

UNIVERSITY HONORS COLLEGE

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY | FALL 2021

Areté

[excellence • virtue]

MIDDLE
TENNESSEE
STATE UNIVERSITY

CIVIC DUTY

Mary Evins fights for the right
for all citizens to engage in
American democracy



MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

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I AM *true* **BLUE**

Photo by J. Intintoli



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FROM THE DEAN'S DESK | Returning with bells on



It is tempting to say good riddance to an academic year marked by COVID-19 fears and restrictions. But, fortunately, the Honors College was able to carry on successfully with a combination of on-campus and remote services that proved efficacious. Despite the presence of unique obstacles, especially for those who were attempting research on human subjects, and the need to conduct most proposal and thesis meetings via Zoom, a record 95 Honors undergraduates completed their theses; for many, that was the last leg of the Honors journey. Once again, two students were selected for Fulbright awards, with others winning other national and international scholarships, including Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REUs) over the summer.

Masks are still with us, but we're meeting in person, as almost all faculty and staff, and an increasing number of students, have been vaccinated. Although some have come to embrace communication via Zoom and related means, I don't think most of us will ever again take direct personal contact for granted.

Like Ivy League institutions, the Honors College revels in its own traditions, one of which is the ringing of the bells after each student completes the thesis. I made sure to have a bell that I could strike for those who completed their theses via Zoom, but many students came in person to capture the moment as we rang the bells in the Honors tower.

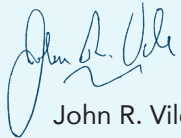
I will always remember one student who dropped by with her mother to ring the bells to mark the completion of her thesis; she reminded me that she had been inspired to join the Honors College after she visited the campus in high school and heard about the tradition. More recently, one of our students who had completed her thesis via Zoom drove from

Louisville, Kentucky, simply to have the privilege of ringing the bells and having her photo taken. Getting an Honors degree, of course, represents much more than ringing bells, but what a memory to treasure as our students advance to new areas of endeavor in graduate or professional school or in the world of work and service.

“Getting an Honors degree, of course, represents much more than ringing bells, but what a memory to treasure.”

The institutions to which they have been accepted and the jobs which they have obtained give us confidence that our graduates can compete with any in the nation. One of the joys of reading this magazine is learning about the important milestones in our graduates' lives.

Many of you know that Marsha Powers, who continues to supervise Honors publications, was on a reduced schedule for much of the last year, heroically and apparently successfully battling cancer. It is a pleasure to welcome her back. April Goers, who has advised most of our freshmen and helped lead our study abroad trips, has taken a job with Asurion's Leadership and Development division in Nashville. This is an important promotion for her and a tribute to her many years of good work here, and I know that she will keep her connection with the Honors family.


John R. Vile

areté
noun (ahr-i-tey)

the aggregate of qualities, as valor and virtue, making up good character



Instructors guided 28 undergraduate student participants, including 23 Honors students, in this year's Institute of Leadership Excellence (ILE), a weeklong immersive course developed in 2005 by a cross-disciplinary task force of faculty and staff.

Described as "a fantastic experience" by one participant, the institute is designed to provide an intensive, unique, and interdisciplinary total-immersion experience in leadership and leadership development for promising undergraduate students from across the University.

The Honors College and the Jones College of Business have partnered in the yearly endeavor. Classes are led by business faculty, and books and professional padfolios are furnished by the Honors College for every student. The Honors College also provides breakfast and snacks each day and scholarships for all Honors students taking the class.

The institute, held 9 a.m.–6 p.m. daily May 17–21, allowed students to study leadership theory and

practice through a combination of lecture, discussion, activities, speakers, and interaction with classmates—all with a clear focus on application and experiential learning.

All eligible MTSU undergraduates can apply to attend; University Honors College faculty and ILE alumni also can nominate potential applicants. Eligible students must have completed 45 credit hours before the first day and have either a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA or a nomination from a faculty member or institute graduate.

Organizers invite successful individuals in a variety of fields to come to the institute during "working" lunches as well as other times during the week to share their thoughts on leadership.

In its 15th year, the Institute of Leadership Excellence was first held in 2006 and has convened every year since 2008.

Learn more at mtsu.edu/ile





Woman POWER ♀

Visual Art major creates powerful thesis project

By Allison Gorman

While studying abroad at the Université de Caen Normandie in northern France in fall 2019, Buchanan Fellow Katrina Scott sought inspiration for her Honors thesis project. An idea grew out of an association with a women's rights group on the campus, paired with a tour of art museums in Italy.

Scott wanted to change the narrative of persecuted and oppressed women depicted in art throughout history and talk about women's power. She created four 16-by-20-inch works of art depicting what is possible for women: subjugation, awareness, anger, and renewal. Each multimedia piece is a single animal—hare, alligator, wolf, and snake.

Scott's fearful hare, watchful alligator, angry wolf, and shedding snake symbolize a journey she herself has experienced.

"There was a period in my life when I was dealing with a lot of trauma, and I remember feeling like I wanted to shed my skin and become a different person that hadn't had those experiences," said Scott, a Visual Art and French double-major with a minor in Psychology.

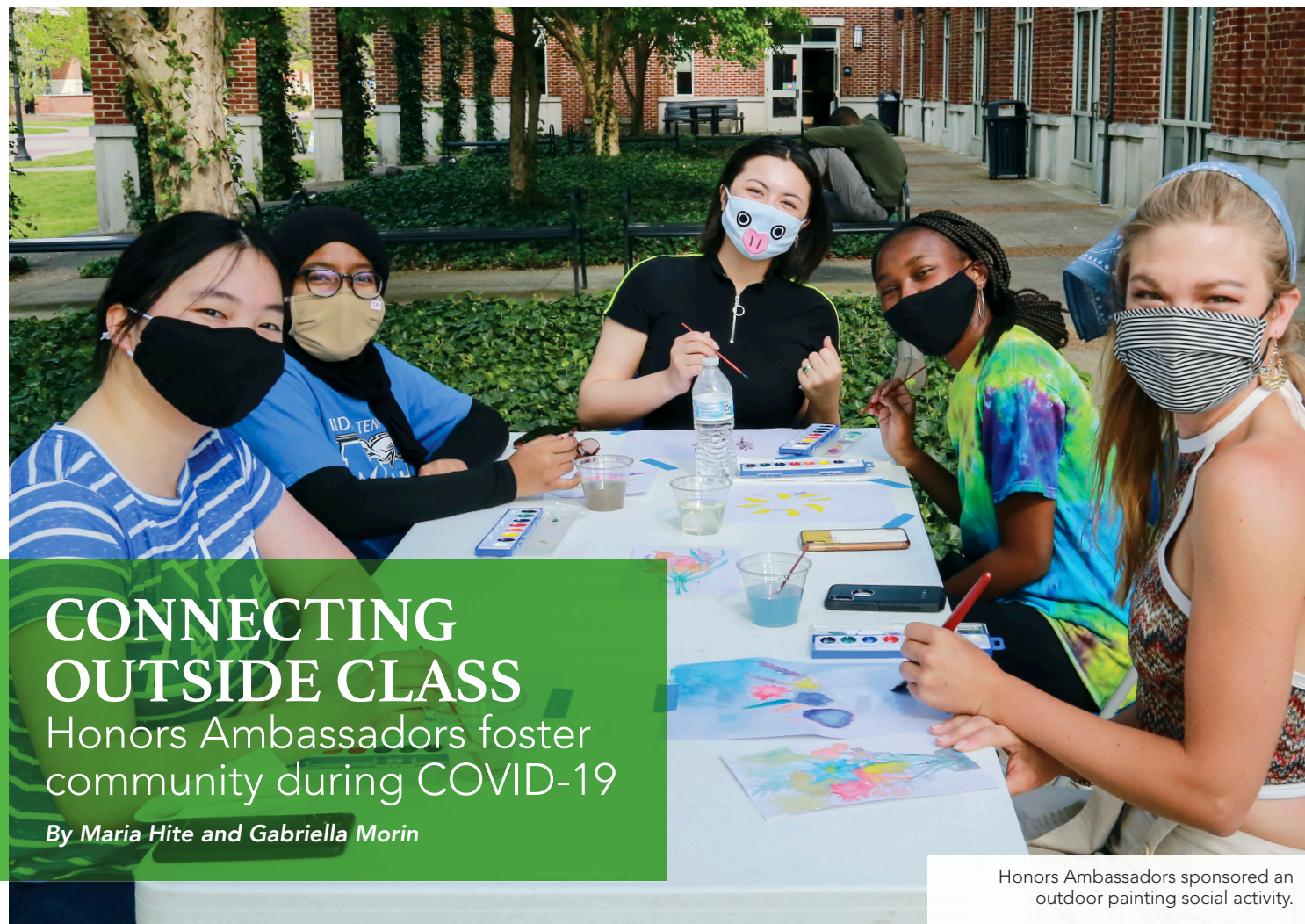
With the help of an Undergraduate Research Experience and Creative Activity (URECA) grant and faculty mentor Erin Anfinson, Scott completed the powerful project in spite of a COVID-19 campus shutdown and pandemic burnout. At the advice of Anfinson, she stepped back from the project and remembered why she was doing it.

The paintings, completed in August 2020, were displayed in Todd Hall for her senior exhibition during the Spring 2021 semester. Two of the paintings, *An Innocent Victim* and *Hell Hath No Fury*, also were published in the fall 2020 issue of MTSU's *Collage: A Journal of Creative Expression*.



Katrina Scott's Honors thesis artwork series began with *An Innocent Victim* (inset).

Photo by J. Intintoli



CONNECTING OUTSIDE CLASS

Honors Ambassadors foster community during COVID-19

By Maria Hite and Gabriella Morin

Honors Ambassadors sponsored an outdoor painting social activity.

How can community be created amid a pandemic? This was the challenge that MTSU Honors Student Ambassadors faced in 2020–21.

In the past, the ambassadors hosted events ranging from Halloween-themed escape rooms to health and wellness workshops focused on nutrition and meditation. Like millions of students around the world, MTSU students saw the COVID-19 pandemic change the ways they learned and connected.

Instead of walking to classes and talking with friends and classmates, students often found themselves staring at computer screens. The pandemic presented a particular challenge for planning events. The ambassadors' goal was to create events that encouraged student engagement while also prioritizing the safety of all involved. For 2020–21, while pandemic protocols were in place, this meant primarily creating virtual events.

The Honors Ambassadors kickstarted the Fall 2020 semester with a "socially distanced" scavenger hunt. Students were encouraged to get outside,

solve riddles, take photos, and explore MTSU's campus and traditions. Bonus points were given for mask selfies.

Later in the semester, Honors students tested their knowledge of history, science, and Disney in a virtual Quiz Bowl. The ambassadors also helped decorate the Honors College for Halloween and hosted an event featuring a costume contest and True Blue pets.

There is something about food that brings people together, so the ambassadors created a recipe book that featured recipes from the Honors College community. From Kabsa Arabian Rice to Pumpkin Mochi, the recipes reflected the cultural diversity present at MTSU and the Honors College.

In the Spring 2021 semester, the Honors Ambassadors created new activities that were enhanced through collaboration. They partnered with MTSU's Career Development Center to host virtual escape games, which consisted of solving riddles and puzzles to help MTSU's resident winged

horse, Lightning, escape. Players were placed in groups online and had to work together. Through the game, students learned about teamwork, leadership, communication, and other so-called soft skills that employers value.

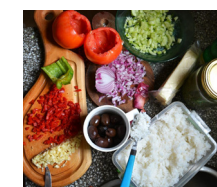
“As ambassadors, we have become a family unit during the stress of COVID and personal struggles.”

As the weather warmed, the ambassadors were able to hold an in-person event outside the Martin Honors Building. Katrina Scott, a Buchanan Fellow and Visual Art major, led a watercolor painting event. Even if some students had to chase after flying watercolor paper, it was a treat to interact with others in person, and most would agree that there's nothing quite like having a conversation face to face.

The Honors Ambassadors concluded the semester by hosting a meditation event during finals week. Though the ambassadors create fun events for students, they also encourage student self-care. De-stressing and focusing on health are important for everyone to fully enjoy all aspects of their lives.

The Honors Ambassadors program has had an impact not only on the close-knit Honors community, but also on the ambassadors themselves.

“As ambassadors, we have become a family unit during the stress of COVID and personal struggles,” one member said. “We cannot stress enough the importance of the community that happens within the late-night group chats and meetings where we can vent or laugh about our days together. It is truly a life-changing experience, and we hope that everyone can have this special opportunity in their Honors College experience.”



HONORS COLLEGE
RECIPE BOOK 2021
Created by Honors College Students
With special guest Honors College Faculty
Bringing to the new semester with diversity

A recipe book created by the Honors College community



Montgomery Barreto helps one of the Honors lions mask up.



Maria Hite in her Halloween costume



FRIENDLY SKIES

Thai aviation student serves as international ambassador

By Nakanya Rodruepid

Nakanya Rodruepid

Last fall, MTSU's Office of International Affairs launched an international student ambassador program in which current international students mentor incoming international students. The ambassadors help students adjust to the U.S., get involved on campus, and learn how to be successful at MTSU. **Nakanya Rodruepid**, a senior Honors student from Thailand, was one of the first ambassadors to write a blog post for the new program.

Most people call me Matoom, which is a type of fruit, but my legal name is Nakanya Rodruepid. I came about 9,000 miles from my home country of Thailand to pursue my aviation dream and become a professional pilot. When I was in high school, MTSU sent a representative to Thailand to promote the school, and I decided to attend MTSU because of the resources and scholarships available for international students and the quality of the Aerospace program.

“ I came about 9,000 miles from my home country of Thailand to pursue my aviation dream and become a professional pilot. ”

It is not easy to move to a new country, but I remember the day that I landed in Nashville and a volunteer picked me up from the airport. It was a heartwarming welcome that has continued throughout my four years at MTSU. I enjoy the frequent international student dinners within walking distance of campus, and there is good conversation with local and other international students with only one rule for the meetings: We speak only English.

This helps international students practice English skills in casual, safe settings. There are also picnics, activities, and trips that are offered free or at very affordable prices by the international office so that students can meet others and connect in their new city.

Campus involvement is an excellent way for international students to get to know people, learn about American culture, and feel closer to home, so I decided to join Alpha Eta Rho aerospace fraternity to make friends with similar interests and expand my connections. I also joined Women in Aviation International and had a chance to volunteer at events and help support women in the very male-dominated aviation industry. Recently, I have had the excellent opportunity to become an international student ambassador.

MTSU's Aerospace Department is one of the best aerospace programs in the United States. The Aerospace teachers and lab instructors are involved with their students, helping them gain confidence in flying, while promoting safety in the aviation program. I love the hands-on experience I get. Additionally, the Aerospace Department has many professional pilots who can guide students toward their goals, and the faculty involvement increases the students' professional networks, which helps students in their future careers.

I would recommend MTSU to other international students because MTSU is very affordable compared to other schools in the United States, and there are many scholarships available. In addition, MTSU has a very high quality of education, with professors who are often available outside of the classroom to answer students' questions. Another benefit of MTSU is the location. Murfreesboro is a medium-size city

“ Campus involvement is an excellent way for international students to get to know people, learn about American culture, and feel closer to home. ”

that has beautiful parks and nature trails and is also only about 30 miles from Nashville.

Leaving my home, my parents, and my friends to come to MTSU was not an easy decision. There were many obstacles in the way, but with the help of my new friends, professors, and the international student office, this decision turned out to be a life-changing experience that will benefit me forever.



Rodruepid receives a Certificate of Recognition from the Department of Aerospace, presented by former chair Wendy Beckman (l).



Rodruepid completed an Honors thesis.

Harpichords and Historic Notes

Washington Center internship provides professional experience

By Liam McBane, a Buchanan Fellow majoring in Music

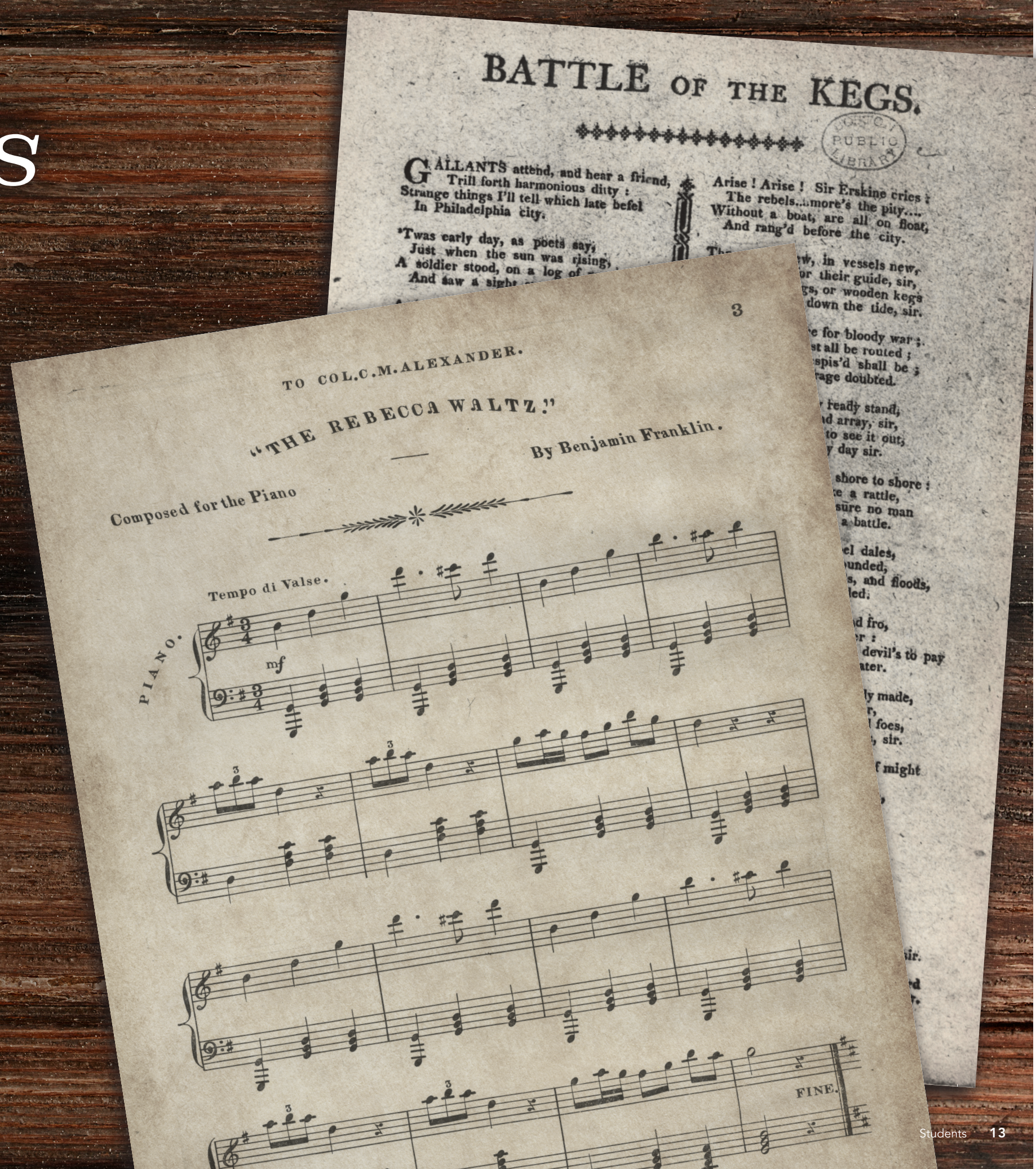


Liam McBane

My Washington, D.C., story began in September 2019 when I received an email blast about The Washington Center (TWC) Academic Internship Program. I went to the campus coordinator for the internship to learn more and soon began my internship pairing process. I hoped to work with a major performing arts organization since I'm keenly interested in arts administration.

Unfortunately, performing arts organizations were not eager to take on new workers during the industry downturn due to COVID-19. TWC soon switched over to an exclusively online format, and after interviewing with several organizations, I agreed to a position with the DACOR Bacon House, a diplomatic nonprofit that wanted my musical expertise for historical research to form the basis of a special historical-musical concert series for fundraising.

“My research findings were unexpected. I learned that Franklin was a prolific author of drinking songs and the inventor of . . . the glass harmonica.”





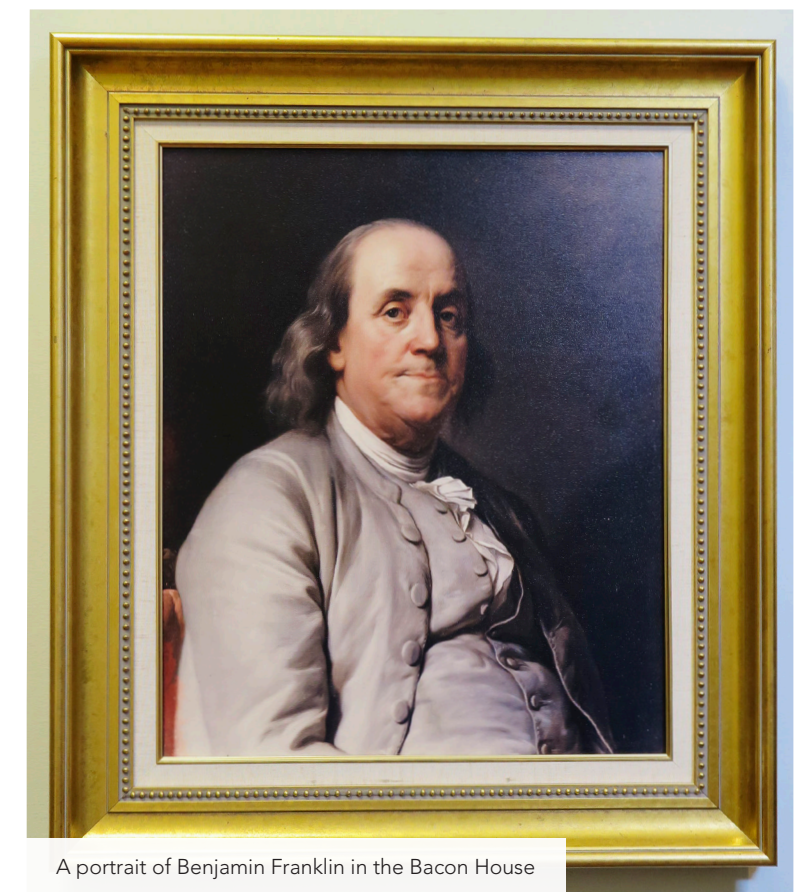
The DACOR Bacon House, located near the White House, houses a museum honoring the nation's diplomatic history.

Through June and July in 2020, I researched early American music intensely, presenting weekly findings to supervisors and participating in regular committee meetings to refine the direction of the project. Drawing extensively on both web resources and the Walker Library's holdings, I compiled about 35,000 words of research notes on the Colonial music scene and musical activities of signers of the Declaration of Independence, principally Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Francis Hopkinson. I wrote a 120-page master research report, a shorter synopsis for perusal, and an article for publication in the organization's newsletter. The committee I worked with will use my materials to develop the strategic plan for the concert series to present to a philanthropic underwriter.

My research findings were unexpected. I learned that Franklin was a prolific author of drinking songs and the inventor of the ethereal and very popular instrument now known as the glass harmonica. Jefferson played violin in early adulthood with the governor of Virginia but stopped practicing later in life after sustaining a wrist injury, according to popular legend, attempting to vault a fence to impress a Parisian lady. Hopkinson, who is considered the first native-born American composer of secular music, invented a new method for quilling the harpsichord, carried on extensive correspondence with Jefferson concerning the scientific news of the 1780s, and wrote satirical ballads for the revolutionary cause.

For instance, Hopkinson's "The Battle of the Kegs" mocks British confusion over a winter incident in which a set of barrel-shaped floating landmines drifted harmlessly past their docked navy.

I remember my first-semester English class professor saying how much more she learned in grad school because of the years she had spent in the workforce after receiving her bachelor's degree. I think The Washington Center program provides a similar benefit; now that I have worked, however briefly, in a significant professional position, I understand more how nonprofit employees approach problems. Overall, The Washington Center program is a high-quality educational opportunity that can greatly reward self-motivated students with experience, insight, and polished professional projects.



A portrait of Benjamin Franklin in the Bacon House



The historic Bacon House hosts lectures, discussions, receptions, musical performances, and other cultural events.



2021 Transfer Fellows (l-r): front, Lillian Hickman, Morgan Hutchins, JoyAnna McDonald, Johari Hamilton, Dimend Little, Emaline Tremayne, Sarah Roberts, Greta Muller; back, Kaleb Cardwell, Michael McGee, Charese Harrison, Joy Van Ryckeghem, Aaron Jollay, Magdalene Ofori-Kumi, Dominic Marcoaldi, Jennifer Cunic;



front, Kelsi Heck, Angela Benninghoff, Julia Anderson, Kelsey Dillard, Rebecca Jones, Sheri Masters, Sidney Creter; back, Patricyonna Rodgers, Luciano Donati, Alexandra Spadafino, Hunter Brady, Abigail Swanson; and inset, Ava Brittain, Foram Patel

MEET THE 2021 TRANSFER FELLOWS

A new class of Transfer Fellows from Tennessee, Georgia, Ohio, and Kentucky joined the ranks of the University Honors College in August. The Honors Transfer Fellowship is the highest academic award given to transfer students at Middle Tennessee State University.

Julia Anderson
Psychology
Western Kentucky University

Angela Benninghoff
English
Motlow State Community College

Hunter Brady
Biology
Pensacola Christian College

Ava Brittain
Biology
Columbia State Community College

Kaleb Cardwell
Finance
Pellissippi State
Community College

Sidney Creter
Animation
Columbia State Community College

Kelsey Dillard
Biochemistry
Walters State Community College

Luciano Donati
Business Administration
Nashville State Community College

Johari Hamilton
Journalism
Southwest Tennessee
Community College

Charese Harrison
Audio Production
Cuyahoga Community College

Kelsi Heck
Art
Walters State Community College

Lillian Hickman
Recording Industry
Volunteer State
Community College

Morgan Hutchins
Theatre
Bluegrass Community
and Technical College

Aaron Jollay
Accounting
Nashville State Community College

Rebecca Jones
Information Systems
Northeast State Community College

Dimend Little
International Relations
Lipscomb University

Dominic Marcoaldi
Philosophy
Nashville State Community College
and State College of Florida

Sheri Masters
Special Education
Aims Community College and
Arapahoe Community College

JoyAnna McDonald
Recording Industry
Savannah Technical College

Michael McGee
Management
Motlow State Community College

Greta Muller
Art
George Emil Palade Medical
University and Trevecca Nazarene
University

Magdalene Ofori-Kumi
Business Innovation
and Entrepreneurship
Nashville State Community College

Foram Patel
Computer Science
Tennessee Tech University

Sarah Roberts
Social Work
University of Tennessee

Patricyonna Rodgers
Journalism
Columbia State
Community College

Alexandra Spadafino
Communication
Nashville State Community College

Abigail Swanson
Accounting
Lee University

Emaline Tremayne
Psychology
University of Tennessee–
Chattanooga

Joy Van Ryckeghem
Psychology
Columbia State
Community College



Samuel Apigian



Kenneth J. Boyd



Annalise R. Dodson



Casey Epting



Zachary N. Thomas



Allison G. Throm



Joshua A. Wheaton



Jacob B. Williams



Jaymes I. Garcia



Jael S. Guest



Hannah L. Harris



Cadee J. Havard



Delana E. Howard



Hannah J. Kadzban



Aidan S. King



Connor A. Prim



Joshua D. Sheets



Emma J. Shillington



Gita Swaminathan



Meredith P. Taft

MEET THE 2021 BUCHANAN FELLOWS

Twenty incoming freshmen committed to the Honors College Buchanan Fellowship this fall. The program is named in honor of MTSU's Nobel Prize-winning alumnus, James M. Buchanan, and is the highest award given to an entering freshman at Middle Tennessee State University.

Samuel Apigian

Central Magnet School
Murfreesboro

Kenneth J. Boyd

Camden Central High School
Camden

Annalise R. Dodson

Franklin High School
Franklin

Casey Epting

White House High School
White House

Jaymes I. Garcia

Nelson County High School
Bloomfield, Kentucky

Jael S. Guest

Homeschool
Cane Ridge

Hannah L. Harris

Roane County High School
Kingston

Cadee J. Havard

Gulfport High School
Gulfport, Mississippi

Delana E. Howard

Siegel High School
Murfreesboro

Hannah J. Kadzban

Lake Mary High School
Longwood, Florida

Aidan S. King

Two Roads Academy
Homeschool
Ridgeway, South Carolina

Connor A. Prim

Cascade High School
Bell Buckle

Joshua D. Sheets

Providence Christian Academy
Murfreesboro

Emma J. Shillington

Nolensville High School
Nolensville

Gita Swaminathan

Brentwood High School
Brentwood

Meredith P. Taft

North Forsyth High School
Gainesville, Georgia

Zachary N. Thomas

Nolensville High School
Nolensville

Allison G. Throm

Bartlett High School
Bartlett

Joshua A. Wheaton

Central Magnet School
Murfreesboro

Jacob B. Williams

Martin Luther King Jr.
Magnet High School
Mount Juliet

LIZARDS AND SNAKES. OH MY!

Research with reptiles results in Goldwater award

By Randy Weiler

MTSU student **Denise Ortega** likes snakes. Actually, she loves snakes—and lizards—unlike most people, who have at least some degree of fear of the reptiles. As a young scientist, she appreciates and studies their existence.

Ortega, majoring in Biology with an Organismal Biology and Ecology concentration, earned the prestigious Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship in 2021. The coveted scholarship, named after the former U.S. senator from Arizona who had a strong interest in science and technology, is among the highest awards undergraduates majoring in science can receive.

A senior who graduated from Hunters Lane High School in Nashville, Ortega is one of approximately 400 U.S. college students from thousands of applicants to receive the distinction.

"The Goldwater award serves as a firm reminder to me that I really am a scientist and

that all my efforts to succeed academically have been worth it," Ortega said.

A bilingual, first-generation student who earlier lived in Ecuador, she already has completed two National Science Foundation Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REUs) at the University of New Mexico and in Costa Rica. She also recently earned a prestigious DAAD RISE (Research Internships in Science and Engineering) award to conduct research in Germany.

The Goldwater selection committee recognized her "dedication to strive in education, although the odds were stacked against me," Ortega said. "I don't have a traditional research background. I had no experience or knowledge about the field of science, but I sought out opportunities that could help me become experienced in my field of study."



Denise Ortega earned MTSU's third Goldwater award in the past five years.

Photo by J. Intintoli

UNAFRAID OF SUCCESS

Ortega has always loved nature. “My family was not surprised at all that I’d chosen something like this as my career. . . . They just didn’t expect reptiles and amphibians,” she said. “Like most people, they used to dislike snakes and weren’t too keen on lizards.

“I’m mostly proud that I have been able to educate them on their importance, so now they have a more positive view on them and are often coming to me for reptile questions. Both my family and friends are always so interested in my work, and it’s so exciting that I get to share that with them and others.”

“She visited different biomes that hadn’t been surveyed for 30 years.”

Even before earning her degree, Ortega is making noise with her research on reptiles. She recently published a first-authored natural history note in *Herpetological Review* that documents female water anoles (in the lizard family) performing an unusual social signaling behavior that is usually seen only in males of this species.

Ortega conducted group research on the reptiles in the rainforest of southern Costa Rica summer before last, observing lizard behaviors, recording observations on audio, quantifying data, and helping create the first known ethogram for the species. An article with Ortega as first author is also in preparation for the *Journal of Herpetology*.

“This species of lizard is understudied, and behavioral data is scarce,” she wrote on her Goldwater application.

While many opportunities were impacted by the pandemic in 2020, Ortega was able to assess lizards at the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) during a shortened REU through the University of New Mexico. She visited different biomes that hadn’t been surveyed for 30 years.

Her research involved visual encounter surveys, camera observations, pitfall traps, and box-funnel traps. After making a list of the 87 different species, she analyzed data through RStudio.

MTSU “has shaped the person I am today,” Ortega said. “When I started in 2017, I was 18 and had no idea what I wanted to do in biology. Now, I have a solid idea of who I am: a scientist and woman in STEM,” the acronym for the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

SHARING HER PASSION

Ortega not only has presented at different symposiums at Las Cruces Biological Station and Sevilleta NWR, but also plans presentations at the Ecological Society of America annual meeting, Southwestern Association of Naturalists meeting, Council for Undergraduate Research biennial meeting, and Emerging Researchers National Conference in STEM.

Honors College coordinator Laura Clippard called Ortega “an extraordinary student who mentors others and has a giving spirit.” Clippard has assisted and advised 700 to 800 students applying for national awards (Goldwater, Fulbright, and others) through the college’s Undergraduate Fellowships Office. Ortega is MTSU’s third Goldwater winner in the last five years.

On target to graduate in December, Ortega said she will use the Goldwater award of up to \$7,500 for tuition, possible travel to conferences, and research supplies. She is starting a new lab project this fall



“The Goldwater award serves as a firm reminder to me that I really am a scientist and that all my efforts . . . have been worth it.”

Ortega with her Goldwater certificate outside of the Honors building

on turtles and said the award will allow her to “focus fully on my education and worry about finances less.”

“This scholarship pushes me to want more out of my research, and it is a testament to all my hard work and the great people I have surrounded myself with,” Ortega added. “The Goldwater has given me the opportunity to share my experience in STEM with others. I hope to encourage other minorities in the field to apply to Goldwater and similar scholarships that they, too, can obtain.”

Her ultimate goal is to earn a Ph.D. in Ecology, conduct research in reptile behavior systems, teach at the college level, and promote “a more inclusive and diverse scientific community.”

For the DAAD RISE award in Germany, Ortega will examine “the interactions of woody plants in view of climate change and other changes such as invasive species,” she said in the Goldwater application. “By doing research in different disciplines from herpetology, I expect to take away important conservation information that will aid me in becoming a better scientist and conservationist.”

MTSU faculty who are passionate about biology, mentors along the way, and friends she has met through the trips to New Mexico and Costa Rica “have allowed me to become very open-minded to different cultures and beliefs,” she said. “ . . . MTSU created so many research opportunities for me that I will always cherish because of what I learned and the friendships I created.” **A**

View a video of Ortega at mtsu.edu/honors/ufo.

STRIKING GOLD

Goldwater winners from MTSU

2021	Denise Ortega Biology
2020	Jared Frazier Chemistry/Computer Science
2017	Kirsten Cunningham Biology/Chemistry
2013	Robert Murphy Physics and Astronomy
2012	Jordan Dodson Chemistry/Mathematics
2011	Evan Craig Biology
2011	Robert Ehemann Physics/Mathematics
2007	Taylor Barnes Physics/Chemistry



Ortega holds a lizard she was studying in 2019 while on a National Science Foundation research trip to New Mexico. Photo courtesy of Vera Ting



Ortega (r) and mentor Lindsey Swierk, a faculty member at Binghamton University, studied the behavior of a water anole lizard endemic to Costa Rica for three months in 2019.

2020–21 HONORS THESES DEFENDED

FALL 2020

College of Basic and Applied Sciences

Haley Brazel

"Comparison of the Economics of *Vitis aestivalis* 'Norton/Cynthiana' Propagation by Cuttings and Tissue Culture"
Agribusiness
Tony Johnston, thesis director

Chase Burton

"Improving Gene Model Accuracy for Genes Involved in Capsule Formation of Fungal Pathogen *Cryptococcus neoformans*"
Biology
Rebecca Seipelt-Thiemann, thesis director

Tyler Christian

"Representing Textual Passages as Graphs to Support Question Answering"
Computer Science
Salvador Barbosa, thesis director

Shelby Cox

"Assessment of Cannabinoid levels in Successively Cloned Generations of industrial hemp (*Cannabis sativa*)"
Biology
John DuBois, thesis director

Niah Frantzen

"Analysis of the Differentially Expressed Genes of *Cryptococcus neoformans*-Infected Macrophage Mouse Cells"
Biology
Rebecca Seipelt-Thiemann, thesis director

Jewel Galloway

"Evaluation of Physiological Traits Expressed in vitro and Effects on Plant Growth by *Bacillus Endophytes*"
Biology
Stephen Wright, thesis director

Jori Graeff

"The lipid composition of the marine dinoflagellate *Zooxanthella nutricula*, a polycystine radiolarian symbiont"
Biology
Jeff Leblond, thesis director

Elijah Jacober

"Wilson County's Antebellum Landscape: A Past Worth Preserving"
Construction Management, Land Development
Carroll Van West, thesis director

Gabriella Morin

"Determining How the PINK1: Parkin Mitophagy Pathway Responds to Transient Mitochondrial Stress and How This is Affected by Disease Associated Mutations in Parkin"
Biology/Spanish
David E. Nelson, thesis director

Gabrielle Mould

"A bi-seasonal evaluation of somatic cell count, hygiene scores, and bedding cultures of Holstein cows housed in a compost bedded pack barn"
Animal Science/General Science
Jessica Carter, thesis director



Channing Blake Mullinax

(pictured above)
"Novel Role Filler Generalization for Recurrent Neural Networks Using Working Memory-Based Indirection"
Computer Science
Joshua Phillips, thesis director

Emily Oppmann

"Assessing the clonal nature of *Trifolium calcaricum*"
Biology
Ashley Morris, thesis director

Brian Sharber

"Analyzing Political Polarization in News Media with Natural Language Processing"
Computer Science/Mathematics
Salvador Barbosa, thesis director

Nathan Smith

"Reviving Classical Music Through Interdisciplinary Teaching: A Cognitive Integration Approach"
Biochemistry
Joseph Morgan, thesis director

Charles Teeples

"Investigation of Nitrile Oxide-Alkyne 1,3-Dipolar Cycloadditions and Their Potential Viability for Synthesis of Stapled Peptides"
Biochemistry
Norma Dunlap, thesis director

Russell Walden

"Improving Gene Model Accuracy for Nitrogen-Use Efficiency Genes in *Zea mays*"
Biochemistry
Rebecca Seipelt-Thiemann, thesis director

College of Media and Entertainment

Kathryn Caggianelli

"Modern Lyrical Interpretations of Ancient Greek Myths"
Music Business
Rhonda McDaniel

Micaela Griffin

"We Love to See It: Diversity in Romantic Comedies"
Media and Entertainment
Katie Foss, thesis director

Miranda Hall

"Exploring the Israeli Narrative Beyond Mass Media"
Audio Production
Karen Petersen, thesis director

Danielle May

"A Southern Spring"
Audio Production
Claudia Barnett, thesis director



Emily McTyre

(pictured above)
"Vanderbilt: A Television Mini-series in Four Parts"
Video and Film Production
Leland Gregory, thesis director

Isabella Morrissey

"Adventures of Self-Compassion: Memoir of a Depressed Undergraduate"
Interdisciplinary Media
Tricia Farwell, thesis director

Madeline Quinby

"Grown and Gone: A Photographic Study of Urban and Natural Middle Tennessee"
Photography
Jonathan Trundle, thesis director

Hayley Payne

"It's a Man's World: An Analysis of the Roles of Women in the Male-Dominated Country Music Industry"
Commercial Songwriting
Melissa Wald, thesis director

Kayla Pearson

"Sound Isn't Always What You See: An Analysis and Demonstration of the Perception of Sound Effects in Film"
Audio Production
Matt Foglia, thesis director

University College



Mark Blackmon

(pictured above)
"The Multinational Association of Supportive Care in Cancer (MASCC) risk index score: Neutropenic fever and provider intuition"
Integrated Studies
Michelle Finch, thesis director

College of Liberal Arts

Victoria Deckard

"Drawing the Line: Defining Consent in Cosplay"
English/Theatre
Claudia Barnett

Natalie Jones

"The Use of Spanish as a Literary Device in Selected Texts by Sandra Cisneros and Esmeralda Santiago"
English/German
Patricia Gately, thesis director

Jonathan Locke

"An Argument Against the Justification of Paternalistic Laws in the United States"
Communication
Patrick Richey, thesis director

Andrew Modaff

"A Moral Argument for God's Existence, The Peircean Perspective, and an Interpretive Scheme for the Success of the Twelve Steps"
Philosophy
Mary Magada-Ward, thesis director



Ashlin Murphy

(pictured above)
"Responding to Sexual Abuse: A Study of Southern Baptist Churches"
Political Science
Jennifer Woodward, thesis director

Benjamin Narrell

"Franklin Roosevelt and His New Deal: A Rhetoric of Class-Consciousness and the Role of Identification"
Political Science
Julie Myatt, thesis director

Matthew Parris

"Camus, Heller, and the Absurd Legal Novel"
English
Mischa Renfroe, thesis director

Nava Sepehri

"Feminism, Misogyny, and Rap Music: A Content Analysis of Lyrics within the 'New Wave' of Female Rappers"
Sociology/Psychology
Tricia Farwell, thesis director

Jennings A. Jones College of Business

Nicholas Lynn

Heroes of Vatalyr
Marketing
David Rollins, thesis director



Grace Murphy

(pictured above)
"Passion and Perseverance: GRIT in Accounting"
Accounting
Tammy Waymire, thesis director

College of Behavioral and Health Sciences

Emily Ballantyne

"Gender Dynamics of Sexual Victimization in United States Prisons"
Criminal Justice Administration
Meredith Dye, thesis director



Abigail McCarthy

(pictured above)
"Experiences of American Families Who Have Adopted Children from Bulgarian Orphanages"
Psychology
Michelle Boyer-Pennington, thesis director

Summer Pritchard

"Dissolution of Tennessee's Percentile Rank Sex Education System and Suggested Improvements to Tennessee's SB 3310 Legislation"
Psychology
Monica Wallace, thesis director

SPRING 2021

College of Basic and Applied Sciences

Elizabeth Clippard

"Decadal Comparison of Soil Respiration Rates of Disturbed and Undisturbed Forest Sites"
Biology/Plant and Soil Science
Samuel Haruna, thesis director

Renata DeLucia

"Analysis of Dental Anxiety and Avoidance Behaviors in Young Adults"
Biology
Kimberly Ward, thesis director

Ryan Doole

"Building the Bridge: A Case Study for the Significance of Cross-Cultural Education in the 21st Century"
Aerospace, Professional Pilot
Mei Han, thesis director

Natalie Foster

"Testing for Associations Between Boldness and Thermoregulation in the Eastern Box Turtle, *Terrapene carolina carolina*"
Biology
Matthew Klukowski, thesis director

Maxwell Gardner

"Hybrid Theory: A Study of Hybrid Rudiments through Classical Musical Form"
Actuarial Science
Julie Davila, thesis director

Hector Hernandez

"Learning Lessons from COVID-19 to Create a Better Federal Action Plan for Future Public Health Crises"
Mathematics
Aaron Gamino, thesis director

Steffany Jenkins

"Engineering the TetO System to Test the Contribution of FKS1 to Yeast Cell Wall Strength"
Biology
James Robertson, thesis director

Cameron Maddux

"Synthesis of functionalized peptoids designed to coordinate to quantum dots for use in biomedical applications"
Biology
Kevin Bicker, thesis director

Cody Maness

“The MTSU Events App: An Android Application to Display Campus Events”
Computer Science
Rafet Al-Tobasei, thesis director

Sophie McIntyre

“Mind Map Automation: Using Natural Language Processing to Graphically Represent a Portion of a U.S. History Textbook”
Computer Science
Salvador Barbosa, thesis director

Brendan Mitchell-Fostyk

“Effects of Slope and Land Management on Soil Hydraulic and Thermal Properties”
Plant and Soil Science
Samuel Haruna, thesis director

Alaa Mohammed

“Evidence-based Annotation Revision to Genes Involved in the Virulence Factor Melanin Production in Fungal Pathogen, *Cryptococcus neoformans*”
Biology
Rebecca Seipelt-Thiemann, thesis director

Ansley Morgan

“Screening Novel Triazole Aurones for Anti-Inflammatory Properties”
Biology
Anthony Farone, thesis director



Jiwoo Park *(pictured above)*
“Evaluating the Effects of a Hyperactive Parkin Mutant on the Dynamics of PINK1: Parkin Mitophagy”
Biology
David E. Nelson, thesis director

Khôra Seule

“Operator Symmetry on Functions”
Mathematics/Computer Science
James Hart, thesis director

Isaac Shirk

“Creating the Core Components of an Astronomy Lab in AR”
Physics
John Wallin, thesis director

Morgan Smith

“APTeach: Professional Learning Communities as an Invaluable Method of Reform”
Biochemistry
Gregory Rushton, thesis director

Emily Stafford

“Effects of leaf meal supplementation on commercial broiler performance and carcass characteristics”
Animal Science
Kevin Downs, thesis director

Kennedy Wallace

“Multitemporal Assessment of Coastal Erosion: Case studies from the Gulf of Mexico, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Mediterranean Sea”
Geosciences
Racha El Kadiri, thesis director

Hannah Welch

“Synthesis and Characterization of Polyacrylamide and Poly(acrylamide-co-diallyldimethylammonium chloride) via Free-Radical and RAFT Polymerization”
Chemistry
Dwight Patterson, thesis director

Justin West

“Examining the Binding Affinity of Ribose to YME1L-AAA+ By Competition Titrations”
Biochemistry
Justin Miller, thesis director

College of Media and Entertainment

John Gustafson

“Making Western Swing: An Analysis and Reproduction of 1930s and ‘40s Production Techniques”
Audio Production
Michael Hanson, thesis director

Anna Levine

“Managing Musicians: Creating a Podcast for the New Music Business”
Music Business
Michelle Conceison, thesis director

Miranda Renzi

“Hear Her Voice: An Analysis of Selected Songs by American Female Songwriters of the 1960s and 1970s”
Music Business
John Dougan, thesis director



Dale Shackelford *(pictured above)*
“Muskogean Tribes Musical Influence on the Genre of Delta Blues”
Audio Production
Cosette Collier, thesis director

College of Liberal Arts

Luke Arnold

“Understanding Tennessee’s Racial Realignment and Political Polarization: An Examination of Tennessee Gubernatorial Elections, 1932–2018”
Political Science
Kent Syler, thesis director

Makayla Barrett

“Heartbreak in Stages: A Poetic Approach to the Tragedy of Love”
English
Amie Whittemore, thesis director

Hanan Beyene

“Never Again: Analysis of the Rohingya Crisis and the Role of Religion in Conflict”
Religious Studies/Global Studies
Rebekka King, thesis director

Karen Cranston

“Narrative Empathy and an Analysis of Three Contemporary Young Adult Mental Health Novels”
English
Ellen Donovan, thesis director

Catherine Farone

“An Aristotelian Analysis of the Conservative Reaction to the 20th Century Rights Revolution and Originalism”
Political Science/Foreign Language
Robb McDaniel, thesis director

Kelsey Keith

“Reckon with It: A Podcast Exploring Tennessee Cultures and Identities”
English/Spanish
Eric Detweiler, thesis director

John Lichtman

“Adaptive Music for Fiction: Writing Multi-Sensory Short Stories in a Digital Age”
English
Fred Arroyo, thesis director

Sophia Maas

“The Painting Writer: The Writing Painter”
English/Global Studies
Fred Arroyo, thesis director

Katelin McVey

“Empty Spaces: A Photographic Memoir on Post Memorial and Transgenerational Effects of Grief and Loss”
English
Shannon Randol, thesis director

Megan Manning

“An Analysis of the Evolution of Death Narratives in Superhero Comic Books”
History
Jennifer Marchant, thesis director

Nash Meade

“For That Is Our Curse: How the Dark Souls Games Create an Existential Experience”
English, Literary Studies/Philosophy
Eric Detweiler, thesis director



Savana Mezquiriz *(pictured above)*
“In the Best Interests of the Child: Kant’s Influence on Child Custody Rulings in Tennessee”
Philosophy
Mary Magada-Ward, thesis director

Kayleigh Payne

“Understanding leadership styles and the prevention and management of nursing burnout in the hospital setting”
Organizational Communication
Elizabeth Dalton, thesis director

Katrina Scott

“The Nature of Feminine Rage: A Creative Exploration of Female Anger”
Visual Art/French
Erin Anfinson, thesis director

Hannah Solima

“United Nations Human Rights Council and Israel: Comparative Analysis with Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia”
French/International Relations/Criminal Justice Administration
Karen Petersen, thesis director

**Jennings A. Jones
College of Business**



Asya Craven *(pictured above)*
“The Remnant Fellowship Female Leadership Success”
Accounting
Jenna Gray-Hildebrand, thesis director

Katelyn Gardner

“Beauty During a Pandemic: The Impact of COVID-19 on the Cosmetic Industry”
Marketing
Diane Edmondson, thesis director

Patricia Hummel

“Analyzing College Students’ Finances and How They Were Impacted by COVID-19”
Economics
Keith Gamble, thesis director

Lilliana Napier

“What It Takes to Thrive: An overview analysis of the key factors that contribute to a community theater’s success”
Business Management
John Mullane, thesis director

College of Education



Jessica Nasca *(pictured above)*
“A Relational Analysis: How Three Different Method Books Teach K–5 Elementary School Teachers to Use Music and Song in the Classroom”
Elementary Education
Jamila McWhirter, thesis director

College of Behavioral and Health Sciences

Finley Aavatsmark

“A secondary data analysis on the effectiveness of flexible chains when teaching complex daily living skills to twin boys with autism spectrum disorder”
Psychology
John Pennington, thesis director

Jarod Ball

“The Relationship between Parental Involvement and High School Athletes’ Performance and Enjoyment”
Exercise Science
Jennifer Caputo, thesis director

Laura Grimes

“The Relationship Between Hearing and Cognitive Function in Older Adults: Differences in Perception”
Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology
Rebecca Fischer, thesis director

Yostina Lamei

“Effects of Dopamine Receptor Activation and Antagonism on Social Motivation in Mice”
Psychology
Tiffany Rogers, thesis director

Hadley Pegg

“The Impact of School Shootings on American Students: A Research Paper and a Play”
Criminal Justice Administration
Elizabeth Dalton, thesis director



Esteban Sanchez *(pictured above)*
“Effects of Incongruent Video on Rating of Perceived Exertion while Treadmill Running with Self-Selected Music”
Exercise Science
Sandra Stevens, thesis director

Briana Sands

“All Humans are Human: Environmental Humanization and Its Positive Impacts on People Struggling with Substance Abuse”
Psychology
Bethany Wrye, thesis director

Margarett Waller

“Student Perception of Professors with Accents”
Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology
Karen Davis, thesis director

Alan Webb

“The Sociology of *Breaking Bad* and Societal Relevance: Methamphetamine Abuse, Marital Dissolution, and White-Collar Crime”
Criminal Justice Administration
Lynda Williams, thesis director

MicKayla Wilkinson

“Taboo and Offensive Language in Audiovisual Translation: A Spanish to English Case Study of the Television Series *Paquita Salas*”
Psychology
Alan Campbell, thesis director



ARTISTIC TRIUMPH

"Collage" Creative Expression Awards named for 2020–21

Anthony Czelusniak, editor-in-chief of the spring 2020 *Collage: A Journal of Creative Expression*, shows off the publication's latest Columbia Scholastic Press Association Silver Crown Award. The national award, presented by Columbia University in New York for outstanding publications, is for both the fall 2019 (editor-in-chief Beatriz Dedicatoria) and spring 2020 issues.

Each semester, the University Honors College, the sponsor of *Collage: A Journal of Creative Expression*, awards \$75 prizes to outstanding submissions from each of six areas: prose, poetry, art, photography, video, and audio. The award winners are selected from among high-rated submissions by secret ballots from the entire *Collage* staff.

Fall 2020

Matthew Parris
"King of the Landfill"
Prose

Lisa Hardie
"Svalbard"
Poetry

Jillian DeGrie
Stressed
Art

Ross Sibley
The Fall
Photography

Catelyn Woody
"Resisting Nihilism"
Audio

Daryl Hickman Jr.
Ubered Lyft
Video

Spring 2021

Rachel Booher
"Dysplasia"
Prose

Fritz Valentine
"Extinction"
Poetry

Jake Yandle
Valley of the Primordial Sea
Art

Valkyrie Rutledge
Phoenix of Pompeii
Photography

Nick Edgerson
"Better Days"
Audio

James Roberson
Elizabeth's Houses
Video



The Fall
by Ross Sibley



Valley of the Primordial Sea
by Jake Yandle



Stressed
by Jillian DeGrie



Phoenix of Pompeii
by Valkyrie Rutledge



MOTIVATION AND MENTORS

Student-faculty partnerships merit major fellowships

Kelsey Keith



Laura Clippard

A firm believer that “no one gets where they are alone,” Buchanan Fellow **Kelsey Keith** says MTSU’s Honors College and English Department altered her academic trajectory, sharpened her skills as a leader, and expanded her ideas for her future.

“During my first semester as an English major, I took classes with Dr. Claudia Barnett, Dr. Eric Detweiler, and Dr. Kate Pantelides. They became my most trusted mentors throughout college,” she said.

“All of our fellowship winners possess strong work ethics, excellent communication skills, and teamwork.”

According to Keith, Interim Chair Ron Kates helped with scheduling and planning for the future, while directors and peers at the University Writing Center (UWC), a tutoring class with UWC Director Erica Cirillo-McCarthy, and working as a writing tutor helped her develop “a passion for equity in education that has steered my post-graduation goals.”

The English and Spanish double-major, who previously studied abroad in Chile and was editor-in-chief of the fall 2020 *Collage: A Journal of Creative Expression*, is currently teaching in Spain through the Fulbright fellowship program. Keith additionally won an \$8,500 Phi Kappa Phi Fellowship recently.

Her roommate, **Katrina Scott**, a Buchanan Fellow with majors in Visual Art and French, said faculty from the World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures and the Art and Design departments made a significant impact on her college career.

Department Chair Roger Pieroni’s French classes inspired her to travel abroad, and his guidance and encouragement eventually enabled her to study abroad in Caen, a port city in Normandy, France. The trip inspired what became her Honors thesis project the following semester (see page 6).

Scott, editor-in-chief of the spring 2021 issue of *Collage*, was awarded a slot in the Teaching Assistant Program in Rouen, France.

Undergraduate Fellowships Office Coordinator **Laura Clippard** recently acknowledged that partnerships with faculty, academic departments, Education Abroad, the UWC, the Undergraduate Research Center, and others created a community of support for students and greatly contributed to the success of fellowship and scholarship applicants. As a result of these partnerships, over two dozen students captured coveted opportunities this year, including teaching overseas and conducting research with other universities.

Clippard spoke proudly about the caliber of fellowship applicants.

“Our students show diversity in their career goals, backgrounds, and campus involvement, but all of our fellowship winners possess strong work ethics, excellent communication skills, and teamwork,” Clippard said.

“MTSU has extraordinary and highly motivated students.”



Jilaena Dienye



Gretta Maguire



Thi Nguyen



DaVonte Lewis

LEARN MORE



Students can learn about the Undergraduate Fellowships Office by visiting mtsu.edu/honors/ufo, scheduling an appointment, or emailing laura.clippard@mtsu.edu.

Clippard and her numerous partners provide assistance in selecting the most appropriate fellowships and in completing the applications and essays.

2020–21 Fellowships winners

(Recipients are listed by award type)

Brittany Johnson (Global Studies/Foreign Language), Teaching Fulbright in Spain

Kelsey Keith (English/Spanish), Teaching Fulbright in Spain; Phi Kappa Phi Fellowship

Denise Ortega (Biology), Goldwater Scholarship; DAAD RISE in Germany

Rebecca Clippard (Foreign Language), Phi Kappa Phi Love of Learning Scholarship

Joseph Gulizia (Animal Science), Phi Kappa Phi Fellowship

Katrina Scott (Visual Art/French), Teaching Assistant in France Scholarship, Rouen, France

Michelle Sullivan (Global Studies), Japan Exchange and Teaching Program

Marina Loza (Music), Fund of Education Abroad, Vienna

Suzy Ni (Biochemistry), Fund of Education Abroad, South Korea

Gretta Maguire (Music), Critical Language Scholarship, Chinese

Jilaena Dienye (Elementary Education), Gilman Scholarship, Spain

Logan Gordon (Foreign Language), Gilman Scholarship, Japan

Marina Loza (Music), Gilman Scholarship, Vienna, Austria

Kylie Margerison (Psychology), Gilman Scholarship, South Korea

Antonio West (Business Administration), Gilman Scholarship, Japan

Elijah White (Computer Science/Foreign Language), Gilman Scholarship, Japan

Logan Gordon (Foreign Language), Freeman-ASIA Scholarship, Japan

Suzi Ni (Biochemistry), Freeman-ASIA Scholarship, South Korea

Sai Clayton (Art and Japanese), Freeman-ASIA Scholarship, Japan

Rachel Booher (Foreign Language), Freeman-ASIA Scholarship, Japan

Elizabeth Clippard (Biology/Plant and Soil Science), NSF REU at Missouri Botanical Garden

Miles Crenshaw (Physics), NSF REU at Catholic University

Jared Frazier (Computer Science), NSF REU at the University of Michigan

Yaseen Ginnab (Biology/Psychology), NSF REU at Central Michigan University

DaVonte Lewis (Physics/Computer Science), NSF REU at University of Illinois

Thi Nguyen (Computer Science), NSF REU at Florida International University

Steven Rhodes (Physics), NSF REU at the University of Arkansas

Miura Rempis (History/Political Science), Harold Love Community Service Award

CIVIC



DUTY

Mary Evins fights for the right for all citizens to engage in American democracy

By Gina Logue

It was inevitable that **Mary Evins** would take the path she chose in life.

"I always knew I would have a Ph.D. and be a professor," said the MTSU research professor of History and coordinator for the American Democracy Project who has residency in the Honors College.

It was also inevitable that her life would focus on history and citizenship. Born to natives of DeKalb County and Warren County whose roots extend deeply into Tennessee soil, Evins grew up listening to tales of family history. Both sides of her family settled in the hills and hollows of Tennessee in the early 1800s.

"I loved taking in all of his stories," Evins said of her father, Joe L. Evins, who represented Tennessee's 5th District (1947–53) and 4th District (1953–77) in Congress.

Born after World War II in Washington, D.C., Evins was referred to around her household as the "post-war product." She would accompany the family, including mother Ann and sisters Joanna and Jane, between life in urban Washington and life in rural Tennessee throughout her childhood, essentially attending school 11 months a year because of the difference in school terms between the two areas. In Washington, which was filled with political and diplomatic families, Evins went to school with children whose parents were household names across the U.S. and with children from countries around the world.

"We would drive back and forth from D.C. to middle Tennessee many times every year in the Buick with the dog and the goldfish bowl," Evins said. "It was a two-day trip in those days. I have rich memories of the

AN SUFFRAGE MONUMENT

STATES TO VOTE SHALL NOT BE DENIED OR ABRIDGED
BY ANY STATE ON ACCOUNT OF SEX
stitution, Nineteenth Amendment

“The right to vote is fundamental to citizenship. The struggle for it has been constant throughout our history.”



Mary Evins at the Tennessee Woman Suffrage Monument in Nashville

winding backroads of rural Tennessee and rural Virginia before the interstate system.”

It was these urban-rural, North-South, foreign-homegrown dichotomies that would come to shape Evins’ life and her approach to the American experience.

“I have been a cultural translator my whole life really. I learned early on to bridge differences.”

DIGGING INTO THE PAST

Both sides of her family were steeped in politics and education over centuries, with officeholders and teachers in every generation. Her grandparents taught in one-room schoolhouses. Her great-great-grandfather was one of the founders of the Cumberland Female College in Warren County in 1850. Her mother’s father was the legendary Circuit Court Judge R. W. Smartt, who served on the bench in Tennessee around 45 years and held court in counties across the state.

“All the Smartt children read Latin and great literature by the fireplace on the farm in rural Warren County,” Evins said, “and all went to college, even during the Great Depression.”

It was natural that Evins’ mother, Ann, after graduating from Warren County High School and earning her bachelor’s degree from Maryville College in east Tennessee, would teach school. Her mother’s first job was teaching English and Latin at the high school in Smithville, which is where Ann met Evins’ father.

Yet, as much as she loved history, Evins also dug archaeology. Double-majoring in History and Anthropology and minoring in Classical Studies, she worked on excavations throughout college. She participated in her first dig in the Middle East, in Iran as an undergraduate at Vanderbilt University, and excavated in Iran as a graduate student as well.

It was while she was at Vanderbilt that inevitability again entered the picture. The university required seniors to write out their life plans. Evins did so, in a notebook that was rediscovered many years later in the Evins family attic in Smithville. In her handwriting, the notebook predicted that she would work after college, get a master’s degree, teach high school history for a

few years, then get her doctorate and be a university professor. She did all those things.

After obtaining her undergraduate degree, Evins worked at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, then returned to Tennessee and earned her master’s degree in education, again from Vanderbilt. She taught in Tennessee public schools for a few years before entering the Ph.D. program at the University of Chicago, earning a second master’s degree and her doctorate.

Having grown up in Washington, Evins did not find big-city living in Chicago intimidating. However, some of her contemporaries were not accustomed to being around Southerners.

“There were not many Tennesseans going to university in the Midwest,” said Evins, who was always pleased to invite her Northern colleagues to visit her family back home in Tennessee. “I have been a cultural translator my whole life really. I learned early on to bridge differences and navigate among those whose biases and stereotypes narrow their ability to understand.”

Helping people navigate differences and grow beyond their preconceptions would serve Evins well in later years when teaching university students who were not only new to higher education and the college experience but who also often lacked knowledge of people from different regions, cultures, heritages, languages, and religions—the kinds of people Evins has been privileged to know throughout her life.

CONNECTING TO THE PRESENT

At the University of Chicago, Evins worked under the mentorship of anthropologists Robert Braidwood, on whom the Indiana Jones character was based, and Robert McCormick Adams, who would assume leadership of the Smithsonian Institution during the Reagan administration.

Evins did her dissertation research in Turkey because politics had intervened.

“Making classroom study personally relevant to students is what good professors do.”

“The reason I shifted from Iran to Turkey—I had studied Farsi for two years in order to be able to work in Iran—was that by the 1980s I could no longer go there,” Evins said. “After the Iranian revolution, there was a massive exodus of American and British archaeologists out of Iran and into Turkey.”

For four years she excavated as a graduate student in southeastern Turkey near the Syrian border, on the Euphrates River, before returning to the States, to Chicago and to the Smithsonian as a pre-doctoral fellow, to complete her research and writing.

Evins’ first jobs after obtaining her doctorate from the University of Chicago in 1998 were adjunct



Evins’ Honors history class role-played dual parts for the Chicago 1968 political convention: (l-r) front, BriAnna Jones, Olivia Guse, and Madison Staggs; back, Jacob Moore, Nathaniel Lathrop, and Jaia Peterson.

professorships at Tennessee universities, and she was hired as a temporary assistant professor in 2002 at Tennessee State University. She joined MTSU's Department of History in 2005, was promoted to associate professor in 2008, moved into the research track at MTSU in 2014, and was promoted to research professor in 2019.

It was during her early years of teaching history in Tennessee that Evins first began studying and writing on Tennessee women in social reform during the Progressive Era, women who were involved in race, class, and gender challenges to socioeconomic and sociopolitical structures in Tennessee at the turn of the last century. These women started the associations and laid the groundwork for the political activism that would culminate in Tennessee's ratification of the 19th Amendment. Evins' anthology *Tennessee Women in the Progressive Era* will be followed by *Constructing Citizenship: Tennessee Public Women* next year.

Having been part of Tennessee's first service-learning faculty-training program during her time at TSU, at MTSU she was an early adopter of on-campus and off-campus experiential learning for her classes—for community-based learning, civic learning, connecting history to everyday life, and working to make textbook knowledge have real-world meaning.

"Embedding enrichment opportunities into coursework and making classroom study personally relevant to students is what good professors do," Evins said.

IMPACTING THE FUTURE

When then-MTSU Provost Kaylene Gebert and fellow historian Jim Williams, then-head of the American Democracy Project (ADP) on campus who was preparing to take over the Albert Gore Research Center, invited Evins to attend an ADP conference in Baltimore, Evins' life was transformed.

"I was swept away by that conference. It was filled with passionate faculty focusing on teaching for meaning. It provided a framework and structure for what I knew in my core to be true, that civic learning is potent best practice in higher education," Evins said.

The American Democracy Project, initially begun under the auspices of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities in 2003, unites nearly 300 public institutions of higher education in a network designed to help students become actively engaged in their communities and in our participatory democracy.

To that end, Evins' primary objective has been to advance civic learning and civic engagement across the disciplines at MTSU.

"Mary's leadership of the American Democracy Project has been outstanding," MTSU Provost Mark Byrnes said. "She consistently arranges programming that is timely, relevant, and engaging. And her work on voter registration has been indefatigable."

“It's absolutely imperative that civic learning not be . . . saved for celebratory occasions.”

Evins rallies MTSU students to promote visible, audible appreciations of the American experiment. Faculty, students, and staff celebrate Constitution Day each Sept. 17—the day in 1787 that the delegates to the Constitutional Convention signed the United States Constitution in Philadelphia—with public readings of the foundational American document across campus to refresh its significance.



Evins earned the Honors College's 2019–20 Exemplary Faculty Service Award.

"U.S. history is baseline for every American as we interact with our friends and neighbors here at home and in other lands," Evins said. "It's our starting point."

During election years, ADP pulls out all the stops to encourage voting, whether hosting the Tennessee Campus Civic Summit in 2020 complete with panel discussions and national and state workshops or promoting free Raider Xpress shuttles to the polls on Election Day. Voter registration is a constant theme, and Evins rallies students to become civic-minded year in and year out.

"We need to meet each incoming class with renewed freshness, energy, and focus," Evins said. ". . . It's absolutely imperative that civic learning not be just episodic or saved for celebratory occasions, but that it be embedded in everything we do on a regular basis."

ADVOCATING FOR VOTING

In August 2020, to mark the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage in the United States, MTSU ADP women rang bells in unison with the University Honors College carillon, which rang its bells 100 times in commemoration. Tennessee's ratification in 1920 secured passage of the 19th Amendment, which guaranteed American women the right to vote.

"The franchise is the key to how democracy works, and it is beyond my comprehension that any American would work to limit citizens' access to the ballot," Evins said. "Voting should be easier and more readily available to citizens, not difficult and restrictive."

"We want to help our students to be able to vote while they are under our care. . . . The practice of voting secures students' commitment to active citizenship and voter participation for the rest of their lives," she added. "Eighteen-year-old Americans must be supported when they first engage as voters, not be confused, undervalued, and deterred. Voting is the most basic act of being American."

"The right to vote is fundamental to citizenship," Evins continued. "The struggle for it has been constant throughout our history. African Americans sought the right to vote. Women sought the right to vote. Eighteen-year-olds sought the right to vote."

The words flowed from Evins freely, sincerely, and spontaneously. The American idea, a glorious experiment that has been a goal and in a state of disequilibrium since inception, is her passion. Yet, as an educator, she says allowing oneself to be vulnerable enough to endure some disequilibrium is the state in which we learn the most.

"That's the only way to communicate with any other human being—through the heart." **A**



Former Vice President Al Gore and Evins at MTSU's Albert Gore Research Center, named in honor of his father



Evins speaks at the 2020 Middle Tennessee Campus Civic Summit.

ADAPTATION TO NEW ENVIRONMENT

Mullen helps
students cope with
challenging times

By Carol Stuart

Biology Professor **Dennis Mullen** had to adjust some of his instruction while teaching first-semester Honors Biology classes in the middle of a pandemic—but it was communication with his MTSU students where he especially made extra efforts.

In each of his courses last fall, the 20 students rotated 10 at a time by odd- and even-numbered weeks into in-person lectures in their Honors building classroom, where they could interact with their professor. The other 10 would watch Mullen's instruction remotely on livestream or on video later, and then the next week the groups switched. Students also alternated for the lab portion.

“Students really appreciate . . . being in a room with faculty.”

Mullen knew it was tough on students to keep track of “where they're supposed to be, when they're supposed to be there, for each of their multiple classes.” He realized their lives had to be “confusing and complicated.” His main solution was constant communication, so students would be able to plan during the unique 2020–21 school year.

As a department, Biology prioritized students' getting some in-class instruction even with social distancing required—and opted to go with lab exercises that supplemented lectures rather than those reinforcing material. That meant rearranging the lab sequence and syllabus.

Honors Biology faculty
Dennis Mullen

“The extra part was just planning out how to conduct a semester . . . in a room that can only hold 10 students and do as much on ground as possible because I think it's really important,” said Mullen, the department's chair.

“I think the students really appreciate having some face time, being in a room with the faculty.”

Mullen, likewise, appreciated being able to teach students in a classroom. The March 2020 shutdown was a shock to all when instruction suddenly went remote.

He was challenged by “going from being able to stand in front of my classes and deliver what I hope were coherent lectures and convey the information and ask questions and interact with the students, to sitting in my office and trying to deliver content in a meaningful, quality, high-level manner without actually being able to make eye contact with my students,” Mullen said.

Instead of his usual method of writing on the board and sharing images, he typed up a sentence-by-sentence “script” with visual links and emailed about 25 pages on weekends before class Zoom meetings in spring 2020.

When campus reopened last fall, Mullen arrived an hour before class per his normal routine and conscientiously checked not only on any labs but also on technology. (MTSU's new Panopto video system equips each MTSU classroom for livestreaming/recording, and Mullen had to post signs reminding him to wear the microphone!) Then, masked up, he would wait for any student who arrived early to talk.

Each Friday afternoon, Mullen also emailed students outlining exactly what was happening the next week. And, during a Zoom meeting with 25 Biology Club members, he just asked, “How's it going?”

It was “a challenge of coordination, planning, especially for freshmen and sophomores who really have not ever had to do that in their lives before,” he said.

One commuter student from a neighboring county, who had some classes on ground and some remote, emailed one day asking to talk about handling the stresses. He arranged a quick call.

Now, although he has a son who started graduate school last year, Mullen believes the COVID-19 crisis will make him more in tune with students and better “understand the stresses of their lives . . . even without the pandemic.”



Mullen in the Honors science lab
with student Kaitlynn Wallace



Messier (second from right) with Dean John R. Vile (l), former dean Phil Mathis, and previous director June Hall McCash



Messier lecturing in the Honors College

In Memoriam: Ronald A. Messier

Ronald A. Messier, 76, a professor emeritus in History at MTSU, served as director of the Honors program from 1980 to 1990 and was a member of the Honors College Board of Visitors. He died Sept. 2, 2021.

Messier taught Islamic history and historical archaeology at MTSU from 1972 to 2004. He won several teaching awards, including the MTSU Outstanding Teacher Award in 1976, Outstanding Honors Faculty Award in 1978, and CASE Tennessee Professor of the Year in 1993.

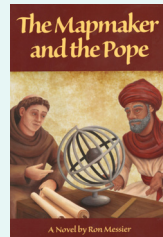
From 1987 to 1998, Messier directed the excavation of the ancient city of Sijilmasa in Morocco. In recognition of that work, he received MTSU's prestigious Outstanding Research Award in 1997. From 2005 to 2020, he co-directed an archaeology project at Aghmat, near Marrakech, Morocco.

Messier also served as an adjunct professor at Vanderbilt University from 1992 to 2004 and as a full-time senior lecturer there from 2004 to 2008. He earned his M.A. and Ph.D. in History from the University of Michigan and spoke three languages (French, Arabic, and English).

Honors College Dean John R. Vile, who was also a personal friend, noted that Messier was one of only five

individuals who had served as Honors director or dean at MTSU and that he embodied the combination of scholarship and good teaching that continue to be the hallmarks of the college.

Messier co-edited a book titled *Jihad and its Times* with Hadia Dajani-Shakeel and published over two dozen articles in academic journals. His recent publications include *The Almoravids and the Meanings of Jihad*; *Jesus, One Man Two Faiths: A Dialogue between Christians and Muslims*; and *The Last Civilized Place: Sijilmasa and its Saharan Destiny*, co-authored with James A. Miller. The latter won the L. Carl Brown AIMS Book Prize in North African Studies for 2016. In 2020, Messier published *The Mapmaker and the Pope*, a historical novel.



Messier's obituary included a note, which said: "Rather than being remembered for anything I have done; I would like to be remembered for who I am—your friend."

Survivors include his wife, Emily; children Samantha and Ben; stepchildren Alex, Missy, and Jody Ruffner; granddaughter Mary Elizabeth Ruffner; and brother Robert Messier.

In Memoriam: David Arnold

David Arnold, professor emeritus at MTSU and friend of the Honors College, took a position at then-named Middle Tennessee State College in 1962 to establish the speech pathology and audiology program. He died Sept. 27, 2020, at the age of 90. Arnold also was the father of Honors College Board of Visitors member Mary Lee Barnes and grandfather of Honors College alumnus Taylor Arnold Barnes (Chemistry, Physics, '09).

He earned his bachelor's degree from David Lipscomb College and his master's degree from Louisiana State University. Arnold taught and preached in many states, including Alaska, and the countries of Jamaica, Hungary, Belgium, Romania, England, and Lithuania.

Other survivors include his wife of 68 years, Janice; son, David; three grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.



Louis Woods, associate professor of African American history

LECTURE SERIES ADDRESSES SOCIAL JUSTICE

By Randy Weiler

Louis Woods recounts how his grandfather, Melvin Grant, served with other men on "the historical USS Mason (DE-529), the first trans-Atlantic vessel with a predominantly Black crew, successfully completing five convoys across the Atlantic in World War II."

But when Grant returned home, he still faced historical barriers and a lack of access to fair housing that Woods discussed in his "Structural Racism and the Construction of Place" talk, part of MTSU's Spring 2021 Honors Lecture Series titled "Social Justice."

"It took my grandfather 21 years to buy a home, despite earning a no-down-payment, federally endorsed GI Bill home loan," said Woods, noting that his grandfather's story is not abnormal. "The racial barriers of the postwar era superseded his heroic military service."

Every spring and fall, the Honors College offers an upper-division class on a topic of interest, bringing in MTSU faculty and renowned experts from beyond campus to share their knowledge during a weekly class. Usually open to the public, the lecture series was available by livestream only to class members last year, but each talk was posted to video later.

However, last fall the Honors College hosted two lecture series in the same semester for the first time, "Civic Virtue" on Mondays and "Images and Icons" on Tuesdays, both remotely.

"We want our students to engage with topics of current and often enduring relevance," said Philip E. Phillips, Honors College associate dean.

Phillips consulted with Woods about possible topics and speakers for the Social Justice lectures. Woods' discussion was central to the series because

it addressed "systemic racism and some of the ways that it continues to undermine the possibility of true 'equality' in our country," Phillips added.

He said that between 1934 and 1962, after investing more than \$100 billion dollars into the private American housing market, the federal government helped Americans double their national rate of homeownership. But access to upward mobility was often dictated by a veteran's race.

“The federal government chose winners and losers.”

The GI Bill "created the modern American middle class. . . . Less than 3% of African American veterans of World War II ever benefited from the GI Bill," said Woods, MTSU's Presidential Fellow on Social Justice and Inequality.

"Where we live influences taxes, health care, encounters with police, and wealth," he added. ". . . A ZIP code is a destiny. Where people live is not an act of God; it was intentional. The federal government chose winners and losers."

MTSU speakers primarily addressed social justice during the other lectures in the series. Topics included LGBT+ student activism, women's equality while working during the Depression, immigrant identity, and African Americans' current fight for voter justice.

For more information about the Honors Lecture Series, please email philip.phillips@mtsu.edu.



BRINGING UNTOLD STORIES TO LIFE

Aspiring curator uncovers
and preserves the hidden past

By Audrey Creel, a December 2020 Honors graduate
and Honors Transfer Fellow

As an undergrad at MTSU, I majored in History with a double-minor in Chemistry and Art History. My unique degree plan prepared me for a career in museum conservation, a lab-based career preserving historical documents and artifacts. The Honors College did not try to steer me away from an unconventional degree plan. Instead, they embraced it and helped me prepare to meet my goal of preserving history for future generations.

My first opportunity to pursue historic preservation came via my Honors thesis. My project, "The Untold Story of the Maney Family Slaves," led me to Oaklands Mansion to research the lives of formerly enslaved African Americans in Murfreesboro whose stories had been lost to modern researchers.

I spent countless hours in archives, researching and uncovering formerly unknown histories and personal narratives, and in the process, I learned about Silas Maney, an African American man who was sued by his former owner over a business technicality. As I continued reading the court records, I found that even after the Civil War, Maney was denied basic rights and equality in Murfreesboro. With this new information in hand, my thesis began to take shape.



Ada Maney

Luke Maney

Matthew Maney

Annie Lee Maney with her dog

Ada Maney (I) and Lucy Sykes

First Baptist Sunday school



Oaklands Mansion

My most exciting discovery was unearthing the full text of an interview given by Wesley Maney months before his death in which he discussed his life as an enslaved man in Murfreesboro. The complete text of his interview brought to light details previously unknown to modern archivists. As I researched and wrote about these individuals, I found amazing stories of perseverance and triumph. I shared my research with the curators at Oaklands Mansion, and they are currently working to include this history as part of museum interpretation.

“It is a significant step toward making these individuals’ voices heard.”

Upon completing my thesis, I felt as though I was not done telling the stories of the enslaved. I have continued to research local enslaved African Americans so they are recognized for their significant contributions to Murfreesboro. In cooperation with Oaklands Mansion, these narratives are being worked into regular tours and an interactive online

database. For the first time, the lives of these individuals are being researched, recorded, and made available to the public. It is a significant step toward making these individuals’ voices heard.

While a large portion of my research at the Honors College focused on writing historical narratives, I also had the opportunity to apply theoretical conservation research. During the Spring 2020 semester, I applied for an internship program in Washington, D.C. Through the assistance of the Honors College, I earned placement in the Preservation Department at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of American History and was able to work remotely alongside lead conservators to research various chemical components affecting documents in the museum’s collection. While my research was not in the lab because of the COVID-19 pandemic, this internship allowed me to understand more about practical conservation and preservation techniques from experts in the field and gave me one-on-one access to lead conservators at the Smithsonian.

I am grateful for my professors and the staff of the Honors College for their investment in me. They pushed me far beyond what I ever thought I could do and provided me the confidence to keep moving forward. This is just the beginning!



View award-winning project online

Because of MTSU Honors student Audrey Creel’s work on “The Untold Story of the Maney Family Slaves,” Oaklands Mansion was the recipient of a Tennessee Association of Museums (TAM) Award of Excellence. Awards were presented in March to museums across the state for exceptional projects, programs, and events held during 2020. Oaklands Mansion released the presentation in partnership with Creel and the African American Heritage Society of Rutherford County. Filmed by the City of Murfreesboro TV, the project is available at oaklandsmansion.org/museum-videos.

Audrey Creel



LOVE AND LIBRARY LEAD TO NEW SCHOLARSHIP

By Gina Logue

James E. Walker Library



From the deep recesses of a lasting romance is emerging a lasting legacy that will help MTSU Honors students for a long time.

Dale Clifford, pictured left, a Psychology major with minors in Social Welfare and Musical Theatre Performance, is the inaugural

recipient of the Hanna Romans Witherspoon Endowed Scholarship. The award was created for undergraduate Honors students, and students working in James E. Walker Library will receive first preference.

Nearly 60 years ago, a chance meeting at the MTSU library blossomed into a love that has lasted, and MTSU supporter Don Witherspoon endowed the scholarship with a \$25,000 gift in honor of his wife.

"Hanna worked here while we were in school, and her birthday was coming up," Don said. "She has everything she needs, and I thought maybe we could help someone who didn't. We had talked several times with the Honors College about doing

something like this, and I thought this would be a nice way to honor her on her birthday."

“I was really involved in the library . . . I thought this scholarship was a great way to give back.”

"He surprised me!" Hanna interjected. "I was really happy because I had a really close relationship with the people here at the library. I was really involved in the library and worked here all four years, and I thought this scholarship was a great way to give back to the University."

Hanna, a Czech national born in the Philippines, came to the United States at age 6 after her mother married an American soldier from Pikeville, Tennessee. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in English in 1964, married Don in August of that year, and had careers first in secondary school education and then with American Airlines.



Hanna and Don Witherspoon attend a reception for Centennial Campaign members.



Don and Hanna Witherspoon ride in the 2010 Homecoming parade.

The couple moved around the country before returning and settling in Murfreesboro for retirement in 2000. The Witherspools also have created scholarships for incoming freshmen.

"Don and Hanna have been stalwart alumni and loyal supporters of the Honors College, with Don serving on our board of visitors," Dean John R. Vile said.

Clifford, a junior from Cottontown, said the \$1,000 from the scholarship fund gives him an opportunity to expand his academic career and possibly help pay for graduate school.

"This scholarship will help my family . . . not have to struggle with loans, which takes so much stress off of us," he said. "I want to personally thank Hanna and Don Witherspoon for this honor."

Clifford also worked in his high school library, which is why he considered a library job "a perfect fit" when he entered college. He believes his major, minors, and campus job blend together well.

"I chose Psychology because I have this passion for people," Clifford said. "As for my minors, I chose Social Welfare to help with getting into a therapy field. My Musical Theatre Performance minor is for me so that I can still have this outlet that I love so much. It also allows me to focus on some music classes so I can later look into researching music therapy."



Don and Hanna Witherspoon (l-r), Linda and John R. Vile, Sharmila Patel, and Philip E. Phillips at the 2013 MTSU football Homecoming Mixer

More Happy Returns

Hailey Harrison, pictured right, an Aerospace major, is the recent recipient of another annual scholarship for Honors students.

Harrison earned the Ralph and Elizabeth Gwaltney Centennial Scholarship, sponsored by Don and Carolyn Midgett. The scholarship is competitive and requires a 3.5 GPA, an application, an essay, and a letter of recommendation.



Information about Honors College scholarships is available at mtsu.edu/honors/scholarships.php.

View a video of the spring 2021 Honors Awards ceremony at youtu.be/cexGbHeEI_E.

Justice for All

Alumna attains award
as state's top public
service attorney

By Randy Weiler

MTSU Honors graduate Kaitlin Beck is the 2021 Ashley T. Wiltshire Public Service Attorney of the Year in Tennessee.

Assistant public defender and MTSU alumna **Kaitlin Beck** ('12) calls herself a fighter and radical skeptic who questions authority easily and naturally—and is “very proud to be in court every day, meeting new clients, confronting new injustices.”

An Honors College graduate and former Buchanan Fellow, the 31-year-old Beck is already making her legal mark in the courtroom as an attorney with the Shelby County Public Defender's Office in Memphis.

“I’m a big proponent of the underdog—all of my clients are David facing the awesome Goliath of governmental force,” she said. “When everyone in the room presumes ‘guilty,’ I’m just bursting to shout ‘not!’ ”

Her deep passion of embracing justice for all was recently recognized when Beck was honored by the Tennessee Bar Association (TBA) as the state's 2021 Ashley T. Wiltshire Public Service Attorney of the Year.

The award honors an attorney who has delivered dedicated and outstanding service while employed by an organization that is primarily engaged in providing legal representation to the poor. Beck was nominated for the award by her husband, MTSU alumnus **Lee Whitwell** ('11), a fellow lawyer and “my biggest supporter,” she said. The couple met while students at the University.

“More than anything, I’m glad the Tennessee Bar chose to honor a public defender, and rank-and-file public defender,” Beck said.

IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

A graduate of Oakland High School in Murfreesboro, Beck says the Buchanan Fellowship—the top scholarship offered by the University—was “the single largest factor in my attending MTSU.”

“I was 17 and not prepared to pay for college. I was somewhat undecided on a major, and it was a happy twist of fate that I picked pre-law,” she said. “I thought it sounded impressive for my Buchanan Fellowship application.”

Beck, who double-majored in French, later switched to Economics and defended her thesis in this field.

Attending an MTSU Mock Trial team activity was “my first look at a career that would help me to leverage my interests and talents—public speaking, debate, even acting to some degree—in a field that was not only intellectually challenging but would

afford me the opportunity to work in the public interest,” she said.

The experience led to preparing for law school and competing in MTSU's Moot Court program, providing her the confidence to compete in and win the University of Chicago Law School's Moot Court competition and eventually earn her law degree there.

Her MTSU mentors include Honors Dean John R. Vile; his wife, Linda; and Ann McCullough, an associate professor in World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures.

“Dean Vile managed the Mock Trial program and organized MTSU's huge invitational competition in the fall,” Beck said. “I found myself in his office, for better or worse, once a week.”

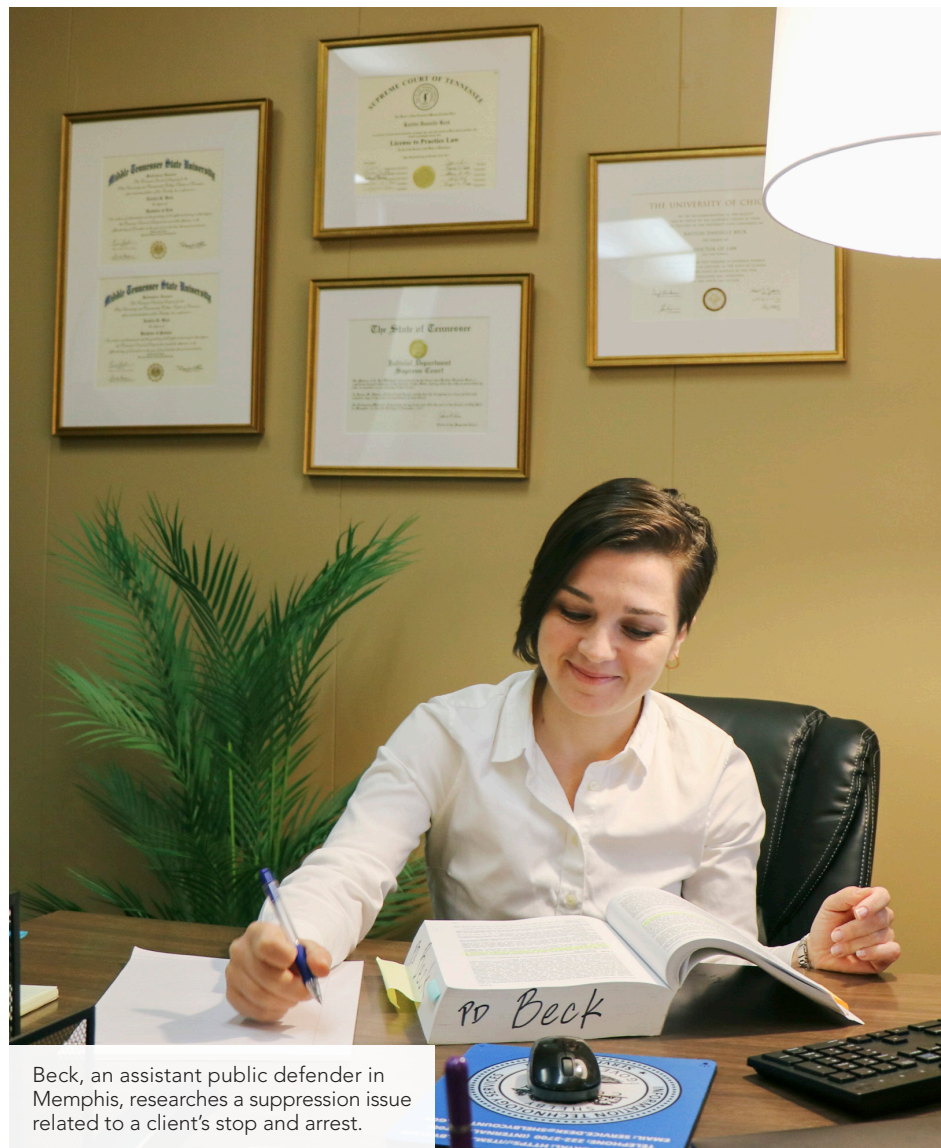
GIVING BACK

McCullough encouraged her young student's talent and “talked me through [future] practical and financial considerations,” Beck said. “I attended a top-five law school and declined a full academic scholarship to Vanderbilt to do so. I honestly do not know if I would have dared to apply at the top-tier school if it hadn't been for Ann.”

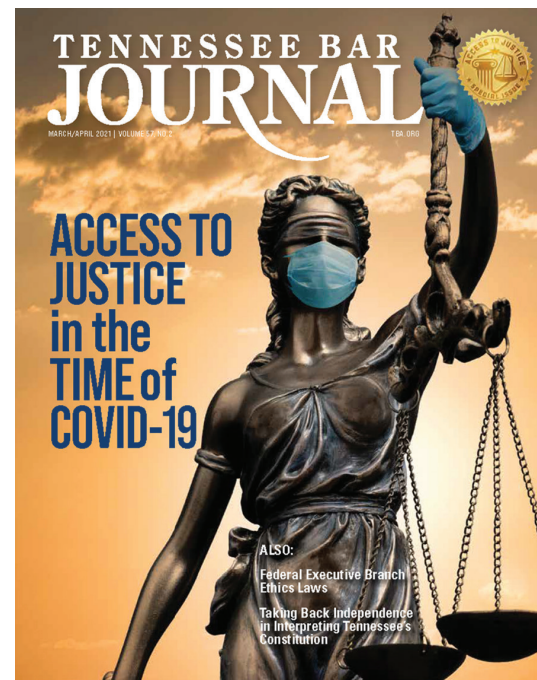
“I’m a big proponent of the underdog—all of my clients are David facing the awesome Goliath of governmental force.”

After graduating from MTSU, Beck briefly worked as a victim witness coordinator for the district attorney in Memphis and applied to law schools. While attending the University of Chicago Law School, her aspirations of a career in the courtroom were “overtaken by the sociological importance of defending the most vulnerable citizens of Tennessee,” she told the TBA's *Tennessee Bar Journal*.

Beck worked with the Public Defender Service in Washington, D.C., and interned with the American Civil Liberties Union in New York City during law school, then later clerked with U.S. District Judge Sheryl Lipman in the Western District of Tennessee.



Beck, an assistant public defender in Memphis, researches a suppression issue related to a client's stop and arrest.



“It’s really important . . . for a public defender to humanize their client and slow down and tell a story about them.”

In 2018, she opted for the public defender position in Memphis over an offer by the ACLU in Chicago to have more immediate impact on individuals. Beck also has completed an intensive indigent defense training program with Gideon’s Promise, a nonprofit organization. From a high school role in *The Crucible* to Mock Trial at MTSU to “tirelessly telling the stories of her clients,” the *Tennessee Bar Journal* wrote, “it’s clear that Kaitlin Beck steals the show.”

“One of the reasons our most vulnerable citizens have such poor dispositions of their cases sometimes is that we can’t fathom what it would be like to be in their position,” Beck said in the TBA article about her award. “It’s really important day-in-and-day-out work for a public defender to humanize their client and slow down and tell a story about them.”

Outside of the courtroom, Beck often gives back by volunteering to judge high school and college Mock Trial competitions, raising money as a runner in the St. Jude Memphis Marathon, and donating her books to inmates.

Beck said she enjoys working on the front line “to ensure my clients have the most robust defense possible, regardless of their financial resources.” **A**

Photos courtesy of Margaret Mahaffey



STRIKING A POSE

Phi Kappa Phi student vice presidents **Jasmin Laurel** (I) and **Beatriz Dedicatoria** show off their regalia following their recent graduation.

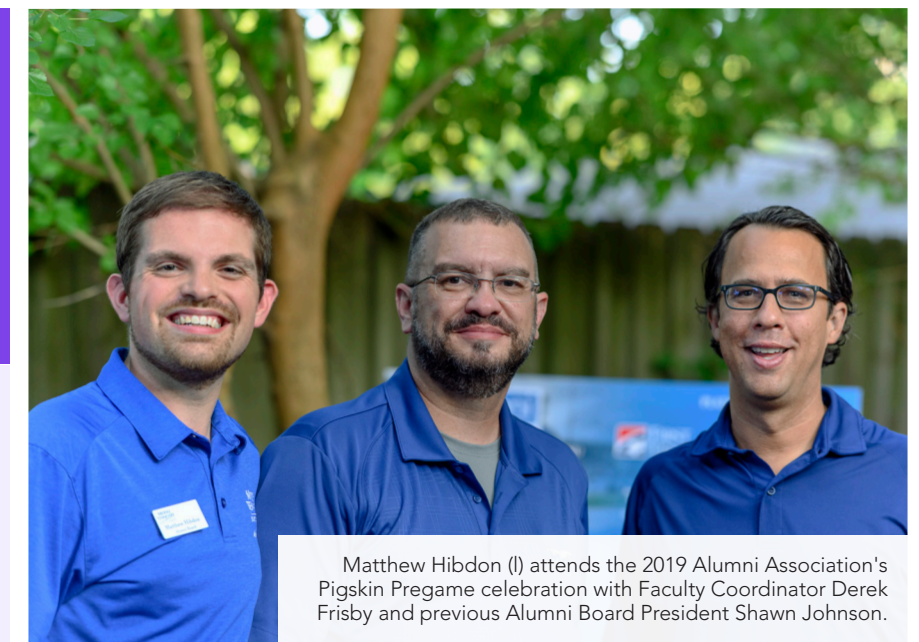


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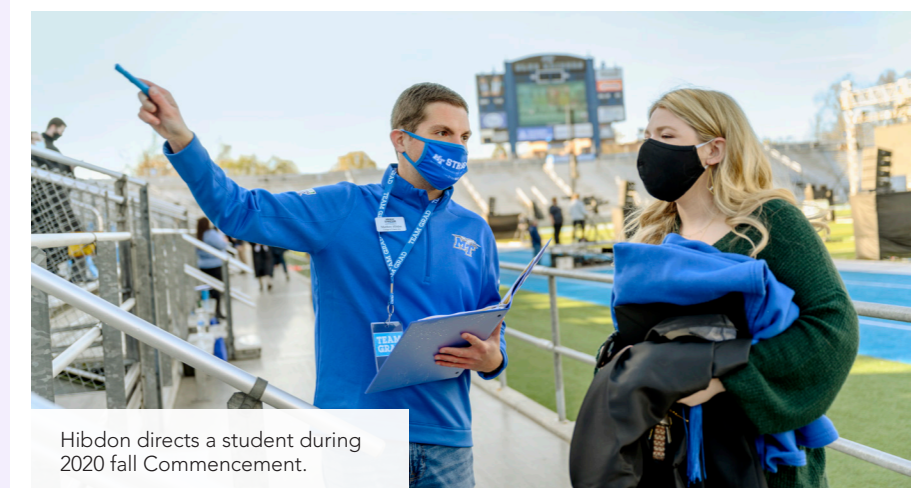
HONORS GRADS LEAD ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Matthew Hibdon (History, '12; M.Ed., Administration and Supervision, '14) is serving as president of the MTSU Alumni Association Board of Directors. The alumni association’s mission is to foster relationships between the University and its graduates.

Additionally, **Patrick Morrison** (International Relations, '12), associate counsel with the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security, was selected to the alumni association board for a three-year term, through June 30, 2024. Triple 8 Management artist manager **Jake West** (Psychology, '17), who also participated in the Honors College, was selected to serve as well.



Matthew Hibdon (I) attends the 2019 Alumni Association's Pigskin Pregame celebration with Faculty Coordinator Derek Frisby and previous Alumni Board President Shawn Johnson.



Hibdon directs a student during 2020 fall Commencement.

Brandon Armstrong practices with the California Feetwarmers.



NOT JUST FLOATING THROUGH LIFE



Honors alum Brandon Armstrong lives on a houseboat in Holland.

Renaissance man finds purpose on a houseboat in the Netherlands

By Zoë Haggard, a Journalism major who served on the Collage staff

Brandon Armstrong was the first Honors College graduate to ring the Paul W. Martin Sr. Honors Building bells after completing his thesis. That was in December 2005, shortly after the building was completed.

If you were to tell Armstrong 16 years ago that he would be living in the Netherlands on a houseboat obtaining his master's at the University of Amsterdam, with a Grammy nomination under his belt, he would have shaken his head and replied, "Nein." But that is exactly where his winding journey has taken him.

“It’s really been a dream come true getting to travel, tour in the summers, getting to share cultures and music.”

For his undergraduate degree at MTSU, Armstrong studied German literature and completed his thesis about the music pedagogy book *Musicolor*. It was written by a teacher Armstrong met while in Germany who was able to teach music to his school of special

needs students by replacing music notation with colors.

“It was quite inspiring,” said Armstrong, the first to translate the book from German into English.

While at MTSU, Armstrong also became involved in a clean energy campaign. He enjoyed its work so much that, shortly after graduating, Armstrong worked in clean energy activism while living in Nashville. He then went to Germany once again, traveling on a Fulbright scholarship, and studied urban development.

THE MUSIC MAN

Then came another change of focus. After his Fulbright trip, Armstrong landed in Los Angeles in 2009 and worked as a traveling tuba player for five years with a band called The Blasting Company. The group traveled the world and brought the sounds of blues and jazz to people who had not yet been introduced to American culture.

“I think we accidentally found ourselves playing in some informal cultural diplomacy roles . . . by being Americans in small villages and making people’s first connections to America,” he said.

While in Los Angeles, Armstrong continued working with The Blasting Company, developing its own studio that made music for hire. Together, group members also composed music for Cartoon

Network’s 2015 Emmy-winning miniseries *Over the Garden Wall*.

Embracing his American South-Los Angeles connection, Armstrong became involved in another band called the California Footwarmers, which focused on traditional jazz and the early roots of folk music from New Orleans. The group collaborated with blues musician Keb’ Mo’ on the track “Old Me Better,” which was nominated for a Grammy in 2015.

“It’s really been a dream come true getting to travel, tour in the summers, getting to share cultures and music . . . and then in the offseason, getting to do studio work,” Armstrong said.

A BALANCED APPROACH

His music career was growing, and seemingly moving a long way away from the German literature he studied at MTSU. But soon enough, his Deutsch proficiency would indeed come in handy for learning Dutch as love and new opportunities collided.

Armstrong met his wife, a physician from the Netherlands, in Los Angeles while she was completing her Ph.D. in immunology research with City of Hope National Medical Center. They met not through music playing or medical researching, but rather through partner acrobatics. It’s Armstrong’s favorite “health

addiction” and a practice that not many people think of as a keen form of communication.

“Doing something that requires mutual attention to the present moment is a whole new level of communication that opened my eyes,” he said.

In true Renaissance-man style, Armstrong used this new understanding of communication as a springboard to delve into a personal interest in conflict resolution.

“Doing something that requires mutual attention to the present moment is a whole new level of communication that opened my eyes.”

“It’s not just clean energy I’m hoping to work for; it’s any kind of conflict, which nowadays seems to be a lot of political and cultural confrontation. So I’m hoping to be able to ease tensions wherever I am,” he said.



Armstrong with his thesis advisors Tom Strawman and Sonja Hedgepath in 2005



Tamara Augustine (l), Professor Ngee Chong, and Armstrong work together on a biodiesel setup for Continuing Studies.

RENEWED ENERGY

Having just completed his master's degree with honors in Conflict Resolution and Governance at the University of Amsterdam, Armstrong embraces many of his former skills sets—such as researching, communicating, strategizing, building a network, and problem-solving.

“I had an idea to do some kind of schooling in the social sciences or social theory, and so when COVID hit, it just seemed like an opportune time to fast-forward that plan . . . because all of a sudden my schedule was wide open,” he said.

“It’s not just clean energy I’m hoping to work for; it’s any kind of conflict.”

After all his accomplishments, Armstrong continues to attribute his involvement at MTSU as his main influence.

“My interests just rapidly grew and looped back around to what extracurricular lessons I learned at MTSU with the clean energy campaign,” he said.

And for those in the Honors College right now, Armstrong says be encouraged; the effort put in now is worth it.

“You are where you’re supposed to be, and you might not realize the lessons you are learning right now—it might take a while, but those experiences will translate into something grand and unknown,” he said.

Now, after 16 years of incredible work and travel, Armstrong said this Dutch country is a place he sees himself staying for years to come, living on his houseboat, which he likens to taking care of a giant pet.

CLASS NOTES Students

Elizabeth Clippard (Plant and Soil Science) received the Theodore C. Bigger Outstanding Plant and Soil Science Senior Award in the spring.



Winton Cooper (Environmental Science), pictured above, is the 2021–22 MTSU Student Government Association president.

Emaa Elrayah (Biochemistry) won an Honors Outstanding Student Award as a second-year student.

Marissa Gray (Exercise Science), a third-year student, won an Honors Outstanding Student Award.

Kelsey Keith (English/Spanish) was winner of the 2019–20 Overall Outstanding College of Liberal Arts Student Award. She received an Honors Outstanding Student Award for 2020–21.

Elizabeth Kowalczyk (Forensic Science), a first-year Honors student, won an Outstanding Student Award.

Liam McBane (Music) received a third-year Honors Outstanding Student Award.

Marena Mikael (Risk Management and Insurance) was selected by Women in Higher Education in Tennessee to receive a book scholarship, a \$500 award for deserving female college students that offsets expenses associated with textbooks.

Rosemary Reid (Tourism and Hospitality Management), a Transfer Fellow from Chattanooga State Community College, received a \$500 book scholarship from Women in Higher Education to help with textbook costs.

Usman Saeed (Computer Science), a second-year student, received an Honors Outstanding Student Award.

Molly Scott (Engineering Technology), a fourth-year student, won an Honors Outstanding Student Award.

Ross Sibley (Biochemistry), a first-year student in 2020–21, received an Honors Outstanding Student Award.



Hannah Solima (International Relations/Criminal Justice Administration/French), pictured above, was awarded the Outstanding Student Award from the College of Liberal Arts for 2020–21.

Dara Zwemer (Psychology) received a Dean's Distinguished Essay Award this spring for her essay "Exploring the Link between Violent Crime Workload and Officer-Involved Shootings of Unarmed Individuals," published in the 2021 issue of MTSU's peer-reviewed *Scientia et Humanitas: A Journal of Student Research*.

English in Japan as part of the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) program, was selected for her superior academic record and life/career ambitions.

Megan Cole (Journalism, '20) is seeking an M.S. in Media and Communication at MTSU. She has a half graduate teaching assistant position with Chris Bacon and expects to complete the master's program in December.

Rebecca Clippard (Japanese, '18), pictured above, won a \$500 Phi Kappa Phi Love of Learning Award. Clippard, who is teaching

CLASS NOTES Alumni and Friends

Mark Blackmon (Integrated Studies, '21) began the Physician Assistant master's program at Trevecca Nazarene University in June. He plans to finish the program in August 2023.



Beatriz Dedicatoria (English/Video and Film Production, '20), pictured above, worked at TikTok in the spring before joining Asurion as a content writer.

Hannah (Tybor) Fletcher (M.S., Management, '21) started a new position as safe house ministry director at Eight Days of Hope in the spring.

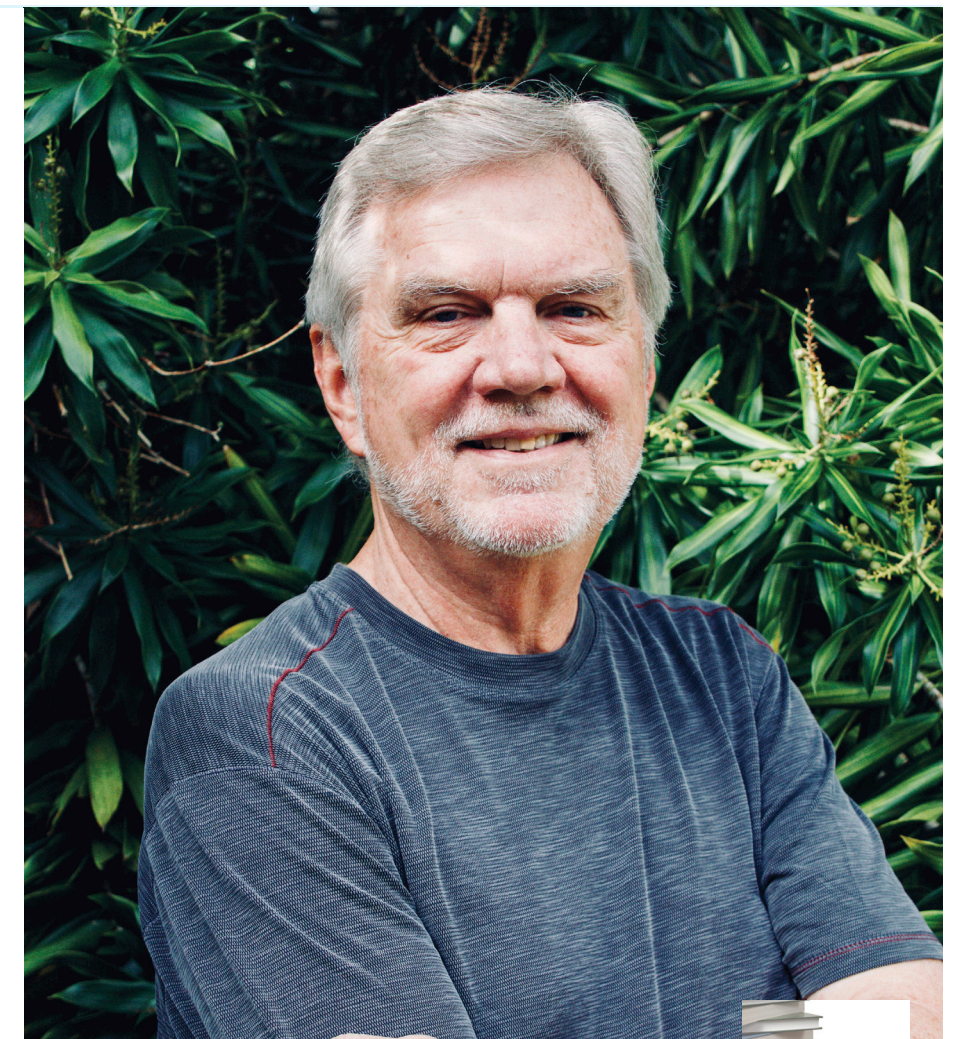
Amanda Freuler (Journalism, '17) is working as a content development specialist at EVERSANA in the Knoxville area.



Joseph Gulizia (Animal Science, '19), pictured above, received a Phi Kappa Phi \$8,500 fellowship to help fund his graduate degrees in Poultry Science at Auburn University.

Merranda Holmes (Biology, '13), and Hunter Stanfield married Aug. 9, 2020, in Franklin.

Meredith Lynn Holt (Biology, '14) married Chris Alan Johnson on May 16 in Auburn, Alabama. She graduated from Auburn University's Harrison School of Pharmacy in 2019.



Keel Hunt (English, '71) published *The Family Business: How Ingram Transformed the World of Books* in April. The subject of the book, Ingram Content Group, recently celebrated its 50th anniversary. Hunt, an editorial columnist for *The Tennessean*, has two earlier books, *Coup* and *Crossing the Aisle*. Photo by Marsha Hunt



Whitney Ingle (Exercise Science, '19) was awarded a scholarship for physical therapy school that pays half of her tuition at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis.

Brandon Ingram (Recording Industry, '17) and **Erin (Gardner) Ingram** (Mass Communication, '17) adopted their son, Landon Alexander Ingram, Nov. 11, 2020.

Cassidy Johnson (Audio Production, '20) is pursuing a master's degree from MTSU's

Jones College of Business. She also is continuing ballroom dance training and plans eventually to have a professional dance career.

Kate Ruth Johnson (English, '17) and husband Mathew moved their family to Titusville, Florida, in October 2020.

Joey Kennedy (International Relations/Foreign Languages, '16) started a position as a legal intern at the Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland.

Maddie Kurtz (English, '18) graduated from the Belmont University College of Law in April.

Collin McDonald (Aerospace, '17) is working with the MTSU flight school doing aircraft maintenance and inspections and breaking in new engines for the school. He is also pursuing an Aeronautical Science master's at MTSU with a concentration in Aviation Safety and Security Management.

Connor McDonald (Political Science, '17), a graduate of Belmont University College of Law, passed the Tennessee bar exam in December 2020 and began his legal career working at Lowery, Lowery & Cherry in Lebanon.

Katherine Miller (English, '12) started a new position as director of project management at Harker Bos Group in Raleigh, North Carolina, in the spring.



Meghan Miller (Integrated Studies, '18), pictured above, is studying Political Management through George Washington University's online master's program.

Tiffany Miller (International Relations/Spanish, '18) received a \$5,000 award from the Gary W. Rollins Tuition Relief Fund to help with tuition and expenses for graduate school at the University of Tennessee–Chattanooga. She is studying Data Analytics.

James Morton (History/Political Science, '18) is attending law school at Baylor University.



Emily Oppmann (Biology, '21), pictured above, earned the Provost's Award for academic achievement and had her thesis manuscript accepted for publication in the peer-reviewed journal *Castanea*. In March she presented her research on the clonal nature of *Trifolium calcaricum* at the Association of Southeastern Biologists (virtual) conference and received a North Carolina Botanical Garden Award and a Southeastern Section of the Botanical Society of America Outstanding Student Oral Presentation Award. Oppmann matched her first-choice graduate school and is one of only eight accepted at the University of Alabama–Birmingham's Genetic Counseling master's program.

Miura Rempis (History/Political Science, '21) received one of the state's Harold Love Outstanding Community Service Awards.

Lee Rumble (Plant and Soil Science, '16; M.S., Biology, '19) is working for the University of Tennessee as a county extension agent.

Destiny Seaton (Journalism, '19) started a new position this spring as communications and membership specialist at Environmental Defenders of McHenry County Inc. in Lake Villa, Illinois.



Joanne Tan (Biology, '14), married Zach McGinnis in May. They live in San Jose, California.

Nathan Tilton (Aerospace, '16), pictured above, started a new position as assistant chief instructor at MTSU's flight school in the spring.

Sarah Beth (Gideon) Urban (History, '11; M.A., Public History, '13) is executive director for the Tennessee Distillers Guild and the new Tennessee Whiskey Trail tourism attraction. She and her husband, J.P. Urban (Recording Industry, '11), and their two sons, James and Dominick, live in east Nashville.

Nathan Wahl (Communication, '21), received MTSU's Robert C. LaLance Jr. Achievement Award for his determination, sacrifices, and community contributions.



Leland Waite (Aerospace, '13; M.S., Aviation Administration, '16), pictured above, worked for a year as an adjunct professor of Aerospace at MTSU while on leave from Delta Air Lines. He and his wife, Jenn, welcomed a baby in June.



CLASS NOTES

Faculty and Staff

The Honors College celebrated **April Goers'** nine years as an Honors advisor and wishes Goers (front row, third from right) well in her new pursuits. Her numerous contributions include proposing and co-leading the Honors study abroad in Italy; launching and overseeing the Passport Scholarship; and proposing and co-leading the Honors Ambassadors.



Claudia Barnett (English) had her play *Witches Vanish* published by Carnegie Mellon University Press.

Nate Callendar (Aerospace) was an invited presenter at the Aerodynamics 2020 Webinar in September 2020. He made a presentation titled "Autonomous Lecture Capture in Undergraduate Aerodynamics: System Description, Demonstration, and Benefits for Traditional and Remote Instruction." Callendar also had an article accepted for fall 2020 publication in the *Journal of the International Society of Christian Apologetics* titled "A Möbius Analogy to the Trinity."

David Carleton (Global Studies and Human Geography) received the 2021 Honors Outstanding Honors Faculty Award.

Laura Clippard (Honors College, Undergraduate Fellowships Office) was selected as a national Critical Language Scholarship final reader and was chosen as a member of the national Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) review and interview panel.



Lara Daniel (Accounting), pictured above, was recognized as a Trailblazer at the opening ceremony for MTSU's National Women's History Month on March 3, 2020. The theme, Nevertheless She Persisted: Valiant Women of the Vote, honored "the brave women who fought to win suffrage

rights for women and the women who continue to fight for the voting rights of others."

Laura Dubek (English) wrote an article on Toni Morrison's children's book, *Remember: The Journey to School Integration*, which appeared in a special issue on Toni Morrison and Adaptation in *College Literature: A Journal of Critical Studies* in fall 2020. Morrison's book commemorates the 50th anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*. Dubek's article titled "Black Writers Matter: Frederick Douglass in the Literary Present" appeared in *Critical Insights: Frederick Douglass*, a series published by Salem Press in July 2020.

Mary Evins (History), director of the American Democracy Project at MTSU, received the 2019–20 Exemplary Faculty Service Award for the University Honors College.

Brian Hinote (Student Success), associate vice provost for data analytics and student success and interim chief online learning officer at MTSU, was one of only 12 higher education leaders nationwide to receive an invitation to join the EAB Academic Performance Solutions (APS) Product Advisory Council. He also published the second edition of *Social & Behavioral Science for Health Professionals* with co-author Jason Adam Wasserman and contributed book chapters and had recent presentations, including “Optimizing Your Student Success Portfolio: Performance Metrics and Communication Plans” with MTSU colleagues Richard Sluder and Vincent Windrow at the 2019 annual meeting of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities in Minneapolis.

Heather Hundley (Communication Studies) co-authored a book with **Roberta Chevette** (Communication Studies) and Hillary A. Jones titled *Dangerous Dames: Representing Female-Bodied Empowerment in Postfeminist Media*.

Judith Iriarte-Gross (Chemistry) captured the Diversity and Inclusion Initiative of the Year Award from the Nashville Technology Council (NTC) and the Women of Achievement Award from the Women in Higher Education in Tennessee in 2020. Iriarte-Gross is the founder and director of the WISTEM Center, whose mission is to enable the campus and community to realize the intellectual potential and utilize the expertise of women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.



Tony Johnston (Fermentation Science), pictured above, was appointed by Gov. Bill Lee to the Tennessee Wine and Grape Board in February 2020; led a study abroad trip to Mendoza, Argentina, the next month; and received several grants during the summer. Johnston also had numerous publications with colleagues. Additionally, the Fermentation Science program saw the addition of a master’s degree as a concentration under the M.S. in Professional Science. This June, Johnston appeared along with representatives from Peru and Argentina at a Wines and Distilled Spirits of the Americas bilingual, virtual international seminar. The panelists discussed the growth of the U.S. artisanal distillery spirit and craft brewing industry.

Nancy Kelker (Art and Design) authored a book, *Art of the Non-Western World: Asia, Africa, Oceania, and the Americas*, that was published by Oxford University Press.

Rebekka King (Philosophy and Religious Studies) was elected president of the North American Association for the Study of Religion in November.

Ryan Korstange (University Studies) co-authored “Academic and Social Expectations of Incoming College Students”

in the *Journal of College Orientation, Transition, and Retention* and “The Online First-Year Experience: Defining and Illustrating a New Reality” in *Adult Learning* in 2020. He also participated in several presentations, including “What Are Students Anticipating? Analysis of Pre-Semester Students’ Academic Expectations” at the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition in Washington, D.C., in February 2020.



Susan Lyons (Honors), pictured above, has been selected as the new full-time Honors College advisor after serving as an Honors coordinator for eight years. She is advising freshman Honors students and will continue to oversee the Honors Ambassadors program and work with Dean John R. Vile on the Honors in Washington, D.C., trip. She also will assist Associate Dean Philip E. Phillips with the Honors in Italy program.

June Hall McCash (professor emerita, World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures) won a first-place award in the Chaucer competition of the 2020 Chaucer International Book Awards for her latest historical novel, *Eleanor’s Daughter: A Novel of Marie de Champagne*. McCash, the first director of the Honors program at MTSU, is the author of 14 books and has been selected for Georgia Author of the Year Awards twice.



Dawn McCormack (Graduate Studies), pictured above, was named a co-director of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at MTSU, along with Gregory Rushton. The administrators will lead efforts to promote and support student and faculty research on campus.

Ashleigh E. McKinzie (Sociology), the 2019–20 recipient of the Ayne Cantrell Service Award by MTSU’s Women’s and Gender Studies, has two recent peer-reviewed publications: “Embodying Ethnographic Data: An Interactive Approach for Teaching Intersectionality” in *Teaching Sociology* and “Embodying Inequality Activity: Teaching Intersectionality with Ethnographic Data” in *TRAILS* (Teaching Resources and Innovations Library for Sociology), both co-authored with Jeffrey Gardner. She also had several media mentions and mentee awards.

Julie A. Myatt (English), recently promoted to professor, had her chapter on what we can learn from the women who long sought the vote, “Persevering Even When ‘We Are All Full of Mad’: A Lesson in the Value of Incremental Progress,” published in *Failure Pedagogies: Learning and Unlearning What it Means to Fail*.

Tammy Noragon (Financial Aid and Scholarships) received the 2021 Honors College Service Award.

Carl Ostrowski (English) had an article, “‘Mere Formula—Nothing More’: The Poetics of Profanity in ‘Never Bet the Devil Your Head,’” published in *Poe Studies: History, Theory, Interpretation*, Vol. 52, in 2019.

Kate Pantelides (English) has two recent publications: “After the Accusation: The Lasting Impact of Plagiarism Trauma on Student Writing Behaviors” in *Failure Pedagogies* and “Predicting Futures, Performing Feminisms: Chronology and Ideology in Writing Classrooms” with Eric Detweiler in *Pedagogy*, Vol. 20, No.1.

Philip E. Phillips (associate dean, Honors), contributed a chapter, “Poe’s Poetry Anthologized,” to the book, *Anthologizing Poe: Editions, Translations, and (Trans)national Canons*, published by Lehigh University Press in fall 2020. He was appointed to serve on the national Nominating Committee of The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi for the 2020–22 biennium and organized a virtual conference session on “The Literary and Philosophical Influence of Boethius in the Middle Ages” for the 56th International Congress on Medieval Studies this May.

Dan Smith (Economics) has a new book, *Money and the Rule of Law: Generality and Predictability in Monetary Institutions*, written with Peter Boettke and Alexander Salter and published by Cambridge University Press. He also has authored four research articles, including “Turn-Taking in Office” in *Constitutional Political Economy*.



Ben Stickle (Criminal Justice), pictured above, has had numerous recent scholarly publications, book chapters, practitioner articles, grants, invited presentations, international presentations, national and regional presentations, and awards and honors. Among recent presentations, he participated in the “Role of Community Policing to Reduce Violence against Women and Femicide” for the 41st session of the United Nations Human Rights Council at Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. Stickle also received the McGraw Hill Distinguished Scholar Award at the Ethnographic and Qualitative Research Conference; the Stanford M. Lyman Distinguished Book Award for *Metal Scrappers and Thieves: Scavenging for Survival and Profit* at the Mid-South Sociological Association; and Top 50 Global Thought Leaders and Influencers on COVID-19 Business Impact by Thinkers360 in June 2020.

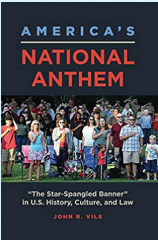


Shelley Thomas (World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures), pictured above, received the 2021 Honors College Exemplary Faculty Service award. An Honors resident faculty member since the opening of the

Paul W. Martin Sr. Honors Building in 2003, she retired in the spring but will continue holding Center for Accelerated Language Acquisition (CALA) classes on campus.

John R. Vile (dean, Honors) has participated in scholarly Zoom panels on “Continuing Lessons on Federalism from the COVID-19 Pandemic” sponsored by Utah Valley University in October 2020 and on “Business, Religion, and the Pandemic” at Touro College in New York in April 2021. He was consulted by numerous media outlets over the past

year and has recently published *America’s National Anthem: “The Star-Spangled Banner” in U.S. History, Culture, and Law*. Additionally, the latest edition of his book *Essential Supreme Court Decisions* was recently published in India. Vile continues to be a regular contributor of scholarly



essays to The First Amendment Encyclopedia, which is now online at mtsu.edu/first-amendment/encyclopedia.

Louis Woods (History) has published “‘To Tighten the Walls of the Negro Ghettos’: The NAACP’s Fight against Discriminatory Federal Housing Administration Mortgage Insurance Policies, 1937–1962” with Torren Gatson in the *Journal of North Carolina Association of Historians*. He also hosted a podcast, “I Can’t Breathe: Surviving the Dual Pandemics of Racism and COVID-19.”

2020 CONTRIBUTOR HONOR ROLL

The Honors College deeply appreciates friends who have contributed to its success in countless ways. Philanthropic support has been integral to the college’s history, most notably through the construction of our beautiful building. We are honored to recognize those who made giving to the college a priority in 2020.

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