

UNIVERSITY HONORS COLLEGE

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY | FALL 2019

# Areté

[excellence • virtue]



## FROM THE 'BORO TO THE BELTWAY

Honors College alumna Katie Crytzer helps fill judgeships across the country, including on the Supreme Court

MIDDLE  
TENNESSEE  
STATE UNIVERSITY

FALL 2019

# MIDDLE TENNESSEE

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## STATE UNIVERSITY

### ARETÉ MAGAZINE

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I AM *true* **BLUE**

Photo by J. Intintoli



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I now have been Honors dean for just over 11 years, and the job continues to be the most rewarding of my career. I love recruiting, interacting with, and challenging students, and I also appreciate that I can continue to pursue my scholarly interests.

It's flattering to have my own column in this magazine, but I hope readers know that I carry the flag for a whole group of dedicated staff members. This has been brought home over the past semester as our administrative assistants, Karen Demonbreun and Kathy Davis, have retired with over 20 years of service each. As sad as we were to see them go, I'm pleased we have found two suitable replacements. Sandra Campbell comes to us with an undergraduate degree in Historic Preservation from Southeast Missouri State University, and Cindy Phiffer holds both a master's from MTSU and an undergraduate degree from the University of Tennessee. The entire staff participated in their hiring, and we are looking forward to learning from each of them.

“As dean, I am proud of the college's progress, but I have one of the University's best staffs behind me.”

When I became dean, Marsha Powers was already our publications coordinator, and we have continued to upgrade this magazine, recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of the *Collage* literary journal, and have elevated *Scientia et Humanitas* to a print publication.

The first hire I made as dean, again with input from all existing staff members, was Laura Clippard, who has continued not only to advise students but also to improve and expand our Undergraduate Fellowships Office. She recently earned a two-week trip from the Fulbright office to Japan.

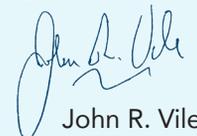
Philip Phillips, who earned a Ph.D. in English from Vanderbilt University, has served for several years as our associate dean. He continues his involvement in scholarly activities, work with the Honors Lecture Series and education abroad programs, and service on campus committees.

We have hired advisors too: Judy Albakry, who also often pitches in with computer and other issues, and April Goers, who helps to coordinate our study abroad trips. Susan Lyons continues planning for numerous Honors activities, including the newly instituted Honors Ambassadors Program, while keeping budget costs down. She recently was invited to the Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C., to receive two-round trip tickets to China.

Our resident faculty now include Shelley Thomas, who works with our Center for Accelerated Language Acquisition; Mary Evins, who directs the American Democracy Project; Rebekka King, who is helping us with theses; Ken Paulson, who stepped down as College of Media and Entertainment dean to head the Free Speech Center; and Ennio Piano, who is our first full-time Honors resident economist.

And our Board of Visitors is as dedicated as any at this University. They support the college not only with their money but also by attending events, calling us about potential prospects, and otherwise getting the word out about the Honors College.

As dean, I am proud of the college's progress, but I have one of the University's best staffs behind me. I know I speak for all of us in thanking you for the opportunity to serve in our respective capacities. We couldn't do what we do without you!



John R. Vile

## areté

noun (ahr-i-tey)

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



# POSTERS AT THE CAPITOL

Honors researchers participate in legislative event

MTSU participants at Posters at the Capitol in Nashville are (l-r): front, Kaylee Lindgren; second row, Hannah Hall; third row, Greg Rushton, Abigail Chossier, Tessa Antonelli, and Joseph Gulizia; and back, Sabrina Spicer, Jamie Burriss, and Caldwell Charlet.

Seven MTSU undergraduates, including four Honors students, presented a variety of research topics at Posters at the Capitol in Nashville Feb. 26. The students joined 55 undergraduates from other state universities in presenting their posters, discussing their research, and meeting state legislators at the Tennessee State Capitol.

MTSU's representatives included Honors students **Joseph Gulizia**, an Agriculture major; **Hannah Hall**, who is majoring in Biology; **Kaylee Lindgren**, a Social Work student; and **Sabrina Spicer**, a Chemistry major.

MTSU students **Tessa Antonelli** (History), **Caldwell Charlet** (Fermentation Science), and **Abigail Chossier** (Geosciences) also presented their research.



Joseph Gulizia (l) discusses his research project with new state Rep. Charlie Baum, an MTSU professor, during Posters at the Capitol.



Undergraduate researchers (l-r) Kaylee Lindgren, Tessa Antonelli, Hannah Hall, Sabrina Spicer, and Joseph Gulizia walk down the tunnel in the Cordell Hull Building on Capitol Hill.



More than 60 undergraduate researchers from nine Tennessee universities pose on the steps of the state capitol.



# INAUGURAL SUCCESS FOR HONORS AMBASSADORS

Honors Ambassadors sponsored escape rooms.

The Honors College kicked off a new program in 2018–19 designed to give Honors students opportunities for leadership, service, and fun. Honors staffers Susan Lyons and April Goers, inspired by National Collegiate Honors Council Conference sessions on the topic of Honors Ambassador programs, undertook the challenge of organizing and leading an MTSU program.

The 2018–19 ambassador team consisted of eight students from a variety of majors: **Madonna Ghobrial**, Biology; **Devyn Hayes**, Biology; **Gareth Laffely**, Marketing; **Cody Maness**, Computer Science; **Roqué Marcelo**, Video and Film Production; **Madyson**

**Middleton**, Biology; **Rachel Reece**, Japanese and Global Studies; and **Sabrina Washington**, Journalism.

Following the success of the first year, eight ambassadors were selected for 2019–20, including four new team members and four returning ambassadors. New students are **Connor Chase**, Audio Production; **Micaela Griffin**, Media and Entertainment; **Gabriella Morin**, Biology; and **Georgey Weissman**, Psychology. Returning ambassadors are Ghobrial, Laffely, Maness, and Marcelo.

Two returning students, Maness and Laffely, share their experiences as MTSU Honors College Ambassadors.



## New program highlights Homecoming, Halloween, and Honors

By **Gareth Laffley**, an Honors Transfer Fellow majoring in Marketing

Being a part of the recently-formed University Honors College Student Ambassadors has been an incredibly rewarding experience. The Honors College at MTSU is a place where driven students can set themselves apart while honing their skills alongside other creative and talented individuals. Ambassadors are expected to maintain the integrity of the Honors College while serving the community of Honors students. I am now in my third semester as an Honors Ambassador and will continue serving throughout this academic year.

The Honors Ambassadors organized a number of events throughout 2018–19. One of my favorites was a Halloween movie night. Ambassadors Sabrina Washington, Madonna Ghobrial, and I decorated

Honors 106 in the full Halloween spirit, hosted a costume contest, and showed the movie *Hocus Pocus*. Ambassadors also volunteered at Homecoming, Preview Days, and the annual fall Board of Visitors meeting to promote the Honors College. Ambassadors help by providing information on Honors programs while encouraging current and potential students to pursue Honors at MTSU.

Our escape room event also sparked a lot of attention. Ambassadors created three on the second floor of the Martin Honors Building. My team created a room called "The Mine Shaft," where participants were tasked with finding the lost gold of the ghost of Skippy Barton, a prospector who disappeared into a mine. The event was a success, and dozens of students came through the three escape rooms.

Being an Honors Ambassador is important to me. The Honors College has made MTSU feel like

“ I am proud to represent the college that inspires me to be my best. ”

my second home, and I am very passionate about encouraging others to meet with the Honors staff to see if Honors is right for them. Volunteering at Preview Days has been an incredible opportunity for ambassadors to speak with potential Honors students, and I am proud to represent the college that inspires me to be my best. I am grateful for my ambassadors team of hardworking, dedicated students, and I am proud to call them my colleagues and my friends.



## Ambassadors recruit students, develop skills, and improve confidence

By **Cody Maness**, a junior majoring in Computer Science

The Honors Ambassadors program was created with the belief that no one understands students more than their fellow students. So the Honors College looks to its ambassadors as a voice for Honors students and gives us the resources and platform to lead and improve student life within the college.

“Through my role as an ambassador, I saw what leadership meant to me.”

We are urged to create and advertise events that we believe students will enjoy. We are encouraged to represent the Honors experience to students and tasked to lead and serve Honors students. This opportunity to lead has left quite an impression on me over the past year.

As an Honors Ambassador, I helped plan and execute events. I used social media, flyers, word of

mouth, and an email newsletter, *The Bell Tower*, to advertise the events. I also shared my experiences in the Honors College with prospective students at recruitment events. Through these opportunities, I grew as a leader. I came to understand how to promote and communicate events to students and became more organized, creative, and confident with every event.

Through my role as an ambassador, I saw what leadership meant to me. I saw it every time a student enjoyed our events. I saw it when students connected at our events. I saw it when I answered a prospective student's question. It was incredible to make a difference in students' lives, and it allowed me to see that leadership is bringing people together and connecting with them.

I am honored to have been a part of the inaugural group of Honors Ambassadors. I am incredibly thankful to our advisors, Susan Lyons and April Goers; my fellow ambassadors; and every student who attended our events and made our inaugural year amazing. I look forward to watching the program grow and continue in its service to MTSU's Honors College and its students.

# MEET THE 2019 BUCHANAN FELLOWS



Brady Armstrong



Emma Beard



Charlotte Daigle



Nicholas Dennison



Emaa Elrayah



Joseph Fernandez



Cooper Thomason



Michael Tonos



Timothy Wales

This fall, 20 freshmen joined the elite group of students accepted into the Buchanan Fellowship program, the highest academic honor bestowed upon entering freshmen at MTSU. The scholarship program is named in honor of MTSU alumnus and Nobel Prize winner James M. Buchanan. Collectively, the students represent the states of Alabama, Georgia, Ohio, and Tennessee and have an average score of 33 on their ACT exams.

The new Buchanan Fellows, their high schools, hometowns, and majors are listed at right.

### **Brady Armstrong**

John A. Holmes High School  
Edenton, North Carolina  
*Audio Production*

### **Emma Beard**

Anderson County High School  
Clinton, Tennessee  
*International Relations*

### **Russell Biesada**

T.C. Williams High School  
Alexandria, Virginia  
*Aerospace*

### **Caleb Conard**

Central Magnet School  
LaVergne, Tennessee  
*Information Systems*

### **Katherine Corder**

Home Life Academy  
Lebanon, Tennessee  
*Anthropology*

### **Savannah Cucchiara**

Central Magnet School  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee  
*Academic Focus (Business)*

### **Charlotte Daigle**

Knoxville Catholic High School  
Oak Ridge, Tennessee  
*Music Industry*

### **Nicholas Dennison**

Gallatin High School  
Gallatin, Tennessee  
*Actuarial Science*



Russell Biesada



Caleb Conard



Katherine Corder



Savannah Cucchiara



Aura Ganster



Grayson Garrette



Alexander Larabie



Owen Tadych



Sophie Watts



Clark Wilson



Aubrey Zurhellen

**Emaa Elrayah**

STEM Prep Academy  
Nashville, Tennessee  
*Academic Focus (Undecided)*

**Alexander Larabie**

Columbia Central High School  
Columbia, Tennessee  
*Computer Science*

**Timothy Wales**

Arlington High School  
Arlington, Tennessee  
*Religious Studies*

**Joseph Fernandez**

Smyrna High School  
Smyrna, Tennessee  
*Audio Production*

**Owen Tadych**

William G. Enloe High School  
Raleigh, North Carolina  
*Audio Production*

**Sophie Watts**

Franklin High School  
Franklin, Tennessee  
*Communication*

**Aura Ganster**

Hume-Fogg Academic High School  
Nashville, Tennessee  
*Nutrition and Food Science*

**Cooper Thomason**

Oxford High School  
Oxford, Mississippi  
*Audio Production*

**Clark Wilson**

Tennessee High School  
Bristol, Tennessee  
*Academic Focus (Undecided)*

**Grayson Garrette**

Community High School  
Shelbyville, Tennessee  
*Science (Allied Health Technology)*

**Michael Tonos**

Farragut High School  
Knoxville, Tennessee  
*Audio Production*

**Aubrey Zurhellen**

Covington High School  
Covington, Tennessee  
*Theatre (Teacher Licensure)*



## REWARDED FOR SERVICE AND SUCCESS

Honors students capture  
campus and state awards

Three Honors students described by Fellowships Coordinator Laura Clippard as “unselfish and service-oriented” received MTSU’s top campus awards this spring. “One thing they have in common,” she said, “is a strong motivation and desire to serve.”

The 2019 winners—**Myranda Uselton** (President’s Award), **Robert Owen** (Provost’s Award), and **Gareth Laffely** (Community Service Award)—also share a passion for academic excellence, which when paired with service is a winning combination that contributed to their selection. Laffely additionally was one of five students statewide to receive a Harold Love Outstanding Community Service Award from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC).

Two of the campus award honorees are standout students from College of Basic and

Applied Sciences programs. Uselton, a Chemistry major, is a senior minoring in Mathematics and Honors. Owen, a spring graduate, majored in Biology with a concentration in Physiology and minors in Chemistry and Honors.

One glance at Uselton’s résumé provides clues as to her selection for the President’s Award. She has engaged in four separate undergraduate research projects with three faculty mentors since 2017. Uselton also has received multiple academic honors, serves on the *Scientia et Humanitas* research journal staff, has an academic publication, has made several research presentations, is an active member of the MTSU Chemistry Society, volunteers at Expanding Your Horizons to promote STEM careers, and has volunteered with Rutherford County PAWS and CrossRoads Missions.

Myranda Uselton



Robert Owen

Her academic and career goals include earning a Ph.D. in Chemistry and working at a government research lab or becoming a professor.

Owen, the Provost Award recipient, was accepted to two medical schools and relocated with his wife and children to Rochester, Minnesota, this summer to attend the Mayo Clinic Alix School of Medicine. In 2018, he won both the campus Community Service Award and the Harold Love Outstanding Community Service Award from THEC. Owen was an Honors Transfer Fellow, a student vice president of MTSU's Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi circle, winner of a 2019 Phi Kappa Phi Fellowship, the recipient of numerous academic recognitions and awards, a campus and community leader, and an undergraduate researcher.

Owen also participated in medical mission trips to serve leprosy victims in rural Kenya and to aid Syrian and Iraqi war refugees in Beirut, Lebanon. In 2018, he and his wife served in impoverished areas of Santa Cruz, Bolivia, and volunteered with Remote Area Medical and Saint Thomas Health medical missions in rural Tennessee. He also started youth programs, volunteered at an orphanage for sexual abuse survivors, and was a volunteer minister at a Nashville church.

Laffely, winner of MTSU's Community Service Award and the Harold Love statewide award, has been using his musical talents to raise money for the American Cancer Society and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital since 2010.

The former president of Phi Theta Kappa honor society at Volunteer State Community College, Laffely was selected as an Honors Transfer Fellow at MTSU and serves as an Honors Ambassador. He founded an anti-bullying campaign in 2012, which he took into schools, and has volunteered with terminally ill patients at Highpoint Hospice in Gallatin for the past seven years.

A Marketing major in the Jones College of Business, Laffely is a recording artist who has four full-length music albums and is an official Grammy voting member. He received an Equis Film Festival Award for Best Music Video in 2019, had a No. 1 song on the *Billboard* Heatseekers Chart in 2015, and earned a Rising Star Award in 2014 from the Native American Music Association.



Gareth Laffely



## DRIVE TO THRIVE

Motivated students land national and international awards

Biron Little (l) and Ana Herrera-Lopez

MTSU students face many challenges in terms of work and family responsibilities but also exhibit a strong motivation and resolve for success, according to Undergraduate Fellowships Coordinator Laura Clippard. She backs up her claim with data from Financial Aid Director Stephen White, who reported that in 2017–18 nearly 40% of MTSU students were Pell Grant-eligible and that more than 75% of MTSU students received financial aid.

In spite of the challenges our students face, MTSU has gained and maintained a reputation for producing students with high academic achievement, outstanding research skills, and a drive to succeed and has seen numerous students receive national and international recognition in recent years. In 2018–19, 18 students were awarded some of the most distinguished scholarships and grants available to undergraduates, including two student Fulbright awards, three Japanese Exchange and Teaching Program awards, and five Phi Kappa Phi Scholarships.

**Casey Brinegar** (Leisure, Sport, and Tourism Studies) and **Parker Smythe** (Criminal Justice Administration) were both awarded U.S. Student Fulbright Awards to teach in Bulgaria. **Rebecca Clippard** (Foreign Languages) was offered a Fulbright Award to teach in Spain but instead elected to accept placement with the Japanese Exchange and Teaching Program (JET).

Two other students, **Rachel Reece** (Foreign Languages, Global Studies and Human Geography) and **Corey Reed** (Mass Communication) also accepted teaching positions with the JET program.

Perhaps a reflection of MTSU's strong Phi Kappa Phi program, our students also claimed four of 75 Phi Kappa Phi Study Abroad scholarships and one of 50 PKP Fellowships awarded nationwide. **Robert Owen** (Biology) won an \$8,500 Fellowship to help fund his first year at the Mayo Clinic Alix School of Medicine (see page 11). PKP Study Abroad Scholarship winners were **Hayley Ellis** (Interdisciplinary Studies), Australia; **Liam McBane** (Music), Austria; **Hannah Solima**



Fellowship and scholarship recipients (l-r) Denise Ortega, Rebecca Clippard, Rachel Reece, and Casey Brinegar

(International Relations), Russia; and **Biron Little** (Industrial/Organizational Psychology), Japan, who also won a Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship for her study in Japan.

**Ana Herrera-Lopez** (Nutrition and Food Science) earned a Gilman Scholarship to study in France this summer, and **Tammy Nunez** received a Gilman for education abroad in Spain this fall. **Destiny Seaton** (Journalism) and **Alexis Marshall** (Foreign Languages, Journalism) were awarded Critical Language Scholarships to learn Indonesian and Arabic, respectively.

Additionally, **Aric Moilanen** (Political Science) and **Denise Ortega** (Biology) were chosen for National Science Foundation Research Experiences for Undergraduates (NSF REUs). Moilanen conducted research at the University of Michigan, and Ortega traveled to Costa Rica.

**Jackson Cole** (Physics) was selected for a research opportunity at LaSerena School of Data Science in Chile, and **Teresa Carter** (Psychology) garnered a REVU (Research Experience for Veteran Undergraduates) at Yale University.



Aric Moilanen

# RELIVING HISTORY IN NATION'S CAPITAL

Students visit "edge of a revolution"  
and experience modern lawmaking

By Ashlin Murphy, a junior majoring in Political Science



True Blue at the Capitol

On March 2, before the sun rose, 20 students departed from the Paul W. Martin Sr. Honors Building to spend a week exploring Virginia and Washington, D.C. The trip, led by Honors Dean **John R. Vile**, provided an opportunity for students to go back in time and immerse themselves in the places and the people who shaped the founding of the United States.

The Virginia/D.C. spring break trip has been the highlight of my college career so far, and it is a must-do for any student. Planned by the dean and by Honors Coordinator **Susan Lyons**, the Honors educational excursion included visits to Monticello and Colonial Williamsburg, a private tour of the U.S. Capitol, and lunch at the Supreme Court Building.

One of my favorite experiences was the unique opportunity to visit the Capitol at night when there were no other tours, and the buzz of lawmaking filled the hallowed halls. Former U.S. Rep. Bart Gordon, an MTSU alumnus, led our private, after-hours tour. He

took us past no-entry signs and into rooms normally only frequented by members of Congress and their staffs. While there, we were able to witness a debate on election reform among several representatives.

Traveling through the early story of the United States was the most impactful part of the trip for me. We started with Montpelier and Monticello, the homes of James Madison and Thomas Jefferson, respectively. Here we were able to see where the foundation of our country was laid.

“The connection between the past and today is direct and measurable.”

We then visited St. John's Church, where Patrick Henry fervently encouraged his peers to fight for liberty. We toured the Yorktown battlefield, site of

the final battle of the Revolutionary War. We strolled through Colonial Williamsburg and discovered what life in a colony was like, along with a taste of living on the edge of a revolution. After Williamsburg, we visited Gunston Hall and Mount Vernon, the respective homes of founders George Mason and George Washington.

We ended the trip in Washington, D.C., with our visit to the U.S. Capitol, Supreme Court, Library of Congress, National Archives, several Smithsonian museums, and more.

This trip engages students in the beginnings of the nation and the workings of our government. The Honors trip is a fabulous way to see many of the places we have learned about all of our lives. It is a hands-on, experiential learning opportunity, and I encourage every student to embark on this journey through our country's history.



With Gen. Washington



At the White House with John R. and Linda Vile



Bart Gordon Capitol tour group

# EXPLORING IDEALS AND REALITIES

## Spring break trip to D.C. and Virginia allows for reflection

By Liam McBane, a Buchanan Fellow majoring in Music



When I visited the Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress, I took time to read the plethora of quotations engraved around the expansive atrium, and one especially struck me: "The foundation of every state is the education of its youth." This is what our trip was ultimately about. The houses, museums, and public buildings that we toured contain precious knowledge that enlightens young citizens and thus provides the basis for informed participation in the guidance of our country in the future.

The most powerful moment of our trip for me came during our nighttime visits to monuments in D.C. Exploring after sundown lent a new perspective to our travels—in the absence of light, every visible detail carries meaning and becomes the focus of the mind. After dark, the memorials allow one to reflect on the ideals that they stand for, concepts



True Blue in Colonial Williamsburg

that have dramatically affected the world. Especially powerful are the quotations that monument designers chose to include, and I found profound value in merely sitting in silence to consider the weight of Thomas Jefferson's, Abraham Lincoln's, and Martin Luther King Jr.'s principles and visions for society. Without fully understanding their foundation, we can never attain the civilization they sought.

Our trip looked not only to the ideal, though, but also considered the ugliness of the colonial era. Too often we caricature history to create a simplistic narrative, but the sites we visited did not shy away from harsh realities. For example, when I talked to the operator of the printing press in Williamsburg, he cast doubt on the idea that the Stamp Act enraged the colonial populace and instead posited that it became an issue due to its disproportional effect on the rich. Don't expect a happy-go-lucky rendition of noble Americans versus oppressive British from this trip; you'll instead discover a saga of deeply flawed people, mistakes on both sides of the ocean, and a praiseworthy, but ongoing, struggle to bring justice to the earth.

“The foundation of every state is the education of its youth.”

That said, though, going on this trip was a refreshing educational experience. There's a certain thrill in discovering our national history, a wonder in seeing the sites and walking in the ways of founders that can't be matched. Camaraderie between the students on the trip made the journey extra special, and I made amazing memories that will stick with me for many years. For students with a desire to inquire, learn, and reflect, this trip might just be the highlight of their MTSU studies.



Yorktown tent



Yorktown troublemakers

# HIGH SCHOOLERS GET HONORS CREDIT

## Dual enrollment offered for Blackman high achievers

By Morgan Posey

The Honors College is known for offering a small private college environment within a large state university. Now, that experience is open to some high school students.

Blackman High School, located less than 10 miles from MTSU's campus, recently began offering Honors dual enrollment credit for students in the Blackman Collegiate Academy.

Blackman Collegiate Academy juniors and seniors can take two English classes, Expository Writing and Research and Argumentative Writing, for Honors

College credit through Blackman and MTSU. Students must have a 25 on the ACT and a 3.5 high school GPA to enroll in the classes—the same requirements for freshmen entering the Honors College.

The partnership allows students to experience the engaging environment of the Honors College before deciding where they will attend college. At this time, the program is available only to Blackman Collegiate Academy students.

For more information on dual enrollment, visit [mtsu.edu/dualenrollment](https://mtsu.edu/dualenrollment) or call 615-898-5246.



## VISITING ARTIST SEMINAR

Fourteen Honors students studied the art of fiction writing with founding Honors director June Hall McCash during the spring Visiting Artist Seminar. Students shown with McCash are (l-r) Emma Cryar, Nathan Wahl, Brianna Bauman, Tre'yanna Ogilvie, Sabrina Washington, Brittney Johnson, Myranda Uselton, Megan Tudor, Kelsey Keith, and Alyssa Chaney. Not pictured are Joseph Guilizia, Sheridan Hitchcox, Madeline Quinby, and Miranda Renzi.

# LOWER-DIVISION CERTIFICATES EARNED

Sixty-five Honors students completed 20 or more Honors hours and received Lower-Division Certificates of Achievement from the University Honors College this spring. The students represent a variety of majors. Students who complete the lower-division certificates only need 11 additional hours, including thesis-related classes, to graduate with an Honors degree.

**Zepher Elizabeth Barber**  
Environmentally Sustainable  
Technology

**Mark Douglas Blackmon**  
Social Work

**Catheryn Amber Bolick**  
Foreign Languages, Biology

**Miquellie Brucine Bonner**  
Forensic Science

**Chike B. Brown**  
Industrial/Organizational  
Psychology

**Kathryn R. Caggianelli**  
Recording Industry

**Alyssa Paige Chaney**  
Elementary Education

**Anika Tasnim Chowdhury**  
Biology

**Daniel Zhang Chu**  
Economics

**Elizabeth A. Clippard**  
Biology

**Megan Lee Cole**  
Journalism

**James M. Collins**  
Chemistry

**Erica S. Combs**  
International Relations

**Helena Mai Cook**  
Recording Industry

**Sierra Danielle Crowe**  
Accounting

**Renata Bernadette DeLucia**  
Biology

**Rachel Diane Dier**  
Psychology

**Rose E. Eckert**  
Audio Production

**Micah Samuel Ediger**  
Audio Production

**Michael Gerard Fitzgibbons**  
Athletic Training

**Jared G. Frazier**  
Chemistry

**Maxwell N. Gardner**  
Actuarial Science

**Hannah N. Giles**  
English

**Micaela Ellyse Griffin**  
Media and Entertainment

**Laura Elizabeth Grimes**  
Speech-Language Pathology  
and Audiology

**Lillian G. Gulliver**  
Biology

**John Bynum Gustafson**  
Audio Production

**Anas Naseem Haj-Hussein**  
Biochemistry

**Turner Allen Hamilton**  
Music

**Cole S. Hansen**  
Business Administration

**Gibson Lee Harrison**  
Finance

**Christopher Daniel Hadden**  
Biology

**Kevin A. Hernandez Ovalle**  
Business Administration

**Robert Bryant Humphrey**  
Biochemistry

**Marie-Lena Hussels**  
Criminal Justice  
Administration

**Elijah R. Jacober**  
Construction Management

**Yostina Monsif Lamei**  
Psychology

**Cody Lee Maness**  
Computer Science

**Liam Bruce McBane**  
Music

**John C. Mehne**  
Animation

**Julia Mihic**  
Accounting

**Grace Elizabeth Millican**  
Biochemistry

**Reaunna Korleen Morgan**  
Anthropology

**Gabriella Sophia Morin**  
Biology

**Ashlin Mai Murphy**  
Political Science

**Elizabeth Grace Murphy**  
Accounting

**Maryam Antoinette Nemati**  
Music

**Robert Loren Owen**  
Biology

**Hayley Elizabeth Payne**  
Recording Industry

**Hadley Sue Pegg**  
Criminal Justice  
Administration

**Matthew Thomas Penny**  
Biology

**Leanna R. Prince**  
Anthropology

**Crimson A. Rose**  
Recording Industry

**Reuben E. Savage**  
Business Education

**Austin D. Suttman**  
Chemistry

**Ryan Scott Tims**  
Biology

**Samantha Anne Udell**  
Community and  
Public Health

**Nathan Randall Wahl**  
Communication

**Lauren Hailey Walden**  
Biochemistry

**Russell B. Walden**  
Biochemistry

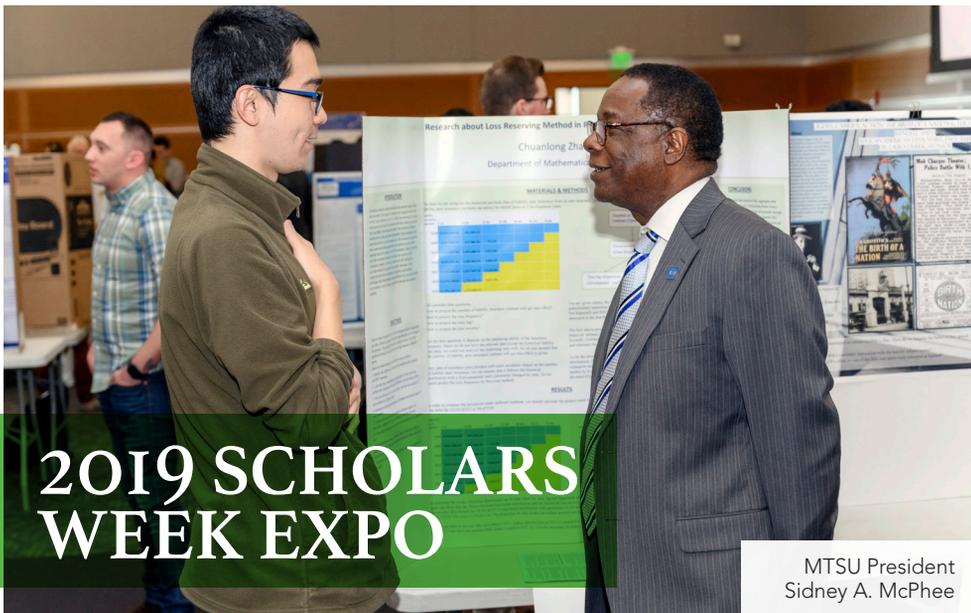
**Kennedy G. Wallace**  
Geosciences

**Hannah R. Welch**  
Chemistry

**Justin L. West**  
Biochemistry

**Hannah N. Williams**  
Computer Science

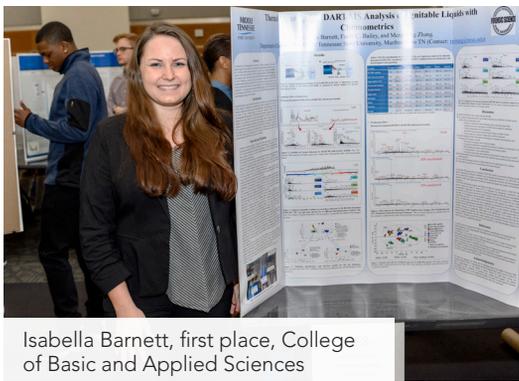
**Robert D. Woods**  
Economics



# 2019 SCHOLARS WEEK EXPO

MTSU President  
Sidney A. McPhee

Numerous Honors students participated in the display of undergraduate, graduate, and faculty posters at the MTSU Scholars Week Poster Exposition, an annual celebration of research, scholarship, and creative projects, March 22 in the Student Union Ballroom. Competition winners from the Honors College were **Matthew Cureton, Isabella Barnett, Sarah Dixon-Morgan, Tatum England, and Marina Ibrahim.**



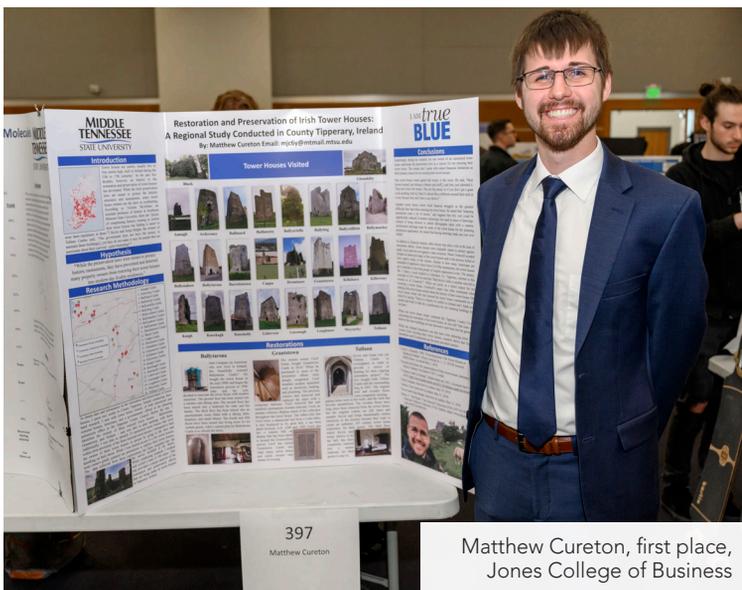
Isabella Barnett, first place, College of Basic and Applied Sciences



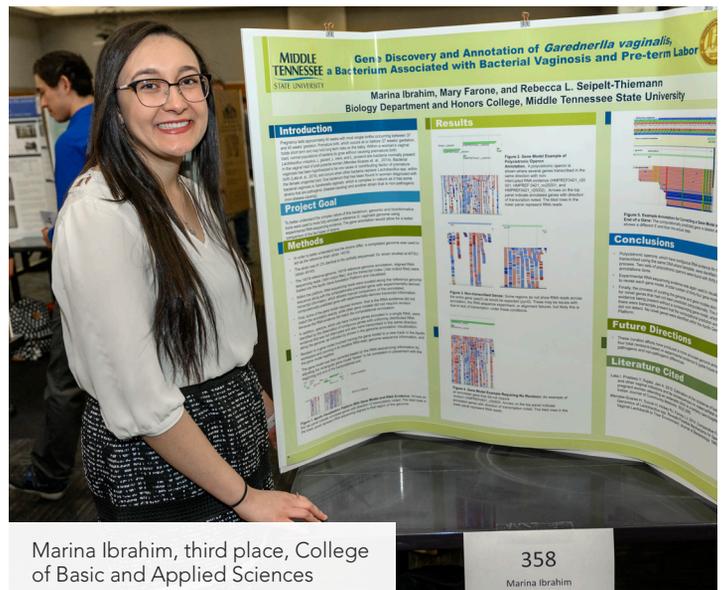
Tatum England, third place, College of Behavioral and Health Sciences



Sarah Dixon-Morgan, first place, College of Liberal Arts



Matthew Cureton, first place, Jones College of Business



Marina Ibrahim, third place, College of Basic and Applied Sciences



Retired Lt. Gen. Keith M. Huber (l) of MTSU with Smith and Provost Mark Byrnes (r)

## CAP COMMANDER IMPARTS WISDOM

Civil Air Patrol Maj. Gen. Mark Smith delivered motivation and inspiration to an overflow MTSU classroom March 22. The national commander of the U.S. Air Force auxiliary group spoke of mentorship, servant leadership, and “rising from the ashes and learning from failure” as he talked to more than 100 students, faculty, and staff in the Business and Aerospace Building.

An audience of primarily Aerospace students and young CAP cadets attended Smith’s 45-minute lecture, which was sponsored in part by the University Honors College and Omicron Delta Kappa leadership honor society.

Smith said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Ray Powell mentored him so that he could attend the Air Force Academy: “He invested in me personally, allowing me to achieve my dream. Hopefully, at MTSU, you have someone investing in you and helping you out, to help you achieve your dream and get you where you are going.”

Smith, who favors a “servant leadership” style, suggested students “pay it forward, to help those coming behind you to make it happen [for them]. Find someone, talk to them, develop a road map from Point A to Point B. Invest in them with your talents as well.”

Smith was introduced by **Casey Brinegar**, a senior with academic ties to both the Honors College and College of Behavioral and Health Sciences and a member of the Civil Air Patrol. After Smith’s talk, Brinegar presented him with a framed photograph from ODK and the Honors College.



Civil Air Patrol Maj. Gen. Mark Smith



Casey Brinegar



MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee, Andrew Oppmann, and Smith

# SPRING 2019 THESES DEFENDED



**Jeffrey Grant Allen II**  
*Philosophy, International Relations*  
"A Resolutive Account of the Hobbesian Laws of Nature: From the Body Politic to the Human Body"  
*Ron Bombardi, advisor*



**Isabella Barnett**  
*Forensic Science*  
"Pyrolysis DART—MS Analysis of Ignitable Liquids for Forensic and Environmental Applications"  
*Mengliang Zhang, advisor*



**Emory Bibb**  
*Biology*  
"The Relationship Between Vaccine Experience and Vaccine Harm Belief"  
*William E. Langston, advisor*



**Bryce Bivens**  
*International Relations*  
"Godzilla: Culture Through the Camera's Lens"  
*Robert Kalwinsky, advisor*



**Danielle Rae Bonner**  
*Biology*  
"Measurement of the Phagolysosome pH in *C. neoformans* Infected Macrophages"  
*David Nelson, advisor*



**Jonathan Cannon**  
*Biochemistry*  
"Using Nuclear Microsatellite Loci to Characterize Genetic Variation Within and Among Populations of the Federally Endangered *Astragalus bibullatus* (Pyne's Ground Plum Fabaceae)"  
*Ashley Morris, advisor*



**Caroline Susanne Cromwell**  
*Animation*  
"Short Film on Sex Trafficking Regarding Working Age Minors and College Students"  
*Rodrigo Gomez, advisor*



**Emma Cryar**  
*Graphic Design*  
"Lifeblood"  
*Marion Hollings, advisor*



**Kirsten Cunningham**  
*Biology, Chemistry*  
"Development of a Model for Transcriptome Profiling of *Cryptococcus neoformans* Infected Macrophages"  
*David E. Nelson, advisor*



**Hannah Curry**  
*Biology*  
"Synthesis and Biochemical Characterization of a Linearized Homolog of the Anti-TB Drug Lassomycin"  
*Justin Miller, advisor*



**Jacinda Drenckpohl**  
*Music Education*  
"Musical Arrangement of Robert W. Smith's *Divine Comedy* Movement: "The Ascension" for Brass Ensemble and Piano"  
*Allen Kennedy, advisor*



**Kami Dyer**  
*Biochemistry*  
"Purification and Monosaccharide Composition of Polysaccharides Isolated from *Cannabis sativa* Cherry Hemp Root"  
*Paul C. Kline, advisor*



**Samantha Eisenberg**  
*Psychology*  
"The Effects of Media Violence on Adult Prefrontal Cortex Functioning"  
*Paul Foster, advisor*



### Jonathan Elam

Psychology  
"Cell Phone Addiction and Mental Health"  
Corey M. Teague, advisor



### Anas Haj-Hussein

Biochemistry  
"Synthesis and Characterization of 4-Alkoxy pyridines for Unsymmetrically Distributed 1, 10-Pyridium's Derivatives of the [closo-B10H10]2-Anion"  
Andrienne C. Friedli, advisor



### Jaime Elowsky

Psychology  
"Gender Differences in Child Maltreatment"  
Greg Schmidt, advisor



### Katelynne Hamlet

Information Systems  
"Digital Divas as the Future of Entertainment"  
Stacy C. Merida, advisor



### Fallon Endsley

Marketing  
"An Analysis of Millennials and Their Interactions with Financial Institutions"  
Lucy Matthews, advisor



### Tina Higgins

Journalism  
"Over the Rainbow: Testimonies of LGBTQ Individuals and the Population's Reaction"  
Jennifer Woodard, advisor



### Elisabeth Foreman

International Relations  
"War, Terrorism, Reconstruction: Gender Disparities for Primary Education in Pakistan and Afghanistan"  
Zhen Wang, advisor



### Sheridan Hitchcox

Theatre  
"Shakespearean Madwomen and the Gendered Portrayals of Mental Illness That Devalue Them"  
Jette Halliday, advisor



### Jackson Gargaro

Biochemistry  
"The Development of Leptin Receptor Antagonist Through Peptide and Peptoid Synthesis and Analysis via Surface Plasmon Resonance"  
Kevin Bicker, advisor



### Alea Hollandsworth

Communication  
"Behind the Laughs: The Relationship Between Narcissism and Humor Styles in an Individualistic Culture"  
Thomas M. Brinthaup, advisor



### Merna Ghobrial

Biology  
"Investigating the Ability of Spice Extracts to Inhibit Bacterial Growth and/or Histamine Accumulation Associated with Scombroid Food Poisoning"  
Rebecca L. Seipelt-Thiemann, advisor



### Marina Ibrahim

Biology  
"Gene Discovery and Annotation of *Gardnerella vaginalis*, a Bacterium Associated with Bacterial Vaginosis and Pre-Term Labor"  
Rebecca Seipelt-Thiemann, advisor



### Abrial Goen

Entrepreneurship  
"Long-Term Sustainability of Mergers and Acquisitions as a Growth Driver: A Case Study of Hospital Corporation of America"  
Keith Gamble, advisor



### Aaron Kelly

Philosophy  
"Modal Ontological Arguments and the Predicate of Existence"  
Michael R. Hinz, advisor



### Elizabeth Kobeck

*Biology*  
"The Effect of Self Descriptive Language on Autistic Individuals"  
Tiffany Rogers, advisor



### Jada Murriel

*Biochemistry*  
"Investigating How the Pathogenic Yeast *Cryptococcus neoformans* Affects Gene Expression in Host Macrophages"  
David Nelson, advisor



### Benjamin Kulas

*Physics*  
"Evolutionary Optimization of Runge-Kutta Coefficients for Specific Differential Equations"  
Eric Klumpe, advisor



### Alexa Norsby

*English*  
"Beyond the Bell: A Collection of Short Stories Through the Eyes of Nine Low-Socioeconomic Students"  
Claudia Barnett, advisor



### Megan Loveless

*Journalism*  
"The Making of *Inoxia* Mag: A Look at Nashville's DIY/Underground Music Scene"  
Philip A. Loubere, advisor



### Dylan Palmer

*Criminal Justice Administration*  
"How Plea Bargaining Has Impacted the Criminal Justice System"  
Benjamin Stickle, advisor



### Roque Marcelo

*Video and Film Production*  
"Embracing the Ephemeral: Cultural Preservation Among Filipino Immigrants"  
Paul J. Chilsen, advisor



### Steven Quinn

*Audio Production*  
"Phil Spector and the Wall of Sound"  
John P.J. Hill, advisor



### Alexis Marshall

*Journalism, Spanish*  
"Surviving: A Journalistic Podcast Exploring Life Beyond Abuse"  
Stephen L. Alligood, advisor



### Rachel Reece

*Japanese, Global Studies*  
"Poems of Hiroshima: Translations of Children's Writing in 'When I Was Small' "  
Fusae Ekida, advisor



### Caitlin Miller

*Interdisciplinary Studies*  
"School Choice and Diversity"  
Jennifer Woodard, advisor



### Peter Roldan

*Concrete Industry Management*  
"Spectrophotometry of Colored Mortar Mixes"  
Heather Brown, advisor



### Asfah Mohammed

*Chemistry*  
"N-Substituted Azaaurones: Synthesis and Photochemistry"  
Scott T. Handy, advisor



### Destiny Seaton

*Journalism*  
"Exploring Effectiveness of Images in Media and Their Ability to Capture Attention and Engage Consumers About Climate Change"  
Jason Reineke, advisor



### Don Srisuriyo

Biology, Spanish  
"Have You Ever Seen the Sun Rise?"  
Matthew Burleson, advisor



### Kayley Stallings

Biochemistry, Fermentation Science  
"Antibacterial Activity of Endophytic Fungi Isolated from Arkansas *Vitis aestivalis* (Norton/Cynthiana) Vegetative Tissue"  
Tony Johnston, advisor



### Ross Thomas III

Biology  
"Isolation and Identification of Fungal Endophytes of *Vitis aestivalis* (Cynthiana/Norton) from Tennessee, Arkansas, and Missouri"  
Rebecca Seipelt-Thiemann, advisor



### Andrew Towle

Psychology  
"Coping with a Person with Borderline Personality Disorder in the Family"  
William Langston, advisor



### Katelyn Walls

Psychology  
"Understanding the Subscribers of the Local Imagination Library and Their Habits"  
Ying Jin, advisor



### Beverly Warner

Astronomy  
"Solar Radio Burst Analysis and the 2017 Solar Eclipse"  
Charles Higgins, advisor



### Moose Williams

Graphic Design, Spanish  
"Manifestation: Illustrating American Masculinity, A Creative Thesis in the Field of Visual Arts"  
Michael Baggerly, advisor



Hanan Beyene accepts a *Scientia et Humanitas* Deans' Distinguished Essay Award from Associate Dean Philip E. Phillips (l) and Dean John R. Vile for her paper, "Surviving Hardship Through Religion: Womanist Theology in Beyoncé's *Lemonade*." Beyene is a junior majoring in Religious Studies and in Global Studies and Human Geography.

**"SCIENTIA"  
ESSAY  
AWARD  
WINNER**



# HONORS WELCOMES PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

College opens doors for yearly Presidents Day event

Tiffany Milfort (l), College of Media and Entertainment advisor, answers Lawson Hillis' questions during the annual Presidents Day Open House.

About 300 prospective students, along with more than 350 parents, grandparents, and guardians, attended the annual MTSU Honors College Presidents Day Open House in February.

Attendees had the opportunity to visit over a dozen booths in the Student Union Ballroom to learn more about potential programs of study, housing, leadership opportunities, education abroad, ROTC, and financial aid. Dean **John R. Vile** and sophomore Buchanan Fellow **Emily Oppmann** welcomed guests and shared information about the Honors College.

Hundreds took advantage of the opportunity to tour the Martin Honors Building, Walker Library, Recording Industry Studio A, and the Aerospace air traffic control simulator. Guests also could take campus tours and attend Mock Trial, School of Music, and Physics Department "Mad Science" demonstrations.



Aurora Shepherd listens as Basic and Applied Sciences Dean Bud Fischer describes opportunities in his college.



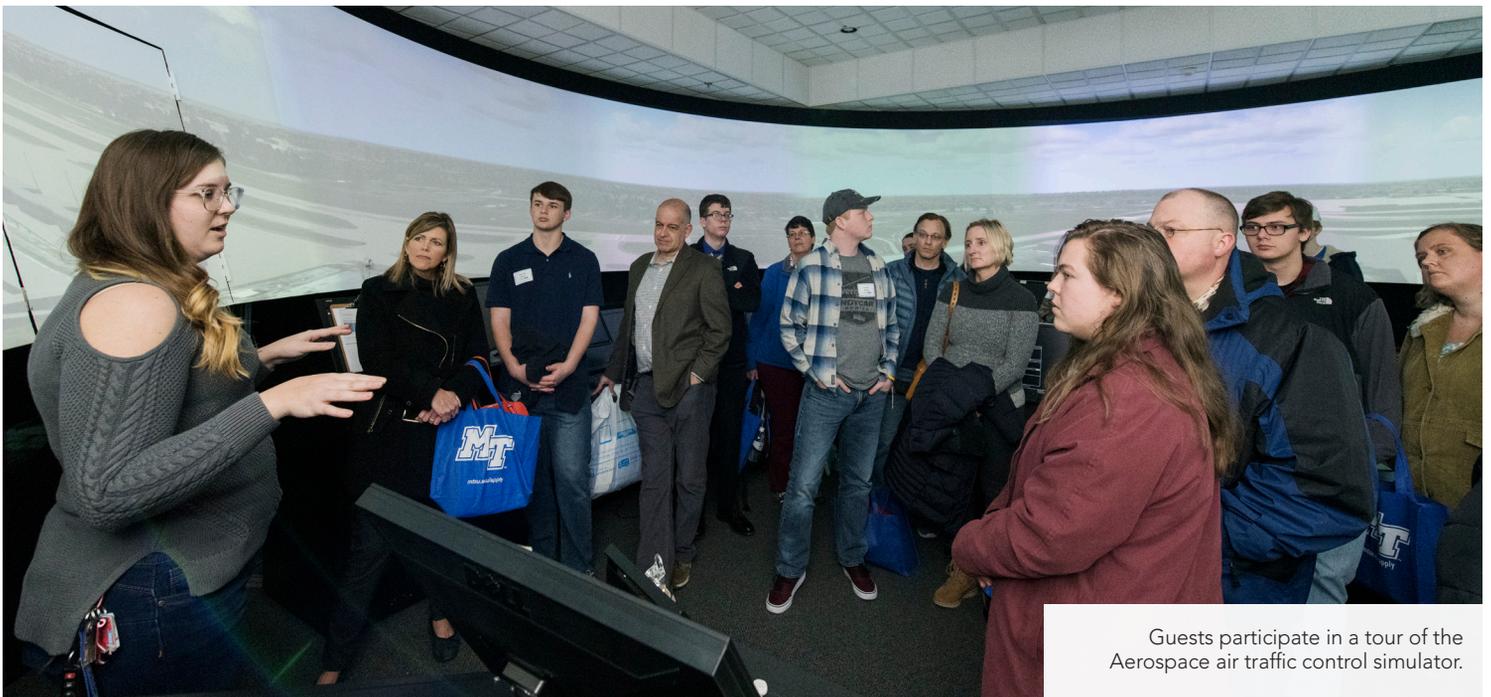
Junior Emily Oppmann, a Global Studies major, tells the 300-plus prospective students about being involved at the University.



David Willequer (l), and his daughter, Ana Cannon, both of Clarksville, Tennessee, listen as Dean John R. Vile shares benefits of the Honors College.



Jackie Victory, director of Student Organizations and Service, explains campus student opportunities to an open house guest.



Guests participate in a tour of the Aerospace air traffic control simulator.



## MEET THE 2019 TRANSFER FELLOWS

This fall, 30 new students representing two countries, six states, and 19 cities in Tennessee have joined the elite group of students accepted into the Honors Transfer Fellowship program, the highest academic honor bestowed upon students transferring to MTSU from other institutions.

**Luke Aaron Arnold** is a transfer student from Walters State Community College and is majoring in Political Science.

**Makayla Dawn Barrett**, from Motlow State Community College, is seeking a degree in English.

**Drew W. Bray**, a transfer from Motlow, is studying Mechatronics Engineering and Physics.

**Haley Denae Brazel**, an Agribusiness major, previously attended the University of Tennessee–Martin and Volunteer State Community College.

**Antonio Charles Chioccio**, a Volunteer State transfer, is studying Communication.

**Tyler Keith Christian** is a Computer Science major who attended Pellissippi State Community College and East Tennessee State University.

**Karen Elizabeth Cranston**, who formerly attended Gwinnett Technical College and Georgia Gwinnett College, is pursuing a degree in English.

**Natalie Rachel Foster**, who previously studied at Motlow, is majoring in Biology.

**Katelyn Gardner** studied at Cleveland State Community College and is a Marketing major.

**John Maxwell Lichtman** is an English major who studied at County College of Morris and Mercer County Community College in New Jersey.

**Jonathan Logan Locke**, a Communication major, attended Pellissippi State and Walters State.

**Abigail Jewell McArthur** is a Psychology major from Columbia State Community College.

**Andrew Vincent Modaff**, a Philosophy major, transferred from the College of DuPage in Illinois.

**Hannah Irene Monday** attended Pellissippi State and Walters State and is majoring in Communication.



**Isabella Grace Morrissey**, who studied at Columbia State's Williamson campus, is an Interdisciplinary Media major.

**Lilliana Elise Napier** transferred from Nashville State Community College and is seeking a degree in Business Administration.

**Matthew Wade Parris**, an English major, attended Trevecca Nazarene University.

**Kayleigh Nicole Payne**, formerly a student at Volunteer State, is majoring in Communication Studies.

**Summer Pritchard** is studying Psychology after transferring from Motlow.

**Esteban Sanchez**, a Volunteer State transfer, is seeking a degree in Exercise Science.

**Briana Marie Sands**, a Psychology major, attended Jefferson Community and Technical College in Kentucky.

**Terryn Joel Seaton** studied at Chattanooga State Community College and Columbia State and is majoring in Computer Science.

**Leah N. Seier**, a Music major, is a former student at Motlow.

**Dale Evrett Shackelford**, who attended Oklahoma City Community College and Eastern Oklahoma State College, is studying Audio Production.

**Morgan Alexandra Smith**, a transfer student from Motlow, is majoring in Biology.

**Emily Kara Stafford**, a former student at Chattanooga State, is seeking a degree in Animal Science.

**Savana F. Tucker**, who is studying Philosophy, previously attended Motlow and Columbia State.

**Carina N. Vazquez** is a former student at Motlow and will study Physics.

**Nathan Wahl** attended Queens College in New York and is majoring in Communication.

**Alan G. Webb**, transferring from Motlow, is pursuing a degree in Criminal Justice Administration.



## DANCING OFF 100 POUNDS

Buchanan Fellow writes thesis on weight-loss journey at Rec Center

By Randy Weiler

As a freshman Buchanan Fellow in 2016, Cassidy Johnson was unhappy with her teenage weight gain and wanted no part of the “Freshman 15”—a reference to the extra pounds students tend to add during their first year in college.

So, taking matters into her own hands—or feet, if you will—three years ago, she began her journey to a 100-pound weight loss after taking up dancing and initiating a fitness routine at the MTSU Campus Recreation Center.

“This ‘me’ was hiding inside that ‘me,’ ” Johnson said, referring to her current outward appearance and pointing to a “before” photo. “My freshman year was a weird transitional thing.”

“ This ‘me’ was hiding inside that ‘me.’ ”

Now Johnson is a ballroom dancer and fitness fanatic adept with the cha-cha, mambo, and American styles of dance. She trains with coach/dance partner Christopher Wayne of Nashville, and they won three multi-dance categories in a Wisconsin competition earlier this year. During the spring and summer, Johnson and Wayne competed in six more

Buchanan Fellow Cassidy Johnson practices the cha-cha in the Campus Recreation Center aerobics room.

photo by J. Intintoli



**Before:** Cassidy Johnson prior to starting college at MTSU in 2016 and before beginning a weight loss regimen at MTSU's Campus Recreation Center



**After:** Cassidy Johnson practices the mambo.

events, including in St. Louis, Milwaukee, Orlando, and Atlanta.

"A Journey Through Dance," the title of her Honors thesis, "explores how dance can provide medical benefits to your physical and mental health based on recent academic research, as well as the transformative power of the sport on a person's life," she said.

Between August 2016 and this May, Johnson visited MTSU's recreation facility more than 350 times, Campus Rec Director Charlie Gregory said. "Cassidy is a dynamic student and a great student success story," added Marianna Gibson, the center's marketing director.

When people saw the new Johnson and looked at her "before" photos, she said, their response was, "This doesn't look like you." She chose to have a new student ID made her sophomore year.

In the process, Johnson also said she has "overcome a lot of mental health issues," such as anxiety and social anxiety, particularly in situations where she had to engage with people.

Johnson, a native of Hoover, Alabama, is majoring in Audio Production and pursuing minors in Health

“ I study at night. Sleep is not a thing I do a lot of. ”

and Human Performance and in Honors. She also began working on campus in February as social media coordinator for Production Services, taking photographs and posting them to Instagram and Facebook, after being a crew member the previous year.

"I study at night," she said. "Sleep is not a thing I do a lot of. I'm always busy."

A T-shirt Johnson often wears while training reads: "Dance With Whoever Makes You Feel Happy." Her "happy dance" is not necessarily dancing the night away—it's dancing the pounds away and keeping them off. And whether she's competing or dancing socially "when I have the time," Johnson's one happy dancer.

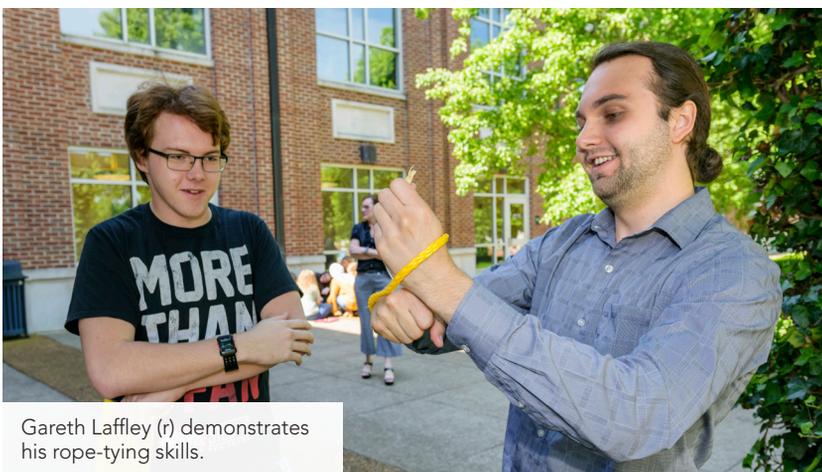


# STUDENTS PRACTICE LEADERSHIP THEORY

Institute of Leadership Excellence participants



Deana Raffo leads an ILE leadership session.



Gareth Laffley (r) demonstrates his rope-tying skills.

Thirty-five students from across the University participated in the ninth annual Institute of Leadership Excellence (ILE), an interdisciplinary experience led by Jones College of Business faculty **Deana Raffo**, **Earl Thomas**, and **David Foote**.

Participants heard from area leaders about developing their own leadership abilities and applying leadership in their fields of endeavor. The institute also included a wide range of experiences, including ice breakers and team-building, lectures, interactive discussions, focus group activities, and team projects.

During the one-week, all-day class, students also enjoyed furnished lunches sponsored by First Tennessee Bank; Pinnacle Financial Partners, Bill Jones, executive vice president and Rutherford area executive; the Jones College of Business; and Greater Nashville Realtors, Jarron Springer, CEO.

The institute is held each year during the first week of the May term and is open to all undergraduate students who have completed 45 credit hours and have a 3.0 GPA or who are nominated by a faculty member.



# SPRING 2020 INTERDISCIPLINARY SEMINARS

## Found In Translation

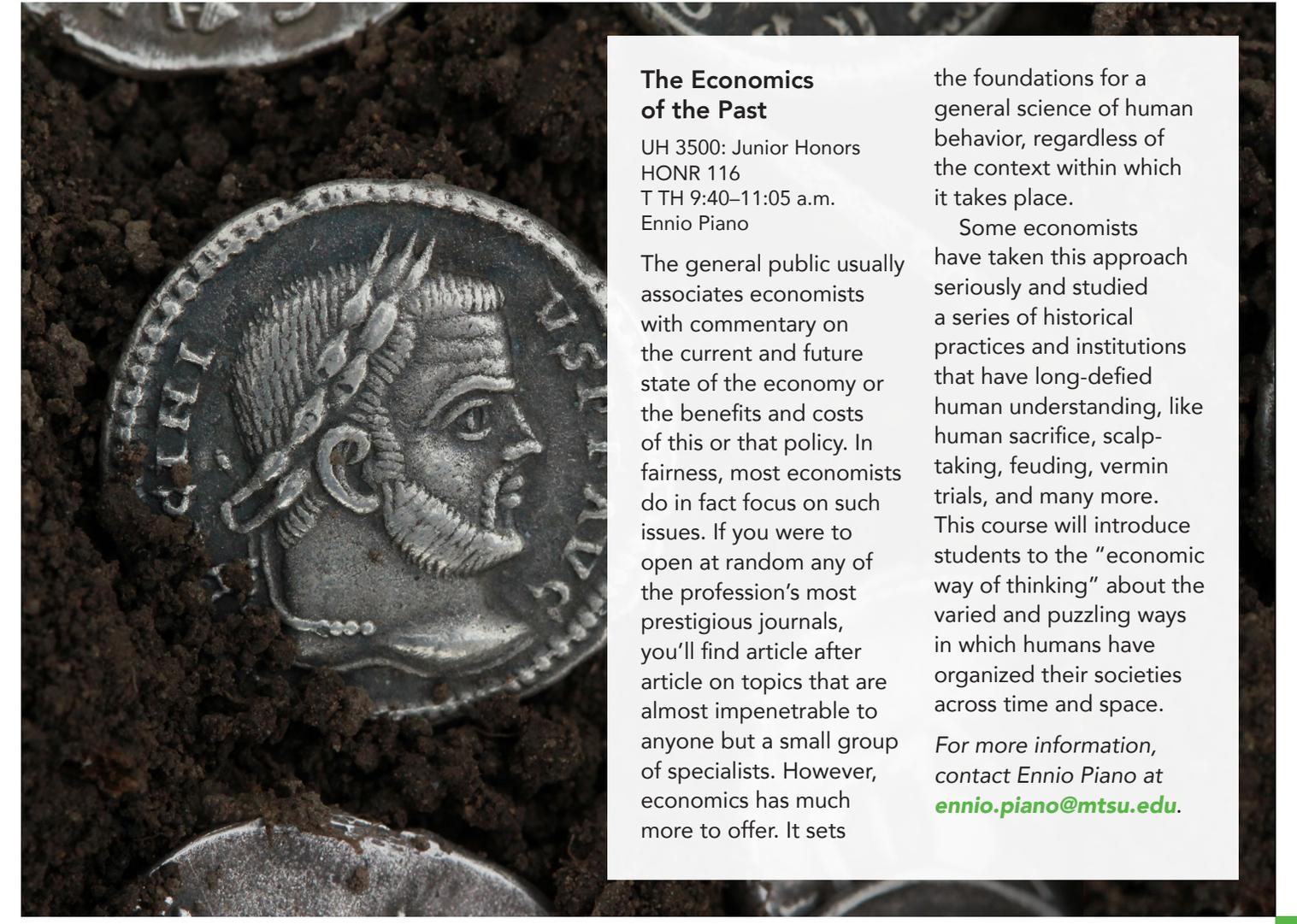
UH 4600: Senior Honors  
HONR 117  
M 4:30–7:30 p.m.  
Mohammed Albakry

This seminar introduces students to the fast-growing field of translation studies. It delves into the major issues and controversies of translation and explores the centrality of translation as a medium of cultural and intellectual exchange from the classical past to the global present. We will consider linguistic,

cultural, and literary theories of translation; critique and compare various samples of translation from multiple languages; and pay special attention to the importance of translation in the context of immigration, multilingualism, and globalization.

The course can be counted for the linguistics minor. It also can be counted for both the English major or minor.

*For more information, contact  
Mohammed Albakry at [mohammed.albakry@mtsu.edu](mailto:mohammed.albakry@mtsu.edu).*



## The Economics of the Past

UH 3500: Junior Honors  
HONR 116  
T TH 9:40–11:05 a.m.  
Ennio Piano

The general public usually associates economists with commentary on the current and future state of the economy or the benefits and costs of this or that policy. In fairness, most economists do in fact focus on such issues. If you were to open at random any of the profession's most prestigious journals, you'll find article after article on topics that are almost impenetrable to anyone but a small group of specialists. However, economics has much more to offer. It sets

the foundations for a general science of human behavior, regardless of the context within which it takes place.

Some economists have taken this approach seriously and studied a series of historical practices and institutions that have long-defied human understanding, like human sacrifice, scalp-taking, feuding, vermin trials, and many more. This course will introduce students to the "economic way of thinking" about the varied and puzzling ways in which humans have organized their societies across time and space.

*For more information, contact Ennio Piano at [ennio.piano@mtsu.edu](mailto:ennio.piano@mtsu.edu).*



Katie Crytzer

# from the "BOBRO" to the BELTWAY

Honors College alumna Katie Crytzer helps fill judgeships across the country, including on the Supreme Court

By James Anderson

It seems MTSU alumna Katie Crytzer's impulse for public service may be hereditary.

"In my family when I was growing up, service to others was always very important," said Crytzer, who graduated summa cum laude as a Presidential Scholar in the Honors College in 2006. "As I was growing up, my father worked for the federal government—an auditor for the Army—and we often lived on military bases or in temporary housing near military bases. When I was in high school, I was involved with the school and service organizations, and I sought ways to give back to the community. That's always been very important to me."

Even though she understood from an early age her desire to build a career in the public sector, she would have had no way of knowing that she'd eventually serve in an impactful role at the Department of Justice (DOJ) in President Donald J. Trump's administration well before her 40th birthday. After all, in 2006 when Crytzer was still at MTSU, it was still merely a possibility that Trump—then a real estate developer and host of a runaway hit TV show, *The Apprentice*—would be elected president of the United States. Besides, Crytzer's career was three years away from launching: She first needed to earn her J.D. from the George Mason University School of Law (renamed the Antonin Scalia Law School in 2016) before she could map out where she would take her legal talents.

Fast-forward 12 years to 2018. By then, with Trump in his second year as president, Crytzer was chief of

staff in the DOJ's Office of Legal Policy, assisting the administration in filling judgeships across the country. This includes helping to shepherd Supreme Court Justice Brett M. Kavanaugh through a challenging, but successful, Senate confirmation hearing—a cultural and political flashpoint watched around the world.

"I was in the room with President Trump [for the first time] after Justice Kavanaugh's confirmation, which we worked on in my office," Crytzer said. "It's humbling and an honor to be doing the work each of us is doing at the Office of Legal Policy every day."

“It's humbling and an honor to be doing the work each of us is doing at the Office of Legal Policy every day.”

Long before she helped to steer the U.S. Supreme Court toward a conservative majority, she was just a kid in Knoxville considering her options for college. Spoiler alert: "Go Big Orange" was decidedly not a part of her vocabulary.

"The University of Tennessee would not have been the right fit for me," Crytzer said. "I personally wanted to spread my wings. I cherished my high school classmates, and a lot of them went to UT, but



Dean John R. Vile and Crytzer



Crytzer at the Honors College Board of Visitors annual meeting

I wanted a change, especially since we had moved around a lot when I was growing up. That's how I found MTSU."

### THE MATLOCK EFFECT

When she arrived in Murfreesboro, Crytzer already had a pretty good idea she wanted to be an attorney—she learned that about herself via an informal distance-learning program of sorts.

"For a while before coming to MTSU I had thought I wanted to be a lawyer," Crytzer said. "But I didn't have any lawyers in my family, and I wasn't sure what type of lawyer I wanted to be. It sounds silly, but the idea of being a lawyer probably came about through watching *Matlock* on TV with my dad as a kid. With hindsight, I now know that *Matlock* was not a great lawyer—he came close to losing nearly every case. But growing up, I enjoyed analyzing things. And I enjoyed the process of making arguments and taking arguments apart. I felt that I was good at what lawyers did to be successful."

If the seersucker-clad fictional attorney played by Andy Griffith planted the seed for a career in law, it was a caring mentor from MTSU's Honors College who may have helped Crytzer cultivate it into a career: Dean John R. Vile.

"As an undergrad, Dr. Vile suggested that I join the Mock Trial team at MTSU," she said. "I really loved it. And I appreciated the guidance as I navigated the process of applying to law school. Dr. Vile is attuned to his students and their needs. And I was an eager beaver—that hasn't changed. I think Dr. Vile saw that about me even back then. I am also a classic oldest child."

Crytzer has two siblings. Her brother, James "Jimmy" Crytzer, and sister, Emily "Emmy" Crytzer Meredith, attended MTSU as well.

After graduating from MTSU and George Mason Law, Crytzer clerked for a year for Judge Raymond W. Gruender on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit in St. Louis. Later she joined the Washington, D.C., office of the prestigious law firm Kirkland & Ellis LLP as a litigator. It was there that she met her husband, Joe Oliveri. They actually didn't meet at Kirkland & Ellis, where they both worked as attorneys. Technically, they met playing softball on the Ellipse near the White House while they both worked at the firm.

"It sounds like it might have been scandalous, but it wasn't," she said, laughing. "It was a large office and we both played on the firm softball team. Win or lose, the team went to a sports bar nearby to have dinner and talk outside of work."

Oliveri holds a bachelor's degree in Government from Harvard University and a J.D. from George Washington University Law School.

By spring 2014, Crytzer had left Kirkland & Ellis to become an assistant United States attorney in Lexington, Kentucky, where, among other things, she prosecuted cases involving drug crimes and health care fraud. Three years later, she was at the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C., working as chief of staff for the Office of Legal Policy, where she provided legal and policy advice to DOJ leadership and managed a team of attorneys. Earlier this year, Crytzer was appointed acting deputy assistant attorney general in the same office.

"It's kind of funny. Here in D.C., people often assume that because I'm a woman, I'm not a Republican," she said. "And when they hear that I work at DOJ, they ask me what I think about the political appointees"—who, like Crytzer, serve at the pleasure of the presidential administration.

"When I tell them that I am one of those political appointees, that often changes the tone of the conversation. But it's an opportunity for me to share my story with someone new. In some circles, there's a sense that Republican women are a dying breed. But, rest assured, there are a lot of us in public service in D.C. doing good work." **A**



## Herby the Protector

Crytzer and her husband have a dog named Herbert Hoover—Herby for short—whom she describes as a "loud" mutt with a lot of "character." So much so, the first family to adopt him from the Humane Society returned him shortly thereafter.

At the Humane Society, "his report card said 'very barky.' And it's fair to say he didn't have all the manners that some dogs have," Crytzer noted. "But now he is a great little dog. He would tell you he is a very good protector of the house."

If Herby were to make his case in court that he is indeed an excellent protector of the home, Exhibit A might be the ongoing war he robustly wages daily against the only enemy he knows: the mailman in Old Town Alexandria where his family lives.

"We have a mail slot in our front door, and Herby barks at the mailman daily," Crytzer said.



Crytzer at the 2015 Honors College Board of Visitors annual meeting

## Service to the Honors College

In addition to serving in the Trump administration, Crytzer serves on the MTSU Honors College Board of Visitors, pictured above.

"We serve as a sounding board for students in the Honors College," she said. "Some portion of the work is to ensure we are providing students the best experiences and opportunities. Sometimes that's a matter of ensuring certain programs and scholarships are funded. Other

times it's providing mentorship to students. We have annual meetings around Homecoming. It's always nice to come back to MTSU."

It's also nice to have such a successful and accomplished alumna as part of the MTSU family.

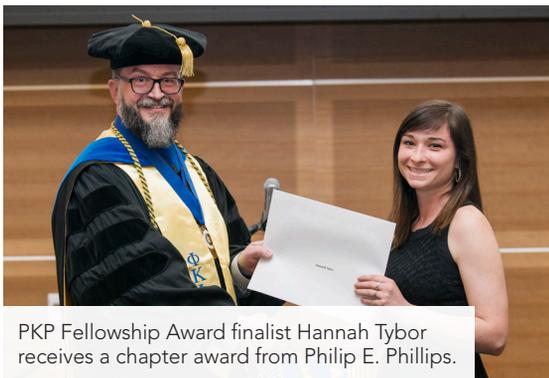


# PKP INITIATES NEW MEMBERS

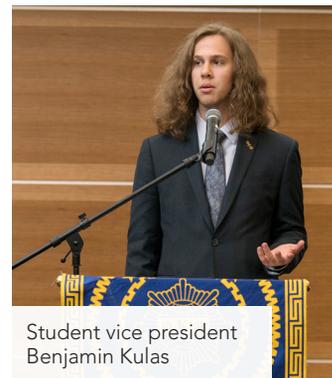
Student vice president Allison Bradford



Philip E. Phillips presents a chapter award to Robert Owen, a PKP Fellowship Award finalist.



PKP Fellowship Award finalist Hannah Tybor receives a chapter award from Philip E. Phillips.



Student vice president Benjamin Kulas

MTSU's vice provost for faculty affairs, **Cheryl Torsney**, served as keynote speaker at the April 9 initiation ceremony for the MTSU chapter of the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi.

Student vice president **Benjamin Kulas** introduced the influential faculty selected by new initiates, and **Robert Owen**, also a student vice president and a national Phi Kappa Phi Fellowship winner, explained the honor society's symbols. **Philip E. Phillips**, chapter president, presided over the initiation ceremony and presentation of certificates.

Honors students **Molly Scott** and **Beatriz Dedicatoria** received local PKP scholarships, and **Hannah Tybor** and **Owen** were recognized as the MTSU chapter's top applicants for a PKP Fellowship.

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

## Honors students initiated:

- |                    |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Chase Burton       | Vada Newman     |
| Catherine Farone   | Madeline Quinby |
| Madonna Ghobrial   | William Smith   |
| Miranda Hall       | Grant Waldron   |
| Kristen Huddleston | Emily Webb      |
| Cody Maness        |                 |

## Honors influential faculty:

- |                 |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Hilary Miller   | Constance Schmidt |
| Kate Pantelides |                   |



PKP initiation keynote speaker Cheryl Torsney



Beatriz Dedicatoria, a 2019–20 student vice president, and Philip E. Phillips

## PKP CHAPTER EARNS PLATINUM STATUS



The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi recently recognized MTSU’s chapter as a Circle of Excellence Platinum Chapter, the highest commendation a chapter can receive from the organization. The award is given to those that exceed expectations in operations and that demonstrate sustainability and vitality as a chapter of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation’s oldest and most selective collegiate honor society for all academic disciplines.

The Circle of Excellence distinction is a part of the Society’s Circle of Honor program, which was introduced in 2018 and awarded for the first time this year. The program recognized 75 chapters, including only 16 with the Platinum distinction. Phi Kappa Phi currently has chapters on more than 300 select campuses in the United States and the Philippines.

“The Circle of Honor program recognizes Phi Kappa Phi chapters that have gone above and beyond to promote academic excellence on their campuses,” PKP Executive Director Mary Todd said.

The Circle of Excellence Platinum honor is given to chapters who scored a perfect 100 on a criteria scale that evaluates chapter health indicators. By receiving the Platinum distinction, the MTSU chapter is recognized as a thriving organization that holds annual initiations, upholds the bylaws, regularly attends chapter training opportunities, and submits a chapter-endorsed nominee to the Phi Kappa Phi Fellowship Program.

“MTSU Chapter 246 is approaching its 30-year anniversary, and we are privileged to have the strong support of our University administration—including President Sidney A. McPhee, Provost Mark Byrnes, and all of our academic deans—in our efforts to promote

intellectual engagement and the lifelong love of learning on our campus,” said Philip E. Phillips, chapter president and Honors College associate dean.

“Over the past decade, our greatest strength as a chapter, however, has been the leadership demonstrated by our proactive group of student vice presidents and the dedication of our outgoing secretary, **Kathy Davis**, who has organized fall and spring initiation ceremonies for us every year. We are also indebted to the University Honors College for housing and supporting the chapter through the years. This is truly a great honor for us, and one that will spur us on to continue supporting academic events on campus and engaging in service projects like Habitat for Humanity and Relay for Life.”

Chapters achieving the Circle of Excellence Platinum distinction receive:

- a commendation letter sent to chapter officers and campus administration
- special recognition on the Phi Kappa Phi website
- specially-designed logo for use in chapter communications
- choice of a \$300 cash award or applicable event registration grant

Some of the organization's more notable members include former President Jimmy Carter, NASA astronaut Wendy Lawrence, novelist John Grisham, and YouTube cofounder Chad Hurley.

To see a full list of Platinum, Gold, and Silver chapters, visit [phikappaphi.org/2019excellence](http://phikappaphi.org/2019excellence).



Watson Harris (l) and Reaunna Morgan



Paul W. Martin Scholarship recipients with Honors Associate Dean Philip E. Phillips are (l-r): front, Jasmin Laurel, Beatriz Dedicatoria, Steffany Jenkins, Kaitlyn Berry, and Myranda Uselton; and back, Moose Williams, Ella Morin, Hannah Solima, Ekaterina Valuiskaya, and Phillips. Tatum England is not pictured.



Outstanding Student Award recipients with Honors Dean John R. Vile are (l-r) Hannah Tybor, Liam McBane, Ashlin Murphy, Gareth Laffely, and Devyn Hayes. Tatum England is not pictured.

# HONORS COLLEGE 2018-19 ANNUAL AWARDS

## Outstanding Honors Faculty Award

Teresa Davis (Psychology)

## Exemplary Faculty Service Award

Anthon Eff (Economics)

## Bart McCash Scholarship

Kaylee Lindgren (Social Work)

## McCash Founders Award Scholarship

Katrina Scott (Art, Foreign Languages)

## Ingram-Montgomery Research Scholarship

Cassidy Johnson (Audio Production)

## Hannah/Harris Study Abroad Scholarship

Reaunna Morgan (International Relations)

## Marilyn M. and Philip M. Mathis Research Award

Britney Brown (Animal Science)

## Michael Martinelli Memorial Scholarship

Beverly Warner (Physics)

## Lawrence R. Good Scholarship

Mickayla Wilkinson (Psychology)

## First Tennessee Study Abroad Scholarship

Erica Combs (Anthropology, Foreign Languages)

## Honors College Outstanding Public Service Award

Emma Cryar (Art)

## Academic Achievement Scholarship

Cody Maness (Computer Science)

Kayley Stallings (Biochemistry)

## Paul W. Martin Scholarship

Kaitlyn Berry (Psychology)

Beatriz Dedicatoria (English, Video and Film Production)

Tatum England (Community and Public Health)

Steffany Jenkins (Biology)

Jasmin Laurel (Physics)

Gabriella Morin (Biology, Foreign Languages)

Hannah Solima (International Relations)

Myranda Uselton (Chemistry)

Ekaterina Valuiskaya (Finance)

Moose Williams (Art, Foreign Languages)

## Gordon and Sara Bell Native American Studies Scholarship

Gareth Laffely (Marketing)

## Outstanding First-Year Student

Liam McBane (Music)

## Outstanding Second-Year Student

Ashlin Murphy (Political Science)

## Outstanding Third-Year Student

Tatum England (Community and Public Health)

Gareth Laffely (Marketing)

## Outstanding Fourth-Year Student

Devyn Hayes (Biology)

Hannah Tybor (Public Relations)



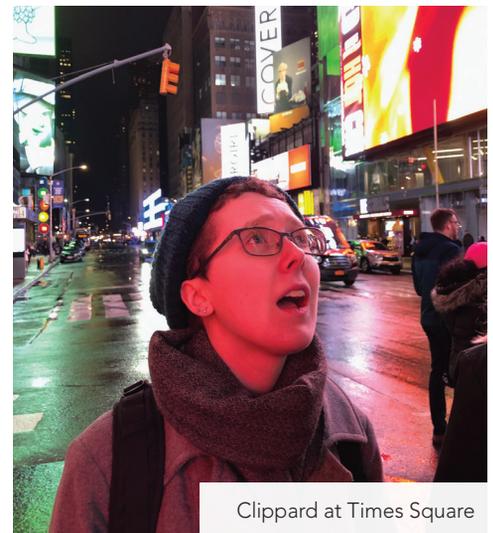
Rebecca Clippard and Marsha Powers at the New York Public Library



Collage award presented at March CSPA Convention



Clippard at the Museum of Modern Art



Clippard at Times Square



Clippard makes a friend.

# “COLLAGE” CROWNED AT NATIONAL CEREMONY

Magazine editor, advisor accept award in New York

**Rebecca Clippard**, former editor in chief of *Collage: A Journal of Creative Expression*, and advisor **Marsha Powers** were on hand at Columbia University in New York City in March to accept a prestigious Crown Award for the Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 issues of the MTSU magazine.

*Collage* was one of only 10 collegiate arts and literary magazines nationwide to receive the prestigious award from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association (CSPA), which has been recognizing excellence in student publications for 95 years.

This was the third Silver Crown Award for *Collage* since its first in 2007. *Collage* has also won three Gold Crown Awards.

A biannual publication established at MTSU in 1968, *Collage* provides opportunities for students to gain experience in peer review, magazine layout, and many aspects of publishing. The journal, now housed in the Honors College, provides beneficial experience for staff members and contributors alike.



# CREATIVE EXPRESSION WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Members of the Spring 2018 staff of *Collage: A Journal of Creative Expression* pictured at the final editing meeting are (l-r): front, Bae Dedicatoria, Hannah Tybor, Moose Williams, and Katrina Scott; second row, Arif Bashar, Lisa Hardie, and Nathan Wahl; third row, Elizabeth Clippard, Laura Grimes, Niki Yonkov, Kelsey Keith, and Zoe Haggard; and back, George Boktor, Kate Carter, Leslie Bell, Caroline Cromwell, Nabraas Khan, Anthony Czelusniak, and Katelyn MacVey. Jake Garrette, Simone Strange, Stacey Yabko Misra, Kaylee Schilling, Destiny Seaton, and Todarius Morris are not pictured.

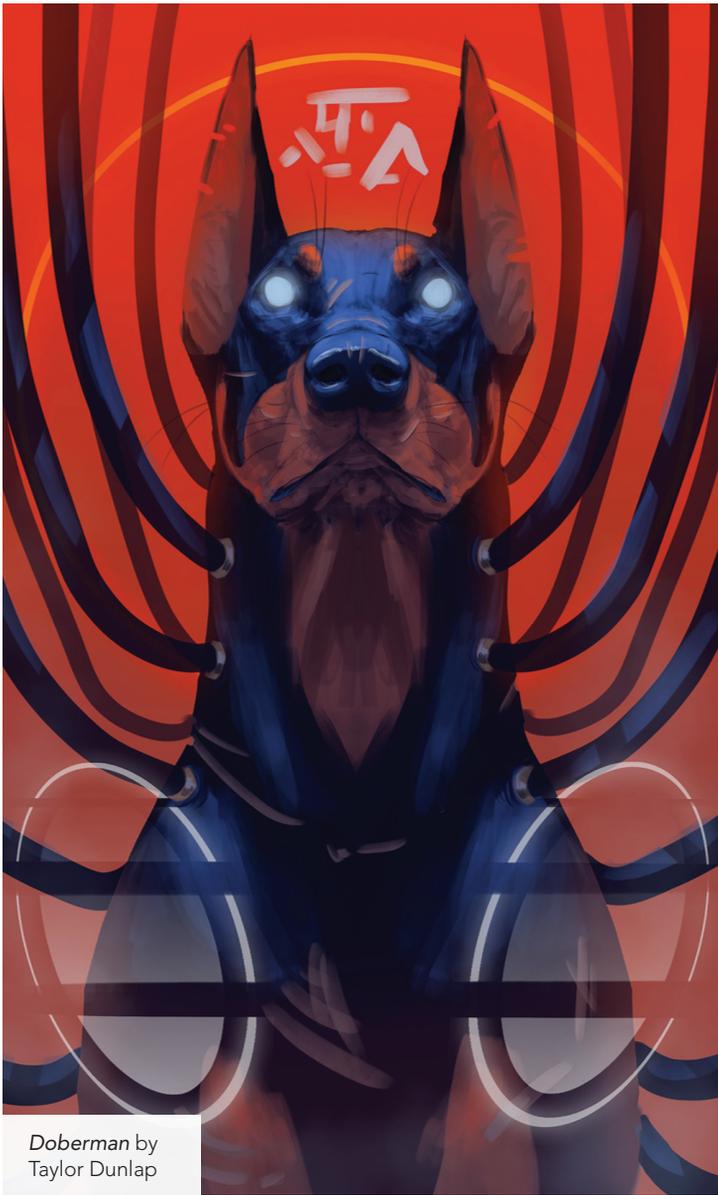
Undergraduate students **Hannah Berthelson**, **Bailey Hilliard**, **Taylor Dunlap**, and **Haydin Oechsle** won spring *Collage* Creative Expression Awards for their outstanding poetry, short story, art, and photography submissions, respectively. Each student received an award certificate and \$75.

Each semester the *Collage* staff participates in a blind grading process to select approximately 60 pieces for publication from around 350 submissions. *Collage* presents four to six Creative Expression Awards, depending upon the type of submissions received. 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. The staff now also selects award recipients for highly rated audios and videos when applicable.



## Poetry

**Hannah Berthelson**, a senior Buchanan Fellow majoring in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology, received a Martha Hixon Creative Expression Award for her poem "Hushed."



*Doberman* by Taylor Dunlap



*The Window Must Always Be Left Open* by Haydin Oechsle



## Art

**Taylor Dunlap**, an Animation major who also has an Art minor, captured a Lon Nuell Creative Expression Award for his digital painting *Doberman*.



## Prose

**Bailey Hillard**, an English major with a minor in History, won for her short story "The Familiar Darkness."

*Photo by Haydin Olivia Photography*



## Photography

**Haydin Oechsle**, a senior pursuing a Media and Entertainment degree with a Photography concentration, earned the photography award for her digital photograph *The Window Must Always Be Left Open*.



# PEER-TO-PEER PRESENTATIONS

State conference encourages networking and develops skills

By *Mark Blackmon*, a junior Buchanan Fellow majoring in Social Work

MTSU Honors participants at the TCHCC

Ten Honors students joined groups from numerous colleges and universities statewide at Volunteer State Community College to participate in the Tennessee Collegiate Honors Council Conference (TCHCC).

MTSU Honors students **Tatum England, Hannah Berthelson, Sarah Dixon, Hannah Hall, Kelsey Keith, Gareth Laffely, Gabriella Morin, Matthew Cureton, Devyn Hayes**, and I presented our research at the Feb. 16 event at Volunteer State. Student poster presentations, round-table discussions, panel presentations, and general sessions with multiple presenters took place at the new Steinhauer-Rogan-Black Humanities Building. Honors staffers **Susan Lyons** and **April Goers**, who organized MTSU's participation in the event and helped students participating refine their presentations, also attended the day-long conference.

The schedule for the day was flexible, allowing us to attend many unique presentations. We were able to support each other as well as hear speakers from other universities, such as Christian Brothers University, East Tennessee State University, Fisk University, Freed-Hardeman University, Motlow State Community College, Tennessee State University, Tennessee Technological University, the University

of Tennessee–Chattanooga, and Volunteer State Community College.

Many speakers presented scientific research focused in the disciplines of chemistry or biology; however, there was still outstanding representation from the areas of psychology, anthropology, photography and videography, music, politics, English, film and media, gender studies, technology, and world travels. The students' varied presentation styles gave each speaker a distinct flair and showed his or her strengths.

The Tennessee Collegiate Honors Council Conference was a fantastic opportunity not only to improve my skills but also to network with students from other universities. As I was presenting, I found myself surrounded by scholars with whom I wanted to connect. The faculty in attendance were eager to hear each presentation and to provide helpful feedback.

The best part about TCHCC was that everyone wanted to be there. It was not just a conference for extra credit or brownie points; it was an opportunity for like-minded peers to grow together in academic excellence, ask thought-provoking questions for clarification and insight, and develop professional connections with faculty and students from other Tennessee universities.



## EXEMPLARY SERVICE AWARD

Economics Professor Tony Eff accepts an Exemplary Service Award from Honors College Dean John R. Vile.

## PHILLIPS ELECTED TO PKP BOARD



Philip E. Phillips

Honors Associate Dean **Philip E. Phillips** has been elected to serve a two-year term on the national board of directors for the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi.

In this role, Phillips will represent the membership of Phi Kappa Phi while also working to support the mission and goals of the society during the 2018–20 biennium. The election took place last August during the society's Biennial Convention in Minneapolis, where there were 152 voting delegates.

Since 2012, Phillips has served as secretary, president, and past president of the MTSU chapter, which received the Circle of Excellence Platinum distinction this year (see page 39). Phillips was a member of the national Fellowship Committee for the 2016–18 biennium and on the Credentials Committee for the 2016 Biennial Convention.

Phillips joined the MTSU faculty in 1999 and was a recipient of an MTSU Foundation Distinguished Research Award in 2014–15 and 2007–08. He also is the founder and former director of the Great Books in Middle Tennessee Prisons program.

Founded in 1897, Phi Kappa Phi is the nation's oldest and most selective collegiate honor society for all academic disciplines.



Lily Grace and Susan Lyons (l-r) at the Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C., with their first-place award

## GOOD FORTUNE SMILES ON PAIR

### Chinese Embassy honors Lyons and her daughter

By Susan Lyons, a coordinator for the University Honors College

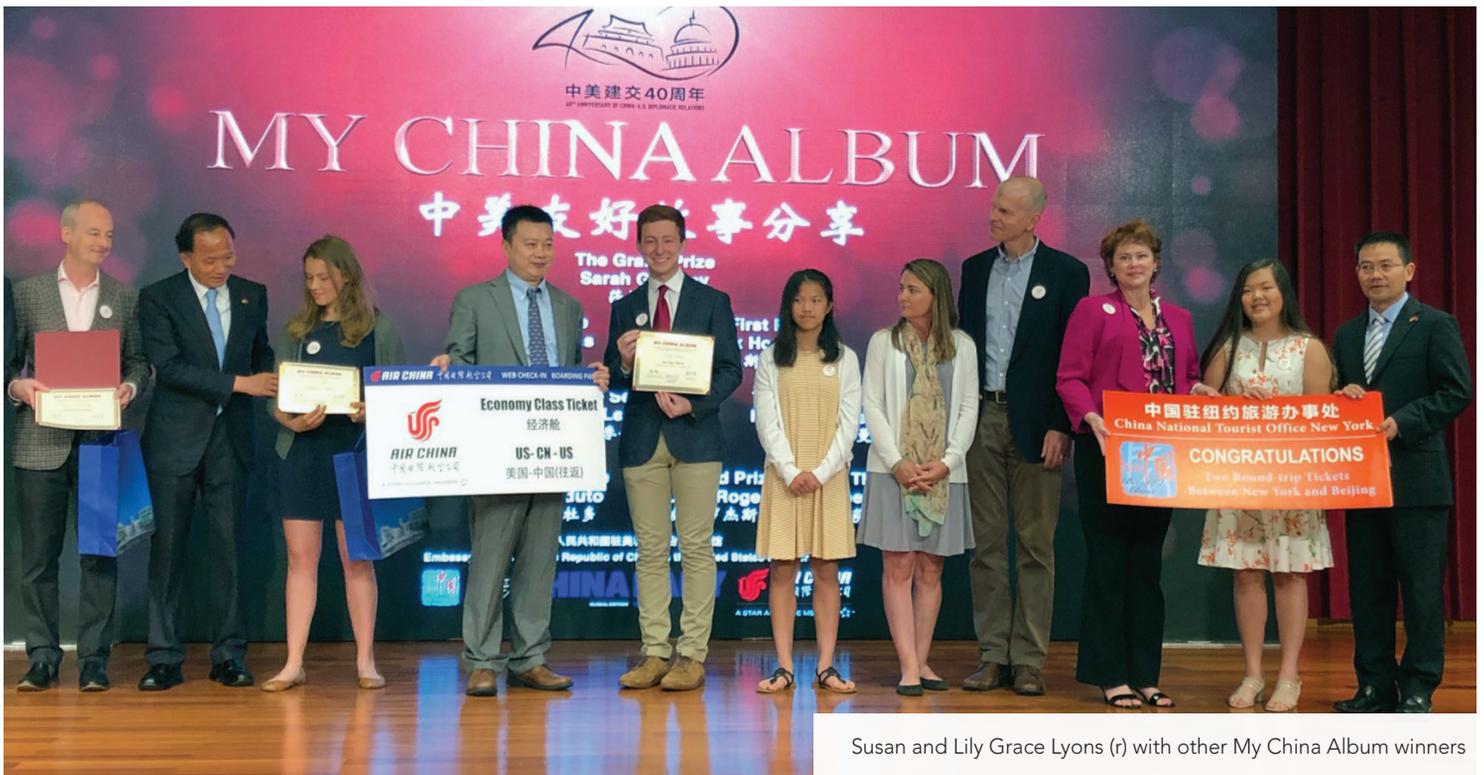
In early April, I had the good fortune to meet and become friends with Yingzhen Zhao, the associate director of the Confucius Institute at MTSU. Knowing that I had adopted my daughter Lily Grace from China, Zhao encouraged me to enter a contest sponsored by the *China Daily* newspaper and the Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C. Imagine my surprise when I received this email a few weeks later . . .

Dear Ms. Lyons,

On behalf of China Daily Newspaper and the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States, it is my honor to inform you that you have been selected as a **first-place** winner of the My China Album story sharing event. The pictures and stories you provided were exemplary of the importance which people-to-people relations have played, and will continue to play, in China-U.S. relations.

“I had always planned to take Lily Grace on a heritage tour of her birth country.”

As it turns out, there were several hundred entries and only two first-place winners. I was invited to attend a VIP ceremony at the Chinese Embassy May 4 in Washington, D.C., celebrating the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and the United States. I also was awarded two round-trip tickets from New York to Beijing during a ceremony opened by the Chinese Ambassador to the U.S. I had always planned to take Lily Grace on a heritage tour of her birth



Susan and Lily Grace Lyons (r) with other My China Album winners



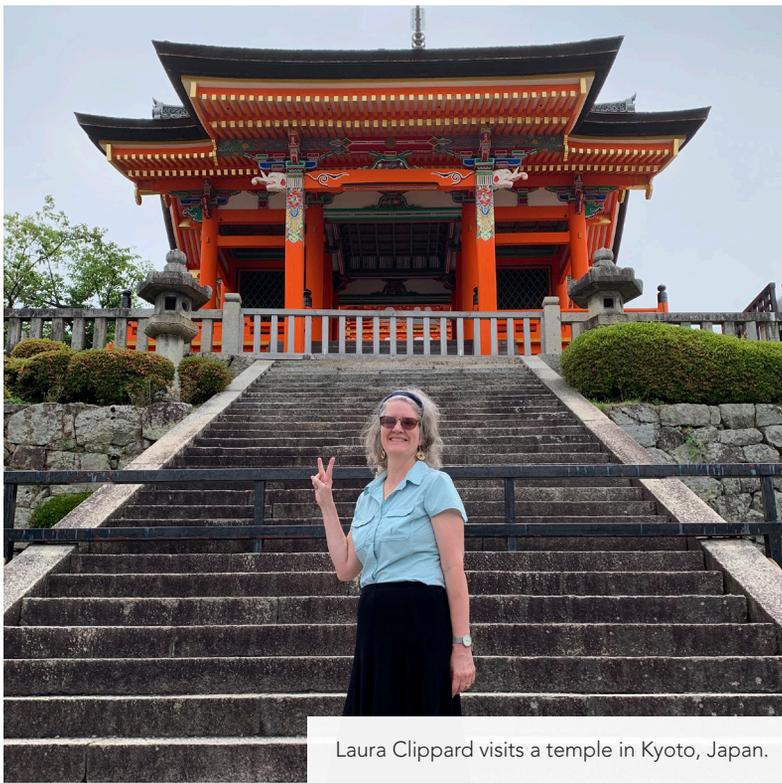
Reporters from the *China Daily News* interview Susan Lyons.

country, and the plane tickets will allow us to go next spring.

The day of the ceremony my daughter and I arrived at the Chinese Embassy at 9 a.m. We had an opportunity to tour the very modern building designed by famous architect I.M. Pei and view beautiful pieces of artwork. There were several hundred people in attendance and many cultural activities, including dancing, tai chi, calligraphy, food tasting, and a tea ceremony. We thoroughly enjoyed the day and the gracious hospitality provided by the embassy and *China Daily News* staff. Since I had never won anything significant in the past, this was an experience my daughter and I will never forget.



Lily Grace Lyons poses with a Chinese vase on display at the Chinese Embassy.



Laura Clippard visits a temple in Kyoto, Japan.



Dean Karen Petersen at the Taj Mahal in India

# FACULTY/STAFF FULBRIGHTS TOO

## Petersen and Clippard set an education abroad example

By Morgan Posey, 2017 Honors graduate seeking a master's in Media and Communication

Dean **Karen Petersen**, who heads up MTSU's College of Liberal Arts, has one question for students, faculty, and staff considering applying for a Fulbright: "Why wouldn't you?"

Fulbright, a government-funded exchange program started by U.S. Sen. William Fulbright, offers students and university employees the opportunity to travel abroad to conduct research, attend graduate school, teach English, visit international higher education institutions, and more.

Petersen, an Honors faculty member, recently returned from her own Fulbright adventure. She traveled to India for two weeks as part of an International Education Administrators (IEA) program.

**Laura Clippard**, an Honors College advisor, also received an IEA Fulbright for an educational trip abroad to Japan in June.

"Fulbright promotes mutual understanding," Clippard said. "It breaks down barriers. That strikes some emotion with me, as well as an intellectual note."

As MTSU's Fulbright program advisor in Honors, Clippard works one-on-one with students applying for

the fellowship to strengthen their essays and prepare for faculty interviews.

"I love what it's done for our students," Petersen said. "We have been able to send so many of our students abroad thanks to the work Laura has done."

“Fulbright promotes mutual understanding. It breaks down barriers.”

Both Petersen and Clippard have helped many students in faculty interviews but found that being on the other side of the application was more challenging than they realized.

"It was really a humbling experience for me," Clippard said. "My job is to provide constructive criticism to students on their Fulbright applications, and that's easy to do until you're the one writing a five-page personal statement."

Petersen and Clippard worked together with several students, but one in particular stands out in both of

their minds—Patrick Pratt, who received a research Fulbright to Tanzania in 2010. He credits Clippard and Petersen with giving him the confidence he needed to apply.

“They were there for me every step of the way, and I let them know I was accepted before I even told my parents,” Pratt said. “Since this time, I have known Dr. Petersen and Mrs. Clippard to be unwavering in their commitments to students who are willing to give themselves a chance.”

The Fulbright program has rewarded Clippard’s hard work, recognizing MTSU as a top producer of U.S. Student Fulbright Award winners in 2012.

This summer, Clippard was thrilled to embark on her own IEA Fulbright adventure to Japan, a two-week group seminar designed for U.S. higher education administrators to familiarize themselves with the Japanese higher education system, society, and culture. The program consists of briefings, campus visits, and appointments with selected government officials, cultural activities, and meetings with Japanese international education professionals.

While in Japan, Clippard visited a wide range of educational institutions and universities and discussed women’s issues in the United States and Japan with the 10 women in her Fulbright group. They also met a group of visionary women who have made international impacts, including Hiroshima Jogakuin University’s current president, Akiko Minato, who is

87 years old. Minato shared her extraordinary journey, including her experience meeting Martin Luther King Jr. She also revealed that her journey started when she received a Fulbright in the 1950s to visit America.

“This Fulbright has been a life-changing experience for me on a personal and professional level,” Clippard said. “I hope to share this experience with my students and to continue to promote cultural understanding and encourage students to travel abroad. I also hope to encourage more students to apply to Japanese opportunities such as the JET (Japanese Exchange and Teaching Program) and Fulbright.”

“This Fulbright has been a life-changing experience for me on a personal and professional level.”

“There are so many options for Fulbright. If faculty can’t leave for a full year, there are flex options. Students can teach English, conduct research, or go to graduate school overseas. There is a Fulbright option for everyone.”

To learn more about Fulbright and the Undergraduate Fellowships Office, email [laura.clippard@mtsu.edu](mailto:laura.clippard@mtsu.edu).

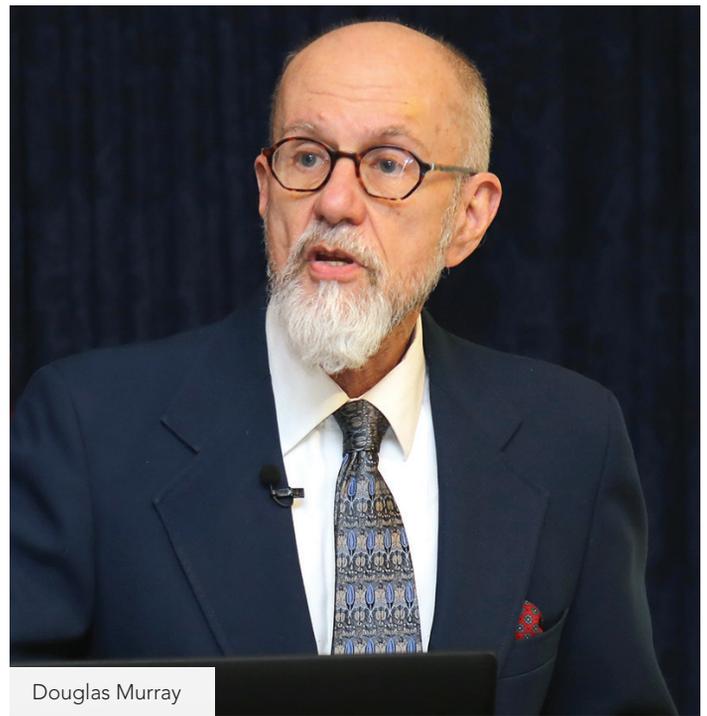


## HONORS COUNCIL APPRECIATION

Roger Heinrich (Media Arts), chair of the 2018–19 Honors Council, receives a gift of appreciation from Associate Dean Philip E. Phillips (l) and Dean John R. Vile.



Joan McRae



Douglas Murray

## LECTURE SERIES EXAMINES “LETTERS”

The Spring 2019 Honors Lecture Series explored topics related to “Letters,” a theme selected by **Philip E. Phillips**, Honors associate dean, following a conversation with **Kent Syler**. Syler’s students, who had read constituent correspondence sent to the office of Sen. Albert Gore Sr. during the Civil Rights era, were brought back in time to a place that was both familiar and unfamiliar to them by means of a medium (the written letter) that is now “old-fashioned.” Both the subject matter and the means of communication made a lasting impression upon the class.

Syler was the keynote speaker of the spring interdisciplinary series. Seven other speakers contributed, all but one from MTSU.

Other spring class sessions and activities included a beyond-the-classroom experience at the Albert Gore Research Center, a presentation by **Laura Clippard** on fellowships and scholarships, and Honors student thesis presentations.

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 about the Honors Lecture Series, please email [philip.phillips@mtsu.edu](mailto:philip.phillips@mtsu.edu).



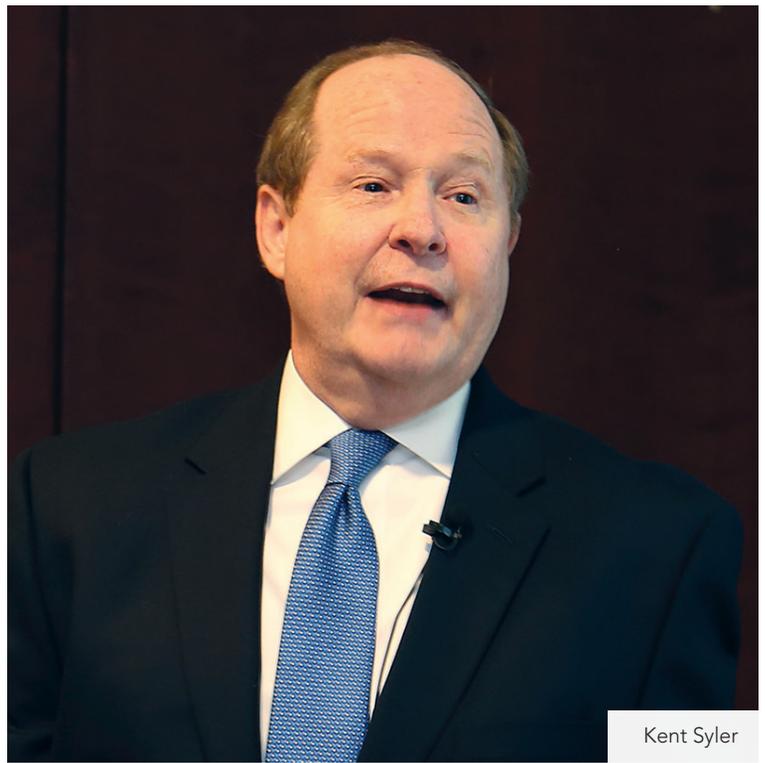
Kate Pantelides



Louis Kyriakoudes



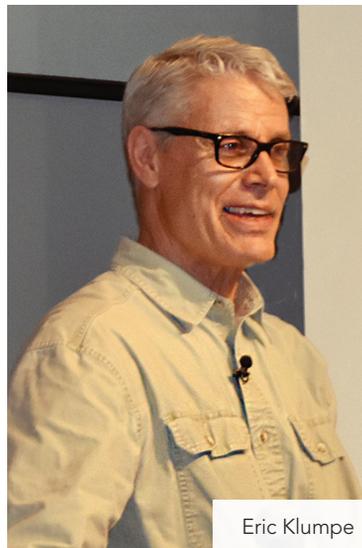
Philip E. Phillips



Kent Syler



John R. Vile



Eric Klumpe



Mary Hoffschwelle

### Lecture topics and speakers:

Introduction

**Philip E. Phillips**, Honors Associate Dean

“A Mirror of Today’s Political Fray in Letters from 50 Years Ago”

**Kent Syler**, Albert Gore Research Center

“Understanding How Tennesseans Experienced War through Letters at the Albert Gore Research Center”

**Louis Kyriakoudes**, Albert Gore Research Center

“A Republic of Letters: American Political Correspondence”

**John R. Vile**, Honors College dean

“Galileo’s Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina: A Tale of Two Revelations”

**Eric Klumpe**, Physics and Astronomy

“Jane Austen and the #MeToo Movement”

**Douglas Murray**, English, Belmont University

“What’s Old Is New Again: Lessons from Words of War, Peace, and Propaganda in Fifteenth-Century France”

**Joan McRae**, World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

“Words in the Clouds: How We Talk to Each Other in Digital Spaces”

**Kate Pantelides**, English

“ ‘Don’t Write Agnes’ : Narrating Race, Gender, and Professional Identity in Jim Crow Alabama”

**Mary Hoffschwelle**, History



# THE LAST PIECE OF THE PUZZLE

Mary Hoffschwelle engages students in Honors, History, and across campus

By Vicky Travis

Give Mary Hoffschwelle an archive full of letters and documents, and we might not see her emerge for hours. It would be her joy to sift through historic papers to connect the dots of a person's past and relate it to our present, always appreciating how everyone sees history through different lenses.

"It's like putting together a puzzle," the MTSU History Professor said of research. "I have a personal fascination with the idea that wherever you are, there have been so many before us."

Her love of reading diaries and first-person narratives started when she was young growing up in the suburbs of Pittsburgh and St. Louis. That deep interest in who came before us prompted her to major in History at Chatham College in Pittsburgh, then led her to a master's at the College of William and Mary and later to a doctorate at Vanderbilt University.

Hoffschwelle, who joined the MTSU faculty in 1992, is an expert in the history of education in the rural South in the early 20th century. She is also an expert in Tennessee history and U.S. and Southern women's history.

She has authored two well-reviewed books: *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South* (2006) and *Rebuilding Rural Southern Community* (1998). Hoffschwelle is often called upon for her expertise in Rosenwald schools, some 5,300 well-designed schools built for African American children across the South during 1912–32. Julius Rosenwald, philanthropist and president of Sears Roebuck,

partnered with Booker T. Washington of the Tuskegee Institute on the effort. Only 10%–12% of the buildings still exist.

"I started studying them, digging down, and the next thing you know there are two books," she said. Her humility doesn't go unnoticed.

“I have a personal fascination with the idea that wherever you are, there have been so many before us.”

"Her well-foundedness, intellect, and excellence give her a quiet strength," said Mary Evins, a colleague in the Department of History and University Honors College who has worked with Hoffschwelle for 14 years. "Her research is incredibly respected. One would go to her for any evaluation or critique, and her advice is beyond compare."

#### FOR THE LOVE

Hoffschwelle believes deeply in fostering a love of learning in the heart of a student. As an Honors College History professor and as director of MT Engage, she has helped students relate their here-and-now classes with their futures, and, in the process, perhaps they discover who they want to be.



Mary Hoffschwelle  
photo by Darby Campbell



"It is so fascinating to create a program to give students a chance to engage in their learning but also to articulate what they've learned through integrative/reflective thinking, then communicate it with other audiences," she said.

MT Engage, which began in 2016, is the University's Quality Enhancement Plan for continuing accreditation with the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

"What they [the MT Engage team] do is amazing," said Professor Carroll Van West, director of the Center for Historic Preservation and Hoffschwelle's husband. "What they've accomplished in two years is impressive."

Ahead of schedule, eight students graduated with the MT Engage distinction this year—the first last fall and seven earlier this spring.

"Under our original plan, we should not have seen our first graduates until next spring, but the overall success of the program allowed us to be in front of that goal," said Lexy Denton, assistant director of MT Engage.

"MT Engage has far exceeded our goals and even our expectations in large part due to the leadership of Mary Hoffschwelle. One of the primary components of our program is faculty development. Mary works with our faculty to determine how MT Engage can fit into

what they are already doing, instead of trying to make what they are doing fit our program."

Hoffschwelle's excellent record in teaching, research, and service, led recently to her selection from many nationally qualified candidates as MTSU's new associate provost for strategic planning and partnerships on July 1, following the retirement of Faye Johnson.

### A PERFECT MATCH

Hoffschwelle and West met during the late 1970s in Virginia when Hoffschwelle was finishing her master's and West was working on his doctorate at William and Mary. They actually met at Colonial Williamsburg, where West was giving tours on weekends and summers and she was working in history site administration. "It was fabulous training as a curator," she said of her Williamsburg role.

"The young people who were there tended to congregate," West remembered. "We were all the same age with the same income." The two started dating, often spending time enjoying their eclectic music interests by playing and sharing records. The music collecting has remained a passion for West, who laughingly called it his addiction.

They married in November 1980 and moved to Montana in 1981 for Hoffschwelle's job as a curator.

Living there for about four years, they fell in love with the state where she was born.

The couple moved to Murfreesboro in 1985 when West accepted the job at MTSU's Center for Historic Preservation. Hoffschwelle became director at Oaklands Mansion and went on to earn her doctorate in Public History from Vanderbilt in 1993.

Teaching at MTSU since 1992, she calls herself "a lifer."

Hoffschwelle and West enjoy music of all kinds including MTSU's WMOT Roots Radio, country, symphonies, and opera. And West loved some punk back in the day, introducing Hoffschwelle to The Clash. They have season tickets to the Nashville Opera and the Nashville Symphony. And for 20 years, they've also held Tennessee Titans and Nashville Predators season tickets.

The couple loves visiting museums to learn and just for fun, and both are fascinated with architecture. They have a son, Owen, 27, and a daughter, Sara, 21, and recently became grandparents with the birth of Owen and his wife's baby girl.

## ONWARD AND UPWARD

Started three years ago following a year of development, MT Engage has about 100 faculty involved who use high-impact practices in the classroom. MT Engage embraces study abroad, writing intensive, project-based, and active courses.

"When Dr. Hoffschwelle decided to direct MT Engage, she brought gravitas to outside-the-box teaching. It used to be a lonely universe," Evins said of alternative teaching methods. Students who were accustomed to the "sage on the stage" traditional form of college instruction would look at Experiential Learning (EXL) courses as extra work.

"Now that a very esteemed faculty member has taken this on, it's becoming more mainstream," Evins

added. "The University is on an upward trajectory toward these pedagogies."

The Honors College partners with the program and "is quite grateful for Dr. Hoffschwelle for leading it," said Honors Dean John R. Vile, who also holds a degree from William and Mary and thus feels a special bond with West and Hoffschwelle.

Over the years, MTSU's integrative teaching has included EXL courses and the Raider Learning Communities (RLCs), which pair two courses.

Hoffschwelle and Chemistry Professor Judith Iriarte-Gross have teamed up to teach sections of Tennessee History and Contemporary Issues in Science together for the RLC.

"What made the RLC were her suggestions, which brought both Tennessee history and science to life for the students," Iriarte-Gross said. During a discussion on Prohibition, they visited Jack Daniel Distillery, where the history and science of whiskey were presented.

"Students asked questions about the distillation process and commented on how they heard stories from their grandparents and great-grandparents about Tennessee moonshine," Iriarte-Gross said.

Both are members of the American Association for University Women chapter, and Hoffschwelle helped Iriarte-Gross start the first Expanding Your Horizons (EYH) in STEM Conference for girls. The 23rd EYH at MTSU took place Sept. 28 and has expanded to numerous statewide sites as well.

Hoffschwelle serves on the board of Youth Empowerment through Arts and Humanities (YEAH!), which seeks to empower teens in arts, life skills, volunteerism, and community service. She also has been president of the Middle Tennessee Fund for Women and Girls since 2017.

"Mary is an amazing educator and friend," Iriarte-Gross said. "I have grown as an educator by working with her." **A**



Mary Hoffschwelle speaks at the 2019 Spring MT Engage Reception.



Philip E. Phillips, Honors associate dean (l-r); Lexy Denton, assistant director, MT Engage; Mary Hoffschwelle, former director, MT Engage; Michelle Northcutt; Faye Johnson; and Jason Vance



## DEANS ON THE MOVE

Bonnie Allen, dean of Walker Library, retired May 3 to be with her daughter in New Mexico. While Allen was dean, the library hosted a Buchanan Fellow inauguration and unveiling of the James M. Buchanan bust created by local artist Tracy Sugg in 2015. In 2017, the library hosted an exhibition of rare books by Mississippi author Eudora Welty from the collection of retired pediatrician J. Lee Owen, a friend of the Honors College who donated the collection to the University in 2018.



Ken Paulson stepped down Aug. 1 as dean of the College of Media and Entertainment, but is continuing work as a faculty member and director of the new Free Speech Center. He now has an office in the Martin Honors Building, Room 230.



## HAPPY RETIREMENT

Kathy Davis, long-time executive aide for the Honors College, retired in June after 24 years at MTSU. She also served as coordinator for MTSU's chapter of the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, a role which will be assumed by Sandra Campbell.



## BUCHANAN FELLOWS: DATING SERVICE?

Several couples find love and marriage in program

By Hannah Tybor

*Have you been struggling to find love? Looking for someone with similar interests? Sick of swiping left on Tinder? Join the Buchanan Fellowship instead!*

Since 2007, the Buchanan Fellowship has provided camaraderie among its cohort of 20 annual recipients through shared classes and experiences. While the intent of the program is to strengthen students through rigorous academics and community service, the fellowship also creates the perfect environment for students to fall in love, resulting in Buchanan marriages on several occasions including these four couples.

**Dylan** and **Chelsea Phillips** were the first of the Buchanan duos who married, followed close behind by **Trevor** and **Kailey Wiemann** as well as **Trevor Smith** and **Chelsea Harmon Smith** from the Buchanan Fellowship class of 2012. The Buchanan Fellowship class of 2015 produced another couple: **Jake** and **Lauren Garrette**, who were married this June.

While the Buchanan Fellowship's original intention was not to create marriages, it has been successful in doing so. Jake Garrette sums the program up nicely when he says, "I think the fact that so many Buchanan Fellows have married is proof of the program's success. It was conceived to foster a connection and sense of unity among the University's highest-ranking students. It has certainly created lasting ties, and personally, I couldn't be more grateful."

Jake and Lauren Garrette

### Trevor and Kailey Wiemann

It was the Sunday before the start of their classes in 2012—Trevor and Kailey’s freshman year at MTSU. Their entire Buchanan Fellowship class gathered to eat dinner at Demos’ Restaurant, and as a Murfreesboro native, Kailey drove several people to the restaurant, including Trevor. Throughout the car ride and the meal, Trevor joked with Kailey, teasing her about the spilled Doritos in her backseat and their mutual awkwardness.

“I feel like the Buchanan Fellowship is the perfect environment for bringing people together.”

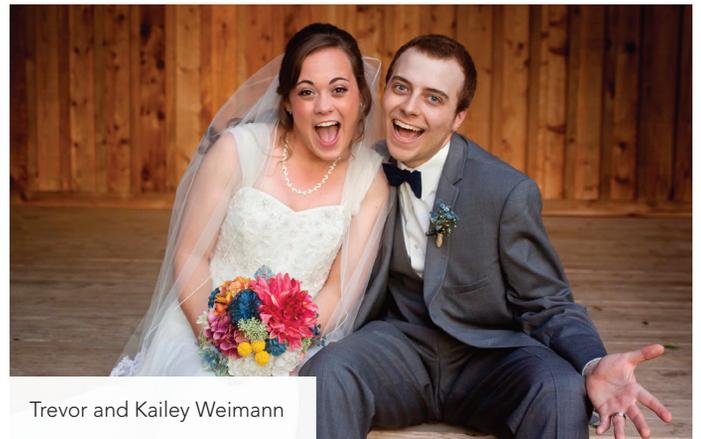
When the class returned to campus to hang out, Trevor asked Kailey to slip away for frozen yogurt instead. The pair started dating a week later, and now they are married.

“I feel like the Buchanan Fellowship is the perfect environment for bringing people together,” Kailey Wiemann said.

“Whether it’s a marriage or just long-lasting friendships, I feel like most of us won’t finish our time at MTSU without meeting another Buchanan who will have a huge impact on our life.”



Trevor and Kailey Wiemann



Trevor and Kailey Wiemann



Trevor Smith and Chelsea Harmon Smith

### Trevor Smith and Chelsea Harmon Smith

Trevor Smith and Chelsea Harmon Smith met in 2012 on move-in day at Lyon Hall. Several members of the class had gathered after unpacking to hang out before their dinner plans at Demos’. Chelsea noticed Trevor’s rosary, and the pair immediately connected when they discovered that the other was Catholic as well.

From that day on, their friendship grew through both the Buchanan Fellowship and the Catholic Center on campus.

“There are so many great memories from study groups to organized social events to spontaneous hangouts,” Chelsea recalled. “We helped each other through hard times, supported each other when the work got tough, and made so many great memories.”

Trevor and Chelsea were married in September, and two other Buchanan Fellows from their class, Chloe Madigan and Matthew Pyles, were in the wedding. “We have seen a lot of Buchanan marriages, but there are also so many Buchanan friendships that are holding strong through both distance and time,” Chelsea noted.



Dylan and Chelsea Phillips

## Dylan and Chelsea Phillips

Dylan and Chelsea Phillips, from the Buchanan Fellowship class of 2009, first connected in front of the Science Building during their Buchanan Astronomy 1030 lab when Chelsea asked to take a photo of Dylan upon seeing the penguin shirt he was wearing. She and her friends shared an inside joke about penguins, and she wanted to send the photo to them. However, Dylan insisted that Chelsea found him handsome and needed the photo to remember his good looks.

From that day, the two grew closer together, sharing many study sessions and intense conversations, but they didn't begin dating until their senior year. "One of my favorite moments happened in the library after a particularly long and taxing study session," Dylan recalled. "We had booked a study room, and everyone had pretty much gone home for the night. I can't remember if any music was playing or if it was all in our heads, but we slow-danced together in the transparent study room."

Dylan later proposed to Chelsea in front of the Science Building, where she had asked to take the photo of him in his penguin shirt. Chelsea credits the Honors fellowship program: "Without the Buchanan, I don't know if we would have had a relationship at all," she said. "It is how we met, and I think it helped keep us in contact during times we may have otherwise not."



Dylan and Chelsea Phillips



Jake and Lauren Garrette

### Jake and Lauren Garrette

Jake and Lauren Garrette met at their freshman University Convocation, but they have no recollection of their first interaction. However, both know that they had very distinct thoughts about the other.

"I do remember early on thinking how far out of my league she was," Jake recalled. Lauren remembers a similar thought process: "There were so many fun and beautiful girls in our Buchanan class, I never thought I would get the time of day from him."

During their freshman year, the pair grew as friends, but in the fall of their sophomore year, Jake knew that he wanted more than friendship. He just didn't know that Lauren felt the same way. Together, they would plan movie nights for their friends, mostly as an excuse to hang out with one another without admitting how they felt. Jake didn't sit next to her, too worried that she would know he had feelings. Lauren wanted nothing more than to sit by him.

"By the end of my fall sophomore semester, I knew that if Lauren somehow had feelings in return, then by God's grace I was going to marry her. There was never

another option. It was too perfect of a story, and she was too perfect of a person," Jake said.

The couple started dating during the spring of their sophomore year, and they got engaged in the fall of their senior year. "Sharing common goals and classes gave us the chance to get to know each other in a way we could not have otherwise," Lauren said. "The stress, the laughs, and the tears given to us by the Buchanan Fellowship and the Honors College gave our relationship a place to grow over our years in college."

“ Sharing common goals and classes gave us the chance to get to know each other in a way we could not have otherwise. ”



Dr. Liz Rhea and Hanna Witherspoon



Dr. Liz Rhea and President Sidney A. McPhee

## In Memoriam



**Dr. Elizabeth "Liz" Rhea, 85,** who died May 30 after a 17-year battle with cancer, was a beloved supporter of MTSU as well as the Honors College. A member of the Honors College Board of Visitors, she was a particular favorite of Honors students who visit Adams Place monthly to help residents with technology issues.

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

Born Ira Elizabeth Hay on Oct. 11, 1933, Rhea was the eldest of six children. She was valedictorian of Eagleville High School before earning her

bachelor's degree in science and pre-med in 1955 from the then-Middle Tennessee State College, where she was a cheerleader and yearbook editor.

In 1958, Rhea was one of two women to graduate from the University of Tennessee College of Medicine in Memphis. Eventually, she returned to medical school at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston to learn mammography and ultrasound. In 1978, she went to work at William Beaumont Army Medical Center in El Paso, Texas, where she worked until retiring in 1992. Not long after, the Rheas returned to Rutherford County, where she wasted no time finding ways to give back, with the encouragement and support of her husband.

MTSU's Science Building, which opened in 2014, features the Liz and Creighton Rhea Atrium as a tribute to the couple's generosity. The Blue Raider Athletic Association named its Member of the Year award in her honor, given to someone "who has exemplified being True Blue to the core."

The chapel at Saint Thomas Rutherford Hospital, its Diagnostic Imaging waiting room, and Cancer Center lobby are all named in Rhea's honor. In addition, the Saint Thomas Rutherford Foundation named its most prestigious honor for her, the Dr. Liz Rhea Philanthropist of the Year Award.

Rhea was involved with numerous nonprofit and charitable organizations, and at one time, served on 24 boards simultaneously, including for the MTSU Foundation, MTSU Alumni Association, United Way of Rutherford and Cannon Counties, and Saint Thomas Rutherford Foundation.

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

# CLASS NOTES

## Students

### **Matthew Cureton**

(Management) earned an Honor Roll scholarship to attend the Beta Gamma Sigma Global Leadership Summit in Chicago. His team placed first among 40 teams competing in conference case competition.



**George Bektor** (Computer Science) was selected to serve as an associate editor with *URCA*, the National Collegiate Honors Council undergraduate journal of research and creative activity. He traveled to Bryce Canyon, Utah, in June for a summer editing boot camp.

**Kelsey Bowen** (International Relations) was awarded an internship in International Safeguards at Oak Ridge National Laboratory for this summer.



**Clorissa Campbell** (Biology), pictured above, received a summer 2018 MHIRT (Minority Health and Health Disparities International Research Training) award to research opsin genes of nocturnal and diurnal frogs in Brazil.

**Nicole Chandler** (Mechatronics Engineering) was recognized by MTSU's Student Organizations and Service as President of the Year for her service to MTSU's Society of Manufacturing Engineers. She married **Dustin Arnold** (Mechatronics Engineering, '19) in August.



**Delanie McDonald** (Journalism), pictured above, was elected as MTSU's 2019–20 Student Government Association president after serving as the 2018–19 executive vice president.

**Jocelyn Mercado** (Political Science) was chosen for an internship with the Tennessee legislature.

**Stacey Yabko Misra** (Psychology) received first place in the 2019 General Education Writing Awards (Category 2) for her piece "As 'Un-American' as Apple Pie." Her \$300 award was presented at MTSU's Celebration of Student Writing April 19.

**Ella Morin** (Biology) presented her medical research at the 55th annual national Medical Education Conference in Philadelphia in April.

**Tess Shelton** (English, Foreign Languages) was selected as the 2019 National Women's History Month Student Trailblazer for her Project Accessibility, Period, a campaign to make it easier to access feminine hygiene products on campus.

**Jacob M. Smith** (Criminal Justice Administration) was chosen for an internship with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation.

# 2019 URECA AWARD WINNERS

## Spring 2019

Devin Adcox  
Kaitlyn Berry  
Mark Blackmon  
Britney Brown  
Chase Burton

Jared Frazier  
Madonna Ghobrial  
Joseph Gulizia  
Steffany Jenkins  
Nibraas Khan  
Alaa Mohammed

Asfah Mohammed  
Ella Morin  
Cameron Oldham  
Jiwoo Park  
Payal Patel  
George Schroeder

Robyn Sessler  
Tia Shutes  
Marissa Turner  
Alyssa Walsh

Nibraas Khan  
Olivia Peters  
Robyn Sessler  
Nathan L. Smith  
Cassidy Woodall

## Summer 2019

Kaitlyn Berry  
Elizabeth Clippard  
Jared Frazier

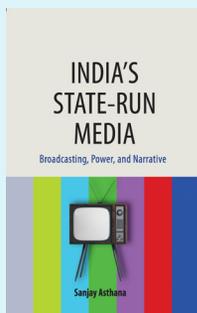


## CLASS NOTES Faculty and Staff

**Claudia Barnett** (English) saw her play *Aglaonike's Tiger* performed on the main stage at Western Kentucky University in February.

*photo by E. Shura Pollastsek*

**Sanjay Asthana** (Journalism and Strategic Media) had a new book, *India's State-Run Media: Broadcasting, Power, and Narrative*, released in early May.



**Mary Evins** (History, American Democracy Project), pictured left, was selected as a National Women's History Month 2019 Trailblazer Honoree. In recent years her research has centered on Tennessee women's history, specifically on women's social, political, and economic activism at the turn of the last century. She published the anthology *Tennessee's New Women in the New South during the Progressive Era: Their Work in the Public Sphere* in 2013. Her co-edited second volume on women's

work, tentatively titled *Public Women, Society, and Suffrage: Expanding the Narrative of the Tennessee Progressive Era*, will be published in 2020 as scholarship for Tennessee's commemoration of the centennial of the 19th Amendment. Evins is a part of the Tennessee Woman Suffrage Centennial Collaborative.

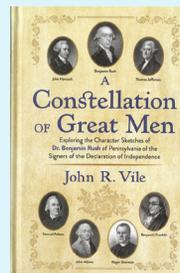


**Philip E. Phillips** (Honors associate dean), pictured above, has published two new books: *Poe and Place* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018) is an edited collection of essays by leading and emerging Poe scholars on the various places and spaces, real and imaginary, that were significant in Poe's life and works. *Remaking Boethius: The English Language Translation Tradition of "The Consolation of Philosophy"* (Brepols Publishers, 2019) is a co-edited encyclopedia of the translators and translations of the *Consolation*—from the Old English Boethius attributed to Alfred, to the translations of Geoffrey Chaucer, Queen Elizabeth I, and others, to the present. He

delivered the plenary lecture on "Boethius and the Shaping of the Medieval Mind" at the 20th Christianity in the Academy Conference at Union University in March, and a paper on "Poe, the Ourang-Outang, and 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue,'" at the 13th annual conference of the American Literature Association in Boston in May. A past president of the Poe Studies Association, Phillips has been appointed to serve as program chair of the 5th International Edgar Allan Poe Conference, to be held in April 2021 in Boston, the city of Poe's birth.



**Cindy Phiffer**, pictured above, was formerly a secretary for MTSU Housing and Residential Life. She has joined the Honors staff as an executive aide, replacing Kathy Davis, who retired in June.



**John R. Vile** (Honors Dean) published *A Constellation of Great Men: Exploring the Character Sketches of Dr. Benjamin*

*Rush of Pennsylvania of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence* (Talbot Publishing, 2019).

## CLASS NOTES

### Alumni and Friends



**Jacob H. Basham** (Mathematics, Science, '13), pictured above, is a resident physician for the Pediatrics Physician-Scientist Training Program at Vanderbilt University.

**Hannah Berthelson** (Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology, '19) is pursuing an M.A. in Speech and Language Disorders at the University of Memphis.

**Bryce Bivens** (International Relations, '19) is seeking an M.A. in International Affairs at MTSU, with a concentration in International Security and Peace Studies.

**Brett Bornhoft** (Aerospace, '14) is working as a research aerospace engineer at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Columbus, Ohio, after earning a master's degree in Aeronautical and Astronautical Engineering from North Carolina State University in 2016.



**Amy Powers Shaw** (Electronic Media Production, '09) and **Garrett Shaw** (Accounting, '09) welcomed their daughter, Olivia Kate, May 13.



**Sierra Coffee** (Criminal Justice Administration, '19), pictured above, is pursuing the Master of Criminal Justice at MTSU.

**Kirsten Cunningham** (Biology, Chemistry, '19) is seeking a Ph.D. in Cell and Molecular Medicine at Johns Hopkins University. Her studies are fully funded, and she is receiving a yearly stipend.

**Matthew Cureton** (Management, '19) accepted a position at Yazaki North America in Smyrna as a materials planner.

**Kami Dyer** (Chemistry, '19) is completing a master's degree in Chemistry at MTSU, where she is continuing as a Blue Elite tour guide and working as a graduate assistant.



**Samantha Eisenberg** (Psychology, '19), pictured above, is serving as a student trustee for MTSU's Board of Trustees. She is a graduate assistant seeking a master's at MTSU in Clinical Psychology, specializing in neuropsychology. She is vice president of the Collegiate Neuroscience Society and treasurer of the American Democracy Project. She formerly

served as senator and as attorney general for the MTSU Student Government Association.

**Jaime Elowsky** (Psychology, '19) is working as a research assistant at Boys Town National Hospital in Nebraska.

**Amanda Freuler** (Mass Communication, '17) is communications and marketing specialist for Oak Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU) in the Knoxville area following her one-year internship there. She creates multimedia content for print, web, and social media marketing campaigns. She also is responsible for developing and executing social media strategies for eight social media platforms for ORAU.

**Jake Garrett** (Aerospace, '19) married Lauren Grizzard (Interdisciplinary Studies, '19) in June and joined Endeavor Airlines in August.



**Matthew Hibdon** (History, '12), pictured above left with Susan Lyons and Philip E. Phillips, returned to the University in June as strategic communications manager for the College of Liberal Arts. Hibdon, who earned an M.Ed. at MTSU with a specialization in higher education, previously served as an MTSU Liberal Arts academic advisor before working as director of leadership programs for Omicron Delta Kappa in Virginia and as executive assistant to the county executive in Warren County.

**Abrial Goen** (Finance, '19) is attending graduate school at Vanderbilt University.

**Lauren (Grizzard) Garrette** (Interdisciplinary Studies, '19) is teaching third grade at Salem Elementary School in the Murfreesboro City Schools system.

**Meredith Holt** (Biology, '14) graduated from Auburn University's Harrison School of Pharmacy in May and was selected as graduation marshal to lead her class.



**Michele Kelley** (Physics, '16), pictured above, was awarded a National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship in April. Kelley is a Royster Fellow at the University of North Carolina.

**Benjamin Kulas** (Physics, '19) has entered the Physics Ph.D. program at Northeastern University in Boston, where he has a teaching assistantship.

**Collin McDonald** (Aerospace, '17) is working as a project manager and estimator at Westmoreland Grading LLC in Lebanon.

**Sam Mitchell** (Chemistry, '12) and his wife, Allie, welcomed a daughter, Nora Katherine, May 21.

**Connor Moss** (Biology, '18) is attending medical school at East Tennessee State University's Quillen College of Medicine.

**Matthew Posey** (Journalism, '17) graduated with an M.S. in Leisure and Sport Management in May. He now works in the MT Athletics communications office.

**Morgan (Murphy) Posey** (Journalism, '17) is pursuing an M.S. in Media and Communication. She married Matthew Posey in May.

**Dylan Palmer** (Criminal Justice Administration, '19) is studying for the Master of Criminal Justice at MTSU.

**Mikaela Ray** (Music, '19) is assistant band director at Seigel High School.

**Courtney Rodman** (Organizational Communication, '14) is an associate examiner for the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority in Chicago. She earned a J.D. degree from Chicago-Kent College of Law at Illinois Institute of Technology in 2017.

**Michelle (Ebel) Schmidt** (Accounting, '11) has been promoted to senior audit manager at LBMC Financial Services.



**Darcy Tabotabo** (Biochemistry, '17), pictured above, married **Kellie Taylor** (Organizational Communication, '17) in April.

**Hannah Tybor** (Journalism, '19) is studying for a master's in Management at MTSU, with a concentration in Social Innovation and Not-for-Profit Management.

**Katelyn Walls** (Information Systems, '19) is seeking an Information Systems master's degree at MTSU, focusing on the Business Intelligence and Analytics concentration.

**Clinton Warren** (Biology, '19) is pursuing an M.S. in Biology at MTSU.

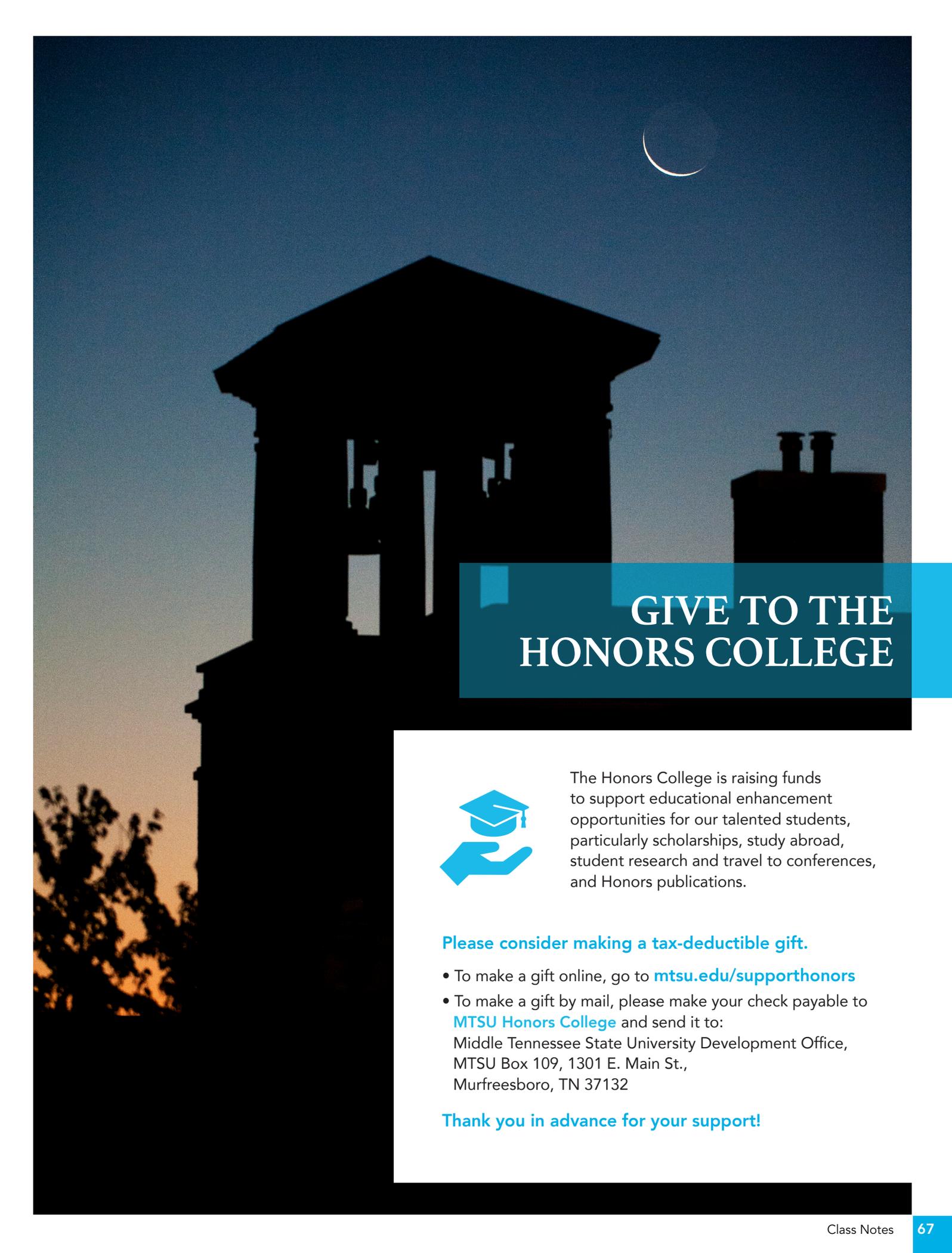


**Beverly Warner** (Physics, '19), pictured above, was awarded a fellowship in the Physics Ph.D. program at Ohio State University.

**Tyler Whitaker** (Anthropology, '13) is the new linguist for the Language and Culture Revitalization Program of the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana. She is playing a critical role in restoring the Tunica language and preserving tribal culture. For the past three years, Whitaker has worked as a contributing linguist and assistant teacher at the Tunica-Biloxi Language and Culture Camp.

**Kyeesha Wilcox** (Health and Human Performance, '18) presented at the Emerging Researchers Conference in Washington, D.C., in February. She is currently a graduate assistant in Geography at Michigan State University.

**Taffy (O'Neal) Xu** (English, '12), pictured above, and her husband, Shane, welcomed their first child, daughter Beili, Jan. 27.



# GIVE TO THE HONORS COLLEGE



The Honors College is raising funds to support educational enhancement opportunities for our talented students, particularly scholarships, study abroad, student research and travel to conferences, and Honors publications.

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- To make a gift by mail, please make your check payable to **MTSU Honors College** and send it to:  
Middle Tennessee State University Development Office,  
MTSU Box 109, 1301 E. Main St.,  
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