

# MTSU MAGAZINE

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

January 2013 Vol. 17 No. 2

## Holding *the* Reins

MTSU's nationally renowned equine program excels at turning student dreams into reality

## Street *Cred*

MTSU students help a Nashville record label entertain thousands of music lovers

**MIDDLE  
TENNESSEE**  
STATE UNIVERSITY.





cover: student Miller Henard  
photographed by J. Intintoli

This aerial photo shows the parking garages (a \$23.5 million investment) and other important new construction projects dotting campus.

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Special thanks to pilot Marshall Price for aerial support. Photo: J. Intintoli

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## Bleeding **BLUE**

**W**HEN I LEFT MAINSTREAM media in late 2010 and took the job of University Editor at Middle Tennessee State University, I did so based on my belief that MTSU was on the verge of great things. From new facility development to program enhancements to exciting, ground-floor research opportunities to an increased role in Nashville business and workforce development, I felt confident the University was on its way up.

Two years later, I have not been disappointed. Dynamic new initiatives have taken shape, \$400 million in new facilities have come out of the ground or are now under construction and, perhaps most importantly, a renewed spirit of what it means to be part of the MTSU family has emerged. Blue Raiders young and old are proudly embracing a shared appreciation of the great works that can be accomplished at MTSU. And there is an increasing confidence in the role that MTSU plays in the region. You can feel the difference. People are believing in the great promise of this University.

### What's the key to all that success?

In my mind, it is the fact that despite MTSU's impressive growth through the years, it has never lost sight of its sense of community that stems from its roots as a small, regional college. In the words of MTSU Vice President of Student Affairs Deb Sells, MTSU came from a culture where it was educating our neighbors' kids, "and somehow, as our population grew, we never lost sight of that."

Nearly every day I find out about something exciting a student or faculty member at MTSU is achieving that is connected to MTSU's focus on student success. This edition of *MTSU Magazine* is chock full of such stories. As a former business editor in Nashville, I find a few of these stories particularly relevant at a time when state policymakers are getting focused on achieving **the right balance between the state higher ed system's dual roles of educating people and also preparing a workforce.**

Profiles here of MTSU's horse science, electronic media communication, and songwriting programs reveal just how hard MTSU faculty is already working to help students turn their professional dreams—no matter the discipline—into a professional reality that benefits us all.

MTSU turned 100 years old in 2011. Grounded in outstanding tradition, the future has never been brighter for MTSU as it enters its second century of service to middle Tennessee. As someone who covered the institution as a journalist and who now works for it day to day, I'm glad to say I believe those words even more today than I did when I first came to work at MTSU in 2010. True Blue! **MTSU**

by Drew Ruble

# MTSU MAGAZINE

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**STATE UNIVERSITY**



# trueBLUE Student Success



President Sidney A. McPhee helps freshman Shuntez Smith move in during We-Haul.

... **Every** dean,  
every professor,  
every secretary,  
every technical support person, every groundskeeper—feels that **student success is their job.**

Every university describes itself as “student-centered.” What is MTSU doing to go beyond just words and **truly invest in student success?**

WITH THE PASSAGE OF the Complete College Tennessee Act, our state appropriation is now based on retention and graduation rates, not enrollment. It makes it more important than ever for us to focus upon attracting more students who are best equipped for college and are most likely to graduate. And it becomes critical that we develop support systems that will help all students succeed. Examples include the following:

- MTSU’s **Total Intake Model** is a new way of receiving students into the University. It provides initial advising to new students to help them solidify career goals and meet academic expectations.
- We started an **Academic Alert** program, which allows faculty to communicate directly with students about classroom performance and follow up on concerns. Last year, more than 27,000 early alerts were entered in this digital system.
- We have assigned **academic counselors** to all incoming students in addition to their standard academic advisors. Advisors change each time a student changes majors, but the academic counselor is the one person students can turn to for help—from enrollment through graduation—regardless of what they study.
- In addition, 99 members of the MTSU administrative staff joined me this past fall in serving as **advocates and resources** for 10 new Blue Raiders each. These advocates were trained for this role and serve as the person

on campus to whom students can come with any concern. We know both from research and from our own practice that in order to persist, thrive, and graduate, students must form academic and social connections to the institution in multiple ways.

- We are now deploying **admissions advisors** to major-feeder community colleges in the region. Through this program, prospective transfer students have access—on their own campuses—to MTSU staff through regularly maintained office hours at the community colleges.
- MTSU joined approximately 250 institutions of higher education across the country by becoming **tobacco free**.
- **MTSU’s Shelbyville campus** offered three times as many classes in fall 2012 as it did the previous year. That’s higher education in your own backyard.
- The shiny new pearl of MTSU’s campus is the \$65 million, nearly 211,000-square-foot **Student Union building**, the newest place for students and others to gather. The placement of student activities, student groups, and student services in one location is having a tremendous impact on the campus community and speaks loudly to our student-centered focus. New campus entrances and nearby parking garages ensure that the building truly serves students.

MTSU is already the state’s most efficient producer of graduates for Tennessee and a tremendous investment for the state! Part of the reason is that everyone at MTSU—every dean, every professor, every secretary, every technical support person, every groundskeeper—feels that student success is their job. And that’s what enables us to better retain and graduate students.

**Thank you, Mr. President.**





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# A look at **recent awards**, events, and accomplishments involving the **MTSU community**

compiled by Gina A. Fann, Jimmy Hart, Gina K. Logue, Paula Morton, Drew Ruble, and Randy Weiler

## Read All About It

MTSU students covered the news about the people who cover the news this past fall, when they provided exclusive stories, photos, audio, and video for the Associated Press Media Editors (APME) national conference in Nashville in September. Student journalists from the College of Mass Communication generated news content for the APME blog and produced a daily video report and a special 24-page tabloid summing up the conference. Senior Becca Andrews of Bells, Tenn., editor-in-chief of MTSU's independent student newspaper, *Sidelines*, coordinated all news coverage for APME. Senior Michelle Potts of Franklin, Tenn., news director of the student-run TV station, MT10-HD, led video coverage. All content flowed through MTSU's new Center for Innovation in Media. The APME recognized the center earlier this year for its ability to merge MTSU student media and foster collaboration across communication platforms. Also during the conference, MTSU unveiled an innovative federal judicial system reporting project, allowing students to be immersed in daily coverage on federal law enforcement operations in Nashville. Seven students supply coverage of the U.S. District Courts and other federal entities for publication by *The Tennessean* in print and on its website. The effort is known as the Seigenthaler News Service, named in honor of journalism icon John Seigenthaler, who worked closely with the University, federal court officials, and *Tennessean* executives to create the hands-on learning opportunity. MTSU also recently announced the creation of a Tennessee Journalism Hall of Fame. The first class of inductees will be announced in April 2013.



## Lake Effect

The Valve House Trail, which MTSU geography and history students helped create, recently opened at Radnor Lake State Natural Area in Nashville. MTSU's Global Studies program worked closely with Radnor staff to collect geographical and historical data dealing with the natural area before construction of the trail.

## Good Stewards

Two deans—Jim Burton of the Jennings A. Jones College of Business and Roy Moore of the College of Mass Communication—will step down at the end of the 2012–13 academic year. Burton came to MTSU in August 1990 as a professor of accounting after teaching at Florida State and Murray State universities. Moore joined MTSU in September 2008 after serving as associate vice president for academic affairs at Georgia College and State University in Milledgeville and executive director of the First Amendment Center at the University of Kentucky in Lexington. The University hopes to appoint new deans during spring 2013.



Jim Burton



Roy Moore

## Turning over new LEAFs

Nissan North America Inc. donated two Nissan LEAF cars and three charging stations to MTSU to promote the use of electric-vehicle technology. The cars were added to the University's motor pool, and the charging stations are available for students, faculty, staff, and visitors to campus. Nissan produces the LEAF and lithium-ion batteries in Smyrna.



## Hybrid Thinker

Powered by the work of at least nine students' work since 2008, Dr. Charles Perry keeps driving toward success in the development of a plug-in hybrid retrofit kit that can work on any car. Perry, who holds the Russell Chair of Manufacturing Excellence, recorded 100 miles per gallon on a 1994 Honda station wagon retrofitted with his laboratory prototype, a plug-in, wheel-hub electric drive system. Perry is now talking with several potential investors—companies with vehicle fleets—for the money to build and demonstrate a manufacturable version of the kit. Perry's project garnered worldwide media attention, including a visit to campus by the Fox News Channel, which profiled the kit in a national broadcast.



## Learning from Disaster

The Japanese city of Fukushima Daiichi continues to recover from a massive March 2011 earthquake and resulting tsunami that engulfed the coastal area. Some 16,000 people lost their lives. In June 2012, ten MTSU students witnessed the aftermath firsthand. During ten days of debris cleanup and personal service, the MTSU delegation—chosen on the basis of grades and essays—served hot meals, entertained children, and learned about disaster-response procedures. (Doug Heffington, director of the Global Studies program, led the trip. No MTSU representatives ventured into unsafe areas.)

## By Land and Air

MTSU has formed an historic educational partnership with the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps to study ways robots on the ground can be used in concert with unmanned vehicles in the air. The three-year cooperative effort with the Robotic Systems Joint Project Office, headquartered in Warren, Mich., with a satellite office at the Redstone Arsenal near Huntsville, Ala., is the first of its kind. It comes one year after MTSU and the Army partnered to support educational and research efforts into the Army's remote-controlled Raven aircraft.



## Service to Country

Once again, MTSU has been named one of the top "Military Friendly Schools" in the country on the 2013 list announced by *G.I. Jobs* magazine. It marks the third consecutive year the University has made the list, which recognizes the top 15 percent of colleges, universities, and trade schools that are doing the most to embrace America's military service members, veterans, and spouses as students and ensure their success. Last fall, MTSU had 1,005 students, including dependents, using G.I. benefits and at least 1,040 students who have past military service or are dependents using G.I. benefits. MTSU boasts the state's only VetSuccess on Campus program, a collaboration with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs that provides a supportive, on-campus environment where students with military service can get assistance and peer support. The U.S. Department of Defense also recently recognized MTSU as a "Patriotic Employer" for support of its employees who may face deployment at a moment's notice.



## Welcome Aboard

MTSU celebrated the 225th anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution with a few new fellow citizens—288, to be exact—and a global audience that tuned in online at a special naturalization ceremony in Murphy Center. The University celebrates the Constitution's 1787 signing every year with special events and programs, including live readings of the document and the printing of portions of it on MTSU's replica 18th-century Franklin-era printing press at Walker Library. The 2012 celebration was even more special, however, because the U.S. District Court, Middle District of Tennessee, allowed a rare naturalization ceremony to be held outside Nashville. The ceremony included three MTSU students—senior Mike Patel of Knoxville, sophomore Levon Mkrtchyan of Nashville, and freshman Tammy Li of Smithville—who took their oaths and became naturalized U.S. citizens. Each year, approximately 680,000 people become American citizens during ceremonies across the nation and around the world.



## Reaffirming Roots

A new doctoral degree program will move MTSU forward into its second century of teaching Tennessee's educators: the Doctorate of Education in Assessment, Learning, and School Improvement. The new program, which will begin in fall 2013 and is the first of its kind in Tennessee, aims to help pre-K-12 educators improve their students' academic achievement. "The program offers the best example of an attempt to bridge the gap between universities and public-school practitioners that I have ever seen," said Roland Barth, founding director of Harvard University's Principals' Center and one of three nationally recognized education experts who reviewed the new degree proposal.

## A Concrete Advantage

Four Concrete Industry Management programs—at Arizona State University, MTSU, Texas State University–San Marcos, and New Jersey Institute of Technology—were named "Excellent Universities" by the American Concrete Institute (ACI) for student and faculty efforts to support the industry. Universities were selected based on the number of ACI members in student chapters; student and faculty participation in ACI competitions, committees, conventions, and meetings; and participation in other industry-related activities. Universities were also judged on community outreach efforts by students and faculty involving neighborhood revitalization, construction projects, and donated services.



Heather Brown, CIM chair

## Complete College Acts

Recently signed agreements with Roane State Community College in east Tennessee and Jackson State Community College in west Tennessee are expected to make it easier to transfer to MTSU, the number-one destination of transfer students in Tennessee. The University already had similar programs in place with Nashville State, Chattanooga State, Dyersburg State, and Motlow State community colleges. MTSU and Columbia State Community College also recently forged an agreement to facilitate the transfer of **Columbia State nursing students seeking to upgrade their associate degree to a bachelor's degree** through MTSU's program.

Dr. Sidney A. McPhee, MTSU president, and Dr. Gary Goff, president of Roane State Community College





## New Directions

The College of Basic and Applied Sciences has added three new, distinguished scholars/administrators. Robert U. "Bud" Fischer became the fifth dean of the college following a national search. He replaced Tom Cheatham, who stepped down to become director of the Tennessee Mathematics, Science, and Technology Education Center on campus. Fischer was previously chair of the biology department at the University of Alabama–Birmingham. His expertise is in aquatic and fisheries biology. Also, Lynn Boyd and Paul Gregory "Greg" Van Patten were named chairs of the Departments of Biology and Chemistry, respectively, after national searches. Boyd, formerly associate professor of biology at the University of Alabama–Huntsville, has had 13 refereed publications, including one in *Science*, plus three book chapters, dozens of presentations, and 16 funding proposals securing more than \$1.5 million. She replaces George Murphy, who retired from MTSU after 43 years in the Biology Department. Van Patten came from Ohio University, where he had been a professor of chemistry. He has two patents and two others pending and has published 33 peer-reviewed/refereed articles and made 50 professional presentations. He has received 14 grants totaling more than \$3.5 million, mostly from the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Defense. Van Patten served as director of the Center for Condensed Matter and Surface Science at Ohio University. He replaces Earl Pearson, who is retiring after 14 years at MTSU. All three hires signal a shift in direction toward more robust research output in the College of Basic and Applied Sciences. A new, \$147 million science building is under construction and is scheduled to open in 2015.



## For a Song

A new research grant for the Center for Popular Music (CPM) will help students and researchers track down information on songs about the Volunteer State. The \$6,700 grant from the Tennessee Historical Records Advisory Board helped the CPM produce *"My Homeland": A Research Guide to Songs about Tennessee*, which identifies and preserves a unique collection of songs in the center's archives and makes them accessible online. "Perhaps more than any other state, Tennessee is associated with music," says Dale Cockrell, CPM director. "While many thousands of songs have been written in Tennessee over the last century, hundreds and hundreds have also been written about Tennessee. Because resources have been scattered, there has never been a systematic effort to gather and organize this powerful music." Five hundred to 550 records are digitized and incorporated into the website, which features a special section on the state songs of Tennessee. Visit <http://popmusic.mtsu.edu> for more.



Dr. Resit Ozkanca, director of Meliksah University, and President Sidney A. McPhee

## Global Partners

MTSU and Meliksah University (a research center with an emphasis on mechanical engineering, science, and economics in Kayseri, Turkey) crafted an academic and cultural exchange allowing third-year students from Turkey to finish their studies in Murfreesboro and earn degrees from both institutions. It also allows faculty and staff exchanges and cultural opportunities between the two universities. MTSU's academic master plan calls for more ties abroad to help students develop a global perspective on life and work.



# Perfectly **ALIGNED**

by Drew Ruble

Counting the many upsides of MTSU's recent leap to **USA**





MTSU'S RECENT INVITATION to join Conference USA for intercollegiate athletics, beginning no later than July 2014, clearly elevates the standing, competitiveness, and stature of the University's athletics program. C-USA teams and athletes have made nearly 700 NCAA championship appearances since the league's inception in 1995.

"We have been a proud member of the Sun Belt Conference and we appreciate our years as a member of the league," said president Sidney A. McPhee. "However, this change is a natural step in the evolution of our athletics program."

Here is a top-10 list of reasons why MTSU's jump to C-USA was a good one:

**1 A bigger piece of the pie:** C-USA members enjoy significant national and regional television exposure and revenue sharing through partnerships with CBS Sports, Fox Sports, and ESPN.

**2 Brand expansion:** Beyond TV visibility, the conference's expanded geographic footprint and already established brand enhances MTSU's chances of becoming a household name.

**3 Student-centeredness:** The move provides MTSU student-athletes with bigger stages, bigger challenges, and bigger opportunities and also gives MTSU more identifiable opponents, rich in athletic tradition.

**4 Reaching goals:** Joining a more established conference matches a primary thrust of MTSU's current \$80 million fundraising campaign—to gain national recognition for the prowess of its athletes and the quality of its sports programs.

**5 Survival of the fittest:** In the rapidly reshuffling collegiate athletics landscape, which could one day lead to "super-conferences" that determine athletic championships, schools like MTSU must act aggressively to realign or risk being left behind.

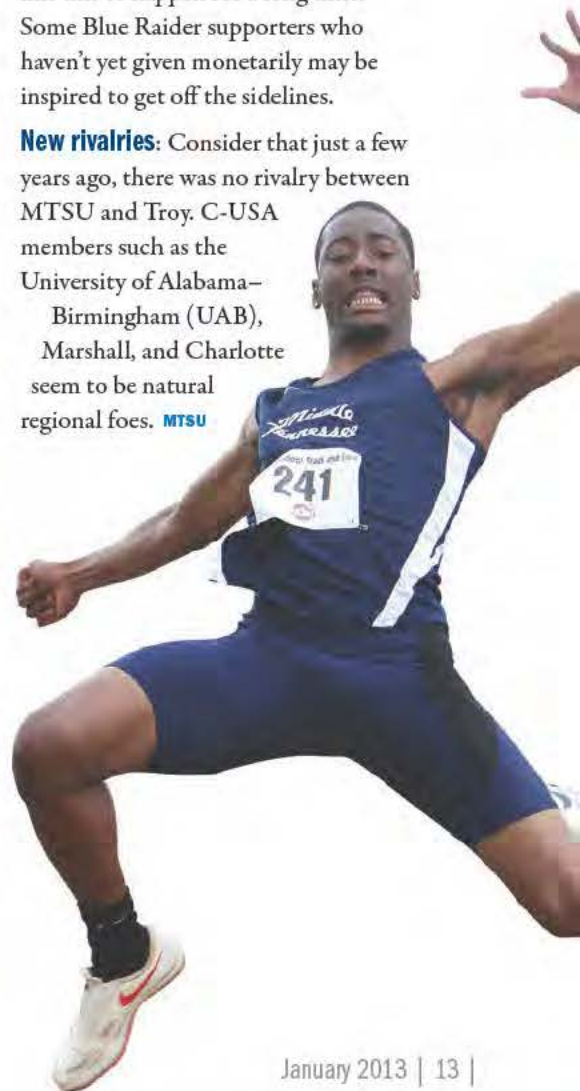
**6 Validation:** The C-USA invitation validates the hard work and progress MTSU has made over the past decade both athletically and academically. Conferences look at a lot more than just athletics when choosing new partner institutions, and for MTSU to be joining a conference that includes Rice University—a top academic institution nationally—is a signal of quality.

**7 Student recruitment:** The move greatly increases MTSU's ability to recruit better athletes on the promise of established bowl game tie-ins, bigger venues in which to play, and a higher level of competition.

**8 Perfect match:** MTSU adds value to Conference USA, specifically through exposure in the Nashville TV market at a time when the conference has recently lost markets in Houston, Memphis, New Orleans, Dallas, and Orlando.

**9 More support:** The added prestige, visibility, and increased fan interest makes MTSU more attractive for corporate sponsorship. The move should also motivate more giving from boosters, who have wanted something like this to happen for a long time. Some Blue Raider supporters who haven't yet given monetarily may be inspired to get off the sidelines.

**New rivalries:** Consider that just a few years ago, there was no rivalry between MTSU and Troy. C-USA members such as the University of Alabama—Birmingham (UAB), Marshall, and Charlotte seem to be natural regional foes. **MTSU**







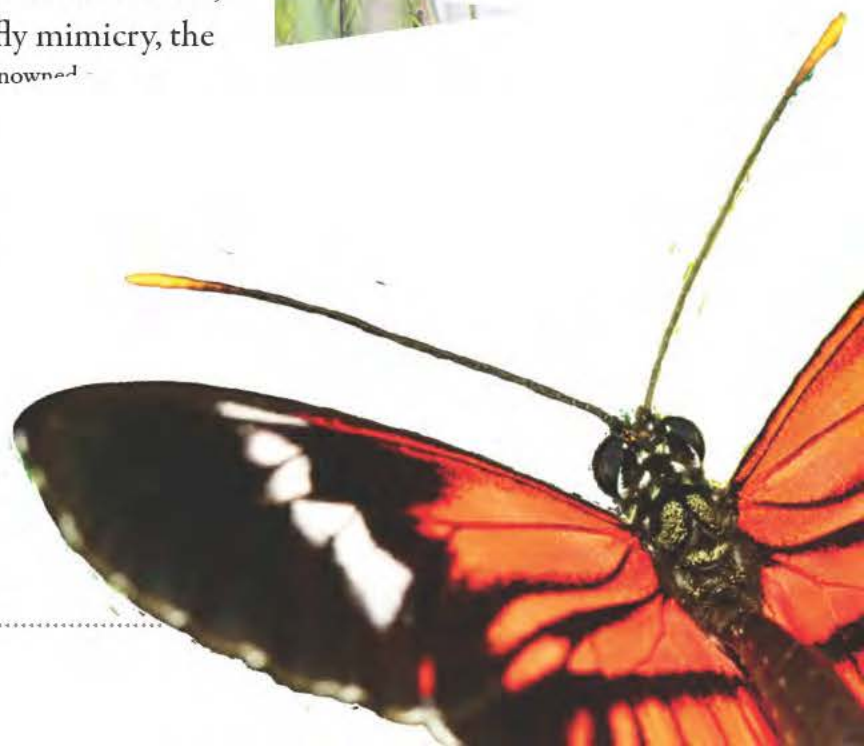
# *Imitations in Life*

**A**T AN AGE WHEN MOST KIDS WERE SITTING ON the family room floor watching Captain Kangaroo, Andy Brower was running across the green hills of Trinidad, watching his parents collect butterflies. Both were renowned entomologists: his mother, Jane, conducted groundbreaking research on butterfly mimicry, the protective adaptation by which one species develops the markings of another; his father, Lincoln, built on her research and also received acclaim for his study of the unique migratory pattern of the monarch butterfly. The scientific term “Browerian mimicry” was named for them. (“My parents were high school sweethearts,” Brower says. “Nerdy, bug-collecting sweethearts.”) By age seven, Andy had tagged along on several research trips to Trinidad and, shepherded by graduate assistants, amassed his own “little-kid butterfly collection” of brightly colored tropical species.

Now, Dr. Brower is a renowned expert in his own right. At Cornell, he co-edited a book on mimicry at the Museum of Natural History. At the Smithsonian Institution, he has published more than 100 papers on the subject and become an internationally recognized expert. In 2006, he left Ohio State to join the biology department at MTSU, where he recently earned the University’s Distinguished Research Award.

by Allison Gorman

*continued on page 15*







r. Andy Brower uses mimicry patterns to decode  
the evolutionary history of butterflies

photo: J. Intindoli

January 2013 | 15



*The butterfly effect is a term used to describe how small changes to a seemingly unrelated thing or condition can affect large, complex systems.*

*continued from page 14*

One of Brower's advantages over his parents is technology they didn't have that allows him to study butterflies at the chromosomal level. Over the past 20 years, he has been piecing together an evolutionary history of a group of South American butterflies, studying their DNA to figure out how certain mimetic patterns developed over time in that continent's diverse geography. Did those patterns stay essentially the same, he wondered, or did they change—and what role did genetics play in the process? He hypothesized that the butterflies evolved their wing patterns independently and "mimicked" one another many times in different areas. When he began the research, he says, "The access we had to the genome was pretty limited. It's much broader nowadays, but subsequent research has largely borne out what I said."

Brower has secured more than \$1 million in external funding for his research, and he just received funding from the National Science Foundation to begin new fieldwork in South America. He and several Brazilian scientists will collaborate with the American Museum of Natural History, the New York Botanical Garden, the Field Museum in



Chicago, and the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County to construct a Pleistocene history of the Amazon Basin. "We'll be looking at genetic patterns of variation in a variety of model organisms including birds, monkeys, trees, and then butterflies," he says. "We're going to try to do some next-generation sequencing, which is something I haven't done before." He hopes to begin in the spring.

Researchers like Brower are playing beat the clock, because thousands of species of plants and animals are threatened with extinction each year. "There are too many people, the

climate is changing, and it's an ecological catastrophe for most other living things in the world right now," he says. "And as countries like China and Brazil become more economically advanced, it speeds up the destruction of natural resources—they get whittled down to little national parks and places like that." The next few decades will be the most critical in history for understanding and preserving biodiversity, Brower says—and that requires coordinated, systematic research.

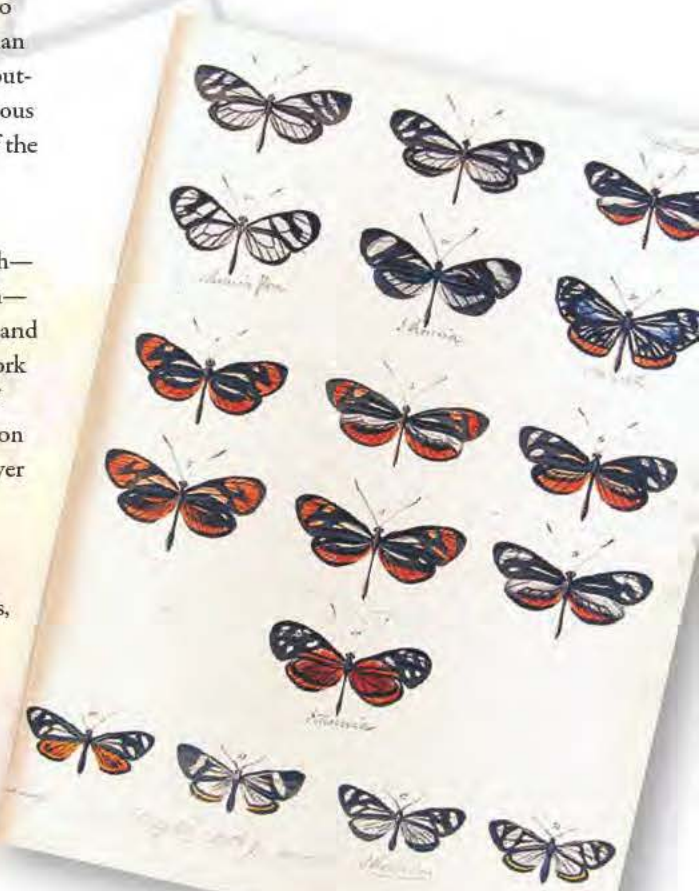
To promote that collaborative mission, Brower has added his expertise to the Tree of Life Project, a web-based "family tree" charting genetic interconnections among all living things. Scientists and nature enthusiasts

around the world have contributed to 10,000 web pages, each devoted to a different group of plant or animal, from tyrannosaurs to fungi. (Thanks to Brower, it includes more than 40 varieties of *Heliconius* butterfly alone.) It is an ambitious undertaking, a blueprint of the evolution of life on earth.

Because Darwinian theory underpins Brower's research—mimicry is evolution by natural selection—he's well aware of the attendant political and religious baggage. While his own fieldwork never crosses the perilous intersection of human and ape, he does teach an evolution course required for biology majors. Brower begins by acknowledging to his students that a majority of Americans reportedly don't believe in evolution—and then he reminds them that for scientific purposes, absolute truths are less important than hypotheses and data, the framework for understanding biology. "You don't have to believe it," he tells them, "but you've got to understand it."

To understand. If work like Andy Brower's could be distilled to a single concept, that would be it. Unlike applied science, whose goal is problem solving (often through the development of marketable technology), basic science has no agenda beyond furthering understanding of the natural world. Certainly applied science is built upon that understanding: as Nobel prize-winning astrophysicist George Smoot once noted, "If we only did applied research, we would still be making better spears."

But as academia pushes the more lucrative applied side, Brower says he feels fortunate to do what he does for a living. "My work is like art, in a sense, and my artistic medium is that I generate stories about the evolutionary history of butterflies." When he tells those stories well, he doesn't just help people understand biodiversity—he gets them excited about it. Then, perhaps, they'll be motivated to preserve it. [MTSU](#)







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photos: J. Intintoli; photo illustration: Brian Evans



## Ask an Expert



# REBUILDING *the* Privacy Fence

Calling on corporations to do the right thing (and not just the legal thing)

by Gina K. Logue

In the classic Alfred Hitchcock thriller *Rear Window*, Jimmy Stewart peers at his neighbors from his apartment window through the lens of an analog camera. Can you imagine what he could have learned about his neighbors in the age of Google? If Stewart were operating in the digital era, would he trade his own privacy rights for the convenience that Google, Facebook, Twitter, and other digital companies afford?

American private businesses have an “innovation policy vacuum” in dealing with the new technology, assert Dr. Leigh Anne Clark, assistant professor of management, and her father-in-law and research partner, Dr. W. Jeff Clark, professor of information systems. The Clarks, along with Auburn University doctoral student Daniel Jones, compared privacy laws in the United States and the European Union, particularly Germany. They found that the few restrictions on

the books in the U.S. are very lenient, while Germany has perhaps the toughest privacy laws in the EU.

“They look at personal data as belonging to the person, and a person has to consent to the use of that data,” says Leigh Anne, who also is an attorney. “Even a photograph taken on a public street is my image that you’re using. . . . In Germany, the norm is I should consent to . . . the taking of the picture and the use of that data before it’s ever even used.”

According to Leigh Anne, a recent attempt to conduct a census in Germany came under fire as an invasion of privacy partly because the country’s agonizing Nazi past still looms over today’s public policy decisions.

“They are very, very sensitive to data being collected and to being surveilled,” she says.

*continued on page 20*





Contrast that with the American model, which can be diametrically different.

"There's an argument that says an organization, a company, ought to do whatever it can do in order to maximize shareholder wealth," Jeff says. "There's even a prevailing sentiment in some sectors in the United States that says that if you can violate the law and increase shareholder wealth—so long as the penalty is not criminal, just civil—then go for it."

Leigh Anne says Germany's personal privacy statutes date back to around 1970. In 1995, the European Union passed a law requiring foreign companies working with EU companies to adhere to EU privacy standards. There are court precedents that use privacy as a touchstone. The 1973 *Roe v. Wade* case asserted a woman's right to privacy. But can a case about abortion be pertinent in other areas of life?

"The spirit of that ... is that there are things within us that are within our own control and body, and they're not for someone else to use," Leigh Anne says. "So I think you can pull from what is out there to help provide guidance."

The research the Clarks are doing is scholarly, not judgmental. But they do suggest that businesses should take social norms and "hypernorms"—not just the law—into consideration when establishing their policies. They describe a norm as a principle that defines the right thing to do whether it becomes policy or not. A hypernorm is a cultural expectation that is so strong that virtually everyone in society accepts it as the way things ought to be.

*Editor's Note: Leigh Anne Clark (Ph.D., business administration, Southern Illinois University), professor of Management and Marketing at MTSU, has been cited by media outlets for her recent research and commentary on privacy concerns related to Google. The former Georgia attorney (J.D., Emory School of Law), who also focuses on disability and aging issues, previously worked for the Georgia Attorney General's Office, the AARP, the Georgia Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, and for her own consulting practice.*

"Maybe you don't have to go to jail, or maybe you don't have to pay a fine," Jeff says. "But there are people saying, 'Whoa! That's not okay.' So you may suffer some public relations consequences, which may cost you, in the long run, even more than a civil fine."

**"I'm not sure that the average U.S. citizen realizes how far we have already compromised our privacy rights compared to the rest of the world."**

More and more of us are sacrificing privacy rights for personal convenience. For example, all Twitter transmissions are being archived by the Library of Congress. Another example is Google's method of obtaining photo informa-

tion for its maps, capturing digital images of private property from public streets. Let's say someone drives down your street in a van with a camera on a pole on top of the van. The pole is tall enough to enable the camera to take photos of you sunbathing in the nude behind a 10-foot-tall fence in your own backyard. The van never trespasses on your property. Do you have recourse?

"I'm not sure that the average U.S. citizen realizes how far we have already compromised our privacy rights compared to the rest of the world," Jeff says.

The Clarks believe that society has been caught somewhat flatfooted as technology has evolved. After all, Alexander Graham Bell hardly could have anticipated that his revolutionary invention could have led to the obscene phone call.

"There's no way that we can keep passing laws that will stay ahead of where we're headed," says Leigh Anne. "That's why we strongly said to companies, 'You've got to look at the cultural norms, because they are there. They don't change very quickly.'" **MTSU**





photo: J. Intintoli

## A FISH TALE

by Drew Ruble

The story of MTSU's competitive bass fishing squad keeps getting bigger and bigger



FEW BLUE RAIDERS ARE AWARE THAT AMONG MTSU's myriad club sports is a bass fishing team that competes regionally against programs like Kentucky and Florida. Currently led by fifth-year senior Nolen Spencer (pictured), the team recently beat out more than 40 other squads (including the University of Kentucky) for first place in a Collegiate Bass Fishing Trail tournament on Chickamauga Lake. Spencer and partner Jonathan Reese caught a five-bass limit weighing 19.02 pounds at the November event, winning \$1,000.

Spencer helped launch the team in 2008 along with graduates Tyler Barnes, Reid Harrington, Josh Morton, and D. J. Boggs. The team mainly survives on sponsorship dollars from supporters like Smyrna Ready Mix (Mike Hollingshead) and Mean Mouth Lure Company (Tim and Cinnamon Turrentine).

More than 200 collegiate bass fishing teams exist nationwide—a clear reflection of how fast the sport is growing. Modern bass fishing has evolved into a multi-billion-dollar industry with more recreational participants than golf and tennis combined. The sport is becoming so popular on campuses that many high school students take bass fishing programs into consideration when making their college choices. Across Tennessee, college-based programs are ramping up to meet that demand. Bethel University offers scholarship money to college anglers, and Tennessee Tech boasts more than a dozen university-owned boats. (MTSU anglers, by comparison, use their own boats to compete.)

Spencer, who aims to find employment in the outdoors industry after graduation, hopes the future is bright for the club he helped found.

"This is my last year, so I want to do well this year, and win a few tournaments," says the marketing major with a minor in business administration. "I also want to leave the club as its last founding member confident that future MTSU anglers will have a better opportunity to raise money and compete more frequently than we did." **MTSU**



Andrew Agee and Matt Allen at the 2012 BoatUS Collegiate Bass Fishing Championship, Pickwick Lake, Florence AL (courtesy CarecoTV LLC)



# The center of the ★MTS universe

Murphy Center marks 40 years of memories

FROM FIRST KISSES AND FIRST CONCERTS TO FIRST DAYS of college, Murphy Center may hold more memories than any other building at MTSU. As the arena enters its fifth decade, efforts are under way to renovate it and ensure that it continues to be a vibrant part of campus life.

After all, where else on campus—or anywhere else in middle Tennessee—did Elvis Presley make a live recording of back-to-back concerts? Recorded over two nights in May 1975, the King's *Dixieland Rocks* CD is available at [shopelvis.com](http://shopelvis.com), the official site of Graceland.

"When he sings 'Falling in Love with You,' he says, 'We have another show tomorrow night,'" at Murphy Center, says Chip Walters, director of broadcasting for Nelligan Sports Marketing and someone who spends a lot of time in the building.

Elvis, who performed there five times, was one of dozens of top acts that drew fans by the thousands to Murphy Center in the years before Nashville's Bridgestone Arena was built. With its free-floating cantilevered roof, 520 glass panels that form its walls, and 11,500 seats for concerts and sporting events, there was, and is, no place like Murphy Center in middle Tennessee. A who's who of '70s, '80s, and '90s entertainers—Elton John, the Who, the Beach Boys, Johnny Cash, the Eagles, the Judds, George Strait, and many more played there.

But those concerts did more than entertain local audiences. As Murphy Center reached its 40th birthday in December 2012, local officials were looking back and noting that the building played a part in the enormous growth of MTSU and the city of Murfreesboro.

"Murphy Center burst on the scene when MTSU was growing. High schools didn't have enough room for graduation. The TSSAA [high school sports association] wanted to use it. I'm sure it

influenced the decision of young people to go to school at MTSU," says Bill Smotherman, who managed the building for years.

Just as all those entertainers found their way to Murfreesboro, so did their fans, and many became students or the parents of students. They also found out that Murfreesboro was a desirable place to live, work, and raise a family.

"It gave the city a sense of being cosmopolitan," Walters says. "What other building has contributed so much to the growth of the city and the school?"

More than just a building, Murphy Center has been a catalyst for economic development, according to Tommy Bragg, Murfreesboro's mayor. "Murphy Center is a great athletic and music venue that brings cultural options we never would have had. It spreads the word what a great place Murfreesboro and MTSU are when people come here to go to concerts," Bragg says. "It has taught us locally how important tourism can be and why we should continue the great partnership the city of Murfreesboro has with MTSU."

For many young adults who grew up in Murfreesboro, memories of Murphy Center begin early in life. The arena quickly became a focal point for the community after it opened Dec. 11, 1972. For years, almost every rising seventh grader in the public school system was herded into the arena by the Rutherford County Medical Alliance, made up of the spouses of local physicians, to hear lectures about what was delicately called "health education."

"We were talking about pregnancy," says Madge Lewis, whose husband was one of the doctors. "The physicians spoke about sex.

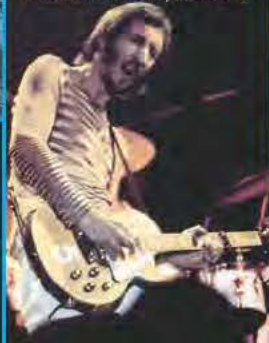
*continued on page 24*

1970

construction



Pete Townshend; The Who



Don Felder; the Eagles



1980

David Crosby, Graham Nash, and Stephen Stills; Crosby, Stills & Nash



Steve Perry; Journey





by Bill Lewis

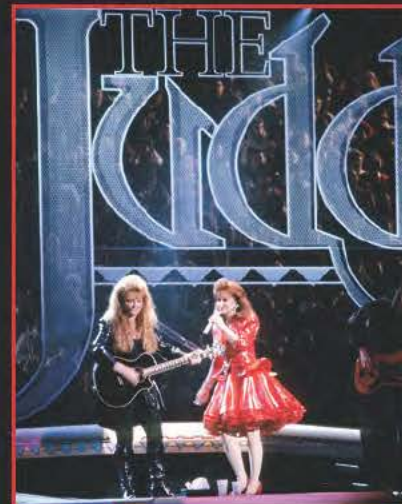
Murphy Center is a great athletic and music venue *that brings cultural options* we never would have had



Rod Stewart



Tina Turner



Wynonna, Naomi Judd; The Judds



Garth Brooks



1990

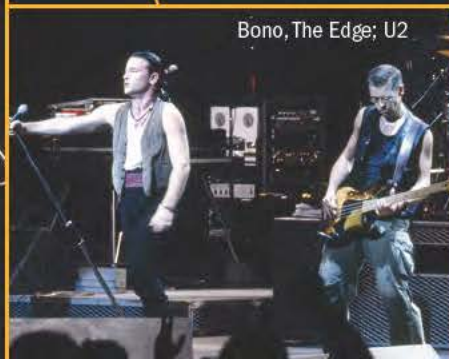
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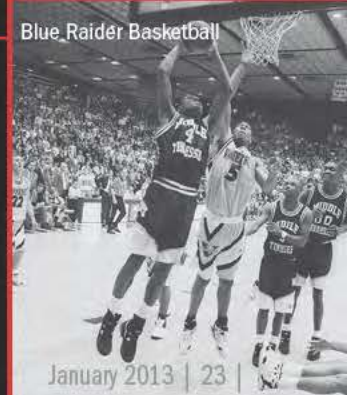
MTSU registration



Stevie Wonder



Bono, The Edge; U2



Blue Raider Basketball

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The girls had a conversation about pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.”

Not everyone was comfortable. “Some of the ministers and some of the parents were a little iffy,” Lewis recalls.

Unbeknown to University officials, Murphy Center quietly became a school bus stop and an after-school playground for elementary kids. That led to some heart-stopping moments on the indoor track.

“We’d have track and two or three world-class sprinters could come around the curve and run into three or four third-graders,” says Jim Simpson, director of the MTSU Varsity Club. Luckily, no one was ever injured.

Today, as the building and campus evolve, it’s possible that the track, which circles the concourse behind the seats, could move to a proposed indoor multipurpose sports facility. That building is still on the drawing board—a site hasn’t been decided on—but its funding is a key part of the University’s \$80 million fundraising campaign.

“That would allow us to do something special with the concourse. When you walk in [today], it doesn’t feel like you’re walking into someplace special,” says Chris Massaro, athletic director.

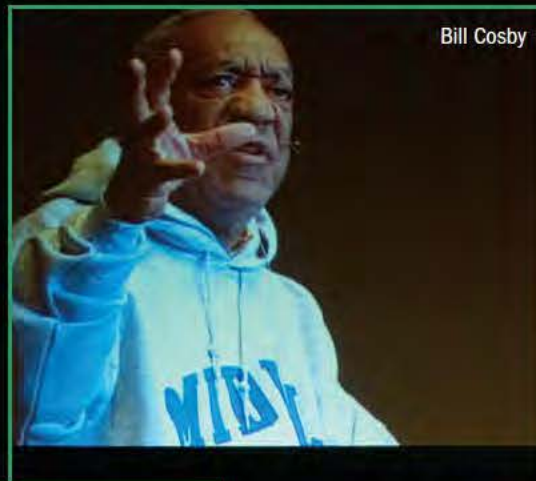
One idea is to build spectator suites in space now occupied by the track and some seats, which would modernize the building and increase its appeal. But even in a building as large as Murphy Center, space is at a premium. During graduation ceremonies, every seat is filled, and reducing capacity has not been an option. Meanwhile, some upgrades have been made: new flooring for the basketball court, an improved sound system, new seats, and fresh paint and murals. Massaro says new wiring and a new roof are still needed.

“If we are to keep it for another 40 years, the facelift would make it hard to recognize,” Massaro says.

Murphy Center is a “cultural icon and should be treated as such,” says Massaro. “There is no other building in Rutherford County or the midstate that holds as many memories as Murphy Center. I’ll bet

more people went on first dates there. They graduated there. Now their kids or grandchildren have graduated. You mention Murphy, and everybody has a memory.”

The original four buildings of Middle Tennessee Normal School are still in use after 100 years. But, for many, 40-year-old Murphy Center is MTSU’s most sentimental spot. **MTSU**



Bill Cosby



Kanye West



MTSU commencement

MTSU commencement

2000

See p. 55, *Voices Heard*, for additional memories of the Murph. 2010




Lady Raider Basketball





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# C Man

*Rick Carnes* brings his platinum touch to the commercial songwriting program at MTSU

by Drew Ruble

A short drive from Music City U.S.A. is the primary source of new talent for the Music Row business community: MTSU's Department of Recording Industry, widely regarded as among the finest in the nation. In that department is one of the finest commercial songwriting concentrations in academia, as well. Hugely successful songwriters including Grammy nominee Luke Laird, Eric Paslay (who had three songs rise to number one on the country charts last summer), and Laura Rodgers (of Secret Sisters fame) are among who studied commercial songwriting at MTSU.

How exactly do you teach songwriting? Isn't it the case that you've either got the talent or you don't? Let's just say that the program's recently hired new leader, esteemed songwriter Rick Carnes, has the professorial elements required to help wannabe songwriters in the tough-to-crack world of commercial songwriting to stop all that dreaming and start living the dream instead. In a city where good songs are a form of currency, such a contribution can be profound.

Carnes has earned 40 platinum albums with songs recorded by Alabama, Steve Wariner, Pam Tillis, Conway Twitty, and Dean Martin. His song "I Can't Even Get the Blues No More" was Reba McEntire's first number-one single, and "Long Neck Bottle," recorded by Garth Brooks, set a *Billboard* record by entering the charts at number 10.

As president of the Songwriters Guild of America, Carnes is also a leading advocate for songwriters and copyright protection. (He's the kind of applicant who puts U.S. Senator Orrin Hatch on his list of references for a job.) Carnes is also a vice president of the National Music Council, the organization of music educators, and communications chair of the Music United Coalition. "But the first thing I do when I wake up is work on these classes!" Carnes says.

## *Singing a Different Tune*

Long gone are the days when music publishing operations filled houses stuffed with staff writers on Music Row. Now it's more of an entrepreneurial world for songwriters, according to Carnes.

"You have to find out where you fit in the music business, and that can change day to day," he says. "First and foremost these days, you have to be able to fix problems. Artists nowadays are more like individual brands, so you have to be a problem solver and address issues like, 'How do we give this artist a new direction, or reinvent him or her?'"



"It used to be that the best song wins. That's entirely not the business now. Its demographics, pure and simple. It's 'Radio is telling us that our artist is stale or sings too many songs about the South. Research tells us we're losing these segments. We need an answer for how we attract those kinds of people. The artist needs to change their image.' A great songwriter today is someone who can take the tools of a song—groove, melody, structure, harmony, and lyric—and craft them in such a way it solves these market problems."

"In my songwriting classes, you learn a conscious process to do things like artist reinvention or project writing. So you learn the difference between bossa nova and Latin hip hop, so you can write that type of song for a film or TV placement if that's what is needed *today*. Because today a project may need a rock 'n' roll song circa 1956. You've got to be able—within 24 hours—to turn that around. And you can't do that unless you have a conscious process for analyzing that music and reproducing it. That's what songwriters of today need—a toolkit of skills that they can apply to a vast set of problems. And that's what I'm teaching in my classes."

### *The Teaching Moment*

Carnes caught the bug for teaching as a guest lecturer at MTSU on the topic of copyright. After one class, a student gave him a CD of her songs and asked if he would listen to them. He agreed and said goodbye. A few weeks later while cleaning up his office, he saw the CD and guilt compelled him to listen.

"Every song on it was good, and two were great," Carnes says. "I realized right there

and then she was going to be a successful songwriter."

Carnes called the student and agreed to help her network in Nashville music circles, but on one condition—that she follow through and get her degree. She did. It was Erin Enderlin ('04), who has since written a top-five song for country

### **That's what songwriters of today need—a toolkit of skills that they can apply to a vast set of problems.**

megastar Alan Jackson called "Monday Morning Church."

Carnes uses the story as an example of his belief that MTSU students are by far the best and brightest anywhere when it comes to budding music talent. Another example he cites is how, as president of the Songwriters' Guild of America, he often hires MTSU interns to help with the work—only to find that he can't live without them.

"The only ones I've ever hired were the MTSU grads," he says. "Others might come in and know what they were doing and understand the music business, but they didn't have the work ethic."

There are many other proprietors in the Nashville business community who would echo those sentiments. Carnes describes MTSU as "literally, a music business feeder school—the feeder school right now." He adds, "I would send my child here first before any other school simply because I would know she's not just getting the artistic education

but the practical knowledge that applies in a real-world setting. When I went to music school, the idea was to let in as many people as possible—that supports the department—flunk most of them out and graduate 10 to 15 people each year. You come to this school, and they are really focused on your success. And the kids respond with a work ethic that you don't see at other schools."

### *Change Agents*

Carnes has been lobbying for songwriter copyright rights in the nation's capital since pre-Napster days. He regularly sits down with music company CEOs to discuss the future of the industry. Interestingly, he sees opportunity in the music business right now.

"We are kind of bouncing along the bottom right now," he says. "We can have a viable business again, but we have to think smarter, invest money smarter, and solve problems in ways that don't include just throwing dollars at them."

"If you come out of MTSU, and you have an understanding of entrepreneurship, marketing, promotions, and management—that's what you need. The term music business has far too often been an oxymoron. But at MTSU, they actually understand how they relate. These students are the kinds of people that are going to walk out into that industry now bouncing along at 50 percent of what it once was and find ways to turn that around. If you think about it, rock bottom can be good solid ground on which to stand!" **MTSU**



# Horse Sense

by Katie Porterfield

Dave Whitaker and Anne Brzezicki oversee MTSU's nationally renowned equine science program

**W**HEN DAVE WHITAKER, DIRECTOR OF MTSU'S HORSE Science program and coach of the horse judging team, makes his way past the trophy cases and photos that line the Horse Science Center hallway, it's like taking a 30-year trot down memory lane.

Like a proud father bragging about his kids, Whitaker loves to talk about former students, their accomplishments at MTSU, and how they're succeeding in the real world. And he's not the only one. His colleague, Anne Brzezicki, equestrian program director and equestrian team coach, has been at MTSU almost as long as Whitaker and is equally eager to share stories about those in the horse science "family" who've gone on to do great things.

There's the farrier in Florida who tends to the hooves of million-dollar horses; the equine rep for Tennessee Farmer's Co-Op who travels the state educating people about proper feeding; the horse trainer who runs her own operation in Texas; the courtroom judge and the pharmaceutical rep who say their judging team experience helped them deliver more succinct messages; and the marketing manager at Blackberry Farm in the Smokies who was the 2003 Intercollegiate Horse Show Association National Champion High Point Western Rider.



Sure, faculty members at horse science programs across the country can likely tell similar stories, but at MTSU, Whitaker and Brzezicki do it with an unmistakable affection for their students. Students, Whitaker says, aren't numbers, and when he passes students in the barn he calls them by name.

"We've got great facilities, but I tell parents you send your kids to people not places," says Whitaker, a sort of academic cowboy with a deep voice and Southern drawl who is comfortable in khakis, a Western belt buckle, and cowboy boots. (He often wears a hat to complete the look.) "We have a wonderful set of people here that are genuinely interested in these students and their future, and there's an opportunity to interact with us on a daily basis. We become very close to our students. They turn out to be almost like family."

It's that mentor/family mentality, along with the faculty's insistence that students work hard and develop talents that will help them make a living, that has attracted students (and won over parents) from across the county. Throw in the state-of-the-art Horse Science Center next to the Tennessee Miller Coliseum—a world-class arena that hosts regional, national, and international horse show events—and it's easy to understand why MTSU is home to one of the leading equine programs in the East.

## A Gift Horse

When Whitaker, who worked for MTSU for four years in the '70s before leaving for a few years, took the Horse Science reins in 1982, he inherited a program that had a handful of majors but justified its existence by allowing students to take riding as a physical education credit. As the horse industry grew during the '80s and '90s, so did the number of majors, and riding as a recreational course became a thing of the past. Meanwhile, the horse judging team, which Whitaker started in 1976 during his first stint at the University, and the equestrian team, which Brzezicki launched in 1977 (she, too, left for a bit before returning in 1989), continued to gain popularity and win competitions.

In 1994, a bequest of more than \$20 million from the John and Mary Miller Foundation led to the construction of the Tennessee Miller Coliseum

(completed in 2003). The gift also enabled the University to put up the necessary matching funds to claim a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant (previously secured by Congressman Bart Gordon) to build the Horse Science Center and create two more faculty positions.

"I can't say enough about the Miller gift and how it catapulted MTSU and the horse program forward," Whitaker says.

## Taking the Lead

Today, the program, which is the only one of its kind in the state, boasts about 100 majors and 70 minors, five instructors, and a secretary, barn manager, and assistant barn manager. There are typically about 10 graduate students (see sidebar), and about 50 University-owned horses. The judging and equestrian teams consistently place in the top five in national competitions, and perhaps more importantly, continue to teach life skills beneficial to any career. Whitaker and Brzezicki, superstars whose résumés include coaching championships, industry accolades, and board memberships, set the tone for a well-connected and talented faculty.

"None of our people sit in an office waiting for the next thing to happen," Whitaker says. "They are out there doing something in the industry, which is great for our students because lots of times students go with them wherever they go."

Whitaker also works hard to add courses to ensure that the curriculum stays relevant. An equine-assisted therapy class, for example, introduces students to principles applied at Saddle Up!—a recreational therapeutic riding program in Franklin that supports children with disabilities. Part of the coursework for the class includes spending time in Franklin to gain first-hand knowledge and experience about this specific field.

With Miller Coliseum right next door, there's a lot of hands-on experience to be had in Horse Science at MTSU. The arena hosts shows almost every weekend, and in addition to being able to wander over and check out the scene, students are always needed to work at the coliseum.

"What a great opportunity for kids to connect with people and get some real life experience in

It's that  
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parents) from  
across the county.

*continued on page 30*



# Keeping the Pace

The Master of Science in Horse Science program is galloping along at a respectable pace in its second year, but Horse Science Center director Dave Whitaker's plans for the future include physical improvements that are absolutely necessary to ensure that MTSU holds its own.

To get more research funding from the National Institutes of Health or the U.S. Department of Agriculture, MTSU must meet certain facility codes. The USDA, for example, requires that stalls be a certain size and that horses in the field have proper shelter such as run-in sheds. Additionally, the Horse Science Center lacks a lab for conducting analyses that would increase MTSU's research input into the industry.

"We may never be a land-grant university in terms of our research, but we can do research that will be applicable and helpful to the industry," Whitaker says.

Satisfying those physical requirements will help MTSU capture top graduate students who opt to attend universities offering the best facilities as well as the best mentors. Such improvements will also enhance the Horse Science program as a whole.

"We need to put our students under a horse and let them make shoes or learn enough about farrier science so that . . . they can at least tell if their farrier is doing a good job," Whitaker says.

He's determined to move the program to the next level, and he's adamant that although MTSU has one of the best horse science programs, the University can't afford to be complacent.

"We need to stay ahead of the curve in terms of updating, constantly moving forward, doing more research, and adding more value to the program, so when kids come here we can convince them and their parents that there's a future in the horse industry."

## Horse Sense *continued from page 29*

what's happening in the horse industry from a lot of different breeds and perspectives," Whitaker says.

The coliseum is a top-notch facility (and one of the air-conditioned few). Plus, it sits right in the middle of the country, making MTSU the perfect place to host events such as the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association (IHSA) nationals. The University has already hosted that event four times—more times than any of the other 380 colleges that are part of IHSA.

### The Human Touch

Miller Coliseum and the Horse Science Center, seven miles from campus, has classrooms, faculty offices, an equine reproduction laboratory, a heated barn with 65 climate-controlled stalls, and a teaching arena, so it's a significant national draw. But Whitaker's guiding presence and philosophies complete the package.

"I respect him with all the world," says Travis Emore, an MTSU graduate who initially went into horse training and now manages the Miller Coliseum (and says Whitaker's judging team prepared him more for communicating with people than any

other experience he's had). "And if you were [at the Miller Coliseum] with him during a horse show and walked through, you wouldn't get very far. Between here and the barn, you are going to stop at least 10 to 12 times talking to people. Everyone has just a great respect for him."


That has everything to do with Whitaker's horse judging prowess, his industry reputation, and the fact that under his leadership, MTSU is turning out students who are ready to go to work.

"Dave cares very much about our students discovering and developing their talents, getting the necessary experience to gain some skills and confidence and finding their best place in the horse world," Brzezicki says.

Indeed, the word "talent" is one that Whitaker references quite a bit, and it's often used alongside two other favorites—"work ethic" and "passion."

"When a kid comes in, we tell them, 'If you're lazy, go somewhere else because you've got to work while you're here,'" he says. "And then we stress that you can have a passion for horses, but you also have to have a talent that enables you to make a living."

*continued on next page*



Dave Whitaker

**"If you're lazy, go somewhere else because you've got to work while you're here."**



*continued from page 30*

That talent, Whitaker explains, isn't always going to be horse training, grooming, or breeding. Because there are about 150 different careers associated with the horse industry (including everything from horse feed salesmen to equine insurance agents to lawyers who specialize in equine law), a student's talent doesn't have to be directly related to horses. It may, for example, pertain to journalism, marketing, management, or business. But Whitaker and the rest of the faculty do everything they can to help students figure out what those talents are.

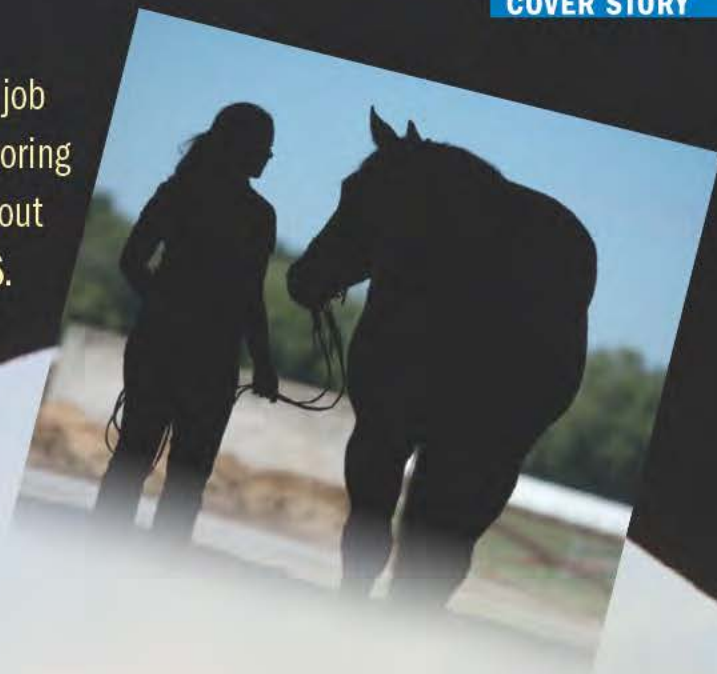
"If students can match their passion and talent, they will be successful in the horse industry or a related pathway," Whitaker says, adding that he's a big fan of MTSU's major/minor program because it allows students to choose a second area of study to support their career goals.

It's an approach that appeals to parents and has allowed the faculty to continue to be successful in helping hard-working, deserving graduates find jobs in the industry, regardless of a down economy. And in the end, Whitaker says, their job isn't just about mentoring students, it's also about improving lives.

"We can give you the book education, but more importantly, what are we going to do about your life that's going to cause you to have a better future?" says Whitaker, noting that almost half of MTSU's graduates are first-generation college students. "We're trying to change lives, and we're trying to do it with one of God's greatest creatures—the horse."

Spoken like a true father figure. [MTSU](#)

And in the end, their job isn't just about mentoring students, it's also about **improving lives.**





# The Horse's Mouth

**T**HE MTSU EQUESTRIAN TEAM'S 120 MEMBERS RANGE from those without previous riding experience to those who have competed nationally. The team welcomes all students, not just horse science majors, and competes across the Southeast in Intercollegiate Horse Show Association (IHSA)-recognized shows. MTSU has hosted the IHSA national collegiate finals (an equine version of the NCAA Final Four) a record four times. Program director Anne Brzezicki has been on the IHSA national board of directors since its inception.

Riders compete in hunter seat equitation on the flat and over fences, Western horsemanship, and reining. Two team members and one alumna earned reserve national champion honors at the 2012 IHSA nationals. A third student and a second alumna also had top 10 showings at that event.

We asked Brzezicki a few questions about her nationally recognized equestrian program.

## How do students benefit from being on the equestrian team?

**Brzezicki:** First, they are offered a solid education in two equestrian disciplines in excellent facilities on really good horses. Since they are all horse lovers who will mostly own horses, this is an investment in them that will enrich their entire lives. Then, our riders are expected to plan, organize, and produce several equestrian events each year and support industry events [at] our facilities or that we participate in through our industry network. This gives them real-world experience in project management useful in every field, including the horse industry. Our system is to encourage potential student leaders to move up through the ranks and eventually take the lead of our large team. Many businesses have fewer employees than our equestrian team has members, and the lessons learned are transferable to any business or organization.

## You succeed in being a top-five program every year. What's the secret to your success?

**Brzezicki:** There are no secrets, just a lot of planning and hard work, long hours, and determining what individuals need to be their best. We are clear from the first visit of prospective students that this takes hard work and dedication, and lazy people won't succeed here or in the horse industry. We just keep putting one foot in front of the other with our goal in mind. **MTSU**

A key to success is practice:  
doing the same thing over  
and over and over and . . .

Anne Brzezicki

photos J. Intintoli



# Spring into Middle

Alumni Weekend 2013 • April 19–21

## 2013 ALUMNI SPRING WEEKEND

We invite you, along with your family and friends, for a **great weekend of Blue Raider fun!** Reacquaint yourself with your alma mater and explore the many exciting things happening on campus, such as reunions, tours, lectures, Blue-and-White spring football, baseball and softball games, a luncheon, and much more.

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**MIDDLE  
TENNESSEE**  
STATE UNIVERSITY



AS AN ESTIMATED 14,000 FANS ON Nashville's Lower Broadway enjoyed the music of Capitol Records artists Luke Bryan, Jon Pardi, and Kelleigh Bannen last October, 53 MTSU students were modulating audio, operating HD cameras, conducting interviews, and recording the show for the label. Students later postproduced music videos for three songs, produced a promotional video for the Department of Electronic Media Communication (EMC), and produced a "sizzle reel," which Capitol is using in social media and other marketing efforts.

"Usually, colleges don't get to do projects of this magnitude," says MTSU's Bob Gordon, an assistant professor in electronic media communication, who oversaw the student-led effort at the event.

Department chair Billy Pittard, winner of five Emmys, a Golden Lamp Award, and hundreds of other industry honors, says MTSU's program, paired with its proximity to Nashville's entertainment business, has a perfect formula for delivering extraordinary college learning experiences like these.

"What we did at the Capitol Records street party is, as far as I know, completely unique," Pittard says. "Imagine: our students are going to graduate with portfolio materials that are professional quality."

Students from MTSU's College of Mass Communication got an experience that October day and night that few media professionals will ever realize. Zack Eagles, a senior TV production student from Alvaton, Ky., directed the production from MTSU's 40-foot, \$1.7 million HD mobile production laboratory parked a block away from the stage on 3rd Avenue. "The Truck," routinely used by students to cover sports, concerts, and events for local broadcast, cable stations, and national cable networks, has been used more than 40 times exclusively by students since its arrival on campus about a year ago. From its onboard audio recording capability to its cameras and state-of-the-art switchers, the equipment on the truck is the same used by professionals at Titans and Predator games or local TV news channels. Long before they graduate, MTSU students

get exposure to the very equipment they'll use as paid professionals.

Colby Graham, a senior TV production student from Auburndale, Fla., was producer at the party. His job was to make sure all crew members were on the same page and executed their separate responsibilities well.

"We learn how to do it the way the big boys do it," he says. "We try to mimic that as much as we can, and that's a lot easier to mimic with a \$1.7 million truck. It's a great opportunity for us to gain real-world experience, so when we walk away, we can pretty much walk right into a job right out of college."

Before the Capitol street party, Graham had experience with short films, music videos, concerts, and volleyball games, but he admits that didn't necessarily drive away the jitters.

"I always get butterflies," Graham says. "Even if it's just a class news show, I want everything I do to be good. There were so many eyes on this, but I felt prepared."

*continued on page 37*

by Gina K. Logue and Drew Ruble

photos: Andy Heintz

# STREET



## MTSU students help Capitol Records entertain thousands of music lovers

### Three's a Charm

MTSU's College of Mass Communication, the fifth largest in the nation, has three departments—Electronic Media Communication, Journalism, and Recording Industry—and the Center for Popular Music and Center for Innovation in Media.

"Other universities close to us don't have anything like we do," says Bob Gordon. "They may have a great recording program, for instance, but nothing else. We have recording, film, animation, graphics, photography, journalism, new media, and remote TV recording. Students have an opportunity to have a well-rounded academic experience, and [the Capitol Records event] is a powerful example of that."

According to EMC professor Dennis Oneal, parents of prospective MTSU students "could go a long way and spend a lot of money and not get anything better" than the education they'll get at MTSU.

"There are very few programs like this," he says. "On multi-cam, I don't know of a school anywhere internationally that has anything better than what we have. And our single-cam, new media center, and digital animation programs housed within the College of Mass Communication are also on high par. In digital animation, for instance, we've had kids share in Academy Awards for being on the team for Golden Compass."

"We do not limit the students' ability," he adds. "We provide experiences where they can enhance what they've got and go as far as they want to go."

EMC chair Billy Pittard, whose body of work spans over 200 television network brands, adds, "The magic that comes from our unique program at MTSU is we have an array of disciplines that come together. They all influence and inspire each other."

MTSU

# REETCREED



# STU

## Making the Team

Athletic departments have varsity basketball and football teams. The players are the top performers, and don't get credit or grades. They have to compete for positions on the team. They have to practice on their own time. They can lose their positions if they don't perform well.

EMC professor Dennis Oneal also serves as executive producer of EMC Productions, an elite noncredit squad of students hand-selected and used to produce MTSU games for ESPN3.

"We essentially have a professional production crew—a varsity squad," he

says. "I'll put my people up against any professional crew."

In national competition, the EMC program has finished in the top five for sports production.

"What a great thing for a résumé," Oneal says. "We'll produce four football games and 10 basketball games for ESPN, plus the Raiders Choice Awards, a big sports banquet broadcast on local television."

Being on the team is extracurricular. No academic credits or grades are given. Students can be replaced if they don't perform. EMC chair Billy Pittard

describes it as "an excellent experience to prepare team members for employment—and a great portfolio-building opportunity. The people on this team are serious about their futures."

The idea is a big one and a new concept in the College of Mass Communication. Oneal says he is not aware of any other such varsity electronic production squad at a university in America. [MTSU](#)





# STREET CRED

FEATURE STORY



Continued from page 34



Those butterflies are key to the experiential learning MTSU is providing through savvy partnerships with Capitol Records, says Dr. Dennis Oneal, who primarily teaches electronic media management.

"In all my years in teaching, I have never been able to duplicate in a classroom the feeling you get in the pit of your stomach when the recording is live and being broadcast to a network like ESPN," Oneal says. "It's a feeling students need to get used to as a step to becoming a professional. This is all about learning environment."

Gordon agrees.

"The collegiate world, usually, is not real, not really," he says. "You are in a classroom for 15 weeks, an hour and a half each class. But to do a project like this where you are here 18 hours straight and there is no rehearsal, there is only one pass—well, it makes everybody more intense than normal. These students are managing to enjoy both the thrill of that and the fear of that, both of which are good for professional development."

Pittard calls real-world experience like the Capitol event the key to postgraduation success in the field.

"In this industry, it is all about showing you know how to do the work. And there is no substitute for doing the work," Pittard says. "This is essentially no different from what will happen at the professional level. These students are already very seasoned."

It's no surprise the faculty would crow about the program they administer and the quality of students MTSU produces. Mike Dungan, president and CEO of Universal Music Nashville, which at the time of

the event was in the process of merging with Capitol Records, provides a validating industry view.

"The most frustrating thing is when people are only book smart," Dungan says. "They know the theories but don't know how to do it. That's why this is great. It's terrific that the students can come in and produce this and put this on their written or spoken résumés. Right away, we know what they've done."

These experienced students will one day be seeking jobs in the growing field of live TV production, which has a significant presence across Tennessee. Three cable networks—CMT, GAC, and RFD-TV—operate in Nashville, as do significant television and movie production outfits. Knoxville has Scripps Network products including HGTV, DIY, and the Food Channel.

"Plus, in addition to Music City and the recording world, the tour industry is based out of Nashville," Gordon says. "There are probably more TV jobs in tour support than TV right now. Because every act that goes out on the road these days takes with it LED screens and animation and cameras. So many students may not go the traditional TV route after they graduate but rather go out on the road with acts like Rascal Flatts. It is still doing TV, just slightly different. And here at MTSU, they have much more opportunity to learn real-world skills than most places."

Dungan, one of the most powerful persons working on Music Row, praised MTSU for its commitment to getting students ready to work in the real world.

"It's a big investment for the University to be here," he says. "It shows how important this program is for MTSU. It's world class." **MTSU**

photos: Andy Heidt



# A Reporter's Eye

Alex Hubbard and Lark are budding members of the Fourth Estate

by Amanda Haggard

ON THE CAMPUS OF THE LARGEST UNDERGRADUATE university in Tennessee, faces often go unnamed in the shuffle to make it to classes on time; but those faces do not go completely unnoticed. Alex Hubbard, whom many may have noticed rushing around campus, phone in hand and seeing-eye dog in tow, has become one of those faces frequently seen but not always known. That may change if Hubbard's journalism career keeps growing.

Hubbard, 22, is news editor for the student-run newspaper, *Sidelines*. He was born with some vision in his left eye but none in his right. He lost his existing sight before he was old enough to have the percentage of vision measured.

Now, Hubbard is only able to see the sun and major differences in lighting. But that doesn't slow him down. As he juggles classwork and daily interviews for the paper, he often appears in as much a hurry as the dog named Lark who guides him around campus safely.

"Lark is everything to me. She knows that I'm a total spaz," Hubbard says, laughing and reaching to pat Lark's head. "I'm walking across the street. I'm on the phone. I'm sending an email. I'm doing tons of things."

For instance, Hubbard recently completed a professional assignment for the Associated Press, assisting with election coverage—quite a feat for a budding journalist still in pursuit of a college degree.

## Man About Town

But the world isn't always spinning so fast for Hubbard and Lark. On the day of this interview, the scruffy mix of golden retriever and Labrador crawled under Hubbard's chair and closed her eyes in the busy campus coffee shop, unexcited by the commotion of students and professors getting coffee before heading to class. Such ease amid the hubbub might be due to the many loud sports events Hubbard has taken Lark to in the past few years during a previous stint as sports editor at *Sidelines*. That's in addition to the many Nashville Predators games he and his family have attended. Not unlike on campus, Hubbard is a highly recognizable figure for many fans at Preds home games in Bridgestone Arena.

Hubbard has attended nearly every home game in the last decade. As a result, he became acquainted with Terry Crisp and Pete Weber, the voices of the Nashville Predators. At first, Hubbard and Weber bonded over their mutual love of sports, but eventually a change in seats put Hubbard about six feet from Weber and led to a more mentor-like relationship. Weber's love for Lark also kept Hubbard visiting.

"When I began getting into the newspaper business, especially sports writing, I showed Pete a lot of what I was doing," Hubbard says. "I think he was really impressed with it!"

## Man About Campus

Hubbard, a senior Mass Comm major (Journalism) with minors in political science and history, concedes that MTSU is a leader in universities that provide services for blind students, but he says his goal is to use those services as little as possible.

"As a matter of my own philosophy, I want to do as much as I can of my own volition," Hubbard says, adding that journalism as a profession is not particularly subject to adaptation, and he believes finding a way to perform tasks without alteration will be absolutely necessary.

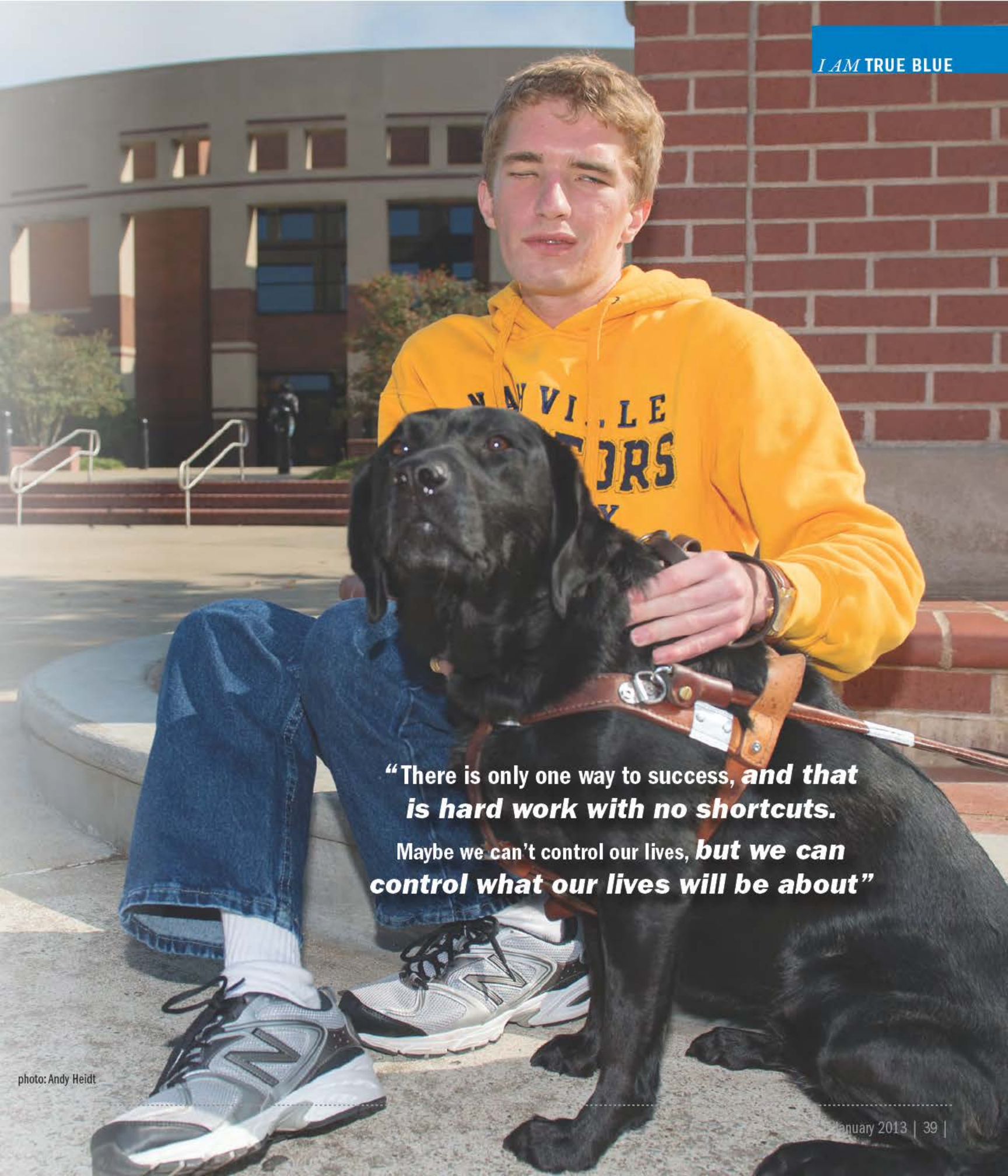
He insists he never thought he would be a writer, but that his mom played a big part in introducing him to newspapers. She read the paper to him from the time he was five or six years old, he says, "Whether I wanted to hear it or not."

"But I knew that if I wanted to get out of the trap that most blind people find themselves in—unemployed or underemployed—I needed to learn how to write," Hubbard says.

While he fields many questions about how he performs his work, it is not as complicated as one might think. He uses nearly the same process as any other writer: a computer, Microsoft Word, and a program that reads the text back to him.

"There is only one way to success, and that is hard work with no shortcuts," Hubbard says. "It's not always pretty, and isn't always idealistic. That has nothing to do with me; it is that way for everybody. Maybe we can't control our lives, but we can control what our lives will be about." [MTSU](#)





**“There is only one way to success, *and that is hard work with no shortcuts.***

Maybe we can't control our lives, ***but we can control what our lives will be about***”





interview by Drew Ruble

## FOLLOWING THE LEADERS

*Cochairs of the Campaign for MTSU discuss the importance of giving back . . . and paying forward.*

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY IS FORTUNATE THAT ITS FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN is being led by alumni who firmly believe in the University's ability to promote positive change in the world. Campaign cochairs Pamela Wright and Don Witherspoon have volunteered their time to be advocates for MTSU, rallying support to reach the campaign's \$80 million goal. Below, Wright and Witherspoon share their perspectives on the campaign and how it will shape the future of MTSU.



Pam Wright

**This is the biggest campaign in MTSU history. Why is it so important, and why is now the right time to launch such a campaign?**

**Witherspoon:** One reason this is so important now is the cutbacks that have occurred in state funding. Education is the answer to a lot of our problems, and with state funding being cut, it is particularly important that we have this campaign underway.

**Wright:** The campaign's stated goals are focused on what

is really important now, not only for the University and community but the whole nation, which is focused rightly on finance, growth, opportunities, and problem solving. So, now is the time to focus on excellence and how to move MTSU and the country forward. It all ties in to why this campaign is important.

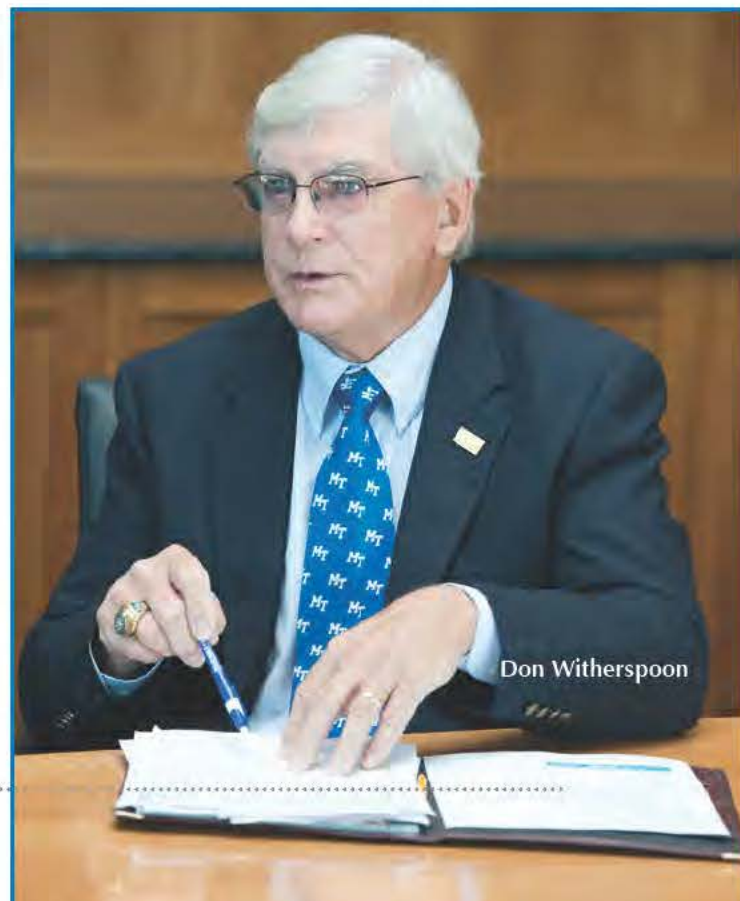
**Talk about MTSU's impact on the local workforce. Is that a reason to support this campaign?**

**Witherspoon:** The role MTSU plays in middle Tennessee is extremely important. First and foremost, if you go into most K–12 schools in this

area—and probably throughout the state—teachers will have been trained here. Education is so important in terms of where the country needs to go. And we are training those people who are going to take us there.

**Wright:** What makes any business successful is the workforce, the quality of that work, and the products and services that we produce. That is strongly

*continued on page 42*



Don Witherspoon

photos: Andy Heidt

To give by phone,  
call 615-898-2502  
or toll free  
877-444-6678.  
To give online, go  
to [www.mtsu.edu/  
supportMT](http://www.mtsu.edu/supportMT).





## SUPPORT THE CENTENNIAL CAMPAIGN WITH A GIFT THROUGH YOUR ESTATE

The Office of Development can help you create a charitable estate plan that supports scholarships, faculty research, endowments, or other projects for the MTSU college or department you care about most.

Visit [www.mtsu.edu/plannedgiving](http://www.mtsu.edu/plannedgiving)

to learn more, or contact

Nick Perlick, [nick.perlick@mtsu.edu](mailto:nick.perlick@mtsu.edu), (615) 898-2502.



MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY



linked to education—not only in attracting the best and brightest but also in what happens with their development while here. Hopefully, during this campaign, businesses will see that MTSU's role in local workforce development is critical to their success. This University feeds so many businesses and creates those successes. So many of us hire MTSU grads, and it's critical to get the right people as we continue to build our own companies.

**In the end, then, what could this campaign mean in terms of taking MTSU and the region to next level?**

**Wright:** To me, it is all about creating leaders for the future, new leaders who can move us forward as a local and regional and national community.

**One of the four campaign goals is raising money to provide more scholarships. How important is it to attract the best and brightest students?**

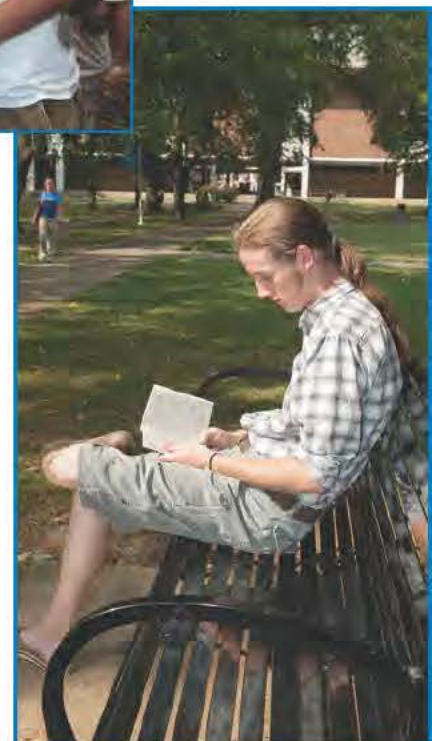
**Witherspoon:** Becoming involved in the campaign opened my eyes to something I wasn't fully aware of. I'm aware of athletics and how we need to recruit top athletes to compete in the various sports. The concept of recruiting scholars really, to me, was a little bit foreign. But now I have been involved in some activities where I've seen what has had to happen to attract these top students to MTSU. We are in competition with colleges and universities throughout the world for top-notch students, and having the financial resources to assist those students in coming here really moves things forward. This campaign will help us do a better job of that.

**Another major component of the campaign is raising money to attract great faculty through the establishment of more chairs of excellence. Pam, you're one of the most successful female entrepreneurs in all of Tennessee. You've established a chair in entrepreneurship at MTSU. Tell me about that aspect of the campaign since that is where you chose to make your own personal investment.**

**Wright:** A few years ago, when I first began thinking about a major investment in the University, I really wasn't sure what I wanted to do or how to use my own gift to make a difference. After several



discussions about the needs and opportunities available to me, I found my passion—something that was truly important to me, and it was a vital need for the University. Establishing an endowed chair in entrepreneurship has enabled MTSU to bring a nationally recognized expert to campus, where he can be found in the classroom with students, as well as out in the business community providing a valuable link to the University. I realize now that we would not have been able to attract such a noted individual without the chair. The real workplace knowledge that person brings, as well as the potential for research and for community outreach in terms of enhancing the reputation of the University—it can have a transformational impact.



## The Brass Tacks

**MTSU recently launched the most comprehensive and ambitious fundraising campaign in its history—the Centennial Campaign.**

The campaign will ensure the University's place among the nation's top comprehensive universities, further raise its visibility nationally and internationally, and maintain its legacy as a center of higher education excellence for the future.

Nearly \$60 million has already been committed toward the campaign's \$80 million goal. That sum alone would constitute a successful effort at many comprehensive universities.



**CENTENNIAL  
Campaign**

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY



*You have to make your own personal commitment before you can ask anyone else to do it.*

**Raising money for MTSU athletics is also a focus of the campaign. Why is that so important?**

**Witherspoon:** Sports are the front porch of a university. It's an outlet of the full college experience for the students who participate, both athletes and spectators alike. Some scholars might say, "Why is athletics so important?" I think it gives some students a chance that they might not otherwise have to attend college. It also promotes the morale of the University. And it's a terrific part of campus life.

**Wright:** The pride of following your team is exciting. It links people who maybe have lost touch with the University or don't have any connection academically with the University but will follow and support the Blue Raiders because they feel linked to the excitement and pride of that.

**Serving on the executive committee of this campaign is a big commitment. Why are you so heavily involved?**

**Wright:** You have to make your own personal commitment before you can ask anyone else to do it. As a person who has worked to have a successful corporate business, it is just extremely important to give back.

**Witherspoon:** My wife Hanna and I have been able to see the results of the programs we have gotten involved in financially and with our time. We've met the people we've been able to sponsor scholarships for, and seen real results. We also feel a sense of community with MTSU, and this is one of the ways we express that.

**In addition to your time, you've also put your own money into this effort. Why did you choose to give and what do you hope will be the outcomes of your gifts?**

**Wright:** The growth and success of this community is important, and I believe the entrepreneurship chair I funded can make a difference in the way that we develop students and present opportunities for students. I'm a strong believer in entrepreneurship. It was important that I connected with the University on a need that fit for me, as well. So there was a strong connection there and a good feeling that this was the right thing to do.

**Witherspoon:** We can see the good that it does when we give. We can see where education is going to take a student and, by extension, this country in the future. That's our biggest motivator.

*continued on page 44*

## Four priorities for the \$80 million have been outlined.

**1. Increasing financial aid and support** available to students with both merit- and need-based scholarships. For MTSU to continue as the first choice for *Tennessee's Best*, it must offer competitive financial aid packages to attract and support exceptional scholars.

**2. Maintaining the finest teaching and research faculty** possible by establishing new endowed faculty positions and securing additional awards for outstanding teaching, advising, and research, as well as additional graduate assistants and stipends. These positions will attract prestigious scholars whose teaching and research will energize academic life and attract national attention.

**3. Improving physical facilities and academic opportunities** for students. MTSU remains dedicated to giving every student access to the finest facilities, the most modern equipment, and the most innovative academic programs. Funds for academic enhancement will enable MTSU to better internationalize curricula and ensure that students have hands-on

*continued on page 44*



January 2013 |



**Is this campaign exclusively about getting large donations?**

**Witherspoon:** It is not just for major donors. It is for everyone. We are as interested in the small donations as the large. Many times, the publicity of major donors causes us to lose [smaller] contributions. But one of the important things about this campaign, I believe, is that it will increase the number of overall donors. And this increase will be exponential. It will continue and continue this way into the future. We're already seeing that happen. It's very important we find those people giving smaller and medium-sized gifts, as well as the larger gifts, in order to make this successful.

**Wright:** It also gives people an opportunity to be a role model to their kids and really communicate what's important. We are all telling our kids education is so important, so we need to be showing that and putting some money behind it. It can be a \$20 gift, but it is communicating to your kids that you're supporting education. That's important.

**What would you say to someone considering their first gift?**

**Witherspoon:** Would you like a pen? [laughter] The reason my wife and I give is we really think we can make a difference. That's important to us.

**Wright:** Outlining the successes of the University and connecting the fact that every small gift is a contribution to those continuing successes—it creates a pride and a connection. Most people can afford to do a small gift. So getting them engaged with the University at that beginning level is so important, as is emphasizing that it doesn't have to be a large gift.

**Witherspoon:** Also, there are several areas of the University where we are leaders. Mass Comm. Aviation. Concrete Industry. The [college of] business. There are other great programs, too. When you put it all together, the sum of those parts just makes MTSU a terrific university. We really need to make sure that message gets out and that people continue to see us in that light.

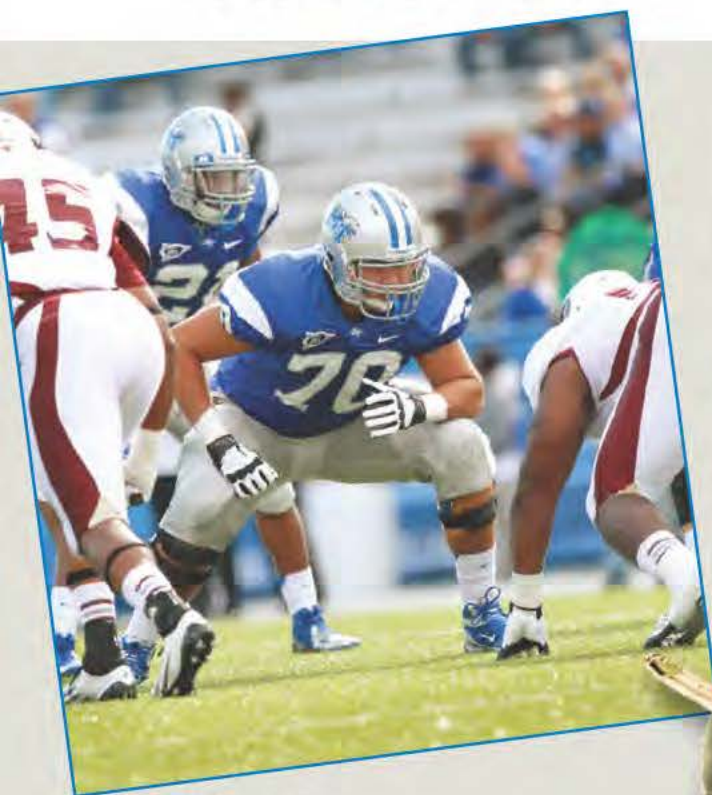
**Wright:** We need to also remember the intangible benefits of college. This is a huge population of students, and the impact we make on their lives is huge. We see the grades and the jobs they get, but think about the personal development and the character development that occurs here—that comes from exposure to university life.

**Thank you both. MTSU**

exposure to and familiarity with state-of-the-art technologies. With proper funding, MTSU can use its extensive experience as an entrepreneurial institution to better serve students and the economy of the state.

## 4. Enhancing the Blue Raider Athletic Program

to ensure that student-athletes have the opportunity to fulfill their potential, provide new training and practice facilities, upgrade and enhance Murphy Center, and build a new indoor tennis complex. Regional and national recognition provide a link between the University, its alumni, and the community at large. It also builds alumni and public support for all aspects of the University. Maintaining a good position on the national sports scene requires a competitive approach to recruiting succeeding generations of talented student-athletes. MTSU must have the financial support to offer competitive student aid packages to attract and support exceptional student-athletes; provide them with access to facilities that allow year-round training; and build a new facility to house key athletic administrators and staff, group coaches in key sports, and provide academic and resource space for student-athletes. **MTSU**





# A Learning Experience

For some deserving Rutherford County students each year, the Shipp has come in

The late Ken Shipp, a 1947 MTSU graduate and NFL coach, was perhaps best known in middle Tennessee for his love of Blue Raider athletics. Soon, however, he will likely be known to future generations for creating a way for deserving students to get a college education.

University officials announced in October that Shipp died March 15. They decided that the fund would benefit students who would be assisted with tuition in 2007.

bequest to that scholarship fund for students, coupled with earlier gifts, brought to more than \$4 million—making it the largest donation to date for Rutherford County.

“Starting next fall, thanks to this contribution, students each year will have the resources to pursue their education,” says President McPhee.

McPhee says the fund will help select incoming freshmen from Rutherford County public high schools who demonstrate an ability and desire to excel but for whom tuition is a major barrier.

Shipp was born in Old Hickory in 1919. He played football for MTSU’s legendary Charles “Bubber” Murphy. He was an assistant coach in the National Football League and, during the 1975 season, as interim coach of the New York Jets, he famously (or infamously) benched star player Joe Namath for violating team rules.

Despite his success as a coach and his love of his alma mater’s athletic programs, the Shipp name will always be most closely associated with scholarships. [MTSU](#)



# A Way of Saying Thanks

John Lemons pays a little back even as he pays a lot more forward

When 2011 graduate John Lemons received his first paycheck as a brand new special education teacher with the Bedford County School system, he did something few recent graduates do. He wrote a \$25 donation check to his alma mater. What compelled him to do it?

“I like the word ‘gratitude,’” Lemons says. “I had been to a few other colleges, but by comparison, the professors at MTSU were very accessible and gave input and feedback

on everything you put in to yourself. I felt very

comfortable on substitute rather than writing that \$25 check.

“It’s a hard job to do at work,” he says. “You have a budget restraints, and you have to give to an organization

that makes it clear how much they care with special education. I’m a really passionate special needs teacher. I’ve seen special needs students in mainstream classrooms, and I’ve seen a really recent shift in educational protocols that has resulted in more inclusive classroom atmospheres. It’s not like the segregated environments that we’ve had in the past of school-aged children growing up in.

It appears to alter the way you’re meeting someone, and the conversation with them. “Kids are special needs kids, and they’re a kid, in the same way that everybody’s a kid in stride.” [MTSU](#)





## Raiders of Industry

### Introducing the 2012–2013 CLASS of distinguished ALUMNI

**M**any MTSU alumni bring the University recognition and prestige through their innovative work and loyal support. Each year since 1960, MTSU's Alumni Association has recognized accomplished alumni with the association's highest honor—the Distinguished Alumni Award. More recently, it has also selected a younger MTSU alum for the Young Alumni Achievement Award.

This year's honorees include a product safety innovator, a former Lady Raider turned high-powered Nashville attorney and a children's education researcher. Each is well deserving of the honor, and their personal stories don't make for a bad read, either.

#### DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

Maria Salas ('85) B.S. | Mass Communication

**Salas** is a former Lady Raiders basketball player who now, along with owning a bankruptcy law firm in Nashville, devotes a large part of her time to community service. She has served or is currently serving on the board of directors of Nashville Cares, Human Rights Campaign, Nashville Bar Association, Stonewall Bar Association (founding member), Mid-South Commercial Law Institute, and the Tennessee Lawyer's Association for Women. She's received many volunteer awards, has been named "Best of the Bar" by the *Nashville Business Journal*, and is an alumna of Leadership Nashville.

#### YOUNG ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Deanna Meador ('04) B.S. | Interdisciplinary Studies

**Meador** is a research coordinator at Vanderbilt's Peabody Research Institute. She is coordinating two multimillion-dollar, grant-funded research projects focusing on self-regulation in children. One of her most recent accomplishments was the development of a paperless data collection system that—on one research project alone—has saved over 68,000 pieces of paper, months of data entry, and thousands of dollars. Meador is presenting the new system to the Institute of Education Services, the research arm of the U.S. Dept. of Education.



Deanna Meador

Maria Salas

Larry  
Needham

#### DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

Larry Needham ('68) | B.S., Chemistry

**Needham** was employed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta for over 34 years. He served as chief of the Organic Analytical Toxicology Branch. He devoted much of his time to the development of methods for assessing human exposure to a variety of environmental toxicants and was considered to be one of the preeminent human exposure assessment experts in the field. He's best known for demonstrating that leaded gasoline was a major health hazard (prompting the EPA to remove lead from gas) and for producing data that led the FDA to remove the reproductive toxicant BPA from food packaging and baby pacifiers and bottles. He produced over 350 peer-reviewed publications and gave over 200 presentations internationally. Needham passed away in October 2010. [MTSU](#)





## Bart Gordon

Former Tennessee congressman **Bart Gordon ('71)**, pictured here at the South Pole, recently received an honorary degree and served as commencement speaker at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York, the nation's oldest technological university. Gordon, who served in the U.S. House of Representatives for 26 years before retiring in 2010 and was former chair of the House Committee on Science and Technology, is now a partner in K&L Gates law firm in Washington, D.C. Gordon was also recently honored with the designation of "Officer" in the French Legion of Honor for his nearly 30 years of public service, including his focus on innovation, science and technology. It is France's highest distinction and one of the most coveted in the world. **MTSU**

## 1960s

**William Coward ('66)**, Fairview, was inducted into the Band of Blue Hall of Fame at the MTSU Symphonic Band concert in April 2012.

**Steve Cates ('68)**, Murfreesboro, led the Cripple Creek Cloggers to represent the United States in international folklore festivals in Latvia and Lithuania in 2012.

**Robert William Clouse ('68)**, Nashville, a professor emeritus of Vanderbilt, recently moved his research and developing work to Western Kentucky University, where he holds the Mattie Newman Ford Endowed Chair in Entrepreneurship and is a professor of management. He also serves as executive director of the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation and is CEO/president of the Clouse-Elrod Foundation.

**George S. Clinton ('69)**, the man behind the music of *Mortal Kombat*, *The Santa Clause 2* and the *Austin Powers* film series, recently accepted the position of chair of the Department of Film Scoring at Boston's prestigious Berklee College of Music.

**Tom Morrow Jr. ('69)**, Huntland, and Faye Morrow were voted Mr. and Mrs. Franklin County 2011.

## 1970s

**Wendell Pedigo ('71)**, Nashville, has retired from *The Tennessean* after 39 years of service.

**Ralph Crary ('72)**, Goodlettsville, retired from the Nashville VA Medical Center after nearly 34 years of federal service. He practiced as a RN, charge nurse, and discharge coordinator.

**Don Goldmann ('74)**, Orange, Calif., was elected to the National Association of Health Underwriters (NAHU) board of trustees as treasurer. He is vice president of the Word & Brown General Agency.

**Pamela Manning ('75)**, Fallon, Ill., was saluted at the National Council of Negro Women's 2012 Biennial Awards Luncheon honoring 16 outstanding women on March 24, 2012.

**Donald Jernigan ('77, '82)**, Christiana, was named the 2012 vice chair of Tennessee Farmers Cooperative's board of directors.

**Wynona James ('78)**, Colorado Springs, Colo., received the Air Force General Counsel's Individual Achievement Award. She is the special emphasis program manager and alternative dispute manager of the 21st Space Wing, Peterson Air Force Base, Colo.



**Melissa McDonald ('79)**, is communications director at the Tennessee Board of Parole, the state agency responsible for scheduling parole hearings, maintaining offender files and providing services to crime victims.

**Davis Porch III ('79)**, Waverly, principal agent of Porch-Stribling-Webb, was presented the prestigious Insuror of the Year award at

the 117th Annual Convention of Insurors of Tennessee. This award is the highest honor presented annually by the Insurors of Tennessee.

## 1980s

**Richard Pugh ('80, '86)**, Torrance, Calif., was granted the Certified Construction Auditor (CCA) certification by the National Association of Construction Auditors in December 2011. He has been promoted to audit supervisor for UCLA Audit & Amp, Advisory Services, Los Angeles.

**Cindy Hazen ('81)**, Brentwood, graduated from the Leadership Middle Tennessee class of 2012 in May.

## Mark Hall

Wake Forest University School of Law professor **Mark Hall ('77)**, led the preparation of a brief filed last year with the U.S. Supreme Court concerning one aspect of the controversial health care reform law—the individual mandate requiring most Americans buy health insurance. The brief was in support of the provision and the legislation. Hall, one of the nation's leading scholars in health care law and policy and bioethics, is the author or editor of 15 books. He regularly consults with government officials, foundations, and think tanks about health care public policy issues. **MTSU**







## Lucas Johnson

A journalist for the AP, a member of the College of Mass Communication Wall of Fame, and a member of the MTSU School of Journalism's recently formed professional advisory board, **Lucas L. Johnson II ('91)** is the journalist who last year broke the story of Chattanooga Stephon Tull finding a never-before-heard audio recording of Martin Luther King Jr. from 1960 in an old box in his father's attic.

In the audio, which Tull's father had captured for a book project that was never completed, King discusses the importance of the civil rights movement four years before the Civil Rights Act became law, three years before his "I Have a Dream" speech, and eight years before his assassination. Johnson later broke the story that magician David Copperfield purchased the audiotape and planned to donate it to the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis to help promote King's message of nonviolence. **MTSU**

## 1980s, cont.

**Bobby Smith ('82)**, Murfreesboro, is coauthor of *Let's Go to Work*, the autobiography of Leon T. Garr, a well-known philanthropist and entrepreneur in the Los Angeles area. Smith has been writing professionally since 1988.

**Nelson Eddy ('84)**, Murfreesboro, has been recognized by the Nashville Advertising Federation with its lifelong achievement award, the Silver Medal, for his many contributions to the advertising industry.

**Morris H. Stocks ('84)** is provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs at the University of Mississippi. Stocks previously served

as senior vice chancellor for planning and operations and as dean of the Patterson School of Accountancy at Ole Miss. During his tenure as dean, the Patterson School was ranked as one of the top 25 accounting programs in the country for the first time in its history.

**Susan Graham Waters ('85)**, Antioch, was inducted into the Band of Blue Hall of Fame at the MTSU Symphonic Band concert in April 2012.

**Kelley Kiningham ('86, '89)**, Nashville, was appointed to the position of assistant dean for student affairs for the College of Pharmacy at Belmont University. She will be a standing member of

the executive team, will chair the Student Affairs Committee, and will serve on the Admissions and Awards committees.

**Mary Flipse ('89)**, Washington, D.C., is assistant general counsel and vice president at King Pharmaceuticals, a subsidiary of Pfizer Inc.

## 1990s

**Greg Carter ('91)**, Tullahoma, was appointed assistant superintendent of schools and director of personnel for Tullahoma City Schools on June 1, 2012.

**Heath Nokes ('95)**, McMinnville, was named Lion of the Year for 2011-2012 by the Woodbury Lions Club. He is the UT Extension

agent for Cannon County and the current president of the Woodbury Lions Club.

**Keith Caywood ('96)**, Shelbyville, has earned the designation of Certified Green Builder and Certified Graduate Builder.

**Carla Bush ('97, '03)**, Woodbury, has received the Girl Scout Volunteer of Excellence award and Rookie of the Year award.

**Philip Crabtree ('97)**, Huntsville, Ala., has been promoted to major in the United States Army and reassigned to Washington, D.C.

**Mark A. Blakeman ('98)** is senior vice president and general manager of the Nashville Symphony and the acclaimed Schermerhorn Symphony Center, where he oversees the 85-member, Grammy-winning Nashville Symphony, produces 160 concerts annually, and supervises artistic administration as well as education and community engagement activities. After the 2010 Nashville flood, Blakeman oversaw a \$40 million reconstruction of the center. During Blakeman's tenure, the symphony has won one Emmy and seven Grammys.



## Darrell Freeman

**Darrell S. Freeman ('87)**, founder and executive chairman of Zycron Inc., a high-tech company headquartered in Nashville that helps hospitals manage information technology, was recently named by Gov. Bill Haslam to represent the 7th Congressional District on the Tennessee Board of Regents, which oversees Tennessee's public colleges and universities, including MTSU. Freeman, a two-time chair of the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, also serves on the executive committee of the University's recently launched capital campaign. *Black Enterprise* magazine once profiled Freeman for the impressive evolution and growth of Zycron, ranking it as the 86th largest black-owned company in America in the industrial/service arena. Freeman started the company using an MTSU dorm room as a satellite office. **MTSU**





## Vernon Whaley

**Vernon Whaley ('82)** has been named dean of the new school of music at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va. Whaley, who joined Liberty in 2005 as chair of the Department of Worship and Music Studies, has more than 40 years of experience as a music educator, worship leader in large churches, professional orchestrator, arranger, and Christian music publisher. [MTSU](#)



## Ken Strickland

**Ken Strickland ('89)** was recently promoted to vice president and named bureau chief at NBC News in Washington, D.C. Strickland joined NBC in 1995 and served as an associate producer for *Dateline*. Two years later, he was named White House producer, then moved to helping cover Capitol Hill. "My experience at MTSU—and I was there long before digital journalism crept

in—put me far ahead of my competitors," Strickland recently told MTSUNews.com. "I really think the foundation I got at MTSU was what made the difference." [MTSU](#)

## 1990s, cont.

**James Booz ('98)**, Watkinsville, Ga., was named an Outstanding Alumnus of Dyersburg State Community College on Feb. 18, 2012. He is the senior associate athletic director for compliance at the University of Georgia.

**Angela Layton ('99)**, Joelton, has been appointed chair of the 2012–2013 Meeting Professionals International Membership Advisory Council.

**Mark Miller ('99)**, Bonn, Germany, retired from the U.S. Air Force after 20 years of service. He is now a 757 first officer for Federal Express and is based in Cologne, Germany.

## 2000s

**Bradley Underwood ('00)**, Woodbury, was recognized by Channel 2 News as an Educator of the Week. He is a fourth grade teacher at Short Mountain School.

**Matthew Nwokoji ('02)**, Jonesboro, Ga., earned a doctorate degree from Walden University in November 2011.

**Joshua Cornwall ('03)**, Spring Hill, helped with the installation of a



## David Chandler

**David Chandler ('89)**, known as "Big Dave" on the afternoon drive time show *Big Dave and Chelsie* on WUBE, Cincinnati's Country B-105 FM, was honored with the Academy of Country Music (ACM) Large Market Personality of the Year award at the 47th annual ACM Awards show in Las Vegas last year. Chandler is the son of the late Dr. Clay M. Chandler, who was an MTSU biology professor. [MTSU](#)



## Artis Twyman

**Artis Twyman ('00)** recently completed his first year as senior director of communications for the St. Louis Rams professional football franchise. Twyman oversees the media relations staff and directs communication efforts. The 2012 season was Twyman's 10th season with the Rams. He previously served three seasons as the team's director of media relations after spending six years as assistant director of football media. Before joining the Rams in 2003, Twyman spent two years as public relations assistant for the Seattle Seahawks. He broke into the NFL in 2001 as a public relations intern for the Houston Texans. [MTSU](#)





## Jeremy Cowart

Nashville-based **Jeremy Cowart ('99)** only began his photography career in 2005 but has quickly become a respected artistic voice in the industry. Having shot many celebrities (including Taylor Swift and the Kardashians) and the cover of Tim Tebow's best-selling book, he has a list of clients that includes *Rolling Stone*, *USA Today*, and *Time* magazine, among others. Cowart is also the founder of Help-Portrait, a worldwide movement of photographers giving free portraits to those less fortunate. **MTSU**

## 2000s, cont.

3,000-pound I-beam from Tower One of the former World Trade Center at the Rutherford County Sheriff's Office. The beam is a memorial to the victims of the terrorist attack in New York City on Sept. 11, 2001.

**Tony J. Elion Jr. ('03, '04)**, Nashville, has completed U.S. Navy basic training at Recruit Training Command in Great Lakes, Ill.

**Lawrence "Matt" Smith ('03)**, Hartsville, AVP and chief compliance officer at First Freedom Bank, was recently awarded the Certified Regulatory Compliance Manager designation from the Institute of Certified Bankers, a subsidiary of the American Bankers Association in Washington, D.C.

**Saundra Etchison ('04)**, Mt. Juliet, accepted an associate position with Frost Specialty Inc. in Nashville.

**Heather Bailey ('05, '10)**, Knoxville, accepted a position with the East Tennessee Development District (an association of municipal and county governments) as a historic preservation/housing planner.

**Robert Boccio ('05)**, Wappingers Falls, N.Y., is serving as a captain in the military in Afghanistan.

**Nicole Hanks ('05)**, Decatur, Ga., has been promoted to training and development manager at

Pardot Marketing Automation in Atlanta.

**Matthew Anderson ('06)**, Franklin, is director of alumni communications at Vanderbilt University.

**William Anderson Jr. ('06)**, Winchester, of the Tennessee National Guard, received the Bronze Star Medal (Achievement) at a Freedom Salute ceremony on Jan. 8, 2011.

**Katie Crytzer ('06)**, a former student ambassador and attorney with the law firm of Kirkland & Ellis in Washington, D.C., provided legal counsel to the Republican National Committee's Committee on Contests, addressing seating of delegates at the 2012 GOP national convention in Tampa.

**Ashley Elizabeth Graham**, a nondegree alum and also a former student ambassador, was one of only four speechwriters

## Martha Earls and Mike Molinar



Veteran music publishers **Martha Earls ('98)** and **Mike Molinar ('98)** are now responsible for overseeing songwriter signings, artist/writer development, and catalog growth at Nashville's Big Machine Music, an expansion and rebranding of the Big Machine Label Group's publishing company, Super 98 Music. The label is home to music superstars such as Taylor Swift, Tim McGraw and Rascal Flatts. Molinar and Earls had most recently been partners in Effusion Entertainment, a boutique music publishing

and writer/artist management company. Before Effusion, they were partners in Elevation Music Publishing, which had the hit song "Easy," recorded by Rascal Flatts with Natasha Bedingfield. At Elevation, the pair also placed songs with Brantley Gilbert, Jewel, Brad Paisley, Blake Shelton, Trace Adkins, Rodney Atkins, Montgomery Gentry, and Easton Corbin, among others. **MTSU**





## Alana Ward

Clarksville's **Alana Ward ('01)**, a political science graduate who worked at the U.S. Attorney's office while an MTSU student, began working at her father's HVAC business, Baggett Heating and Cooling, at the age of 23. In 2007, at age 29, she took over her father's business. In an industry where most businesses are owned and managed by a graying class of hard-working people, Ward breaks the stereotype of an HVAC company CEO. ContractingBusiness.com named Ward the 2012 HVACR Woman of the Year.

MTSU



## 2000s, cont.

chosen for the GOP convention. Several of Graham's speeches, including those delivered by Jeb Bush, Nikki Haley, and Timothy Cardinal Dolan, ran in primetime. Graham has only one class left to graduate. She left MTSU to work for the former President Bush as a speechwriter. She now works fulltime for Tennessee congresswoman Marsha Blackburn.

**Hayley Jordan West ('06)**,

Whitleyville, is teaching English to elementary students in Seoul, Korea. She tutors North Korean defectors through People for Successful COrean REunification (PSCORE).

**Erica Payne Williams ('06)**,

Madison, has produced a novel, *Love Lifted Me*. She is an independently published author through CreateSpace.



## Paige Pressley

**Paige Pressley ('07)** is a corporate communications specialist at Nissan North America. She was back on campus last summer when the automaker donated two LEAF electric vehicles and charging stations to MTSU. **MTSU**

**Leslie Merritt ('07, '08)**,

Collierville, has been promoted to director of chapter services at Kappa Delta national headquarters in Memphis.

**Cyndi Butler-Mobley ('07)**, Hixson,

was among 80 honorees nationwide presented with a Love of Learning Award by the Phi Kappa Phi honor society.

**Justin Ochs ('07)**, Hendersonville,

recently won the title of International Auctioneer Champion during a competition at the 63rd International Auctioneers Conference and Show in Spokane, Wash.

**Jennifer Kennedy Perry ('07)**,

Portland, was promoted to assistant branch manager at US Bank in Gallatin.

**Ryan M. Richards ('07)**, Nashville, has joined the law firm of Harwell Howard Hyne Gabbert & Manner as a corporate and tax associate.

**Evan Shafferman ('07)**, Sherman

Oaks, Calif., passed the California Bar on May 18, 2012. He works for CMG Brands in its business and legal affairs office in Los Angeles.

**Sheila P. Umayam ('07)**,

Chattanooga, was inducted into the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International.

**Jeffery Crips ('08)**, Dowelltown, has been promoted to branch manager of the Smithville branch of Region's Bank. He oversees all bank operations with a focus on providing excellent customer

*continued on page 52*



## Jessica (Beard) Morrison

**Jessica (Beard) Morrison ('08)** studied journalism at MTSU her freshman year, but the lure of rocks, minerals, and radioactive elements led her instead to a bachelor's degree in geology. She is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Civil Engineering and Geological Sciences at the University of Notre Dame, where she expects to graduate this spring. Last year, she returned to her journalism roots as one of just 12 young scientists nationwide who traded in their lab coats for reporters' notebooks as part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science AAAS Mass Media Fellowship. The ten-week program places advanced science students in newsrooms across the country to help translate scientific jargon and better disseminate scientific information to general audiences. Sponsored by the American Geophysical Union, Morrison wrote for the *Chicago Tribune*. (Photo courtesy of the *Tribune*.) **MTSU**





Bryce Alexander Darden

## BABY RAIDERS

**Evelyn Betts Campbell**, born April 12, 2012, to **Adams and Jennifer Stines Campbell ('03)**, of Nashville.

**Bryce Alexander Darden**, born March 20, 2012, to **Xavier R.**



Mason Tyler Wright

**( '05 ) and Kristen M. Darden ( '07 )**, of Murfreesboro.

**Madelyn Brooke Henson**, born February 23, 2012 to **Tyler ( '04 ) and Brooke Henson ( '04 )**, of Murfreesboro.

**Sydney Grace Howell**, born August 2, 2011, to **Kevin ( '98 ) and Lindsay Howell ( '98 )**.

**Sawyer Houston Jefferys**, born February 4, 2011, adopted February 11, 2011, by **Jeremy and Erica White Jefferys ( '02 )**, of Hartselle, Ala.



Madelyn Brooke Henson



Evelyn Betts Campbell

**Robert Bradley Jones**, born March 24, 2012, to **Karen and Brad Jones ( '08 )**, of Lebanon.

**Isaac Timothy King**, born February 12, 2012, to **Christopher ( '03 ) and Rebecca King** of Knoxville.

**Robert Reagan Lockmiller**, born April 9, 2012, to **Jon ( '98, '00 ) and Lori Pyles Lockmiller ( '01 )** of Franklin.

**Dylan Rhyleigh Long**, born on May 14, 2012, to **Scott ( '00 ) and Linda Rucker Long** of Daphne, Ala.

**Noah Lucas Madden**, born March 16, 2012, to **Michael and Mary Madden ( '94 )**, of Burlington, Ontario.

**Madison Suzanne Perry**, born May 16, 2012, to **Dustin and Jennifer Kennedy Perry ( '07 )**, of Portland.

**Aria Brooke Powell**, born February 2, 2012, to **John ( '05 ) and Samantha Makin Powell ( '10 )** of Antioch.

**Mason Tyler Wright**, born July 30, 2012, to **Richard ( '06 ) and Debbi Hope Wright ( '02 )**, of Murfreesboro.



Madison Suzanne Perry

*continued from page 51*

## 2000s, cont.

service and maintaining strong community relationships.

**Terrance Eubanks ( '08, '10 )**, Chattanooga, was appointed resident director in the housing department at UT-Chattanooga for the 2012-2013 academic year.

**Lauralee Gordon ( '08 )**, earned her doctorate in pharmacy from the University of Tennessee College of Pharmacy in Memphis in 2011.

**Frederick D. Middlebrooks ( '08 )**, Conyers, Ga., received his commission as a naval officer after completing Officer Candidate School at Officer Training Command, Newport, R.I.

**Matthew Swafford ( '08 )**, Nashville, has been promoted to audit senior with the Nashville office of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited.

**Steven Tucker ( '08 )**, Springfield, Air National Guard, graduated from basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio.

**Amber McKellar ( '09 )**, Dyersburg, led a group of 20 high school seniors and their chaperones on a trip to England for a performance in London's New Year's Day Parade.

## 2010s

**Derek Donegan ( '11 )**, Murfreesboro, joined Precision Walls in Nashville as a sales estimator.

Former MTSU standout long jumper **Stanley Gbagbeke ( '11 )** competed for Nigeria in last summer's London Olympic Games, placing 27th among 42 long jumpers. Current MTSU sprinter **Noah Akwu** placed fifth in the 200 meters at the London Olympics, running in the lane next to Jamaica's Usain Bolt. The Nigerian narrowly missed moving on to the next round. In all, 12 MTSU track athletes have competed in the Olympic Games in the last four decades, including MTSU assistant track coach **Andrew Owusu ( '04 )**, who was also at the London games, serving on the coaching staff for Ghana.

**Jonathan S. McKay ( '11 )**, Barnwell, S.C., graduated from Navy Officer Candidate School and received a commission as ensign while assigned to Officer Training Command, Newport, R.I.

**Charity E. Somma ( '11 )**, Fayetteville, Ga., graduated from Navy Officer Candidate School and received a commission as ensign while assigned at Officer Training Command, Newport, R.I.

**Bonner M. Secrest ( '12 )**, Collierville, completed U.S. Navy basic training at Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes, Ill.



## In Memoriam

### 1940s

**Virginia Bragg ('46, '53),**  
McMinnville, Mar. 4, 2012

**Sam Burton ('43),** Lake Worth,  
Fla., February 10, 2012

**Virginia Bragg ('46, '53),**  
McMinnville, March 4, 2012

**Marilyn Wade Parker ('47),**  
Shelbyville, April 18, 2012.

**Ray Phillips ('47),** Pensacola, Fla.,  
April 30, 2012

**G. Hildreth ('48),** Oak Ridge, July  
18, 2012

**Ruby Dill Ristvedt ('48),** La  
Vergne, August 30, 2012

**Cora Stovall ('48),** Chattanooga,  
August 6, 2012

**Louise Crowe ('49),** Columbia, July  
31, 2012

**Ethel Bowden Stricklin ('49),**  
Maryville, April 4, 2012

### 1950s

**Garland Russell ('50),** Mt. Juliet,  
Nov. 8, 2011

**Charles Bean Sr. ('51),** Soddy  
Daisy, June 20, 2012

**Earl Springer ('51),** Jackson, July  
8, 2012

**Forrest Hill Jr. ('52),** Charleston,  
May 13, 2012

**Francis Speakman ('52),**  
Lawrenceburg, Oct. 26, 2011

**Jerry Phillips Sr. ('56),**  
Indianapolis, Ind., July 26, 2012

**Dearnold Barnette ('57),** Jasper,  
April 23, 2012

**Juanita Bell ('58),** Murfreesboro,  
Feb. 21, 2012

**Charles Roddy ('58),** Huntsville,  
Ala., July 5, 2012

**Leland E. Hewgley ('59),**  
Hendersonville, October 20, 2011

**Ed Jordan ('59),** Murfreesboro,  
June 27, 2012

**Calvin Lacy ('59),** Linden, April  
18, 2012

### 1960s

**Julian King ('61),** Modesto, Calif.,  
March 15, 2012

**Paul Cantrell ('63),** Lascassas,  
May 21, 2012

**Daniel Preston Sr. ('65),**  
Cleveland, August 30, 2012

**Irvin Lewis Jr. ('66, '67),** Gallatin,  
April 23, 2012

**Una Farris Ring ('67),** Columbia  
, August 22, 2012

**Howard Tribble Jr. ('67),** Lebanon,  
March 16, 2012

**Richard Brimm ('68),** Riddleton,  
Jan. 7, 2012

**Phillip Brown ('68),** Powder  
Springs, Ga., June 28, 2012

**James Dubois ('68),** Mount  
Pleasant, May 15, 2012

**William Chapman ('69),**  
Murfreesboro, March 13, 2012

**Patricia Hite ('69/'79),** Nashville,  
May 22, 2012

**Joe Puckett ('69),** Nashville, Feb.  
18, 2012

**John Tallent ('69),** Cumming, Ga.,  
August 13, 2012

**Oliver Turpin ('69),** Irvington, Ala.,  
August 17, 2012

### 1970s

**Vera Lewis ('70),** Anderson, Mo.,  
June 13, 2012

**Mary James Wallace ('70),**  
Lewisburg, July 26, 2012

**Michael Whiteside ('71),**  
Columbia, August 11, 2012

**Morris Ezell ('71),** Columbia,  
July 2, 2012

**Ronald Johnson ('71),** Loudon,  
April 4, 2012

**Barbara Colvert ('72, '84),**  
Dowelltown, Oct. 13, 2011

**Larry Davis ('72),** Bradyville,  
March 31, 2012

**Brent Gipson ('72),** Winchester,  
May 7, 2012

**James Harrell ('72),** Lynn Haven,  
Fla., March 9, 2012

**Martha Daniel Jennings ('72,  
'91),** Woodbury, May 3, 2012

**Terry Parker ('72),** Cookeville, July  
4, 2012

**Patricia Brewer ('73),** Ellijay, Ga.,  
June 20, 2012

**Roger Dotson ('73),** Manchester,  
March 10, 2012

**Mary Farley ('73),** Lewisburg,  
September 6, 2012

**Dorothy Boyd Gravitt ('73),**  
Whitwell, August 6, 2012

**John Matthews ('73),** Old Hickory,  
Dec. 24, 2011

**Susan Ford ('74),** Nashville, March  
7, 2012

**Steven Sager ('74),** Lascassas,  
March 13, 2012

**Della Crutchfield Sharp ('74,  
'80),** Tullahoma, March 24, 2012

**Michael Mayfield ('75),** Woodbury,  
September 25, 2012

**Thomas Brown Jr. ('76),** Culleoka,  
March 15, 2012

**Stephanie Shachmut ('76, '79),**  
Conway, Ark., March 4, 2012

**Faye Reed ('77),** Murfreesboro,  
March 9, 2012

**Mark Fitzhugh ('78),** Brentwood,  
March 11, 2012

**William Saupe ('78, '83),**  
Murfreesboro, May 6, 2012

**Robert Fergus ('79),** Smyrna, June  
20, 2012

**Catherine Austin Smith ('79, '80),**  
Marietta, Ga., August 31, 2012

### 1980s

**Sara Glover-Petker ('81),** Strat-  
ford, Ontario, August 23, 2012

**Joseph Givens ('82),** Murfreesboro,  
June 15, 2012

**Clayton Swartout ('84),**  
Englewood, April 7, 2012

**Barbara McCrary Holt ('86),**  
Nashville, August 7, 2012

**Kelly Gannon Lackey ('86),**  
Murfreesboro, June 28, 2012

**Lisa Krueger Stone ('87),** Signal  
Mountain, July 23, 2012

**Teresa Gerhart ('88),** Lascassas,  
August 6, 2012

**John Stofel ('88),** Columbia, May  
14, 2012

**Michael Lilly ('89),** Murfreesboro,  
April 19, 2012

**Richard Smith ('89),** Toney, Ala.,  
Feb. 1, 2012.

### 1990s

**Alyssa Crutcher ('98),** Hermitage,  
April 5, 2012

**James Gustafson ('98),** Knoxville,  
June 9, 2012

### 2000s

**Tsali Colton ('00),** Chattanooga,  
September 7, 2011

**Thomas Queen ('02),** Sesser, Ill.,  
May 13, 2012

### 2010s

**Brandon Elder ('10),** Smithville,  
August 28, 2012

**Bradley Gore ('10),** Tullahoma, July  
18, 2012

**Jenna Smith ('11),** Elyria, Ohio,  
Feb. 23, 2012

**Ricki Uselton ('11),** Franklin, July  
24, 2012



# You Do What?

## The Meat of the Matter

Donna Jo Curtis bridges the gap between agricultural producer and consumer

FARMERS AREN'T ALWAYS FOUND on the farm, according to Donna Jo Curtis ('80), president of the Alabama Cattlemen's Association (ACA). These days, future farmers are found in colleges studying such diverse disciplines as plant science, biotechnology, animal science, horticulture, and forestry, to name a few.

"Agriculture is the basis of everything and the sustainability of this nation," Curtis says. "It's said that we'll be feeding nine billion people in a decade. The technology it's going to take for those of us in the world of agriculture to meet that need is unbelievable."

Farm life has changed. Statistically, there are far fewer "family" farms now, but the ones that are left are working more acres. Technology is absolutely necessary to even plant, according to Curtis, which leads to all sorts of job possibilities—and this is why agribusiness and agriscience departments are thriving components of many universities.

**"Agriculture is the basis of everything and the sustainability of this nation," Curtis says. "It's said that we'll be feeding nine billion people in a decade."**

"You don't have to be raised on a family farm to work in some aspect of the agriculture business," Curtis says. "If a student has an interest in any aspect of agriculture—farm animals, becoming a veterinarian, studying horse science, or studying soil science—there is a broad spectrum of jobs out there."

Curtis, only the second woman to lead the ACA, lives and works on her 300-acre farm in Thatch, Ala., where she manages a cow-calf program running 120 cows. She has a B.S. in animal science and a minor in secondary education, and while her plans were not to teach in school settings, she finds herself educating consumers in her high-profile position.

"One of my primary responsibilities is to keep the presidents of all the county associations up to date about what is going on at the national level. I also work on member recruitment—especially getting young people involved in the beef industry," she says.

## You Do What?

by Candace Moonshower

According to Curtis, surveys of consumers have shown that most people are disconnected from farm life, yet they are the buyers of the industry's end product. Beef cattle production ranks second behind broiler chickens in cash receipts among Alabama farm commodities. Alabama cattle producers sold \$395.8 million worth of cattle and calves in 2011. Cattle are produced in every county, and cattle production represents a \$2.5 billion industry in Alabama. The state's climate and land are ideally suited for growing forage and raising cattle, and as of January 2012 there were 1.2 million head of cattle and calves on Alabama farms.

"I am the face of the producer," Curtis says. "I help consumers understand what we do and help them to see the beef industry in a positive way."

Curtis grew up on her family's cattle farm and always intended to raise cattle after college. Her husband, John Curtis

('78), graduated from MTSU with a degree in animal science.

The two were high school sweethearts, which helped push Donna Jo to MTSU, a decision she has never regretted.

She recently returned to MTSU on Field Day and saw the University's new \$4.3 million, 435-acre dairy located six miles east of campus. The new dairy opened in September 2012. One-third of all the milk produced by a herd of 70 cows is consumed by students on campus, and the rest is sold to Virginia and Maryland Milk Producers. The dairy is only one thriving aspect of the School of Agribusiness and Agriscience: the school has increased its number of undergraduate majors by 14 percent since 2010.

"I am so impressed," Curtis says.

Curtis's children are also in the family business. Daughter Lauren Graham, also an MTSU graduate ('10), is teaching agriscience in Limestone County, Ala. Son Landon graduated from Auburn University in May with a degree in business and agricultural economics, and his twin sister, Landria, is set to graduate from Auburn in December with a degree in animal science. Agriculture in the Curtis family, it appears, is a family affair. [MTSU](#)



# VOICES HEARD

## Advice from the Friends List



CLASS NOTES

### Murphy Center turned 40 years old in December.

We turned to the fertile ground of our MTSU Facebook page and asked our

thousands of followers to tell us about their

### fondest memories at the “Murph.”

Below is a selection of the responses we received.

“When I attended CUSTOMS, we were gathered into Murphy Center, and I remember thinking to myself, ‘This is it. This is real. I’m in college!’ I loved that feeling!”

Meaghan Wiedemann (Class of 2015)

“When Eddie Murphy came, it was sold out, and no one could get in. Then one person at a side door opened it, and about 20 people ran inside. Eddie Murphy RAW. Need I say more?”

T. C. Cope

“November 1972, when our Blue Raiders played Vanderbilt in the first basketball game in our brand new facility. I believe we lost by 11 points, but it was a great game and Freddie Allen played his heart out!”

Shirley Farris Jones ('71, '78)

“I have a great picture of my dad and me together on the track with me in my cap and gown and a very proud look on his face. Six months later, we lost dad to cancer.”

Perri Tipton Lomax ('98)

“Beating UT in the NIT tournament in March of 1988. The ‘Murph’ was rocking that night!”

Todd Savage ('96)

“I met Tonia Sanders on the campus of MTSU, and we both walked the same graduation line in Murphy Center. We recently celebrated being married for nine years. Thanks for the memories! Go Blue!”

Ryan Sanders ('03)

“When the legendary Luther Vandross had a concert there, my cousin and I were so excited, we got there extra early and walked around the center, and we actually saw Mr. Vandross before the concert started. We were in awe!”

Belicia Allen-Sims

“The warm-up session of the Oldham County Marching Colonels just prior to our third place performance in the 26th Annual Contest of Champions on October 24, 1987. The warm-ups were staged in the lower-level gyms of Murphy Center. Relatively few people other than the contest participants even witnessed these warm-up sessions. The energy and anticipation of the kids and the sheer volume of sound was awe-inspiring.”

James Allen Hall ('89)

“In 2006, winning my schools’ first state championship!”

Gaby Bussell

“The Bruce Springsteen concert December 9, 1984. A bunch of us camped out three days in the cold. The ticket line wrapped around Murphy Center. To this day, the single greatest concert I’ve ever seen.”

Rick Dixon ('88)

“The men’s basketball team defeating the Russian national team in 1988. The Russians were led by Arvydas Sabonis, who seemed larger than life to a six-year-old sitting behind the visitor’s bench.”

Michael C. Gillespie ('05)

“Cheering for my high school basketball team in the state tournament in 1989. It was then that I decided to attend MTSU!”

Rachel Leigh ('95)

“Shooting the Goo-Goo Dolls concert as the *Sidelines* photographer.”

Robin S. Wallace

“One of the saddest memories was being at Murphy Center and learning that the Evansville Purple Aces basketball team was killed in a plane crash on the way to Murfreesboro to play MTSU in 1977.”

Bill Robison ('90, '94)

“Ran a mile in under eight minutes in Coach Hayes’s circuit training class. Played in the girls state basketball tournament there, too, in 1973.”

Lugene Sloan ('78)

The MTSU and Alumni Relations Facebook pages feature new content daily.

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