

HONORS

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY | FALL 2017

Magazine

RAP ATTENTION

Rising popularity
no big deal for
road manager turned
rapper nobigdyl.

**MIDDLE
TENNESSEE**
STATE UNIVERSITY



Blue Horseshoe

A symbol of tradition
and good fortune for
Walden University

HOWARD COOK OF THE BLUE HORSESHOE
WILL BE GRANTED GOOD LUCK

We would like to thank the following
for their generous donation and support of
this project.

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RAP ATTENTION

Rising popularity no big deal for road manager turned rapper nobigdy.



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LAW & HONORS

Deep desire to fight for those who can't propelled two MTSU graduates into the DA's office in Manhattan



Cover: Photo by Anthony Ferrel

At left:
Blue Horseshoe
in the fall
Photo by
J. Intintoli

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HONORS MAGAZINE

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

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From the Dean's Desk



Recently, I completed almost 200 essays for an encyclopedia I am writing about the American flag. My contract called for 120 entries, but the more topics I explored, the more I found. There are many myths about the flag, but there also is a rich history. In a similar way, there are myths that surround MTSU's University Honors College and that sometimes obscure our "flag."

Myth: Honors classes are harder than others. Our classes typically cover more material, but that's because it's easier to do so with fewer students in a more interactive setting. Our aim is not so much to teach more facts, but rather to engage students in critical thinking skills that they will be able to apply outside the specific subject matter.

Myth: Honors students are all brilliant. Our students are certainly smart, and some are so smart that I sometimes wonder how I became dean of such an auspicious group. But, in my experience, many have gotten where they are not simply as a result of genius but of perseverance and hard work. It takes more perspiration than genius to stay on track with Honors classes and write an Honors thesis.

Myth: The Honors College is only open to a small elite. Although this may be true of some institutions, it is not true here. More than 2,000 currently enrolled MTSU Honors students have taken our classes—about 850 enroll each semester. Anyone who enters MTSU with a 3.5 GPA and an ACT or equivalent score of 25 or higher and any college students with a 3.25 GPA on 12 or more college hours are eligible to participate. The number of students who write theses each year is increasing, with about 75 doing so last year.

Myth: The Honors College has unlimited resources. We have certainly been blessed, especially by generous financial support from our Board of Visitors and University President Sidney A. McPhee. It's especially gratifying to double the number of Honors Transfer Scholarships this year. However, each year we have more students that we would like to give scholarships to than we have money to do so. Often, scholarship support that we provide for study abroad or other projects has a multiplying effect; such aid increases the likelihood that students will be competitive later for national and international scholarships.

Students who enroll in Honors classes move from myth to reality: The Honors College continues to provide a supportive community and a superb opportunity for students who want the benefits of a large state university while still experiencing the intimacy provided by small liberal arts institutions.

In short, students in the Honors College have the benefits of flying under two flags, both of which add value and both of which have storied histories.

John R. Vile

UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS OFFICE REPORTS

A RECORD-BREAKING YEAR

By Susannah Barry

A Biochemistry major who received the top undergraduate science award in the United States was one of many outstanding MTSU students receiving national awards this year. “The 2016–17 academic year was record-breaking,” said Laura Clippard, coordinator of the Undergraduate Fellowships Office and recipient of MTSU’s 2017 Administrative Employee of the Year. “In terms of science students receiving national opportunities, we had one Goldwater winner, six National Science Foundation Research Experiences for Undergraduates (NSF-REU) winners, and one student awarded the opportunity to conduct paid health research in Uganda.”

The success does not stop there. This year, MTSU also had two winners for the competitive Critical Language Scholarship and a Gilman recipient. In her work assisting students apply for national scholarships, Clippard noted that “all students who applied this year showed dedication, a strong work ethic, and the desire to do something greater for society.”

Students from the College of Basic and Applied Sciences have been particularly successful this year. **Kirsten Cunningham**, majoring in Biochemistry, received the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship—which is touted as the most prestigious scholarship awarded in the natural sciences, mathematics, and engineering in the nation.

“Dr. David Nelson and other faculty took a personal interest in me as a student. This was the key to my success,” Cunningham said. “The Goldwater Scholarship is a life-changing opportunity and gives me the chance to live my dream of becoming a researcher.”

Cunningham was MTSU’s first winner since 2013, although the University has had numerous honorable mentions over the past three years.

“The Goldwater is a truly competitive scholarship,” Honors College Dean John R. Vile said. “Kirsten’s hard work demonstrates the dedication MTSU students have.”

record-breaking
one
one **SIX**



Undergraduate Fellowships Office coordinator Laura Clippard was MTSU administrative Employee of the Year.

Kirsten Cunningham,
Biochemistry
Barry M. Goldwater
Scholarship

Bassam Aboona,
Physics
NSF-REU (Texas A&M)

Jackson Cole, *Physics*
NSF-REU (University of
Wyoming)

Hannah Hall, *Biology*
NSF-REU (University of
California–Riverside)

Benjamin Kulas, *Physics*
NSF-REU (Sanford
Underground Research
Facility / Black Hills
State University)

Karla Robles,
*Computer Science and
Biochemistry*
NSF-REU
(Massachusetts Institute of
Technology)

Collin McDonald,
Aerospace
Rardon Aviation
Maintenance Technician
Student of the Year
Award

Marilyn Kelley,
Mathematics
Gilman International
Scholarship Program
(Costa Rica)

William York, *English*
Gilman International
Scholarship Program
(Japan)

John Gillespie, *History*
DAAD Studies Research
Grant (Germany)

Hermon Phuntling,
*Global Studies and
Human Geography*
Minority Health and

Health Disparities
International Research
Training Program
(Uganda)

Ethan McHugh,
Philosophy
Critical Language
Scholarship Program
(Arabic)

Bonnie Boley
International Relations
Critical Language
Scholarship Program
(Turkish)

Tiffany Miller, *Spanish
and International
Relations*
Phi Kappa Phi Study
Abroad Scholarship
(Chile)

Evan Lester, *Aerospace*
Phi Kappa Phi Love of
Learning Award

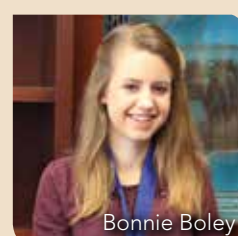
Natalie Musselman
Biology
Phi Kappa Phi
Fellowship Award

Kelly Richardson,
Political Science
Public Policy and
International Affairs
Junior Summer
Institute (University of
Minnesota)

Kyeesha Wilcox, *Global
Studies and Human
Geography*
Summer Research
Opportunities Program
(Michigan State
University)

Lee Rumble, *Plant and
Soil Science*
Tennessee Federation
of Garden Clubs and
Scholarships
Deep South Gardening
Club Scholarship

Undergraduate Fellowships Office 2017 Recognitions



Getting Where You Want to Go: Why Apply for an REU?

The National Science Foundation (NSF) funds research and education in science and engineering through grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements. Through NSF, the Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) program supports active research participation by undergraduate students in any of the areas of research supported by NSF. This allows undergraduates to pursue various interests in different scientific fields and even gain cross-cultural experiences.

Previous MTSU awardees received funding to pursue research in San Francisco, Chicago, and Paris. Through REU, students are provided an opportunity to propose a research project in a scientific area of interest and receive funding to carry out their research. Students contact the individual sites either in the U.S. or at a foreign location that is supported by the REU Sites program. Once selected by the research program of the host university, the student will be associated with a specific research project and work closely with the faculty and other researchers. Typical REU Sites consist of a group of 10 undergraduates and provide hands-on research and lab experience.

REU Site contacts will help provide guidance for students who are seeking a field of study. There are an expansive variety of options available for students with fields of interests including, but not limited, to astronomy, chemistry,

engineering, biology, social, ethical, and economic sciences. REU Sites may be based in a single discipline or academic department or may offer interdisciplinary or multi-department research opportunities. Students are encouraged to add an international component to their proposals. REU is an excellent opportunity to participate in a competitive comprehensive research program or internship that will teach students how to conduct real, in-the-field research alongside top scientists.

REU students are given the chance to work closely with their research supervisors to design an experiment, collect samples, learn how to analyze data, and give a final presentation to their peers. Involvement does not have to end once the program is finished; many REU recipients have gone on to attend local and regional conferences and co-author scientific journal articles about their research. The program can continue to provide opportunities to students as they apply the skills they developed and the research they completed to their future academic and career goals.

Students can go beyond the classroom setting and make a proposal in a field that they are passionate about exploring. All students of different backgrounds and varying levels of experience are encouraged to apply. Whether particular interests involve full-time independent research, an internship, or a research

course, there are numerous opportunities to find a program to utilize different avenues of developing research skills. REU awards are restricted to students who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents and have not graduated from college before the dates of the program. Minorities underrepresented in the biological sciences are also strongly encouraged to apply. There also are a substantial number of full and partial scholarships that can also be applied to these programs or projects.

REU Benefits

- \$5,000–\$7,000 awarded
- Housing expenses covered
- Travel expenses covered
- Funding for research
- Developing professional research skills
- Specialized experiences
- Cross-cultural opportunities

Learn More

mtsu.edu/honors/ufo

615-898-5464

laura.clippard@mtsu.edu



Phi Kappa Phi Holds Spring Initiation

The honor society of Phi Kappa Phi (PKP) initiated six Honors students into its MTSU chapter April 11 and recognized 10 current members of the Honors faculty as influential faculty designated by the student initiates. The honor society also inducted one Honors faculty member, one Honors staff member, and an Honors College alumnus.

Five of the undergraduate initiates are from the College of Basic and Applied Sciences: **Kyra Boots** (Biology), **Benjamin Kulas** (Physics), **Paige Fairrow-Davis** (Exercise Science), and **Asfah Mohammed** and **Myranda Uselton** (both Chemistry majors). Honors College alumnus **Matthew Fuller** (Biology B.S., 2015; Professional Science M.S., 2017) was initiated as a graduate student.

Ian Cabage (Video and Film Production) represented the College of Media and Entertainment.


Honors faculty member **Maria Bachman** (English), keynote speaker for the ceremony, and Honors event coordinator **Susan Lyons**, a graduate student, were also initiated.

Honors faculty members recognized as influential were **Michelle Boyer-Pennington** (Psychology), **Nate Callender** (Aerospace), **Paul Craig** (Aerospace), **Norma**

Dunlap (Chemistry), **Kaylene Gebert** (Communication Studies), **Robb McDaniel** (Political Science), **Dennis Mullen** (Biology), **Gina Pisut** (Human Sciences), **Lauren Rudd** (Human Sciences), and **Stephen Wright** (Biology).

Philip E. Phillips, Honors associate dean and PKP past president, presented member certificates and awards for the ceremony, which took place in the Student Union ballroom. During the initiation ceremony, Honors students and PKP members **Natalie Musselman** (Biology) and **Todd Pirtle** (Plant and Soil Science) were recognized with certificates and \$250 for their outstanding achievements.

Other 2016–17 PKP chapter officers were Honors College Dean **John R. Vile**, PKP treasurer and fellowship coordinator; **Kaylene Gebert**, vice president; Honors College executive aide **Kathy Davis**, chapter coordinator; and **Gina Logue**, chapter secretary and public relations coordinator.

Phi Kappa Phi encourages and recognizes superior scholarship in all academic disciplines. Junior initiates must rank in the top 7.5% of their class, while seniors must rank in the top 10% of their class. 



Darcy Tabotabo



Ryan Bearden



Joy Shind

Honors Students Capture **Campus Awards Again**

For the eighth consecutive year, Honors students have claimed three of four top campus awards.

This spring, the University awards program selected **Darcy Tabotabo**, **Ryan Bearden**, and **Joy Shind** to receive the President's Award, the Provost's Award, and the Robert C. LaLance Jr. Achievement Award, respectively.

President's Award

Tabotabo, a Buchanan Fellow, earned the 2017 President's Award, the most prestigious award given to a student of MTSU, for his superior character, honor, and achievements. A Biochemistry major, he served as MTSU Global Brigades chair, was president and volunteer coordinator of the Student Medical Association, volunteered weekly with Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and was active in Omicron Delta Kappa (ODK) leadership honor society.

Tabotabo began medical school this fall at the University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center in Memphis.

Provost's Award

Bearden, an Honors Transfer Fellow, won the 2017 Provost's Award, which honors a student who best demonstrates outstanding academic achievement through involvement in scholarly activities. A military veteran, Bearden majored in Psychology and minored in Leadership Studies. He also was recognized as the Larry Morris Outstanding Senior in Psychology, received the General Education Writing Award for argumentative writing in 2015, was a member of ODK leadership honor society, and received a URECA grant in 2016.

Bearden is currently pursuing a master's degree in Psychology with a concentration in Industrial/Organizational Psychology at MTSU.

LaLance Achievement Award

Shind, an Honors Transfer Fellow from Motlow State Community College, received the LaLance Award, recognizing remarkable determination, sacrifices, and contributions to the community. An Art Education major, Shind also earned Rutherford Cable's Athena Nontraditional Scholarship, which supports the extraordinary achievements of exemplary women in the Rutherford County community. She previously wrote and received an MTSU grant to fund her travel to Italy to study the fresco painting techniques of Ignatius Moder and was initiated into ODK leadership honor society. She is now an art teacher at Smyrna High School.

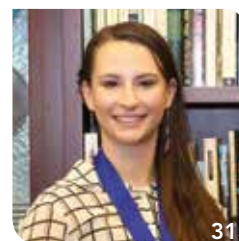
"Honors College students exhibit leadership, compassion, and a desire to help others, which is why they are great candidates for the campus awards," Honors coordinator Laura Clippard said. "Ryan, Joy, and Darcy all have several traits in common. They are motivated, curious, and strive to assist others in their fields. Joy is passionate about art education; Darcy works overseas as a medical volunteer; and Ryan brings his military background and academic interest in leadership to conducting research. All are exceptional."

How to Nominate

Members of the MTSU community are encouraged to nominate students who have demonstrated a commitment to excellence and meet the awards criteria. Nominations and applications are accepted each year in February. To nominate a student, submit the student's name and contact information to Jackie.Victory@mtsu.edu in the Center for Student Involvement and Leadership. [H](#)

Spring 2017

Theses Defended



Emily Anderson¹

English and Psychology
 "Harry Potter, Lord
 Voldemort, and the
 Importance of Resilience"
 Martha Hixon, advisor

Brandon Baker²

Criminal Justice Administration
 "Performance Evaluation
 Inflation: Factors Affecting
 the Exaggeration of
 Performance Ratings in the
 Air Force"
 Joshua Harms, advisor

Ryan Bearden³

Psychology
 "Self-Leadership
 Strategies and Performance
 Perspectives Within Student
 Aviation Teams"
 Michael Hein, advisor

Shivan Berwari⁴

Biology
 "Temperature Effects
 on the mono- and
 digalactosyldiacylglycerol
 Lipid Composition of Algae
 in the *Chlorarchniophyceae*"
 Jeff Leblond, advisor

Dakota Beverly⁵

Business Administration
 "A Comparative Study of
 the Acceptance of Mobile
 Payment Systems in the
 United States and Japan"
 Nita Brooks, advisor

Reece Boyd⁶

Computer Science
 "Implementing
 Reinforcement Learning
 in Unreal Engine 4 with
 Blueprint"
 Sal Barbosa, advisor

Kathryn Brittain⁷

Biology
 "What Does BCAT Do in
Cryptococcus neoformans?"
 Erin McClelland, advisor

Abigail Carter⁸

Psychology
 "Running Head: The Effect
 of Cell Phone Use on Frontal
 Lobe Function"
 Paul Foster, advisor

J. T. Cobb⁹

English
 "Reevaluating Juneteenth:
 What to Do with Ralph
 Ellison's Second Novel?"
 Allen Hibbard, advisor

Kayla Conner¹⁰

Biology
 "Bioassay-Guided
 Fractionation of Antifungal
 Compounds from Plant
 Extract 23B for Inhibition of
Cryptococcus neoformans"
 Erin McClelland, advisor

Destiny Donald¹¹

Biology
 "Impact of Synthesized
 Aurone on Adipocyte
 Differentiation"
 William Stewart, advisor

Miranda Dotson¹²

Business Administration
 "Comparing and
 Contrasting For-
 profit and Non-profit
 Crisis Communication
 Response Using W.T.
 Coomb's Situational Crisis
 Communication Theory"
 Sharon Smith, advisor

Michaela Edwards¹³

*Industrial/Organizational
 Psychology*
 "Gotham: A Rhetorical
 Analysis of President Donald
 J. Trump's Republican
 National Committee
 Acceptance Speech"
 Kaylene Gebert, advisor

Kellye A Guinan¹⁴

Anthropology and German
 "Culture and Community
 Online: How Fanfiction
 Creates a Sense of Social
 Identity by Reshaping
 Popular Media"
 Ida Fadzillah Leggett, advisor

Pascal Louis Holtkamp¹⁵

Aerospace
 "Lessons Learned from
 Transitioning to Gliders"
 Paul Craig, advisor

Brandon Ingram¹⁶

Music Business
 "Locker Room Talk: A
 Politically-Charged Story
 Told Through Music and
 Analysis of Successful
 Songwriting"
 Odie Blackmon, advisor

Melinda Lewis¹⁷

Global Studies and English
 "Understanding Bengaluru:
 A Guidebook to the City
 and the Self"
 Laura White, advisor

Devin Marsh¹⁸

Computer Information Systems
 "Are Ethical Hackers the
 Best Solution for Combating
 the Growing World of
 Cyber-Crime?"
 Charles Apigian, advisor

Ashley Martinez¹⁹

International Relations
 "Shanghai in Transition:
 Western Identity and the
 Former French Concession"
 Yuan Ling Chao, advisor

Kelsey Massey²⁰

*Mass Communication and
 Global Studies*
 "Select Ethnic Enclaves and
 their Cultural Indicators
 in Nashville, Tennessee:
 Nolensville Road"
 Doug Heffington, advisor

Katie Nicholson²¹

Music Education
 "Musical Arrangement of
 Eric Whitacre's Five Hebrew
 Love Songs for Clarinet
 Choir and Percussion"
 Allen Kennedy, advisor

Evidence Nwangwa²²

Biochemistry
 "Comparison of
 Polysaccharide Profiles in
 American Ginseng (*Panax
 quinquefolius*) Callus Tissues
 and Plant Root Tissues"
 John Dubois, advisor

Quinlan Odom²³

History
 "Re-Energizing the High
 School History Lesson"
 Dawn McCormack, advisor

Hanah A Owens²⁴

English
 "De Anima: An Exploration
 Using the Short Story"
 Gaylord Brewer, advisor

Wesley Riley²⁵

Biology and Chemistry
 "Determining How the
 PINK: Parkin Mitophagy
 Pathway Responds
 to Transient and
 Recurrent Mitochondrial
 Depolarization Using a Live
 Cell Imaging Approach"
 David Nelson, advisor

Calla Sharp²⁶

Early Childhood Education
 "A Child's World: A
 Qualitative Study of
 the Social and Cultural
 Construct of Kindergarten
 Children"
 Jane Seok Jeng Lim, advisor

Jessica Shotwell²⁷

Sociology
 "Civic Engagement among
 College-Aged Youth in
 Middle Tennessee"
 Sekou Franklin, advisor

Sierra Sotelo²⁸

Recording Industry
 "Disruption and
 Development: How the
 Uneven Growth of Mexico
 Has Affected Intellectual
 Property in the Yucatan
 Peninsula"
 Deborah Wagnon, advisor

Robin Stone Fair²⁹

Social Work
 "Tolerance of Gay-Straight
 Alliances in Public Schools:
 LGBT+ Adolescents'
 Struggle for Support and
 Coexistence"
 Ariana Postlethwait, advisor

Darcy Tabotabo³⁰

Biochemistry
 "Assessment of Anti-Herpes
 Simplex Virus Type 1 Activity
 in *Bidens biternata* and
Mangifera periciformis"
 Stephen Wright, advisor

Ginny Whaley³¹

Anthropology
 "A Re-Creation of Mary
 Wigham's *Ceremonial
 Figure* Emphasizing the
 Noh Theater and Butoh
 Elements"
 Margaret Brooker, advisor

BUCHANAN FELLOWS

Meet the 2017 Freshman Buchanan Fellows

This fall, 21 freshmen join the elite group of students accepted into the Buchanan Fellowship Program, the highest academic honor bestowed upon entering freshmen at MTSU. The scholarship program is named in honor of James M. Buchanan, an MTSU alumnus and Nobel Prize winner. Collectively, the students represent three states and nine counties in Tennessee.

Max Worthley Behling is from Brentwood and attended Ravenwood High School. A Physics major, Behling is the son of Brian and Jennifer Behling.

Catherine Clare Farone, a graduate of Father Ryan High School, is the daughter of Anthony and Mary Farone of Murfreesboro. Her major is Political Science.

John Bynum Gustafson attended Oak Grove High School in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. He is majoring in Recording Industry and is the son of David and Hope Gustafson.

Miranda Leigh Hall attended St. Cecilia Academy in Nashville. She is the daughter of Julie and Steven Hall of Murfreesboro and is a Recording Industry major.

Hector Noel Hernandez, from Murfreesboro, attended Central Magnet School and is the son of Marta Santiago and Noel Hernandez. He is majoring in Mathematics.

Sarah Elizabeth Jones, who is from Smyrna, graduated from Central Magnet School. Undecided about her major, she is the daughter of Noel and Sandra Jones.

Kelsey Grace Keith, the daughter of Anne and Mark Culpepper, is from Murfreesboro where she attended Central Magnet School. She is majoring in Recording Industry.

Anna Catherine Levine attended Larry A. Ryle High School in Union, Kentucky. A Recording Industry major, she is the daughter of Julie and Steve Levine.

Cameron Nicholas Maddux graduated from Central Magnet School in Murfreesboro. He is the son of Spence Kristina Maddux and is interested in health professions.

Alyssa Marie Maloney attended Gatlinburg-Pittman High School in Gatlinburg. She is majoring in Psychology and is the daughter of Annie Maloney and Matt Maloney.

Isabelle Dare McCurdy graduated from Chattanooga High Center for Creative Arts. She is an Agribusiness major and the daughter of Jay and Kay McCurdy.

John C. Mehne attended Atherton High School in Louisville, Kentucky. He is the son of Lora Mehne and David Mehne and is majoring in Animation.

Channing Blake Mullinax attended Gatlinburg-Pittman High School and is the son of Chan and Lori Mullinax. He is majoring in Computer Science.

Emily Katherine Oppmann, a graduate of Central Magnet School in Murfreesboro, is majoring in Biology. She is the daughter of Andrew and Elise Oppmann.



Max Behling



Catherine Farone



John Gustafson

Jiwoo Park, the daughter of Hyo S. Park and Jae H. Park, is from Wartrace. A graduate of Cascade High School, she plans to major in Science.



Miranda Hall



Hector Hernandez



Sarah Jones

Hayley Elizabeth Payne, a Recording Industry major, is from Owensboro, Kentucky, and attended Daviess County High School. She is the daughter of Keith Payne and Therese Payne.



Kelsey Keith



Anna Levine



Cameron Maddux

Katrina Julianne Scott, a graduate of Farragut High School in Knoxville, is the daughter of Robert and Lisa Scott. She is majoring in Art.



Alyssa Maloney



Isabelle McCurdy



John Menne

Carma Rae Sharp of Smyrna is a graduate of Central Magnet School. A History major, she is the daughter of Ray and Jill Sharp.



Channing Mullinax



Emily Oppmann



Jiwoo Park

Isaac Robert Shirk of College Grove is the son of Christopher Shirk and Julie Hummer-Shirk. He is a graduate of Summit High School in Spring Hill and is majoring in Physics.



Hayley Payne



Katrina Scott



Carma Sharp

Dirk Ryan Sims graduated from Fred J. Page High School in Franklin. He is studying Mechatronics Engineering and is the son of Darryl and Janette Sims.



Isaac Shirk



Dirk Sims



Nathan Smith

Nathan Hunter Smith, a graduate of Central Magnet School in Murfreesboro, is the son of Sarah and Laurence Smith. He is majoring in Chemistry.

TRANSFER FELLOWS

Meet the 2017 Transfer Fellows

This fall, 30 new students representing three states and 21 cities in Tennessee have joined the elite group of students accepted into the Transfer Fellowship Program, the highest academic honor bestowed upon students transferring to MTSU from other institutions.

Emory Leigh Bibb is a transfer student from Tusculum College and is majoring in Science (Pre-Med).

Jonathan D. Cannon transferred from Columbia State Community College and is seeking a degree in Biochemistry.

Sierra B. Coffee, a transfer student from Motlow State Community College, is majoring in Criminal Justice Administration.

Emma R. Cryar, a Graphic Design major, transferred from Columbia State Community College.

Matthew Jared Cureton, majoring in Business Administration, attended Walters State Community College.

Jessica L. Dejong transferred from Motlow State Community College. She is seeking a degree in Science.

Elisabeth Foreman is a transfer student from Naugatuck Valley Community College in Milford, Connecticut. She is majoring in International Relations.

Hanna N. Giles transferred from Volunteer State Community College and is a Political Science (Pre-Law) major.

Emily Lawra Gleason, who transferred from Motlow State Community College, is seeking degrees in Animal Science (Horse Science) and Psychology.

Joseph P. Gulizia, a transfer from Columbia State Community College, is majoring in Animal Science (Pre-Vet).

Christina Skye Higgins, a Journalism major, attended Roane State Community College.

Sheridan Grace Hitchcox attended Volunteer State Community College and is seeking a degree in Theatre.

Aleea Jean Hollandsworth is a transfer student from Volunteer State Community College majoring in Psychology.

Ariellah Lyn Huisinga transferred from Columbia State Community College and is majoring in Global Studies and Cultural Geography.

Seth Wallace Jones, a Foreign Language major (Japanese), attended Chattanooga State Community College and Bryan College.

Aaron R. Kelly is a transfer student from Motlow State Community College majoring in Philosophy.

Sunny Beth Lusins transferred from Georgia Gwinnett College and is studying Forensic Science.

Gordon Marcelo, a transfer from Cumberland University, is majoring in Liberal Studies.

Jana Elizabeth Marsh, a Textiles, Merchandising, and Design major, attended Mississippi Community College.



Transfer Fellows advisor Judy Albakry meets with Robert Owen, a new Transfer Fellow.

Jocelyn Mercado is a transfer student from Motlow State Community College seeking a degree in Political Science.

Caitlin Elizabeth Miller transferred from Motlow State Community College. Her major is Education.

Robert Loren Owen attended Life School of Ministry; Full Sail University in Winter Park, Florida; Indiana University; and Olivet Nazarene University in Bourbonnais, Illinois. He is seeking a degree in Biology (Pre-Med).

Dylan Russell Palmer is a transfer student from Roane State Community College majoring in Criminal Justice Administration.

Destiny J. Seaton transferred from Columbia State Community College and is a Journalism major.

Clinton R. Warren is a transfer student from Motlow State Community College studying Biology.

Abrial L. Westbrook, a Marketing major, attended Motlow State Community College.

Jacob L. Wilder transferred from Roane State Community College and is majoring in Journalism.

Sarah Elizabeth Wilfong Joblin attended Berklee College of Music in Boston, Wilbur Wright Community College in Chicago, and Nashville State Community College. She is seeking a degree in Music (Instrumental Performance, Violin).

Lucas R. Williams is a transfer student from Volunteer State Community College majoring in Graphic Design.

Stacey Yabko Misra transferred from Tennessee State University and is majoring in Psychology.

STUDY AWAY

HONORS STUDENTS SHARE THEIR JOURNEYS

A NATION DISCOVERED

An inaugural Honors study trip
reveals our nation's past and present
By Jake Garrette

Garrette is a junior Buchanan Fellow majoring in Aerospace and assistant editor of Collage: A Journal of Creative Expression.

In a time of divisive political dealings and an uncertain national identity, many Americans are motivated to become familiar with the way our government functions, its origins, its values, and the driving forces upon which it was founded. Some Americans at this critical juncture are making a conscious decision to step out of the shadows of ideological division born on false information and slanted perspectives and to understand what our federal government truly is and how it came to be.

Sparked in part by the current political climate, Honors Dean John R. Vile and event coordinator Susan Lyons organized a 2017 spring break journey

through Virginia and the District of Columbia, zigzagging to historical sites along the way. Twenty-five student participants learned about the founding principles of the United States government during the odyssey to the U.S. Capitol and to the homes of those who built the nation.

"I thought it was exhausting," joked Vile, whose area of academic expertise includes the founding period of American history and the Constitution. The spring break trip was a tie-in to Vile's class on constitutional legacy and the founding fathers, a course developed specifically to pair with the first-time trip.

During the week-long trek, students were not only treated to D.C. but also to the homes of Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, George Washington, James Monroe, and George Mason, along with visits to the University of Virginia, Colonial Williamsburg, and St. John's Church—the site of Patrick Henry's famous "Give me liberty, or give me death!" speech. The itinerary was designed to shift focus to the making of the Constitution rather than the modern sights and sounds of the government in D.C.

"From what I'm hearing, the students enjoyed it," Vile said. "I was surprised by how much Mr. Jefferson

became a focus of the trip."

Indeed, Jefferson's fingerprints seemed all over Virginia—and not just at his homes Poplar Forest and Monticello. Madison's house Montpelier and

the University of Virginia's famous Rotunda bore the influence of Jefferson and his vision of America, to say nothing of his ideas of liberty ingrained in our society.

"The students were as enjoyable as the experiences," said Linda Vile, wife of the Honors College dean.

Lyons conceived the idea of a study class/visit to Virginia and Washington, D.C., several years ago, and she and Vile carefully planned the excursion. The trip "turned out exactly how I thought it would. I was so proud of our students and their enthusiasm," she said.

"The itinerary was designed to shift focus to the making of the Constitution rather than the modern sights and sounds of the government in D.C."



True Blue at Mount Vernon

If student response is an accurate indicator of the quality of the trip, the planners did their job well.

"I think it was a really incredible experience," said Meghan Miller, a student who participated in the class. "It was very inspirational."

Hannah Hall, a sophomore Biology major, had praise for the tour guides, "I enjoyed the fact that we actually learned stuff. The guides gave us so much information that we would never have learned ourselves. For me, they made the trip what it was."

In addition to regular tours of the founders' homes and D.C., students were also treated to a private tour of the U.S. Capitol courtesy of retired Rep. Bart Gordon ('71), an MTSU alum and Democrat from Murfreesboro. This visit was considered a favorite by many due to its exclusivity.

"My favorite part was the time [during the private tour] that we sat watching the House in session. It was exciting to see government in action rather than just hearing about it in class," said Kami Dyer, a sophomore Honors student.

"I learned a lot about the values that the founders held and how they incorporated that into the new nation," Dyer added.

Vile's and Lyons' experiment, much like our founders' experiment in liberty many years ago, was a rousing success, and it provided new insights for the students who participated. It proved to be an effective way of becoming more informed, and the students who gave up their spring break for the pursuit of knowledge are perhaps better citizens for it. [H](#)



Sarah Warner meets a Highland sheep



Ray Baird as Patrick Henry at St. John's Church cemetery



Colonial Williamsburg silversmith



At the Metro station



The Matrimandir, an edifice of spiritual significance for practitioners of integral yoga in Auroville

BEING IN THE KALEIDOSCOPE

An Honors thesis explores
culture shock and self-discovery

By Melinda Lewis

Lewis is a 2017 Honors graduate who majored in Global Studies and English.

My plan was to write my Honors thesis about the culture of Bengaluru, India, following my study abroad semester. In 2014, I had studied abroad in Thailand, so I thought I was prepared for the roadblocks, culture shock, and other challenges that might interfere with this project. I wanted to have an understanding of Indian culture and share that information to combat pervading stereotypes, but I wasn't prepared to come to terms with my own limitations and preconceptions during the experience.

As soon as I landed in Bengaluru, I was gripped harder by culture shock than I had ever experienced.

I was barraged by noise and air pollution from the traffic that comes with a population of more than 8 million inhabitants. In my utter disorientation, I clung to the idea that I could understand the culture well enough to write about it for others, even if it was just from my own biased understanding. I wrote about this disorientation in my thesis, "Understanding Bengaluru: A Guidebook to the City and the Self."

It's like a kaleidoscope, where the picture changes while you're still trying to understand what you're seeing. My desire to understand things in order to share that understanding with others made this rapid change even more disconcerting, and though I fought it, I quickly learned that the task I aimed to complete was out of the question.



Clockwise from top left:

Melinda Lewis is welcomed to Indian society.

Cow roaming freely in the city

The Shiva Statue, which visitors touch for a blessing

Ceremonial burning at the Shiva Temple in Bengaluru

“As soon as I landed in Bengaluru, I was gripped harder by culture shock than I had ever experienced. I was barraged by noise and air pollution.”

I experienced a great deal of tension with certain areas of culture. During times of discomfort, I realized I faced the very prejudicial thoughts I hoped to address and correct in my thesis. I was deeply disappointed in myself and my own lack of adaptability, but this was an opportunity to learn while living outside my comfort zone in a mind that felt foreign to me. I learned that prejudice comes out of low moments and a baser need to blame and simplify, to make sense of a reality that might seem incomprehensible in the moment.

I still believe cross-cultural exposure is an effective way to work through prejudices, but participants must first confront preconceived cultural oversimplifications. There is a process of navigating through a sort of

personal muck to get to the other side, where we are better equipped to address and challenge stereotypes and prejudices.

My thesis became more of a personal reflection than I planned. I discarded any illusions of objectivity and analyzed the areas of living in Bengaluru where I felt the most tension. Through writing about social issues, population and poverty, environment and pollution, transportation, and the name change from Bangalore, I gained perspective into why I felt such discomfort and how others might feel similarly. Ultimately, I still encourage travel in spite of the potential culture shock. It is not discomfort we should fear, but our potential to avoid situations in which we are stretched and shaped in ways out of our control. [H](#)

MY YEAR IN JAPAN

From shrines to spiders, living overseas offers a succession of learning experiences

By Rebecca Clippard

Clippard, a senior Buchanan Fellow majoring in Foreign Languages and serving as managing editor of Collage: A Journal of Creative Expression, received a Phi Kappa Phi Study Abroad Scholarship.

During my year-long study abroad, a group of local and international friends and I took weekend trips to Kyoto, one of Japan's oldest cities. The first time we went, I fell in love with the thousand-year-old city. Japanese students guided us, and we stopped to take photos of the many amazing statues and shrine entrances. The Yasaka-Jinja is the best. The iconic red gates are so much larger in real life than in a photo, and the carvings are breathtaking.

Living in Japan was a succession of learning experiences. I enjoyed both the solemnity of the shrines as well as living day-to-day in a different country. My host mother would set out bowls of miso soup, steaming-hot rice, and sliced cucumbers and bananas, as well as dishes of yogurt, cereal, and grapes for breakfast. While I missed American favorites, I loved Okaasan's cooking. I tried everything at least once, which usually led to new favorite foods.


I was fascinated by more than the food. Japan's spiders are beautiful with their

The more I observed,
the more I felt
comfortable in Japan.

exoskeletons an iridescent green I'd never seen before. They hung lazily from telephone lines and fence posts as I walked along the road to the gates of Kansai Gaidai University in Hirakata, where I studied Japanese language

and culture. My commute took 20 minutes to walk to Kuzuha station, 20 minutes on a sub-express train, and 20 more minutes on foot. Sometimes I hummed the *Rocky* theme song as I climbed up some of the steeper hills, but mostly I took in the sights of early morning city life.

High schoolers with small, yellow flags guided elementary school students across traffic, while bicycles swerved up and down sidewalks onto busy roads. Pedestrians keep to the right of the sidewalk and bicyclists ride on the left, but if I forgot, a quiet bell would politely ring asking me to please move. I found myself fascinated by billboards and store signs, and I walked slower to try to read the language. The more I observed, the more I felt comfortable in Japan.

The university gave me a different sense of comfort. Entering the gates, I saw all the represented countries' flags in two semicircles along a courtyard, proudly showing the school's international status. In addition, I identified Russian, Spanish, Portuguese, German, and French languages as I walked into study rooms. Despite our diverse backgrounds and many different countries, everyone gathered together with a common purpose—our love of languages. 



Rebecca Clippard in Kyoto, Japan



At the peak of Mount Kongo, the highest mountain in Osaka



Japanese spiders



Clippard (center) and friend with host father Tetsuyuki Kanayama

STUDENT SERVICE

HONORS STUDENTS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES

MY SPRING BREAK STORY

Restoring dignity, trust, and love
to lepers in Kenya

Owen is a Transfer Fellow studying Biology (Pre-Med).

One of the greatest fears in my life is failing fully to see the bubble in which I live. Do I see the world for how it truly is or understand the lives that people actually live? How should I daily live my own life in service to others?

One day in 2004, my friend Peter Ochiel, a native of Kenya, was in the town of Mombasa and met a beggar—a leper. This crippled man had taken a two-hour bus ride from the rural, coastal town of Msambweni. More specifically, he traveled from a leper colony—a place called Tumbe, which in Swahili means “rejected.” This man came to Mombasa to beg on the weekends and then returned to the colony.

Ochiel felt compelled to help, moved his family to the remote area, and started a church, a farm, medical clinic, and school. Over 13 years later, the colony’s name has changed from “The Rejected” to “Blessed Camp.”

Through this ministry and government help, the leprosy (caused by bacteria) has been cured, but the care must continue. Leprosy not only eats away one’s skin, but also destroys the nervous system. Living in mud and gravel huts, these 200-plus recovered leprosy victims still experience their toes and feet eaten away during the night by rats and chiggers. Without functional nerves to cause the appropriate pain-reflex



response, these victims have no ability during sleep to defend themselves from losing their digits. Ochiel’s team has since provided a largely successful solution of “sealing” their hut floors and walls with concrete to keep the pests out.


He also started a free medical clinic to help the leprosy victims. On spring break, I had the humbling privilege of helping

dress foot wounds, diagnose and treat malaria, and treat infections at the clinic.

Over time, some of the leprosy victims have married and had children and grandchildren. Ochiel started a primary school, and for one week our mission team had the honor to teach the students and cook a lunch of rice and beans—the children’s only meal of the day because of Kenya’s ongoing drought and famine.

Other volunteers and I partner with Ochiel to help break the cycle of begging by assisting development of micro-economies like farming, weaving, and sewing. We are trying to overcome hunger and heal and comfort bodies. We are also educating children, praying, and restoring dignity, trust, and love to a people once exiled and rejected.

Do I still live in a bubble? Perhaps. Am I more aware of the blindness of that bubble? Hopefully.

For more information, visit actionministrykenya.com, or email Robert Owen at rlo2e@mtmail.mtsu.edu. 

STUDENT RESEARCH

HONORS STUDENTS LOOK TO CHANGE THE WORLD

PARTNERSHIP PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES

MTSU undergraduates and European scientists
conduct liquid crystal research

By Randy Weiler

A unique partnership between Middle Tennessee State University and the Centre of Molecular and Macromolecular Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences is allowing MTSU undergraduate students to interact with European scientists to conduct National Science Foundation-funded research on liquid crystals. These fluids are the basis of modern display technology, commonly known as LCD technology.

This high-level research addresses the chemistry of boron clusters while contributing to the understanding of the physics of liquid crystal phases. It also produces materials of interest for LCD applications.

Jack Lasseter, 20, an Honors student and Professional Chemistry major, took his first international trip this summer as a visiting student at the Polish Academy of Sciences in Lodz. The Blackman High School graduate flew to Poland May 6 and remained until the project ended July 6.

Lasseter's role involved investigating the structure-property relationships in the utilized compounds.

"In my work, I am switching the 'tails' of certain liquid crystals around and observing how this change impacts the properties of the material," he said, adding that the changes relate to color, temperature ranges, and more.

According to Lasseter, his research exploring the structure-property relationships of highly quadrupolar liquid crystals allows for more precise and directed engineering of materials and additives for displays and other applications that involve manipulating light.

As part of a memorandum of understanding between MTSU and the Polish academy, the collaboration involves the exchange of personnel between the two institutions. Project leader is Professor Piotr Kaszynski, formerly of Vanderbilt University. He and MTSU Chemistry Professor Andrienne Friedli advise and mentor students. In the program's first year, five MTSU undergraduate Chemistry and Biochemistry students, several associated with the Honors College, also worked on group research projects in Murfreesboro.

The MTSU project has a unique organizational design in which research is performed by MTSU undergraduates with constant technical help from established scientists. Scientists visit from the Polish Academy of Sciences, which is similar to an American national laboratory such as Oak Ridge National Laboratory. Then, each summer an MTSU undergraduate researcher has the opportunity to travel to Lodz to work with Kaszynski and other Polish Academy of Science scholars, who had formerly visited MTSU. Lasseter made the maiden voyage.

"The language [barrier] was easily the hardest part of the whole adventure," Lasseter said. "It was strange being in a foreign country where I didn't speak the language very well at all. The signs, the letters, the television, the food labels are mostly gibberish, intermingled with bits of clarity. I got incredible practice and became reasonably good at communicating without much shared language—between hand signals,

12TH POSTERS AT THE CAPITOL SHOWCASES STUDENT RESEARCH

Five Honors students were among seven MTSU undergraduates who shared their research with legislators March 1 at the Tennessee State Capitol in Nashville. Joined by more than 60 of their peers from other Tennessee universities, MTSU researchers discussed their scholarship with state legislators during the 12th annual Posters at the Capitol.

The Posters at the Capitol event allows student researchers to visit with their state senators and representatives, while also enabling legislators to catch a glimpse of what students are pursuing during their academic careers.

Honors students Grayson Dubois, Brooke Fitzwater, Mary Beth Gormsen, Erin Herbstova, and Marilyn Kelley joined Scott Armstrong and Miranda Givens as representatives of MTSU.

Tom Cheatham, director of MTSU's Tennessee STEM Education Center, and Andrienne Friedli, director of special projects for the Undergraduate Research Center, coordinated the event. To learn more about MTSU research, visit mtsu.edu/research. [H](#)



Top: Jack Lasseter (r) and senior Kenya King listen as Chemistry Professor Andrienne Friedli provides instruction on liquid crystals in the MTSU laboratory.

Above: Marissa Williams watches as Professor Piotr Kaszynski (foreground) views liquid crystals through the microscope at MTSU. Visiting scholar Remek Zurawinski checks a sample as Jack Lasseter and visiting scholar Beata Lukasik watch.

my broken Polish, their broken English, a dash of Google Translate, and grit.

"Describing something as life-changing is difficult; there are not many situations that are objectively described as life-changing. In certain ways though, this opportunity has changed my life. I've learned a lot of tricks from the people in Poland, who often do things in such vastly different ways; I'd like to think I'm picking up this new way of thinking, at least to some extent." [H](#)



Representing MTSU at Posters at the Capitol are (l-r): front, Marilyn Kelley, Brooke Fitzwater, Miranda Givens, Erin Herbstova, and Mary Beth Gormsen; back, Grayson Dubois, Scott Armstrong, Andrienne Friedli, and Tom Cheatham. *Photo by Randy Weiler.*



ODK initiates and participants

ODK National Leadership Honor Society **Inducts 16**

The MTSU circle of Omicron Delta Kappa Leadership Honor Society (ODK) initiated 16 new student members March 2, following a record-breaking fall initiation of 65 students and faculty. ODK President **Connor McDonald**, also 2016–17 executive vice president of the Student Government Association, spoke on leadership.


New student initiates were **Pamela Bailey, Hannah Berthelson, Allison Bradford, Benjamin Burton, Ian Cabage, Nicole Chandler, Jonathan Ciecka, Rick Darr, Tatum England, James Green, Lauren Grizzard, Devyn Hayes, Kayla O'Connell, Wesley Riley, Sierra Sotelo,** and **Hannah Tybor.**

In addition to McDonald, ODK officers for the past academic year

were **Connor Moss**, vice president; **Kyra Boots**, student secretary; **Skylar Dean** and **Alex Knight**, project coordinators; **Matthew Hibdon**, national ODK liaison; **John R. Vile**, faculty advisor; **Philip E. Phillips**, faculty coordinator; and **Susan Lyons**, membership coordinator.

Omicron Delta Kappa, founded in 1914 and now over 300,000 members strong, is “the first college honor society of a national scope to give recognition and honor for meritorious leadership and service in extracurricular activities and to encourage development of general campus citizenship,” according to the odk.org website. The society recognizes achievement in the areas of scholarship; athletics; journalism,

speech and the mass media; creative and performing arts; and campus/ community service, social/religious activities, and campus government.

For more information about ODK, contact Susan Lyons, circle coordinator, at 615-898-5645 or susan.lyons@mtsu.edu. 




Benjamin Burton and Kyra Boots



ODK Drive-In Workshop

ODK national executive director **Tara S. Singer** (l) greets MTSU Omicron Delta Kappa circle members at ODK's Drive-In Workshop at the University of Memphis Feb. 4. Representing MTSU are (l-r) **Matthew Hibdon**, College of Liberal Arts advisor;

Susan Lyons, Honors College events coordinator; **Ryan Bearden**, Psychology; **Clorissa Campbell**, Biology; **Janie Kullmar**, Speech-Language Audiology and Pathology; and **David Hughes**, Political Science and Philosophy. 

ODK True Blue Leadership Day 2017

TBI director, state chief justice bring leadership perspectives to MTSU

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation director and the Tennessee Supreme Court chief justice stressed leadership qualities in talks with MTSU students, faculty, and staff at the Omicron Delta Kappa (ODK) True Blue Leadership Day.

MTSU alumnus Mark Gwyn, TBI director for 13 years, discussed the climate of the country toward law enforcement and job prospects in his session, "Leadership in Law Enforcement." State Chief Justice Jeff Bivins spoke on "Civility and Humility in Public Service: Are They Dying Characteristics?"

Other speakers for the daylong event, held April 7 in the Paul W. Martin Sr. Honors Building, were also noted practitioners from a variety of professions who shared

their leadership experiences with students and faculty:

Lindy Boots, human resources manager with Becton, Dickinson and Co. discussed the topic "What an HR Manager Wants You to Know About Interviewing."

Dusty Doddridge, assistant director with the MTSU Career Development Center, shared "Writing a Professional Resume."

Chris Ediger, leadership consultant and senior associate with GiANT Worldwide and founder of Go International, spoke on "Why 'Smarter' Isn't Always Better: The True Competitive Advantage That Will Set You Apart when Competing for a Job."

The ODK True Blue Leadership Day highlights the core values of MTSU's True Blue Pledge by

educating participants about multiple aspects of leadership. ODK is a national honor society that emphasizes both academics and leadership.

Approximately 125 students and faculty members participated in the annual event. [H](#)



MTSU ODK circle leaders (l-r) Philip E. Phillips, Susan Lyons, and Matthew Hibdon display MTSU ODK's 2016-17 Presidential Circle certificate. The certificate is awarded to circles who have received Distinguished Circle recognition for five years.

Clay Grant Brings VA Executive to MTSU to Speak on Trusted Leadership



MTSU students and staff heard a talk about "Trusted Leadership" from U.S. Navy veteran and VA executive Jennifer Vedral-Baron during a visit sponsored in part

by a Clay Grant from the national Omicron Delta Kappa (ODK) office.

Vedral-Baron, director of the Tennessee Valley Healthcare System within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, discussed situations she encountered during her career and how difficult it is to maintain integrity and trust. She fielded questions from audience members following her talk, held Jan. 26 in the Paul W. Martin Sr. Honors Building Simmons Amphitheatre.

With 30 years of military service before retiring in 2016, Vedral-Baron and her teams earned numerous awards during her outstanding military career. Honors included the Defense Superior Service Medal and Legion of Merit Award three times.

ODK National Leadership Honor Society, the University Honors College, and the Charlie and Hazel Daniels Veterans and Military Family Center sponsored the event. [H](#)

Photo by Eric Sutton



1



2



3



4

1. Deana Raffo speaks to the Institute of Leadership Excellence class on "Encourage the Heart."
2. Ronald Roberts, CEO of DVL Seigenthaler, challenges the ILE class.
3. ILE students maximize their lunch "break" by listening to Roberts speak as they eat catered box lunches.
4. Roberts stresses a point during his lunchtime ILE session.

Learning Leadership through Relationships

Students gain insight during week-long institute of leadership excellence

By Hannah Berthelson

Berthelson is a Buchanan Fellow majoring in Speech-Language Audiology and Pathology.

“The world moves at the speed of trust.” Retired Army Lt. Gen. Keith Huber, one of 12 speakers who visited the Institute of Leadership Excellence, paused for a moment as those simple, yet profound, words resonated throughout the Honors amphitheater.

As that singular sentence reached the 31 pairs of ears clinging to every word he spoke, I realized that within its context the world was moving very quickly for everyone in that classroom, at least for the five days that we spent together throughout the Institute of Leadership Excellence.

Within one week, an immense amount of trust developed between 31 students, three professors, and 12 guest speakers—a trust that grew into connections and relationships embodying the characteristics of leadership we had learned about each day throughout the course. Relationships. The concept of truly connecting with others was revisited again and again as a crucial foundation for leadership.

It all began on Monday, our first day of class that doubled as the much anticipated “Day We Get to Go Outside.” Despite having known each other for a meager five hours, all 31 students braved the uncertainty of a ropes course that required mental, physical, and emotional teamwork, which ultimately came to fruition in cheerful success and relieved laughter. We quickly learned that leadership is not a strict balance consisting of one leader directing a number of followers, but rather a conglomeration of people with varying talents, skills, strengths, and weaknesses coming together to solve problems and implement change as a team.

As we learned this through our own experiences, we were also fortunate enough to observe fluid, strong leadership and teamwork exemplified by our three professors. David Foote, associate dean of the

Jones College of Business, imparted an abundance of wisdom through his lectures on “The Art of Possibility.” He called attention to the necessity of grace and compassion when working with others in order to consistently understand who they are at that moment and who they have the potential to be in the future. Furthermore, he emphasized the fact that every individual is to be considered a contribution that adds value to each situation.

Deana Raffo, a Management professor, taught us that it is our values that motivate us as leaders and provide a point of commonality among members of a team, allowing for a greater shared vision overall. Management professor Earl Thomas instructed us on the basics of leaderships, including 10 very important truths to remember as a leader, and guided the class in the discussion of major points throughout the week. It was occasionally expressed that one professor did not agree with another, but what an example of harmonious leadership it was to watch how they worked together so seamlessly despite minor differences.

By the end of the week, it was clear what leadership, as well as the Institute of Leadership Excellence, is truly about: people. At the start of the course, our very first lecture included a quote by Margaret Wheatley: “In organizations, real power and energy is generated through relationships. The patterns of relationships and the capacities to form them are more important than tasks, functions, roles, and positions.”

The truth carried within that statement was fully realized by the finale of our time spent with each other through the Institute of Leadership Excellence. It was felt in every goodbye and exchange of contact information, in every hug and “see you soon.” For relationships built upon trust and authenticity are not easily abandoned, just as a team of genuine and motivated individuals is not easily disbanded. [t](#)

Discovering Campus Creative Expression on the *Collage* Staff

By Elisabeth Bradley

Amidst the turmoil of my classes, homework, job, and other activities, I find art a welcome respite. I often enjoy writing an occasional poem or drawing doodles in the corners of my papers, so discovering the amazing creativity of my peers this spring was a wonderful surprise.

Working for *Collage* was one of the most enjoyable experiences of my college career. The Spring 2017 edition showcased incredible works from a number of MTSU students. I was completely unaware of the fantastic talent that surrounded me every day on campus prior to my semester on staff.

Following a blind review of all spring submissions, the staff met to discuss and choose the work to be published. Then the staff cast secret ballots to choose award winners from the highest-scoring pieces in each category for poetry, prose, photography, and art. **Traci Cruey** and **Leah Bailey** captured the Martha Hixon Creative Expression Awards for literature, while **Anthony Alexander** and **Karlie Tankersley** won the Lon Nuell Creative Expression Awards for visual entries.



Members of the Spring 2017 *Collage* staff in attendance at the final editing meeting were (l-r): front, Matt Olive, Bronwyn Graves, Jake Garrette, Luke Judkins, Melinda Lewis, Grace Hollowell, Kaylee Schilling, and Kimi Conro; middle, Bell Doski, Kayleah Bradley, Megan Loveless, Hannah Tybor, and Aleah Grenier; back, Margaret Sanders, Lexi Norsby, J.T. Cobb, Lacey Kanipe, and Karin Albrecht.

About the Awards

Each semester the *Collage* staff participates in a blind grading process to select approximately 60 pieces for publication from the numerous submissions. The staff chooses Creative Expression Award winners from outstanding submissions from each of four areas: prose, poetry, art, and photography.



Poetry

Cruey, a third-year English doctoral student, won for her submission titled "Say Uncle." The personal poem features her uncle who suffers illness caused by coal mining and the difficulty family members have confronting mortality. Cruey said his recent knee surgery gone bad is what drove her to write the poem. "The image and his glib demeanor stuck with me," Cruey said of her uncle exhibiting the results of his surgery. Although her Ph.D. research mainly focuses on children and young adult literature, Cruey said she tries to find time to write creatively.



Contributors to the Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 issues of *Collage* are recognized at the annual *Collage* Celebration April 25 in the Martin Honors Building amphitheater.



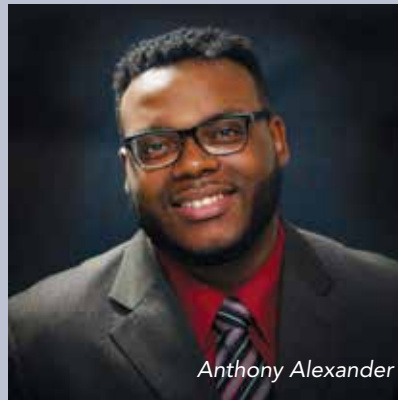
Luke Judkins, 2016–17 *Collage* editor-in-chief, introduces Fall 2017 editor-in-chief Kimi Conro.



Leah Bailey

Prose

Bailey submitted "The Bird," a short story that she called "an accumulation of many different thoughts." After looking at a photograph of a handcrafted bird, Bailey began to form the story. Having volunteered with disabled individuals, she feels "they are often misunderstood in society and have talents of their own." Bailey, who is from middle Tennessee and is currently employed at a private college, recently completed her master's degree in Media and Communication at MTSU and is working on a young adult novel and a series of short stories.



Anthony Alexander

Photography

Alexander's award-winning photograph is titled "Afro-Millennials Affection." The Recording Industry student started pursuing photography in 2014 after an impromptu trip to Chicago with a camera borrowed from a friend. His photograph was part of a series of images intended to promote self-love and the empowerment of African-American millennials. "I think it is very important for women to have self-love and never be afraid to embrace their inner and outer beauty," Alexander said. "I spend a lot of time and effort investing in creative art that not only I, but the world can enjoy as well. . . . Affection should be embraced, not submerged."



Karlie Tankersley

Art

Tankersley's painting, "Untitled," was inspired by a photograph she saw online. The original picture had a snake coming out of panties. "I love what each viewer pulls away from my piece. I like that the name doesn't explain the piece and that people take away so many different meanings behind it," Tankersley said. From Jackson, Tennessee, Tankersley is working toward a Bachelor of Fine Arts with an emphasis in painting and a minor in Entrepreneurship. [H](#)

[View Collage at mtsu.edu/collage](http://mtsu.edu/collage)



Presidents Day Open House Welcomes High School Students to Honors College

By Randy Weiler

One student flew from Colorado. Most of the high school students came from areas of Tennessee. The rest visited from surrounding states in the South and Midwest. In all, over 700 people attended the MTSU Honors College Presidents Day open house Feb. 20.

Prospective students learned that the Honors College fosters the academic excellence and nurturing environment of a small, select, private liberal arts college within the setting of a major university. It also provides expert faculty, unique curricular and extracurricular experiences, and *Collage*, an award-winning arts and literary magazine.

Attending a Mock Trial demonstration by MTSU students for the roomful of visitors and their parents, Cate Farone “loved it (courtroom atmosphere). I definitely want to be on the Mock Trial team.”

Farone, of Murfreesboro, who attended Father Ryan High School, said the February open house marked her “first official college visit,” though she has literally grown up at MTSU with parents— researchers and faculty members Tony and Mary Farone—who each have worked more than 20 years on campus.

Cate Farone has been awarded a Buchanan Fellows scholarship, the top academic award an MTSU freshman can receive, by the Honors College.

“Coming today, I definitely want to come here,” added Farone, who had an opportunity to talk with Connor McDonald, the 2016–17 Student Government Association executive vice president and Political Science major—the field she wants to pursue. “He was very interesting and helpful. I want to be a lawyer, and he told me about the law school process.”

Farone said she liked “how diverse it is here,” referring to people from “different backgrounds and parts of the country and the world coming together at MTSU.”

Honors College Dean John R. Vile was more than pleased with the turnout. “The Student Union ballroom was filled,” he said. “It’s been a great day.”

Admissions joined the Honors College in hosting the event. All of the University’s colleges, Housing and Residential Life, and the MTSU Parent and Family Association shared information with the prospective students and their families.

The visit included

- Tours—Walker Library, Aerospace air traffic control, Recording Industry facilities, Center for Innovation in Media, Media Arts mobile production lab, and more
- “Mad science” physics and Mock Trial demonstrations
- An option to attend the spring Honors Lecture Series, “Rhetoric in Contemporary Culture,” with Keel Hunt of The Strategy Group, who spoke on “Political Speech: How Candidates Win and Leaders Lead” [H](#)



Top: Honors Buchanan Fellow Connor McDonald, the 2016–17 Student Government Association executive vice president, welcomes high school students and their families to the Presidents Day open house.

Middle: Eric Klumpe, a Physics and Astronomy professor, demonstrates a straight-line wave to Honors College Presidents Day open house visitors during the fun with physics “mad science” demonstration in the Student Union Parliamentary Room.

Bottom: Honors College Dean John R. Vile greets prospective MTSU student Cameron Almonrode, who has questions about the program.

Photos by Andy Heidt



Spring 2018 Interdisciplinary Seminars

Folktales and Literature

UH 3500-001 • CRN# 14298
MW 12:40–2:05 • HONR 117
Martha Hixon

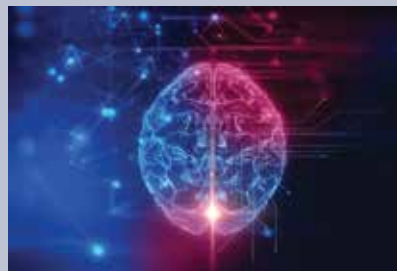
For hundreds of years, storytellers have spun tales of heroes and villains, magic and trickery, good rewarded and evil punished. How have these stories twisted and turned over the centuries, and how have they defined our expectations of narrative structure and the elements of “a good story”? Why do these 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 the various cultural contexts of what is commonly referred to as “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 also will examine contemporary fiction, film, art, and musical versions of some of the traditional

stories and 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 requirements and may count as 3 hours of upper-division English credit.

For more information, email Martha.Hixon@mtsu.edu.



Your Brain on Books: Reading Fiction and the Sciences of Mind

UH 4600-001 • CRN: 16926
TR 11:20 to 12:45 • HONR 116

What happens when we read fiction? What does it really mean to “get lost in a good book”? Can reading novels rewire our brain?

In this course, we will investigate how recent developments in the sciences of mind—cognitive

psychology, neuroscience, moral philosophy, anthropology, and sociology—can illuminate what happens when we read fiction, particularly novels.

We will employ selected British novels from the 19th–21st centuries as “case studies” to investigate such theoretical concepts as theory of mind, embodied cognition, mental time travel, and affective narratology. At the same time, we’ll explore some ideas about the evolutionary roots of the arts in general and about narrative, more particularly.

This Honors seminar is intended to have broad, cross-disciplinary appeal. While *Your Brain on Books* will be of immediate interest to students in English studies, it will also have relevance for students in psychology, sociology, philosophy, education, and anthropology, as well as for any students who “like to read” and are curious about the power of fiction and its wider role in human experience.

Email Maria.Bachman@mtsu.edu for further information. [H](#)

Student Accomplishments

Caitlin Couch (Marketing) was invited to join a select group of female students who participated in the second Rutherford Athena Leadership Forum March 31. The forum is a partnership between Jones College of Business and the Rutherford Cable women's leadership organization.

Emily Drew (Photography) is pictured below with an exhibit of images she took while studying abroad in South Korea. The exhibit was held in the student gallery of the McFarland Building Feb. 1–10. Drew studied abroad with financial assistance from a Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship.

Devyn Hayes (Biology) received the Freeman P. Jordan Scholarship from the College of Basic and Applied Sciences. She also served with MTSU's Global Brigades team in Nicaragua for a week in May. Honors students Kami Dyer and Madyson Middleton also participated in the service trip, along with Erin Herbstova (not pictured).

Joy Shind (Art Education) received the Athena Return to the Workforce Non-Traditional Scholarship, awarded to a Rutherford County woman who is at least five years past high school graduation and is pursuing an associate's or bachelor's degree. The award was presented at an April 11 Rutherford Cable breakfast meeting.



Caitlin Couch



Joy Shind



Emily Drew with an exhibit of her photographs



Devyn Hayes and the Global Brigades in Nicaragua

SPRING 2017 URECA AWARDS

Devin Adcox, Anthropology
Kyra Boots, Biology
Emily Brackett, Forensic Science
Kathryn Brittain, Biology
Jennifer Crow, Sociology
Paige Fairrow-Davis, Exercise Science
Nolan Jolley, Animal Science
Lauren Morris, Psychology
Sydney Smith, Physics
Kimberly Warren, Forensic Science

SUMMER 2017 URECA AWARDS

Muhammad Ali, Biology
Kyra Boots, Biology
Benjamin Burton, Physics and Astronomy
Kirsten Cunningham, Biochemistry
Brooke Fitzwater, Biology
Catherine Latham, History
Madyson Middleton, Biology
Sabrina Spicer, Biochemistry
Andrew Swehla, Biology
Emma Williams, Recording Industry

SPRING 2017 SCHOLARS WEEK WINNERS

COLLEGE OF BASIC AND APPLIED SCIENCES

UNDERGRADUATE FIRST PLACE

Samantha Addis (Geosciences), "Analysis of Thecamoebian Assemblages in Fall Creek Falls State Park"

Melissa Lobegeier (faculty sponsor, Geosciences)

UNDERGRADUATE TIE FOR SECOND PLACE

Darcy Tabotabo (Biology), "Assessment of Anti-Herpes Simplex Virus Type 1 Activity in *Bidens biternata* and *Mangifera performis*"

Stephen Wright (faculty sponsor, Biology)

Ashley Corson (Chemistry) and **Scott Armstrong** (Chemistry), "Characterization and Structure-Activity Relationship of an Antimicrobial Peptoid against the Fungi *Cryptococcus neoformans*"

Kevin Bicker (faculty sponsor, Chemistry)

UNDERGRADUATE THIRD PLACE

Mahmuda Akter (Chemistry), "Investigating the Gender Bias of Cryptococcosis Using Differential Gene Expression Analyses"

Erin McClelland and **Rebecca Seipelt-Thiemann** (faculty sponsors, Biology)

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

UNDERGRADUATE FIRST PLACE

Joy Shind (Art), "Promoting Global Understanding: An In-Depth Study of the Neo-Classical Frescoes Located at Villa Di Geggiano, Siena Italy"

Debrah Sickler-Voigt (faculty sponsor, Art)

UNDERGRADUATE SECOND PLACE

Calla Sharp (Elementary and Special Education), "A Child's World: A Qualitative Study of the Social and Cultural Construct of Kindergarten Children"

Jane Seok Jeng Lim and **DeArris Boyd** (faculty sponsors, Elementary and Special Education)

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

UNDERGRADUATE FIRST PLACE

Kelsey Massey (Global Studies and Geography), "Select Ethnic Enclaves and Their Cultural Indicators in Nashville, Tennessee: Nolensville Road"

Doug Heffington (faculty sponsor, Global Studies and Geography)

COLLEGE OF MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT

UNDERGRADUATE FIRST PLACE

Cassidy Johnson (Recording Industry), "Ecocriticism: An Allegorical Interpretation of the Environmentalism Movement in *Godzilla*"

Joan McRae (faculty sponsor, Foreign Languages and Literature)

RAP ATT



ENTION

A man with dreadlocks and a beard, wearing a red t-shirt, is looking upwards in a lush green forest. The background is filled with tall trees and sunlight filtering through the leaves.

**Rising popularity
no big deal for
road manager turned
rapper nobigdyl.**

By Maz Rodriguez
and Marsha Powers

HE GETS POSITIVE REVIEWS FROM SOCCER MOMS, KIDS, HIP-HOP HEADS, NON- BELIEVERS, AND PASTORS.



Above: *Canopy* album cover

Previous page: Dylan Phillips
Photo by Anthony Ferrel

A self-described “rapper influenced by the storytelling of poetry and folk music,” Dylan Phillips, known as nobigdyl., is making his mark in the rap world by differentiating himself from other acts. Audiences are taking notice of his unique focus on lyricism and content—so much so, that his album and debut retail release, *Canopy*, which dropped Feb. 3, reached No. 7 on the iTunes hip-hop charts, an amazing feat for an independent artist with no major label backing against some of the hottest artists with an abundance of publicity.

NOBIGDYL.

Dylan and his wife, the former Chelsea Fleet, who were both Buchanan Fellows, began their tenure at MTSU in 2009. If their names sound familiar, it may be because they were the centerpieces of a Spring 2015 *Honors Magazine* feature, “Rings of Honor,” outlining their unique relationship: Chelsea and Dylan were the first Buchanan Fellows to marry one another.

Since 2015, life has changed dramatically for the couple. Our last article documente Dylan's marriage proposal, Chelsea's health, and touched on Dylan's transition from a road manager for a rapper to a budding music career under the moniker nobigdyl. Chelsea, who suffers from Crohn's disease, which at times has left her bound to a wheelchair, is doing much better these days. “Last year, I was officially in remission,” she said. “The disease isn't gone, but right now there are virtually no symptoms. I haven't had to use my chair in years, and I thank God for that.”

While Chelsea's health is on the upswing, Dylan's music career is as well. After graduation and getting married, the couple focused on music and have become incredibly successful in the endeavor.

In addition to nobigdyl.'s success on the hip-hop charts, he also founded indie tribe., which is an artist collective run by Dylan and Chelsea comprised of nobigdyl., Mogli the Iceburg, and Jarry Manna. “After we got married, we turned a spare room into a recording studio and started the company,” Dylan said. “We do everything together—book shows, handle merchandise, come up with marketing schemes, and even record together.” The couple hopes to parlay their company into an imprint record label in the future.

Dylan's' music has been met with positive reviews from people from a wide demographic. He gets positive reviews from soccer moms, kids, hip-hop heads, non-believers, and pastors. Comments left on his social media profiles demonstrate his widespread appeal.



Above: nobigdyl. performing
Photo by Anthony Ferrel



Children at City Church, the local church Dylan and Chelsea attend, tell him how much they love “Purple Dinosaur,” the song that seems to be the favorite among his youngest fans. Trevor Atwood, a 2000 MTSU alumnus and pastor at City Church, said, “My highest endorsement of *Canopy* and nobigdyl. is this: My two youngest sons go to bed every night listening to *Canopy*. They know every word.”

Recalling the words of Scottish writer and politician Andrew Fletcher, “Let me make the songs of a people, and I care not who makes its laws,” Atwood added, “Music has a way of shaping what we think and believe in the realm of morality, ethics, philosophy, and theology. In all these categories, as a father, I’m delighted to have Dylan’s lyrics and

beats forming all of those things in my sons, even as they sleep.”


As a longtime fan of hip-hop and rap, Atwood said that nobigdyl. isn’t “just another rapper, he’s a lyricist. His lyrics are layered with meaning and create pictures in the listener’s mind that aren’t soon forgotten. *Canopy* is everything I appreciate about art—nobigdyl. tells a story from the first to the last track that’s personal, yet universal, and acknowledges both immanent and transcendent truth.”

Dylan has an upcoming showcase for record labels and the future is looking bright for him. “Our desire is to use this music, this company, this collective, and our entire lives to show people how much they need God and how sufficient He is to meet that need,” Chelsea said. Even the

Former Buchanan Fellows Dylan and Chelsea (Fleet) Phillips

Photo by All of the Stars Photography

name nobigdyl.—with its lowercase stylization and a period—“represents the fact that we are nothing without Christ, dependent on Him, and in need of God who is much bigger than us.”

The sky is the limit when it comes to Dylan and Chelsea, and nobigdyl.’s popularity is quickly growing. For the chance to say “you knew him when,” nobigdyl. can be found at nobigdyl.com, on Instagram and Twitter at @nobigdyl, and on Facebook at facebook.com/nobigdyllie. 



DREAMING OF PRODUCING MUSIC

Alumnus Dylan Phillips is not the only Honors Recording Industry student in recent years to focus on hip-hop. Senior Anthony Williams, a former School of Music student turned Audio Production major, says he is “very much interested in electronic music and the hip-hop beat scene that has taken off in Los Angeles and other areas of the world.”

Williams’ Honors thesis creative project, which earned him the 2017 Ingram-Montgomery Research Scholarship, involves delving deeply into the album *You’re Dead!* by the artist Flying Lotus, an eclectic musician mixing hip-hop, jazz, soul, and electronic funk. To complete his thesis and create his own work of art, Williams will finely dissect the album—look at the production techniques and different rhythms and harmonies used to create feelings and

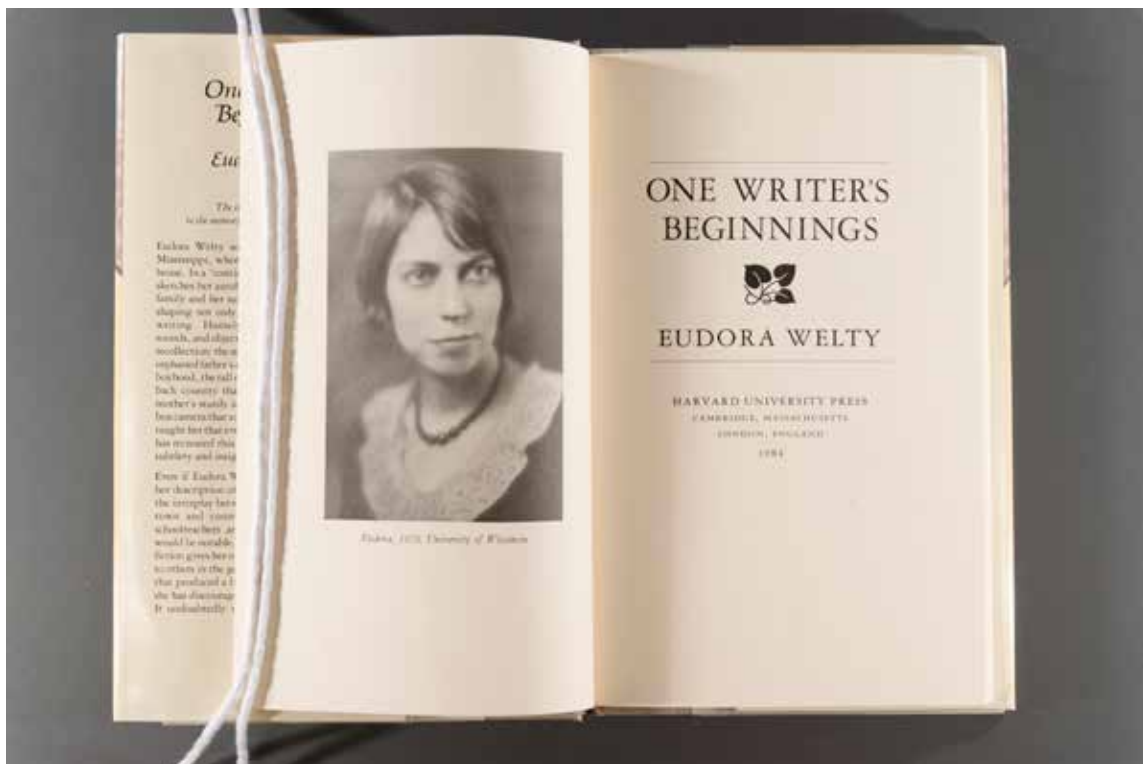
moods. He will then use some of the ideas to create his own piece of art.

The concept for *You’re Dead!* is sound-tracking the point of death and what happens afterward, according to Williams. His project will relate to dreaming from the point of falling asleep and what happens next. “The similarity between Flying Lotus’s album and my project is that [death and dreaming] are both metaphysical states that a person is in; even some of the sounds will be the same because death, heaven, and dreaming are things that are intangible.”

Williams is undertaking his ambitious creative project with the assistance of thesis advisor Misty Jones. “We’re both analysis geeks,” she said. “We joke in my office—we listen to songs, and I’ll say, ‘I wonder if this symbolizes this,’ and our brains explode. We have the same mindset.”

Williams’ plans for his thesis and beyond are ambitious. “I’d like the finished thesis to be my first actual release as a producer. My minor is Entrepreneurship, and I want to eventually own my own business. In the future, I’d like to own a record label—build up and work with other artists.”

Forced into the school band in sixth grade by his mother, Williams says he quickly fell in love with playing music and has since become passionate about producing music. “My passion isn’t just making music, it’s the music industry in general. This [thesis] project is so great because it’s half and half of what I love. I love listening to music, and I also love making music.” 🎧



Eudora Euphoria

Rare collection of writer Welty leads down a path of discovery

By Megan Donelson

Donelson is working on her Ph.D. in English at MTSU.



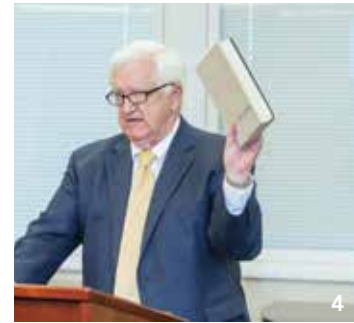
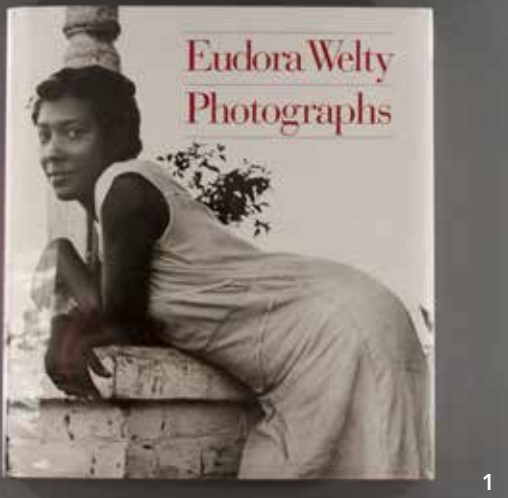
In January, I was given the opportunity to work as a research assistant to Philip E. Phillips, English professor and University Honors College associate dean. The primary task for the semester was to put together an exhibition of rare books by Mississippi author Eudora Welty. My first step was to get to know Welty; I had a short time to become as much of an expert on her life and work as possible. The materials for the exhibit would come from the collection of Dr. J. Lee Owen, a retired pediatrician who had practiced medicine for 50 years in Jackson, Mississippi—Welty’s hometown. Since I had studied museum exhibit design, I was delighted to take on this project.

Owen and his wife Sophia were familiar with Welty’s work of course. But, one year for his birthday, friends gave Owen a copy of Welty’s Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *The Optimist’s Daughter*, signed by the author and inscribed to him personally. By Owen’s own account, he was “hooked.” He began to collect first editions and rare printings of Welty’s work, many of them signed by the author herself.

At the time, I wasn’t exactly a Welty scholar. I had studied William Faulkner during my M.F.A. studies and was familiar with some of the expectations

readers and scholars have about Southern writers, but had not read much of Welty’s work. I started with Suzanne Marr’s biography of Welty, and I dove into Welty’s writing, devouring *The Optimist’s Daughter*, her novella *The Robber Bridegroom*, her memoir *One Writer’s Beginnings*, and many of her short stories. I also looked at popular criticism of Welty’s various novels and stories to familiarize myself with critical perspectives on her work.

Left: Memoir, *One Writer’s Beginnings*



Part of the Dr. J. Lee Owen Collection: (1) *Eudora Welty Photographs* and (2) a 1920 illustrated volume of *St. Nicholas*. (3) Dr. Michael Kreyling. (4) Dr. J. Lee Owen at the opening program.

Keen Observation

Welty is perhaps best known for her short story, "A Worn Path," which generations of students have read in high school and college literature courses. The story narrates the experiences of Phoenix Jackson, an elderly African-American woman, as she makes the difficult journey into town to pick up medication for her grandson. Welty is also known for her many literary awards, including not only the Pulitzer Prize but also the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the French Legion of Honor, among many, many others. Most readers note that her characters come to life on the page; Welty attributed this to her keen power of observation, which was intricately related with her work as a photographer. She worked for the Works Progress Administration in the early 1930s, and many of her most famous photographs were taken during her travels for that position.

One of Welty's greatest contributions to American literature was her philosophy of how place influences the writer. She objected to the way in which critics often characterized Southern writers, portraying their place of birth as a limitation. Welty had no use for these stereotypes and saw place as a tool that the writer could use to explore the universal concerns of all human beings: love, family, and the passage of time, among others. Welty felt deep ties to her home state, and despite sometimes being disappointed in the political atmosphere in Mississippi, she always returned home after her many travels.

(5) At Bowen's Court, County Cork, Ireland, 1950s (from the original negative, 52 copies of this photograph by Welty were printed to accompany the deluxe edition of *Photographs*). (6) Welty's home. (7) Megan Donelson, Mary Alice White, Susan Lyons, and Philip E. Phillips.

Based on what I had learned about this fascinating writer, I came up with a series of themes for the exhibit that would allow us to showcase a variety of Welty's passions and interests. My aim was to show Welty in all of her roles: writer, teacher, traveler, philosopher, and beloved friend. Phillips and I worked together to adapt final versions of these themes for the exhibit.

After developing an understanding of Welty's work and its significance, my next task was to familiarize myself with Owen's collection. The Owens welcomed me into their home, where I worked to create a detailed inventory of the items. I carefully recorded publication information and any relevant details about books, periodicals, newspaper clippings, and other miscellaneous items related to Welty. With a complete inventory, I selected items from the collection and assigned them to individual display cases in the Special Collections gallery in the James E. Walker Library, where the exhibition would be on display. With Phillips' help, I continually shifted these items around, with some additions being made just days before our opening event. The collection contains so many fascinating items that the most difficult task was narrowing down what could be displayed without overwhelming the viewer.

Bringing Welty to Life

During this process, I had the opportunity to travel to Welty's hometown with Phillips, his wife Sharmila Patel, and Honors College event coordinator Susan Lyons. We visited Welty's home on Pinehurst Street. The family had moved into the house when Welty was 16 years old, and she lived there for the rest of her life. We were honored to be given a private tour by Mary Alice White, one of Welty's nieces, who shared personal memories of her beloved aunt along the way. Walking through the house brought to life the mental images I'd formed of Welty: I could imagine her visiting with friends in the front room, shuffling through drafts on the dining room table, or rearranging the books that covered every flat surface to make room for visitors to sit down. The lavish garden bears a striking resemblance to the one in *The Optimist's Daughter*; Laurel's mother's favorite rose, lovingly referred to as Becky's Climber in the novel, was even inspired by a particular climbing rose that Welty's mother favored. We were in awe of the small details of Welty's everyday life that had been preserved (the original kitchen sink, souvenirs of her travels, a bottle of her favorite whiskey on the buffet) and felt her presence throughout the house.

One important stop on our trip was the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, where archivist Forrest Galey and White helped us select images from the archives to use in our exhibit, including both family photos and Welty's famous photographs of rural Mississippians. Galey shared her own memories of Welty's sense of humor, and with each story Welty seemed to me less like a mythic figure of literary greatness (though she was that, too) and more like a friend—Eudora.

Before leaving Jackson, we visited Welty's grave, which is not far from her home. Her headstone is inscribed with a quotation from *The Optimist's Daughter*: "For her life, any life, she had to believe, was nothing but the continuity of its love."

Back on campus, I worked closely with the MTSU Special Collections staff, Alan Boehm and Susan Hanson, who taught me how to create labels and other texts that viewers would read as they moved through the exhibit. Phillips and Boehm provided editing and




formatting advice, while I helped Hanson arrange the items and labels in the gallery cases. This was a fascinating process, and I learned a great deal about spacing and arrangement of items from Hanson.

On the day of our opening event, I had the opportunity to meet two of the Owens' four children and to give the Owens a private tour of the exhibit before it opened to the campus community. It was wonderful to see how pleased they were with the exhibition and to hear Owen tell the story at the opening event of how he began collecting Welty's works. I also enjoyed Vanderbilt professor Michael Kreyling's presentation on Welty's literary career,

focusing on the development of her persona as revealed in the many iconic portraits of her taken by famous photographers.

At the official opening reception, I proudly watched faculty, staff, students, and members of the MTSU community stroll through Special Collections, stopping to marvel at particularly

rare items and to read the explanations I had written. I also was honored to show the exhibit to several close friends and colleagues—and to watch the Owens point out special items to their daughters, as well as to MTSU students.

Through my work on this exhibition, I gained hands-on experience in exhibit design and installation, and it has been my pleasure to work with all of the individuals across campus who helped to bring this exhibition together. Most of all, it has truly been a gift to learn about Eudora Welty's life and work. I hope to use what I've learned this semester to design future events and opportunities for students to learn more about our great American writers. 

*"... with each story
Welty seemed to me
less like a mythic figure
of literary greatness . . .
and more like a friend."*



John M. Sloop



Ken Paulson



Mary Evins



Keel Hunt



Odie Lindsey



Frank Dobson



John R. Vile



Thomas J. Jurkanin



Preston MacDougall



Tina Johnson

MTSU Honors Lecture Series Focuses on Rhetoric

"Rhetoric in Contemporary Culture," the Spring 2017 Honors Lecture Series, was planned by Philip E. Phillips, Honors College associate dean and professor of English, along with Kaylene Gebert, professor of Communication Studies and Organizational Communication. The weekly series began Monday, Jan. 23, with the course introduction by Phillips.

John M. Sloop, professor of Communication Studies and associate provost for digital learning at Vanderbilt University, delivered the keynote lecture on "Sex, Ghosts, and Soccer: A Case Study in the Contextual Critique of Public Argument." Sloop also met with a group of students, faculty, and staff informally at a reception prior to the lecture.

Ken Paulson, dean of MTSU's College of Media and Entertainment, delivered the Feb. 6 lecture titled "Music Matters: Free Speech and Music Censorship."

Mary Evins, associate professor of History and coordinator of the American Democracy Project at

MTSU, presented "Civil Discourse as Core Academic Value and Core American Value" Feb. 13.

Keel Hunt, president and founder of the Strategy Group in Nashville and a member of the Honors College Board of Visitors, spoke on "Political Speech: How Candidates Win and Leaders Lead" Feb. 20.

Odie Lindsey, senior lecturer of Vanderbilt University's Center for Medicine, Health, and Society, lectured on "Writing the War at Home: Postwar Fiction and the Legacy of Trauma" Feb. 27.

On March 13, **Frank E. Dobson Jr.**, associate dean of students and director of the Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center at Vanderbilt University, spoke on "The Rhetoric of Race: Black Lives Matter." Honors College Dean **John R. Vile** lectured on "The Rhetoric of the 2016 Presidential Election" March 20, and Criminal Justice associate professor **Thomas J. Jurkanin** presented "The Current State of Police in Society" March 27.

Chemistry professor **Preston MacDougall** discussed the "Rhetoric of Climate Change" on April 3. And, on April 10, **Newtona (Tina) Johnson**, an English professor and interim vice provost for academic affairs, presented the final faculty lecture of the series on "The Rhetoric of Belonging and Its Impact within Higher Education."

The series also included thesis presentations by Honors students **Ryan Bearden**, **Brandon Ingram**, and **Ginny Whaley**.

The long-running lecture series features focused topics and presenters from multiple disciplines on and off campus. A required class (UH 3000) for students graduating from the Honors College, the series is also free and open to the public. Focusing on a primary theme, weekly presenters provide perspective based on their own field of study and research.

For more information about the lecture series or MTSU's Honors College, call 615-898-2152. [t](#)



Visiting Artist's Seminar

Photographer Natalie Fobes, a Pulitzer Prize finalist who has shot assignments for *National Geographic*, *Smithsonian*, *Audubon*, and other major magazines, poses with students from her Spring 2017 Visiting Artist's Seminar "Insightful Portrait" in the McFarland gallery. Class participants were (l-r) Angelina Marsella, Fobes, Meagan McPherson, Benjamin Kautzky, Jonathan Hartzell, Ava Baghaevaji, Nathan Wahl, Vann Tate, and Priyanka Modi. [H](#)

Honorary Gavel

Rebecca Seipelt-Thiemann, 2016–17 Honors Council chair, receives a gavel commemorating her tenure as chair from Honors Dean John R. Vile (l) and Associate Dean Philip E. Phillips. [H](#)



Pi Day

Associate Dean Philip E. Phillips (l-r), Honors College event coordinator Susan Lyons, and Dean John Vile celebrate Pi Day, March 14, with an assortment of pies for students to sample. [H](#)



Buchanan Fellowship Imparts Sense of Confidence and Value Amidst a Wall of Ivy

“Like Buchanan,
perhaps,
I believe that
as a society we
sit on a wealth
of unmined
potential.”

Kaitlin Beck (Economics and Foreign Language, '12), an editorial board member on the 84th volume of the *University of Chicago Law Review*, won the Grand Prize in the Marshall Shulman *Criminal Law Journal* Writing Competition this year, and her comment on federal sentencing is forthcoming in that journal. She and her partner won first place in the law school's 2016–17 Edwin W. Hinton Moot Court Competition. After law school graduation, Beck began clerking in August for U.S. District Judge Sheryl H. Lipman in west Tennessee.

Beck recorded the following reflections following a spring Public Choice class at the University of Chicago Law School.

By Kaitlin Beck

“And then we have James Buchanan. He went to . . . Eastern Kentucky Teachers College, I think it was . . .”

My hand shot up.

“He went to Middle Tennessee Teachers College, which is now Middle Tennessee State University.”

“Oh—did you go there?”

“I was a Buchanan Fellow.”

Hand-raising isn't really the norm at the University of Chicago Law School—like any law school, most classes are conducted, famously or infamously, in the Socratic method. But this detail of James Buchanan's life is important to me.

As the professor explained, in a small detour, Buchanan was born in Murfreesboro and attended the teachers' college in his backyard. He then went on to the University of Chicago to receive his Ph.D. in Economics, to pioneer public choice theory with Gordon Tullock, and to win a Nobel Prize.



Kaitlin Beck, with friends, displays her first-place trophy for the University of Chicago Law School's Moot Court Competition.

Later in life, my professor continued, he was sort of a gruff, interesting man who thought that folks put too much of a premium on Ivy League institutions. This resulted, he thought, in a wealth of unmined potential, which led him to establish scholarships at schools like MTSU.

I feel a special connection to Buchanan, in part because of the similar trajectory of our lives. Like Buchanan, I grew up in Murfreesboro and attended the state university in my backyard. And, as I mentioned, I was a beneficiary of the Buchanan Fellowship. It was in an introductory Economics course I was required to take with my fellow Fellows that I became interested in studying economics, and it was partly out of a desire to later attend one of those Ivy League institutions that I changed my major. Then—in an almost laughable turn of events—I got into the University of Chicago Law School.

I say laughable because the University's Economics Department is considered the one of the world's


foremost, and the Law School is notorious among its peer schools for its almost unwavering “law and economics” approach. (In fact, my own Public Choice professor had just made a joke about how strange it was that only one of the previous four students on which he called had an undergraduate degree in Economics.

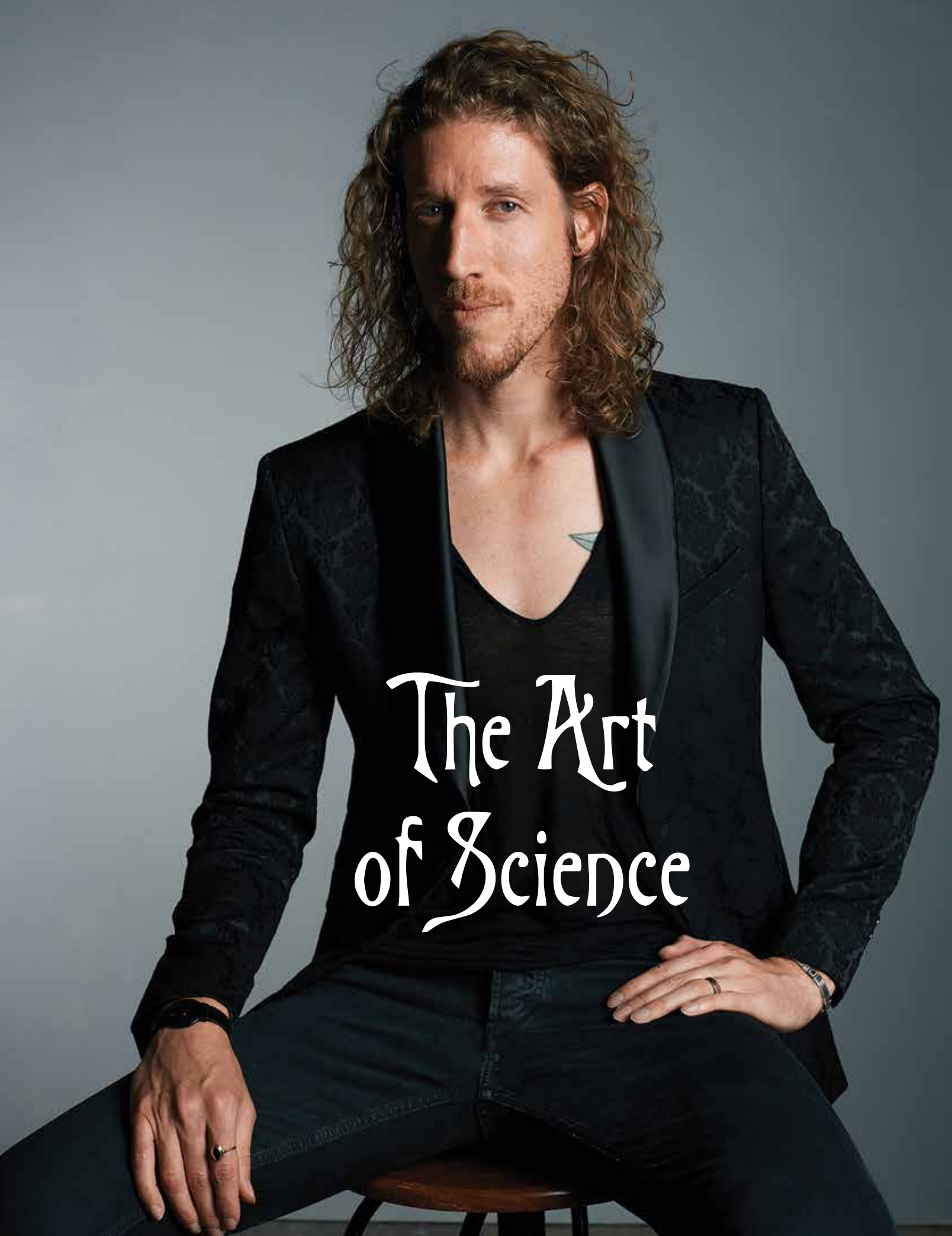
The UC law school is also in the T14, or top 14—a rough equivalent to the Ivy League undergraduate institutions (the cost of which, Buchanan might have said euphemistically, may not be in proportion to the utility derived). At the law school, however, I am surrounded by a large proportion of Ivy League graduates, and I have more than once felt out of my element.

Now finishing my third year of law school, my most recent triumph has been correcting my own personal “valuation.” Like Buchanan, perhaps, I believe that as a society we sit on a wealth of unmined potential, because we have narrowly defined personal success (including, but not

limited to, by the institutions with which we align ourselves). Individuals who fall outside of this narrow definition have a wealth of knowledge to offer, and those that don't recognize it (or live within the narrow confines of such a definition to begin with) lack important insights about the world.

Today, I felt particularly grateful to Dr. Buchanan for his part in making my—very protracted, and perhaps embarrassingly obvious—realization possible. By subsidizing my undergraduate education, he created a situation in which I felt valued and confident enough to invest heavily in my graduate schooling. And, by attending this particular graduate school, I was able to see for myself that no one has more to offer than the students at Middle Tennessee State University.

In the future, I hope to be able to share this insight with others. In the moment, I raised my hand. 



The Art
of Science

Professional and personal interests intertwine in Shulman's life as a medical physicist, photographer, and philanthropist

By Gina K. Logue
and Maz Rodriguez

An MTSU Honors College alumnus who has spent much of his life mining "The Gold of Africa" put some of it on display this spring.

Adam Shulman's first solo photography exhibition, entitled "The Gold of Africa," was on view April 1–May 6 at Tinney Contemporary Art Gallery in Nashville.

Shulman, a self-taught photographer, took the pictures while working as a medical physicist in Senegal, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Ghana, and Qatar. "The Gold of Africa" is a result of two divergent careers melded into a creative process. Each model in the exhibit, showcasing beautiful African bodies covered in what appears to be golden, cracked, desert earth, captivates the viewer with overwhelming power and beauty.

"I've always had a deep desire to create, to capture my own perception of beauty in the world. I've also been fascinated by science, questioning the world around me from an early age," he said. "Science and art, seemingly two divergent realms, have intertwined throughout my life. I've found science to be one of the purest forms of art."

Shulman spent over a year shooting and editing the "Gold" series, which consists of 19 images and five behind-the-scenes videos showing Shulman and

the models in action. He used a Mamiya RZ67 manual camera and 6-by-7-centimeter film, which he felt would result in larger, crisper images.

The dynamic images of black men and women decorated with gold in various positions on the bodies create a startling contrast as Shulman attempts to

convey that the "gold" in Africa is not in a precious metal, but in the hearts and souls of its people.

Shulman, a Nashville native, worked for more than seven years in medical philanthropy throughout Africa. He is the senior medical physicist at the National Center for Cancer Care and Research in Doha, Qatar, and a project director and trustee for Radiating Hope, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving radiation oncology around the world.

He also has advised leading cancer centers on African projects, including the Dana Farber Cancer Center and Massachusetts General Hospital, both in Boston, and the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center at the University of Texas medical school in Houston.

A proud product of the University Honors College, Shulman graduated summa cum laude from MTSU with a bachelor's degree in Physics in 2007. He chose to seek a career in medical physics after meeting his mentor, Victor Montemayor.

"I was unaware of the profession until I met Dr. Montemayor

"I've found
science
to be one of
the purest forms
of art."



“I have seen the beauty of life
in its purest form
in the people of Africa.”

in the Physics Department,” Shulman said. “At the time, I was a math major. He explained that the math I loved was created by physicists to describe the world around them. I took a Physics class and I was hooked!”


At MTSU, Shulman was runner-up for the Provost’s Award, awarded annually to the student who best demonstrates outstanding academic achievement through involvement in scholarly activities. He earned his master’s degree in Medical Physics from Vanderbilt University in 2009.

A few years after graduating from Vanderbilt, Shulman immersed himself in medical philanthropy. He was published multiple times in academic journals, initiated a free medical physics training program for physicists in Sub-Saharan Africa, discussed medical endeavors with the Senegalese Ministry of Health, and is the recipient of a multimillion-dollar National Institutes of Health grant. “My friends in New York City used to constantly laugh at me because of my uncanny abilities to multitask,” Shulman said. “In one day, I could do a sunrise photoshoot, spend a couple hours working on projects in Africa, then go to a casting.”

Over the past eight years or so, Shulman has been immersed in both fashion and medical philanthropy. He and his wife have lived between New York City, Dakar, Accra, and now Doha.

“Throughout my time in West Africa, I have seen the most beautiful aspects of the African people, style, culture, and land,” he said. “I’ve seen local African medical professionals take what little resources they have to save lives; families and friends share their homes, food, laughter and tears; a striking beauty in the human form as well as a harmony between the people and their environment. Through all of this, I have seen the beauty of life in its purest form in the people of Africa.”

Shulman currently has two photography projects in development. He is shooting one in the deserts of Qatar, tentatively titled “The Transfigurations of Earth.” The second project will be a juxtaposition of history and fashion, featuring Arabic women in the hijab as the focal point, and will combine painting and photography.

For further information on Shulman’s upcoming projects or his current collection, “The Gold of Africa,” visit adamaphotographyinc.com. 



AN HONOR AND A DUTY

Five directors and deans in Honors history each put in hard work and extra efforts to build success upon success

BY PATSY WEILER

Since its inception, the MTSU Honors College has had five talented, hard-working educators—

June McCash, Ron Messier, John Paul Montgomery, Phil Mathis, and John R. Vile

—who have guided it through nearly 45 years of change, challenge, and growth. All of them followed their own path at MTSU prior to bringing their unique touches to this job.

Attempting to fit this group into a single mold would be impossible. They hail from different parts of the country, taught different disciplines, and enjoyed diverse activities from riding motorcycles to playing ice hockey. What they all share is a deep, abiding love of lifelong learning and an ability to inspire and lead others by their hard work and commitment to the success of students.

Safe to say there are many bright fires of student success burning across the world that were lit under the watchful eyes of this quintet of amazing leaders.

JUNE MCCASH

Initially, when French professor McCash was selected in 1973 by then-president M.G. Scarlett to start an Honors Program (college status would come later), instead of bright fires there were only a few flickering flames of interest at best. Determined, the self-proclaimed Army brat set out to gather the necessary tinder to fuel the endeavor. With her pleasant but persistent efforts, McCash ignited a small but strong blaze of support.

"It was not an easy start, because I had to beg for faculty members without compensation from department chairs that were all men. Many would cross their arms and argue that they couldn't spare their very best professor—the one I always asked for—to teach 15 or 20 students at a time," recalled McCash, who then was one of the rare female MTSU directors. "Many resisted, and I had to win them over. Somehow we managed, and people began to see the value of the program."

The fledgling program's first home was a storage room on the third floor of the Boutwell Dramatic Arts building. While continuing to teach two courses, the Emory University graduate was a half-time director with a part-time secretary. During McCash's seven-year tenure, the program moved three times before settling into an Honors Center on the first floor of Peck Hall, where it remained until the Martin Honors Building was constructed.

Bright and curious students were drawn to the academic offerings. McCash remembers one Honors seminar on Utopias and Utopian Thought when B.F. Skinner, the author of *Walden Two*, did a rare one-hour telephone interview and famed cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead visited campus.

"When I was director, the Honors College we have today was only a dream, but it was our distant vision, and I think it has lived up to its potential," McCash said. "We launched a program that is solid, that strives for excellence, and that produces graduates I would compare with those of any first-rate university."



McCash directed the infant program well, including instituting the Honors Lecture Series, until 1980 when she became the chair of the Department of Foreign Languages before retiring from MTSU in 2004. The Honors College Commons Room is named for her. In 2003, McCash was presented MTSU's Outstanding Career Achievement Award, among many other honors. She is in the midst of a second fruitful career as a respected novelist. A well-worn passport has accompanied her to 25 different countries. Hardly one to sit still, the voracious reader, who also keeps a home in Jekyll Island, Georgia, has earned two Georgia Author of the Year Awards for her historical fiction books.

WHAT MIGHT PEOPLE BE SURPRISED TO LEARN ABOUT YOU?

McCash

The tai chi enthusiast says she has few secrets but people might be surprised how messy her office is with papers and books everywhere.

Messier

He played organized ice hockey for 22 years.

Montgomery

Wearing his "Jimmy Buffett" shirts during MTSU CUSTOMS came at the suggestion of Barbara Haskew, then-provost and vice president of academic affairs, who thought the colorful tops made him look more approachable.

Mathis

Had he not become an educator, he might have gone into pharmaceutical sales.

Vile

He initially found writing to be fairly difficult, but something that improved with time.

RON MESSIER

Called a “scholar’s scholar” by contemporaries, Messier first taught Honors courses in Western Civilization and Medieval Experience, an interdisciplinary offering, before inheriting the program as the second director in 1980. Now retired, the Rhode Island native joined the MTSU Department of History in 1973 and is an internationally recognized and honored historical archaeologist, MTSU professor emeritus of Middle East History, and author.

Messier spent 11 years at the Honors helm and viewed himself as a “facilitator” for students when MTSU faced lean budget times.

“My vision was not to see the program grow in size, mainly because of (financial) limitations,” he said. “Rather it was to provide more course choices for students at both the lower and upper division levels.”

His dogged determination resulted in the H-Option program (now known as the Honors contract program)—receiving credit for a non-Honors course by completing an individual plan of study—designed to increase upper-division offering and thus provide freshman-through-senior continuity.

One of Messier’s leadership touchstones was a commitment to developing a strong Honors community. Activities included camping and Ocoee River rafting adventures, field trips to see exhibits in New Orleans (Tutankhamun) and Chicago (Pompeii), the founding of the Honors Student Association (1981), and student get-togethers in his home.

The first living-learning center for Honors students was



created in the Monohan, Schardt, and Reynolds halls dubbed MonSchaRey. Although short-lived, it was an important housing harbinger. But it was the gathering of students called the “Lounge Lizards” in a small Honors Center room where lifelong friendships were honed against a whetstone of humor and camaraderie.

Messier witnessed the creation of the first Honors scholarship sponsored by brothers Paul Martin Jr. and Lee Martin. His continuing friendship with them eventually led to the Paul W. Martin Sr. Honors Building, named for their father.

Two special moments from his tenure stick out in Messier’s mind: David Lee Gregor’s thesis research judged superior to two Stanford University students at a national conference and Ranis Kazemi saying his MTSU Honors education exceeded his peers’ preparation at Yale.

Following his exciting 1988 discovery and excavation of Sijilmasa, an ancient trading center in the Sahara Desert, Messier’s plan to organize a Moroccan Honors semester abroad was thwarted by Operation Desert Storm.

Messier’s in-progress novel, *The Mapmaker and the Pope*, coincides with his ongoing Morocco archaeology project, the excavation and preservation of the medieval city of Aghmat. He is engaged in encouraging Christian-Muslim dialogue.

Messier has earned a multitude of honors, including many MTSU faculty and research awards, numerous *National Geographic* and Fulbright grants for research in Morocco, and recognition by the Moroccan-American Commission for Cultural and Educational Exchange (2012) as one of two Americans who most exemplify the spirit of traditional friendship uniting the people of the two countries.

“The Honors College has become the flagship of the University. My hope is to see it continue to fill that role,” he said. “I am really proud to see exceptional students experience such personal growth and individual academic achievements.”



GIVEN A DAY TO DO ANYTHING THEY WANT

McCash

A trip to New York City to accept the National Book Award.

Messier

His upcoming trip to Machu Picchu, an ancient Inca city atop Peru’s Andes Mountains.

Montgomery

Enjoy life on his farm.

Mathis

Travel with his wife to Oregon for a visit with their only grandson Jacob and family.

Vile

Receive a Nobel Peace Prize, or seeing one of his children, students, or former students receiving a major award.

JOHN PAUL MONTGOMERY

Montgomery has deep MTSU roots that wind through more than half a century of memories from his undergraduate days in the mid-1960s until his 2004 retirement.

After earning a doctorate, Montgomery soon returned to his alma mater in 1972 to teach in the English Department before becoming the third director of MTSU's Honors Program in 1990. In his 14-year tenure—the longest of any leader in MTSU Honors history—a tremendous amount of growth and progress transpired.

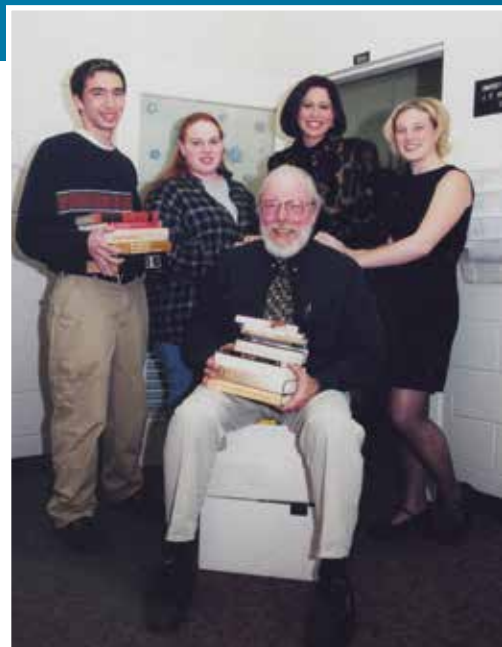
Walk through the Paul W. Martin Sr. Honors Building and you are experiencing the fruition of the work of a man who kept his hand on the leadership rudder as the Honors Program transitioned to the Honors College in 1998—the first of its kind in Tennessee—and when his title changed from director to the first dean. During this time, Montgomery was also responsible for carrying much of the load of raising matching construction funds.

"Dr. Montgomery was the one who sat down with the architect and discussed the modern but classic look of the building," said Psychology Department Chair Greg Schmidt, who was the first Honors associate dean. "When the Martins were thinking about their gift, I understand it was the well-thought-out professional presentation

to advocate for the college, and seeing the number of Honors courses double and enrollment eventually reach a new high.

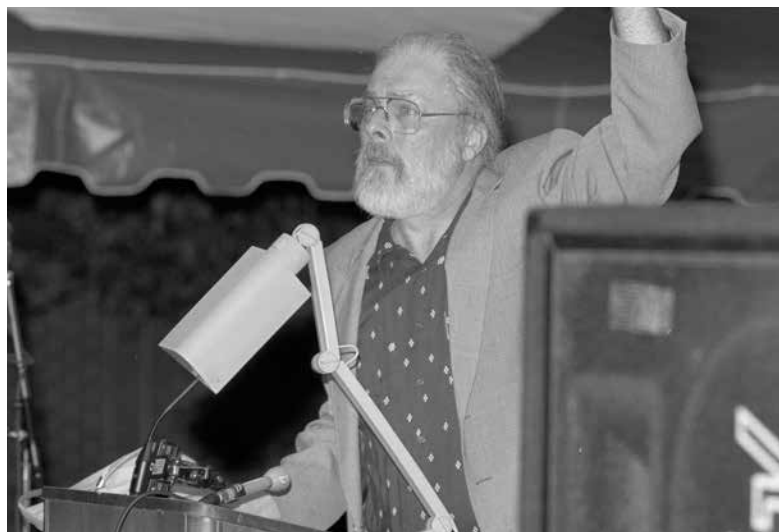
Not surprisingly, Montgomery was popular with his young scholars. The motorcycle-riding dean with the gray ponytail was known to ditch his shirt and tie for a Hawaiian shirt, especially at CUSTOMS, so he could be spotted easily at the summer orientation event for new students. Additionally, he once treated a group of students traveling to a conference in Texas to a stretch limousine ride to the airport.

Montgomery stressed to students the importance of writing their Honors thesis because he had personally



and his vision for the Honors Program that confirmed the benefactors' final decision."

Beyond the bricks and mortar, Montgomery's laser focus was squarely on students. Montgomery encouraged them to step out of their routine and become engaged with others at campus activities and events. He spearheaded the popular Poetry Slam and Honors Lyceum, a diverse slate of "cultural enrichment" opportunities from films to folk music. It was advice he personally followed by working tirelessly, meeting with faculty and administrators



experienced how finishing his own undergraduate paper helped him in graduate school. He was exceedingly pleased when Brian Chance became MTSU's first Fulbright honoree in 2001. He saw the establishment of the Honors Living-Learning Community at the Wood and Felder residence halls, although they were torn down for the new Science Building (Honors housing is now offered in the Lyon Hall Complex). And, in 1993, Montgomery instituted the presentation of the Honors Medallion to graduates of the college.

PHIL MATHIS

One of the sweetest sounding traditions on the MTSU campus—the tolling of the bells from the University Honors College bell tower—was started in 2005 by Mathis, the college’s second dean. The minute-long chime proclaims an Honor student’s successful thesis defense. It would be only one of the positive, new developments on the horizon.

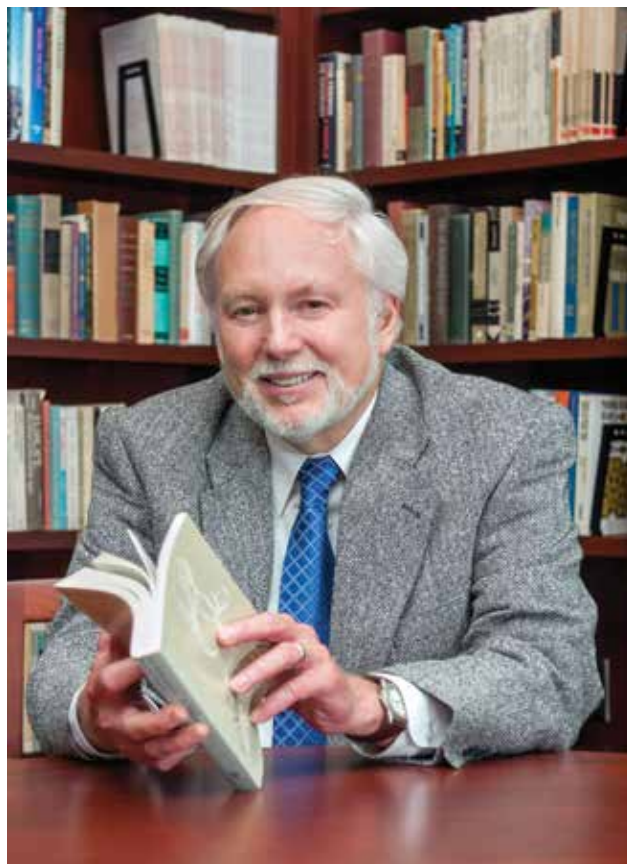
Mathis, a distinguished Biology professor, researcher, and MTSU 2000–01 Outstanding Career Achievement Award recipient, came in as an interim dean in 2004 and was appointed to permanent status in 2005 by President Sidney A. McPhee.

The Kentucky native was charged to establish a clear vision for the future and soon presented to administration a 12-page report, “A Focus for the Future,” outlining problems, possible solutions, and a new direction for the Honors College. An early task was raising retention and admission standards, which resulted in a sizable increase in Honors graduates.

One of Mathis’ key achievements was the establishment of the Buchanan Fellows in the fall of 2007. The academic scholarship, given to 20 students each year, is the highest award for an entering freshman and was named for James M. Buchanan, an MTSU alumnus and 1986 Nobel Prize winner in Economic Sciences.

“I remember Dr. Buchanan’s effusive praise following his visit to the Honors College in conjunction with the inauguration ceremony for the first class of Buchanan Fellows,” Mathis said.

An author of two volumes of poems and the book *Penny Corner Road: A Collection of Short Stories*, Mathis sought and succeeded in having *Collage*, a campus-based arts and literature magazine, moved to the Honors College.



The publication changed its name to *Collage: A Journal of Creative Expression* and has since earned numerous national awards, including the prestigious Gold Crown honor presented by Columbia Scholastic Press Association.

Well-regarded for his quick wit, Mathis oversaw the landing of a UFO—Undergraduate Fellowship Office—which assists students pursuing national scholarships. The results were out of this world, to say the least, as awards with names like Fulbright, Goldwater, and Phi Kappa Phi started orbiting the college for the first time.

The Mathis blueprint also showed with the establishment of the Honors College Board of Visitors; the *Book of Town and Gown*, a leather-embossed, 300-page volume to record key signatures of individuals who visited and shaped the Honors College from 2006 and beyond; a revived Honors Student Advisory Council; and establishment of the official Honors Creed—plus an increased emphasis on foreign travel and study abroad for students.

Mathis’ hope for the future “is to see the Honors College become a nationally recognized program,” he said. “Every university should serve the interest of its most-able students.”



Taylor Arnold Barnes and Dean Phil Mathis

JOHN R. VILE

An effervescent, gregarious, people person, Vile thoroughly enjoys being the third dean and fifth leader of the University Honors College, a job he took because he “loves working with dedicated and talented students.”

The Virginia native, who is a notoriously hard worker, is starting his 10th year as dean. He is a well-versed and prolific editor and author of more than two dozen books related to the U.S. Constitution and is a recognized international scholar on the topic.

“Being dean is really about serving the students, but I like to set a good scholarly example,” said Vile, who regularly keeps an open-door policy to visit with students.

Somehow, he also manages to squeeze in time to speak—complete in his white wig and tights—to various groups about James Madison, a founding father Vile calls “one of the most influential thinkers in American history.”

The former chair of the MTSU Political Science Department said he “may be in the best position on campus. (My job) allows me to interact with good students while having time to continue my scholarship.”

Only eight months into the job, Vile presented a 22-page vision in the form of a master plan for the college. It included the lofty objective “to promote the Honors College as a national model program.”

Under his guidance, MTSU’s Honors College has experienced an increase in the number of Honors theses, more students are engaged in research and writing,

national and international awards are at an all-time high, and more education abroad and study-away projects are in place.

Two of Vile’s sterling accomplishments were instituting and now doubling to 30 the Honors Transfer Scholarships and, in 2013, securing a \$2.5 million bequest from the will of MTSU alumnus and Nobel Prize winner James Buchanan for the 20 annual Buchanan Fellowships. The Buchanan estate later gave an additional \$1.2 million gift. Vile also oversaw the efforts of having a bust of the benefactor sculpted and displayed in James E. Walker Library.

A vibrant publication culture has grown to include *Scientia et Humanitas*, a peer-reviewed journal of academic research.

One of Vile’s most cherished awards, among many, is the 2010–11 MTSU Outstanding Career Achievement Award. He is a member of the American Mock Trial Association board and 2009 inductee into that association’s coaches’ hall of fame honoring his many years of guiding MTSU teams.

Vile, who likes to shop for antiques as well as travel, especially to see his four grandchildren, serves as a preacher of a small Presbyterian church.



Left: Vile, Mathis, Messier, and McCash

Right: Directors, deans, and Board of Visitors



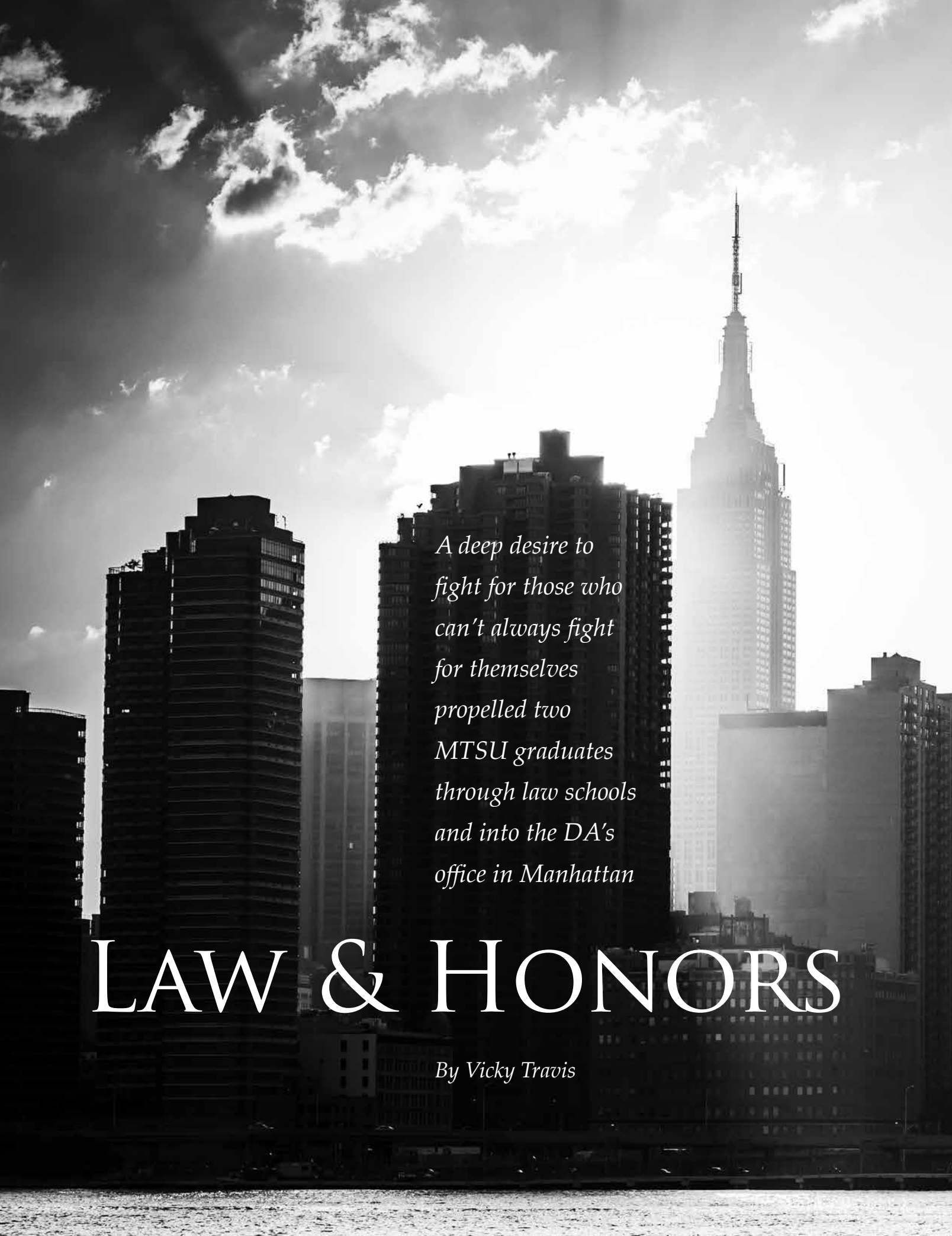
A LASTING LEGACY

Today all these individuals continue to serve as members of the Board of Visitors. They have contributed to or have at least one scholarship fund named for them.

Reflecting on the legacy and service of these educators, Vile is humbled to be today’s torchbearer in the Honors College.

“I really am proud to be in such a long line of committed directors and deans; I’ve had the opportunity to know each


one not simply as a professional but also as a friend,” Vile said. “Three of five have won MTSU Career Achievement Awards, and the others could well have qualified. All have been gentleman and gentlewoman scholars, and it is an honor—pun intended—to continue this legacy.” [H](#)



*A deep desire to
fight for those who
can't always fight
for themselves
propelled two
MTSU graduates
through law schools
and into the DA's
office in Manhattan*

LAW & HONORS

By Vicky Travis



Gretchen Jenkins Mohr ('08) and Katie Bogle ('12) both graduated from MTSU with degrees in Political Science, armed with analytical and practical skills honed in the Honors College.

Their GPAs and test scores counted when applying to law schools, but so did intangibles, said Honors College Dean John R. Vile. It takes reasoning, persistence, energy, and confidence to write and defend a thesis, as well as engage in student government, Mock Trial, and other activities. And both of these Honors graduates jumped headfirst into those opportunities.

"It's odd. Law schools don't have to see that you had constitutional law. They'll take care of teaching you the law," Vile said. "Of all the skills, it's the analytical skills they want: Can you interpret text and reason?"

In the cases of both Jenkins Mohr and Bogle, the answers are "yes" and "yes." Possessing such a skill set has led each from the relatively calm borough of Murfreesboro to the vibrant legal scene in what many consider the greatest city on earth.

GRETCHEN JENKINS MOHR ('08)

The seed idea to go to law school may have first germinated as Gretchen Jenkins Mohr watched *Law & Order* on TV with her dad while growing up in Lebanon, Tennessee (Jenkins Mohr is photographed with Katie Bogle on page 61 in front of New York County Courts, where they work, at 60 Centre St. in New York City—which is the building from *Law & Order*.) The seed was watered as she got to know her best friend's mom, an attorney. The self-described "weird kid" always knew she wanted to be a prosecutor. In high school, Jenkins Mohr even got to prosecute her classmates through Wilson County Teen Court.

"Yeah, that's a great way to make friends," she said with a laugh.

But the public service and justice aspects really appealed to her.

"In criminal law prosecution, you always have the ability to do the right thing," said Jenkins Mohr, 31.

Now in her fourth year working as an assistant district attorney in the Manhattan DA's office, Jenkins Mohr is doing just that. A memorable case she prosecuted this year resulted in a seven-year sentence in a robbery trial after helping a victim overcome fear to testify.

Her job mixes excitement, stress, lots of work, and sometimes that "justice-served," satisfactory outcome, she said.

"I'm always a little nervous. But after the opening statement, the nerves just leave," Jenkins Mohr said.

She said MTSU helped prepare her for the rigors of law school.

"I took advantage of every opportunity there," she said.

Vile remembers how involved Jenkins Mohr was in MTSU's Student Government Association, becoming president after serving as executive vice president and speaker of the SGA Senate. She also wrote for *Sidelines*, the student newspaper, and participated in sorority activities and several Honors organizations. Jenkins Mohr earned both a Phi Kappa Phi Fellowship and an Award of Excellence.

For her Honors College thesis, she wrote her own Supreme Court opinion on students' First Amendment rights in the college environment. Vile served as her advisor.

After graduating from New York Law School, Jenkins Mohr clerked for two years for a judge, then was hired at the DA's office. She has passed the bar in three states: New York, Illinois, and Tennessee.

An NYC resident for nine years now, she has lived in six different places in Manhattan and recently settled in Queens with her husband, Mark Mohr, whom she married on Oct. 22, 2016, in Nashville.

"Living in New York is awesome," she said.

"Personal space might be unheard of, but I can just go to a Broadway show and there's always new and adventurous things to do."

KATIE BOGLE ('12)

For Bogle, it's funny how saying "never" led to one of the best things that's ever happened in her life.

"I always said New York is one city I would never live in," said Bogle, 27, a middle Tennessee native. Now having lived in NYC for less than a year and working as an assistant district attorney in the Manhattan DA's office, she's actually "in her element."

Her element just happens to be right down the hall from Jenkins Mohr, whom she had never met until working in NYC (the two were years apart in classes). Their alma maters, job descriptions, and Honors College experiences aren't the only things the two share in common, incredibly. Bogle and Jenkins Mohr happen to have the same wedding anniversary date. Bogle and her husband, Bryan Podzius, also married Oct. 22, 2016, in Virginia.

Bogle, who lives on the upper east side of Manhattan, said the sense of community inside the DA's office is strong. Part of that feeling no doubt stems from the closeness she shares with seven other rookies in her class of about 60 assistant DAs that started the job together in fall 2016.

"Being a rookie is a lot like boot camp—lots of late nights and weekends," she said.

The idea to pursue a career in law grew during her time at MTSU and in particular during an internship at the Department of Justice in Washington D.C.

Bogle transferred to MTSU after her freshman year at a small, private college, and she said her worldview expanded tremendously after the change.

"Being able to interact with everyone is just monumental for what I do now," she said. She stressed that she enjoyed the Honors College's smaller classes, which facilitate discussion with really engaged students.

Bogle also praises MTSU professors such as Sekou Franklin, who taught a Civil Rights course, and Foreign Language professor Kari Neely, whom Bogle calls "the coolest human being on the planet."

Vile said what he remembers most about Bogle as a student was her persistence.



"Once she got to MTSU, she just plunged in and got involved," Vile said.

Indeed, during her time in the Honors College, Bogle studied abroad in South Africa, edited at *Collage*, held several SGA positions, was a Truman Scholar finalist, and received the MTSU President's Award.

After applying to 20 law schools, she was accepted at the University of Virginia Law School, which she called her "reach" school. She guarantees that doing a thesis in the Honors College, her recommendations from the college, and the internships she was afforded through MTSU played a huge part in her acceptance there.

During her third year at UVA Law School, Bogle made sure she had real-life experience, with its yearlong

Gretchen Jenkins Mohr ('08) and Katie Bogle ('12) in front of New York County Courts at 60 Centre St. in New York City, which is the building from Law & Order.

prosecution clinic, an externship at the Virginia Appeals office, and volunteer work at the Richmond legal aid office.

"I needed to hone my craft," she said.

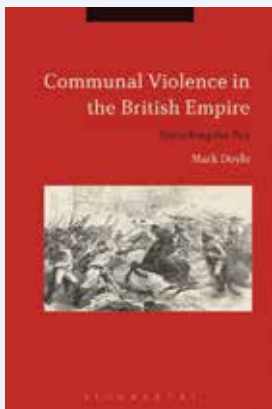
For Bogle, it's a craft that took shape at MTSU.

"I think I am where I am because I embrace a lot of opportunity," she said. "I always tell people to play to their strengths and figure out what works best for them. MTSU set me up to do that." [H](#)

Class Notes {faculty and staff}

Sanjay Asthana (Journalism) published "Translation and Localization of Children's Rights in Youth-Produced Digital Media in the Global South" in *New Media and Society*, Vol. 19, No. 5, and "Youth, Self, Other: A Study of Ibdaa's Digital Media Practices in the West Bank, Palestine" in the *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 1, in 2017.

Emily Baran (History) earned a National Endowment for the Humanities summer stipend for her research on Soviet Pentecostals in the late Cold War. She also published two editorials, one for the Oxford University Press blog and one for the *Moscow Times* Russian daily newspaper about Russia's recent decision to ban Jehovah's Witnesses. Her commentaries were cited by the *Washington Post* and *Bloomberg News* in condemning Russia's decision.



Mark Doyle (History) had a book published in August 2016, *Communal Violence in the British Empire* (Bloomsbury). Two of his articles also were published in edited volumes over the past year: "Those the Empire Washed Ashore: Uncovering Ireland's Multiracial Past," in *Ireland in an Imperial*

World (Palgrave), and "The Perils of Impartiality: Policing Communal Violence in Victorian India, 1850–1900," in *Policing in Colonial Empires* (Peter Lang). He also has signed a contract with Reaktion Books to write a book on the British rock band The Kinks. The working title is *The Kinks: Songs of the Semi-Detached*, and it is slated for publication in 2019.

Norma Dunlap (Chemistry) was co-writer of "Antitrypanosomal Activity of Iridals from *Iris domestica*" with Anuradha Liyana Pathiranaige, Jeannie Moore Stubblefield, Xiaolei Zhou, Jianhua Miao, and Anthony L. Newsome. The research was published in *Phytochemistry Letters* in 2016.



Mary Evins (History) submitted the final report to the National Endowment for the Humanities in March for the Bridging Cultures at Community Colleges project she has directed for NEH, the Tennessee Board of Regents, and MTSU since 2015. The Religious Pluralism in Tennessee program, titled *Creating a More Perfect Union in the Bible Belt: Building Community and Cultural Understanding through the Study of Religion and Civil Society*, opened doors, made introductions, established connections, and facilitated new, developing relationships over the last two years between Tennessee's immigrant communities and our state's rural counties through local community colleges. For this statewide effort of dialogue and civil discourse, the American Muslim Advisory Council of Tennessee awarded Evins the Bridge Builder Lifetime Achievement Award May 6 at the Islamic Center of Tennessee.

Richard Hansen (Theatre) presented “Ongoing Evolution of a Program” at the annual conference of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education in August.

Judith Iriarte-Gross (Chemistry) was awarded the 2017 American Chemical Society National Award for Encouraging Women into Careers in the Chemical Sciences. Iriarte-Gross received the award April 4 at a ceremony in conjunction with the 254th ACS national meeting in San Francisco “for her continued persistence and tireless efforts to level the playing field for women in chemistry and to inspire young women to major in chemistry.”

Yang S. Kim (Communication Studies and Organizational Communication) was facilitator for the Faculty Learning Community (FLC) workshop presentation “Teaching and Mentoring International Students” at MTSU’s Learning, Teaching, and Innovative Technologies Center in April. He also was awarded a 2016–17 FLC grant. Kim’s book *Global Business-wa-Indonesia- I-Moonhwa-I-Hae* (Global Business and Understanding Indonesian Culture), co-authored with Y.H. Koh, was published in 2017 by Hankuk University of Foreign Studies Knowledge Press in Seoul, South Korea. Kim also presented “Korean Expatriates in India: Preparedness, Adaptive Personality, Host Communication Competence, and Cross-cultural Adaptation” at the Korean American Communication Association at the annual conference of the National Communication Association in Dallas in 2017. Co-written with Y.Y. Kim, his research “Ethnic Proximity and Cross-Cultural Adaptation: A Study of Asian and European Students in the United States” was published in *Intercultural Communication Studies* in 2016. Another article by Yang Kim, “Multiculturalism and Interethnic Communication in Korea: An Examination of the Context-Behavior Factors,” also was published in *Intercultural Communication Studies* in 2016.

Rebekka King (Religious Studies) won MTSU’s Outstanding EXL Teaching Award in collaboration with Jenna Gray-Hildenbrand (Religious Studies), also an Honors faculty member. Additionally, King earned an MTSU Faculty Research and Creative Activity Award and received an Outstanding Teacher Award. She was a roundtable participant on “Critique as Horizon, Critique as Specter: Reflections from the Anthropology of Religion” at the biennial meeting of the Society for the Anthropology of Religion in New Orleans in May 2017. She presented a response to Marla Frederick, Gabriel Acevedo, Randy Styers, and James Spickard, “Rethinking Theory, Methods and Data: A Conversation between Religious Studies and Sociology of Religion,” for the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion in San Antonio in November 2016.

King also wrote “Whose Loss Is It Anyway?: A Discussion on Nostalgia and Social Media” for the University of Alabama’s online blog *Studying Religion in Culture* in 2016 and “Teaching Dual Nationalism: A Pedagogy of Displacement” for *Teaching, Religion, Politics*, an online series hosted by the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Religious Studies and Theology in 2017. Her latest publications include “Can One Study One’s Own Religion Objectively?” in *Religion in Five Minutes*, edited by Russell McCutcheon and Aaron Hughes (Equinox Press), and a chapter in *Stereotyping Religion: Critiquing Clichés*, edited by Craig Martin and Brad Stoddard (Bloomsbury Press).

Jane Marcellus (Journalism) has had two recent media appearances related to her academic research on broadly historical perspectives on women in media. She appears in *Perfect 36*, a documentary about Tennessee’s role as the final state to ratify the 19th Amendment. She was selected as an interviewee because of her previously published work in *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* on how Nashville newspapers covered the fight for suffrage during the summer of 1920. The documentary, produced by Yoshie Lewis, has been distributed nationally on PBS and won a Telly Bronze Award. Marcellus was interviewed on WFHB Radio’s *Interchange* program, hosted by

Class Notes {faculty and staff}

Douglas Storm, for her previous research in *Feminist Media Studies* on a 1932 media campaign titled “It’s Up to the Women.” The title was repurposed, with a more feminist spin, by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. The segment was called “Eleanor in Love and Politics.”

Marcellus also published two literary non-fiction pieces in 2017: “Scissors” in *Hippocampus Magazine* and “My Father’s Tooth” in *Sycamore Review*.



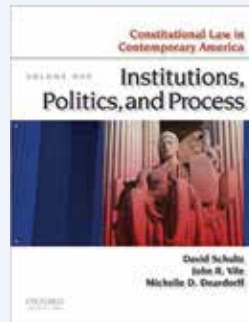
Yuri Melnikov (Mathematical Sciences) has a recent monograph in co-authorship with his former Ph.D. student, Volodymyr N. Borodin. *Green’s Functions: Potential Fields on Surfaces* was published by Springer International Publishing AG in 2017.

Phil Oliver (Philosophy) published an online Festschrift essay, “Immediacy and the Future,” on Vanderbilt University professor and philosopher John Lachs, a version of which has been accepted for inclusion in a forthcoming book. Oliver also delivered an invited lecture, “Happiness: A Free Person’s Worship,” to the Nashville Sunday Assembly and participated in a panel sponsored by the William James Society at the annual meeting of the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy this year in Birmingham, Alabama. He presented “Missing Vin” at this year’s annual Conference on Baseball in Literature and Culture at Ottawa University in Kansas.

Philip E. Phillips (Honors) was selected to serve on the national Phi Kappa Phi Fellowship Selection Committee. He is past president of MTSU Chapter 246 of the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi. Phillips was the co-curator (with his English doctoral research assistant, Megan Donelson) of the exhibition, “Eudora Welty: Her Life and Legacy,” featuring selected materials from the collection of Dr. J. Lee Owen at the James E. Walker Library April 4–May 4 (see *related article*

on page 40). Phillips recently published an article, “Boethius,” as part of the series on Medieval Studies in Oxford Bibliographies Online, and his co-edited book, *Remaking Boethius: The English Language Translations of the Consolation of Philosophy*, was accepted for publication by Arizona State University Press in partnership with Brepols Publishers NV.

Shelley Thomas (Foreign Languages and Literatures) was invited, along with Peter Cunningham and Zaf Kahn, to be part of the inaugural group of MTSU professors sent to Tongliao, China, in May. MTSU’s teacher training program, started by Mark Byrnes, David Schmidt, and Guanping Zheng, has been hosting Inner Mongolia University (IMUN) professors at MTSU for the past four years. This new initiative expanded the program into China. Thomas, Cunningham, and Kahn provided workshops on pedagogy, the American culture, and critical thinking.



John R. Vile (Honors) is working with the College of Media and Entertainment to update a two-volume work that he co-edited, *Encyclopedia of the First Amendment*, for a website that became available in September for students and scholars who want to research the topic. Vile and two colleagues at other universities recently published *Constitutional Law in Contemporary America, Vol. 1: Institutions, Politics, and Process* (West Academic Publishing).

Cornelia Wills (Student Success) served as keynote speaker for the Modernettes Civic Club Inc.’s 23rd annual African-American Heritage Breakfast in February at the James E. Bruce Convention Center in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. Her speech was titled “What Is Your Password for Success?” Hopkinsville Mayor Janet Victor presented Wills with a key to the city.

Class Notes {alumni and friends}

Emilie Aslinger (Foreign Languages, '14) received her M.S. from the University of Tennessee this spring.

Jacob Basham (Mathematics and Science, '13) was nominated by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) to attend the 2017 International Achievement Summit, whose mission is to bring students face-to-face with the extraordinary leaders, visionaries, and pioneers who have helped shape our world. Basham is attending the all-expense-paid summit in London this October. A medical student at the University of Tennessee, Basham has engaged in research at St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital as an HHMI Med Fellow for the past two years.

Ryan Bearden (Psychology, '17) is pursuing a master's degree in Psychology with a concentration in Industrial/Organizational Psychology at MTSU.

Abigail Carter (Psychology, '17) is studying Clinical Psychology at the University of Kentucky.

Daniel Gouger (Biochemistry and Foreign Languages, '12) graduated from East Tennessee State University's Quillen College of Medicine this spring.

Chelsea Harmon (Chemistry, '16; M.S., Chemistry, '17) is pursuing a Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City.

Matthew Hibdon (History, '12; M.Ed., Educational Leadership, '14) was the recipient of the Region 3 Excellence in Advising New Advisor 2017 award from

the National Academic Advising Association. Hibdon was an academic advisor for the College of Liberal Arts until he accepted the position of director of leadership programs at Omicron Delta Kappa's national headquarters in Lexington, Virginia, in August.



Matthew Hibdon

Bennie Hunt (Psychology, '17) is attending graduate school at MTSU, seeking a master's in Clinical Psychology.

Cari Jennings (Biology, '12) earned her master's degree in Health Policy and Management at the University of Tennessee.

Luke Judkins (English and Music, '17) is teaching freshman standard and Honors English and Latin I and II at Lebanon High School in Lebanon, Tennessee.

Michele Kelley (Physics, '16) was selected as a Royster Fellow at the University of North Carolina.

Victoria Lay (Biology, '17) accepted an internship at the Chattanooga Zoo. She hopes to gain essential work experience to eventually gain a permanent position as a zookeeper.

Devin Marsh (Information Systems, '17) completed a summer internship with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Tennessee and is attending graduate school at MTSU in Information Systems with a concentration in Information Security and Assurance.

Collin McDonald (Aerospace, '17) is working as a flight instructor and mechanic at Lebanon Airport. He married Katie McCoy this summer and is living in Carthage, Tennessee.

Connor McDonald (Political Science, '17) is attending Belmont Law School in Nashville.

Todd Pirtle (Plant and Soil Science, '17) began a two-year graduate research assistantship at the University of Florida in May.

Mallory Melton Ray (Anthropology, '09) and her husband welcomed a son, Vernon Wesley Ray, in



Vernon Wesley Ray

August 2016. She is working as a completion advisor at Volunteer State Community College.

Jensen Still (Psychology, '17) is studying Clinical Psychology as a graduate

In Memoriam: Peter Lawler



Dr. Peter Augustine Lawler, who gave a talk at MTSU on “The Future of Liberty Is Confusing” in October 2014, died unexpectedly of natural causes May 23. Dean John R. Vile, who attended graduate school at the University of Virginia with Dr. Lawler, noted that the Dana Professor of Government at Berry College in Georgia was among the leading political theorists in the nation and often approached topics from a non-partisan perspective.

{alumni and friends}

student at MTSU.

Darcy Tabotabo (Biochemistry, '17) is attending medical school at the University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center in Memphis.

Nathan Tilton (Aerospace, '16) is attending Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina. He married Morgan Lang in December 2016.

Courtney Wright (Mathematics, '17) is teaching seventh-grade math at Oakland Middle School in Murfreesboro.

Will Wright (Philosophy, '15) received a research master's degree this spring from Radboud University in the Netherlands. He studied Philosophy with a specialization in the mind and completed a thesis on the topic of content externalism. He plans to teach at the community college level before pursuing a Ph.D.

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