is a recipient of the Purple Heart for injuries from an IED. E. J. received an internship with *The Tennessean* for the spring semester and is focusing on the newspaper and design sides of publishing.

Kristin Johnson (Political Science) was one of three top witnesses at the Robert E. Sanders Mock Trial Invitational Tournament at Eastern Kentucky in October.



Joe Quarles (English) was published in the fall 2011 issue of *Sanctuary*, a regional literary journal published by the Honors Program at the University of Alabama–Birmingham that accepts submissions from any students, faculty, or staff who are part of the Southern Regional Honors Council. Quarles was previously published in *Sanctuary* in 2009.

Lindsey Purvis (Athletic Training), a freshman, is a defensive specialist on the MTSU women's volleyball team. In fall 2011, the team was invited to its sixth straight NCAA Tournament and received MTSU's second at-large bid in school history.



Admissions personnel from six law schools provided information to students at the **Career Day Law School Forum** on October 12. The event, cosponsored by the Honors College and the Political Science Department, attracted representatives from Belmont University, Mercer University, the University of Memphis, Faulkner University, Samford University, and the University of Tennessee.

Class Notes {students}

Chris Ranker (English and Mass Communication) presented at "Catwoman to Katniss," an interdisciplinary conference examining heroines and villainesses in science fiction and fantasy on March 16. His paper, "'Be Me for a Little While': Manipulation and Ambiguity in *Let the Right One In*" examines the role of the twelve-year-old vampire in a 2008 Swedish film by Thomas Alfredson. The paper is scheduled to be published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing in a collection based on the proceedings of the conference.

This semester, the MTSU Film Guild is producing its first feature-length film. The project, called *Juicy Mooshu*, finished shooting in March and is now in postproduction. The film was written by Ross Wells and directed by Warren Smythe, both seniors studying electronic media production. Chris Ranker, Jessica Henry, and Scott Frost are producing the project, and Henry Reed is the executive producer. All these students currently attend MTSU, and the project has involved over thirty students. The group plans to apply to film festivals and seek outside distribution after postproduction. The film's website is <http://juicymooshu.com>.

Ranker's short film *Breather* won an Award of Merit from the Best Shorts Competition, a worldwide awards competition for short films. *Breather* was produced last spring by the MTSU Film Guild in association with Planet Sun Productions, a production company in Nashville.

ODK FALL ACTIVITIES



Boys and Girls Club Fall Festival
Omicron Delta Kappa members assisting with the Boys and Girls Club Fall Festival in November (front, L-R) Chad Slaven, Troy Berry, (back, L-R) Jennifer Johnson, Matthew Hibdon, Hannah Hopkins.



Hannah Hopkins helps with a game at the Boys and Girls Club Fall Festival.

 Like us on **Facebook**
facebook.com/MTSUHonorsCollege

Dean John Vile, left, participates in a water taste test administered by Dr. Judith Iriarte-Gross's Honors chemistry class in November.

Students interested in graduate school attend an information session led by Dr. Peter Cunningham, associate dean of Graduate Studies, and Dr. Philip Phillips, interim associate dean of the Honors College, right, held in the Honors amphitheater in October.



Amber Ryder (Anthropology) presented two papers, "Linking Linear Enamel Hypoplasia to Cultural Pressures in Late Mississippian Populations" and "An Evaluation of the Cigarette Butt Litter on the Walkway to Old Main Circle and Kirksey Old Main from Peck Hall, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee," at the 2011 Tennessee Undergraduate Social Science Symposium November 1. The second paper was copresented with Tara Clark. [see page 19]

Chad Slaven (Chemistry) was accepted to two dental schools and plans to attend the University of Tennessee Health Science Center School of Dentistry in Memphis.

Kelsey Wells (Mass Communication) was the musical director for *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, an MTSU Theatre and Dance production performed at Tucker Theatre in October. Kelsey wrote and performed all of the music for the show, playing the fiddle, banjo, mandolin, and an egg slicer!

Anna Yacovone (Global Studies and Organizational Communication) placed first in the student paper competition at the 2011 Tennessee Undergraduate Social Science Symposium in November. Her winning paper, "Interfaith Dialogues: A Method to Promote Peace in Southern Thailand," was written while studying in Thailand in spring 2011. [see page 19] 



Panelists from Clergy Beyond Borders respond to a comment by Honors student Cari Jennings during a September 19 forum called "From Fear to Faith: Advancing Religious Pluralism in America." Honors dean John R. Vile presented an introduction to the Constitution and its tenets concerning religious freedom. He also served as moderator.

Class Notes {faculty and staff}

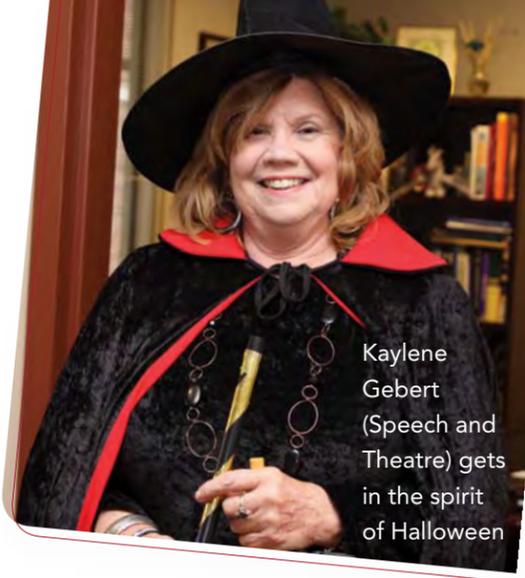
Scott Carnicom (Honors) was published in the *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council*, vol. 12, no. 2. His article, "Honors Education: Innovation or Conservation?" was the first of 11 focused on the topic of the institutional impact of honors. Carnicom is completing an American Council on Education (ACE) Fellowship with Dr. S. Georgia Nugent, president of Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio.

Kathy Davis (Honors) was elected secretary of MTSU's Association of Secretarial and Clerical Employees in September.

Norma Dunlap (Chemistry) wrote "Three-Step Synthesis of Cyclopropyl Peptidomimetics" with several coauthors, including **Jessica Taylor** and **Daniel Gouger**. The paper was published in *Organic Letters*, vol. 13, no. 18, in 2011.



Dean Vile portrayed James Madison during Constitution Day activities near the KUC. He read an introduction and the preamble to the Constitution.



Kaylene Gebert (Speech and Theatre) gets in the spirit of Halloween

Kaylene Gebert (Speech and Theatre) served as a panelist on corruption and education at the Conference on Corruption in Mexico, Russia, and the United States at Vanderbilt University October 13. Her paper was titled "Corruption in American Education: Changing Rationales for Cheating." MTSU, Vanderbilt, and the Institute for Democracy and Cooperation sponsored the conference. Sessions were presented at MTSU and at Vanderbilt.

Allen Hibbard (English) received an acknowledgement from the Institute of International Education (IIE) and the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs for his excellent work as MTSU's Fulbright Scholar Program campus representative. MTSU was named a Fulbright Scholarship "top producer" in 2011 and was highlighted in the October 24 digital edition of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. The IIE also acknowledged **Laura Clippard**, coordinator of the Undergraduate Fellowships Office, for her strong contributions to the Fulbright program's success at MTSU.

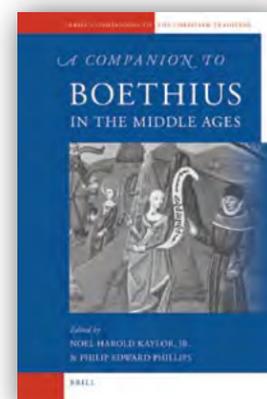
Judith Iriarte-Gross (Chemistry) represented the Girls Raised in Tennessee Science (GRITS) Collaborative Project and the National Girls Collaborative Project at the White House December 9. The Office of Public Engagement honored those who are "winning the future" by helping recruit girls and retain women in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields. Iriarte-Gross is director of the GRITS program. At the event, agency representatives and White House policy offices participated and hosted small-group discussions between champions and other notable guests from various sectors and communities who are engaging and supporting girls and women in STEM. These groups focused on changing stereotypes of girls in the sciences and technology, on mentoring, and on supporting and retaining women in the STEM workforce. After the small-group meetings, a larger event focused on amplifying best practices learned in each area.

Shelley Thomas (Foreign Languages and Literatures), second from right, with family members (L-R) sister Sandy Thomas DeRousse; brother Kip Thomas; her 92-year-old father, Bill Thomas, and his new, 91-year-old wife, Margaret; and cousin Dave Thomas. Bill and Margaret, who live in a retirement home on James Island, South Carolina, married in December. The NBC news television affiliate in Charleston aired a piece called "Finding Love at 90" about the couple, and the story was picked up by *USA Today* and the *Today Show*.



Mark Jackson (English) was promoted to associate professor.

James Oliver (Philosophy) was promoted to associate professor.



Philip Phillips (English, Honors) is coeditor of *A Companion to Boethius in the Middle Ages*, published by Brill in March 2012. The book focuses on Boethius's extant works: his *De Arithmetica* and a fragmentary *De Musica*, his translations and commentaries on logic, his five theological texts, and, of course, his *Consolation of Philosophy*. It examines the effects that Boethian thought has exercised on the learning of later generations of scholars—including, to a degree, scholars of the 21st century. The book was also coedited by Noel Harold Kaylor Jr., a professor of English at Troy University. Dr. Phillips was elected to serve on the Poe Studies Association Executive

Committee; his term begins this year. His responsibilities include organizing and chairing sessions on Poe at the annual meetings of the

American Literature Association. Previously, Dr. Phillips served on the editorial advisory board of the *Edgar Allan Poe Review*. He is also a fellow at the W. T. Bandy Center for Baudelaire and Modern French Studies, where he is creating an exhibition on Charles Baudelaire and his translations of Poe using rare books and materials from the collection. Phillips is also a member of the Edgar Allan Poe Foundation of Boston. He will be presenting "Baudelaire's Poe in Europe" at the *Conversazioni in Italia: Emerson, Hawthorne, and Poe international conference* in Florence in June 2012.

A Belmont University alumnus, Phillips presented "The Liberating Voice of Philosophy: The Function of Poetry in Boethius's *The Consolation of Philosophy*" January 25 in the Massey Board Room at Belmont. [see page 28]

Bob Pondillo (Electronic Media Communication) was promoted to full professor. 



Shared Inquiry Workshop participants (front, L-R) Rebecca King, Rhonda McDaniel, Warren Tormey, and (back) Philip Phillips, Don Whitfield, Laura Dubek, and Jim Hamby.

Class Notes {alumni and friends}



In Memoriam: Richard D. Gleaves Jr.

Richard Douglas (Dick) Gleaves Jr., husband of Honors Program founding director and current board of visitors member June Hall McCash, passed away at home in Murfreesboro on November 13, 2011. He was 82 years old.

Gleaves was born in Nashville and earned a bachelor's degree from MTSU. He retired as a major in the Air Force Reserve after 20 years of service and worked in the insurance industry and later in real estate. He served as chair and board member for Hospice of Murfreesboro.

Survivors include his wife, June Hall McCash; sister Carolyn Lightfoot of Montgomery, Alabama; children Doug (Sandy) Gleaves of Murfreesboro, Stephanie (Terry) Poteete of Franklin, Andy (Nancy) Gleaves of Clarksville, and Beth (Clay) Smith of Gainesville, Florida; stepsons Michael (Jill) Martin of Kenmore, Washington, and Bren (Leah) Martin of Murfreesboro; 12 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; and two nieces.

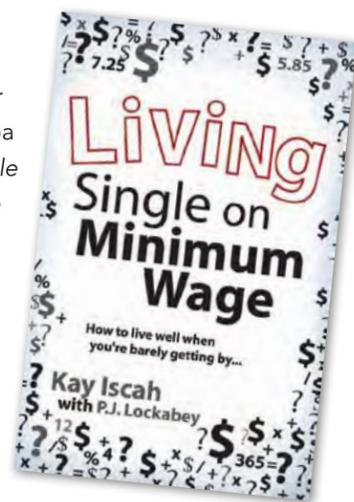
Dick Gleaves (rear) with his wife, former Honors Program director June McCash, and former director Ron Messier.

Carolyn Crawford (English, 2008) is teaching English for a year at a private school outside Seoul, Korea.

Hannah Green (Art, 2008) was promoted to inventory control specialist by the Apple Store in Knoxville.

Alyse Gillman (English, 2010) is in her second year of teaching English at West Creek High School in Clarksville, Tennessee.

Kim I. Malone (Mass Communication [Radio/TV], 2004) is a writer and designer and C.E.O. of Amoeba Ink Company. Her book *Living Single on Minimum Wage* is now available for order in most bookstores. Her Cafepress shop, www.cafepress.com/amoebaink, is having its first profitable year, and she has changed her full-time child-care business into a small publishing business. She also plans to attend graduate school in the near future.



Paul W. Martin III is a standard verification analyst at Quality Industries in La Vergne. Quality Industries funds the Russell Chair in Manufacturing Excellence at MTSU.

Candace Moonshower (English, 1996) is an instructor in the English Department at MTSU.

Taffy O'Neal (English, 2011) received an award for excellence in her class of international students at the Wenyi campus of Hangzhou Normal University in China, where she is studying this year. She was also honored with an invitation to spend the Chinese Spring Festival with the vice chancellor of the university and his family at their home. [see page 38]

Tony Pritchard (Biology, 2011) has been accepted to the University of Tennessee Health Science Center College of Dentistry in Memphis for the fall.

Lee Martin, left, and **Roy Martin**, brother of the late Paul W. Martin Sr., visited Dean John Vile and Interim Associate Dean Philip Phillips, right, in December.



Shannon Randol (Mass Communication [Photography], 2005) earned an M.F.A. in visual arts from Washington University in St. Louis and taught at Arts Institute of Tennessee in Nashville before returning to MTSU in fall 2011 as an assistant professor of photography in the Department of Electronic Media Communication. Six of his black-and-white photos, a series called *Faces of Speakers' Corner*, were published in the spring 2005 issue of *Collage*. One of the images hangs in the study area of Martin Honors Building.

Aaron Shew (Global Studies and International Relations, 2011) and his wife, Natalie, moved to northern Afghanistan in December 2011 for a three-month assignment with a nongovernmental organization called SALT International. Aaron was interim manager for training employees at a new soybean mill which was funded under a USDA-American Soybean Association grant, and Natalie taught English to women at a local institute. They returned to the states for two months and plan to move to northern Iraq this spring to implement a similar project through a partnership between SALT, a private poultry company called the VANO Group, and investors in a business called AGRISOYA. Aaron will be director of training and research. He will be responsible for working with farmers, continuing research trials with the Ministry of Agriculture, and collaborating with Salahaddin University to develop curriculum for soybeans. Natalie hopes to teach ESL at a local college or university.



Colby Sledge (Mass Communication [EMC/Journalism], Foreign Languages [Spanish], 2007) is attending graduate school at Lipscomb University and was recently accepted as a member of the inaugural class at the Nelson and Sue

Andrews Institute for Civic Leadership there. Colby is press secretary for the Tennessee Senate Democratic Caucus.

In Memoriam: Carolyn Lee Boatright Reeves



Carolyn Lee Boatright Reeves, mother of board of visitors member Shane Reeves, died Saturday, November 5, at her home in Murfreesboro. She was 69 years old.

Ms. Reeves was the daughter of the late Raymond and Evelyn Pigg Boatright. She graduated in 1960 from Spring Hill High School and earned advanced degrees from MTSU. She taught at Eagleville, Central, and Oakland high schools for 37 years. She was a member of North Boulevard Church of Christ for 50 years.

Survivors include her son Shane (Amanda) Reeves of Murfreesboro; daughter Marsha (Ben) Saalfeld of Murfreesboro; brother Raymond "Pete" Boatright of Columbia; and grandchildren, Will, Jack, and Emma-White Reeves and Owen and Reagan Saalfeld, all of Murfreesboro.

Class Notes {alumni and friends}

Evan Swift (Biology, 2010) has been accepted to Christian Brothers University in Memphis and began classes in January to become a physician assistant.

Jessica Taylor (Chemistry, 2011) was a coauthor with Norma Dunlap of "Three-Step Synthesis of Cyclopropyl Peptidomimetics" in *Organic Letters*, vol. 13, no. 18, in 2011. Daniel Gouger (Biochemistry and Foreign Languages) was also a coauthor, and the paper is a result, in part, of their Honors theses.

Jim Tracy (Honors College Board of Visitors) is cochairing a bipartisan, bicameral Tennessee STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education caucus, the nation's first state-level caucus on education issues. Other cochairs are Senator Reginald Tate and representatives David Hawk and Brenda Gilmore.



In Memoriam: Jack Justin Turner

MTSU lost a beloved teacher and accomplished author on December 29, 2011, with the passing of Jack

Justin Turner, a longtime member of the Department of Political Science before his retirement in 2000. He devoted his last several years to publishing books that he began researching and writing while at MTSU.

Dr. Turner was born and raised in Langley, Kentucky, where he was a star basketball player. He graduated from Berea College and the University of Kentucky before coming in 1965 to MTSU, where he taught international relations for 35 years and was twice recognized by the University for his outstanding teaching. The University designated him professor emeritus when he retired.

Many students from the international relations program went on to earn doctoral degrees in their fields, including three who later joined the Political Science Department: Mark Byrnes (Honors faculty and dean of the College of Liberal Arts), Anne Sloan (former associate dean of Liberal Arts and study abroad director, now deceased) and Karen Petersen (assistant dean of Liberal Arts and Honors faculty member). Dr. Derek Frisby of the History Department was also one of Turner's students.

Dr. Turner was especially interested in the history of southeastern Kentucky, and in the last several years he

published novels set in the area. These include *The Foxes and the Hounds: Big Medicine River Days*, *The Sheriffs' Murder Cases*, and *The Sheriff of Frozen's Murder Cases*, the last of which was just published in 2011. The second volume of *The Foxes and the Hounds*, called *Bluegrass Days; The Sheriff of Hell's Murder Cases*, a novel; and the nonfiction *Maytown Magic and Mayhem: Fifty Years of Mountain Basketball* have all been scheduled for release by Chestnut Hill Publishing.

On March 1, 2007, the Honors College hosted Turner's first reading and book signing in the Honors College Student Commons, which was filled to capacity with former students and colleagues. He later appeared at numerous other events in Tennessee and Kentucky to introduce people to his books.

Dr. Turner is survived by his wife, Judy (Gibson) Turner (the two met in high school), and he will long be remembered by thousands of students who took his classes. Dr. Frank Essex, a colleague who also retired from the Political Science Department, was among those who spoke at Turner's memorial service in Martin, Kentucky.

Dr. John Vile, former chair of the Department of Political Science and a longtime friend, called Turner an exemplary teacher who seemed to exercise a special magic in the classroom. He cared deeply about his students and never lost touch with his deep Kentucky roots. Vile said it was rare to pass Turner's office without finding him talking to students, who often lined up outside his door to meet with him.

2011 HOMECOMING
Look to the Future Remember the Past
100
MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
traditions of excellence 1911-2011

1 Omicron Delta Kappa Honor Society members Katie Bogle and Matthew Hibdon **2** Honors College Board of Visitors member Judge Don Ash and his wife, Rita **3** John and Raiko Henderson with their children Sarah, Michael, Samuel, and Rebekah **4** Dean John Vile with MTSU graduates Shaun and Ashley Jones Salem. The Salems were members of MTSU's Mock Trial team.

Jeff Whorley (Honors College Board of Visitors), president of Student Aid Services, Inc., announced in October that at that time 575 college campuses chose Student Aid Services' net price calculator to ensure that prospective students and parents get accurate estimates of eligibility for all types of financial aid, net price, and out-of-pocket costs. Whorley said, "Our easy-to-use technology can generate for prospective students and their families very reliable cost estimates for college planning in as little time as it takes to cook a microwave dinner." Student Aid Services is the nation's leading provider of college-cost estimation technology.

Anna Yacovone (Global Studies and Organizational Communication, 2011) is serving as postgraduate education abroad advisor for the MTSU Education Abroad office. [H](#)

Don Midgett

reads a plaque describing the accomplishments of Ralph Gwaltney ('39, '54) at Middle Tennessee State Teachers College. Gwaltney and his wife, Elizabeth, were the parents of Carolyn, who became Don's wife. In 2011, Don and Carolyn established a centennial scholarship for Honors students in honor of the Gwaltneys.

2011 CONTRIBUTOR Honor Roll

The Honors College deeply appreciates all the friends who have contributed to its success in countless ways. Philanthropic support has been integral to the college's history, most notably through the construction of our beautiful building. We are honored to recognize those who have made giving to the college a priority in the past year.

Nancy and Jerry L. Allen
Annette and Billy W. Balch
Mary Lee and Terry W. Barnes
Taylor A. Barnes
Charles L. Baum
Philip D. Bowles
James M. Buchanan
Santee and Philip Cunningham
Eddith A. Dashiell
Kaylene Gebert
Michael Gigandet
Mark A. Hall
Raiko and John Henderson
George N. Hester
Donna D. and Michael Hughes
Allison D. Ingram and
John P. Montgomery
Carmella A. and
Michael K. Jochmann
Jennifer J. and Terry Jordan-Henley
Veronica King
Sandra and Thomas Kubis

Rebecca M. and Scott T. Malone
Paul W. Martin Jr.
Daphne and Terry Martin
Gloria D. Kharibian and
Mike Martinelli
June Hall McCash and
Richard Gleaves Jr.
Ronald Messier
Christina and Lloyd Miller
Paulette and Tracey C. Nash
Sharmila J. Patel and
Phillip E. Phillips
Katherine Elaine and
Matthew Royal
Mary Elizabeth Smith
Sharon J. Stringer
Linda K. and John R. Vile
Edith and Bruce Waite
Pro2Serve Professional Project
Services/Barry Goss
Thompson Rivers University/
Marian Griffin

I am _____
TRUE BLUE.

as a member of this diverse community,

I am a **VALUABLE CONTRIBUTOR** to its

& PROGRESS | I AM ENGAGED IN THE LIFE
SUCCESS

of this **community**

I am a **RECIPIENT &**
a GIVER

I AM A *listener & a speaker*

I am HONEST *in word and deed*

I AM COMMITTED TO REASON,
NOT VIOLENCE

I am a **learner** **NOW & FOREVER** | **TRUE BLUE.**

I am a **BLUE RAIDER.** | **TRUE BLUE.**

Middle Tennessee State University

MIDDLE TENNESSEE

STATE UNIVERSITY

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit 169
Murfreesboro, TN

Honors Magazine

University Honors College
MTSU Box 267
1301 East Main Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37132

Life goes swimmingly in the Honors College.

