

UNIVERSITY HONORS COLLEGE

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY | FALL 2020

Areté

[excellence • virtue]

TREATING THE WHOLE

Pediatrician expands her
reach while seeking unity

MIDDLE
TENNESSEE
STATE UNIVERSITY



FALL 2020

**MIDDLE
TENNESSEE**
STATE UNIVERSITY

ARETÉ MAGAZINE

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

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2,500 copies, printed at Falcon Press, Nashville, Tenn.
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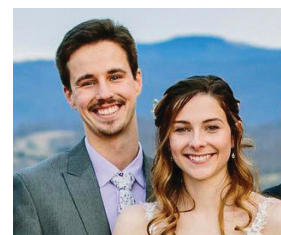
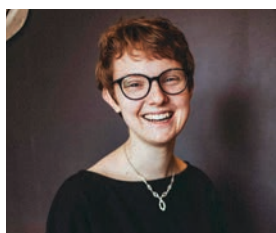
I AM *true* **BLUE**

Photo by J. Intintoli



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Pediatrician expands her reach while seeking unity



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King establishing Religious Studies major as a national brand

FROM THE DEAN'S DESK | Knowing our students



Many parents take considerable care when naming their children. We named our daughter Virginia in part to honor my mother (it's her middle name) and in part to honor the state where I was raised and where my wife Linda and I met. As a mother of twins, the biblical Rebekah came to mind as we discovered that we were having not one but two girls (if I sometimes still seem traumatized, we found this out in the delivery room)!

“It's comforting to be in an environment where. . . we at least recognize that the student is a part of a cherished group whose success is the Honors College's goal.”

I'm not very good at learning names, and it can be embarrassing, so I try to go easy on those who may not remember mine, but it's almost always flattering when someone calls me by name or by one of my titles.

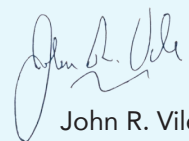
I learned as a child that it can be counterproductive to name an animal whose hams or steaks will later appear on a dinner table, and while my wife lovingly refers to the cat who has practically taken over our house, I continue to refer to her (the cat, not the wife!) as the Great Satan, Beelzebub, etc.

In an age where it is common to identify people by their associations, or even by number or group—as

in the daily TV tallies of those hospitalized or who died from coronavirus—it's comforting to be in an environment where even if the dean or another staff member doesn't immediately remember a student's name, we at least recognize that the student is a part of a cherished group whose success is the Honors College's goal.

One of my favorite television ads is the one for Progressive Insurance where Flo is talking with a Sasquatch who is saddened that people are too busy to notice him anymore. Trying both to commiserate and explain, Flo makes the mistake of calling him “Bigfoot.” After asking what she had called him and hearing her respond “Bigfoot?” he looks down at his feet and replies, “Bigfoot? My name is Daryl.”

The ad reminds me of a cartoon of a group of penguins wearing nametags. One observes that “We should have thought about this a long time ago!” Whether our students are wearing nametags or not, we all work constantly together to keep their needs in mind. This has been especially important during those times that the coronavirus left many students living off campus but taking classes online. Associate Dean Philip E. Philips and I take special pleasure in individually calling each of our Buchanan and Honors Transfer recipients. Overseeing thesis proposals and defenses through Zoom has been both challenging and rewarding. I have been ringing a small bell at each session to remind students that even when we are not physically in the same room, we are celebrating their achievements.



John R. Vile

areté

noun (ahr-i-tey)

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



Philip E. Phillips (r), 2019–20 PKP president, congratulates new member Marsha Powers.

PKP ADDS 22 FROM HONORS

The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi inducted 56 students into its MTSU chapter this spring, including 21 Honors students and one Honors staff member.

Although the coronavirus outbreak prevented a formal initiation ceremony, new student members received certificates and were added to the national membership roll. Honors College coordinator **Marsha Powers** also became a new member.

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



THE HONOR SOCIETY OF
PHI KAPPA PHI

New Honors students who joined PKP:

Finley W. Aavatsmark	Megan Lee Hodge
Catheryn Amber Bolick	Cole
Miquellie B. Bonner	John M. Lichtman
Ally Cherry	Liam McBane
Nora J. Chisamore	Madison P. McConnell
Elizabeth A. Clippard	Corvette Delanie McDonald
Christopher J. Cowherd	Mary Morgan
Ryan W. Doole	Ashlin M. Murphy
Jori E. Graeff	Kayla J. Pearson
Alexa Grogan	Hadley Pegg
Matthew A. Henning	Justin West

WHAT I NOW UNDERSTAND

A semester abroad disrupted: anger, mourning, and gratitude

By **Kelsey Keith**, a senior Buchanan Fellow, English and Spanish major, and editor-in-chief of *Collage: A Journal of Creative Expression*

En el mirador al amanecer en mi final día del trek—antes de que supiera lo que estaba sucediendo—cuando pensé que el sol era lo único en llamas.

At the lookout at sunrise on my final day of trekking—before I knew what was happening—when I thought the sun was the only thing on fire.

This is how I described a picture from the base of the towers in Torres Del Paine National Park, where I watched the sun rise on my fifth and final day of backpacking the W-Circuit. It wasn't until I finally reached Wi-Fi that afternoon that I learned my study abroad program in Chile had been cancelled and I was to return to the U.S. immediately.

Unbeknownst to me, as I was traipsing around mountains and glaciers, the world was preparing to stand still. As I was turning 21, the WHO was declaring COVID-19 a pandemic. When I read the news, I cried for hours, more than 6,000 miles from my childhood home—where I would be only four nights later. The world seemed to be going up in smoke, and the hectic activity of trying to make it back stateside only made it worse.

One moment I was using all the Spanish I knew to assure Delta they could let me onto my connecting flight to Buenos Aires and that I wouldn't be in the country past midnight when the Argentine border closed. Then I was on a plane headed to Atlanta that turned around to make a medical emergency landing in Brazil, the only country that would let us land due to health concerns and closed borders. Returning to Tennessee took 35 hours of travel, four separate flights, and some misplaced luggage.

I'll admit that I was angry. This opportunity I had spent my entire college career working toward was being ripped from my hands. I had no time for final adventures, no time to buy souvenirs for people back home. After two months together, I didn't even really have time to say goodbye



“Unbeknownst to me,
as I was traipsing around
mountains and glaciers,
the world was preparing
to stand still.”



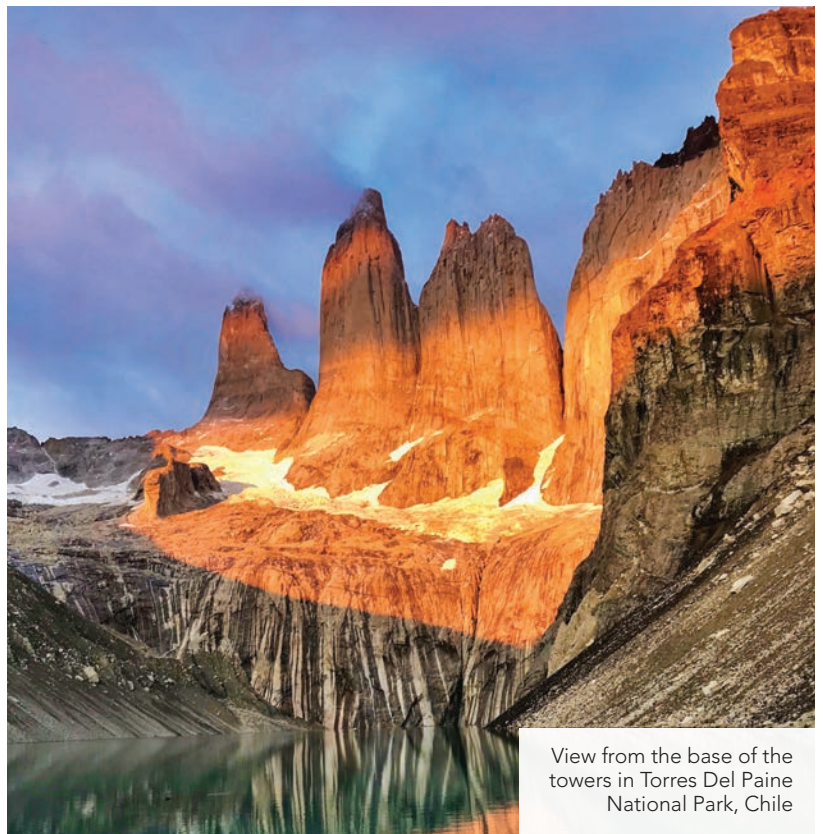
Kelsey Keith with friend Eric
Holdbrooks at Mirador Británico in
Torres Del Paine National Park, Chile



On the W-Circuit
in Torres Del Paine
National Park, Chile



In front of Glacier Gray
in Torres Del Paine
National Park, Chile



View from the base of the
towers in Torres Del Paine
National Park, Chile

to my host family. I was angry, yes, but the truth was that I had been privileged enough to think myself invincible. I had thought that working hard meant that it could not be taken from me. I had thought buying a one-way ticket meant I would choose when I booked a return flight. I was wrong, and I'm embarrassed it took a pandemic for me to truly understand that.

I won't lie and say I've dealt with everything particularly well. As I'm writing this, I've now been home longer than I was there, and my suitcases are still shoved under the bed, only partially unpacked. Like most everyone right now, I have my share of bad days. But I think now I'm a little more resilient, a little more adaptable, and a whole lot more grateful for every day and experience than I was before I boarded that flight to Santiago in January. I owe a lot of this to the people I met in Chile, and there are pieces of me that will never leave my host family or the friends I made in Santiago. Those months will always be precious to me.

A lot of us right now are learning how to acknowledge and mourn our own losses while still recognizing our privileges and helping when we are able. Maybe you, like me, have internalized that comfort of perceived invincibility. Maybe, unknowingly, you taught yourself to stomach the rest of the world's difficulties as their problems, as unfortunate circumstances that you'll never experience. Maybe now you're realizing that you

are not invincible, or maybe you will walk away from this pandemic unscathed. Though some are calling this time of isolation a blessing in disguise, I won't—there are far too many people hurting for that. Instead, I urge us all to consider this a time for growth, learning how we can be better neighbors and global citizens. May it not take a shipwreck where everyone goes overboard for us to realize that people we might not know or understand still deserve life-preservers.

“This opportunity I had spent my entire college career working toward was being ripped from my hands.”

Now, as I write this from my parents' back porch, I try not to focus on what could have been. There are plenty of other study abroad students who also had semesters cut short, plenty of other folks who are losing so much in the havoc that these times are wreaking. I don't need or deserve anyone's pity. How lucky I am to have something to miss.

Te extraño tanto, Chile.

I miss you so much, Chile.

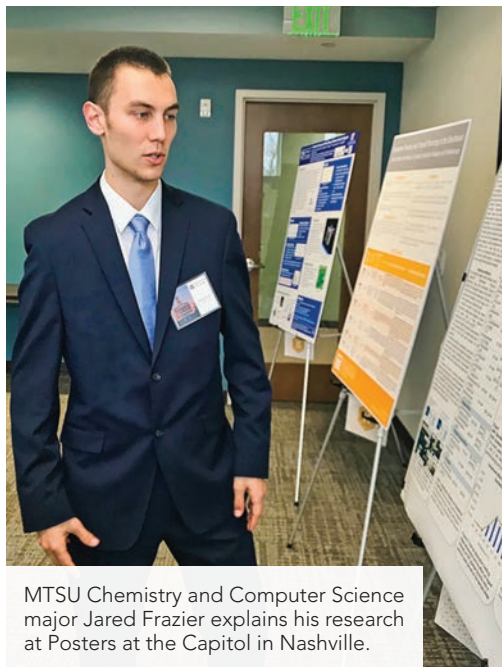


Ally Cherry

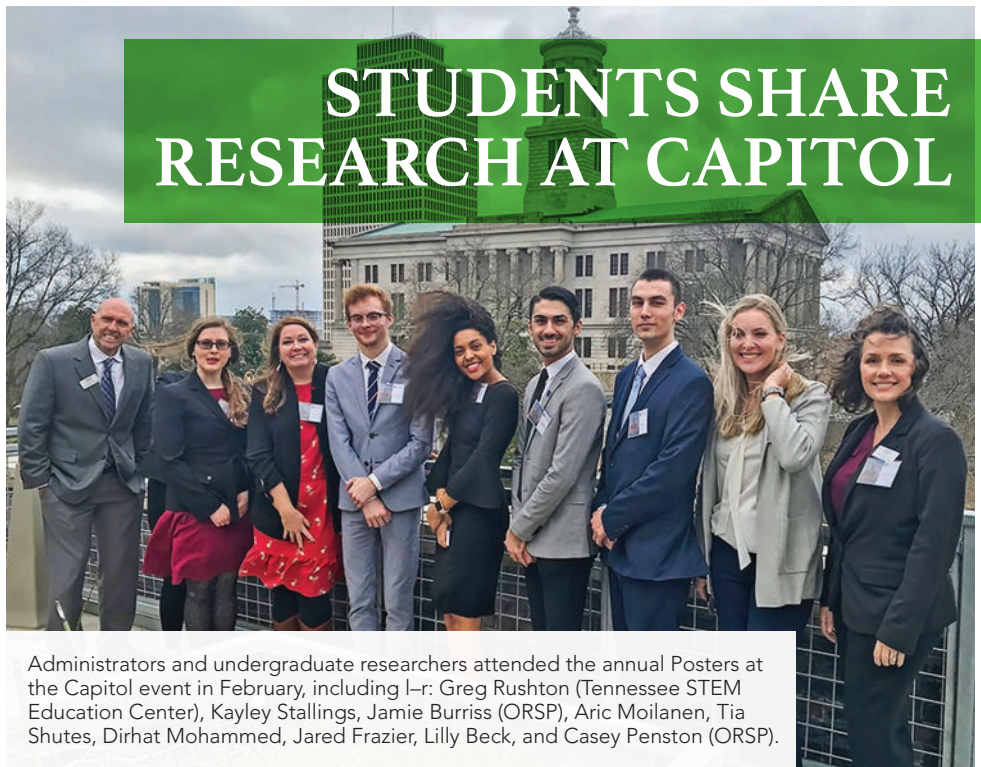
ZOOMING TO THESIS DEFENSE

Ally Cherry was one of 42 students defending an Honors thesis in the Spring 2020 semester. Thesis defenses were held by Zoom meeting and included the student, project director, and Honors representative.

See the *Spring 2020* and other past theses at mtsu.edu/honors/thesis.php.



MTSU Chemistry and Computer Science major Jared Frazier explains his research at Posters at the Capitol in Nashville.



Administrators and undergraduate researchers attended the annual Posters at the Capitol event in February, including l-r: Greg Rushton (Tennessee STEM Education Center), Kayley Stallings, Jamie Burriss (ORSP), Aric Moilanen, Tia Shutes, Dirhat Mohammed, Jared Frazier, Lilly Beck, and Casey Penston (ORSP).



Undergraduate researchers Tia Shutes, Kayley Stallings, and Aric Moilanen pose for a photo with state Rep. Bryan Terry during the annual Posters at the Capitol.

Seven MTSU students joined more than 50 others from eight state universities for the annual Posters at the Capitol Wednesday, Feb. 26, in the Cordell Hull Building in Nashville, sharing their research with legislators and others.

The event was coordinated by Tennessee STEM Education Center Director **Greg Rushton** and his staff at MTSU, along with the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP).

Other universities participating were Austin Peay, East Tennessee State, Tennessee State, Tennessee Tech, the University of Memphis, the University of Tennessee, UT-Chattanooga, and UT-Martin.

Photos by Randy Weiler



HONORS OPEN HOUSE DRAWS TOP STUDENTS

Honors advisor April Goers and Buchanan Fellow Clark Wilson advise potential students at the open house.

The MTSU Admissions Office and the Honors College hosted a daylong Presidents Day Open House for public, private, and homeschool students Monday, Feb. 17. Nearly 250 prospective students, plus parents, visited booths to learn about various campus departments and took campus tours.

Honors Dean **John R. Vile** welcomed guests during a morning program. Musician **Gareth Laffely**, an Honors Transfer Fellow, performed on a Native American flute, and junior **Ella Morin**, a double major in Biology and Spanish, delivered a compelling message with a NASCAR theme.

"Regardless of your passion," Morin said, "the Honors College will elevate your experience and ease your ride along the raceway of life. And as you search for your future pit crew, we hope you choose True Blue."



Ross Sibley of Redlands, California, learns more about the Honors College from staff member Susan Lyons.



Recording Industry Professor Matt Foglia, foreground, demonstrates state-of-the-art equipment to prospective students and family members in Studio A in the Bragg Media and Entertainment Building.



Earl Thomas

EXERCISING EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP

Interdisciplinary
institute offers thinking
outside the box

The Institute of Leadership Excellence (ILE) has been offered to exceptional students from across the University since 2006 and has graduated nearly 400 students from 50 major areas of study.

This year's online class was not the usual intensive one-week (42–45 hours) on-ground offering in a 9 a.m.– 6 p.m. Monday through Friday setting, but it elicited praise from participants nonetheless. One student called ILE a "fantastic week of learning and growing in leadership excellence." Another class member said "assignments gave a lot of freedom to students and encouraged thinking outside the box."

Multiple students applauded the professor for his "enthusiasm and quick response to students' questions throughout the course" and for "the good teacher–student communication relationship."

ILE 2020 challenged the instructor, Marketing Professor **Earl Thomas**, to replicate and try to strengthen past years via a combination of voice-over PowerPoint lecture material, reviews of both scholarly and practical articles, leadership cases and exercises, discussions, activities, and interaction with classmates with a clear focus on application and experiential learning.

ILE provides an interdisciplinary experience in leadership and leadership development. An examination of the theoretical framework for leadership processes serves as the foundation for the course with a focus on practical issues and application of leadership practice.

Thomas said the 29 students in the class of 2020, representing 16 majors from six colleges, did a remarkable job of making this unique class a memorable one.

2020 GRADS HONORED ONLINE



Spring 2020 was not exactly business as usual, so the Honors College sought ways to make

the interrupted semester a little more special. At Dean **John R. Vile's** request, the Honors staff, led by **Susan Lyons**, prepared and posted a special presentation honoring May 2020 graduates at mtsu.edu/honors and likewise added another one for August conferees. The dean called the names of graduates as their photographs were displayed. Look for yourself or your favorite 2020 Honors graduate online!



Steve Daugherty helps students register to vote.



Daugherty



Susan Lyons

ODK WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

The MTSU circle of Omicron Delta Kappa initiated 25 new student members and one honoris causa member in the spring.

Steve Daugherty, an active volunteer with MTSU's American Democracy Project, is the new honoris causa member of the ODK circle. He assists with voter registration drives and engages with state and local campaigns, county and state political parties, and local and national organizations.

Daugherty was commissioned as an active-duty second lieutenant in 1982 after graduating from Austin Peay State University with a degree in Biology. For the next 22 years, he served in leadership positions including platoon leader, company commander, and battalion executive officer, with 10 assignments within the continental U.S. and 14 overseas assignments. Daugherty earned a Bronze Star for his military achievements.

Honors Coordinator **Susan Lyons** was the recipient of the Robert L. Morlan-Robert Bishop Outstanding Circle Officer Award, recognizing her leadership as MTSU's ODK circle coordinator and as a member of the 2018 national convention committee.



OMICRON DELTA KAPPA

The National Leadership Honor Society

New ODK student members:

Emma Beard	Robert Mephram
Caleb Conard	Alaa Mohammed
Eryn Bird	Kayla Pearson
Rachel Booher	Summer Pritchard
Anika Chowdhury	Miranda Renzi
Carlee Cowan	Jessikah Riley
Christopher Cowherd	Colleen Roberts
Karen Cranston	Dale Shackelford
John Lichtman	Nathan Smith
Liam McBane	Taylor Timmons
Emily McTyre	Meghan Wassom
Marian Medley	

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



COLLEGES ATTEND MTSU CIVIC SUMMIT

Student voting among
topics at statewide event

From l-r: State Rep. Charles Baum (R-Murfreesboro), state Rep. London Lamar (D-Memphis), current Distinguished Visiting Professor and former Tennessee House Speaker Beth Harwell, and MTSU Political Science Professor Kent Syler

Civic-minded students from MTSU and other campuses throughout the state connected to hear insights from local and national experts on student voting, campus organizing, and civic education at a February meeting.

MTSU's Student Union served as host site for the Middle Tennessee Campus Civic Summit 2020, part of a statewide event with companion gatherings in east and west Tennessee featuring various workshops, panels, and breakouts to share information about student voting.

A panel discussion featured state Reps. London Lamar, a Democrat from Memphis, and **Charles Baum**, a Republican from Murfreesboro and an MTSU professor of Economics. The event was moderated by former Tennessee House Speaker Beth Harwell, a current MTSU Distinguished Visiting Professor, and **Kent Syler**, an MTSU Political Science professor.

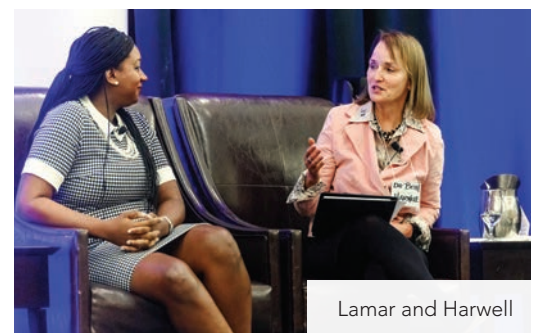
Afterward, a Q&A session allowed students from all three sites to ask the panelists questions via livestream as MTSU History Professor **Pippa Holloway** moderated.

MTSU's summit drew students from Tennessee State University, Belmont University, Columbia State Community College, and others in the mid-state. Honors College resident faculty member **Mary Evins**, director of MTSU's American Democracy Project and a History research professor, organized the event.

Sponsors included MTSU, the American Democracy Project, the Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy, the University of Tennessee Office of Student Leadership and Involvement, the University of Memphis, Scholars Strategy Network, Tennessee Campus Democracy Network, the Urban League of Greater Chattanooga, and the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition.



History Research Professor Mary Evins, director of MTSU's American Democracy Project, introduces the voting panel at the Middle Tennessee Campus Civic Summit 2020.



Lamar and Harwell



Syler, Baum, Lamar, Harwell, History Professor Pippa Holloway, and Evins



HARD WORK PAYS OFF

Outstanding students win
campus and state awards

John R. Vile and Abigail Williams

The University selected four hardworking, worthy students as recipients of MTSU's 2020 campus awards: **Abigail Williams, Kaitlyn Berry, Gabriella Morin, and Jackson Gibson.**

The President's Award, the most prestigious award given to a student at MTSU, is awarded to a student with exemplary character and achievements in scholarship, leadership, and service. Williams, this year's winner, was a spring graduate with degrees in English and German. She took many Honors classes and worked on the *Collage* staff and as a reviewer for *Scientia et Humanitas*.

Williams also was a member of Omicron Delta Kappa leadership honor society and has served as a Blue Elite tour guide, Student Orientation Assistant, Freshman Council representative, and volunteer for Student Programming and Raider Entertainment.



Philip E. Phillips and Kaitlyn Berry



Gabriella Morin



Jackson Gibson

The Provost's Award recognizes outstanding achievement through involvement with scholarly activities. Berry, the 2020 recipient, was the president of MTSU Psi Chi and the Psychology Club. She also was a Psychology Student Success Center peer assistant. Berry won the Larry W. Morris Outstanding Senior in Psychology Award, Belsky Scholarship, and Tyler Schultz Memorial Scholarship.

The Community Service Award is given to a student who has made outstanding contributions to the community. Morin, a pre-med student, was selected to receive this year's award and, in addition, earned one of five statewide student Harold Love Outstanding Community Service Awards. She is the sixth student winner of the statewide Harold Love Award from MTSU in seven years.

A certified nursing assistant, Morin is the founder and president of MTSU's chapter of the American Medical Student Association and is the president of SOAR, a student organization for academic research. She is an English as a Second Language tutor and volunteers as a Spanish translator and in the emergency room at Saint Thomas Rutherford Hospital. Morin also has volunteered at Clinica Esperanza in Roatán, Honduras. She serves on the staff of *Scientia et Humanitas* research journal and was the 2019–20 managing editor.

The Robert C. LaLance Jr. Achievement Award is awarded to a student who has shown remarkable determination, has had to make sacrifices, and is contributing to the community. The 2020 award went to Gibson, a nontraditional, transfer student who was published in both Honors College-sponsored student publications, *Collage* and *Scientia et Humanitas*.

FELLOWS, THESES LISTED ONLINE



Some content typically found in Areté has been moved to the Honors College website.

- Buchanan Fellows and Transfer Fellows can be found through their respective links at mtsu.edu/honors/current.php.
- Honors theses defended can be accessed at mtsu.edu/honors/thesis.php. Under Thesis Scholarship Support, click on Thesis Archive.



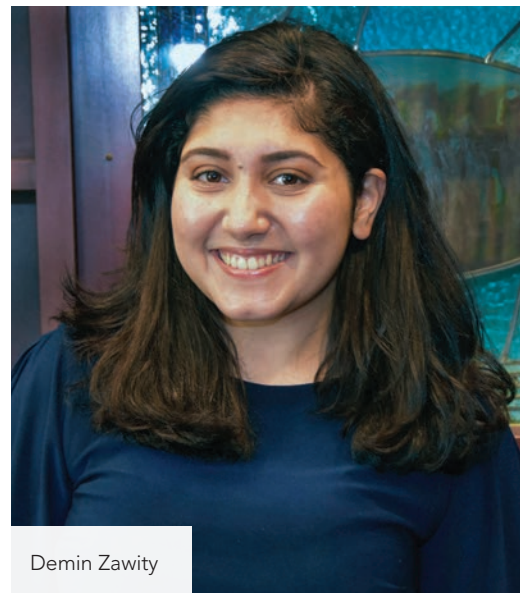
Jared Frazier



Gabriella Morin



Jessica Shotwell



Demin Zawity



Samuel Remedios

STRIKING GOLD ON AWARDS

Goldwater winner headlines fellowship haul

While 2020 has been a good year for MTSU students applying for prestigious national and international awards, not all were to benefit from their fellowships and scholarships. Many offers were cancelled because of COVID-19. However, Buchanan Fellow **Jared Frazier** earned an award that isn't affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

Frazier received a Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship, one of the highest awards undergraduates majoring in science can receive. The double major in Chemistry and Computer Science is MTSU's first Goldwater winner since 2017 and is the seventh recipient since 2007 for the University. Eight other MTSU students have achieved honorable mention.

Frazier also was selected to receive a DAAD RISE Scholarship for research in Germany and three Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) opportunities—at New York University, the University of Buffalo, and the University of Tennessee. He was spared making a difficult choice from among the opportunities since all were cancelled due to COVID-19.

With his Goldwater Scholarship beginning this fall, Frazier could receive up to \$7,500 per year to conduct research for two years. "I now have doors opened to me for research opportunities, internships, graduate schools, and networking," he said.

Four other students won REUs, according to **Laura Clippard**, coordinator of the Undergraduate Fellowship Office. Physics major **Matthew Godwin** was chosen to travel to Pisgah Astronomical Research Institute (PARI) in Rosman, North Carolina, in the summer of 2020.

Three REU recipients, **Elizabeth Clippard**, **Molly Scott**, and **Denise Ortega**, completed their research programs remotely during

the summer. Clippard, a Plant and Soil Science major, worked with the University of Michigan. An Engineering Technology major, Scott assembled robots for a University of Alabama–Huntsville NASA project. Ortega, who is studying Biology, aided the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico.

The Fulbright Program selected three finalists and one alternate from MTSU. **Brittney Johnson** received a Fulbright Teaching Grant to Spain, while **Joan Shock** and **Demin Zawity** earned grants to Romania and Malaysia, respectively. **Jonathan Story** was chosen as an alternate to France.

National and international award recipients also included **Hanan Beyene**, Bridging Scholarship to Japan; **Sai Clayton**, Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship to Japan; and **Landon Norrod**, a Science, Mathematics, and Research for Transformation (SMART) Scholarship.

Clayton, who is majoring in both Japanese and Art, additionally received a Freeman-ASIA Scholarship

to help fund her study abroad program to Saitama University in Japan. **Suzy Ni**, a Biochemistry major, also was awarded a Freeman-ASIA Scholarship and will study at Korea University in Seoul, South Korea.

In addition, recent MTSU alumni **Jessica Shotwell**, a graduate student at the University of Maryland, and **Samuel Remedios**, a student at Johns Hopkins University, are among 2,000 U.S. students named as winners of the National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship Program Award.

This NSF fellowship gives each selected student a stipend, an education allowance for tuition and fees, opportunities for international research and professional development, and the freedom to conduct their own research at any accredited U.S. institution.

For a complete list of recent and past fellowship recipients, go to mtsu.edu/honors/ufo.



Matthew Goodwin



Brittney Johnson



Sai Clayton



TIME OF NATURE AND NURTURE

Pandemic-expanded spring
break provided opportunities

Haley Brazel swimming with
manatees in St. Petersburg, Florida

As 2020 dawned, it was expected to be an exceptional year—the “Year of the Rat,” signifying good fortune in wealth and career. But the year took an unexpected turn as drought, fires, locusts, and tornadoes ravaged parts of the world and the novel coronavirus grew into a pandemic, resulting in an extended spring break and a radically altered end to the semester.

Honors students were forced to adapt, and many found ways to cope and even benefit from the unexpected time off and the new normal created by COVID-19. MTSU added an extra week to spring break before resuming classes online only.

“I crossed swimming
with manatees off my
bucket list!”

Senior **Beatriz Dedicatoria** went home to Cleveland, Tennessee, to spend time with family. “Due to the coronavirus, my parents and siblings had to work from home so they were all there. It’s been a long time since we were all together like that with work, school,

and the fact that we all lived far from each other now, so that was nice,” she said.

Rachel Booher used her two-week spring break to assist law enforcement and emergency personnel by supporting the Tornado Relief Team. “My fiancé and I directed traffic in some of the hardest-hit areas, so crucial services could get through to help those most in need,” Booher said.

Buchanan Fellow **Jared Frazier**, who was selected to receive a DAAD internship in Germany that was cancelled due to the coronavirus, spent some of his time learning German, a skill that could easily come in handy in the future. **Jessejoie Curada** created an Etsy shop and made products such as printable planners and stickers to get some extra cash, another practical use of time.

Katelin MacVey, a creative writer, read Sarah J. Maas’ new novel, *Crescent City*, and binge-watched all eight seasons of *Voltron: Legendary Defenders* on Netflix. “These two worlds allowed me to revisit and reimagine one of my on-hold writing projects and possibly lead me down the path to a new one,” she said.

Cassidy Johnson, a senior Buchanan Fellow, was in Las Vegas during spring break and competed with her dance partner, winning their 9-Dance Championship event in the highest division of competition. **Jacob Ford** and his family also started spring break in Las Vegas before traveling to Zion National Park to hike for a few days. His family spent one night in a tiny home off the grid in Utah before driving to Brian's Head for two days of skiing and snowboarding.

Haley Brazel went to St. Petersburg, Florida, where she had a chance to swim with wild manatees. Brazel said the experience was exhilarating: "I crossed swimming with manatees off my bucket list!"

Other students also reveled in extra time in nature during the break. **Zoé Haggard** took two days to hike around the Ocoee River and thought it was "absolutely beautiful." **Gloria Newton's** spring break adventure involved driving to an old fire tower near her hometown to stargaze.

Jacob Meyer and **Nathan Wahl** were among many who had to adjust to the realities of living with the coronavirus crisis over the break. Meyer helped his mom wipe off the family's groceries with Lysol wipes, and Wahl did his best to acclimate to life away from other people by limiting all trips and rewriting his thesis over and over. He also had the difficult task of keeping his elderly dad from sneaking off to the grocery store.

Honors Transfer Fellow **Isabella Morrissey** relaxed, played video games, and hung out with friends at the beginning of spring break. But as the coronavirus became very real and numbers of confirmed cases rose, she could no longer see her friends and was scared by the news.

"Emails from the faculty of MTSU were my only consolation about the new changes," Morrissey said. "During my extended break, I became accustomed to the idea of the University's remote learning campus. I had to move from Murfreesboro back to Fairview. My workplace was closed. Life felt paused."

“The gift I was given from this crisis was time.”

Fortunately, Morrissey discovered a silver lining. "The gift I was given from this crisis was time. I spent most of my time reflecting on the world and who I am without it. Education is so important to me, and my identity is strongly connected to the university experience," she said. "I am grateful for where we are now. The world hasn't ended yet. There's no need for panic. I can only take it day by day along with the rest of the students and faculty trying to make it through this difficult period in history."



A manatee from Brazel's trip



Cassidy Johnson with dancing partner in Las Vegas



Spring 2020 *Collage: A Journal of Creative Expression* staff members attending the January meeting are (l-r): front, Niki Yonkov, Leslie Bell, Katrina Scott, Anthony Czelusniak, Lisa Hardie, and Zoé Haggard; second row, Gloria Newton, Allyson Bivvins, Halima Ibrahim, Jessejoie Curada, Emma Bradley, Isabella Morrissey, Elizabeth Clippard, and Beatriz Dedicatoria; and back, Regan Olivares, Nathan Wahl, Jared Frazier, Simone Strange, Katelin McVey, and Livi Goodgame. Not pictured are George Boktor, Kate Carter, Kelsey Keith, Shannon Byrd, Tanzeena Karim, Nibraas Khan, Brian Sharber, Moose Williams, and Janine Martin.

“COLLAGE” AWARD WINNERS NAMED

Six undergraduates won *Collage* Creative Expression Awards for their submissions to the arts and literary journal for Spring 2020, with each taking home a cash prize of \$75.

ABOUT THE AWARDS

The *Collage* staff uses a blind-grading process each semester to select approximately 60 pieces for publication from around 350 submissions. *Collage* then presents four to six awards, for prose, poetry, art, photography, and sometimes for highly rated audios and videos. Literature Creative Expression Awards are named in honor of English Professor **Martha Hixon** for her long-time commitment to and support of *Collage*. Visual Creative Expression Awards are named in memory of Art Professor **Lon Nuell**.



Poetry

The poem “Freshwater Sharks” by **Addison Gentry** earned the best poetry award. An English major with a concentration in Secondary English Teacher Licensure, Gentry is minoring in Writing and Secondary Education.

Prose



Emily McTyre, a senior Video and Film Production major with minors in English and University Honors, won the prose award for her short realistic fiction piece, “The Imp.”



Video

Julian Brown, an Animation major with minors in Art and Computer Science, was given the video award for *Seeki the Hide and Seek Robot*.

Art

Ox Zante, a transfer student majoring in Animation with an Art minor, captured the art award for his digital painting, pictured below, *Already Dead Inside*.



Already Dead Inside
by Ox Zante



Peace in the Quiet
by Noah Halford



Photography

Noah Halford won the photography award for *Peace in the Quiet*, a digital image, pictured above. Halford is a Video and Film Production major with minors in Photography and Marketing.

Audio

Engineering Technology student **Jonathan Bruce** received the audio creative expression award for his instrumental song "Vitreous."





DEBATING TOWARD A BETTER TOMORROW

Richey teaches squad life lessons

By Jeffrey Kever

Debate team members at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville include (l-r): Steven Barhorst, Muira Rempis, Anastasia Ortiz, Michael Ketzner (back), Collin Dyer (back), Luke Arnold, Nick Ged (back), Graham Cristophel, Jonny Locke, and Joshua Hendrix, an MTSU alumnus.

The MTSU Debate Team completed an impressive 2019–20 season, finishing second in the nation for the International Public Debate Association’s season-long competition against around 100 universities. The team also won top team and overall tournament at Arkansas Tech University in late February.

Winning, however, is not the goal of the debate team. Honors faculty member **Patrick Richey**, who leads the Blue Raider debate squad, specifically teaches his students values that are necessary for life.

“MTSU puts very little pressure on winning but instead on progressing as a whole,” said Richey, an associate professor of Communication Studies, the department that funds and houses the forensic competition.

Students from a variety of majors form a tight-knit team that meets once a week to hone their debate skills. Their diverse political viewpoints thrive in the safe environment of the team that allows them to explore and understand all sides of each argument. Though debate may not alter one’s viewpoint, it does strengthen the understanding of differing opinions, Richey said. This ability is critical toward working together for a common goal.

“We live in a democracy, specifically a participatory democracy. We as citizens have to be knowledgeable about what is going on in the world. We also have to

work with others toward a common understanding,” Richey said.

Each MTSU Debate Team member brings ideas and opinions, and Richey pushes them to think critically through multiple arguments and positions. These exercises create a strong sense of unity, forging a bond among students of all political and cultural backgrounds. The ideas are examined to comprehend fully the encompassing argument on both sides. Team members then have the task of articulating these arguments in multiple scenarios.

“Truth is key in winning any argument and further applies to all areas of life.”

To further their practice and experience, the team debates in front of peers and professors at other universities, as well as sometimes in front of organizations such as the League of Women Voters. They also practice at campus mock debates and with other debate teams from Ireland and Afghanistan via webcast.



Debaters pictured at the University of Central Arkansas are (l-r) Luke Arnold, Graham Cristophel, Anastasia Ortiz, and Jonny Locke.

The purpose of the debate team and specifically debate competitions, Richey says, is to apply debate to the real world. Through public speaking, critical engagement, and acting in both individual and group rounds, participants are able to experience and learn many life skills, including honesty and integrity, which are taken very seriously within the debate community. There is no shame in losing a good argument, he added, but the debater should grow from the loss as a debater and person.

Truth is key in winning any argument and further applies to all areas of life, Richey said. The ability to be cordial with one other is also a debate standard. Teams must be accepting and welcoming to one another, as well as respect judges and competitors. Similarly, ethos must be upheld at all times to successfully portray an argument, he added.

Richey said he believes debate develops people into better citizens.

"I think that is one thing that debate helps you learn: being able to work together with others and understand the other side. That is critical today in order to solve the types of problems we have. I think we are even seeing this with COVID-19," Richey said. "There is so much deceit and misinformation, that when we are in a crisis, people have lost these skills to come together and work.

"Now we praise that [ability] as being unique and different when, in reality, people coming together to help each other should be normal. That should be every day. That should be community."

Whether it be science, business, or any discipline in between, each person takes a part in constant debates each day, he said. Our ability to debate and comprehend each other is crucial. Through problem-solving, pitching an idea, or upholding one's personal beliefs, Richey said, debate is a necessity in order to fully understand and progress toward a better tomorrow.

Not up for debate

Patrick Richey, director of MTSU Debate, says he appreciates the continued support of the team by Dean John R. Vile (a former collegiate debater) and the Honors College. He also would like to thank Honors College students who have participated and helped make the Blue Raider debate squad a formidable team.



Patrick Richey (l) and Sidney A. McPhee at the 2018 Faculty Promotion and Tenure reception



Richey coaches the MTSU Debate Team against the *Irish Times* National Champions.

Pediatrician expands her reach while seeking unity

By Skip Anderson

At her core, **Dr. Megan Imboden Galaske** is a unifier. Sometimes that means bringing together people of different stripes, and sometimes that means taking two parallel tracks and weaving them into one.

Now, a decade into her career as a pediatrician, she's doing both.

"I considered the arts as a career, actually," said Galaske, who graduated *summa cum laude* from MTSU's Honors College in 2004 with a B.S. in Biology and a minor in Chemistry. "My big dream was to be on Broadway. But once I started thinking about the longer term, I wanted to incorporate art with helping others.

"I started out at MTSU thinking about [a career of] providing physical therapy for a ballet company, but my freshman year I decided medicine had broader opportunity. I was super interested in the human body and how it works—how it moves."

As Galaske was transitioning her academic interests toward medicine, she met her future husband, Nathan Galaske, an audio engineer and 2005 graduate of MTSU's Recording Industry program.

"We met at MTSU in a Physics class," she said. "He took Physics as an elective like a crazy person—he is a crazy person! Crazy smart, crazy talented, crazy loving, and crazy funny. He's the whole package."

“My big dream was to be on Broadway. But once I started thinking about the longer term, I wanted to incorporate art with helping others.”

Galaske was always drawn to musicians. In fact, she was one herself, earning all-state honors playing French horn, singing in choir, and playing guitar in a band while a student at Science Hill High School in Johnson City.

At MTSU, her academic pursuits were largely science-based. But she filled her social and extracurricular calendar with activities that would bring her into contact with creative types.



Dr. Megan Imboden Galaske
Photo by Nathan Galaske



Treating the Whole

"By that point, I was taking mostly advanced science classes with the same people, so I was just glad to be hanging out with people from the music realm. I was still involved in a ton of stuff on campus," Galaske said. "I was leading worship for a youth group, doing bench research, performing and choreographing for the MTSU Performing Arts Company, and going into the studio with Nathan."

"I've always been interested in seeing people for who they really are and not focusing on the things that make us different. It's important to focus on the things that make us human."

THE ART OF SCIENCE

As such a creative type herself, Galaske was as surprised as anyone that she was drawn to science and a profession in medicine. Yet she knew that there was an individual path awaiting her.

After completing medical school and residency at the University of Tennessee's College of Medicine, she joined a clinic in Columbia, Tennessee, as a pediatrician. Galaske lives near Franklin High School, where she and Nathan are raising their two children, Miles, 5, and Juniper, 2.

"Columbia is great and it has a diverse population, which I've really enjoyed," she said. "I'm passionate about serving the underserved, and that's mainly what it's been. I'm involved in the Maury County Prevention Coalition, working to support families affected by the opioid crisis and neonatal abstinence syndrome."

“It's important to focus on the things that make us human.”

Galaske's long-term goal is to bring together different philosophies to take a more holistic—and entrepreneurial—approach to treating the human body.

"I am focusing on mental health, generational trauma, and adverse childhood events and how culture and mentality affects everything about health," she said. "In our country, we've gotten divided in the way we think about the body and healing. But the truth is that we must heal the mind and assist the body in healing itself. There are multitudinous ways to do that."

Galaske said she sees a convergence of proven practices as forming the bedrock for future medical treatments.

"Listening to each other rather than arguing about which is the definitive approach is the way forward for health care," she said. "And I do that in my practice now. I practice good antibiotic stewardship and turn to natural and safe alternatives when they're called for."

"Reform is feasible through electronic medical record and insurance changes and through treating the whole patient in a way that will make both practitioners and patients happier."



Galaske's children, Juniper and Miles



Galaske in the field



Galaske recording an episode of her podcast, *Wild Healers*
Photo by Sarah B. Gilliam

NEW AGE IN HEALTH CARE?

Galaske believes the coronavirus pandemic has put a magnifying glass up to the way we view both physical and mental wellness.

"COVID-19 has shown us our own personal deepest hurting through isolation, the need we have for human connection," she said. "It has reminded us of the unfortunate truth that our system is lacking in many ways, especially in treating mental health, BIPOC [Black, indigenous, and people of color] communities, and the underserved, as well as how we treat our health care providers. It has driven us further apart into our opposing corners.

“We can take this situation and learn from it. This could birth a new age in health care.”

"But I truly believe that through the pain of this time, if we focus on our common humanity, science-backed approaches, and care of the mind, that we may emerge more whole and more focused on what really matters.

We can take this situation and learn from it. This could birth a new age in health care."

Galaske said she hopes to be at the forefront of this new age, marrying the best of both worlds of Western medicine and holistic care for her patients.

"I'm excited to incorporate the arts into a wider reaching net of health," Galaske said. "So, coming back to those early ideas of art therapy, music therapy, physical therapy—heart, body, mind—holistic medicine, and bridging the gap between Western medicine and more ancient and Eastern medicine."

This includes a podcast called *Wild Healers*, available now through all major podcast hosts, that explores the realm of integrative medicine, as well as a coaching practice and an online community for parents homeschooling during COVID called Camp School.

Galaske is clearly passionate about bridging the divide between the science and the art of healing the body. **A**

TO LEARN MORE

Find Dr. Megan Galaske at megangalaske.com, thewildhealers.com, and megangalaskephotography.com.



REMEMBERING RICHARD HANSEN

Former student recalls
“Mousetrap” memories
on London trip

By Matthew Hibdon, ('12, '14), a former Honors student and now strategic communications manager for MTSU's College of Liberal Arts

Dr. Richard Hansen changed my life forever. Whether as a teacher, a colleague, or a friend, Richard possessed a unique ability to remind people just how special they are. He did this, not for praise, but because that was his character. Although he received many well-deserved accolades over the years, he usually avoided the spotlight offstage. So, since his passing on March 19, I have struggled with how best to publicly memorialize my friend and former professor. When the opportunity arose to write something for *Areté*, I had my answer. I would do what Richard would do—tell a story.

During my second semester at MTSU, I walked into a classroom on the second floor of Jones Hall and got way more than I expected from my Honors THEA 1030 course with Richard. His lectures were packed full of wit, knowledge, and some theater history trivia for good measure. During one class meeting, Richard told us that even though Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap* was the longest-running play in the world, he had never watched the production because he knew it would still be there the next time he went to London. He had visited London several times and led a study abroad program there every two years. The more he told us about the London program, the more intrigued I became. Although I traveled domestically while growing up, the thought of international travel never really crossed my mind. I am not sure whether it was Richard's passion for British theater (especially plays written by Harold Pinter) or his insistence that study abroad could be a reality for me thanks to scholarships that ultimately sealed the deal, but I decided to go with him to London in December 2009.

Richard Hansen in the KUC Theater

The way I saw the world drastically changed the minute I stepped off the plane in London's Heathrow Airport. Not only was I in another country for the first time, I was the farthest away I had ever been from my hometown of McMinnville, Tennessee. And it was amazing! The first few days were full of culture shock and jet lag, but our class eventually got more comfortable in our new short-term home. We had a hotel conference room reserved for classroom space, but Richard had a knack for finding much more exciting places to hold class—like on the banks of the River Thames by the Royal National Theatre or even at the table after we finished lunch in a café. Richard effortlessly guided and taught us as we explored 400 years of England's rich theater history by seeing modern West End productions, touring the Globe Theatre, and visiting Shakespeare's birthplace in Stratford-upon-Avon. If you asked Richard, he would have said that we should have visited Sir Francis Bacon's birthplace instead, but that's a story for another time.

On our last night in London, I had one mission—convince Richard to go watch *The Mousetrap* with me. I was a longtime fan of whodunits and wanted to see the record-breaking production for myself. Richard agreed to go, and we headed to St. Martin's Theatre after dinner. We arrived right before curtain in an effort to secure reduced-price rush tickets. Alas, the theater

“Students loved Richard, not because of his encyclopedic knowledge of theater history, but because he loved them.”

did not offer such a deal, and I was down to my last £20. Richard agreed that the “nosebleed seats” would be just fine, so we purchased tickets and squeezed into our narrow upper balcony row. The show was great, but it was not the most memorable part of the evening. I will never forget discussing the show with Richard at the interval or laughing alongside him during it. I know he had as much fun as I did, if not more.

Richard is one of the most amazing people that I have met, and I am thankful that I got to tell him often how much he impacted my life over the years. Students loved Richard, not because of his encyclopedic knowledge of theater history, but because he loved them. So, the next time that you sit in the balcony at MTSU's Tucker Theatre, read a Pinter play, or tell people how special they are, I hope you remember Richard.



The Shakespeare Globe Theatre in London
Photo by Claudio Divizia, 123rf.com



View of the Hall's Croft gardens in
Stratford-upon-Avon, England
Photo by dudlajzov, 123rf.com



Hansen speaks at the Theatre and Dance
Alumni Reunion and naming of the Deborah K.
Anderson Studio Theatre.

In Memoriam: Richard Hansen



The Honors College sadly notes the passing of Theatre Professor **Richard Hansen**, 67, an Honors faculty member, who died March 19 at Saint Thomas Rutherford following congestive heart failure.

Hansen earned his Ph.D. at the University of Missouri, M.A. at Miami University in Ohio, and B.A. at Valparaiso University. An Ohio native, he performed in more than 50 productions and had 28 years in theater management, including two years running cinemas.

A lifelong lover of the theater, Hansen had a theater in his childhood home that seated 10. There he showed 8mm films to neighborhood kids, often rigging up sound and projection himself. He also studied films and began memorizing movie trivia, a practice he continued and for which he became known.

Called "Dr. H." by many faculty and students, Hansen joined the MTSU faculty in 1999. A passionate theater historian, British theater buff, and scholar of dramatist Harold Pinter, he was a proud member of the Screen Actors Guild–American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) and was most at home in a cinema or one of his favorite casinos.

In addition to teaching Theatre History, Theatre in Film, and Introduction to Theatre, Hansen led many educational trips to London, which he called "the theater capital of the world." After the deaths of his parents, he established the Gerhard and Esther Hansen Memorial London Winter Scholarship to help offset the cost of the trip for MTSU Theatre majors.

He is remembered fondly for his intelligence, compassion, patience, and his nurturing of and adoration for his students. Many also recall his remarkable wit, especially his uncanny ability to produce a pun or anecdote.



TO HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

Sonya Sanderson, new chair for the Department of Health and Human Performance, is welcomed by Honors Dean John R. Vile (l) and Associate Dean Philip E. Phillips.



Kim Sadler



Ennio Piano



Cindy Smith-Walters



Kate Pantelides

SERIES EXAMINES CLIMATE CHANGE

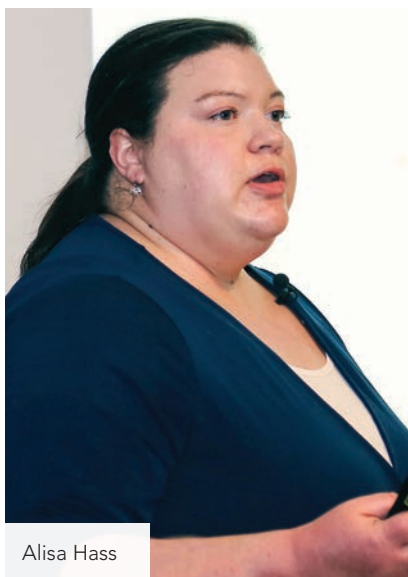
"Climate Change," the Spring 2020 Honors Lecture Series, was introduced Jan. 27 by Honors Associate **Dean Philip E. Phillips**, followed by eight lectures in subsequent weeks focused on climate.

UH 3000 consists of a series of weekly, one-hour lectures designed to stimulate thought and broaden students' knowledge in a variety of disciplines. The course may be repeated for up to 3 hours of credit.

For more information, email philip.phillips@mtsu.edu



Phil Oliver



Alisa Hass

Lectures topics and speakers

"There is a tomorrow": Philosophical Reflections on the Climate Crisis"

Phil Oliver (Philosophy)

"Are K-12 Educators Teaching about Climate Change?"

Kim Sadler (Biology) and **Cindi Smith-Walters** (Biology)

"The Politics of Climate Change"

Lawrence Harrington (attorney)

"The Who, What, When, Where, and Why of Heat Exposure in a Warmer World"

Alisa Hass (Geosciences)

"The Economics of Climate Change"

Ennio Piano (Economics)

"Climate Rhetoric: Examining Genre Change in the UN Climate Report"

Kate Pantelides (English)

"Using Climatic and Cultural History to Understand El Niño's Role in Ancient Peru"

Daniel Sandweiss (University of Maine, Archaeology and Climate Studies)

"A Biblical Approach to Climate Change"

John R. Vile (Honors dean)

Right Place, Right Time



Creation of Adam by Michelangelo in Sistine Chapel
Photo by Cosmin-Constantin Sava, 123rf.com



King establishing Religious Studies major as a national brand

By Patsy B. Weiler

The topic of religious studies is one of boundless enthusiasm for Honors faculty member **Rebekka King**.

King, a native of Canada, is an MTSU associate professor of Religious Studies—one of the University's newer degree programs. It began in 2017 in the renamed Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, the first such major for a public university in middle Tennessee.

Engage King in conversation about the discipline and her face lights up as bright as a full moon shining over the Saint Lawrence River, located at the end of the street where she was raised in rural Ontario. The river is a major northeast artery in North America and joins the Great Lakes and Atlantic Ocean, much like how King sees the study of religion as a way to connect people around the world.

"Religion is not as prominent in the public sphere in Canada as it is here, so studying religion in Canada was kind of like a weird, quirky thing I was doing," said King, who earned her

master's from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, and doctorate from the University of Toronto, both in Religious Studies.

"But of course here, since I came to Tennessee, students really want to study it. They are really vested in the topic and that has been a nice change. The academic exploration of religion contributes to students being more aware of their own traditions and be open to understanding other cultures."

The soft-spoken, admitted introvert was raised in Iroquois, a small, close-knit farming community, the only child of a family where education was prized. Both parents were high school teachers.

King laughs out loud when recalling a childhood story about declaring her youthful wish to be a flamingo.

"They told me I would have to go to the University of Florida to study," King said. "It was their way of emphasizing the importance of education to me."



Students visit the Murfreesboro Islamic Center as part of their Religious Studies class.



Safaa Fathy with students Elvira Hernandez and Reba John



Rebakka King speaks at the 2017 Buchanan Fellows Inauguration.

CROSS-CULTURAL JOURNEYS

King's education went beyond the classroom. Her formative years were enriched by time spent with people of other cultures in her community and family.

Her paternal grandmother was an English war bride from World War II who met her future husband, a handsome Canadian sailor, when he was serving on Her Majesty's Canadian destroyer *Haida*, one of the nation's most famous ships.

"I was in French immersion from kindergarten on. Every Tuesday night during most of my childhood, I would go over to the neighbors' house to play with their children and eat dinner," King said. "My mother wanted me to learn conversational French, not just school French. I'm bilingual in English and French, have a reading knowledge of German, and I can ask directions in Spanish."

She uses those skills as a volunteer to translate for Roots for Refugees, a local community endeavor to welcome and assist new refugee families.

"Murfreesboro is so diverse," King said. "There are many opportunities to work with different populations of people. And, the weather is nice. It usually isn't snowing here in April!"

Behind her quiet exterior beats the heart of a modern day Marco Polo who loves the adventures of travel.

King said she thinks people might be surprised to learn that during the summer she was finishing her master's degree thesis, she camped and traveled across the Northeast, attending folk festivals and participating in contra dances.

Her well-stamped passport has accompanied the globetrotter to two of her favorite religious sites—the House of the Virgin Mary in the ancient city of Ephesus and the relic collection at Topkapi Palace in Istanbul, both in Turkey. On her bucket list is a visit to Peru.

ON THE GROUND FLOOR

After finishing a post-doctorate fellowship at Emory University's Candler School of Theology in Atlanta, King moved to Tennessee in July 2013 to start her work at MTSU.

"The position at MTSU was really appealing because it was an opportunity to work with Jenna Hildenbrand to build a Religious Studies major. I say we have the best job in North America in our field," King said. "We were just so lucky to be here during this time. The University really understood the importance of having Religious Studies and talk about how religion works in society. To get to be on the ground floor building the program has been one of the greatest pleasures of my life."

Trained as a cultural anthropologist, King teaches the Religion and Society general education course as well as Comparative Religion in the Honors College. Students in Religion and Society visit different religious communities, observe their services, and meet people there. Being able to understand who someone is and where he or she comes from is a valuable resource, King said.

The goal is to provide students with a religious literacy from a scholarly perspective that will serve them well in a variety of professions such as education, ministry, nonprofits, marketing, business, medicine, and others in an increasingly global society.

"Dr. King has been a real asset to the Honors College. Her classes are engaging, she will lead the Fall 2020 Honors Lecture Series called 'Images and Icons,' and she continues to chair undergraduate thesis defenses for the Honors College," said Honors Dean John R. Vile, someone King considers a mentor and friend.

"The class that she teaches on Comparative Religion is especially important both as religious pluralism within the United States is increasing and as our foreign policies continually bring us as a nation into contact with cultures with different belief systems."

LIFE LESSONS

King's students, who the educator calls "my greatest source of inspiration," have a strong connection to their instructor.

"Dr. King is an enthusiastic, intelligent, and caring professor," said Timothy Wales, a sophomore

Buchanan Fellow from Memphis who is majoring in Religious Studies and Spanish. "She has a motto, 'Follow your heart'—also the topic of an early writing assignment.

"Looking back on the last semester. . . I realize she was not only referencing follow your heart in the sphere of completing an assignment, but in life as well. The life lessons and practical knowledge I have received in my Religious Studies courses and from Dr. King in general have definitely helped me in shaping future plans."

“To get to be on the ground floor building the program has been one of the greatest pleasures of my life.”

Junior Abi Miga of Murfreesboro, a double major in Biochemistry and Religious Studies, took her first Religious Studies course "simply because it sounded interesting to me and filled a degree requirement, but now I am a Religious Studies major because of the positive impact that one class taught by Dr. King had on me. I have learned to develop greater critical analysis and interpersonal skills that come from learning more about other people and their beliefs that will make relations later in life in a workplace setting easier to develop."



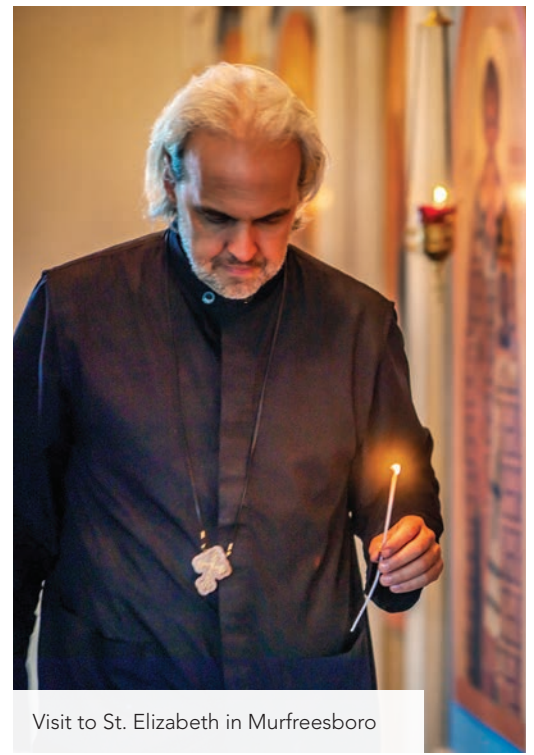
Religious Studies students visiting the Church of Scientology in Nashville



King (r) speaks with their guide at the Church of Scientology.



St. Elizabeth Orthodox Christian Church



Visit to St. Elizabeth in Murfreesboro

King said she missed the energy of the classroom when reflecting on her experience of teaching remotely during the last half of the Spring 2020 semester due to the coronavirus. However, she enjoyed interacting with the students in their own environments and having many one-on-one conversations. One Honors student was eager to show the group his collection of world maps and foreign language dictionaries. Another individual was struggling and having to deal with work issues and a sick parent, but by the end of the semester passed the course.

"It was important to be sensitive that not every student was in a safe place. I tried to walk them through several options and encourage them they would be OK," King said. "Life can be hard sometimes, but we are all in this together. I think the students learned adaptability, how to prioritize, and to put things in perspective. I am very proud of them and how MTSU responded."

During her seven years on campus, the newly tenured faculty member has earned an impressive list of honors, including the Outstanding Teacher and Outstanding EXL Faculty awards in 2017 plus many others including research grants. She also serves as vice president of the North American Association for the Study of Religion and as co-chair of the Sociology of Religion program unit of the American Academy of Religion. Additionally, King is one of the editors of *Critical Research on Religion* and is writing *New Heretics: Secularism, Skepticism, and the End of Christianity*, to be published by New York University Press.

There's no telling what new heights King's boundless enthusiasm for religious studies will take her next. **A**



Religious Studies students at St. Elizabeth Orthodox Christian Church



King is initiated into Phi Kappa Phi by PKP President Philip E. Phillips.

HONORS STUDENT IN TRAINING?

Dan Smith, director of MTSU's Political Economy Research Institute housed jointly in Honors and the Jones College of Business, poses with newborn daughter Evelyn. Smith, an Economics associate professor, and wife Jessica also have a son, Colton.



ECOLOGY CLASS “FLATTENS CURVE” Honors course tackles real-life research



The COVID-19 pandemic brought experiential learning on multiple levels to a spring Honors Ecology class. Once classes resumed remotely following an extended spring break, Biology Professor **Steve Howard** used Zoom videoconferencing and other technology, bringing a virtual real-time “flattening the curve” research discussion into play for the seven class members.

In epidemiology, the idea of slowing a virus’ spread so fewer people need to seek treatment at any given time is known as “flattening the curve.” Howard wanted his students to grasp the science implications of “flattening the curve” and understand the ramifications if people did not take precautions.

Howard and his students ran the simulations from SimUText—an innovative and engaging way to incorporate student-centered, inquiry learning

into ecology or environmental science units—in preparation for the online discussion. The class experimented with different population sizes, transmission rates, and infectious periods to see how they affect the curve.

SimUText delivered two comparisons, one “flatter” than the other, Howard said. In one curve, he reduced the probability of transmission by modeling in “social distancing.” “This is admittedly overly simplistic, but it does make the point,” he said.

“I think the class enjoyed our epidemiology discussions because of the real-world applications,” Biology major Jori Graeff said, “since we have all been affected by this virus and we now have a better appreciation for the measures [social distancing] taken to prevent further spread. I have gained a sense of concern for and understanding about the power of diseases to inflict damage, given the right conditions.”

EXCAVATION ON EXHIBIT

Morocco project showcases
former Honors director's dig

Excavation exhibit in Rabat, Morocco



Excavation site in Aghmat, Morocco



Ron Messier

Aghmat, the medieval capitol of Morocco located 30 kilometers south-southwest of Marrakech, is the subject of an exhibition focusing on excavation overseen by former Honors program director **Ron Messier**.

Messier, an MTSU professor emeritus in History, and his co-directors—one French and one Moroccan—have been leading the Aghmat excavation, one of the largest archaeological projects in Morocco, since 2005. The resulting exhibit is currently at the Bank al-Maghreb (National Bank of Morocco) in Rabat.

The idea for the exhibition was conceived in January 2019 at the opening of another exhibition in which Messier is directly involved: "Caravans of Gold, Fragments in Time." The "Caravans of Gold" exhibit was shown at three major museums and presents the excavation by Messier and five other archaeologists of the ancient city of Sijilmasa, famous for its gold trade.

Messier was among the authors of *Caravans of Gold: Fragments in Time*, a book about art, culture, and exchange across medieval Saharan Africa. He taught Islamic history and historical archaeology at MTSU (1972–2004), directed MTSU's Honors program (1980–90), and was an adjunct professor (1992–2004) and a full-time senior lecturer (2004–08) at Vanderbilt University. Messier also has published *The Almoravids and the Meanings of Jihad*, *Jesus, One Man Two Faiths: A Dialogue Between Christians and Muslims* and *Sijilmasa, the Last Civilized Place*.

ALUMNA JOINS CLA LEADERSHIP

"Integrity, patience, and grace" are three words College of Liberal Arts Dean **Karen Petersen** recently used to describe new CLA Associate Dean **Leah Tolbert Lyons**, a 1995 summa cum laude graduate of MTSU with Distinction in University Honors.

Appointed to the CLA leadership team in February, Lyons joined the MTSU faculty in 2001 and has taught French language, literature, and film as well as contemporary African literature. She also was a visiting professor in Cherbourg, France, in Spring 2008, plus served two years as director of MTSU's Master of Arts in Liberal Arts program.

"She provides sound advice, always keeping our mission at the center of our efforts, and she is not timid. I need people who will challenge the way I see problems, help me to appreciate the nuances, and share time and talent boldly," Petersen said.

Lyons, who was the 2020 John Pleas Faculty Award recipient, "approaches all of her responsibilities with thoughtfulness and integrity" and "is a joy to work with," Petersen added.

During her undergraduate tenure at MTSU, Lyons majored in French and English, completing an Honors thesis, "Miriam Ba et Ken Bugul: L'Exil et La Feminitude." She spent her third undergraduate year studying abroad in Besancon, France. Lyons holds an M.A. and a Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University.



Leah Lyons receives the John Pleas Award.



In Memoriam: Ken Gebert

The Honors College was saddened to learn that retired faculty member Kaylene Gebert's brother, **Ken Gebert**, 71, died unexpectedly at their home in Covington, Louisiana, on March 22. He is pictured with family and friends from the Honors College and the Provost's Office at his mother Loretta Gebert's 93rd birthday celebration in 2015. Loretta Gebert died in February 2018 in Murfreesboro.



J.P. GUIVIER & CO.

GREGORIAN CHANT TO TAYLOR SWIFT

Exploring world of music
at British conference

*By Sarah Wilfong Joblin, former Honors Transfer Fellow,
2018 graduate, and current Music master's candidate*

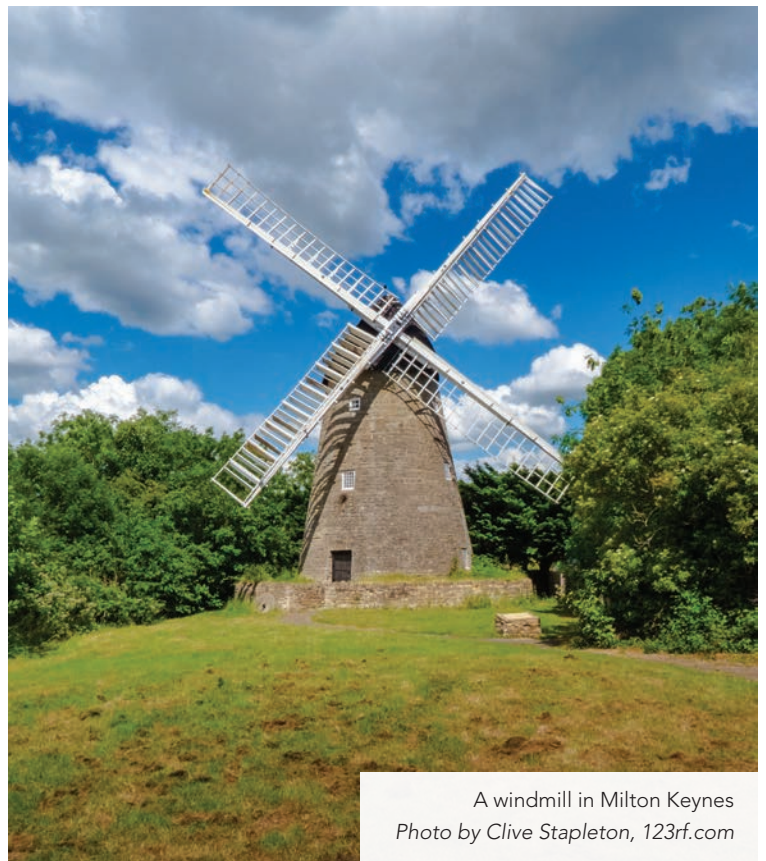
I arrived in Milton Keynes, a small town in central England best known for its 1960s building aesthetic and mint green office buildings, after spending a day in London, during which time I visited the British Library, as any self-respecting Honors College alumna would do. I checked into my hotel weary but full of excitement as I had reached my destination: the British Forum of Ethnomusicology (BFE) and Royal Music Association (RMA) 2020 Research Students' Conference.

“ I don't know if academic conferences are typically life-affirming events, but as Milton Keynes faded in the distance on my train ride back to London, that was my feeling. ”

Sarah Wilfong Joblin in front of J.P. Guivier's Violin Shop

The RMA has been in existence since 1874, with the stated goal of advancing classical music scholarship. In contrast, the BFE aims to study, practice, document, and preserve folk and popular musical traditions. This year, the joint BFE/RMA student conference hosted over 100 post-graduate students from around the world. I, myself, was a bit of an anomaly, being the only representative from an American university and one of a handful of master's students amid a sea of Ph.D. candidates. Even so, I felt at home almost immediately.

The student participants ranged in age from their early 20s to the 70s, and every one of them was a force of intellectual curiosity. They debated cutting-edge compositional techniques and the ramifications of obscure historical events on particular musical developments over lunch, and my presentation was on an equally esoteric topic, "The Emotional Context of Key and Scordatura in Biber's Rozenkranz Sonatas."



A windmill in Milton Keynes
Photo by Clive Stapleton, 123rf.com



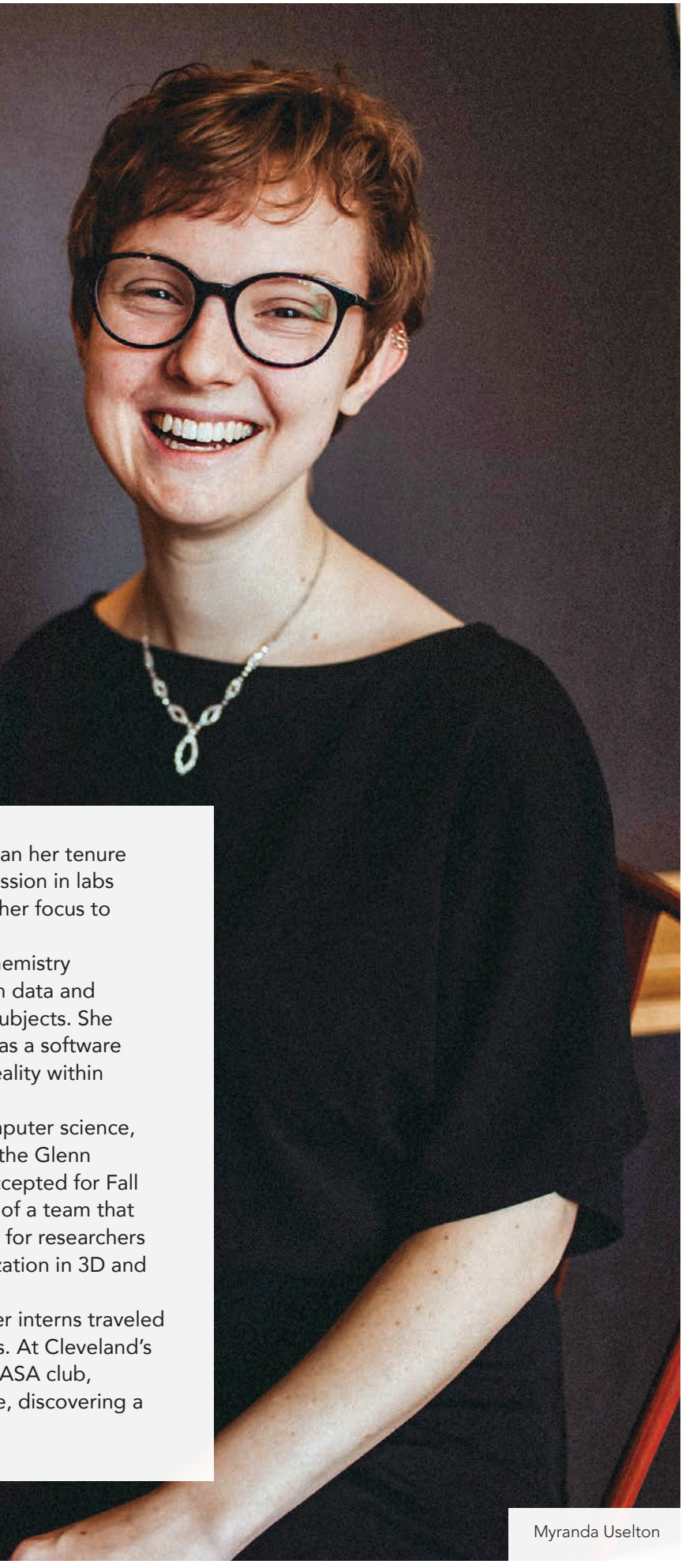
Wilfong Joblin is initiated into ODK by John R. Vile.



Wilfong Joblin outside of
the Honors building

I attended student paper presentations, career development sessions, composition workshops, and keynote speeches delivered by faculty from King's College London and Cambridge University, in addition to presenting my own research. The topics ranged from 13th-century vocal works to Lizzo and everything in between. Nashville was represented in two papers: one with the cheeky title "PhDolly," and another that parsed queer allyship/exploitation in Taylor Swift's "You Need to Calm Down."

I don't know if academic conferences are typically life-affirming events, but as Milton Keynes faded in the distance on my train ride back to London, that was my feeling. I am grateful that MTSU and the Honors College made it possible for me to spend three days with students and faculty who are wrestling with big questions: What is music? How has music been weaponized in the past, and how can we course-correct for the future? How do we help the next generation of musicians to evolve beyond existing boundaries? Through each paper, individual scholars are chipping away at these questions from their own vantage point. I am filled with renewed purpose to do my part in furthering humanity's understanding of music, and I am filled with hope that these brilliant and passionate people will help music change the world.

A portrait of Myranda Uselton, a young woman with short brown hair and black-rimmed glasses, smiling warmly. She is wearing a black top and a silver necklace. The background is a dark, textured wall.

FOCUS ON SCIENCE AND ON SERVING

Former NASA intern
wants to use data
for good

By Jeffrey Keever

Recent Honors graduate **Myranda Uselton** began her tenure at MTSU studying Chemistry before a lack of passion in labs and an abundance of campus resources shifted her focus to Computer Science.

Specifically, it was an MTSU computational chemistry research group that sparked Uselton's interest in data and computer science and led her to pursue those subjects. She then began working in James E. Walker Library as a software developer, researching the use of augmented reality within the education system.

Following the discovery of her passion in computer science, Uselton applied for an internship with NASA at the Glenn Research Center in Cleveland, Ohio, and was accepted for Fall 2019. During her internship, she was a member of a team that created augmented and virtual reality programs for researchers at NASA. These programs included data visualization in 3D and concept models of current spacecrafts.

During her time with NASA, Uselton and other interns traveled to local schools each week to give presentations. At Cleveland's John Marshall High School, she took part in a NASA club, teaching students about NASA and data science, discovering a passion for teaching.

Myranda Uselton

“Reach for the things you want, even if you don’t think it is possible!”

Named the 2019 MTSU President’s Award winner, Uselton graduated in May 2020 with a major in Chemistry and minors in Computer Science, Mathematics, and Honors and began graduate studies in Data Science at Vanderbilt University. Ideally, she would like to return to NASA, but she is also considering a career in teaching computer and data science at the collegiate level.

Not one to limit her interests, Uselton is actively involved in community service, music, reading, and amigurumi, which is the Japanese art of crocheting small stuffed animals. A clarinet player, she also was a part of the School of Music throughout her time at MTSU, participating in ensembles, lessons, and studio classes.

Uselton has traveled to New Orleans each summer for the past five years to contribute to Cross Roads Missions’ disaster relief work in the city. Rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina is still ongoing, and she feels that it is important to give back to people in need. She also has worked as a counselor in a summer camp for inner-city children and in a “food desert” to provide affordable, healthy food to people who do not otherwise have access. The experience is always eye-opening and humbling, she says.

When in Murfreesboro, Uselton offers her spare time as a tutor and assists with community service projects through her local church. Additionally, she has volunteered her time at MTSU for events such as Habitat for Humanity builds.

No matter what her career holds, Uselton is determined to continue participating in community service. She aspires to be a part of the Data for Good movement, which creates specific algorithms to help people below the poverty line. She urges people to “Reach for the things you want, even if you don’t think it is possible!”



Uselton receives the President's Award from MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee.



Uselton and other Honors students were recognized for receiving Paul W. Martin Sr. Scholarships.



Uselton outside of the Honors building

CLASS NOTES

Students

Kaitlyn Berry (Psychology) has been accepted into the Industrial/Organizational Psychology master's program at MTSU. She also was recently selected to receive the University Provost's Award, Larry W. Morris Outstanding Senior in Psychology Award, Belsky Scholarship, and Tyler Schultz Memorial Scholarship.



Mark Blackmon (Integrated Studies), pictured above, won second place from the College of Liberal Arts for his entry in the spring Scholars Week poster presentation.

Ally Cherry (Marketing), who served three years as speaker pro tempore in the Student

Government Association, was selected as the Gene Fitch Outstanding Senator of the Year. A member of Alpha Chi Omega, she also received the Dean Judy Smith Sorority Woman of the Year award.

Audrey Creel (History) presented "The Untold Story of the Maney Family Slaves: A Case Study of Slavery in Murfreesboro" March 28 at Maney Hall in Oaklands Mansion. Creel is a part-time tour guide at the historic home and museum. Her presentation was based on her Honors thesis. Creel also was selected for an internship at the Smithsonian through the Washington Center in Washington, D.C.

Beatriz Dedicatoria (English, Video and Film Production) won the Christine Vaughan Scholarship awarded by the English Department and first place for fiction in James E. Walker Library and the Margaret H. Ordoubadian University Writing Center's inaugural JEWL/UWC Creative Writing Award in the spring. Her award-winning story was titled "Lola's Final Wish." Dedicatoria also earned third place from the College of Liberal Arts in the annual Scholars Week poster presentation.

Rachel Hood (Animation), a member of Gamma Beta Phi honor society, received the Silent Inspiration of the Year Award from the Office of Student Organizations and Service in the spring.



Emily Oppmann (Biology), pictured above, was named Female Student of the Year this spring by the June Anderson Center for Women and Nontraditional Students.

Honors Student MT Engage Scholarship Recipients

Andrew Cwirko
(Global Studies
and Human Geography)

Liam McBane
(Music)

Asma Mohammed
(Mechatronics Engineering)

Jessica Nasca
(Elementary Education)

CLASS NOTES

Alumni and Friends

Brianna Bauman (Mechatronics Engineering, '20) received a fellowship from the U.S. Department of Education's Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) program. She is attending graduate school at MTSU.

Katie Crytzer (Political Science, '06) was nominated by President Donald Trump for the role of Tennessee Valley Authority inspector general in early April.

Sarah Dixon-Morgan (International Relations, '19) is attending Albany Law School in New York.

Grayson Dubois (Computer Science, '17) was promoted to application engineer for HCA

Healthcare Information Technology and Services in Nashville earlier this year.

Emily (Randoll) Ehrenheim (English, '14) and husband Evan welcomed a son, Bennett Joseph, April 17. The family lives in Maryland Heights, Missouri, where she works as an outreach services paraprofessional at St. Charles City/County Library.

Alissa (Ruggle) Hershberger

(Science, Foreign Languages, '13) gave birth to a son, Decker, March 25. She and husband Jarod live in Lees Summit, Missouri, where she is an adjunct faculty member at the Research College of Nursing.

Whitney Ingle (Exercise Science, '19) is pursuing a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree at East Tennessee State University.

Kate Ruth Johnson (English, '17) and husband Matthew welcomed son Samuel James in April. The Johnsons live in Nashville, where she is employed by Entangled Publishing LLC, and have a 2-year-old daughter, Cora.

Emily Kubis (Mass Communication, '13) is a content creator at ReviveHealth in Nashville.

Nicholas Lembo (Political Science, '18), a Philosophy minor, started Officer Candidate School in late March for the U.S. Navy.

Megan Loveless (Recording Industry, '19), an independent show promoter and founder of indie label To-Go Records, is a marketing assistant for Third Man Records in Nashville.



Cody Malone (Aerospace, '16), pictured above, is a captain in the Air Force and has been stationed in Duluth, Minnesota, flying F-16s. He is moving to a new assignment this year. He and wife Alexandra have two young daughters.

**Evidence Nwangwa**

(Biochemistry B.S., '17; Chemistry M.S., '18), pictured above, is working as a machine learning engineer and data analyst in Seattle. She studied data science and computer science online through Lambda School after earning her master's at MTSU.

Aaron Scherer (Philosophy, '11) began working as a consulting manager at Optum in middle Tennessee in August 2019. He consults with clients to improve their risk identification and capture programs, focusing

on data-driven analytics to improve patient outcomes.

Nathan S. Tilton (Aerospace, '16) and wife Morgan welcomed a son, Isaac Scott Tilton, March 31. They recently returned to middle Tennessee after living in Wake Forest, North Carolina, where he worked at Blue Line Aviation.



Anthony L. Williams (Recording Industry, '18), pictured above, is an audio engineer for Analog at Hutton Hotel, a live music venue in Nashville.



Shannon Allen (Biochemistry, '16) and **Logan Whiles** (Biology, '16) were married Dec. 21, 2019, in Meadowview, Virginia.

CLASS NOTES

Faculty and Staff

John Dubois (Biology) won the Outstanding Honors Faculty Award in the spring.



Mary Evins (History), pictured above, earned the Honors College Exemplary Faculty Service Award in May.

Susan Lyons (Honors) received the Robert L. Morlan–Robert Bishop Outstanding Circle Officer Award from the National Awards Committee of Omicron Delta Kappa honor society.

John R. Vile (Honors) was named the Phi Kappa Phi Scholar for 2020–22, recognizing the excellence of his scholarly work over time. The selection committee was impressed

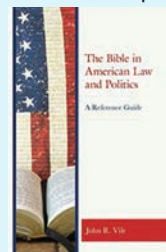


Claudia Barnett (English) saw her play *Strumento*, about the 19th-century Italian “spiritist” Eusapia Palladino, performed Feb. 7 in the Act 1 One Acts Festival at Darkhorse Theatre in Nashville.

Photo by Lauren Terry



by the wide extent of his presentations, leadership roles, and recognition in the fields of political science, U.S. government, and law-related education. The Honors College dean also published two books in 2020: *The Liberty Bell and Its Legacy: An Encyclopedia of an American Icon in U.S. History and Culture* in January and *The Bible in American Law and Politics: A Research Guide* in September.



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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 2019.

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