

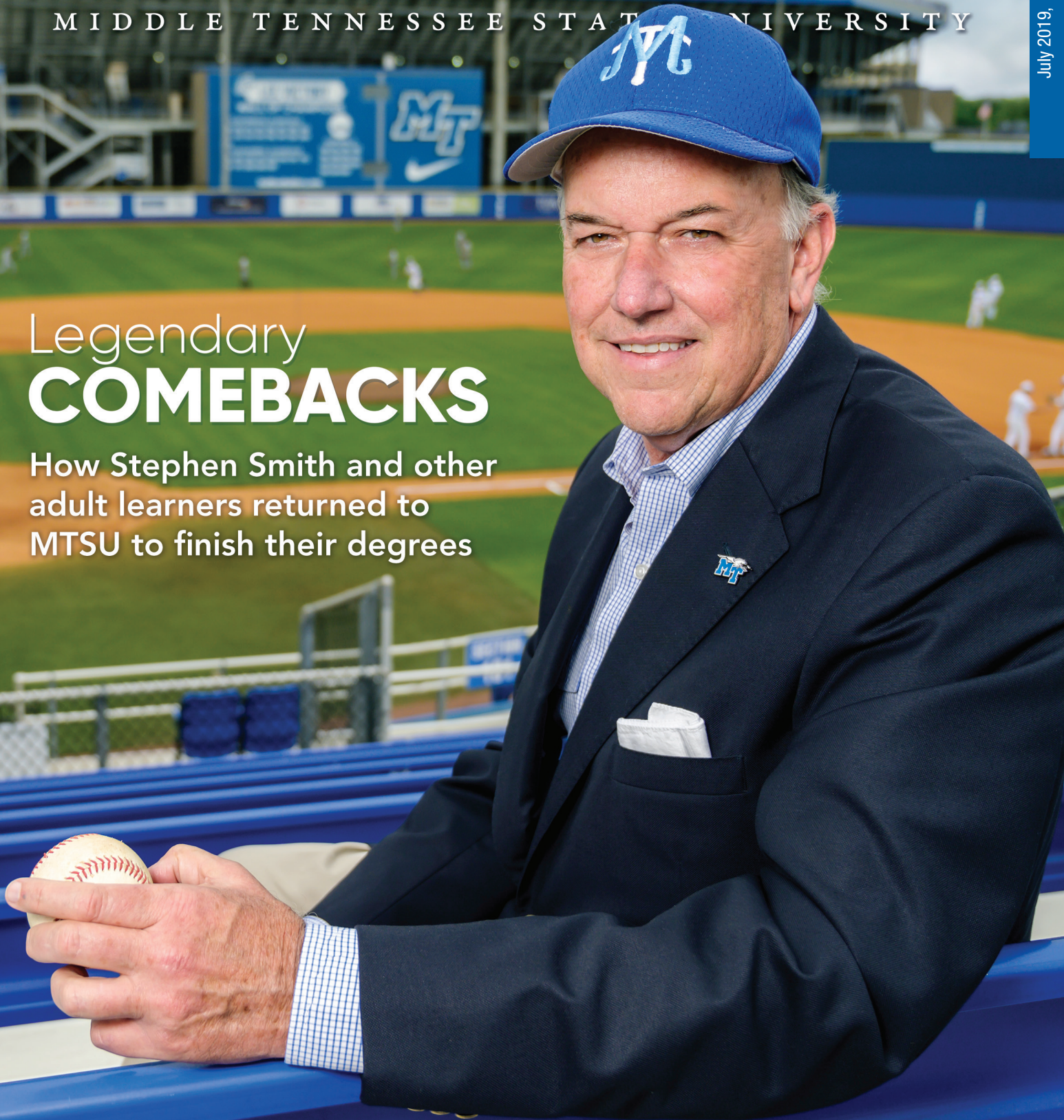
MTSU MAGAZINE

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

July 2019, Vol. 24, No. 1

Legendary **COMEBACKS**

How Stephen Smith and other
adult learners returned to
MTSU to finish their degrees



**MIDDLE
TENNESSEE**
STATE UNIVERSITY.

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Cover Article: Legendary Comebacks

From MTSU Board Chair Stephen Smith to state lawmakers to working mothers, graduates of MTSU's best-in-state Adult Degree Completion Program prove it's never too late to come back to college [p.24](#)



photo by J. Intirachi



Teaching Southern Hospitality

MTSU is poised to become one of the premier institutions for furnishing personnel to a burgeoning industry that is critical to the mid-state economy and in need of skilled professionals.

In March, the University announced the creation of a Tourism and Hospitality Management major that is the only such degree in middle Tennessee. The program is available starting Fall 2019.

This multitrillion-dollar industry supports one in 10 jobs worldwide and is growing by about 5% each year, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council. The organization projects that the tourism and hospitality field will support more than 413 million jobs by 2028.

The MTSU degree will have three emphasis areas—travel and tourism, hospitality and hotel, and event planning. Students can choose one or combine all three. The program also plans an advanced bachelor's-to-master's track that will enable students to graduate with both degrees in five years, allowing graduates to enter the workforce more quickly.

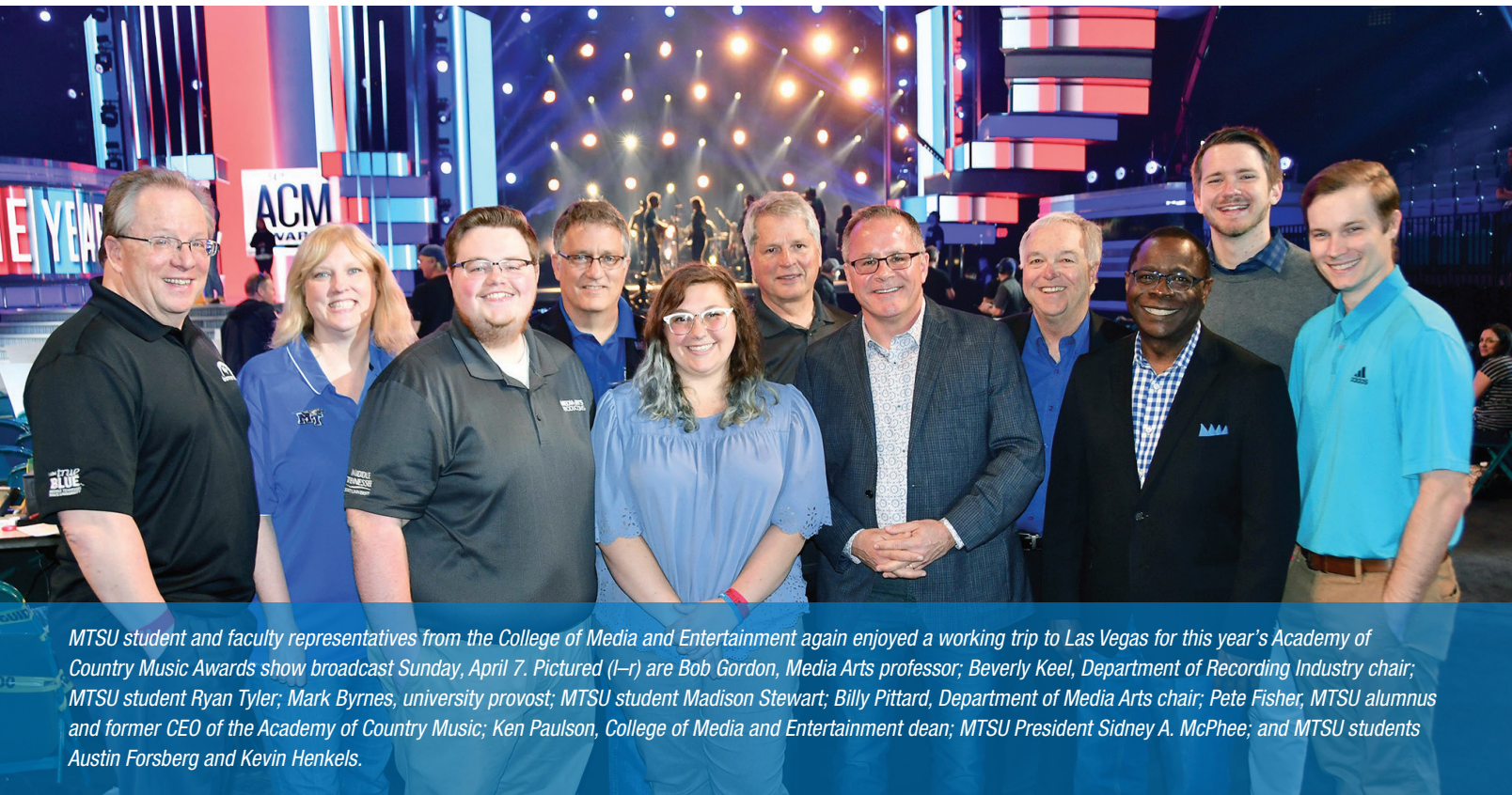
Omni Hotel General Manager Eric Opron applauded MTSU's development of a program that he feels will serve as a pipeline of talented graduates attractive to his company and others.

"How would it be to know that when you go to school, as soon as you graduate, you have a great job waiting?" he said. "Because you do, trust me you do."

Partners in supporting the new program include the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, Tennessee Recreation and Parks Association, Rutherford County Hospitality Association, Embassy Suites, Nashville Convention and Visitors Corp., Tennessee Hospitality and Tourism Association, and Rutherford County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

"We are committed to putting out the most educated, the most well-prepared graduates that not only will represent our University very well, but will also take this industry to the next level," MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee said at the time of the announcement.

Liz Hampton (I), event services manager at Embassy Suites Murfreesboro and an MTSU Leisure, Sport, and Tourism graduate ('18), is photographed here beside Casey Brinegar ('19), who also works at Embassy Suites and was a Leisure, Sport, and Tourism student. photo: Eric Sutton



MTSU student and faculty representatives from the College of Media and Entertainment again enjoyed a working trip to Las Vegas for this year's Academy of Country Music Awards show broadcast Sunday, April 7. Pictured (l-r) are Bob Gordon, Media Arts professor; Beverly Keel, Department of Recording Industry chair; MTSU student Ryan Tyler; Mark Byrnes, university provost; MTSU student Madison Stewart; Billy Pittard, Department of Media Arts chair; Pete Fisher, MTSU alumnus and former CEO of the Academy of Country Music; Ken Paulson, College of Media and Entertainment dean; MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee; and MTSU students Austin Forsberg and Kevin Henkels.

Cream of the Crop

MTSU's strong, annual Grammy connections

drew the attention of NBC Nightly News weekend anchor Kate Snow, who visited campus earlier this year to report on the success of the University's Department of Recording Industry graduates.

While at MTSU, Snow interviewed Grammy-winning songwriter and MTSU graduate **Luke Laird**, whose creative partnership with country superstar Kacey Musgraves continues to blossom, earning the pair and their co-writer another Grammy Award in 2019, this time for the year's best country song.

Snow also interviewed Grammy-nominated MTSU graduate **Tay Keith**, who produced rap superstar Travis Scott's No. 1 track, "SICKO MODE," with Drake, Big Hawk, and Swae Lee.

In all, nine MTSU alumni were nominated for Grammy Awards this year for their work on pop, rap, Americana, gospel, and country albums, including **Anderson East**, **Torrance "Street Symphony" Esmond**, **Jason A. Hall**, **Wayne Haun**, **Jimmy Mansfield**, **Daniel Rowland**, and **F. Reid Shippen**.

In addition to alumni success at the annual awards, the University also has sustained a strong physical presence at the Grammys over the past few years—a strategic choice that has increased MTSU's reputation both at the premier event and within the entertainment industry.

MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee said this year's MTSU Grammy trip, the sixth in a row for a University contingent, was the most successful yet, drawing many alumni and industry officials together and allowing students to see behind the scenes of "music's biggest night."



Former Academy of Country Music CEO and MTSU alumnus Pete Fisher (l) speaks with students from MTSU's College of Media and Entertainment as part of a learning lab at the 54th ACM Awards in Las Vegas. Listening behind the students are MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee and other members of the University's delegation.

For example, this year MTSU sponsored a series of industry get-togethers during the long Grammy weekend, winding up on Sunday night with a co-sponsored reception for Nashville's Leadership Music members at the Rock 'N Fish restaurant next door to the Staples Center. The University also co-sponsored the

Americana Music Association's pre-Grammy Salute to John Prine, a career-spanning tribute concert at the legendary Troubadour nightclub in West Hollywood, California. Six MTSU Recording Industry students, selected by department chair Beverly Keel to represent the University, went both backstage and on stage Friday as the Recording Academy prepared Staples Center to host Sunday's national telecast. The students, along with professor **Matthew O'Brien**, also met with *Billboard Magazine's* West Coast editor, Melinda Newman, and A&R executive Jay Landers, who has worked with a stable of renowned artists such as Barbra Streisand, Frank Sinatra, and Bette Midler.

"Having all our students ready to work when they leave our campus is our goal," McPhee summed up. "Having them be recognized and rewarded for that work makes us unbelievably proud."



photo: J. Intintoli

Kate Snow, anchor of NBC Nightly News Sunday and senior national correspondent, interviewed MTSU alumnus and rising music producer BryTavious "Tay Keith" Chambers inside a recording studio at the Bragg Media and Entertainment Building in late January. The segment about MTSU's Department of Recording Industry, its successful alumni, and annual Grammy Awards outreach aired Feb. 10 before the Grammys telecast on CBS.

Students and faculty from MTSU also traveled to Las Vegas to celebrate alumni nominees at the 54th Academy of Country Music Awards this spring, as well as to get behind-the-scenes instruction in the making of the national telecast. It marked the second year in a row that MTSU music business alumnus Pete Fisher, former CEO of the ACM, offered up the awards show and festivities as a learning laboratory for current students.

Seven MTSU alums were recognized in this year's ACM Awards: Laird; **Chandler Baldwin**, **Jared Hampton** and **Eric Steedly**, who are three of the five members of Lanco; **Mitchell Tenpenny**; **Michael Knox**; and **Hillary Scott**.

With all this activity, no wonder MTSU's Department of Recording Industry once again made *Billboard's* annual list of America's top music business schools in 2019. For the sixth straight year, MTSU was recognized with its counterparts across the country, like Berklee, as top producers of ready-to-work music industry pros.



photo: J. Intintoli

MTSU alumnus and Grammy-nominated songwriter/producer Luke Laird, left in black cap, talks to a group of MTSU Recording Industry students as NBC Nightly News Sunday anchor Kate Snow, center in black shirt, listens inside the Center for Popular Music.

Billboard specifically highlighted the University's work at the annual Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival in nearby Manchester, Tennessee, which MTSU has been staffing with Recording Industry, Journalism, and Media Arts students for experiential learning opportunities since 2013, when the University first established a partnership with festival organizers.

Such consistent excellence and accolades come with a cost. Frankly, as the years roll by, it has become all too easy to take all this success in the music business for granted. Annual news coverage touting the same stellar outcomes has a tendency over time to excite the True Blue faithful less and less. The reputation of MTSU's music business program success, in fact, has such a long and proud history that even the University's staunchest supporters perhaps fail to adequately recognize how prestigious all the more recent recognition truly is.

I urge MTSU graduates and supporters alike not to go numb to all this success. What is described above is, simply stated, completely out of the ordinary for universities nationwide.

The theme of this edition of *MTSU Magazine* spotlights the University's incredible ability and success at preparing students for the workforce. As editor, I would be remiss not to use this space to spotlight once again the incredible creative work emanating from the College of Media and Entertainment and delighting the world.

True Blue!



—Drew Ruble

A brief conversation on recent events with MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee

MTSU's standing as a destination of choice for first-generation students and its long success in helping low-income students who meet admission standards overcome obstacles often posed by tuition and fees are well established. Talk to us about that.

McPhee: A *New York Times* database showed that the median family income of a student from Middle Tennessee State University is \$71,700, and 25% come from the top 20% of income strata. According to the same database, the median family income of a student from UT–Knoxville is \$96,900, and 42% come from the top 20%.

MTSU's full-time undergraduate tuition and fees of \$9,206 for the Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 semesters remain the lowest of the state's three largest universities. The University of Tennessee–Knoxville charges \$13,006, while the University of Memphis costs \$9,701.

Our affordability makes MTSU more accessible to students from all income levels seeking a top-tier educational experience.

MTSU also recently substantially increased the value and broadened eligibility of our Presidential Scholarship, which more than doubled the amount we awarded to some high-ability freshmen who will enroll this fall.

The University of Tennessee System recently announced that students eligible for Pell Grant aid (family income of \$50,000 or less) and who qualify for the HOPE Lottery Scholarship, can attend one of their institutions without paying tuition or mandatory fees. What is your reaction to that announcement?

McPhee: I'm proud to say that MTSU students in this category have attended our institution for years without paying tuition or mandatory fees. Our Admissions and Financial Aid teams are among the best at helping our low-income students qualify for the full range of federal and state scholarships and assistance.

In all, about 50% of MTSU's student population receives Pell aid; about 30% of UT–Knoxville's population receives Pell aid.

Once again, that's why we are a destination of choice for first-generation college students. And we've done all of this while raising our admissions standards and setting records on average ACT scores of our incoming freshmen.

As I told the USA Today Network-Tennessee at the time of the UT announcement, we at MTSU are pleased that UT has joined our University in expressing its commitment to serving the higher education needs of the state's at-risk students.

MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee

“Our affordability makes MTSU more accessible to students from all income levels seeking a top-tier educational experience.”



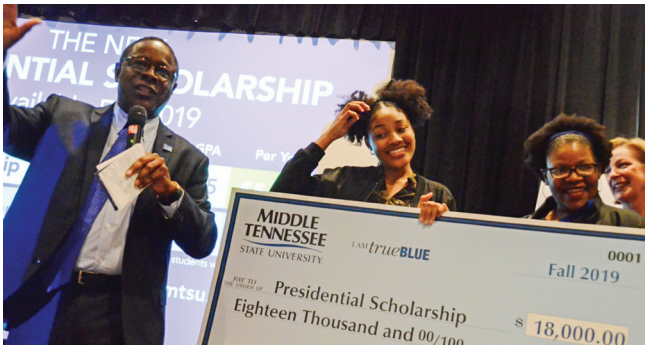


photo: Randy Weiler

MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee (l) informs Ridgeway High School senior Kyndall Smith and the audience that she and others who qualify will receive an enhanced Presidential Scholarship. It was part of the 2018 MTSU True Blue Tour to recruit students in the Memphis area on November 6 at Esplanade Memphis.



photo: J. Intintoli

MT One Stop Call Center Agent LaKenya Day works in the Student Services and Admissions Center.

Connected to all this, Tennessee legislators are using a longstanding MTSU program as a template for a bill that will require a point-person at Tennessee universities to help homeless students, letting them know how to find resources and giving them support. Many or most schools don't have programs in place to be as supportive to their homeless and at-risk student population as MTSU does. Tell me more about this.

Becca Seul, associate director of MT One Stop, started the Next Step program at MTSU in 2008 to help provide support and resources to students experiencing—or at risk of—homelessness as well as those transitioning out of foster care. This has been trailblazing work. Over the past decade, the Next Step program has helped about 1,500 students, and more than 100 students are currently enrolled in the Next Step program, giving them access to resources—and the ability to focus on their education rather than whether they have a place to sleep and food to eat. While it was Seul who started the program with the help and support of her MTSU colleagues, it's the MTSU and Murfreesboro communities that help the program thrive, donating money to help support the services as well as donating food to the food bank. This is truly what it means to be True Blue.

Thank you, Mr. President.

MTSU MAGAZINE

Middle Tennessee State University
July 2019 / Vol. 24, No. 1

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For online content, visit mtsunews.com.

128,000 copies printed at Courier Printing, Smyrna, Tennessee.
Designed by MTSU Creative Marketing Solutions.

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ENGAGE



MT Engage brings out the best in MTSU students

- increases their awareness of learning opportunities beyond the classroom
- supports their ability to integrate all of their learning experiences and apply that understanding to future endeavors

What is MT Engage?

MT Engage offers new multi-faceted opportunities to enhance students' college experience through **specific classes, external volunteer opportunities, and internships**. Students taking the MT Engage challenge create a culminating personal **ePortfolio**. Completing the MT Engage academic requirements and creating a compelling ePortfolio can lead to MT Engage Scholarship support.

Alyssa Poythress, a sophomore majoring in Nutrition and Food Science with a concentration in Dietetics, was one of **12 MT Engage Scholars** recognized this spring for her exceptional ePortfolio. She works on campus as a resident assistant, is a member of the Black Student Union, and will hold an internship in the dietetics field in coming semesters. Poythress works to educate her community on the importance of nutrition and wants to increase the representation of African Americans in the health field. She plans to become a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, focusing on preventable diseases and renal care through holistic nutrition. Her well-organized ePortfolio reflected her strengths very effectively and graphically demonstrated her journey to acquire wisdom—not only good grades.



Engage Academically.
Learn Exponentially.
Showcase Yourself.

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I AM *true*
BLUE

Other 2019 MT Engage Scholarship recipients

- Hannah Solima (overall winner) • Alaa Mohammed
- Gabriella Morin • Rachel Woeltje • Keturah Smith
- Meredith Craig • Ella Denney • Briann McGriff
- Samantha Stafford • Kaushal Patel • Quintonique Poitier

Visit mtsu.edu/mtengage to learn more about MT Engage.

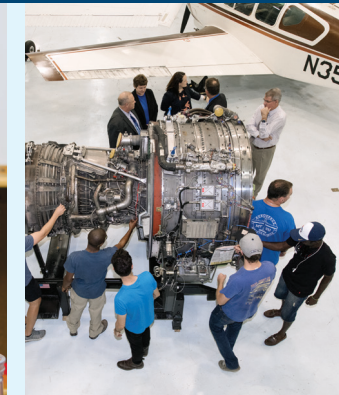


**MIDDLE
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READY TO WORK

MTSU offers programs
focused on industry needs

by Drew Ruble



READY TO WORK



One in five college graduates in greater Nashville holds an MTSU degree, making us the No. 1 provider to the region's workforce.

In all, MTSU has more than **64,000 alumni** working across greater Nashville.

Our alumni run companies. They win Grammys. They teach our children. They cure diseases. They create, innovate, and succeed.

They also give our current students the largest area alumni network to help locate jobs.

The University plays a crucial role in helping community college students, technology center graduates, and adults alike finish their degrees

and join Tennessee's workforce more quickly and prepared to lead.

MTSU is the No. 1 choice of transfer students, adult learners, and first-generation college students in the Volunteer State.

As such, **MTSU serves as the capstone of Tennessee's higher educational program built on the Tennessee Promise and the Drive to 55.**

From aerospace to agriculture, and finance to health care and concrete management, **our grads are ready to work.**

Here are a few highlights of some of our programs that have a direct industry focus and strong experiential ties. True Blue!

Hands-On Experience

MTSU believes in the value of applied knowledge—merging classroom knowledge with real-world work environments through Experiential Learning (EXL) initiatives. A classroom for our students may be behind a camera at Bonnaroo, programming a robot at the Nissan manufacturing facility, helping patients on an underwater treadmill, combing an archaeological dig, or helping veterans with equestrian therapy.

- **200+ EXL courses with real-world experiences**
- **Co-ops, internships, service learning, and study abroad**
- **Undergrad research** usually available to just grad students

ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE

- Ranked 34th nationally in 2019 for **Best Online Master's in Finance Programs** by OnlineMasters.com (only Tennessee university listed)
- **1 of only 183 institutions worldwide** with an additional AACSB accreditation for accounting
- Grads in senior positions at Deloitte, HCA, and Pinnacle



AEROSPACE



- Top 3 program in the nation
- **1 of 8** schools recently selected for new partnership supplying pilots to Delta Air Lines
- **Only** 360-degree, seamless virtual air traffic control tower of its kind in the world
- **1 of 5** unmanned aircraft degree programs in U.S.
- Grads in senior positions at FedEx, Southwest, and Nashville International Airport



AGRICULTURE



- **500-acre, hands-on agriculture laboratory** produces milk (and honey) bottled by MTSU students and sold at campus and retail shops
- **MTSU Creamery** awarded the state's new Tennessee Milk logo, along with another dairy
- Grads in senior positions at Jack Daniel's, Tennessee Farm Bureau, and Tennessee Farmers Coop

APPAREL DESIGN



- Partners for student experience in annual **Nashville Fashion Week**
- Nashville ranks fourth in the U.S. in numbers of fashion designers, earnings, and industry activity—behind New York, Los Angeles, and Columbus, Ohio (corporate home of retail giants)
- **Only** public university in Tennessee offering an Apparel Design program
- Grads in senior positions at Genesco, Fruit of the Loom, and Belk



BUSINESS



- Ranked 17th among the **nation's top schools** for aspiring entrepreneurs by LendEDU
- **Innovative sales laboratory** for students in new Professional Selling concentration to hone skills to become ready-to-hire graduates
- Professional training for all grads through an exclusive arrangement in Tennessee with **Dale Carnegie**
- **University-owned real estate brokerage firm** gives students real-world experience before graduation
- Master's in Management ranked **No. 21 in the nation** by Top Management Degrees (behind only Duke in eight states bordering Tennessee)
- Accreditation in **top 1.5% of business schools nationwide**
- Customizable M.B.A. degree, now with Music Business and Health Care Management concentrations, that can be completed online or on campus in **only 12 months**—a ticket to greater opportunities for employment, promotions, and income
- Grads in senior positions at Healthways, Caterpillar Financial, and Dollar General

COMPUTER SCIENCE

- State's **largest Computer Science program**, helping fill the approximately 1,500 open tech positions in the Nashville area
- **MTSU graduated 1 in 5 area students** earning a tech-related degree in 2017, the most of 36 local institutions
- Holds 36-hour annual **Hack-MT** for students to invent new web platforms, mobile apps, and electronic gadgets
- Grads in senior positions at Dell, Google, Gibson Guitar, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and Passport Health



CRIMINAL JUSTICE

- New \$38 million academic building opening in 2020 with **emergency management simulation facilities** (See page 38.)
- **Partnership with TBI** enabling State Academy graduates to earn 9 hours of college credits from MTSU
- Grads in senior positions at U.S. Secret Service, Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, Tennessee Highway Patrol, and U.S. Border Patrol



CONCRETE AND CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

- **First-of-its-kind** academic program in concrete industry management in the nation (launched in **partnership with industry**)
- Blend of technical, business, and general education coursework **providing entry into jobs** such as quality control, estimating, technical sales, operations, project management, superintendent, purchasing, marketing, and BIM specialist
- Required internship/co-op allowing every student to **experience the industry from the inside before graduation**
- **9+ job offers per Concrete Industry grad (average starting salary: \$80,000+)**
- Grads in senior positions at Beazer Homes, Turner Construction, and TVA



EDUCATION



- Produces **250–300 teaching license candidates each year**, feeding a critical pipeline facing an ever-growing teacher shortage in the state and nation
- Piloted the innovative **Ready2Teach** training program
- Teacher candidates **heavily recruited** by ever-expanding Rutherford County Schools district, one of state's largest, which hired about 500 teachers last year alone
- Launched a first-of-its-kind doctoral degree in 2013, Ed.D. in Assessment, Learning, and School Improvement targeting Pre-K through 12th grade
- Grads in senior positions throughout Tennessee and surrounding states



INDUSTRIAL/ ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

- **Students working with real clients** in MTSU's Center for Organizational and Human Resources Effectiveness (COHRE), such as Tennessee Highway Patrol and Jack Daniel's Distillery
- Ranked **best in the nation** for master's program by the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, the premier organization in the field
- **Fastest-growing occupation** in the U.S., according to the Department of Labor
- Grads in senior positions at U.S. Bank, SMS Holdings, and Rutherford County government



MASTER OF PROFESSIONAL SCIENCE

- Groundbreaking two-year program combining business and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) curricula to **produce in-demand, working graduates**
- **70%+ of students offered a job after internship**
- **90%+ of students employed at graduation**
- **\$60,000–\$70,000 average salaries for graduates**
- Grads in senior positions at Aegis Sciences, BlueCross/BlueShield of TN, Novus International, and Tennessee Valley Authority

JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA

- Cross-trains **new-age multimedia journalists** in fast-changing industry, who chronicle the so-called "first rough draft of history"
- **Multiple Emmy Award-winning alumni and faculty**
- Boasts Center for Innovation in Media, along with **two TV studios and two radio stations**
- Grads in senior positions at NBC News, Associated Press, *The Tennessean*, and DVL Seigenthaler



MASTER OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

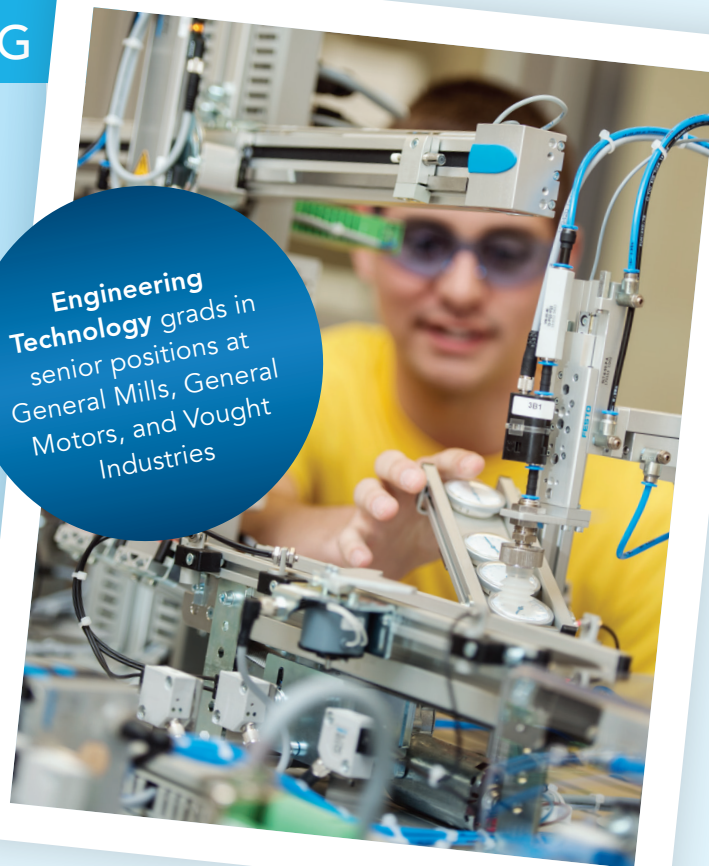
- **Designed for working professionals** who want to enhance their skills and advance their careers
- Available completely **online**
- Three concentrations: Strategic Leadership, Human Resources Leadership, and Training and Development
- Grads in senior positions at Kirkland's, United Way, Tractor Supply, and the State of Tennessee



MECHATRONICS ENGINEERING

- **Launched in partnership with Bridgestone and Nissan in response to their needs**
- **Only** Siemens Level 3 certification program in the U.S.
- Among the **fastest-growing degree programs** in Tennessee, now boasting approximately 400 students
- **\$65,000–\$75,000 average yearly salary**
- Enhanced **state-of-the-art computer-aided design software** available to students from recent Siemens gift valued at \$2.2 million
- Earned Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) accreditation in five years
- Grads in senior positions at Boeing, Insequence Corp., and CalsonicKansei

Engineering Technology grads in senior positions at General Mills, General Motors, and Vought Industries



MEDIA ARTS



- Student **experiential learning opportunities** include working relationship with **Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival**
- Boasts \$1.7 million **mobile production lab** for students to work live events
- No. 33 best public animation school in the U.S. (and **one of the first** digital animation programs in the world)
- Grads in senior positions at DreamWorks Animation, Industrial Light & Magic (ILM), ESPN, National Public Television, and Disney



We at MTSU embrace that 79% of our graduates remain in Tennessee—and 56% stay within an hour’s drive of Nashville. That we are the **No. 1 choice of adult learners and the No. 1 choice of transfer students**, many of whom turn to our campus after entering higher education through the Tennessee Promise. That so many **first-generation students and veterans turn first to us**, knowing we can help them reach their goals. And while we are proud of our many degree programs developed

with industry partnerships or in response to workforce needs, many of which are included in this report, we are equally proud of the **broad-based education** we provide our students in the arts, humanities, and sciences. While a technical and vocational education is indeed valuable, we at MTSU also value the worth and benefit in helping Tennesseans **think critically, broaden their horizons, understand different cultures, and appreciate the beauty, elegance, and nuances of the world beyond a specific vocation.**

Our goal is not only to prepare our students for their first job, but for careers that might not yet exist. The deeper dive afforded by a robust general-education curriculum is what distinguishes a university from a technical school. **We at MTSU prepare ready-to-work graduates who also can reflect, analyze, compare, and understand much more and, in doing so, become engaged citizens of our state.**

NURSING



- **94% pass rate for graduates on Nursing Licensure Exam in 2018**
- Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.) program ranked **No. 15 in the U.S.** for online graduate programs by SR Education Research Publishers
- Grads in senior positions at Nashville General, Vanderbilt Medical Center, and LifePoint



RECORDING INDUSTRY

- **No. 1 audio engineering** program in U.S. (Audio Assemble)
- **Top 25 for music business** (*Billboard* and *Hollywood Reporter*)
- **17 Grammy-winning projects** recently by MTSU alumni and faculty (9 alumni nominated in 2019)
- **Spotlighted by NBC News as a standout** in educating the next generation of music industry pros
- Grads in senior positions at CMT, BMI, and the *Grand Ole Opry*





Combat to Campus to Career

MTSU ranks among the nation's best in helping veterans develop their unique talents and draw on their military careers to succeed in business and industry. Veterans get special academic, employment, and other support services from the Charlie and Hazel Daniels Veterans and Military Family Center.

- 3,200-square-foot veterans center among **largest in U.S.**
- **Partnerships with businesses** to hire veteran graduates
- Advisors, peer mentoring, benefits assistance, counseling, and **prior learning credits** for military experience

SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

- **Strong network of industry partners**, including Schneider Electric, Schwan Cosmetics, Nissan North America, Yoplait/General Mills, and Ingram Content Group
- New undergraduate concentration (to go along with master's program) to help **meet industry demand** of six to nine unfilled openings in the global distribution hub of Tennessee and mid-state for each supply chain graduate
- Conducted inaugural Supply Chain Management Camp for area high school students, with plans to pursue **community college partnerships that culminate with MTSU degrees**
- Grads in senior positions at PepsiCo, State Farm, Nissan North America, The Hershey Company, and Walter Meier Manufacturing



Use these career services just for MT Alumni!



CareerShift job-hunting platform

01

- the most comprehensive online resource for finding positions
- an easy-to-use approach to crack the “hidden job market”
- everything in one place to manage the job hunt

Live and recorded webinars

02

- watch career and personal development webinars
- find an upcoming calendar and archive of previous webcasts
- suggest future topics to cover

Career Development Center

03

- in-person career planning/job search assistance
- review of your résumé
- all by appointment
(career@mtsu.edu or **615-898-2500**)

Find more information at mtalumni.com/career

MidPoints

A look at recent awards, events, and accomplishments at MTSU

compiled by Gina E. Fann, Jimmy Hart, Gina K. Logue, Drew Ruble, and Randy Weiler

This Is “Us”

While the world started watching filmmaker Jordan Peele’s newest creation, *Us*, from behind splayed fingers and popcorn boxes last spring, MTSU junior Phillip Mayberry was savoring the feeling of seeing his own art in one of the film’s trailers. Mayberry, a Graphic Design major from Union City, was one of thousands of fans around the world who answered an ongoing challenge, via Chocolate City Comics, Instagram, and Universal Studios, to create artwork inspired by the new horror movie. The result is a photorealistic image of dual roles by Oscar-winning actor Lupita



Nyong’o in *Us*, a split-screen treatment that’s as beautiful and puzzling—and horrifying—as the characters.

Mayberry’s girlfriend, who is also his publicist, told the Department of Art and Design student about the opportunity, and over New Year’s weekend, after a three-day fast, inspiration came to him. Four hours later, it was done. “I figured I’d take part in it, not thinking that anything would come out of it,” Mayberry said, “but I put my best creative juices together and came up with what I came up with. It kind of picked up a little notoriety on Instagram, and Universal reached out to me and talked about being on the marketing campaign.” You can see more of Mayberry’s work at [instagram.com/pmayart](https://www.instagram.com/pmayart).



MTSU’s Keith M. Huber (l), Civil Air Patrol national commander Maj. Gen. Mark Smith, and MTSU Provost Mark Byrnes hold a commemorative plaque presented to Smith honoring the partnership between the University and CAP. The event took place March 22 at the MTSU Veterans Memorial outside the Tom H. Jackson Building.

On Patrol

Though he considers himself an introvert who grew up in a camping trailer in the middle of the desert behind a garage and experienced a tough upbringing, Civil Air Patrol Maj. Gen. Mark Smith’s extroverted side brought motivation and inspiration to an overflow MTSU classroom during a recent visit. The national commander of the U.S. Air Force auxiliary group spoke of mentorship, servant leadership, and “rising from the ashes and learning from failure” in March as he talked to more than 100 students, faculty, and staff in the Business and Aerospace Building.

Smith’s lecture, sponsored by the University Honors College and Omicron Delta Kappa leadership honor society, was in front of primarily Aerospace students and a group of young CAP cadets. Smith, who lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico, said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Ray Powell mentored him to be able to attend the Air Force Academy. “He invested in me personally, allowing me to achieve my dream. The power of mentorship is an amazing thing,” Smith said. “Hopefully, at MTSU . . . you have someone investing in you and helping you out, to help you achieve your dreams and get you where you are going.”

The College of Basic and Applied Sciences and its Aerospace Department signed a partnership with CAP’s Tennessee Wing in 2014, providing cadets ages 12–18 with opportunities to interact with faculty and explore the Murfreesboro campus. MTSU hosted the Tennessee Wing Cadet Encampment in 2016, 2017, and 2018.



From left, Ken Paulson, then-dean of MTSU's College of Media and Entertainment; Val Hoepfner, executive director, WMOT Roots Radio 89.5; MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee; and Jessie Scott, WMOT host, hold the 50th anniversary banner for the MTSU-owned station during a special celebration held April 9 on campus.



A Half Century in the Making

It went live 50 years ago as a student-run “educational radio station.” To this day, MTSU’s WMOT-FM is still focusing on informing its audience about great music and local, national, and international news. The 100,000-watt National Public Radio (NPR) charter member station celebrated its 50th birthday on April 9. Now known as WMOT-FM Roots Radio 89.5, the station transitioned several times over the years, including its most recent switch to Americana music.

WMOT began as a 780-watt mixed-format rock station broadcasting to the campus and adjoining neighborhoods. When NPR was created in 1970, WMOT became a charter member. The listener-supported station boosted its power to 50,000 watts in 1971, expanding its reach across middle Tennessee and into Kentucky and Alabama. It added classical music to its format and expanded its staff with professional broadcasters and news reporters, achieving a continuing streak of winning state and national news and service awards.

In 1980, WMOT became Tennessee’s first radio station to use satellite broadcasting. Two years later, it debuted its all-jazz format. In 1990, the station became part of the then-newly formed College of Mass Communication and later boosted its signal strength to 100,000 watts with a taller antenna at a new site in 1996. WMOT began broadcasting online in 2003, expanded its reach to a million potential listeners with another antenna upgrade in 2005, and started simulcasting on HD Radio in 2008 to offer better fidelity via digital technology. In 2009, the station added news and talk programming to its format, and then began airing classical music on weekdays in 2011.

WMOT changed to its current Americana format in September 2016 in a partnership with Music City Roots, a Nashville-based firm that provides programming for both radio and television. The collaboration has helped the station expand its audience nationally and internationally. WMOT is currently the region’s only Americana music channel and has been an active partner in the Americana Music Association’s annual AmericanaFest celebration, sponsoring live shows, the event’s official viewing party, simulcasts and live streams, and more. WMOT continues to offer award-winning jazz programming on secondary channels: 89.5HD and 92.3FM in Rutherford County and 104.9 in Williamson County. Rodney Crowell, Lee Roy Parnell, Mandy Barnett, and Sarah Potenza were among the featured artists in this year’s inaugural 895 Fest, an outdoor Americana music festival held May 31–June 1 at Hop Springs Beer Park in Murfreesboro in celebration of WMOT’s 50th birthday milestone.



Jamie Noe

photo by: Nathan Morgan



Closing the Deal

A new program within MTSU’s Jennings A. Jones College of Business is filling an increasing need for sales professionals in the mid-state economy with the support of partnerships and a team of industry advisors. Launched last fall, the new Professional Selling concentration within the Department of Marketing was made possible through a \$100,000 donation from Nashville-based Insurance Group of America that will fund the IGA Office of Professional Sales with \$20,000 annually for the next five years. The mission of the new office is to increase student outreach and internship opportunities and attract top scholars to the program.

A Tennessee Higher Education Commission report indicates that thousands of entry-level sales positions will be opening up in Tennessee over the next few years due to ongoing economic growth. IGA owner and founder Jamie Noe was formally recognized with a special award for his company’s contribution. About half of Noe’s 20 employees are MTSU alumni. Noe is also a member of the department’s advisory board, which is made up of primarily sponsoring sales professionals as well as alumni and community members. The board meets twice a year to provide feedback about the program. Noe said he hopes the office’s enhanced student outreach “attracts top scholars and builds the sales concentration into a nationally recognized program.”

Changing the Conversation

The chair of MTSU’s Recording Industry Department was featured at an Academy of Country Music event in Las Vegas in April about the lack of gender equity in country radio. Former ACM CEO and MTSU alum Pete Fisher asked **Professor Beverly Keel** to bring her **Change the Conversation** presentation to the academy’s annual Radio Awards ceremony. The event gave Keel and her co-founders a chance to address radio executives directly and urge more airtime for female country artists.

“For five years, we’ve been holding meetings, we’ve sponsored research, we’ve held showcases—anything we could to share the word about how great music is by women,” Keel told the radio executives. Change the Conversation was formed in 2014 by Keel, Leslie Fram, and Tracy Gershon to fight gender inequality in country music. The organization funds research, mentors young women, and hosts events to allow industry experts to share their insights with the group.

Earlier this year, about 300 people gathered at a Change the Conversation event in the offices of performing rights organization BMI in Nashville to hear Keel and nationally known journalists Ann Powers (author and NPR’s music critic and correspondent), Jewly Hight (*The New York Times* and NPR), and Marissa Moss (*Rolling Stone*) explore issues of gender inequality in country music and the media. R.J. Curtis, executive director of Country Radio Broadcasters, told the crowd: “I want all of you to know I am here because we are listening. . . . Instead of running away from Beverly, Leslie, and Tracy, we are running toward them.”



photo by: Andrew Oppmann

From left, former Academy of Country Music CEO and MTSU alum Pete Fisher; artists Ingrid Andress and Tenille Townes; MTSU Recording Industry Chair Beverly Keel; and artist Jimmie Allen.



photo courtesy of: Change the Conversation

Change the Conversation (l-r) co-founder and MTSU Recording Industry chair Beverly Keel, moderated a panel featuring Marissa Moss, Ann Powers, and Jewly Hight.

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Legendary **COMEBACKS**

From MTSU Board Chair Stephen Smith to state lawmakers to working mothers, graduates of MTSU's best-in-state Adult Degree Completion Program prove it's never too late to come back to college by Allison Gorman

EVERYONE LOVES A GOOD COMEBACK STORY. Stephen Smith has two of them.

The first one happened in 1977, a year after Smith's pickup hit a feed truck that spun out in front of him on a rain-slickened road in Nashville. The impact left him pinned inside his steaming vehicle, a bone poking through the skin of his right wrist. It took him a while to realize that his hip was broken too.

The good news, besides the fact that he was alive, was that his pitching arm was unscathed. MTSU's baseball team had just clinched the 1976 Ohio Valley Conference championship, and Smith—a walk-on who was, in his words, “an average player with way-above-average dedication”—was looking forward to one more year of eligibility.

His road back to pitching was rough. Smith spent two months in traction, dropped 50 pounds, and returned to school in a wheelchair. When he was back on his feet, Smith couldn't run with the team. His coach, the late John Stanford, gave him a key to Murphy Center to use the whirlpool. That's where the night security guard would find Smith when he was too miserable to sleep.

For Smith, baseball inspired a sense of purpose that school never had. Determined to play again, he logged 500 miles between September and March, going at “a slow waddle.”

His diligence paid off at the end of the season. With Smith on the mound, MTSU beat Murray State to grab the 1977 division championship. After his hard-fought comeback, the win felt like both the pinnacle and the natural conclusion of his college career.

“It was one of those fairy tales that works out,” he said. “Not all of them do.”

With his eligibility finished and a career at his dad's construction company lined up, Smith dropped out of school—but he stayed True Blue.

Over the next three decades, as his star rose in local business, civic, and political circles, Smith held various leadership positions at MTSU. And following in the footsteps of his late father, Reese Smith Jr., for whom the baseball field is named, he donated and raised money to improve Blue Raider athletics.

He also pushed to improve the lives of the MTSU student-athletes themselves. In 2005, as chair of the search committee that hired Chris Massaro, Smith told the new Blue Raiders athletic director that boosting players' graduation rate was his most important mission. (Massaro delivered. By 2017, the rate had reached a school-record 88%.)

Yet Smith knew his own story didn't support his message. So he enrolled in MTSU's Adult Degree Completion Program (ADCP) to finish what he'd started more than 30 years earlier. It was his second great comeback.

Setting an example

Smith had some personal reasons for finishing his degree.

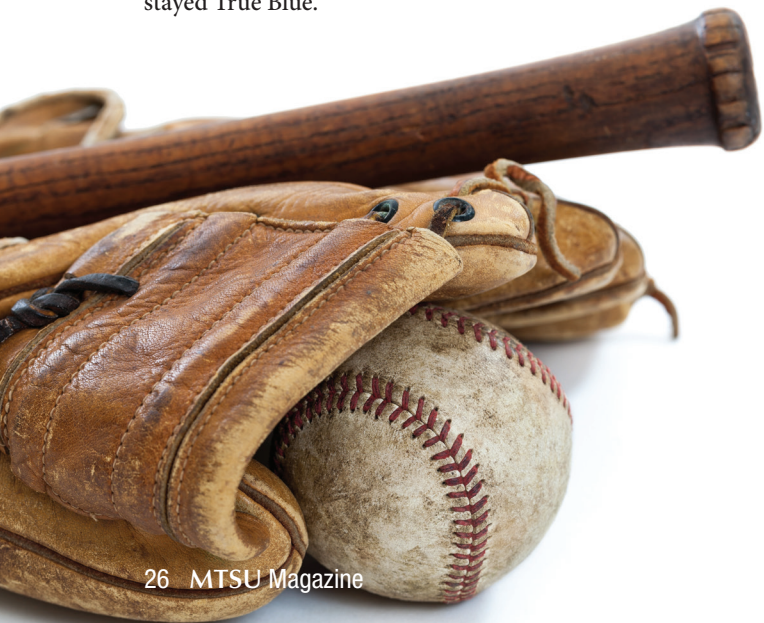
Whenever he applied for a position on a committee or board—and he served on many, for prominent organizations such as the Metropolitan Nashville Planning Commission, Middle Tennessee Regional Transit Authority, and Metropolitan Nashville Parks and Recreation—he'd worry about inadvertently misrepresenting himself as a graduate (rather than an alumnus) of MTSU.

He enrolled in MTSU's Adult Degree Completion Program (ADCP) to finish what he'd started more than 30 years earlier. It was his second great comeback.

He knew a degree would give him more credibility in national political circles as he helped plan a potential U.S. presidential bid by former Senate Minority Leader Bill Frist. (“If you're from the South, they look at you like they're surprised if you wear socks,” Smith said.)

Also on his radar was then-Gov. Bill Haslam's plan to create separate governing boards for MTSU and other four-year schools under the auspices of the Tennessee Board of Regents.

“I hoped to earn the respect of the governor enough to be appointed to the Board of Trust,” Smith said. “I thought it would be a lot easier if I was a graduate than if I was a dropout.”





(l-r) Randy Deere, Steve Smith, Reese Smith, Jr., and Steve's brother Reese.

But his primary motivation was to set an example for MTSU's student-athletes.

Like many of them, he'd dreamed of going pro, even though the odds of making it to the next level were infinitesimal. He'd dropped out knowing he had another dream job lined up: a position working for his idol, his father, at Haury & Smith Contractors. But for most college athletes, their degree is their future.

"The only place my face was recognizable at school was at the athletic department, and we had hundreds of young people there," Smith said. "My thought was that they would say, 'If getting a degree is important to Mr. Smith, and he's nearly 60—to them I was an old man—maybe I'd better get mine.'"

Never too late

Smith has set an example for adults too. He's proof that it's never too late to make a comeback at MTSU. The Adult Degree Completion Program applies the seasoned student's knowledge and skills to degree requirements, making getting a bachelor's degree as time- and cost-efficient as possible.

Fewer than half of MTSU students are between 18 and 21, so accommodating adult students is part of the University's

mission. The ADCP offers a flexible path to a bachelor's degree for people who are entering college later in life. Maybe they joined the military directly out of high school, or they earned an associate's degree and want to go further. Or maybe, like Smith, they dropped out of college and regret it.

Through the ADCP, they can work toward any bachelor's degree MTSU offers, although most people major in Professional Studies or Integrated Studies—general Bachelor of Science programs designed to make the most of prior college credits or work experience. Course credit for previous work and military learning experiences is awarded through a semester-long class called Prior Learning Assessment (PLA).

It's not unusual to finish a degree in a year through the ADCP, although completion time varies depending on several factors, including the specific degree, prior college and PLA credits, and course load. Students are encouraged to work at the best pace for them, choosing from online, traditional, and accelerated classes to fit college into their busy schedules.

In the decade since the ADCP launched at MTSU, word has gotten out about its value. Now at any given time, there are 1,000 to 1,200 adults enrolled in the program, making a comeback.

Quick turnaround

Shenika Martindale, of Antioch, enrolled in the ADCP 27 years after a knee injury forced her to drop out of Roane State Community College, where she was a scholarship athlete. She found a manufacturing job at Nissan and stayed there into her 40s, when she decided she didn't want to work in a factory forever. She became an educational assistant with Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, finished her associate's degree at Nashville State Community College, and immediately wanted more: more education, more opportunities to help inner-city kids.

After exploring the options, Martindale was convinced that MTSU offers the best adult degree completion program around. She entered the program in June 2018 needing 51 credit hours, and between accelerated courses and her PLA credits, Martindale earned a bachelor's in Integrated Studies in less than a year, graduating this May.

"I told myself initially that I wanted my bachelor's degree by the time I turned 50," she said. "Well, I just turned 48. Now I want my master's degree before I turn 50."

She's not even there yet, but "I'm finally living my dream," Martindale said. And she knows where she'll go for her master's in Professional Counseling. "I'm now an alum at MTSU. Why wouldn't I want to give my money to my University?"

Martindale was convinced that MTSU offers the best adult degree completion program around.

Tammie Patterson, of Wartrace, said it was her daughter's impending high school graduation that nudged her back to college. Patterson labored through years of night school in the '90s to earn her associate's degree in business. Then her kids



Shenika Martindale



Tammie Patterson

photos courtesy of Grad Images

were born, and the demands of work and parenthood pushed her educational goals to the back burner.

Last year, with a son at Tennessee Tech and a daughter headed for college, Patterson realized she'd been so busy urging them forward that she hadn't furthered herself. She enrolled in the ADCP, majoring in Liberal Studies (now consolidated with Integrated Studies), and graduated this May with a 4.0.

A bachelor's degree is good employment insurance, Patterson said, although she enjoys her career with human resources company Hamilton-Ryker.

"I wanted to be able to move up in my company, and while my experience covers anything that a degree would, I didn't want my not having a degree to ever keep me from improving my position," she said.

She and Martindale also each participated in the Applied Leadership program, comprising several five-day, 40-hour intensive courses. Both considered the program a highlight—particularly a leadership course taught by retired U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Keith Huber.

"I can't even describe how that experience made me feel," Martindale said.

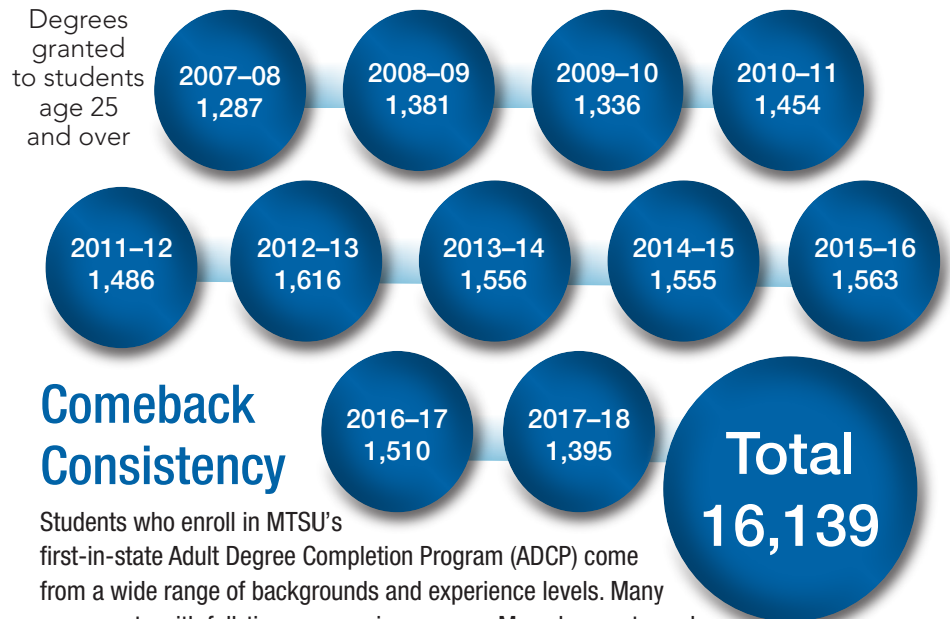
Representing adult learners

Explaining how he fit college into his busy life, Stephen Smith quotes his father: "You find time for things that you want to do."

Exhibits A and B can be found in the Tennessee General Assembly: Mike Sparks, from Smyrna, and Jeremy Faison, from Cosby.

For 30 years, Sparks has been squeezing higher learning into a life that doesn't have room for it. By age 21, he was a husband and father with a factory job and his own business. Then he started more businesses,

Degrees granted to students age 25 and over



Comeback Consistency

Students who enroll in MTSU's first-in-state Adult Degree Completion Program (ADCP) come from a wide range of backgrounds and experience levels. Many are parents with full-time careers in progress. Many have returned to college to change their career paths, to become more valuable to their employers, and, more importantly, to fulfill a previously unattained goal in their lives. Typically, the average student is 25 years old (or older) and has been in the workplace at least five years. Most have some college credit.

trained to be a realtor and an emergency medical technician, wrote the first of three books, became a radio show host, and built a political career. All along the way he was taking college classes, eventually earning an associate's degree from Motlow State Community College.

Sparks enrolled at MTSU in 2013, got his bachelor's in two years through the ADCP—and kept right on going.

"What inspired me was Dr. Larry Burriss' free expression class, about the



First Amendment,” he said. “I had to have it. It was my last class. And I really didn’t want to take it.”

As a politician, Sparks is bothered by what he sees as an unfair and counterproductive media focus on negative and divisive stories. This class got him thinking about how he could help change that dynamic. Now he says he is pursuing a master’s degree in Media and Communication at MTSU and—ever the entrepreneur—publishing an online newspaper, TennesseeLedger.com.

Sparks’ colleague in the state legislature, Faison, could point to his five children as his excuse for never returning to college after failing out as a teen. Instead, Faison said his kids, especially his 16-year-old daughter, were his inspiration for enrolling in the ADCP this spring. As she considers her future after high school, he hopes to set a good example for her and her four younger siblings, especially because his first college go-round was a lesson in what not to do.

Faison wants his children to understand that a degree will open doors for them.

“I wasn’t mature enough to handle it,” Faison said. “And since I’ve grown up, I’ve regretted the fact that I don’t have an education. So that’s what I’m doing—bettering myself.”

While his career as a politician and business owner proves that you don’t need a degree to succeed, Faison wants his children to understand that a degree will open doors for them. He hopes it will open doors for him too, if he leaves government or starts a new business.

By taking online classes and some five-day intensive courses, Faison expects to earn his bachelor’s degree in Integrated Studies by December 2020.

“My family’s used to me being gone five days, because I live in east Tennessee and work in Nashville,” he said. “I think we’ll be just fine.”

A sure thing

Stephen Smith had no such confidence when he enrolled in the ADCP. “I had a lot of self-doubts,” he said.



State Rep. Jeremy Faison (l) meets with MTSU Board Chair Stephen Smith in Faison’s legislative office during the March 15 MTSU Day on the Hill, where University officials briefed legislators about the University’s priorities.

There were logistic issues: He couldn’t type, and he was a stranger to the world of online classes and computerized testing. There were academic issues: His humble grades from the ’70s meant he had to make excellent ones now to bring his GPA up to par.

Smith was so scared he wouldn’t make it through the program that he told almost no one—not even his two sons—that he’d gone back to school.

“I was uncharacteristically modest about what I did until after I accomplished it,” he said.

In fact, he felt far more assured of earning a spot on the future MTSU Board of Trustees than of earning a bachelor’s degree.

Turns out he did both. Smith became the first chair of the board in 2017, 5½ years after receiving the diploma that hangs on his office wall. [MTSU](#)





GET UNIVERSITY CREDIT FOR WHAT YOU'VE ALREADY LEARNED

Making the decision to finish your degree can be a little intimidating and stressful, but MTSU works with hundreds of non-traditional students every semester to help them reach their goals.

With the largest adult degree program in Tennessee, MTSU has developed a streamlined process designed to help you finish as quickly as possible. Our **Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)** program lets you earn college credit for what you already know.

The PLA course allows you to:

- Turn work learning experiences into valuable credit hours
- Spend a semester identifying and documenting job-related skills that equate to college-level training
- Gain 3 hours of course credit, plus however many credit hours you earn for your work portfolio

Maria Vazquez, of Smyrna, took the PLA course as a traditional bachelor's student in Sociology. A divorced mother of two, Vazquez had cleaned homes and offices before starting her own cleaning business. The class helped her recognize leadership skills she didn't know she had. "Before, I just thought, 'I'm a good cleaner.' Now I understood that I have the ability to sell my business and to train people," she said. In the end, Vazquez said, the PLA saved her time and money—and boosted her self-confidence.

Contact

MTSU University College

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Because your background and ambitions are unique, we will provide you a special advisor to guide you. Our goal is to get you there as fast as possible. It's time to get started.

Academic Transitions

Walker Library Dean Bonnie Allen (pictured) retired following the 2018–19 academic year, and the library’s associate dean, Jason Martin, has been serving as interim dean. Guanping Zheng took over as interim vice provost when David Schmidt, vice provost for international affairs, left MTSU in June to become president of American University in Dubai. MTSU Associate Provost Faye Johnson retired on June 30, and History Professor Mary Hoffschwelle has succeeded her. And Zeny Panol was appointed interim dean of the College of Media and Entertainment after the former dean, Ken Paulson, became director of MTSU’s new Free Speech Center and remained a faculty member.



Workforce U

Christine Karbowskiak, member of MTSU’s Board of Trustees and executive vice president, chief administrative officer, and chief risk officer of Bridgestone Americas Inc., served as one of three commencement speakers in May. “Everything you can ever imagine for yourself in this moment is only a tiny fraction of the possibilities that await you,” Karbowskiak told a portion of the total 2,529 new MTSU graduates. In another ceremony, Tennessee **Gov. Bill Lee** reminded the graduates that choosing to serve others is a significant factor in facing life’s challenges. “If we use our lives to serve, we become the beneficiaries of that service more than those that we serve,” he said. The graduate commencement ceremony speaker was **Judith Iriarte-Gross**, MTSU Chemistry professor.

1911 Society

This spring, the University celebrated the newest members of the 1911 Society, named in honor of MTSU’s founding year; the Signal Society, which honors annual donors who have supported the University in 20 or more years and which is named for Middle Tennessee Normal School’s first newspaper/magazine, *The Signal*; and the Old Main Society, recognized for reaching donation milestones. “We are very fortunate to have donors, whose contributions and planned gifts provide the financial resources our students need to succeed,” said Joe Bales, vice president for university advancement. “Private support is no longer considered secondary or supplemental funding; today the University’s success and that of our students and faculty depend on the philanthropic contributions of our alumni and friends. We would not be the institution we are today without their generosity and commitment.”



1911 Society new members: Gilbert Backlund Jr., Janie Hulan Bartlette, Terry C. Bird, Cornelia Freeman Cooper, Clyde L. Hall, James K. Patterson, College of Education Dean Lana C. Seivers, Pamela and Ray Singer, and Kenneth W. Walden.

Signal Society new members recognized for 40-plus years of support: Faye Brandon, Hutton S. Brandon, Regina Jones Giles, Charles and Delia Goodman, Ken and Lisa Halliburton, Betsy and the late Dr. Tom Johns, William and Theresa Ketron, Nelson Smotherman, and Harold and Charlotte Swafford

Old Main Society new members, recognized for donation milestones: Barbara M. Cobble, Richard C. Key, Charles M. and Judy C. Myatt, Charles and Nancy Pigg, Ralph and Carol Ruckart, David A. and Frances L. Singer (pictured), and Clara W. Todd

Campus School

Almost a century of service in educating generations of students produces a lot of cherished memories for those with connections to Homer Pittard Campus School, the K–5 teaching laboratory school owned by MTSU and operated by Rutherford County Schools. Dozens of former students, parents, teachers, staff, and community supporters—including MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee and College of Education Dean Lana Sievers—attended the school’s annual open house this spring to recognize and celebrate the school’s 90th anniversary. Campus School fifth-grader Jada Scott is pictured portraying former first lady Michelle Obama at the open house.



Golden Anniversaries

Earlier this year, three of the original sororities on the MTSU campus—Alpha Delta Pi, Kappa Delta, and Chi Omega (pictured)—celebrated their 50th anniversaries of existence at MTSU. Founded on March 1, 1969, Alpha Delta Pi holds the distinction of being the first national sorority on MTSU's campus.



Setting an Example

It's rare when the president of the United States personally invites you to participate in a national symposium. But there stood Monty Burks ('06, '08), an MTSU alumnus with Criminal Justice bachelor's and master's degrees, at the podium alongside President Donald Trump at the Rx Drug Abuse and Heroin Summit April 24 in Atlanta. Burks is director of Faith-Based Initiatives/Division of Substance Abuse at the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. The president, who attended the Atlanta summit with wife Melania, introduced Burks. "Nineteen years ago, Monty turned his life around when two women of prayer (Burks' mother, who is MTSU alumna Patricia Burks-Jelks, and an anonymous close family friend) from his hometown church helped him to get on a path to recovery," Trump said. The past the president referred to included Burks' father's death in 1997 and the son living a "party lifestyle" that included addiction and three years of personal and financial problems. Burks even spent time at a federal correctional facility. Burks told the attentive audience that "the opposite of addiction is relationship. That simple equation is what helped me find my freedom. Criminal justice intervention led me to treatment, which led me to recover, which put me on this podium." In closing, he thanked the president "for allowing me this space to stand beside you. I want to thank God for you and the first lady, and your support of the recovery community."



Michael Cartwright (l-r) , Whitney Curtis, Erin Mckenzie, and MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee

A Gift That Keeps on Giving

Whitney Curtis and Erin Mckenzie received a life-altering education from MTSU, thanks to the Cartwright-Coakley Scholarship. Curtis and Mckenzie are the first two MTSU graduates on the scholarship, which Michael and Tina Cartwright of Franklin established in 2015 to help students from L.N. Coakley High School in Great Exuma in the Bahamas receive a college education at MTSU and then return to work and be leaders in their town. A former MTSU student, Michael Cartwright is chair and co-founder of the Brentwood-based American Addiction Centers. The Cartwrights created a \$600,000 scholarship fund that he said has grown to nearly \$1 million to fully cover six scholarships for tuition, housing, and other expenses. MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee, a native of the Bahamas, applauded the Cartwrights for their ongoing commitment to the island nation.

Good Steward

After steering MTSU's College of Media and Entertainment toward national acclaim, Dean Ken Paulson has stepped down to focus on advocating for the First Amendment, with plans to launch a public policy center on campus. Paulson has a rich background as a protector of First Amendment rights. The former editor of *USA Today*, he has called MTSU home since 2013. As dean, Paulson propelled the creativity of the media college forward, snagging a heightened reputation during his tenure. He revamped the media programs and changed the format of WMOT, an NPR-affiliated radio station housed on the University campus (see page 23). During Paulson's tenure, students have attended the Grammy Awards, Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival and, for the first time this year, the South by Southwest Conference and Festival in Austin, Texas. In each scenario, media and entertainment students have been able to work alongside professionals and learn the ropes in experiential fashion.



On top of planning for the new Free Speech Center—a First Amendment advocacy hub that aims to provoke thoughtful discussion and discourse at college campuses across the nation—Paulson is still teaching courses at the University. This is familiar work for the former newspaper editor: He served as president of the First Amendment Center at Vanderbilt University for more than a decade. In concert with all of this, Paulson also launched *Shut Up and Dance*, a new program of the Free Speech Center, which is a traveling concert that celebrates free speech with the power of music. The show tells the story of America's social struggles and progress using pop, rock, gospel, soul, country, and hip-hop music.

The *Shut Up and Dance* band is made up of performers who have appeared with music icons such as Eminem and Kacey Musgraves or on *The Voice* or *American Idol*. The program features contemporary songs by Beyoncé, Lorde, Macklemore, Common, and Taylor Swift, alongside vintage anthems by Stevie Wonder, Neil Young, Bob Dylan, and Loretta Lynn. "This show celebrates the role freedom of speech plays in protecting our democracy," Paulson said. "It melds America's core principles with some of the biggest hits of the past half-century, played by a band of some of Nashville's finest musicians."

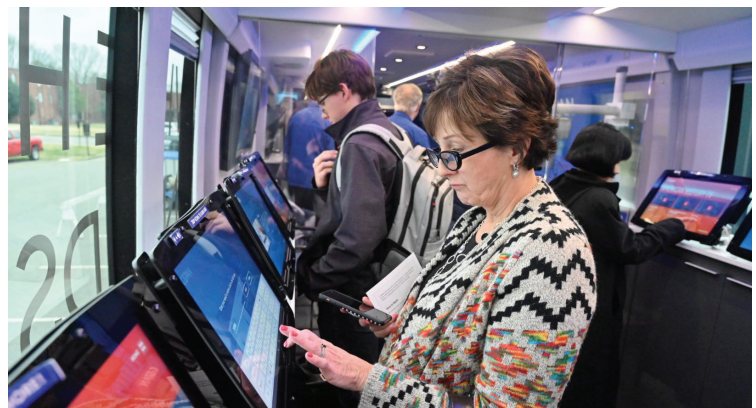


Bus Stop

MTSU students and community leaders alike had the opportunity to explore the iconic C-SPAN bus during a tour stop on campus early this year. The Cable-Satellite Public Affairs Network (C-SPAN), which is funded by the cable industry, has covered American government and culture since 1979. It is perhaps best known for its live gavel-to-gavel coverage of Congress. Visitors were invited to be videoed by C-SPAN staff for short messages explaining "what it means to be an American" in conjunction with the network's video documentary competition. Sharing their views were MTSU Provost Mark Byrnes and Rutherford County Mayor Bill Ketron.

John Cantor, a freshman from Williamsport, Maryland, said he found the bus "fascinating" and expressed interest in an internship with the network. "It's very eye-opening to show you all that C-SPAN encompasses," the Music Business student said. "I believe a lot of people who aren't accustomed to what C-SPAN does think of it as this general program that just covers the government, but it covers so much more." During their visit, C-SPAN representatives spoke to two MTSU media classes about how budding reporters can use C-SPAN to find attributable, authentic source material for class reports and projects.

Above (l-r): Jenae Green, C-SPAN marketing representative; Provost Mark Byrnes; Rutherford County Mayor Bill Ketron; State Sen. Shane Reeves; and Robin Newton, C-SPAN media relations specialist



Stamp of Approval

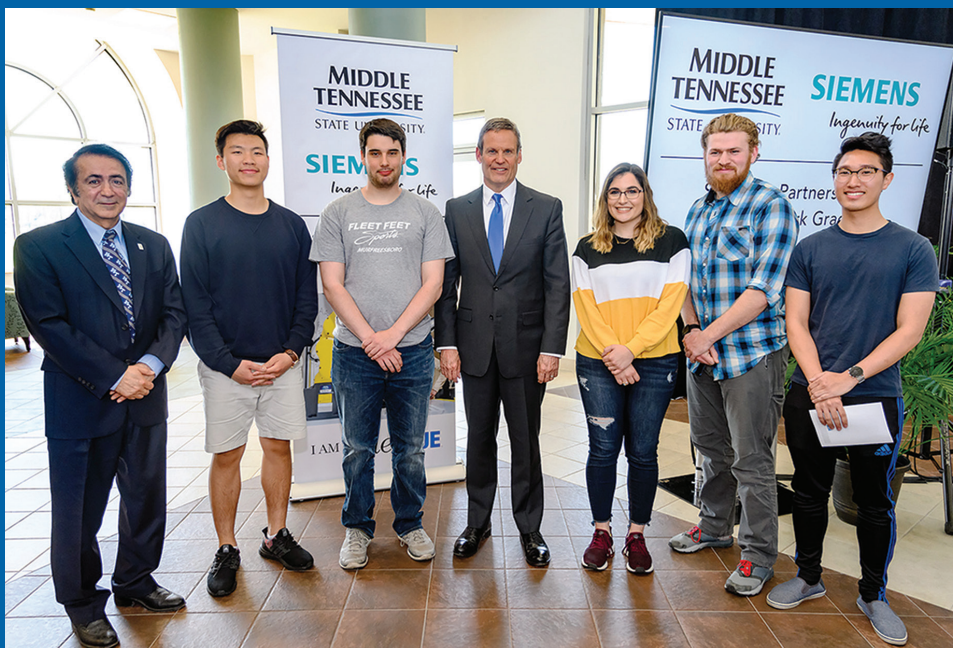
Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee joined MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee and the University's independent board of trustees in March 2019 to underscore several of the institution's ready-to-work degree programs that have been tailored to fit the needs of the state's workforce. Students in one of those programs, Mechatronics Engineering, are getting state-of-the-art training through an in-kind grant from Siemens Digital Industries Software, one of the corporate partners of MTSU's College of Basic and Applied Sciences. The software gives students access to the same technology that companies around the world depend on every day to develop innovative products in a wide variety of industries.

McPhee, MTSU Board of Trustees Chair Stephen Smith, and Siemens' Nashville General Manager Sara Mould showed the new governor how students are being trained on software used to develop robotic systems for automotive, aerospace, machinery, and high-tech electronics companies. Lee later met with students. "MTSU continues to offer high-quality education and prepare students for the jobs of tomorrow with their Mechatronics program," Lee said. "The partnership with Siemens is a key part of pairing industry needs with education opportunity. I'm pleased that this partnership is happening right here at MTSU."

Mechatronics is a multidisciplinary field that includes a combination of systems, mechanical, electrical, telecommunications, control, and computer engineering. The program is based on a three-level international certification program created by Siemens, an innovation leader in automation and digitalization. The Mechatronics Engineering major at MTSU has grown from zero to 400 students in only 5½ years—one of the state's fastest-growing degree programs literally from imagination to accreditation. The four-year degree program was shaped through the partnership with Siemens. MTSU launched the Mechatronics program in partnership also with Bridgestone and Nissan in response to their workforce needs.

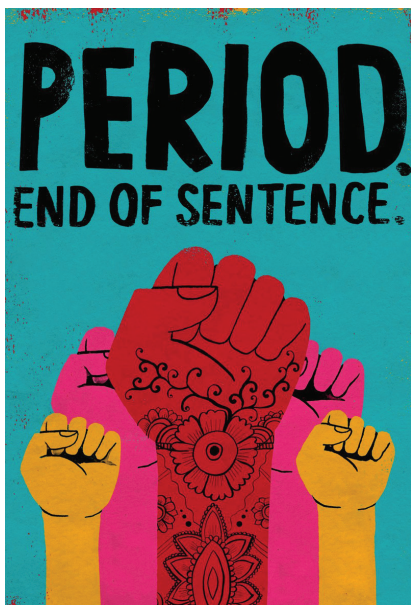
MTSU offers the only Level 3 program certified by Siemens in the U.S. Graduates earn a \$65,000–\$75,000 average salary yearly and have found senior positions with employers such as Boeing, Insequence Corp., and CalsonicKansei, among others. About 60 students graduated in May with the degree. Siemens Corp., a U.S. subsidiary of Siemens AG, is one of the world's largest producers of energy-efficient, resource-saving technologies. For more than 160 years, Siemens USA has innovated and invented technologies to support American industry spanning manufacturing, energy, health care, and infrastructure. "Siemens is committed to providing students with the opportunity to learn the tools used by many leading manufacturers and technology companies," Mould said. "Through our academic partnership with Middle Tennessee State University, we can empower the next generation of digital talent with the skills today's employers need."

The
Mechatronics
Engineering
major at
MTSU has
grown from
zero to 400
students in
only 5½
years—one
of the state's
fastest-growing
degree
programs



Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee joins MTSU Mechatronics Engineering students in the Miller Education Center following the University event recognizing the Siemens company's generous grant of computer-aided design software to the program. From left are Saeed Foroudastan, faculty advisor and associate dean for the College of Basic and Applied Sciences, and students Kevin Pan, Edward Thomason, Lee, Sarah Zakaria, Noah Bright, and Brandon Soundara.

Project Accessibility, Period



The Oscar-winning film *Period. End of Sentence* documents women in Hapur, India, who suffered because they were forced to miss school—and lose out on an education—because they lacked tampons and sanitary napkins and who banded together to create their own sanitary pad-making business and discover the path to empowerment. The documentary inspired an MTSU student group to boost its efforts to raise awareness on campus about women’s health and empowerment. The group, Generation Action, put a local spin on the international issue by working to supply free napkins and tampons in women’s restrooms all across campus.

“Project Accessibility, Period” began as a research project by Tess Shelton, who documented the availability (or lack of availability) of napkins and tampons on campus for a 2017 class on feminist methods and rhetoric. Shelton and her research partner, Joy Lewis, examined 15 high-traffic MTSU campus buildings using the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s model for determining

“food deserts,” which are areas devoid of affordable and accessible groceries. None of those buildings had a working and filled pad or tampon dispenser. Shelton also found that women must walk an average of seven minutes just to reach a campus site to buy tampons and napkins. That could affect whether the women can get to classes promptly if they need supplies unexpectedly.

Price also is a barrier to accessibility for students on shoestring budgets, the research uncovered. Shelton said the average cost of a single tampon on campus is about 50 cents compared to 20 cents off campus, and they’re often not sold individually. Generation Action, for which Shelton serves as president, set up wicker baskets with free tampons and napkins in some women’s restrooms. “The underlying message of our project, and I would say the movement for menstrual equity broadly, is that pads and tampons are a not a luxury,” Shelton said. “No one decides when and where to have their period. Pads and tampons are a necessity and, thus, a human right. . . . You shouldn’t have to worry about your job security or your ability to get an education because you have a normal bodily function.”

Scouts’ Honor



About 20 Girl Scouts spent time on MTSU’s campus this spring as part of a daylong career mentoring project hosted

by first lady Elizabeth McPhee. The project provided the girls exposure to a wide range of professions. McPhee, a retired educator with Murfreesboro City Schools, connected the youngsters with volunteers from the University’s faculty and staff, who in turn allowed the girls to shadow them in their daily job duties. The Girl Scouts visited offices, classrooms, and other operations on campus. The mentors ranged from professors in the College of Basic and Applied Sciences to staff members from several offices, including MT Athletics, the Charlie and Hazel Daniels Veterans and Military Family Center, Campus Planning, and the Marketing and Communications division.

“It’s all about empowering young girls, empowering women,” McPhee said. MTSU is now discussing forging a partnership with the Girl Scout council

similar to the ones signed recently with the Tennessee Wing of Civil Air Patrol, the volunteer auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, and the Middle Tennessee Council Scouts BSA. Those partnerships make it easier for the youth programs in those organizations to gain access to campus and tap into academic and program resources.

Speaking of Scouts BSA, three Eagle Scouts with MTSU ties—retired Army Lt. Gen. Keith Huber of the Daniels Center; alumnus and Rutherford County Mayor Bill Ketron; and Board of Trustees member J.B. Baker—took part earlier this year in a ceremony by the Middle Tennessee Council of Scouts BSA to welcome girl members into its youth program. The trio participated in the all-girl Troop 2019’s founding event at the Rutherford County Courthouse on Feb. 1—the day when girls nationwide could join Scouts BSA.





Make More **MT** Memories at Homecoming!

Oct. 25–26, 2019

Friday, Oct. 25

- 10 a.m. Class of 1969 Golden Raiders Reunion and Induction Ceremony*
- 4 p.m. Alumni Awards Reception*
- 6 p.m. Black Alumni Society Homecoming Party *

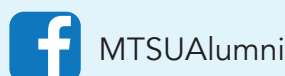
*RSVP required for these events (see below); times subject to change

Saturday, Oct. 26

- 9 a.m. Mixer Parade Watching Party
- 10 a.m. Homecoming Parade
- 11:30 a.m. Tailgate Lunch*
- 2:30 p.m. Middle Tennessee vs. Florida International University (goblueraiders.com/tickets)

Join us for these activities and much more

Event listing, RSVP, and updated information available at mtalumni.com, by calling 1-800-533-6878, or by emailing alumni@mtsu.edu



true **BLUE** Cheerleader

by Drew Ruble and Randy Weiler

Alumna and advocate Liz Rhea was known for her MTSU and community philanthropy

BELOVED COMMUNITY STALWART DR. ELIZABETH “LIZ” RHEA, WHO DIED May 30 at age 85 following a lengthy illness, was often called Middle Tennessee State University’s biggest cheerleader.

Rhea, a retired radiologist, was perhaps best known for her love of the Blue Raiders and, along with her late husband, Dr. Creighton Rhea, her devotion to philanthropic causes in Rutherford County.

“We lost a truly special member of our Blue Raider family with the passing of Dr. Liz Rhea,” MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee said. “Her passion for the University was unrivaled, as she was perhaps our biggest cheerleader and the very definition of what it means to be True Blue.”

MTSU’s Science Building, which opened in 2014, features the Liz and Creighton Rhea Atrium as a tribute to the couple’s generosity. Rhea was a recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award, the highest honor of the MTSU Alumni Association, which annually recognizes alumni who represent excellence and distinction through their professional careers and loyal support and service to the broader community.

“Her generous spirit, in word and deed, will continue to benefit her alma mater, now and in the future,” McPhee said.

Born Ira Elizabeth Hay on Oct. 11, 1933, Rhea was the eldest of six children. She was valedictorian of Eagleville High School before earning her bachelor’s degree in science and pre-med in 1955 from the then-Middle Tennessee State College, where she literally was a cheerleader for Blue Raider athletics.

In an earlier interview for MTSU’s Centennial Campaign in 2011, Rhea reflected on what she had to do to pay for her higher education and the initial time she and her husband began giving to the University.

“I actually had to go to the bank and borrow money to go to med school and a little bit for college and then also from a pharmacist there. I had to borrow a little bit from him,” Rhea said. “So, the people on little Main Street helped me out. There were no scholarships back in those days.

“So, when we were able, we just said, ‘Let’s give back.’ Then, after we gave the first one, it made us happy. Really, I mean we felt a closeness. We belonged to the University. Over the years, we’ve given a little more and a little more, and people don’t realize how happy or good they’ll feel if they’ll just give back.”

A grade-school principal provided the inspiration leading to her eventual career path. In a 2013 interview, Rhea said, “He told me, ‘Elizabeth, you’re so smart. Why don’t you go to medical school?’ And I said, ‘What?’ And he said, ‘Just hitch your



photo: Andy Heidt

wagon to a star.' So, I always said when I grew up, I was going to go to medical school. I don't know what the people of Eagleville thought of a little girl saying that."

She graduated from the University of Tennessee College of Medicine in Memphis in 1958, as one of only two women in her class, and then specialized in radiology. After working at Murfreesboro Medical Clinic, Rhea returned to medical school at Baylor College of Medicine to study mammography and ultrasound. In 1978, she accepted a position at William Beaumont Army Medical Center in El Paso, Texas, and remained there until her retirement in 1992.

After her retirement, she and Creighton returned to Rutherford County, and she began to volunteer in her community with her husband, who died in 2004.

Rhea was involved with numerous nonprofit and charitable organizations, including the Center for the Arts, American Heart Association, Read to Succeed, Habitat for Humanity, Alive Hospice, and Noon Rotary Club.

She served on the board of the MTSU Foundation, MTSU Alumni Association, United Way of Rutherford and Cannon Counties, and the Saint Thomas Rutherford Foundation, which named its most prestigious award after her, the Dr. Liz Rhea Philanthropist of the Year Award.

"Dr. Liz Rhea's optimism, determination, and dedication to community service are an inspiration to all those who are privileged to know her," said now-state Sen. Dawn White in a resolution she penned to honor Rhea's selection as the 2016 Rutherford Heart Ball Honoree and the Heart of Tennessee Hero of the Year.

McPhee and his wife, first lady Elizabeth McPhee, said they "deeply mourn the passing of a truly dear friend."

"Selfishly, I will miss seeing Liz, dressed almost always in blue and white, on the sidelines, in the stands, or with the crowd



photo: Andy Heidt

One of the University's most loyal alumni, Dr. Liz Rhea proudly displays the "I am True Blue" sign during an MTSU Capital Campaign luncheon. The alumna and longtime supporter died May 30.

Alumna Liz Rhea (l) and Hanna Witherspoon sit atop a convertible that was part of the October 2011 MTSU Homecoming Parade traveling down Middle Tennessee Boulevard.



photo: J. Intintoli

at a MTSU event. I will miss her counsel, her laughter, her intellect, and her strength,” the president said.

“She loved MTSU, and we loved her back. It is difficult to imagine Middle Tennessee State University without Liz—her great smile, her devotion to our students, her unabashed and unceasing loyalty to her beloved Blue Raiders, and her unwavering commitment to the progress and success of her alma mater.

“But we can take some comfort in knowing that she has found peace, and that she is now reunited with her beloved husband, Creighton,” McPhee added. “And I know that her memory, and her spirit, will remain an important part of our University for generations to come.”

In the 2013 interview, Rhea said, “My blood runs blue. I was a cheerleader in college here and I’m always cheering on this University. Go MTSU.” [MTSU](#)

photo: Andy Heidt

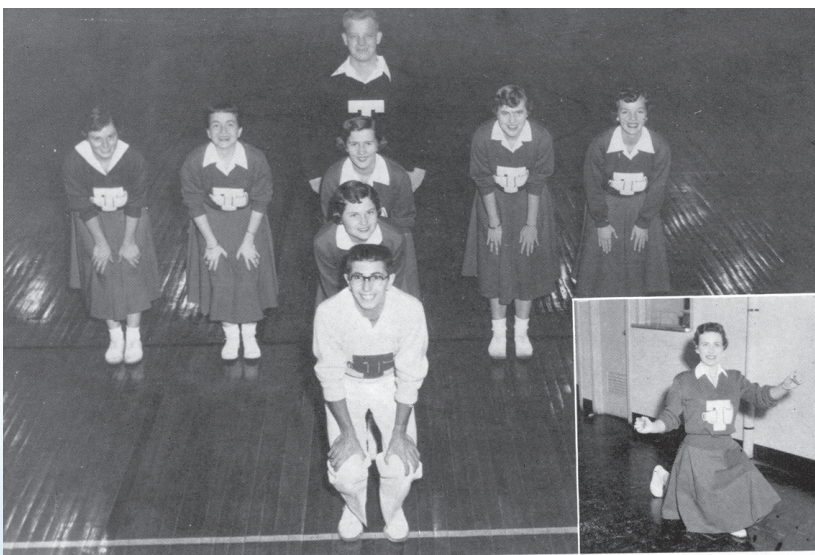


Incoming BRAA president Derek Frisby (l) presented Liz Rhea the BRAA Member of the Year 2013–14 award with outgoing BRAA president Rebecca Upton (r).



photo: J. Intintoli

Above: During the October 2014 Science Building Donors Recognition Dinner, Dr. Liz Rhea (l) and MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee are shown in the Liz and Creighton Rhea Atrium on the first floor of the building.



Left: Liz Hay Rhea ('55), second from right, poses with other Middle Tennessee State College cheerleaders in this mid-1950s photo in Alumni Memorial Gym.

Page 39: During a break at an MTSU Foundation Board meeting in November 2013, Dr. Liz Rhea stands in the hallway of the Paul W. Martin Sr. Honors College Building.

A CAMPUS FUSION CENTER

by Skip Anderson

MTSU's new \$39.6 million building, which will house three disciplines in Behavioral and Health Sciences, is being built with collaboration in mind

Throughout most of the 1970s, the precursor to the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation operated out of the second story of an old house on East Main Street, retrofitted to accommodate academic offices. At the bottom of the creaky, otherwise unremarkable stairs, were the offices for the Department of Criminal Justice Administration (CJA).

"We operated out of the bedrooms on the ground floor," said Lance Selva, the current CJA department chair.

Right about the time Ronald Reagan would move into the White House, Mother Nature would serve up enough rain and wind to force Selva, his CJA colleagues, and their history-minded peers upstairs to relocate.

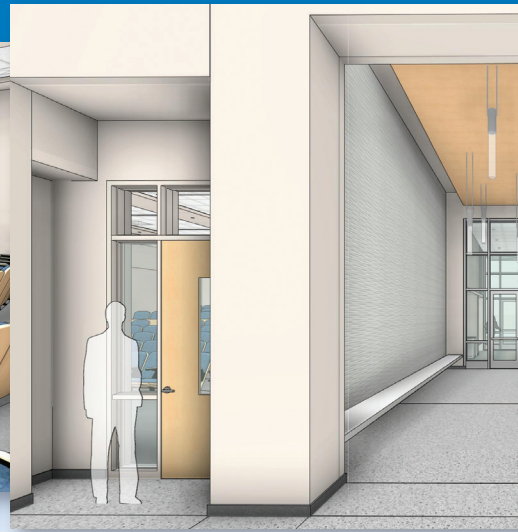
"The irony is not lost on me that the roof above the historic preservation department upstairs caved in, forcing us from that historic old building," Selva quipped.

Nobody was hurt, and the respective offices would soon find temporary new spaces, and eventually permanent homes. Well, sort of.

"The Department of Criminal Justice Administration, as well as the Department of Psychology, are currently located in Jones Hall," Selva said with a bemusement that conveys an unapologetic lack of enthusiasm for the space. To his credit, the words also convey a practical reality rather than a petty complaint.

"We're literally in dormitory rooms. I'm separated from my administrative aide by an entire floor. We truly have no space, and there's simply no direct contact. So, right now, it's not conducive for much," he explained. "What serves as our conference room can't even hold my faculty—six of them have to stand up when we're all in there."





“We’re talking about new technologies capable of securing the United States. That’s where new jobs in the field will be created.”

—Lance Selva, Criminal Justice Administration chair

“So, I hold my faculty conferences in the dining room of my home—it’s twice as big.”

The Department of Psychology doesn’t have it any better. In fact, they might have even greater cause to kick their feet up on a therapy sofa and offload some woe (if only their cinder-block quarters offered space for a divan).

“I feel sorry for Psychology,” Selva said. “They have a closet-size testing room that doubles as storage space for files and videos. Any way you look at it, we’re all crammed into small spaces.”

Collectively, CJA and Psychology have their eyes trained on 2020 when, along with the Department of Social Work, those three synergistic programs will move into a state-of-the-art, 91,000-square-foot building that will offer amenities that are unimaginable in their current configuration. It will afford the faculty and staff the basics—and beyond.

“My office will have a conference room where all my faculty can sit,” Selva said. “And my administrative aide will be within walking distance.”

Greg Schmidt, who chairs the Department of Psychology, will be happy to have his faculty and students all in a central location as well.

“Currently, faculty teach in classrooms spread across campus while our offices are in Jones Hall,” Schmidt says. “We also have a classroom in Alumni Memorial Gym that’s below the volleyball courts while most of our classes are in the College of Education and Business/Aerospace buildings. This makes informal meetings to continue class discussions or to follow up on research interests very rare.” John Sanborn, professor of Social Work, concurs.

“The Department of Social Work is looking forward to our new, cohesive home. Due to the greater number of classrooms available, we will have more flexibility in scheduling classes, which will benefit student schedules and faculty workloads. Students will have much better access to spaces outside of class that will facilitate their interaction with each other and with faculty, and give them a better opportunity to be comfortable as they meet, read, study, and relax before and between classes,” Sanborn said.

“The new, interconnected location of the Department of Social Work and the faculty offices will make it easier for students to be familiar with and locate their professors in order to access us for help with coursework and professional advising.”

New Capabilities

The need for these three departments to move into improved space is well documented, long established, and by all accounts undisputed. But it wasn’t until a couple of years ago, when the Tennessee Higher Education Commission assigned the need to the top slot on its priority list, that MTSU officials began to believe relief might be on the way.

Then-Gov. Bill Haslam included the new academic building for MTSU in his 2018–19 budget among his recommendations for capital outlay projects for the state’s public universities. The state committed \$35.1 million, and MTSU chipped in \$4.5 million, to build—at long last—a facility that offers classrooms, labs, and office space for these three departments. Campus officials expect the three-story building to be ready for classes by the Fall 2020 semester.

“We will have more flexibility in scheduling classes, which will benefit student schedules and faculty workloads.”

—John Sanborn, Social Work professor



The perks that come with Selva retiring his dining table as an ad hoc meeting space notwithstanding, MTSU students will be the ones who realize the most tangible benefits offered by the forthcoming facility.

“We’re going to be going beyond traditional criminal justice,” Selva said. “We’re expanding into homeland security and emergency management. And, this isn’t just border-security stuff. We’re talking about new technologies capable of securing the United States. That’s where new jobs in the field will be created.”

“We anticipate [new student spaces] will facilitate the kind of impromptu meetings and informal discussions that deepen the learning experience.”

—Greg Schmidt, Psychology chair

The new, high-tech building creates opportunities for enhancing the curriculum.

“We’re going to benefit in that new building with high-tech rooms,” he said. “We’ll be getting into predictive analytics. We’ll bring in detectives to speak with the students, too. Can you imagine having an interrogation room where we’ll have experts instruct our students on how to interview a suspect? That’s going to be so valuable.”

The new facility will also have a command center where Criminal Justice Administration students can practice coordinating and mobilizing resources when disasters strike.

“We’ll be getting into emergency management and disaster-relief management, too. We’ll be bringing in experts to help our professors teach the latest methods of coordinating resources,” Selva said. “We’ll have a command center, for instance, that is an emergency-simulation room with 28 computers, multiple projectors, and four 80-inch monitors that can serve as TV screens and computer screens, too. This will be hands-on learning, not abstract learning.

“We’ll be offering modern approaches to learning and teaching that you just can’t get from a textbook. There’s a difference between reading about how to ride a horse and getting up in the saddle. A student who trains in our command center will be able to walk into any state-of-the-art emergency command center in the country, and they’ll know what they’re doing. They will have sat in that saddle before.”

The Social Work and Psychology departments, which have areas of mutual interest, will be able to work more closely together than previously possible.

“With all three departments being housed in the new building, it will also facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration between Criminal Justice, Psychology, and Social Work,” Selva said. “There’s lots of overlap in our disciplines. The interactions of each department’s students and faculties will simply be enhanced—we won’t have to walk across campus anymore.”

Such an environment will be ripe with opportunities for innovation, Schmidt said.

“In addition to our offices being in the same building as our classrooms, the new building will have large and small spaces for students to spend time before and after class,” Schmidt said. “We anticipate these will facilitate the kind of impromptu meetings and informal discussions (among students or between students and faculty) that deepen the learning experience.”

Selva agrees.

“Everything in this new building is geared toward learning, learning, learning,” he said. “The opportunities offered by these new facilities are going to be amazing, and will set MTSU’s students way ahead of a lot of people.” [MTSU](#)

This College of Behavioral Health Science building isn’t the only new building MTSU anticipates opening in the next few years. Proposed in Gov. Bill Lee’s 2019 budget and approved this spring by the Tennessee General Assembly, a new \$40 million, 54,000-square-foot building for the **School of Concrete and Construction Management** is scheduled for groundbreaking on construction soon.

1970s

Charles Brown ('73), Nashville, was honored with a prestigious national award by the National Association of State Budget Officers (NASBO). The award recognizes state budget personnel for outstanding contributions and service to public budgeting and management in state government.

Mary Ann Hall Fitzgerald ('73), Franklin, retired from teaching at the Covenant School in Charlottesville, Virginia. Her husband, **Larry L. Fitzgerald ('73)**, retired as chief financial officer of the University of Virginia Health System. He now serves as Certificate of Public Advantage monitor for the merged Ballad Health system.

Christa Secrest Martin ('76, '80), Columbia, assistant to the president for access and diversity at Columbia State Community College, was recently awarded the inaugural Bob Kirk Local Government Leadership Award by the Tennessee Municipal League for her service as Columbia's vice mayor.

Debra Campbell ('78, '80), Charlotte, North Carolina, assumed the role of city manager of Asheville, North Carolina. She previously served as assistant city manager of Charlotte.

Wynona "Nona" James ('78), Colorado Springs, Colorado, completed her Doctor of Philosophy degree in Conflict Analysis and Resolution with

a concentration in Conflict and Crisis Management from Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Her doctoral research topic is titled "Imprint of Racism: A Phenomenological Study on White Adult Males' Exposure to Racial Antipathy, Historical Stereotypes, and Polarization Towards African Americans and Their Transformational Journey Towards Racial Reconciliation." James is a graduate-certified mediator and currently serves as the negotiations and dispute resolution manager and senior mediator for the U.S. Air Force Equal Employment Opportunity Program and mediates organizational disputes at the 21st Space Wing at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado. Since 2018, James has served as a part-time adjunct instructor with Abilene Christian University's online graduate Conflict Management Program in Addison, Texas. James has served the federal government for almost four decades.

1980s

Randy Brown ('80), Winchester, published a book entitled *For the Crown: Stories and Lessons of Service, Struggle, and Glory from a Sports Team Chaplain*.

Dawn Faught Eaton ('80), Nashville, was named chief executive officer of Susan G. Komen Central Tennessee.

Mark Morgan ('80), Marlow, retired from Tennessee state government after 39 years of service. Following six years

with MTSU Public Safety as a horse-mounted sergeant, he moved to Tennessee State Parks as a park ranger. His final duty station was Norris Dam State Park, where he was park superintendent for 17 years.

Scott Arnold ('82), Prattville, Alabama, recently published a novel titled *Uncommon Prayer: A Father Flenn Adventure*.

Albert Lee ('82), Brentwood, joined First Farmers and Merchants Bank as a mortgage loan originator.

Mark S. Dunn ('87), Nashville, is director of licensing and business affairs at HoriPro Entertainment Group. A 30-year veteran of the Nashville music industry, Dunn has worked in music publishing with Sony/ATV Music Publishing and at record labels for Sony Music's Provident Label Group and EMI Christian Music Group (now Capitol Christian Music Group).

Linda Stover Eaves ('87), Nolensville, was named executive director of Children of Restaurant Employees, a national nonprofit that assists the children of restaurant employees who have experienced life-altering circumstances.

Cynthia Shrader Hill ('87), Flintville, published a collection of short stories entitled *Whispers in the Dark: True Ghost Stories and Eerie Tales*.

1990s

Laura Lawson Webb ('91, '95), Nashville, was named vice president and chief nursing

officer for Sheppard Pratt Health System.

Tommy Lewis ('93), Brentwood, was appointed chief transformation officer and chief of staff to the CEO at Tivity Health Inc.

Deanna Grubbs ('95), Hendersonville, was promoted to vice president of apparel product development at Johnston & Murphy.

Ziad "Steve" Aboona ('96, '98), Brentwood, assumed command of Naval Medial Logistics Command in a March 15 ceremony held at Fort Detrick, Maryland.

Stan Witherow ('97), Albertville, Alabama, was named president of the Albertville Chamber of Commerce.

2000s

Brad Gallimore ('00), Thompson Station, joined First Tennessee Bank as a private client relationship manager in its Private Client Services division.

Sindy McDaniel Nicholson ('01), Parker, Colorado, was nominated for partner at Crowe LLP, a public accounting, consulting, and technology firm.

Erica Stephens ('02), Memphis, was awarded a prestigious Milken Educator Award, a national honor that comes with a \$25,000 financial prize from the Milken Family Foundation. She is a fourth-grade teacher at John P. Freeman Optional School.

Scott Bolden ('03, '13), Murfreesboro, was named principal of Rocky Fork Elementary School, opening this August.

Bill A. Jones

When he moved from Murfreesboro to Los Angeles in 1987, **Jones ('80)** arrived on the West Coast the day before Halloween.

Driving down West Hollywood's Santa Monica Boulevard and seeing a collection of goths and ghouls roaming the streets, Jones couldn't help wondering to himself: Are they dressed this way for Halloween, or is this an everyday look for L.A.?

More than three decades later, Jones still gets surprised by the locals from time to time.



It was just months ago, for instance, that Jones found himself under attack from a groaning zombie, one who'd somehow managed to stumble into his recording studio in search of tasty human flesh.

"I guess you could say that kind of thing comes with the territory," Jones said with a chuckle. "It was actually a lot of fun."

Jones, a 1980 MTSU grad, could afford to laugh about his brush with the living dead because it was part of an Xfinity television commercial in which he starred. The ad gave viewers a humorous—and fake, of course—look at what was going on behind the scenes during production.

That moment offered just a small snapshot into the successful media career Jones has carved out for himself far from his Tennessee roots in Southern California, where Jones lives with his wife of 24 years, Karin. The couple has two children, ages 20 and 15.



Jones is perhaps best known for his recurring role as over-the-top news anchor Rod Remington in the hit TV show *Glee*, where his character had a brief affair with high school cheerleading coach Sue Sylvester (portrayed by Jane Lynch). He also has appeared in several other shows such as *Workaholics*, *King of Queens*, *Everybody Hates Chris*, and *Criminal Minds*.

Jones' television commercial credits include work for FedEx, Crest, Nissan, and American Airlines, among others. He recently shot a new commercial for TurboTax, in which he plays a 1970s game show host.

But the 59-year-old Jones enjoys a completely different labor of love on many weekends, when he serves as both emcee and vocalist in the Battle of the Big Bands. Jones sings some of the greatest hits of big-band legends like Glenn Miller and Tommy Dorsey in a competitive musical tribute to the 1940s.



He fell in love with that style of music back in his teenage years, when he worked at Nashville-based radio station WAMB (99.3-FM, 1200-AM), which until 2014 played the big bands.

A native of Cheatham County, Jones embraced the arts and media as far back as high school, when he acted in plays and worked at WAMB on the weekends. He participated in several theater productions while a mass communications major at MTSU, where he also became a Murfreesboro radio personality.



Jones also started dabbling in commercial work in Nashville, and his first such gig—for a product called Caspian Pearl Caviar—was an especially memorable one. Over and over in each take, he shoveled fish eggs into his mouth.

"Let's just say I had my fill of caviar," Jones said. "After doing that commercial, I would not go near caviar for about 20 years."

—John Glennon

Isiah “Mike” Caldwell Jr.



The Tampa Bay Buccaneers pro football team hired **Caldwell ('96)**, a Hall of Fame MTSU football player and business college graduate, as inside linebackers coach for this season. An 11-year NFL veteran, he started his playing career in Cleveland after being drafted as a third-round pick by then-Browns head coach Bill Belichick in 1993. Caldwell also played with Baltimore, Arizona, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Carolina. Retiring in 2003, the former Blue Raider finished with 521 tackles, 14.5 sacks, eight interceptions (three returned for TDs), and six forced fumbles in his career. Five years after retiring from the league, Caldwell was named Philadelphia Eagles defensive quality control coach for head coach Andy Reid. He later became assistant linebackers coach and, finally, linebackers coach. In 2012, Caldwell moved to Arizona as linebackers coach. He was hired as assistant head coach and inside linebackers coach for the New York Jets in 2015.

Meagan Frazier

While a student in the College of Liberal Arts at MTSU, **Frazier ('01)** used to bug then-dean (now MTSU provost) Mark Byrnes about how she could become a lobbyist. Byrnes arranged an internship for Frazier at the state capitol. She



never left. Earlier this year, Frazier, who has become one of the most influential lobbyists on Tennessee's Capitol Hill, was named a co-owner of Nashville's oldest lobbying firm. What started out as Smith & Johnson in 1980, then became Smith Harris & Carr, is now Harris Frazier Government Relations. It is the only all-female-owned, multi-lobbyist firm in the Music City.

2000s (continued)

Trey Duke ('03, '07),

Murfreesboro, was appointed as principal of Salem Elementary School, which opens in August.

Patrick “Paddy” Steading

('05), Moore, South Carolina, joined Wisycom USA as a sales liaison. Wisycom is a designer and builder of sophisticated radio frequency solutions for broadcast, film, and live production.

Paul Lawson ('06),

Murfreesboro, was promoted to health care project executive for Turner Construction Co.

Jonathan Holmes ('07),

Franklin, earned a promotion to business development executive for Messer Construction Co.

Tiffany Breeding ('08),

Broomfield, Colorado, published a book titled *The Metabolic Makeover: 8 Weeks to Macro Mastery*, a health guide stressing the importance of macronutrients and a positive mindset.

Brian C. Russell ('08, '10),

Murfreesboro, joined Gresham Smith as an instructional designer in the firm's human resources department.

Tommy Doerfler ('09),

Nashville, is lead advisor of Lighthouse Wealth Group, a financial team under the Southwestern Investment Group umbrella. Doerfler has been a member of the Raymond James' Leaders Council for the past five years.

Ann Dee McClane Jones ('09),

Hermitage, was hired as vice president of marketing and communications of The Hermitage by the Andrew Jackson Foundation. Jones is former

marketing manager for the industrial division of Hunter Fan Co. and director of marketing and client development for Spicer Rudstrom PLLC.

Ryan Fitzgerald

Fitzgerald ('08) was promoted to director of entertainment operations for Princess Cruises. He now oversees the entertainment leadership and programming onboard all 17 ships in the Princess fleet. Fitzgerald first joined Princess Cruises in 2015 as manager of cruise staff and programming and led the restructuring efforts of the onboard entertainment teams to include two key positions—entertainment director and cruise director. This two-year initiative resulted in the shipboard teams achieving continuously higher guest satisfaction scores, the company said. Prior to joining Princess Cruises, Fitzgerald started at Carnival Cruise Line in 2002, initially as a musician and then joining the cruise staff team, where he was promoted to cruise director in 2007. He moved to the cruise line's shore-side operations in 2011 and was promoted to manager of cruise staff and programming in 2012.



2010s

Aaron Sheehan ('10), Springfield, Missouri, was named commerce director in Wiedenhammer's Digital Solutions division. Sheehan previously was solutions architect and consultant at Classy Llama. He is a Magento Certified Solutions Specialist and is Google Analytics certified.

Alan Herd ('12), Mount Juliet, was promoted to assistant manager at Wilson Bank and Trust at the Walmart office in Lebanon.

Amy Hutton ('12, '13), Morrison, joined Pinnacle Financial Partners as a financial specialist in the Murfreesboro location. She is a Certified Public Accountant and a member of both the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the Tennessee Society of Certified Public Accountants.

Rachel Lytle ('12, '15), Nashville, received the National Association for Biology Teachers' Outstanding New Biology Teacher Achievement Award. Lytle is in her fifth year teaching biology in Williamson County Schools.

Theowauna Hatchett ('13), Murfreesboro, was named principal of Smyrna Middle School.

Will Hart ('14), Decatur, Illinois, joined the office of Brinkoetter & Associates as a real estate agent.

Emily Peoples ('15), Nashville, was named digital advertising specialist for Nashville-based MP&F Strategic Communications.

Timothy Bolden ('16), San Diego, California, is working with Virgin Musical Instruments, concentrating on marketing, sales, and artist relations.



Michelle Duke

Duke ('94) became president of the National Association of Broadcasters Leadership Foundation (NABLF), the nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the future of broadcasting through leadership, diversity, and community service. Duke had served as vice president of the foundation since 2010. A member of the MTSU College of Media and Entertainment Wall of Fame, Duke is consistently recognized as one of *Radio Ink's* Most Influential Women in Radio. Earlier in her career, Duke worked as a reporter for the *Nashville Banner*, as director of leadership programs for the Newspaper Association of America, and as vice president of diversity at the National Association of Broadcasters.

Jeney Slusser

Ringling College of Art and Design in Sarasota, Florida, named **Slusser ('14)** senior development officer in its Office for Advancement. Slusser joined Ringling College after a stint as director of advancement for Centerstone, one of the nation's largest nonprofit providers for behavioral health care. Since 1931, Ringling College of Art and Design has cultivated the creative spirit in students from around the globe. The private, not-for-profit, fully-accredited college offers the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 12 disciplines and the Bachelor of Arts in two.



Devin Samuel ('16), Smyrna, was hired as social marketing coordinator for the Country Music Association.

Shelby Shelton ('16), LaVergne, was appointed as assistant director of athletic bands at Cumberland University.

Grace Stewart ('17), Chattanooga, joined the Chattanooga Red Wolves Soccer Club as social media

and marketing coordinator for the USL League One professional team. Stewart is a former MTSU soccer player.

To submit class notes and pictures, go to MTAlumni.com or email alumni@mtsu.edu.

BABY RAIDERS

Nolan Douglas Edwards born Dec. 26, 2017, to Matt and **Katie Peek Edwards ('05)**, of Murfreesboro

Brooklyn Rhae Clopton born April 7, 2018, to Ryan and **Caryn Bailey Clopton ('05)** of Antioch

Ellie Kate Garner born June 13, 2018, to **Corey ('12)** and **Katie Potter Garner ('13)** of Murfreesboro

Stephanie Anne Regan born July 10, 2018, to **Jeremy Regan ('09, '17)** and **Paraskevi Gargalianou-Regan ('05, '09)** of Murfreesboro

Greyson Alexander Folger born Oct. 4, 2018, to **Marcus ('12)** and **Miranda McClanahan Folger ('12)** of Murfreesboro

Ellison Grey Lee Vandagriff born Oct. 9, 2018, to **Daniel ('11)** and **Alexandria Smith Vandagriff ('11)** of Murfreesboro

Crawford Stewart Lowman born Oct. 26, 2018, to Nicolas and **Elizabeth Stewart Lowman ('14)** of Katy, Texas

Brooks Michael Gregory Thomas born Oct. 31, 2018, to **Samuel ('14)** and **Stephanie Keys Thomas ('12, '16)** of Murfreesboro

Sutton Danielle Walsh born Nov. 13, 2018, to **Brian ('09)** and **Kaitlyn Walsh ('15)** of Murfreesboro

Leo Adams Dukes born Nov. 16, 2018, to **Alec ('17)** and **Maria Jodoin Dukes ('17)** of Lake Mary, Florida

Robert Daniel Pitts III born Jan. 3, 2019, to **Danny ('10)** and **Paige Alcorn Pitts ('15)** of Murfreesboro

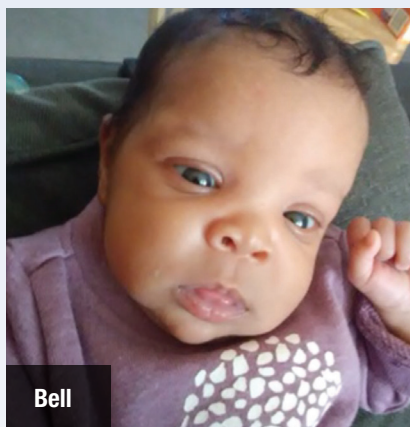
Barrett James Hollandsworth born Jan. 14, 2019, to Andrea and **Glenn Hollandsworth ('12)** of Murfreesboro

Harper Lane Whetstone born Jan. 17, 2019, to Tyler and **Kristen Burgett Whetstone ('13)** of Knoxville

Charles Carroll Janson born Jan. 25, 2019, to **Rob ('05)** and **Kristen Chapman Janson ('13)** of Murfreesboro

Emery Katherine Bell born Feb. 20, 2019, to Donte and **Nichole Bell ('15, '18)** of Murfreesboro

Abليون Franklin Howard born March 10, 2019, to Rustin and **Patricia Perry Howard ('10)** of Murfreesboro



Bell



Clopton



Dukes



Folger



Garner



Whetstone



Hollandsworth



Howard



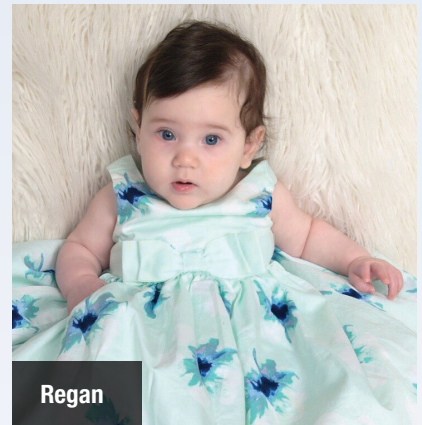
Janson



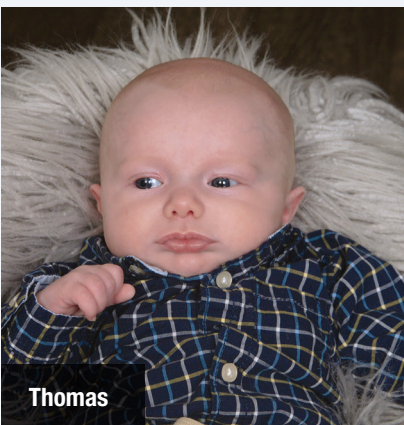
Lowman



Pitts



Regan



Thomas



Vandagriff



Walsh

IN MEMORIAM

1940s

Ann Evans Baber ('47),
Gallatin, Jan. 11, 2019

Irma Crowell Massey ('49),
Murfreesboro, Oct. 26, 2018

William Nisbett ('43), Fontana,
California, Jan. 23, 2018

Aynn Kirtley Phillips ('43),
Albany, Georgia, Dec. 1, 2018

1950s

Charles Carlton ('53),
Wartrace, Feb. 21, 2019

Iral Davis ('56), Murfreesboro,
March 6, 2019

Patrick Harrison ('51), Franklin,
Dec. 14, 2018

Clara West Hill ('54), Nashville,
March 17, 2019

James Hopper ('58), Old
Hickory, Dec. 25, 2018

Wanda Cook Leverette ('54)
Murfreesboro, Oct. 26, 2018

June Brown Moore ('51),
Nashville, Jan. 25, 2018

Dwight Ogle ('52), Mesquite,
Texas, Oct. 13, 2018

Leo Pennington ('56), Lebanon,
Jan. 16, 2019

**Shirley Mason Poole ('51, '55,
'74)**, Pulaski, Feb. 26, 2019

James Skinner ('59), Marietta,
Georgia, Jan. 23, 2019

Charles "Smitty" Smith ('57),
Memphis, Feb. 24, 2019

Dwane Smith ('58), Lampasas,
Texas, March 12, 2019

Charles Smotherman ('57),
Murfreesboro, Feb. 4, 2019

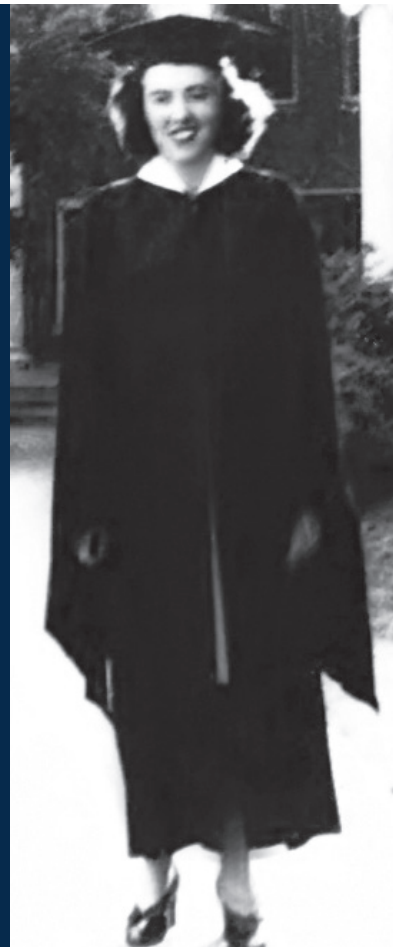
Don Stotser ('53, '66),
Huntsville, Alabama, Jan. 2,
2018

Ruth Youree Willhite ('53),
Springfield, Dec. 17, 2018

Frances Love Whittemore

Frances Love Whittemore ('42), died Jan. 20, 2019, at the age of 97. Whittemore completed her freshman year at David Lipscomb College before receiving her degree in education from Middle Tennessee State Teachers College. She began her teaching career in a two-room schoolhouse in Cherry Hill, Tennessee, in 1942. The following year, she returned to Nashville to support the war effort by working in the Vultee plant. She married a combat veteran in 1948 and was a homemaker while their three daughters were young. After returning to MTSU in the 1960s to receive her certification as a school librarian, Whittemore enjoyed a career at Donelson, Stanford, and Tom Joy elementary schools in Nashville before retiring in 1981. According to her daughter, Whittemore recalled her years at the state teachers' college as some of the happiest and most carefree of her life. She often spoke of the time President Q.M.

Smith fit the entire student body into the library to hear President Roosevelt's December 1941 radio address after Pearl Harbor.



Frances Love Whittemore and daughter, Nancy May ('73)

Edward A. Young ('57),
Colorado Springs, Colorado,
Jan. 25, 2019

1960s

Alexander Adams ('67), Pen-
sacola, Florida, June 9, 2018

James Cecil ('67), Decatur,
Alabama, Jan. 17, 2019

Carolyn Andrews Cheek ('63),
Sparta, Nov. 17, 2018

Wesley "Chad" Choate ('65),
Bradenton, Florida, Nov. 27,
2018

Nina Cantrell Clark ('61, '68),
Murfreesboro, Jan. 3, 2019

Mary Amburn Clonts ('69),
Huntsville, Alabama, March
15, 2019

William Conway ('64), Franklin,
Dec. 21, 2018

Donna Abbott Cotton ('67),
Jacksonville, Florida,
Nov. 4, 2018

Tommy Craighead ('60),
Brentwood, Jan. 2, 2018

James Eaden ('60), Nashville,
Dec. 15, 2018

**Judith "Lynn" McKee Erwin
('68)**, Columbia, Jan. 22, 2019

Richard "Steve" Fulmer ('69),
Abingdon, Virginia, Dec. 15,
2018



Jean Hudgens Moser

Jean Hudgens Moser ('54, '62), Murfreesboro, died March 26, 2019. She was born in Oak Ridge and lived most of her life in Rutherford County. She taught thousands of fifth-grade students at MTSU Campus School for 23 years, in addition to thousands of student teachers at MTSU. She also was a teacher at Hobgood Elementary for several years.

John Haury ('66), Port Orange, Florida, Nov. 25, 2018

Paul Herron ('69), Hendersonville, Dec. 1, 2018

William Hossee ('62, '71, '75), Smyrna, Nov. 14, 2018

Carl "Tom" Hutson ('68), Gallatin, Nov. 29, 2018

Carol Hutton ('69, '73), Goodlettsville, Jan. 14, 2019

Merna Swayne Jaquish ('69), Athens, Dec. 9, 2018

Lelia Ramey Knowles ('66), Oak Ridge, Feb. 10, 2019

Herbert Lee ('69), Murfreesboro, March 5, 2019

William Lycans ('63), Cumming, Georgia, Feb. 19, 2019

Dora McMeen Morris ('68), Marietta, Georgia, Feb. 2, 2018

Paul Overton ('65), Spring Hill, Oct. 25, 2018

Joyce Bible Parker ('69), Jasper, Nov. 7, 2018

Rex Pogue ('63), Murfreesboro, Feb. 7, 2019

William "Bubba" Randolph ('66, '74, '76), The Villages, Florida, Feb. 13, 2019

Johnny Simmons ('66), Franklin, Jan. 30, 2019

Suzanne Blackburn Simmons ('66), Franklin, April 17, 2019

Barbara DeLay Sliger ('62), Kingsport, Feb. 1, 2019

Mary "Lenelle" Marable Smithson ('68, '72), Chapel Hill, Dec. 11, 2018

John Stallings ('64), Fort Myers, Florida, Jan. 7, 2019

Billy Stubblefield ('65), McMinnville, Oct. 8, 2018

Patricia Anne Turner ('61), DeLand, Florida, July 27, 2018

Sue Zapp ('66), Brentwood, Jan. 11, 2019

1970s

Thomas Bowden ('72), Brentwood, Oct. 17, 2018

Susan Cleveland ('79), Murfreesboro, Oct. 14, 2018

O. Tom Johns

O. Tom Johns ('68), team doctor for the Blue Raiders for 40 years and also the Rutherford County Schools, died at age 72. A 1965 Murfreesboro Central High graduate and member of the football team, Johns earned a bachelor's degree from MTSU and then his M.D. from the University of Tennessee medical school in Memphis in 1972. Johns worked in Tampa, Florida, in the early 1970s and then at Vanderbilt University Medical Center before founding Murfreesboro Orthopedic Association in his hometown in 1978.



Louise Ellis-Clifton ('73),
Nashville, Jan. 26, 2019

Richard Cochran ('74),
Franklin, Oct. 11, 2018

Charles Cotham ('70),
Winchester, Dec. 5, 2018

Stephen Curtis ('76), Franklin,
Kentucky, Dec. 6, 2018

Mary Pat Sowell Denning ('73),
Columbia, Dec. 31, 2018

Michael Edwards ('72),
Lebanon, Nov. 15, 2018

Kimberly Hardison Eddins Ezell ('78),
Franklin, May 19, 2018

John Farr ('75), Chattanooga,
Jan. 18, 2019

Richard Fly ('72), Columbia,
March 12, 2019

Patsy Davis Foley ('73), Nevada,
Missouri, Dec. 2, 2018

Linda Gallaher ('79), Fruita,
Colorado, March 10, 2019

Annette Sharp Gregory ('76, '79, '83),
Tulahoma, Jan. 16, 2019

Mitchell Grubb ('78),
Montgomery, Alabama,
Dec. 11, 2018

Frank Hayes ('70), Antioch,
Jan. 9, 2019

Carolyn Hill ('70, '81),
Carthage, Oct. 24, 2018

Peggy Sain Howell ('72),
Brentwood, Nov. 13, 2018

Geraldine Johnson Huffine ('79),
Old Hickory, Oct. 22, 2018

Alford Fann ('78), Smyrna, Oct.
15, 2018

Sydney Ciel Davis Garten ('72),
Columbia, Feb. 1, 2019

Frank Hayes ('70), Antioch,
Jan. 9, 2019

William "Bill" Holt Sr., ('70, '79),
Pulaski, Jan. 1, 2019

Neil "Parry" Lancaster ('78),
Murfreesboro, Sept. 21, 2018

James Ledford Jr., ('72),
Athens, Georgia, Jan. 4, 2019

Thomas Long ('71), Jacksonville,
Florida, Dec. 1, 2018

Michael Merlin ('72), Nashville,
Jan. 26, 2018

George Miller ('72, '83),
Ooltewah, Feb. 1, 2019

Joe McDonald ('74), Christiana,
June 18, 2018

Marilyn H. McDonald ('71, '75),
Lynchburg, Aug. 3, 2018

Linda Parks Moore ('78),
Culleoka, Dec. 1, 2018

Harry "Elliott" Ozment ('72),
Nashville, Oct. 16, 2018

Lawanda Martin Phillips ('72),
Gainesboro, Nov. 18, 2018

Anita Walker Pruitt ('70),
Lebanon, Oct. 10, 2018

Deborah Bohannon Sicola ('72),
Memphis, March 14, 2019

Douglas "Mac" Smith ('71, '75),
Rogersville, Feb. 6, 2019

Karen Starling ('78, '81),
Hohenwald, Sept. 16, 2018

John Talley ('76), Manchester,
March 6, 2019

Terrie Threadgill ('77), Mount
Juliet, March 25, 2018

Joseph Tidwell ('72), Bolton,
Mississippi, March 3, 2019

Carolyn Colombo Tompkins ('77),
Dec. 23, 2018

Randolph "Andy" Veazey ('74),
Nashville, Oct. 25, 2018

Jackie Warren ('70),
Tulahoma, March 9, 2019

Dennis Wieck ('77), Paris,
March 8, 2019

Sally Weatherford ('78),
Nashville, Dec. 9, 2018

1980s

Kevin Baynham ('89),
Nashville, March 6, 2019

Raymond "Pete" Boatright ('81),
Columbia, Sept. 21, 2018

Effie Boyd ('87), Tullahoma,
Oct. 14, 2018

Jane Stone Brissie ('82),
Nashville, Nov. 3, 2018

Clyde Crawley Jr., ('86),
Shelbyville, Jan. 7, 2019

Eric Dalhauser ('84),
Goodlettsville, Jan. 24, 2019

Stephen Force ('82),
Lewisburg, Feb. 1, 2019

Douglas Fouts ('80), Murfrees-
boro, Jan. 15, 2019

Shelby Pass Garland ('83, '86),
Maryville, March 18, 2019

Amy Hargis Holladay ('83),
Lascassas, Nov. 20, 2018

Nancy Hunter Hudson ('83, '85),
Nashville, Jan. 18, 2019

Betty Greenway Jewell ('86),
Goodlettsville, Nov. 22, 2018

Donna Rigsby King ('83),
Cornersville, Oct. 17, 2018

**Angela "Angie" Yvette
Armstrong Radford Lewis ('84, '96)**,
Johnson City,
Jan. 18, 2019

Phyllis Walker McGregor ('82, '89),
Nashville, Feb. 18, 2019

John "Roger" Reed ('89),
Murfreesboro, Dec. 4, 2018

Moir Judas Smith ('81), Bell
Buckle, Nov. 17, 2018

Ronald Smith ('88), Clermont,
Florida, March 19, 2019

Sara Rascoe Stone ('85),
Columbia, Jan. 2, 2019

Rodney Young ('89), Murfrees-
boro, Jan. 12, 2019

1990s

Michael Bates ('96), Picker-
ington, Ohio, April 7, 2018

David Bruce ('96), Murfrees-
boro, Feb. 21, 2019

Richard Conway ('96),
Morristown, Feb. 21, 2019

Robert Cooper ('97), Sparta,
Feb. 1, 2019

Eric Guy ('96), Thompson
Station, Dec. 19, 2018

Timothy Harbison ('92),
Ashland City, Dec. 31, 2018

Tracy McCauley ('97),
Murfreesboro, Oct. 8, 2018

Robert McConnell Jr., ('92),
Murfreesboro, Dec. 15, 2018

David Bruce Mullins ('96),
Murfreesboro, Feb. 21, 2019

Ronald Pawlowski ('99),
Murfreesboro, Nov. 16, 2018

Robin Waller Robertson ('90),
Murfreesboro, Feb. 18, 2019

Donna Helton Wilder ('93),
Mount Carmel, Feb. 26, 2019

2000s

John Eikamp ('05), Scottsdale,
Arizona, Feb. 18, 2019

Dionne Henley ('05), Myrtle
Beach, South Carolina, Dec.
24, 2018

Bennett Rye ('02), Nashville,
Feb. 10, 2019

Claude Sicuro ('01), Memphis,
Nov. 26, 2018

Devarick Scandrett ('07),
Forsyth, Georgia, Oct. 15, 2018

Angela Heydel Walker ('02),
Murfreesboro, Nov. 6, 2018

Shannon M. Williams ('00, '05),
Mount Juliet, Nov. 28,
2018

2010s

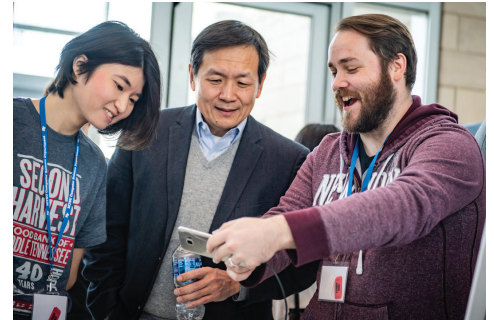
Sabarri Evans ('15), Nashville,
Sept. 26, 2018

Tatiana Garrison ('13),
LaVergne, Nov. 30, 2018

Chloé Harris ('14), Nashville,
Aug. 2, 2019

Jason Harrison ('13),
Lascassas, June 3, 2018

Robert Langham ('16),
Manchester, Feb. 1, 2019



National Excellence

MTSU was ranked as having one of the best Criminal Justice bachelor's degree programs in the country in 2019, by TheBestSchools.org. MTSU is rated No. 37 nationally, with Bryan College (No. 40) in Dayton as the only other Tennessee institution on the list. OnlineMasters.com named MTSU's online master's program in training and development among its list of Best Programs for 2019. Grad School Hub identified the same program No. 2 nationally among the most affordable online master's in training and development programs.

mtsunews.com/online-criminal-justice-ranked-2019

Rite of Spring

In April, MTSU offered opportunities for alumni and the general public to sample campus life through the annual MTSU Spring Showcase. A theater production, student songwriter and band nights, and a popular wing fling, plus opportunities to sit in on classes, awaited participants. "The MTSU Spring Showcase is a University-wide effort to engage alumni and the community members in today's MTSU," said Rhonda King, assistant director of alumni relations.

mtsunews.com/alumni-spring-showcase-2019

Hack MT

With brainpower and a \$3.50 domain fee, one team created its own website, Travelcast.me, in 36 hours' time; a second team provided help to solve Nashville-based Second Harvest Food Bank's warehouse woes both now and in the future. That's the type of innovative, tech-savvy work a record 200-plus students performed during the 2019 Hack MT, an annual event that forecasts a rising workforce to satisfy Nashville's and the mid-state's growing technology needs.

mtsunews.com/hack-mt-brilliant-student-talent



Stars and Stripes

Retired Lt. Gen. Keith Huber (r), MTSU's senior advisor for veterans and leadership initiatives, and Silver Star combat veteran Jay Strobino (l), who graduated in December 2018 with the help of the MTSU Charlie and Hazel Daniels Veterans and Military Family Center, served as guest announcers for the Grand Ole Opry's Salute the Troops show in May. Strobino was shot 13 times during one-on-one combat in 2006 while serving in Iraq as an Army sergeant.

mtsunews.com/pry-daniels-center-salute-advance



Better by Degrees

MTSU's Board of Trustees in April recommended adding master's degree programs in speech-language pathology, biomedical sciences, and public health. MTSU has offered an undergraduate degree in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology for 50 years and is one of only a few universities offering an undergraduate clinical practicum. A master's degree is required for licensure as a speech-language pathologist. New degrees will need approval by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission.

mtsunews.com/board-of-trustees-april-2019



SmokyMtnU

During MTSU's spring break, Biology students in Ashley Morris' Biome Analysis class spent four days in Great Smoky Mountains National Park outdoor and indoor "laboratories" taking a course she titled "Ecology and Management of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park" and that park promoters called "SmokyMtnU." The 4-hour pilot course concluded later with a five-day hiking, backpacking, and primitive camping experience. Students observed wildlife management efforts related to fish and elk.

mtsunews.com/smokymtnu-energizes-biology-class

true **BLUE GIVE** 2019

We asked you to show your love again and give to academics, athletics, and scholarships . . .

AND YOU DID!!

OUR GOAL:

\$300,000 from 600 alumni and friends

TOTAL RAISED:

over \$402,000 from 837 True Blue supporters!

TRUE BLUE SUPPORTERS LIKE YOU

impacted education for our 21,630 students with:

\$248,000 for academic programs

\$27,000 for scholarships

\$10,000 for emergency student support

\$77,000 for Blue Raider Athletics

among other things!

true **BLUE**
true **IMPACT**

It was



THANK YOU