

# MTSU MAGAZINE

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Summer 2012 Vol. 17 No. 1

## A New Catalyst

MTSU's new \$147 million  
**science building** promises to  
take science and research efforts  
**to the next level**



CENTENNIAL  
Campaign

MTSU launches an  
**\$80 million**  
fundraising campaign

MIDDLE  
TENNESSEE

New Science Building



cover photo: J. Intintoli



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### **True Blue Built**

Later this summer, MTSU will open a brand-new **Student Union Building** that will become the new center of campus.

The building will feature a food court and casual dining area, a bookstore, a ballroom, student meeting spaces, student organization offices, a collaborative computer center, a games room, a copy center, and other informal student gathering spaces.

Whether you are a recent or longtime MTSU grad, we invite you to visit soon to see this incredible new addition to our campus!



The *MTSU Magazine* app includes multimedia content built into every edition that you won't find in the print version. Download it now and keep up with your university!

## Give Ourselves a Hand



by Drew Ruble

One of the perks of working at MTSU is the ability to take one course per semester to apply either to the pursuit of a degree or simply for self-edification. As one of the area's many closet songwriters, I recently took a course in commercial songwriting taught by professor Hal Newman. What I learned from that experience far exceeded classroom knowledge. In addition to witnessing first-hand the quality of instruction available at MTSU—and the incredible opportunities being provided by the University—I also learned about the generosity of some of its alumni. Let me explain.

Although he's recently departed MTSU and returned full-time to the Nashville music industry, Professor Newman is credited with co-founding the commercial songwriting concentration at MTSU. Among the numerous hit song

writers and artists Newman groomed over the past decade is chart-topping country music tunesmith Eric Paslay (pictured in studio with Newman here). Newman also helped create one of the most remarkable partnerships at MTSU—a student-mentoring program with ASCAP, one of the three major performing rights organizations in Nashville. The program pairs MTSU songwriting students with professional song pluggers, publishers and other industry insiders, giving students multiple chances each semester to play their songs for professionals on Music Row, get feedback, and maybe even start a career. I can tell you as the former editor of two Nashville business magazines, such access is unparalleled in the music business today.

ASCAP



My ASCAP mentor was MTSU graduate and former Newman student Brooke Arrington (pictured here), currently the creative director for Big Yellow Dog Music, one of the most successful independent music publishing companies in Nashville (and home to Grammy Award-winning songwriter and MTSU graduate, Josh Kear). Arrington cleared her demanding schedule several times during the semester to work with me and other students trying to elevate our music to the “commercial” level. It was an invaluable experience.

There are many ways to give back to the University. One is to give money. And, in fact, as an article on page 26 outlines, MTSU recently launched an \$80 million campaign. Even a \$25 donation can go a long way to reaching the goal of making MTSU an even greater university in its second century.

As my personal experience with Brooke—and the feature story about MTSU graduate Jeffrey Reid on page 12—reveals, giving back to the University can also come in the form of mentoring MTSU students (or even graduates) to help them reach their professional dreams. Imagine what impact the MTSU alumni base could have on the Nashville market alone if every Blue Raider committed to helping just one MTSU student, graduate, or alum seeking an internship, job, or networking opportunity—particularly in these lean economic times.

Reaching back or reaching down to help a fellow Blue Raider make his or her way in the world? To me, that's a great example of what it really means to be True Blue. [MTSU](#)

# MTSU MAGAZINE

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## He is *true* **BLUE**



Sidney A. McPhee

**MTSU recently launched a new marketing campaign called “I Am True Blue.” What does it mean to be True Blue?**

MTSU is committed to developing and nurturing a community devoted to learning, growth, and service. We hold these values dear, and there’s a simple phrase that conveys them: “I am True Blue.” We’re asking each person who affiliates with us to take the True Blue Pledge to practice the core values of honesty and integrity; respect for diversity; engagement in the community; and a commitment to reason, not violence. For members of the faculty and administration, being True Blue also means to renew our commitment to the success of our students. MTSU, now more than a century old, is the number-one choice of undergraduates in Tennessee, as well as the number-one choice of our state’s transfer students and veterans. Why do so many people choose MTSU? I believe it is because we offer the amenities and opportunities of a major comprehensive institution, yet we have not forgotten our small-college roots in how we care for and treat our students. We offer terrific opportunities, exceptional value, and a beautiful campus. The latest example of our student-first commitment is our new, state-of-the-art Student Union building, an open and inviting facility that will open in the summer of 2012.

**MTSU recently announced some incredibly generous, transformative gifts from private individuals. Why is the Centennial Campaign needed, and what will it accomplish?**

In anticipation of limited or reduced support from the state, MTSU has undertaken an intensive

planning and evaluation process, which identified more than \$175 million in opportunities where philanthropy would strengthen our position in the 21st-century marketplace of higher education, while building on the traditions that have characterized the University since its founding. Some of the most vital priorities identified in this process are integral components of this campaign. At its core, the focus of each priority is to enhance the quality of education and ensure the success of each of our students, faculty, and alumni—things that most directly impact the quality of the University. Our initial goal to prepare MTSU for its second century of distinguished service is \$80 million. More than half of that has already been raised. We need the assistance of our wonderful alumni base and other supporters of this great University to make this a reality.

**MTSU recently broke ground on a new \$147 million science building. It’s a project you’ve been pushing uphill for a long, long time. Now that ground has finally been broken, what are your thoughts?**

I feel gratitude. We are grateful to Gov. Haslam for recognizing the importance of the Science Building project and including funding for its construction in this year’s budget. We also appreciate the leadership, encouragement, and support we have received from the members of the General Assembly, especially our local delegation. And we thank the Tennessee Board of Regents and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission for their help in moving this project forward.

**Thank you for your time Mr. President. MTSU**

We’re asking each person who affiliates with us to take the **True Blue Pledge** to practice the **core values** of honesty and integrity; respect for diversity; engagement in the community; and a commitment to reason, not violence.

What *does it mean* to be *true* **BLUE**?

Check out the True Blue Pledge on the next page!



*I am* \_\_\_\_\_  
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*as a member of this diverse community,*

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**&** PROGRESS  
SUCCESS | I AM **ENGAGED** IN THE **LIFE**

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**MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY**



Dr. Dale Cockrell proves not all research and discoveries need occur in a laboratory setting

by Drew Ruble

MUSICOLOGIST DALE COCKRELL IS A scholar. He's not used to the bright lights of a major television production. Nor is he used to being surrounded by musical legends like Ronnie Milsap and Randy Travis thanking him for the academic work he did to shed light on the old-time fiddle music ingrained in the American frontier experience.

No, Dale Cockrell is more comfortable digging through volumes of great American music or presenting a paper at a conference. But he couldn't escape the bright lights and celebrity attention he received on a January night this year at the Loveless Cafe and Loveless Barn in Nashville, site of a PBS concert taping, the roots of which were watered by Cockrell's scholarly sweat.

Cockrell, director of MTSU's world-renowned Center for Popular Music, is the man behind the Pa's Fiddle Project, an effort to reconnect generations of readers with the rich musical legacy woven into the *Little House* books written by Laura Ingalls Wilder. Cockrell says his idea had a quite innocent beginning—reading at bedtime to his then-eight-year-old son, Sam.

"We read along, and there were songs embedded in the books. We would sing the songs, and if we didn't know one, we would make up a song. Sam and I enjoyed that," Cockrell says. "But after a while, the scholar in me started to crawl into bed with us, and I started thinking about how there was an amazing amount of music in these books."

Inspired, Cockrell sat down one Christmas break and started going through all of the books and listing the songs. He then began looking for existing recordings. What he found was that little had been done to chronicle or showcase these song references. Thus was born Pa's Fiddle Project, dedicated to resurrecting and voicing the 127 songs found in the *Little House* books and making some great American music commercially available once again.

Cockrell established a record label, Pa's Fiddle Recordings, to record the music referenced in the books. The label recently issued its third CD (out of a projected 10-CD series). The first was picked up by the National Endowment for the Humanities and sent to libraries nationwide as a sample of music making in 19th century American style.

The collections at the Center for Popular Music formed the foundation of the research that led to the music's production. In all, Cockrell has spent 12 years on the project.

"Sometimes, it's felt like we've been pushing that boulder up that hill every day," he reflects. "Now we're finally at the top and get to share this music with everyone."

But how could Cockrell share the music with a broader audience? In June 2010, he attended a conference in Minneapolis called "LauraPalooza," which was dedicated

# Not Fiddling Around



photos: Andy Heidt

to all things Laura Ingalls Wilder. There, as scholars do at conferences, he delivered a paper—this one on Pa's Fiddle Project. Afterward, he was approached by actor Dean Butler, who played the role of Almanzo, Laura's husband, in the *Little House* TV series. Butler told Cockrell he thought the project would make a great pledge drive special concert for the Public Broadcasting System. The owner of a California-based production company, Butler pitched the project to PBS in New York and was successful in selling the network on the idea.

It all culminated on the aforementioned winter night in Nashville, when a stellar cast of Music City's musical all-stars brought Charles "Pa" Ingalls's old-time fiddle music alive for a PBS taping. *Pa's Fiddle: America's Music*, which began airing last month on PBS stations nationwide, features artists including

Travis, Milsap, Ashton Shepherd, The Roys, Natalie Grant, Randy Scruggs, Rodney Atkins, and NBC's *The Sing-Off* champions, Committed.

Adding to the occasion, MTSU students were behind the scenes to film *Inside Pa's Fiddle*, a look at the inspiration, creation, and execution of the PBS special. The resulting documentary, sponsored by MTSU, is the product of a student crew led by Professor Tom Neff from the Department of Electronic Media Communication in the College of Mass Communication. (Neff happens to be the founder and former CEO of the Documentary Channel and an award-winning producer and director.) Many students were on site for the special, and many others worked in postproduction on editing, graphics and sound with Professors Clare Bratten and Matt Foley.

*continued on page 10*

Perfect Pitch: Music City All-Stars brought MTSU scholar Dale Cockrell's innovative research about the music embedded in the *Little House* books to life at the Loveless Café Barn during a PBS taping.

Dale Cockrell is more comfortable digging through volumes of great American music or presenting a paper at a conference.





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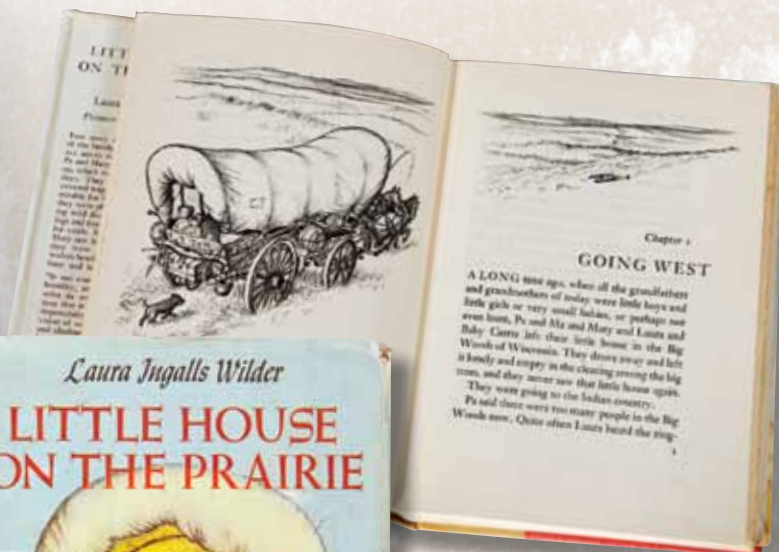
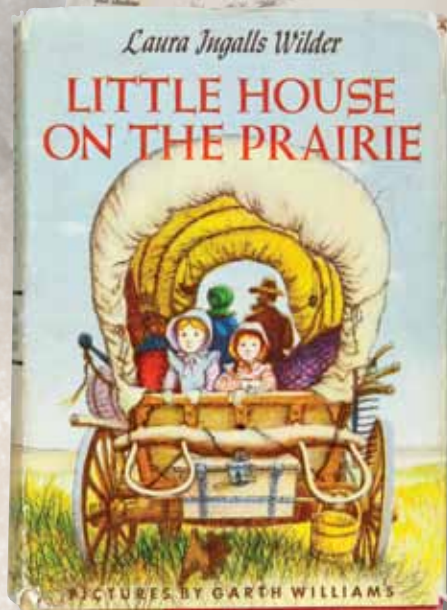
That the national PBS network would show such interest in Cockrell's project indicates the ongoing, high level of fascination with the *Little House* world. Cockrell believes the stories retain their popularity because they are based on real-life experiences and events—not fiction—of a family that homesteaded on the American frontier in the 1860s, '70s, and '80s.

"None of the people in the Ingalls family were superheroes," Cockrell adds. "It goes against the grain of much children's literature today. In fact, the books are pretty dark. Babies die, grasshoppers come and eat the crops, people get kicked off their land, houses burn down—they're not books that are unremittingly cheerful. They are books about real life."

Cockrell argues that the popularity of the books (and the TV series) might never have happened if it hadn't been for the music references.

"To be in a family where you heard live music every day, for probably a couple of hours every day, printed itself upon Laura Ingalls Wilders's brain in way that's difficult for us to understand today," Cockrell says. "Based on research by neuroscience and cognitive psychologists, my theory is that by remembering the songs that her father played and that she sang along to, it enabled her to unpeel the memories in which those songs [were] embedded. In doing so, she could start to write the stories that are about the memories of her family. Without the music, there may have been no *Little House* books."

Though he's admittedly a little uneasy about all the public attention he's getting for his project, Cockrell is thankful for what's happened.



Without the music, there may have been no *Little House* books."

Wilder expected that you'd know the music—then, in fact, you've inculcated a regard for [an] American musical legacy that's not currently present in the consciousness of the nation."

Cockrell is already at work on lesson plans for 3rd- and 4th-grade teachers. It's just the next ripple of the scholarship he hopes will be felt far beyond the comfortable confines of his academic roost. [MTSU](#)

"It's enormously gratifying but also daunting, frankly," he says. "As a musicologist, I'm not trained to get up on a stage in front of a PBS audience and communicate what I do as a scholar. I'm being stretched and challenged in ways that I never expected. But I find it terribly exciting."

Where does his project go from here? Cockrell's goal is to take Pa's Fiddle to grade schools nationwide, where he hopes the impact on kids will serve his even loftier expectations.

"I like to say that my goal is to change the music consciousness of the nation," he says. "It's kind of grand, but if 3rd- and 4th-grade students who come up against these books also learn the music that's embedded in the books—





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Did you know  
MTSU graduates live  
in all 50 states and in  
106 countries around  
the globe?

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Alum Jeffery Reid **extends a helping hand** to current students and recent grads with an eye on his industry

# IN *your* CORNER

by Katie Porterfield

**W**HEN JEFFERY REID ('81) VENTURED TO MTSU FROM the small, rural town of Whitwell, Tenn., he never imagined he'd be an executive producer at CNN. In fact, a career in television wasn't even on his radar.

"I always enjoyed watching television, and I always wondered how they put a newscast together," Reid says. "I just never really thought I'd be doing it one day."

But when a junior-year course in radio production gave him the opportunity to work at the campus radio station, he discovered a passion for broadcast journalism. By his senior year, he'd decided to pursue the more lucrative television route, and after sending 100 résumés to small television markets around the country, he got a bite at a station in Chattanooga. He accepted a paid internship that eventually led to a full-time news producer position there, and with his foot in the door, he worked his way

from Chattanooga to stations in Indianapolis and Atlanta and, finally, to CNN in 1996, where Reid oversaw editorial content for the network's long-form programming, including *CNN Presents* and *CNN: Special Investigations Unit*. Faced with a restructuring in the CNN department he managed, the MTSU grad recently took a new job with Gannett-owned WXIA in Atlanta leading special projects for the station. At press time, Reid was preparing coverage of the upcoming summer Olympics in London.

In short, he's the epitome of a College of Mass Communication success story, and he'd like nothing more than to see others from MTSU follow in his footsteps. "I'm doing everything I can to help prepare students for a very competitive field," Reid says.

For starters, he's one of nine cornerstone donors who contributed a minimum of \$10,000 to the new Center for Innovation



in Media—the state-of-the-art facility that houses the University's student media outlets under one roof. Mass Comm officials hope the center, which opened in January, will encourage collaboration and give students the opportunity to build a working knowledge of multiple media disciplines.

When Reid heard the center was in the works, he “knew immediately” that he needed to support it.

“The more hands-on experience kids have in college, the better job applicants they are going to be,” Reid says. “They have to have more than a college degree in their hands. They’ve got to have a résumé of skills. It’s not so much, ‘Here is what I have learned’ as ‘Here is what I’ve done.’”

When it comes to helping MTSU students get that hands-on experience, Reid does more than pull out his checkbook. Through College of Mass Communication dean Roy Moore and Development Director Kippy Todd, Reid encourages students to apply for media internships and even offers to serve as a reference. Just last summer, Haley Ellis, then an MTSU senior, received one of CNN’s coveted internships, beating out more than 100 applicants for a spot in Reid’s special investigations and documentaries unit.

Though Reid makes it clear that Ellis won the internship on her own merits, he’s also the first to admit that who you know can open doors in his business and others.

“Contacts may not be able to get you the job or keep you there, but at least they can help you get your foot in the door,” he says.

“*The more hands-on experience kids have in college, the better job applicants they are going to be,*” Reid says.

For Ellis, it was an honor to be able to introduce herself to Reid at a College of Mass Communication event and to thank him for giving her the opportunity to apply for the CNN internship. Reid was accessible then, and he became even more accessible once Ellis arrived at her new job.

“His door was always open,” she says. “I felt free to stop in and say, ‘Hey, how’s your day going,’ and he took me to lunch a couple of times.”

She graduated in December, and though she’s still on the hunt for a job, she can’t say enough about having Reid in her corner.

“We’ve emailed multiple times since I graduated,” says Ellis, adding that when she emails Reid, she knows she’ll hear back within the hour.

The **MTSU Career Development Center** has a program that allows students to network with alumni as they search for jobs. It’s called the **Raider Professional Network**. Alumni agree to serve as volunteer career advisors, and students interested in particular fields will be able to contact them for informational interviews—not asking for a job but for advice on how to break into the field, what a typical day is like, and similar topics. The Raider Professional Network is not meant to be a long-term mentorship; it’s set up to be a resource for student jobseekers. To register, visit <https://mtsu-csm.symphlicity.com/mentors>.

Reid says he’s happy to talk to students and graduates looking for advice on breaking into or advancing in the field of television news. Throughout his career, he moved successfully from station to station by keeping in touch with colleagues who made the jump before he did, but he says he also could have benefited from a mentor.

“As I look back on my career, maybe it wasn’t smart to stay in Indianapolis for nine years,” he says. “If I’d had a mentor-type person that I could call and bounce some ideas off of, maybe I wouldn’t have stayed as long.”

He keeps in touch with the College of Mass Communication; he’s on campus frequently; and he’s always just a phone call away. The bottom line is that Reid feels obligated to reach out and help others at the institution that introduced him to his field and started him down a successful career path. And he thinks other MTSU alums should do the same.

“You should give money, too, but I know how difficult it is these days. The economy isn’t like it used to be,” he says, adding that he has a daughter in college and twins (a son and daughter) who’ll be heading to college next year. “To take care of them and still give back to the University is going to be tight, but I’ll do it as long as I can, and if for some reason I’m not able to keep on giving, then at least I can give my time and my knowledge.”

As Ellis and other graduates trying to get into the highly competitive field can attest, time and knowledge from a broadcast journalist with 30 years of experience are valuable and welcome contributions. And there’s no doubt that graduates seeking jobs in other industries would be more than thrilled to have the ear of a fellow Blue Raider already in the business. **MTSU**



# making **Ends** meet

by Allison Gorman

## Helping ensure the recruiting trail ends in the graduation line

Dr. Debra Sells, MTSU's vice president of Student Affairs and vice provost for Enrollment and Academic Services, jokes that when she took over enrollment management in 2008, the strategy was pretty simple: "Go get the mail and see who applied."

That had worked well for many years. As Middle Tennessee grew, the number of qualified applicants grew...and MTSU grew, not so suddenly, into the biggest undergraduate university in the state. Its current enrollment is more than 26,400, and future growth is "inevitable," Sells says.

**"Growth is inevitable, but we don't want it to control our destiny."** — Dr. Debra Sells

But the mailbox strategy won't work anymore. Funding for public universities has declined nationwide, and in Tennessee the funding formula has changed: it's now based on retention and graduation rates, not enrollment. So earlier this year, President Sidney A. McPhee asked that a plan be developed that should allow MTSU to grow in a deliberate,

economically viable way. The Strategic Plan for Enrollment Management, currently in draft form, will focus on attracting more students who are likely to graduate, and will recommend a variety of support systems to help keep all students on a path to academic success. The draft plan analyzes the potential for growth that peaks at a maximum enrollment of 30,000, staying on firm financial ground and maintaining the MTSU commitment to academic quality along the way.

"Growth is inevitable, but we don't want it to control our destiny," Sells says. "We don't want to wake up in 20 years and realize that we're at 45,000 students. So if 30,000 is where we need to top out, the question is, what do we want those 30,000 to look like."

MTSU isn't the only school asking that question. John Dysart, a North Carolina-based consultant who helps universities and colleges develop enrollment strategies, says public institutions that once counted on state support, regardless of enrollment or retention numbers, are now struggling with funding issues their private coun-

**"If 30,000 is where we need to top out, the question is, what do we want those 30,000 to look like?"** — Dr. Debra Sells





terparts have faced for decades. “Just in the last five years, with budget cuts across almost every state in the country, even the biggest-name public universities have had to address recruiting in a way they haven’t had to before,” he says.

That doesn’t mean recruiting students. It means recruiting the *right* students—a major focus of discussions related to MTSU’s strategic plan.

Discussions have focused on potentially slowing the growth of the freshman class, targeting high-achievers by slightly raising academic standards for guaranteed undergraduate admission (pending summer approval by the Board of Regents). The draft plan also proposes increasing the number of graduate students, who earn their diplomas more quickly and reliably than undergraduates. It suggests greater recruitment efforts and scholarship dollars for transfer students, who have survived the so-called dropout years

of early college. And it encourages the enrollment of more international students, a high-achieving and lucrative population, whose members generally complete their degrees on time.

Retention, in other words, is critical.

“It doesn’t do anybody any good—the student or the institution—to get somebody to enroll as a first-year student and not to complete,” Dysart says. “And if Tennessee is moving toward more accountability focused funding, retention is even more important.”

Recruiting those lower-risk students will bear little resemblance to college recruiting of old. The days of university representatives passing out interest cards at college fairs are gone—or they should be, Dysart says. Instead, the key is communication by phone, text message, and, to a lesser extent, email, to keep prospective students engaged from initial contact all the way through enrollment.

MTSU’s new enrollment plan will reflect that trend,

emphasizing constant communication as a key to targeted recruitment. Strategic use of software can make it easier for the University to identify and stay in touch with desirable prospects.

According to Dysart, that strategy bodes well for the plan’s success. “In my opinion, an emphasis on communication is exactly the right track to be on,” he says.

MTSU will be a step ahead of many schools by using communication as a retention tool, not just a recruitment tool, says Dysart. Schools shouldn’t just focus on recruiting from a limited pool of high achievers, he says, but must adopt the “harder ways to retain students, which is proactively communicating with them, monitoring their academic progress, watching their social commitments, and so forth.”

That’s expected to be another major focus of MTSU’s plan, which will provide a continuum of support to keep students on track and engaged.

**all** MTSU students are admitted with the assumption that they can successfully graduate, Sells says. But as a public institution, the University serves a diverse population of students, some at statistically higher risk of academic failure. Recognizing that mission, it already offers academic support of foster children, minorities, and other at-risk populations, and a new pilot project combines recruitment and retention functions for minority and low-income students, so the same admissions official who recruits them one year works with them the next through the Intercultural and Diversity Affairs Center. The Strategic Plan for Enrollment Management will broaden that safety net, adding more specialized programs and stricter advising requirements.

It’s not the most straightforward solution to retention issues, Sells says, but it’s the most realistic one.

“Everybody wants to change the input, the student, so that the output, the graduation rate, will increase,” she says. “We really believe it’s not about changing the input. It’s about what we do, our process while they’re here with us on campus. That’s where we need to be engaged. Otherwise, it just becomes a scholarship race, upping the ante for the very best students, and we’re not going to win that.”

Sells explains that students leave a university for one of two reasons: they aren’t engaged academically, or they aren’t engaged socially. The plan will seek to address any gaps that prevent academic engagement and will also enhance social engagement (with an updated, student-friendly website, for example). The latter is likely to be an easier task because it builds on one of MTSU’s biggest selling points: the sense of community that stems from its roots as a small, regional college.

“We came from a culture where we were educating our neighbors’ kids,” Sells says, “and somehow, as our population grew, we never lost sight of that.”

That friendliness and sense of shared purpose may prove to be MTSU’s best strategy yet. [MTSU](#)







Blue Raiders achieve not only in the classroom, but on the fields and courts.

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Four consecutive Sun Belt All-Sports Awards and eight in the last 12 years.

Fifty-three Sun Belt championships.



## Blue Raider football returns for 2012!

Aug. 30	McNeese State	Oct. 6	ULM	Nov. 1	at WKU
Sept. 8	FAU	Oct. 13	at FIU	Nov. 17	at South Alabama
Sept. 15	at Memphis	Oct. 20	at Mississippi St.	Nov. 24	Troy
Sept. 29	at Georgia Tech	Oct. 27	North Texas	Dec. 1	at Arkansas St.

1-888-YES-MTSU

GoBlueRaiders.com



photos: J. Intintoli

by Patsy B. Weiler

# Bonding Them with Science

**MTSU's Dr. Judith Iriarte-Gross  
serves as a one-woman  
STEM-ulus package**

**G**ROWING UP IN THE SHADOW OF THE White House in Washington, D.C., Dr. Judith Iriarte-Gross never imagined that one day as an adult she would be an invited guest there.

"No, not ever, not even in my wildest dreams," says the Middle Tennessee State University chemistry professor. In December 2011, she represented Tennessee at a White House Champions of Change event saluting efforts of persons nationwide to recruit and retain girls and women in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics).

Iriarte-Gross was summoned to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue for her role as director of the GRITS Collaborative Project. GRITS, or Girls Raised in Tennessee Science, is a statewide organization and part of the National Girls Collaborative Project.

"I grew up a part of a big family living in a small house in Capitol Heights, Maryland," she says. "The Smithsonian was my back yard. I was an usher at Ford's Theatre. It was such an honor to be invited to an event at the White House and get to share all the great things that are happening in Tennessee and the South for girls in STEM."

Back home in the Volunteer State, the dynamic teacher serves as director of the MTSU WISTEM (Women in STEM) Center that opened in July 2009.

"It is a place where we pull together all of our resources between MTSU and the middle Tennessee community to provide opportunities for girls and women to pursue STEM education and career growth," Iriarte-Gross says.

*continued on page 18*

**Girl power:** The GRITS program, based at MTSU, promotes more female participation in science fields statewide.



*continued from page 17*

A 2010 report by the American Association of University Women found that the number of women in science and engineering is growing, yet men continue to outnumber women, especially at the upper levels of these professions. In elementary, middle, and high school, girls and boys take math and science courses in roughly equal numbers, and about as many girls as boys leave high school prepared to pursue science and engineering majors in college. Yet fewer women than men pursue these majors. Among first-year college students, women are much less likely than men to say that they intend to major in a STEM field. By graduation, men outnumber women in nearly every science and

engineering field, and in some, such as physics, engineering, and computer science, the difference is dramatic, with women earning only 20 percent of bachelor's degrees. Women's representation in science and engineering declines further at the graduate level and yet again in the transition to the workplace.

The bottom line? Female representation in science and math fields remains low. It's a fact that doesn't bode well for research and discovery when half of the human race—for whatever reason—remains outside the arena of science. Nor does it help America fill the STEM jobs increasingly available in this country.

Based on the activity of girls at the WISTEM Center, that won't be the case for long. The place explodes with activity like a baking soda and vinegar volcano at a school science fair. With the assistance of a talented group of educators, students, and professionals, Iriarte-Gross has mixed together a virtual alphabet soup of organizations that open the world of STEM for all who are interested.

"Our efforts at WISTEM are making ripples," says Iriarte-Gross. "But those ripples need to turn into waves."

“Our efforts at WISTEM are making ripples,” says Iriarte-Gross. “But those ripples need to **turn into waves.**”





One such effort is Expanding Your Horizons (EYH) in Science and Mathematics, a one-day conference for middle and high school girls that fosters awareness of STEM education and career opportunities. Like a tempting box of scientific chocolates, the attendees get a taste of topics such as “The Math of Project Runway,” “Moon Buggies,” and “Menacing Microbes.” Since starting at MTSU in 1997, the event has given more than 5,000 girls a glimpse of a future many had not envisioned.

“Tennessee schools, particularly those in economically depressed and rural areas, are having difficulty attracting and retaining quality math and science teachers. Consequently, students often have little knowledge of the opportunities that STEM majors can offer women upon graduation,” she says. “It is very important that we reach them at a young age.”

Iriarte-Gross strongly believes new approaches like collaborative work (“girls like to work in teams”), showing how STEM helps people (“engineers build safer bridges, chemists design better medicines to keep people healthy”) and building self-confidence (“research studies show that by simply telling girls that they can master the difficult subjects, a more positive change in the outcomes occurs”) are keys to change.

The proof that role models like Iriarte-Gross are crucial to increasing female representation in science fields can be found in graduates such as Freneka Minter, 31, a McNair Scholar at MTSU who graduated in 2002 with a chemistry degree and who is now a Ph.D. candidate. She is a health-education specialist at Oak Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU).

How did Minter end up on a path to a career in science? At 17, when

she was a student at Riverdale High School in Murfreesboro, she first crossed paths with her future mentor when she became an American Chemical Society Project Seed Scholar.

“Dr. Iriarte-Gross inspired me to be the first in my mother’s family to pursue a college education,” Minter says. “She provided the guidance and encouragement to help me complete my degree. As a role model, she helped me discover I had the backbone needed to pursue my dream.”

Beyond her work at the center, Iriarte-Gross, who was a chemist for the Food and Drug Administration in Dallas before returning to teaching, has a deep passion for helping all her students discover how science is relative to them. This is especially true for non-STEM majors in her general education physical science classes.

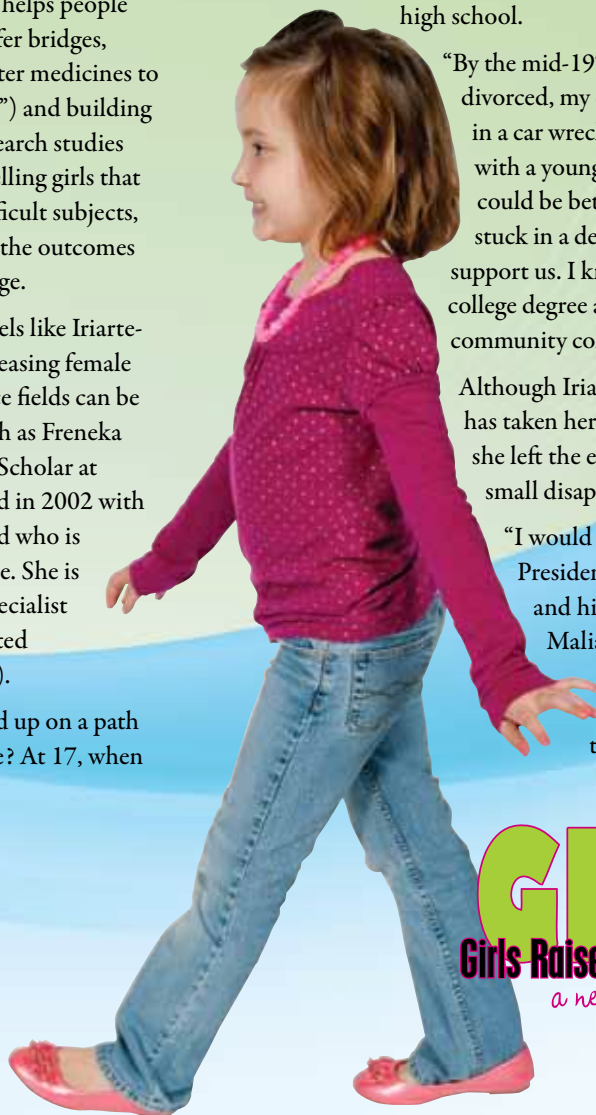
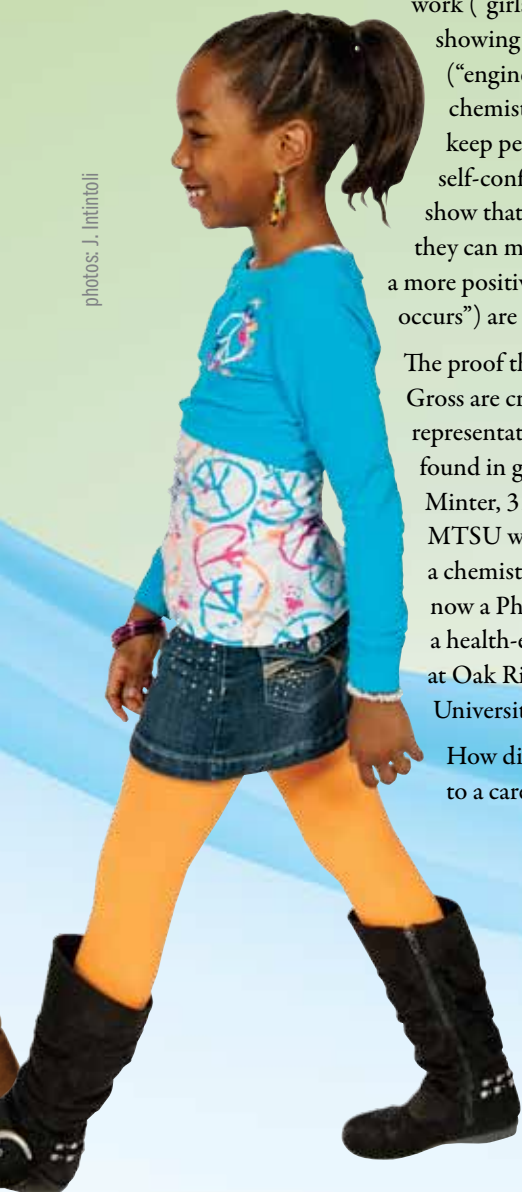
Cheering her students on to never let go of their goals motivates Iriarte-Gross, who started college seven years after finishing high school.

“By the mid-1970s, I had been married and divorced, my ex-husband had been killed in a car wreck, and I was a single mom with a young son,” she says. “I knew I could be better than a clerical worker stuck in a dead-end job that couldn’t support us. I knew I had to get a college degree and started going to a community college.”

Although Iriarte-Gross’s upward journey has taken her to the White House, she left the experience with one small disappointment.

“I would have loved to have met President Obama’s wife, Michelle, and his two daughters, Sasha and Malia,” she says. “I wanted to tell them about the EYH program and invite them to participate!” **MTSU**

photos: J. Intintoli



**GRITS**  
Girls Raised In Tennessee Science  
*a new southern tradition*



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

compiled by Kayla Bates, Gina E. Fann, Gina K. Logue, Paula Morton, Drew Ruble, Tom Tozer, Randy Weiler and Doug Williams

## A+ students : Notable Achievements

### A Happy Work Place

MTSU's Industrial/Organizational Psychology master's student Jaye Murray won the prestigious national outstanding graduate student of the year award from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). MTSU's I/O Psychology program has an unprecedented distinction: two MTSU students have earned this national award in the past four years. The MTSU SHRM chapter was also named by national SHRM in 2010 as one of the top ten university chapters in the country.



### Having a Ball

MTSU captured a fourth consecutive Vic Bubas Cup, given annually to the Sun Belt Conference all-sports champion. It marks MTSU's eighth win in 12 years and the first time a school has won four straight Bubas Cups since South Alabama did so from 1991-94. Leading the way were the Middle Tennessee men's and women's basketball teams, which put together a year to remember for Blue Raider supporters in 2011-12. The MTSU basketball programs finished in the top 10 nationally in combined wins with its 53 victories and a 79.1% winning percentage. Both the men's and women's teams won the Sun Belt regular season title. The women posted a perfect 16-0 record against the league.



### You're Going to Hollywood!

Erica Doyle won second place for "Video Magazine" at the 33rd annual College Television Awards, presented by the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Foundation. Doyle produced and directed her project, "Koure TV—Pushing Boundaries," for the University's television

channel, MT10. Doyle accepted the award at a black-tie gala in Hollywood on March 31. See the project at [www.kouretv.com](http://www.kouretv.com).



### The Future's So Bright

Anna Yacovone, currently employed as a post-graduate adviser in the MTSU Office of Education Abroad, was named the recipient of a Fulbright U.S. Student Program Scholarship to Laos. Yacovone, who graduated from MTSU in December 2011 with degrees in global studies and organizational communication, is now teaching English in the capital city of Vientiane, working mostly at the Na-

tional University of Laos. The U.S. Department of State's Fulbright Program is one of the world's most prestigious international educational exchange programs. This is the third successive year in which two MTSU students have received Fulbright scholarships. The other 2012 recipient is Whiteside, Tenn., native Daniel Gouger, who will be conducting research in Spain.

### From the Ground Up

For the second time in six years, MTSU's Land Development/Residential Building Construction Management team won the National Association of Homebuilders Student Chapters Residential Construction Management Competition. Students were given a 22-acre plot in a flood plain area to develop a subdivision in Huntsville, Ala. MTSU also won the competition in 2007 and has placed in the top five in seven of the past eight years.

### The Big Reveal

A record 331 students presented posters during Scholars Week, a University-wide celebration of research and creative expression. Dr. Eugenie C. Scott, executive director of the National Science Education Center in Oakland, Calif., kicked off the weeklong celebration with a press conference emphatically calling on the Tennessee General Assembly to drop bills allowing religious and politically motivated statements in public middle- and high-school classrooms. Lawmakers passed a bill that same day that would encourage classroom debate over evolution.



*Notable Achievements continued on page 23*





# HOMECOMING

## OCT. 6, 2012

Join us for the Mixer on Middle parade-watching party, Tailgate Lunch at the Alumni House, and watch the Blue Raiders take on the University of Louisiana-Monroe. **The class of 1962 will be inducted into the Golden Raiders Society on Oct. 5.**

Find out, keep in touch, learn more about all alumni events and activities:

**[www.mtalumni.com](http://www.mtalumni.com)**

Facebook: MTSUAlumni

[alumni@mtsu.edu](mailto:alumni@mtsu.edu)

Linked In: MTSUAlumni







## BE PART OF THE CENTENNIAL CAMPAIGN

To ensure a second century of excellence, MTSU is embarking on its most ambitious quest for philanthropy.

Support from alumni and friends will help us maintain an exceptional student body, assure the highest quality faculty and staff, foster an innovative learning environment, and compete at the highest levels in athletics.

Visit [www.mtsu.edu/supportMT](http://www.mtsu.edu/supportMT)  
to make your gift today, or contact  
the Office of Development at (615) 898-2502.





*Notable Achievements continued from page 20*

## Going for the Gold

MTSU sophomore Jordan Dodson was named a recipient of the prestigious Goldwater Scholar Awards. Only 282 sophomores and juniors at colleges and universities nationwide are 2012 recipients. Dodson, 20, who has a 3.97 GPA as a double major in professional chemistry and professional mathematics and a minor in biology, received a two-year, \$15,000 Goldwater Scholarship. Dodson, an Oakland High School graduate who shoots golf in the 70s, joins a growing list of Goldwater Scholars at MTSU, including (currently) Evan Matthew Craig, who received a Goldwater in 2011, and alumnus Taylor

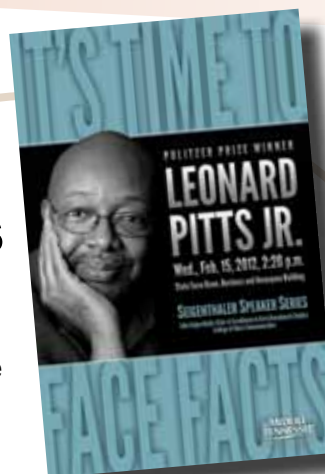
Barnes, MTSU's first Goldwater recipient in 2007. The Goldwater Foundation is a federally endowed agency established by public law in 1986 and designed to foster and encourage outstanding students to pursue careers in mathematics, the natural sciences, and engineering.

## Good Partners

The best video projects from students in Metro Nashville Public Schools were celebrated at the MTSU-sponsored Academies of Nashville Video Awards show in April. MTSU College of Mass Communication students (alongside Metro students) directed, produced and performed in the inaugural awards show using MTSU's \$1.4 million Mobile Production Lab, which has been used for events ranging from Music Row's "Capitol Street Party" to ESPN coverage of Blue Raider athletic contests. The hourlong MNPS video awards production was aired on Nashville's NECA, Channel 10. "We are pleased to partner with Metro Schools because we see the great things happening in their schools and the caliber of students they are sending to college," said Dr. Sidney A. McPhee, MTSU president.

## A Pulitzer Perspective

Leonard Pitts Jr., 2004 Pulitzer Prize winner for commentary, presented "Owning What You Know" at MTSU. Pitts, a syndicated columnist for the *Miami Herald* and author of three books, became a published writer at 14 when the *Los Angeles Sentinel* published one of his poems.



# At the podium: Recent Speakers

## The Right Note

Marlee Matlin, winner of the 1986 Academy Award for Best Actress for her performance in *Children of a Lesser God*, delivered the keynote address for MTSU's National Women's History Month celebration. Deaf since the age of 18 months, Matlin is a member of the National Association for the Deaf, communicates in sign language in her acting and public appearances, and travels with an interpreter.

## Supreme Authority

Retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor became the first woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court when President Ronald Reagan named her as an associate justice in 1981. During her almost 25 years on the high court, she cast tie-breaking votes in more than three-fourths of the panel's 5-4 decisions. "It took 191 years to get the first woman on the Supreme Court," she told an MTSU audience. "That was quite a wait. And frankly, I'm still astonished that I was that woman." Topics ranged from the pros and cons of an elected judiciary to her status as a member of the Cowgirl Hall of Fame (thanks to her Arizona cattle-ranch upbringing).



## Mutual Benefits

MTSU and Nashville State Community College (NSCC) signed an agreement in March to make it easier for students to earn degrees from both institutions. The Concurrent Enrollment provision allows students to enroll at both institutions simultaneously and get financial aid for the total number of credits, if needed. The Reverse Transfer provision gives former NSCC students, who enrolled at MTSU without receiving an NSCC associate's degree, the opportunity to transfer MTSU credits back to NSCC and receive a two-year diploma.

**Spring Speakers** Mark Emmert, NCAA president, served as the morning commencement speaker at the spring 2012 ceremony. Ribo Huang of the National Engineering Research Center for Bioenergy at Guangxi Academy of Sciences in China was the speaker for the afternoon ceremony. At the morning ceremony, MTSU awarded its 100,000th undergraduate degree.







## Young at Heart

RCA recording artist, Murfreesboro native, and former MTSU student Chris Young produced a public service announcement

for MTSU lauding the University for its academic programs. With the sounds of one of his No. 1 hits playing in the background, Young states that his time spent at MTSU as a student helped make him the “Man I Want to Be.” Young also recently donated a selection of his touring audio equipment and accessories to MTSU Production Services, a unit within the Division of Business and Finance that provides event services. In the past year, Young was nominated for a Grammy and had five consecutive number-one singles.



## Grammy Time

Lady Antebellum’s second Best Country Album Grammy in as many years meant more accolades for MTSU after the 54th Grammy Awards ceremony in February. *Own the Night*, the trio’s third album, garnered the win for Hillary Scott, a 2004–06 MTSU recording industry major and member of the group, as well as for engineer Clarke Schleicher (’80). Both were Grammy winners in 2011 for “Need You Now.” Scott and Schleicher were two of nine MTSU alumni and/or former students nominated for their work on musical releases ranging from country to contemporary Christian to bluegrass. Music by 14 current and former MTSU School of Music professors was included in the catalog that earned a classical Producer of the Year nomination for Blanton Alspaugh. Blue Raiders nominated for Grammys this year included Brandon Epps (’01), Jason Hall (’00), Brandon Schexnayder (’05), Dave Barnes (’00), Brandon Heath (’03), and Brandon Bell (’04).

## Field Lab

The Harpeth Wetland Bank recently donated about 220 acres of rural property in the Rockvale area of Rutherford County to MTSU. The land, previously known as the Puckett Farm, was donated with the support and encouragement of the property’s previous owners, former MTSU employee Betty Rowland and her sisters, Mary Taylor and Ann Hartmann, in honor of their father, Clarence William Puckett (’41). It will be used as an environmental field laboratory for programs in biology, environmental science, botany, conservation, and other sciences.

## Join the Club

MTSU became a member of Oak Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU), an Anderson County-based nonprofit that operates like a chamber of commerce for universities across the globe. Through ORAU, these institutions of higher learning work together to advance scientific research and education by getting their best and brightest students working on projects with the government, in private sector industries, and at other universities. Students from any of the member universities can apply for a seemingly endless list of programs, many of which could land them at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. At any given time, there are more than 1,000 students in Anderson County taking classes. The result is more top-level science professionals with the academic prowess to keep the United States competitive with other countries.

## Good Company

Three accomplished alumni were added to the growing roster of the College of Mass Communication’s Wall of Fame at MTSU. Alumni Carrie Dierks (’99), the vice president for B2B operations for True North Custom Media, Luke Laird (’01), *Billboard* magazine’s No. 3 “Hot Country Songwriter of 2011,” and Mikki Rose (’05), Hollywood animator turned Sony Pictures Imageworks’ cloth and hair technical director, were honored with plaques and photos installed on the northwest interior wall of the Bragg Mass Communication Building. Also recognized were Friends of the College Dale and Lucinda Cockrell of the University’s Center for Popular Music.





## COLLAGE

A Journal of Creative Expression

Issue 13 Spring 2011

in 1925. *Collage* was one of only seven magazines in the nation to receive the award. Marsha Powers serves as coordinator of special projects and publications for the Honors College at MTSU, which produces *Collage*.

### A Literary First

*Collage* literary magazine received its first Gold Crown Award—the highest given to a student print or online publication—from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association, an international student press association founded

### Fine Art

Dr. Bonnie B. Rushlow, associate professor of art education, was selected by the National Art Education Association—the professional association for art educators—to receive the 2012 National Art Educator of the Year Award. The award was presented at the NAEA national convention in New York in March.

### Battlefield Promotion

The Library of Congress released the first issue of *Teaching with Primary Sources Journal*, and it was all about the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation's work in Tennessee teaching the Civil War era in a multidisciplinary context. Thousands of teachers across the nation will read the edition, and many will, in turn, use the materials in their classrooms. "Teaching about the Civil War with primary sources—original documents and objects which were created at the time under study—provides opportunities for expanding this familiar topic in history into subject areas as varied as geography, language arts, and science," the *Journal* said, "giving students unique opportunities to discover how this epic struggle bled into nearly every aspect of American life." Carroll Van West directs the *Teaching with Primary Sources* program at MTSU and is the director of the Center for Historic Preservation.

### Coast to Coast

Professor Cliff Ricketts achieved a career goal of driving coast-to-coast on 10 gallons or less of gasoline purchased at the pump. Ricketts and his eight-member support team drove three Toyota hybrid alternative-fuel vehicles approximately 2,582 miles across the country, using only about 2.15 gallons of fuel purchased at the gas pump. Upon achieving his goal,

Ricketts, who has spent 36 years as an MTSU faculty member and invested 34 years into research of alternative fuels, took off his shoes and socks, waded into the nearby Pacific Ocean and let out a large whoop. He is already planning a similar coast-to-coast trip in 2013—that one using sun and water alone. At the time of Ricketts' journey in March, national average gas prices were \$3.76 for regular, \$3.90 for mid-grade and \$4.04 for premium. The amazing journey was covered by media stalwarts including *USA Today* and *ABC News*.

### Atta Boy, Roy

MTSU's Dr. Don Roy was recognized by MBAPrograms.org as one of the top 50 business school professors to follow on Twitter. The list includes business professors from all over the world who use the social media site to network with others in the field and muse about developments in the business world. Roy was also listed number 65 on *Social Media Marketing* magazine's list of top marketing professors.

### Media Savvy

*The Tennessean* announced a partnership with MTSU to launch Brainstorm Nashville, a digital hub for civic engagement designed to foster community problem solving. The joint initiative launched with childhood obesity as its marquee topic. (Tennessee's childhood obesity rate teeters close to 21 percent, the sixth highest in the country.) Successes achieved through Brainstorm Nashville are being celebrated online, in print, through social media, and in real life. Maria De Varenne, executive editor and vice president of *The Tennessean*, describes Brainstorm Nashville as the "editorial page of the future," and a "catalyst for community action." MTSU and *The Tennessean* combined forces for a "Tweetup," a gathering of people who use Twitter, on the topic of childhood obesity in March. Gov. Bill Haslam participated. For more, visit [www.brainstormnashville.com](http://www.brainstormnashville.com).

### From Combat to the Classroom



The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and MTSU entered into a partnership called VetSuccess on Campus to ease the transition of veterans from combat to campus. MTSU is the first university in Tennessee and one of only 16 nationwide to be a part of VetSuccess. MTSU is the number-one choice of Tennessee veterans and, for two years running, *G.I. Jobs Magazine* has named the university a "Military-Friendly Campus."



# Fueling Our Second Century

MTSU announces an **ambitious \$80 million campaign!**

*Imagine a typical day at Middle Tennessee State University three years from now.*

In the brand-new, recently opened science building, students from different disciplines gather in hallway nooks working together as teams, scribbling on whiteboards, scratching their heads, and making impassioned cases for their scientific theories. Down the hall, in a spacious laboratory, a team of Ph.D. students collaborates with highly skilled faculty in the Tennessee Center for Botanical Medical Research on the creation of new drug therapies that could cure innumerable diseases—even cancer. And through the doors of the naturally lit lobby comes MTSU's undergraduate forensics squad, fresh off a visit to the University's field laboratory and headed toward the state-of-the-art research lab for follow-up evaluation.

Across campus, a world-renowned guitarist who just an hour before stepped off a plane from Germany pushes through the doors of the School of Music on her way to teach a master class and present a performance. Her visit is the fruit of an endowed professorship in music studies that enables MTSU to attract—for the benefit of its students—top musicians from around the globe to middle Tennessee.

The effort 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.

From the office of the dean of the Honors College, excited voices begin filling the halls as news spreads that multiple Fulbright scholarships have again been awarded to top MTSU students. The prestigious study-abroad scholarships go to those who could have chosen to study etymology, computational science, or sport management at any university in America but chose MTSU for its stellar academic programs and generous scholarship assistance.

And inside a renovated Floyd Stadium, anticipation runs high as the Blue Raider football squad, fresh off a major bowl appearance the previous year, takes the practice field bolstered by the highest-ranked recruiting class in its history, a nucleus of top young athletes supported by premiere athletics scholarships that might even land the Blue Raiders in the top 25 preseason NCAA football polls.

*Welcome to the near future of MTSU.*

To usher in this vision from the soon to the now, the University has launched the most comprehensive and ambitious fundraising campaign in its history—the Centennial Campaign.

For most of MTSU's first century, the institution looked primarily to the state for the resources needed to maintain its campus and support its students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Unfortunately, demands on state resources and resulting reductions in funding for higher education are increasingly challenging the University to sustain the level of quality that students, alumni, and other constituents have come to expect. It is imperative that MTSU anticipates the opportunities that lie ahead as it begins planning for a second century of excellence.



## CENTENNIAL Campaign

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY



by Drew Ruble

MTSU's most ambitious quest for philanthropy in history addresses strategic needs across all areas of MTSU's enterprise and affects the entire MTSU family. The effort 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 \$54 million has already been committed toward the campaign's \$80 million goal. Raised over the past three years during the "quiet phase," the \$54 million alone would constitute a successful effort at many comprehensive universities.

President Sidney A. McPhee says financial support from alumni, friends, and the community has become a vital component of MTSU's rich heritage.

"MTSU would not be what it is today without the leadership and generosity of our donors and friends," McPhee says. "We hope to inspire our philanthropic partners to join us in building an even stronger university. These investments are necessary to secure our role as a leader in public higher education, not only in Tennessee but across the nation."

The following pages outline the focus of the campaign, the strong leadership in place to guide it, and the story of one particularly generous donor—alumnus Andrew "Woody" Miller ('66)—whose \$10 million gift, the largest outright donation from an MTSU alum, kicked off the public phase of MTSU's Centennial Campaign. Perhaps you, too, will be inspired to make a gift to your alma mater at this historic time.

# Go Blue!



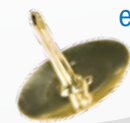
## The Brass Tacks

MTSU has outlined four priorities for the use of the \$80 million to be raised in its current capital campaign.



**Increasing financial aid and support** available to students with both merit- and need-based scholarships, including 100 Centennial Scholarships.

The brightest young minds, those destined to become the next generation of doctors, lawyers, statesmen, scientists, and teachers, are sought by universities around the world. In turn, these institutions provide opportunities and resources to meet the needs and expectations of such students. For MTSU to continue as the institution of choice for Tennessee's best and brightest, it must offer competitive financial aid packages to attract and support these exceptional scholars.



**Maintaining the finest teaching and research faculty** possible through establishing 30 new endowed faculty positions and securing additional awards for outstanding teaching, advising, and research, as well as additional graduate assistants and stipends.

Exceptional students deserve an exceptional faculty. To ensure that the needs of our students are met and that we maintain the best faculty, the University intends to establish a cadre of endowed chairs and professorships. These awards will enable the University to attract prestigious scholars, whose teaching and research will energize our campus by attracting national attention to MTSU and raising the profile of our academic and research programs.



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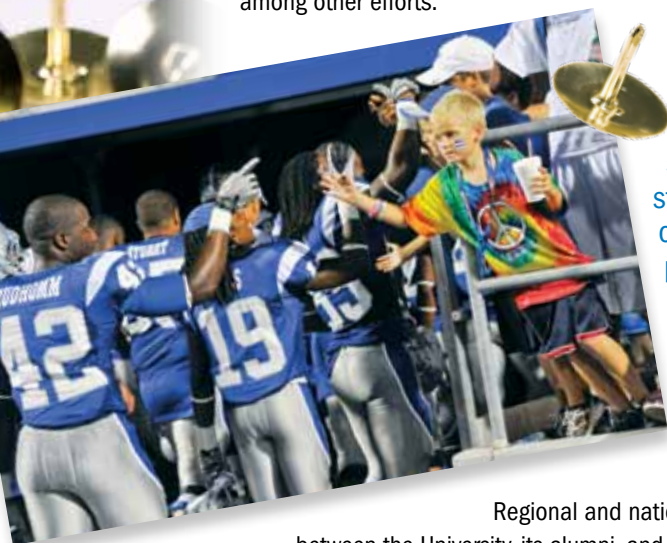




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Enhancing the **physical facilities** and program opportunities for students, including enhancing the library, strengthening the math-science education program, and expanding international and cultural programs for students.

MTSU remains dedicated to providing every student access to the finest facilities, the most modern equipment, and the most innovative academic programs, further supporting our commitment to quality and a student-centered environment. Funds provided for academic program enhancement will enable us to better internationalize our curricula, ensure that our students have hands-on exposure to and familiarity with state-of-the-art technologies, and enable us to better utilize our extensive experience as an entrepreneurial institution to better serve our students and the economy of the state, among other efforts.



Enhancing the **Blue Raider Athletic Program** with 50 scholarships to ensure that student-athletes have the opportunity to fulfill their potential and providing new training and practice facilities, upgrading and enhancing the Murphy Center environment, and building 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 our position on the national sports scene requires that we remain competitive in our ability to recruit 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**



MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY alumnus Andrew Woodfin “Woody” Miller’s April 2012 gift of \$10 million—the largest alumni gift in the University’s history—will transform MTSU’s educational landscape.

“Woody understood that we need donors with a vision of the future who share in the direction that the University is going, who would challenge us and motivate us and other prospective donors to support the University,” MTSU president Sidney A. McPhee says of the Nashville resident, a 1966 graduate and a 1999 Distinguished Alumni honoree. “This gift positions us in a very significant way to continue to make the kind of progress that we have mapped out for the University’s second century.”

## Taking the L

<sup>1</sup> Pamela Wright (’73), founder and CEO of Nashville-based Wright Travel, is chair of the Centennial Campaign.

“As we near the end of our centennial celebration, I’m even more excited about the opportunity to look ahead and do something about the future of Middle Tennessee State University,” says Wright, who made a seven-figure gift to MTSU to establish a faculty chair for entrepreneurship during the Centennial Campaign’s quiet phase. “That’s what this campaign is all about.”

Other executive committee members include Darrell Freeman, Nashville-based Zycron Inc. founder and chair; Stephen B. Smith,<sup>2a</sup> Nashville-based Haury & Smith Contractors Inc. chair; Ernest Burgess,<sup>3</sup> Ruth-



# “I CHOSE TO GIVE NOW”

by Gina Fann

The announcement of Miller's gift was the centerpiece of MTSU's launch of its \$80 million Centennial Campaign. Miller's gift helped boost the campaign's early commitments to nearly \$54 million.

So who is Woody Miller?

A relative of the family that owns and operates Woodfin Funeral Chapels in Rutherford County, Miller spent part of his childhood at his grandparents' home in the Christiana community south of Murfreesboro.

After receiving his degree in accounting from MTSU, Miller began his career as a CPA with an international accounting firm, then joined Hospital Corporation of America soon after its inception and served as senior officer there until 1982. During this period, he also served as president and chair of the Federation of American Hospitals, representing the international for-profit health care industry in Washington, D.C.

Miller was on the leading edge of surgery center development when he cofounded Surgical Care Affiliates in 1982. He has also started two other publicly traded health care companies in Tennessee. And he established Women's Health Partners in 1996 as a physician practice-management company, with approximately 150 physicians in several states.

Today, he is owner of HealthMark Partners, an investment company, and serves on the boards of numerous other private corporations. Miller is also chair and CEO of Women's Health Partners of Nashville and chair and CEO of Vision America, Memphis.

He chairs the Andrew Woodfin Foundation and joined the Million Dollar Roundtable of the United Way Alexis de Tocqueville Society in 1996. He serves on the boards of the United Way of Middle Tennessee and the Cheekwood Foundation.

At MTSU, Miller served on the Jennings A. Jones College of Business Professional Advisory Board and was one of the inaugural recipients of the college's Exemplar Award in 2000. That award recognizes alumni role models whose business, professional, and personal achievements stand out for all to see and emulate.

An important aspect of Miller's \$10 million gift is that he has entrusted the University to spend the money as it sees fit, so long as it "will enhance the quality of education."

Miller is quite direct about why he chose to give such a large sum to his alma mater.

"It's very important for people to give back when they can," he told *The Tennessean*. "I'm 68 and soon to be 69 and soon to be dead. Anybody can give it out of your estate. I chose to give now. You can't put a luggage rack on a hearse." [MTSU](#)

# EAD



erford County mayor; Joey Jacobs<sup>2b</sup>, Franklin-based Acadia Healthcare chair and CEO; and MTSU Foundation member Don Witherspoon.<sup>4</sup>

Campaign steering committee members include

- Liz Rhea,<sup>5</sup> community volunteer and longtime MTSU supporter;
- Walter Chitwood, representing the Blue Raider Athletic Association;
- Carol Hudler, president and publisher of *The Tennessean*;
- Chris Karbowiak, chief administrative officer and executive vice president of Bridgestone Americas Inc.;
- Rick Mansfield, partner at Bragg Mansfield & Stegall;
- Don Midgett, philanthropist who with his wife, Carolyn, established the first MTSU Centennial Scholarship earmarked specifically for the University Honors College program;
- Judy Powell, senior vice president for clinical affairs, National Healthcare Corp.;

- Former state senator Andy Womack;
- Kay Woodfin, owner of Woodfin Funeral Chapel;
- Brent Campbell, president of the MTSU National Alumni Association;
- Kim Neal Nofsinger, president of the MTSU Faculty Senate;
- Michael Arndt, incoming president of the Faculty Senate;
- Jeremy Poynter, 2011–12 Student Government Association president; and
- Coby Sherlock, 2012–13 SGA president.

Though it has its own organizational structure, the Centennial Campaign is supported by the MTSU Foundation, which has been working in coordination with the campaign committee behind the scenes for more than three years to secure the \$54 million in current commitments. [MTSU](#)



# Off the mat

Collegiate wrestling makes a quiet, coeducational return to MTSU

by Bill Lewis

**F**reshman Jasmine Cothran is proud that she made MTSU sports history this year. Her only disappointment is that no one seems to have noticed.

"Even up until this day, people don't believe me," says Cothran, the first female MTSU athlete to win a collegiate wrestling match. "A lot of people say they didn't know that girls wrestle."

She doesn't take their skepticism personally. Most of the doubters are unaware that the University even has a successful wrestling team, much less that it includes four women. Perhaps that lack of awareness is understandable, since the team doesn't use University facilities and has never held a match on campus. When Cothran scored her historic victory, it was at a match held in a rented high school gymnasium in another city.

Headlock: MTSU's club wrestling team expects to more than double the number of women on its roster in the coming year.



Mike Kuziola ('80)

Adding to that confusion, volunteer wrestling coach Bryan Knepper is not a University employee, and the team is not governed by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), as are the football, baseball, basketball, and other sports teams that are part of MTSU athletics. Instead, the wrestling team is recognized as a sports club and competes with similar student clubs from other schools.

After an absence of more than three decades, wrestling's quiet return to MTSU has been, if not a secret, at least cloaked in anonymity and more than a little irony. The sport was cut from the Athletic Department in 1980 amid concerns about budgets and the effect of Title IX, the federal law that requires parity between men's and women's athletic opportunities and scholarships.

Now that law, intended to prevent discrimination against women, could be standing in the way of a return to NCAA status of a wrestling team that for the first time includes women.

For every scholarship or opportunity to participate in sports reserved for male athletes, Title IX requires similar opportunities

As a club supported by the private MTSU Wrestling Scholarship Foundation, the team is able to provide scholarships to certain members. Ten of the men have scholarships, which Knepper describes as "partial books to a full ride."

Pat Simpson, a star MTSU wrestler who graduated in 1979, recalls the atmosphere on campus as Coach Gordon Connell struggled to shield the team from being eliminated.

"He was just starting to build the program," Simpson says. "Title IX was starting to take effect."

He applauds Knepper and his assistants

for returning the sport to MTSU and creating opportunities for both men and women to pursue their dreams.

"Look at the roster. These are

Tennessee kids. Middle is giving kids an option to wrestle," says Simpson, who has been the wrestling coach at Nashville's Father Ryan High School for 32 years.

There are no girls on the Father Ryan team, but Simpson sees growing interest. Jasmine Cothran wrestled in middle school and high school in Nashville before Knepper recruited her.

After her arrival, she used her Facebook page to recruit the team's three other female members: Danah Tatum, Keyonna Jones and Kellsey Smith.

Cothran was unaware of the (to her) ancient history of wrestling at MTSU. Instead, she's focusing on next season. Disappointed in her fourth-place finish this year, she's training as much as possible while pursuing her studies and working a part-time job.

"That's not good enough for me," Cothran says of not being number one. "I hate getting beat. That's the one thing that bothers me, somebody being better than me. I've always been a competitive person."

The same can be said of Knepper and all the athletes who have, for the love of the sport, established a new wrestling tradition at MTSU. **MTSU**

**"Even up until this day, people don't believe me," says Cothran, the first female MTSU athlete to win a collegiate wrestling match.**

**"A lot of people say they *didn't* know that girls wrestle."**

for female. The idea is to create chances for women to participate, not to restrict opportunities for men. But with 85 men's football team members and no budget to create that many offsetting women's positions on sports teams, the University found itself playing a numbers game. Certain exclusively men's sports—think wrestling—were eliminated.

The numbers still stand in the way of wrestling's return to NCAA status. The team has four female members, but it also had 22 men on its roster last season. That means returning the sport to NCAA status could require the creation of at least 18 positions for women on sports teams.

Knepper, a one-time collegiate wrestler with a passion for the sport, is content to stay below the radar.

"I want to make it clear that our intent is not to return to NCAA status. Our fear is that people start talking about that, and the school eliminates us altogether," Knepper says.

"In order to return to NCAA status, one of two things would need to occur," he continues. "Title IX would have to be revoked by Congress or revised to reflect current collegiate trends, or MTSU would have to revive the NCAA [wrestling] program, which would require an additional two or three women's sports at approximately \$150,000 [per] year cost for each team."





# Gray Man

Timothy Ryan Buckley is looking to **make you laugh . . .**

by Gina K. Logue and Candace Moonshower

**C**ollege is traditionally a time to try new things. Living away from home for the first time often gives students the courage to explore new interests and develop new skills. Some may reinvent themselves completely.

In 21-year-old Timothy Ryan Buckley's case, a second persona developed once he got to MTSU.

"Performing as Mr. Gray is **really fun to do** and **brings happiness** to people," he says, "especially kids."

"My roommates were street-performing musicians," Buckley explains, "but I'm not a musician. So I began watching videos online of street performers in the French Quarter. They were covered in paint, and they moved slowly like statues to entertain the crowd."

Inspired, Buckley developed his own character, "Mr. Gray," a "living statue" covered in gray paint who wears a derby hat and carries a briefcase for collecting donations. Mr. Gray made his debut about two years ago in front of a deli where Buckley was making minimum wage. He admits that even after much private preparation he was very nervous to take his public plunge. But there was a payoff for his effort.

"I have a slight natural tremor anyway that is hard to control, and when I'm nervous my hands really shake," he says. "I could not stay still that day, but I must have looked still to everyone else. I made money!"

Depending on the event, Buckley (a mass communication major minoring in art) says he can make more than \$100 an hour performing. But he's not in it only for the money.

"Performing as Mr. Gray is really fun to do and brings happiness to people," he says, "especially kids."

Buckley tries to perform at every MTSU home football game. He's often seen at Raider Walk, a pre-game ritual where many MTSU alums see him perform without knowing who he is or even that he's a student.

photos: J. Intintoli



# on Campus

or make you hurl

Mr. Gray isn't the only thing Buckley has brought to MTSU: he and a friend also introduced a new club sport.

During study abroad in Ireland last year, he and fellow student Jamie Norris discovered the game of hurling, a 3,000-year-old Gaelic sport believed to be one of the oldest field games. Players try to advance a ball (or "sliotar") downfield and score goals with curved,

**"Hurling combines all the sports I love and puts them all to shame," Buckley says.**

flattened clubs called hurleys. (Think lacrosse without the webbing or rugby with cudgels.) With its flurry of sticks and players flying up and down the pitch, hurling is both an ancient sport from which others have evolved and an adrenaline-fueled extreme sport for modern times. (The first recorded account of hurling dates back to 1272 B.C., when the town of Fir Bolg and invaders from Tuatha De Dannan tuned up for the real fight by batting the ball around.)

"Hurling combines all the sports I love and puts them all to shame," Buckley says.

Again inspired, Buckley and Norris started the MT Hurling Club—the only one in Tennessee. They recruited players and corporate sponsors including O'possum's Pub, apparel manufacturer O'Neill's, the Gaelic Athletic Association, and Authentic Ireland Cultural Enrichment of Brentwood. The team became an official MTSU sport club in September 2011. Without NCAA or University sanction, the team can't be called Blue Raiders, so they are the Wolfhounds instead.

"We have 12 active members now, and we've played against Purdue and Indiana universities as well as the City Club from St. Louis," Buckley says. The team has also traveled to Lexington and Orlando to compete.

Between his twin passions of artistic performance and sport, Buckley is piecing together an impressive, albeit unconventional, résumé at MTSU. Whether Buckley will find a way to combine things as different as Mr. Gray and hurling into a single career remains to be seen, but he's certainly going to have fun trying. [MTSU](#)





photos: J. Intintoli

**With a new \$147 million science building finally under construction, MTSU prepares to take its science and research efforts to the next level.**

# A NEW Catalyst

by Drew Ruble

THIS PAST spring, the Tennessee General Assembly approved state funding to build a brand-new, state-of-the-art, \$147 million science building on the campus of Middle Tennessee State University. The building, currently under construction, will open its doors to students in just a few years.

As anyone familiar with the programs and infrastructure at MTSU will attest, the building is as desperately needed as it is long overdue. And yet, when viewed in the greater context of the other changes sweeping across the campus, the state, and beyond—from an evolving University mission to shifting funding formulas to exploding scientific frontiers—the timing couldn't be more perfect.

## Non-Growing Pains

To best understand the importance of the new building, it helps to first understand the glaring inadequacy of MTSU's current science facilities. The existing Wiser-Patton and Davis Science buildings (built in 1932 and 1967, respectively) house most of MTSU's science programs in a combined 75,332 net square feet. In 1968, just after the Davis building opened, MTSU's student population was 6,779; by fall 2011, the University's enrollment was 26,442. That's an almost fourfold increase with no corresponding expansion of the space for science education.

When it comes to science, cramped, decades-old buildings are more than just an inconvenience—they can be physically hazardous. The spotty effectiveness of ancient ventilation hoods throughout the current chemistry building have long been a concern when working with noxious compounds.

But for all their bricks-and-mortar-related shortcomings, the most telling cost of the Davis Science and Wiser-Patton buildings is academic—the buildings are grossly out of touch with





# Life

for MTSU students **enrolled in science classes** just got infinitely better

modern science instruction. Current laboratory and instructional spaces are geared to a population from the 1930s to the 1960s—the decades in which they were built—and a time when science instruction was mostly passive, delivered lecture-style with students seated while professors demonstrated experiments.

Worse still, there are any number of new approaches and innovations in science that simply cannot be accommodated by the existing buildings. Biology and chemistry in particular are rapidly evolving disciplines that can change literally overnight. For example, whereas in the past the study of the human genome required a very specialized laboratory with very expensive equipment, these days such research is no longer the sole property of elite faculty or universities. Without adequate facilities, though, MTSU has been left behind in genome analysis.

Quite simply, the list of scientific endeavors hampered by the University's existing infrastructure includes nearly every branch of study. After more than forty years, it wasn't a matter of merely falling behind or even being lapped by other schools—MTSU's science facilities didn't even allow it on the same track.

## Built to Thrill

Those days will soon be past. The new building will provide more than 250,000 gross square feet of teaching, faculty and student research laboratories, and collaborative learning spaces for the more than 13,000 students, both majors and nonmajors, who are enrolled annually in biology, chemistry, and physical science courses at MTSU.

Life for MTSU students enrolled in science classes “just got infinitely better,” says Dr. Elliot Altman, head of the new Ph.D. program in molecular biosciences. “I am pleased to say they are not cutting any corners,” adds the former University of Georgia professor, who has himself been a part of the planning of three different buildings in his career.

Tom Cheatham, outgoing dean of the College of Basic and Applied Sciences, is quick to point out that despite the substantial handicap imposed by archaic infrastructure, the science faculty and students have done “an amazing job.” Still, he's also the first to admit “it'll be a whole new ballgame in the new facility.”

*continued on page 36*



# path to **PROGRESS**

**M**uch of the credit for securing the state dollars to build the facility belongs to Ruth-erford County's legislative delegation. Sen. Jim Tracy (R-Shelbyville) chairs the STEM legislative caucus tasked with improving science, math, engineering, and technology education statewide. Sen. Bill Ketron (R-Murfreesboro, '76) is a member of the Senate Finance Committee. Together, with local representatives Joe Carr (R-Lascassas, '81), Pat Marsh (R-Shelbyville), Mike Sparks (R-Smyrna), and Rick Womick (R-Rockvale), that group's synergy was key to the final push required to get funding for a new MTSU science building approved. So too was the support and effort of local mayors Tommy Bragg and Ernest Burgess—and the strong push by the Tennessee Board of Regents.

Ketron says a key to the effort was gaining the support of people in positions of influence like House Speaker Beth Harwell (R-Nashville) and Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey (R-Bristol), both of whom are on the Building Commission, the state's three constitutional officers, and other key legislators including House speaker emeritus Jimmy Naifeh (D-Covington), House finance committee chair

Charles Sargent (R-Franklin), current House education committee chair Richard Montgomery (R-Sevierville) and past chair Harry Brooks (R-Knoxville), Senate finance committee chair Randy McNally (R-Oak Ridge), and Senate education chair Dolores Gresham (R-Somerville).

"By the time we brought all those members down to campus and let them see the sorry state of disrepair on these buildings, things just came together," Ketron says.

Getting them to campus was the handiwork of MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee and State Rep. Carr (R-Lascassas, '81), who hatched the plan invite lawmakers to attend a men's basketball game in 2010...and to see the aging science facilities.

The trip was a turning point.

"I made the comment while in one of the labs that I thought I had burned one of the tables in the room with some acid one day while I was enrolled there in the early '70s," Ketron (R-Murfreesboro, '76) says. "It was a quite revealing



*Lawmakers and other officials crucial to the process of securing state funding for MTSU's new science building participate in the ceremonial groundbreaking on May 13, 2012.*



*Governor Bill Haslam, President Sidney A. McPhee and John Hood*

conversation for the people in attendance there to hear."

The outgoing dean of the College of Basic and Applied Sciences, Dr. Tom Cheatham, says without Dr. McPhee's persistent, determined will to make the new Science Building a reality, it wouldn't have happened.

"He did a marvelous job of orchestrating all this and knowing which buttons to push and which not to push," Cheatham says. "And John Hood [former lawmaker and director of government and community affairs at MTSU], of course, is always

giving him good advice in that respect."

Tracy (R-Shelbyville) also credits the leadership and determination of Gov. Bill Haslam for sealing the deal.

"The governor understood how important it was to middle Tennessee and Tennessee as a whole," Tracy says. "Coming from a business background, he understood how important it was in the whole scheme of things to raise the level of science education." **MTSU**

*continued from page 35*

That "whole new ballgame" starts with MTSU's newfound potency on the recruiting trail—both in terms of high-achieving, science-minded students, and nationally renowned faculty members to teach them.

Dr. Preston MacDougall, professor and past interim chair of the Chemistry Department, says in the past, even if top young scholars wanted to come to MTSU, their parents often disallowed it.

"Parents have actually complained to the Tennessee Board of Regents after touring our current facilities because they were hoping to send their child to MTSU until they saw the science buildings."

For his part, Brad Bartel, MTSU provost, is relieved such stories will soon be a thing of the past. "We will boast the finest science facilities in the state and second to none in the country," he says.

Not surprisingly, the new building is already proving to be a powerful strategic tool for regional, national, and international recruiting of students. "We take renderings of the building with us," says Dr. Michael Allen, dean of the College of Graduate Studies and MTSU vice provost for research.



*continued from page 36*

The same is true of recruiting top faculty and administrators. At press time, MTSU had recently hired a new dean of the College of Basic and Applied Sciences, a new chair of Biology, and a new chair of Chemistry, and was looking to fill several other key faculty positions (genomists, molecular biologists, cell biologists) across the science disciplines.

“It’s great to be able to tell the finalists for these positions that they will have these amazing facilities, that they will be in a leadership position to do pioneering work in the sciences,” says Bartel, who spearheads such hiring. “We’ve been stymieing science for decades here. Particularly for our people who deal at the molecular level, it’s going to make a huge difference to MTSU.”

## Research and Rescue

The timing of such high-profile hires occurring along with the construction of the new science building is a happy coincidence to say the least, enabling the University to target new faculty with solid, focused research agendas who can really ramp up MTSU’s profile as a research institution.

“We’re starting to be able to change our personnel a little bit,” Allen says. “We used to get people who were really dedicated to teaching and didn’t necessarily want to be involved in that much research. Now we’re able to attract people who want to spend a large share of their time doing research and bringing in external-sponsored awards.”

Historically speaking, research has not been a strong component of MTSU’s mission—but that’s changing rapidly. The new science building is a game changer with regard to nascent research efforts.

“There are those in the state who would like for MTSU to remain out of the research arena,” Cheatham says. “That’s not President McPhee’s position. It’s not the position of the provost or of the vice provost for research. And it’s not been my position.”

To do state-of-the-art research and become a hybrid research/teaching university, though, MTSU must have state-of-the-art research space.

“And that’s what this will be,” says Altman, whose activity in research, patent development, and tech transfer at the University of Georgia was prolific. “This will be a facility that anyone who wants to engage in research, whether they be undergraduate, master’s or Ph.D. students, will have the facilities to do so.”

## Formulas for Success

It’s easy to see how luring of top-flight students, faculty, and administrators to MTSU will yield long-term benefits, especially considering the potential decades-spanning relevance of university research. But thanks to state funding formulas, the new science building will have a positive impact on the University’s bottom line well before that first “Eureka!” moment takes place in one of its laboratories.

# Breathing Room

## research

space in the new science building will be expansive and accommodate MTSU’s needs for many decades. Two upgrades will be particularly transformative. MTSU will for the first time have an animal facility for conducting research. No longer will researchers have to find other locations to conduct research using mice or other animals, or, worse yet, change the kind of research they do. On the chemistry side, modern ventilation will allow experiments long prohibited in MTSU’s old buildings.

“Right now, it is extremely frustrating because if you’re doing any kind of synthetic chemistry, most of the existing labs don’t have proper ventilation, so it really restricts the kind of chemistry we can do. There’s a barrier,” explains Prof. Preston MacDougall. “So the new building will open up areas of chemistry that have been closed at MTSU for safety reasons for several years.”

Science courses offered in the new building will serve academic programs beyond general education biology and chemistry and include aerospace, agribusiness/agriculture, engineering technology, nursing, physics and astronomy, elementary education, education teacher licensure in science education, wellness and exercise science in health and human performance, human sciences (nutrition/food science/dietetics), geology, social work, and recording industry production technology. [MTSU](#)

One key component of the new funding formula for higher education in Tennessee passed by the legislature in 2010 ties state funding appropriations to how much outside funding for research an institution cultivates. (Before that change, 80 percent of MTSU’s appropriation was determined by sheer enrollment.)

“Now, it’s how many Ph.D. students do you graduate?” Cheatham says. “How many master’s students do you graduate? How many undergraduates do you graduate? How many students do you progress from one grade to the next grade? And how much external funding do you bring in? So there are a lot of reasons now to graduate Ph.D. students, to do good research, and to bring in external funding.”

Once again, for MTSU, the timing is uncanny because the laying of these new funding formula ground rules has coincided roughly with the laying of the new building’s foundation.

“This building lets us do research on a par with any other research university,” Cheatham says. “Because you have to convince the funding agencies like the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy that your university can do the research. It’s a tough sell right now with our facilities. This will make that better.”

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# RESEARCH FOR **answers**

*continued from page 37*

## **MTSU already has in place some very promising new centers of research.**

One major example is the Tennessee Center for Chinese Botanical Medicine (TCCBM), steered by Dr. Elliot Altman, head of the new Ph.D. program in molecular biosciences, and China native and MTSU research assistant professor Iris Gao. TCCBM enjoys an exclusive partnership with the foremost botanical garden in China to do the sole analyses of thousands of traditional Chinese plant extracts to screen them for anticarcinogenic, antiviral, or antibacterial properties that could lead to the development of advanced Western pharmaceuticals. Success with some Chinese plants might also attract pharmaceutical companies to come to middle Tennessee.

TCCBM is a center that could generate intellectual property at MTSU that will not only benefit sick people but also potentially create a financial windfall for the University. Some pharmaceutical drugs that have been developed in university settings (Lipitor and Prozac are good examples) have generated billions of dollars of return on investment. **MTSU**

Another crucial factor in attracting external funding is the presence of Ph.D. students on campus to carry out the research. The recent creation of three new science Ph.D. tracks at MTSU, then, could not have come at a better time. (The University just graduated its first science Ph.D. students this past spring.)

“These Ph.D.s. give us a lever to bring in outside money that we didn’t have before,” Cheatham explains. “They are great assets to a proposal that you’re making to one of these agencies for a big research project.”

When considered together, these improvements in MTSU’s research capacity—the new Ph.D. programming, an influx of new student and faculty talent, and the construction of a new facility—represent something much more transformative than “progress.”

“This is going to be a real sea change for the University,” Bartel says.

# RELOCATION and retention

Courtney Ross, Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce vice president, says the new science building will “absolutely” go straight into the sales pitches her squad makes to potential expanding and relocating companies eyeing the Nashville market.

“As part of their due diligence on their short list of cities, relocation prospects often want to go and physically see where these students are going to be educated at the undergraduate level before entering the workforce,” Ross says. “If there is a state-of-the-art facility at MTSU, we would take them there as a key asset with our partners in Rutherford County. It’s going to be a huge asset and recruiting tool for our team.”

Ross adds that middle Tennessee’s young adult population is very attractive to companies looking to relocate, “and that all comes back to the 100,000-plus college students we have in the region—the majority being from MTSU,” she says. (MTSU boasts five times more annual graduates

than Vanderbilt, and three times more than Austin Peay. In contrast with places like Vanderbilt, about 70 percent of MTSU students stay in Tennessee after graduation.)

Liza Massey, Nashville Tech Council president and CEO, says her organization’s primary objective right now is improving and growing the science and tech workforce available in the middle Tennessee market.

“Anything academia can do to tie its efforts, spending, and investments to workforce and especially workforce in science, technology, engineering, and math is a positive because the jobs of tomorrow—actually the jobs of today already—are in that area,” Massey says. “If we want to keep Nashville ahead of the curve on this whole economic recovery, we have to do things like this and seek long-term solutions at our universities, high schools, and even middle schools.” **MTSU**



## Ripple Effects

Ideally, this sea change at MTSU may be just the thing to help Tennessee leadership lure some big fish into state waters. Currently, Big Pharma does not have a presence within state borders, this despite the fact that life sciences is one of the fastest growing job segments in the United States, employing more than 1.3 million people (including 26,000 in Tennessee with an average wage of \$69,000). Many state policy makers and business leaders think MTSU's new science facility is just the step needed to address this lack.

"MTSU's new science facility allows the opportunity to benefit from and contribute to technology transfer between university and industry, and this technology transfer should help fuel job creation and grow new revenue streams," says Jim Monsor, senior VP of operations for Franklin-based, publicly traded life sciences company BioMimetic Therapeutics Inc. "We should become more focused on our research institutions for the job-creation potential they hold, and a dedicated facility such as this can help stimulate interest among the appropriate stakeholders."

Altman, who has as much or more experience dealing in tech transfer at a major university as anyone at MTSU, agrees that industry tends to aggregate in areas with academic facilities that can help.

After all, why should a biotech company spend some large sum of money for their own equipment "if they've got a large university nearby that has every piece of equipment they could possibly need," Altman explains. Instead, the company is more likely to seek partnerships with the university.

## The Road Ahead

In a February 2012 speech, Dr. Subra Suresh, director of the National Science Foundation, said, "In today's changing economic landscape, science and technology are the new frontiers of American prosperity. The nation's well-being and global competitiveness depend, more than ever before, on the steady stream of new ideas and the highly skilled science, technology, engineering, and mathematical talent."

Numerous national studies support Suresh's perspective, concluding that investing in science research and education generates higher returns than other government investments. Here in Tennessee, consider what the U.S. government's \$150 million investment in Oak Ridge National Lab has meant for the state's economy through the decades.

For these reasons, state Sen. Jim Tracy, who represents MTSU on Capitol Hill and who chairs the STEM legislative caucus, considers the investment in a new science facility at MTSU money well spent.

"The number-one thing we are here to do in the legislature is create an environment where business and industry can flourish and bring jobs to the area," he says. "This is a public investment in the high-reward realm of science."

Thanks to the work of Tracy, McPhee, and many others (see sidebar titled "Path to Progress"), the new science building stands to become the portal by which MTSU enters this realm—and competes for the rewards—for the first time in decades.

Has it been a long time coming? Definitely. But now, as the University's fetters are being removed, it's just time to get to work. There's a lot of science to be done. [MTSU](#)

*a president with a*

President McPhee, the key advocate for the science building's construction for the last 11 years, adds a national and international perspective to the conversation. The building will enable the University to address needs identified in the America Competes Act by creating additional science graduates to fill high-technology jobs and teach science and math in K-12 schools. During academic year 2009-10, MTSU granted almost 700 degrees in biology, chemistry, and related fields. McPhee estimates that number could increase by 25 percent after the new science building is in operation.

"This will enhance middle Tennessee's regional economy by providing technical entrepreneurs and researchers who launch small businesses through ideas and research; make MTSU and the state more competitive for federal grants and contracts in all areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; and support greater collaboration with the Oak Ridge National Lab through MTSU's new science doctoral programs," he says. "As home to the state's largest undergraduate student population, the new science building is critical to our continuing efforts to provide Tennessee with graduates ready for the 21st-century workforce. As communities like the middle Tennessee area strive for high-tech jobs and try to attract business and industry, particularly in the life sciences area, a facility like this will go a long way for us attracting students." [MTSU](#)





# *the Thais that bind*

**MTSU's alumni outreach efforts take on a decidedly international flavor** by Drew Ruble

Soon after David Schmidt joined MTSU in 2011 as vice provost for international affairs, he started researching places around the globe where MTSU had a high concentration of graduates. His thinking? MTSU should organize events for international alumni worldwide to try to make the University part of their lives again.

Schmidt had heard that MTSU had a significant alumni base in Thailand: graduates who attended MTSU in the '70s, '80s, and '90s through a government-led funding program. He had also heard that members of this large Thai alumni population had in recent years made overtures about reaffiliating and reassociating with the University if only MTSU could help create a stronger presence and support system in their country.

By meeting with MTSU Alumni Relations director Ginger Freeman, Schmidt was able to identify more than 400 MTSU graduates living in Thailand. Among them were scientists and successful business people and even the country's deputy prime minister.

With the help of Kiyoshi Kawahito, a former economics professor at MTSU, Schmidt sent out emails and postcards announcing an event in March 2012 in Thailand where MTSU grads there could reconnect with each other and with the University.

## **A Night to Remember**

Schmidt found a willing ally in President Sidney A. McPhee.

"The president bought into it and agreed to attend, and that was key," Schmidt says. "To say to these people, 'Your president is coming to visit you in Thailand,' is huge. And he was fantastic. He worked the room.

I think—no, I know—he shook the hand of everyone there and gave them an MTSU pin. It was a great event."

Nearly 200 MTSU graduates living in Thailand attended the event.

One highlight was the presence of two professors emeritus who had taught the vast majority of attendees during their years at MTSU.

"We asked for a show of hands, and probably 80 percent affirmed that these two professors had taught them," Schmidt says.

Another highlight was McPhee's request that attendees find a way to travel to the States and attend Homecoming later this year.

"I hope they take us up on the offer," McPhee says. "I hope a group will come back and see how much Murfreesboro and MTSU have changed since they were here decades ago."

## **Taking the Lead**

Schmidt says universities are increasingly seeing the value in forming international alumni chapters.

"It's something many universities haven't done, though they are starting to because international alumni tend to be very successful people," Schmidt says. "There will be donors to come out of this Thailand trip. Strategically, this was a smart move on the University's behalf."

Schmidt adds that now, when it comes time for the sons and daughters and grandkids and neighbors of these alumni to decide where to study in the U.S., they will be more likely to choose MTSU. That's good news for the University. Each year, NAFSA, the world's



*Top Left: Dr. Sidney A. McPhee, MTSU President, with Dr. Nipon Poapongsakorn (1973 alumnus), President of Thailand Development Research Institute Foundation. Top Right: Dr. Sidney A. McPhee, MTSU President, chatting with alumni from 1980s. Bottom Left: Dr. Sidney A. McPhee, MTSU President, with '70s-'80s alumni (from left) Ms. Jarunee Kuhapremkit, Ms. Niyada Panpreecha, Mr. Prasit Seksarn, Dr. Sidney A. McPhee, Mr. Nopadol Sarawasi; (from far right) Dr. Churnrurtai Kanchanachitra, Mr. Padoong Pleanrungsi.*

largest nonprofit professional association dedicated to international education, issues a report on the economic benefits of spending by international students and their dependents. During the 2010–2011 academic year, those groups contributed more than \$120 million in tuition and fees alone to the Tennessee economy. The total net economic impact topped \$150 million. Clearly, enrolling international students makes the University's investment of time and energy on a trip like the one in March more than worthwhile.

"We think this trip will pay us back many times over," Schmidt says.

The potential impact of philanthropy coming from Thailand also makes the trip a great investment. McPhee emphasizes that overseas alums "have a tendency to demonstrate a stronger affiliation to their U.S. alma mater than do domestic graduates."

According to McPhee, engaged international alumni have proven to be invaluable resources when MTSU seeks partnerships, research collaborations, and philanthropy. He noted that the Thailand trip also yielded discussions about future ties between MTSU and Bangkok University. "With the balance of wealth shifting overseas, it will be critical for forward-thinking universities to examine their international outreach efforts and develop new strategies to cultivate new relationships and strengthen existing support," he said.

## The Road Ahead

McPhee stressed that for international alumni outreach to work in Thailand and elsewhere, it cannot be merely a token effort. MTSU

officials, the president said, "will have to demonstrate sincerity. We will have to go back." McPhee said he plans to do just that.

Also key to maintaining momentum in Thailand will be the efforts of certain Thai ambassadors—graduates who really stepped up and helped spread news about the March event—to maintain contact with both Thai graduates and the University.

"We brought them together and helped create a club or chapter, the MTSU Alumni Association of Thailand," Schmidt says. "But running these folks down is labor-intensive. It's a lot of digging and archival work. From this point on, we hope they begin to employ listservs, Facebook pages, or other methods so that we can continue to send them news and notifications about what's happening at MTSU."

With the Thailand trip a success, Schmidt is already looking for the next place for outreach. There are many other spots around the globe ripe for a similar effort. According to Schmidt, there are high concentrations of MTSU graduates in Saudi Arabia (the likely next trip), China, and Japan. He hopes to settle on a continent soon and start making plans for next year's event.

McPhee summed up the purpose of global alumni outreach by pointing out that if alumni around the world are reaching out to MTSU, "then we need to reach back. We need to figure out how they want us in their lives."

There's certainly no better way to do that than to stand before them, look them in the eyes, and ask. [MTSU](http://www.mtsu.edu)



Find Thailand-based MTSU alumni at [www.Facebook.com/ThaiMTSU.ThaiMTSU](http://www.Facebook.com/ThaiMTSU.ThaiMTSU).



# Raiders of Industry

by Mike Browning

So many people dream of a career in sports. Whether as a strength coach, a statistician, or an executive, there's just something appealing about the idea of earning a living working for a sports team.

The M.S. program in sport management in the Department of Health and Human Performance at MTSU is quickly becoming a fast track to employment in the sports industry. Under the leadership of Dr. Colby Jubenville, the program has in recent years distinguished itself as one of the finest places to prepare for a career in professional sports management anywhere in the country.

What makes it different? Jubenville says the program at MTSU is designed to help each student "find his or her voice" within the sport industry. According to Jubenville, "students [here] realize that they must compete on unique experience, unique education, and unique ability; it's not simply a college degree."

There's no better way to prove MTSU's effectiveness in preparing future sports executives than by showcasing the successes of a few recent graduates working in the big leagues of sports management.

**Jon Salge ('10)** is a college scout for the Tennessee Titans, responsible for knowing every major college football program in the Midwest inside and out and, specifically, knowing each of the players in those programs extremely well. Salge has to grade all draft-eligible players and determine whether or not they would be a fit for the Titans. He says his biggest goal is to be a part of Super Bowl championship team. "This [MTSU] program has given me a huge competitive edge in my field (professional sports), and I am confident I'll be using these skills for the rest of my working life," Salge says.

Want to know how to get the best seat in Bridgestone Arena for a Nashville Predators game? Contact MTSU graduate **Paige Ciuffo ('06)**. Ciuffo is the coordinator of premium seats service for the Preds. She takes care of the exclusive inner circles of season ticket holders on the first and second rows of the arena. Ciuffo previously worked as fan relations coordinator and has been with the Predators since graduating from MTSU. "[Dr. Jubenville] makes you dig deep for your goals, and he's always standing next to you to guide you in the right direction," Ciuffo says. "He's a man of many words, but those words are valuable."



Paige Ciuffo



## "Who Doesn't Dream of a Career in Sports?"

Jon Salge



Talladega Superspeedway, one of the most recognizable tracks on the NASCAR Sprint Cup circuit, hired **Tom Patterson ('01)** as director of consumer marketing last year. In his new position, Patterson is responsible for developing consumer marketing strategies and helping the vice president of sales and marketing with strategic business plans. Patterson began his sports career selling group tickets and building sales relationships for the Nashville Predators. During the 2004 NHL lockout, he went to work with the Atlanta Braves as a senior account executive and was eventually promoted to manager of new account sales. Before joining the speedway, Patterson was senior sales manager with the Jacksonville Jaguars of the NFL. [MTSU](http://www.mtsu.edu)

[Editor's Note: For a complete list of graduate successes and to get updates about new hirings and the professional development enjoyed by graduates of MTSU's cutting-edge graduate sports management program, visit [www.drjubenville.com](http://www.drjubenville.com).]

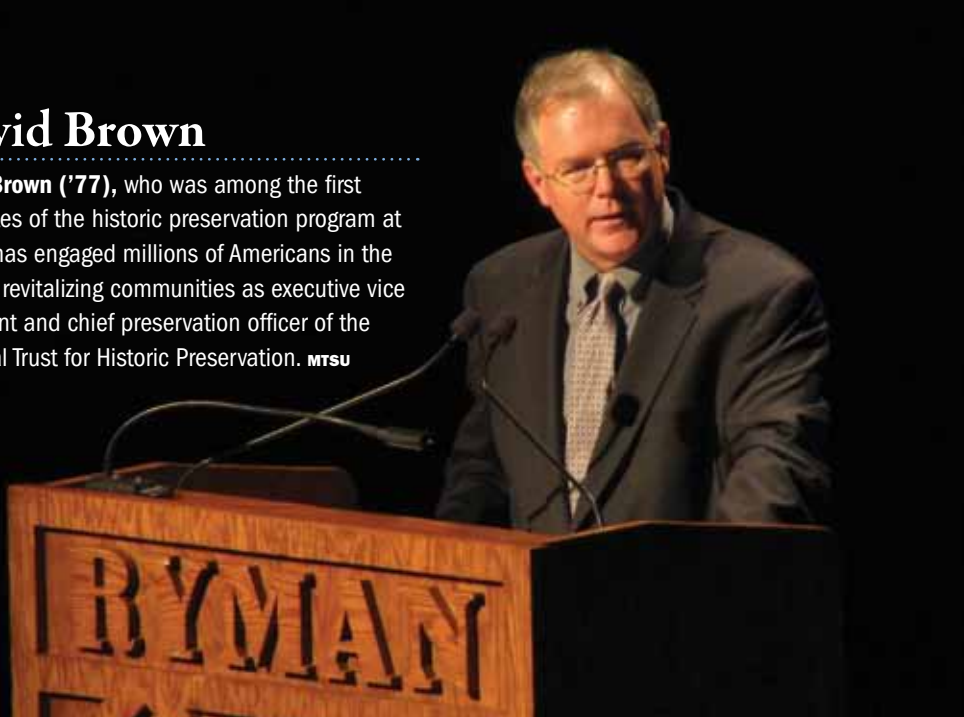


Tom Patterson



## David Brown

**David Brown ('77)**, who was among the first graduates of the historic preservation program at MTSU, has engaged millions of Americans in the work of revitalizing communities as executive vice president and chief preservation officer of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. **MTSU**



## 1960s

**Jim Dedmon ('67)**, Columbia, S.C., received an award from the National District Attorneys Association that was named for him: the first James M. Dedman III award for exemplary career contributions to the prosecution profession. Dedmon is now retired from the association after 26 years of conducting continuing legal education courses. Previously, he was an assistant district attorney general in Memphis.

Leadership Rutherford's 2011 Pinnacle Award winner is WGNS owner and broadcaster **Bart**

**Walker ('68)**. The honor is given to a person who has demonstrated significant leadership throughout his or her career. Walker has owned and operated Murfreesboro's WGNS radio station since 1984. He chaired the Heart of Tennessee Red Cross Chapter during Hurricane Katrina, CrimeStoppers of Rutherford County, and the Tennessee Association of Broadcasters. He previously served on the Rutherford County Chamber's board of directors, the St. Clair Street Senior Center's commission, and as an elder at Murfreesboro's First Presbyterian Church.

He is currently president of the Murfreesboro Rotary Club.

## 1970s

**Fred Adams ('72)**, Readyville, received the 2011 Tennessee Cow Calf Producer of the Year Award from the Tennessee Cattlemen's Association.

**Marsha Goodwin ('72, '75)**, Cleveland, has been inducted into the Greater Chattanooga Sports of Hall of Fame. She is a longtime high school and college volleyball official.

**Jim Drew ('73, '74)**, Springfield, Ill., retired in May 2011 after 28

*continued on page 44*

## Cathy Taylor

**Cathy Taylor ('76)** has been named dean of the Gordon E. Inman College of Health Sciences and Nursing at Belmont University. Dr. Taylor previously served as assistant commissioner for the Tennessee Department of Health's Bureau of Health Services Administration, where she oversaw delivery of public health and primary care services in 89 rural counties and contracted services with Tennessee's six metropolitan health departments. **MTSU**



**Cathy Taylor**



**Michael R. Bryant**

## Michael R. Bryant

The Nashville-based National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA), which regulates the practice of accountancy in the U.S. and administers the Uniform CPA Exam, named **Michael R. Bryant ('79)** senior vice president and CFO. Bryant is also CFO of NASBA's ethics organization, the NASBA Center for the Public Trust. But don't assume from his résumé that Bryant is just a no-fun numbers cruncher. Along with his wife, Sheryl, he is an improvisational comedy performer who uses that experience to teach professional development classes about how to build consensus and improve communication using the principles of improvisational theater. **MTSU**



## Terry “Max” Haston

**Terry “Max” Haston ('79)**, a major general and adjutant general for the Tennessee National Guard, recently discussed leadership traits with MTSU students and staff during a 40-minute keynote address, “Lead or the View Never Changes,” for the first Omicron Delta Kappa Honors Circle True Blue Leadership Day. Gen. Haston’s own leadership on the issue of preventing suicides among National Guard members returning from combat recently garnered him some well-deserved national attention. Supported by Haston and developed in concert with the Jason Foundation and E4 Health, a smartphone app called Guard Your Buddy gives soldiers anytime/anywhere access to critical life resources, including a “Talk Now” button that instantly connects soldiers with qualified clinicians who can provide life services. Suicides in the National Guard have increased by 450 percent since 2004. Haston hopes to spread the app nationwide. [MTSU](#)



## Christina Mitchell

**Christina Mitchell ('95)** is a songplugger for Wrensong/Reynsong Music Publishing, where she was responsible for securing the **Jason Aldean** number-one hit song “The Truth.” An independent music publishing company with offices in Nashville and Minneapolis, Wrensong is owned and operated by Ree Guyer Buchanan. The company, which started in 1983 with only 20 songs, is now home to more than 3,000. Staff writers include Ashley Monroe (of the Pistol Annies), John Wiggins, and Jon Randall. [MTSU](#)

## 1970s, cont.

years of coaching basketball. He was inducted into the Illinois Basketball Coaches Hall of Fame in 2011.

**Allen Henninger ('73, '74)**, Bartlett, retired as an FAA air traffic controller after 32 years of service and now works for Raytheon as lead instructor of air traffic control.

**Terry A. Ethridge ('78)**, Murfreesboro, is director of joint staff for the Tennessee Army and Air National Guard. Col. Ethridge was appointed to the post by **Maj. Gen. Terry “Max” Haston ('79)**.

## 1980s

**Mark Kennedy ('80)**, Signal Mountain, is the content editor of the *Times Free Press* life sections and writes the “Life Stories” column.

**David Middleworth ('80)**, Nashville, is working for Little Champion Music, Martina and John McBride’s Blackbird Studio publishing company.

**Aubrey (Jay) Holloway Jr. ('82)**, Birmingham, Ala., has been nominated for membership in the Claims and Litigation Management Alliance.

**Karla Winfrey ('82)**, Lithonia, Ga., is an independent multimedia

## Lewis Harkness

**Lewis Harkness ('93)** started his broadcast career as an intern at WKRN in Nashville in August 1993. For most of the next 18 years, Harkness served as production supervisor working on newscasts, parades, live music and Tennessee Titans preseason football games. A highlight of his 18 years at WKRN? “I particularly enjoyed working with and giving students their first broadcast jobs,” he says. But after WKRN, Harkness felt he needed a challenge. It presented itself as an opportunity to work at the network level with ESPN in Bristol, Conn. “If I had to sum up my experience at ESPN thus far in one word, I would say ‘surprise,’” Harkness says. “I’m surprised I don’t walk around in awe more than I do; I’m surprised at the number of people who are involved with every broadcast; and I’m surprised at how quickly I was able to start directing *SportsCenter*.” [MTSU](#)





## Bill Herrick

**Bill Herrick ('87, '88, '99)**, a retired MTSU aerospace professor, has invented a new winter sport: “slebogganing,” a cross between sledding and tobogganing. In an effort to make sledding more fun for his grandchildren, Herrick created the sleboggan out of frustration at not being able to get his traditional toboggan to navigate a 2,000-foot run he had created on his New Hampshire property. Herrick found an old surfboard, cut off the tail, attached three steel runners to the bottom, added two handles and was soon steering his standard toboggan the entire length without difficulty. See a video at [www.sleboggan.com](http://www.sleboggan.com). [MTSU](#)

has had a somewhat checkered reputation during its more than 15 years of existence. Those days, however, seem to be in the past. Under the deft leadership of former MTSU political science major **Darin Gordon ('95)**, director of the TennCare Bureau and deputy commissioner of the Department of Finance and Administration, the program has been successful in addressing a problem that the entire health care industry deals with today: containing rising costs while improving quality of care. Gordon says he feels very fortunate for

## Phil Williams

*BusinessTN* magazine, on its list of the “100 Most Powerful People in Tennessee” in 2005, said that when NewsChannel5 investigative reporter **Phil Williams ('85)** walks into Legislative Plaza, “doors slam, lawmakers duck into offices, and emails start circulating throughout the building announcing his arrival. Not another journalist in the state is feared in that way on Capitol Hill.” Williams leads the investigative news team at Nashville’s WTVF-NewsChannel5 that recently received a 2012 Alfred I. duPont-Columbia Award for excellence in local reporting. The CBS affiliate was one of only 14 duPont winners nationwide (including Al Jazeera English, HBO, and the *New York Times*). It marks Williams’s and the station’s third duPont Award—one of the top awards in broadcast journalism—in nine years. [MTSU](#)



professional, Emmy Award-winning journalist, and partner with Black Box: A Winfrey-Giles Production.

**Bettie “Lou” Nave ('85)**, Woodbury, has been named executive director of the Farm Animal Care Coalition of Tennessee (FACCT), an organization devoted to collectively represent the state’s animal agriculture industry with a factual, proactive voice.

**Brent Bush ('87)**, Woodbury, has been named head football coach for Cannon County High School. He retired from the U.S. Army as a lieutenant colonel in 2011, after 22 years of service.

## 1990s

The Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce named MTSU graduate **Shane Reeves ('91)** and his partner Rick Sain, owners of Reeves-Sain Family of Medical Services, as the 2011 Business People of the Year. The two have built Reeves-Sain into a major force in health care and pharmaceutical services since they acquired Reeves-Powell Pharmacy in 1995. The company now has more than 190 employees in many divisions, including 19 pharmacists and clinical staffers who serve major hospitals. It recently opened a retail

operation in Middle Tennessee Medical Center.

**Brian Taylor ('92)**, Nashville, has been named the 2011 Young Leader of the Year by the Young Leaders Council. He is a commercial real estate broker.

**Gail Zlotky ('93, '94)**, Murfreesboro, has been named Tennessee Aviation Person of the Year for her efforts to bring a world-class air traffic control laboratory to MTSU.

It’s no secret that TennCare, Tennessee’s Medicaid managed care program that provides health coverage for 1.2 million low-income children, pregnant women, and disabled individuals,

the time he spent at MTSU. “This university fosters an extraordinary learning environment, and during my time there I was lucky enough to have professors who continuously pushed me to expand my horizons, to challenge myself, and to accept nothing short of my best performance.”

**Robin Newell ('96)**, Murfreesboro, is the principal at Mitchell-Neilson Elementary School.

**Ronald Spears ('97, '01)**, Nashville, has accepted a position as a programmer analyst at the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation.





## Todd Naugle

The list of international blockbuster films with music that have been mixed on equipment built by Rutherford County-based Harrison Consoles is lengthy and impressive. And as has been the standard for over 30 years, Harrison film consoles were used in the production of several of the 2012 Oscar nominated films including two films (*Transformers* and *Moneyball*) nominated in the “Best Achievement in Sound Mixing” category. Television shows such as *The Simpsons* and *CSI* also get their signature sounds from Harrison Consoles. The company’s name is synonymous with premier design, manufacture, and marketing of large-format, professional audio mixing consoles for film, TV, broadcasting, and music recording. And one of its owners is a Blue Raider. Recording Industry graduate **Todd Naugle ('00)** joined Harrison as a programmer in 2000. He later worked as an engineering manager. Today, he is one of three owners of the company. The Business and Economic Research Center at MTSU released a report last year finding that Tennessee exports to other countries were on the rise. Harrison Consoles is one reason why because its products (including home recording software released in 2012) are in demand around the world. [MTSU](#)



## Tyler Warren

**Tyler Warren ('08)**, a graduate of MTSU’s School of Music, has quite a gig for the next year or so. Warren is the drummer for the Queen Extravaganza Tour, crossing North America in 2012. The tour celebrates the music of the classic rock band Queen, which sold more than 300 million albums and recorded 18 number-one singles. A native of Camden, Tenn., Warren has a 15-month contract to play in the tribute tour. He was selected for the job after an 11-week challenge in which judges reviewed online auditions, weighed votes from Queen fans worldwide, and supervised a final in-studio audition in Los Angeles. See more at [www.queenextravaganza.com](http://www.queenextravaganza.com). [MTSU](#)



## Audrey Faires

Ten Ten Music Group hired **Audrey Faires ('09)** as the company’s new catalog manager. A graduate of MTSU’s recording industry program, Faires most recently worked at SAE Recording Institute. A top independent music publisher in Nashville, Ten Ten Management (credited with launching country superstar Alan Jackson’s career) and Ten Ten Music Group (with catalogs from over 35 staff writers) boast over 700 cuts. Staff writers include Tia Sellers (“I Hope You Dance”), Angaleena Presley (of the Pistol Annies), and Rachel Bradshaw (daughter of NFL great Terry Bradshaw and harmony singer on Jerrod Niemann’s “What Do You Want From Me?”). [MTSU](#)

## 1990s, cont.

**Andre Bahou ('99)**, Brentwood, has been appointed to the board of directors of the Tennessee Technology Development Corp. He is vice president and chief intellectual property officer at Prism Technologies.

**Lara Parkes Gaston ('99)**, Edmond, Okla., has been named 2011 March of Dimes Oncology Nurse of the Year. She is a nurse navigator at the Cancer Resource Center at Mercy Health Center in Oklahoma City.

## 2000s

**Tawanda Scales ('00)**, Durham, N.C., is a family counselor for Youth Villages North Carolina. She works with children with emotional, behavioral, and mental health issues and with their families in the their homes in the Durham area.

**Scott Cook ('01)**, Murfreesboro, has earned his Ed.D. from Tennessee State University and is now an associate professor of history at Motlow State Community College.

**Christopher Craig ('01)**, Kingston Springs, is a web designer/developer for Development and Alumni Relations at Vanderbilt University.

**Colin Fly ('02)**, Lexington, Ky., has worked for the Associated Press since graduation. He recently became the AP’s main sports contact for Kentucky.

**Micah Wells ('03)**, Murfreesboro, has joined Strategic Financial Partners as a financial representative.

**Kyle Hooper ('04)**, La Vergne, is maintenance manager at Vi-Jon (formerly Cumberland-Swan) in Smyrna.

## Jeremy Bettle

**Jeremy Bettle ('05)**, who holds a Ph.D. in human performance from MTSU, was named strength and conditioning coach for the NBA's New Jersey Nets just before the 2011–2012 season. There are only 30 such jobs available in the world—a prime reason Bettle left a similar post at the University of California–Santa Barbara, where the men's basketball program (with Bettle on the coaching staff) won two Big West Conference championships and advanced to the NCAA Tournament in consecutive years for the first time in school history. [MTSU](#)



Jeremy Bettle

## Jennifer Pickering and Tommy Hartzog

Two MTSU alumni have collected data in Bangladesh for research on how climate change affects Himalayan rivers and southern Asia delta regions. Geosciences graduates **Jennifer Pickering ('10)** and **Tommy Hartzog ('10)** are using MTSU labs to conduct geochemical analyses of core samples collected during fieldwork in Bangladesh. The project is sponsored by the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Agency for International Development. [MTSU](#)



**Kim Malone ('04)**, of Hermitage, published her first book, *Living Single on Minimum Wage*, as Kay Iscah.

**Adrian Hooper ('07)**, Nashville, has been promoted to software engineer at Active Outdoors in Nashville.

**Zol Hooper ('07)**, Flushing, N.Y., is a client information services data

analyst at Lord, Abbett in Jersey City, N.J.

**Xiaojheng Chang ('08)**, Flushing, N.Y., is working for Bank of China in New York City.

**Rebecca Hurst ('08)**, Knoxville, was named director of distribution for Quality Supply Chain Co-op, part of the Wendy's Company.

**Rachel Simes ('09)**, New Orleans, has accepted a law clerk position for Judge Dee Drell in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Louisiana for the 2012–2013 year.

## 2010s

**Landin King ('10)**, Cookeville, has joined the Andrews Agency public

relations firm in Nashville as an account services representative.

**Amber Williams ('10)**, Westfield, Ind., is a psychology instructor at Ivy Tech Community College.

**Nicole DeCroce ('11)**, Nashville, has launched her own entertainment webcast, called "NickiDtv," covering Nashville lifestyle, music, and entertainment news.



## Jasmine "Jaz" Gray

**Jasmine "Jaz" Gray ('10)**, whose distinguished career at MTSU was highlighted by her wildly successful charitable project "Jaz's Jammies," a drive she led to help collect pajamas for hospitalized children, has become a filmmaker. One of Gray's first ventures *More Than Skin Deep*, a documentary about herself and others who have survived a rare birth defect called arteriovenous malformations (AVM). To watch a clip of the documentary and to donate, visit [www.indiegogo.com/More-Than-Skin-Deep](http://www.indiegogo.com/More-Than-Skin-Deep). Gray, who has had 32 surgeries for AVM, received the MTSU President's Award and made the *USA Today* All-USA College Team while at MTSU. She graduated summa cum laude with her master's in 2011 from Syracuse University. [MTSU](#)



## 2010s, cont. Stephen B. Smith

**Stephen B. Smith ('11)** chairs the board of Haury & Smith Contractors, one of Nashville's oldest development and home-building companies. He received his bachelor's in liberal studies from MTSU last December, but he also studied finance at MTSU in the 1970s and earned three letters on the varsity baseball team. He left college before completing his degree. "It's never too late to go back to school," Smith said on graduation day. Before finally getting his degree, Smith's advances in life were prodigious. A former national finance cochair for Lamar Alexander's presidential campaign and finance chair for former Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist's leadership political action committee, Smith has also served on numerous business and civic boards and was honored by the Tennessee Board of Regents with the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Philanthropy in 2008. Smith led the effort to raise \$5 million to build the University's new baseball facility, Reese Smith Jr. Field, named after his father. Smith also currently serves on the executive committee of MTSU's Centennial Campaign. [MTSU](#)



(from left to right) Bill Frist, Elizabeth McPhee, Stephen B. Smith and Dr. Sidney A. McPhee

### In Memoriam

#### 1930s

**Bonnie Jones Smith ('32)**  
Asheville, N.C., Sept. 29, 2011

#### 1940s

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

**Harry Clark Jr. ('49)**  
Nashville, Oct. 29, 2011

**John Cunningham Sr. ('42)**  
Ivy, Va., Oct. 21, 2011

**Mary Folger ('49)**  
Columbia, Sept. 5, 2011

**Virginia Ralston Hall ('47)**  
Murfreesboro, Dec. 23, 2011

**Dalah Jones ('46)**  
Manchester, Oct. 17, 2011

**Nile McCrary ('49)**  
Murfreesboro, Feb. 15, 2012

**Howard McPeake ('48)**  
Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.,  
Dec. 29, 2011

**Evelyn Mitchell ('41)**  
La Vergne, Oct. 21, 2011

**Ruby Snell Pitard ('43)** Daytona  
Beach, Fla., Nov. 7, 2011

**Kathryn Rich ('43)** Nashville,  
Oct. 3, 2011

**Marie Hogan Wynne ('40)**  
Tuscaloosa, Ala., Nov. 23, 2011

#### 1950s

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

**William Bell Jr. ('57)** Lebanon,  
Jan. 30, 2012

**Winston Bennett ('57)** San  
Antonio, Tex., Apr. 22, 2011

**Robert E. "Bob" Blankenship  
('58, '62)** Murfreesboro, Dec.  
30, 2011

**Mary Frances Brandon ('50, '58)**  
Smyrna, Sept. 25, 2011

**Robert E. Brown ('51)** Lake  
Toxaway, N.C., Oct. 18, 2011

**Paul Reed Conder ('50)** Benton,  
Ky., Feb. 19, 2012

**Betty Dejarnatt ('50)** Fayetteville,  
Feb. 5, 2011

**Medina Dye ('59)** Hixson, Tex.,  
Oct. 31, 2011

**Richard Gleaves Jr. ('55)**  
Murfreesboro, Nov. 13, 2011

**Delbert Goodman ('53)**  
Murfreesboro, Feb. 15, 2012

**Edgar Griswold Jr. ('55)**  
McMinnville, Sept. 28, 2011

**Irma Harlan ('53)** Columbia,  
Dec. 29, 2011

**James Holley ('53, '61)** Pulaski,  
Nov. 27, 2011

**Emalou Huddleston ('52)**  
Tulahoma, Sept. 17, 2011

**George Kemmer ('50)** Crossville,  
July 3, 2011

**Mabel McDole ('56)** Westmore-  
land, Sept. 11, 2011

**William Perrigan ('50)** Jackson,  
Oct. 8, 2011

**Kenneth Shipp ('50)** Murfrees-  
boro, Mar. 5, 2012

**Martha Phillips Swafford ('59)**  
Knoxville, June 29, 2011

#### 1960s

**Robert Beaty ('61)** Cleveland,  
Sept. 18, 2011

**Thomas S. Brown Jr. ('69, '72)**  
Murfreesboro, Nov. 17, 2011

**James Cantrell ('65)** Murfrees-  
boro, Oct. 28, 2011

**Mildred Debusk ('66)** Nashville,  
Feb. 27, 2012

**Morris Hickman ('63)** Nashville,  
Jan. 29, 2012

**Ray Hogan ('64)** Murfreesboro,  
Jan. 23, 2012

**Samuel Hull ('66)** Oak Ridge,  
Feb. 13, 2012

**James T. Jones ('64)** Tullahoma,  
May 31, 2011

**Jane Kelly ('68)** Lawrenceburg,  
Apr. 6, 2011

**Leanell McDonald ('60)**  
Mansfield, Tex., Dec. 14, 2011

**William Nelms ('65)** Murfreesboro,  
Jan. 17, 2012

**Carl Oldham ('63)** Dauphin Island,  
Ala., Oct. 1, 2011

**Carolyn Lee Boatright Reeves  
('63, '72, '91)** Murfreesboro, Nov.  
5, 2011

**Gerald Shuttters ('61)** Ringgold,  
Ga., Nov. 24, 2011



### Dr. Melvin G. Scarlett

**Dr. Melvin G. Scarlett** of Murfreesboro, who served MTSU as president from 1969 until 1978, died April 16 at age 91. Scarlett was the driving force behind the creation of the University Honors and recording industry programs, as well as the communications department. He also traveled with architects to tour facilities throughout the nation before construction of Murphy Center, the state-of-the-art multi-purpose athletic facility that remains a campus showpiece. Scarlett gave students a greater voice in campus governance and, through thoughtful communi-

cation, avoided the unrest plaguing many other universities during the turbulent 1960s and early '70s. [MTSU](#)

**Henry Siemers III ('63)** Marshall-town, Iowa, Nov. 4, 2011

**Katherine Wallace ('65)** Nashville, Oct. 20, 2011

**Johnny Williams ('69)** Antioch, Sept. 18, 2011

## 1970s

**Michael Bateman ('73)** Burns, Dec. 2, 2011.

**William Bennett ('73, '75)** Atlanta, Ga., Oct. 11, 2011

**Jo Ann Connor ('72)** Franklin, Dec. 12, 2011

**Mary Dees ('76)** Murfreesboro, Nov. 18, 2011

**Alexander Domal ('71)** Tullahoma, Nov. 18, 2011

**Carol Dunning ('74)** McKnight, Pa., Oct. 28, 2011

**Richard E. Easterly Sr. ('79)** Knoxville, Aug. 22, 2011

**Gary Grooms ('77)** La Vergne, Nov. 13, 2011

**Evelyn Driskell Hearn ('75)** Murfreesboro, Dec. 20, 2011

**Robert Heller ('71)** Green Cove Springs, Fla., Sept. 24, 2011

**Teresa Miller Johnson ('75)** Hendersonville, Oct. 12, 2011

**Larry Ledford ('74)** Cleveland, Dec. 5, 2011

**Stacey Darrohn Lester ('79, '86)** Manchester, May 14, 2011

**Paul Luna ('78)** Nashville, Jan. 9, 2012

**George McDonald ('71)** Shelbyville, Apr. 26, 2011

**Dennis Rainier ('70, '72)** Murfreesboro, Dec. 26, 2011

**Pamela Shepard ('74)** Readyville, Nov. 29, 2011

**George Traver ('70)** Knoxville, Nov. 25, 2011

**Terry Vinson ('76)** South Pittsburg, Sept. 18, 2011

**David Walden ('71)** Murfreesboro, Oct. 27, 2011

**Rosaland Worrell ('72, '73)** Pleasant Lake, Ind., Feb. 2, 2012

## 1980s

**James Avaritt Jr. ('81)** Murfreesboro, Oct. 12, 2011

**William Cook ('85)** Columbia, Feb. 22, 2012

**Mary Durham ('80)** Signal Mountain, Sept. 30, 2011

**Robert Foster ('85)** Franklin, Jan. 2, 2012

**Scott Hicks ('86)** Nashville, Dec. 8, 2011

**Rebecca Hood Jackson ('84)** Franklin, Mar. 5, 2012

**James Loftin ('88)** Columbia, Sept. 27, 2011

**Michael Love ('83)** Columbia, Oct. 19, 2011

**Clyde Martin ('81)** Savannah, Ga., Oct. 1, 2011

**Earl Phillips ('80)** Wellington, Ala., July 7, 2011

**Lillian Pinkerton ('85)** Christiana, Oct. 5, 2011

**Marsha Sluga ('85)** Sarasota, Fla., Feb. 15, 2012

**Joseph Waggoner ('84)** Hendersonville, Jan. 28, 2012

**Christine Williams ('88)** Franklin, Sept. 16, 2011

**James Earl Wise Jr. ('85)** Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., Nov. 6, 2011

## 1990s

**Mantia Callender ('99)** Wilder, Idaho, Nov. 22, 2011

**Marguerite Chitwood ('90)** Nashville, Feb. 15, 2012

**John Crotty ('99)** Winter Haven, Fla., Feb. 1, 2012

**Lonnie Farris ('99)** Murfreesboro, Oct. 7, 2011

**Jerry Kelton ('92)** Murfreesboro, Jan. 17, 2012

**Linda Kennedy ('92, '94)** Murfreesboro, Jan. 26, 2012

**Jack Lowery ('94)** La Vergne, Oct. 29, 2011

**Beth A. Parsley ('92)** Old Hickory, Aug. 29, 2011

**Thomas Phillips ('97)** Nashville, July 29, 2011

**William "Bill" Ross III ('98)** Calhoun, Ga., Jan. 27, 2012

## 2000s

**Ross Huettig ('06)** Louisville, Ky., Sept. 14, 2011

**Cheryl Serra ('09)** Bethpage, Sept. 17, 2011

**Michael Sullivan ('00)** Franklin, Apr. 2, 2011

**Amy Branson Trevino ('06)** Nashville, Oct. 28, 2011

**Teresa Trybalski ('00)** Columbia, Feb. 9, 2012

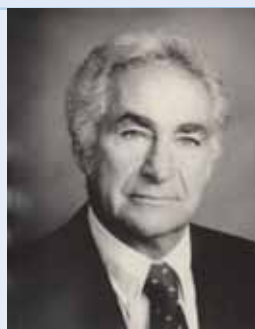
**James M. Warren ('06)** Murfreesboro, Jan. 22, 2012

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



## Robert C. LaLance Jr.

**Robert C. LaLance Jr. ('74)**, the longest-serving vice president in MTSU's history, died Jan. 6, 2012 at age 72. LaLance had been ill with Lou Gehrig's disease since 2010. He was vice president for student affairs in service to four different MTSU presidents from 1975 to 1998. MTSU annually presents the Robert C. LaLance Jr. Achievement Award to a student who has shown "remarkable determination, has had to make sacrifices, and is contributing to the community during work toward a degree." [MTSU](#)



## Angelo "Vic" Varallo

**Angelo "Vic" Varallo ('50)**, age 89, died Nov. 25, 2011. Varallo, elected MTSU's Most Popular Senior in 1952, was captain of the football team and also excelled in basketball. He was inducted into MTSU's Hall of Fame in 1983. He began his career at East High School in Nashville, teaching physical education and co-op programs in distributive education. Two state championship teams in track highlighted Coach Varallo's career at East. After leaving East High in 1974, Coach Varallo taught at Pearl, Hillsboro,

Dupont, Hunters Lane, and Overton high schools before retiring in the early '90s. Also a business owner, a championship water skier (with seven national ski jump titles and a speed skiing title—89 mph—on his resume), and a longtime basketball official, Varallo was elected to an at-large seat on the Metropolitan Council (Nashville-Davidson County) in 1991 and served two terms. [MTSU](#)





# You Do *What?*

by Jennifer Stone

## Her Days in the Sun

**I**N CITIES AND TOWNS BIG AND SMALL, ALL ACROSS America, local meteorologists are celebrities. That's true even in Hollywood, the land of stars, where one MTSU graduate is making her mark.

Jackie Johnson, an immensely popular meteorologist at KCBS-TV in Los Angeles, often appears on both the red carpet and celebrity blogs in Hollywood. But several steps led Johnson there, including a time at MTSU that she credits with helping her get where she is today.

Johnson's fascination with weather started when she was very

**I was terrible. It made me want to practice and get better.**

young. Growing up in Michigan, severe storms, tornadoes, and snow made her want to know how the weather works. She won an elementary school contest

when she built a weather station in her backyard. She says it was just a natural step to meteorology from there.

Her passion for weather led her first to the University of South Alabama, where she honed her skills for predicting storms in the meteorology program's hurricane center. But it was her lack of on-air proficiency that made MTSU the next step on her career path. While interning at WKRG in Mobile, Johnson got her chance to go on air and deliver a weathercast.

"I was terrible," she says. "It made me want to practice and get better."

There is arguably no better place to hone one's on-air skills than MTSU's nationally recognized College of Mass Communication.

"There were amazing classes being taught by experienced professors in the business," Johnson says. "And [there was the] college news station on top of it all."

Less than a month after starting classes, she was a reporter for the on-campus station and soon moved to working as the weathercaster. A professor later helped her get an internship at WKRN-TV in Nashville. She credits those experiences with helping her land in her first job, in Tallahassee, after graduation.

"I never could have survived that first job without the journalism classes I had at MTSU," she says.

Johnson was the weekend weathercaster and a weekday reporter for a mere six months in Tallahassee before offers started rolling in from larger markets, including Nashville and Miami. Johnson calls herself "very lucky" to be able to move to such big media markets so quickly—she spent only a year in Miami before getting offers from New York and Los Angeles.

These days, the "Jackie Johnson Factor," a phrase coined by celebrity blog TMZ, follows Johnson wherever she goes. She

even had a brush with Hollywood controversy recently, when fellow meteorologist Kyle Hunter filed a lawsuit against KCBS, alleging that the station practiced discrimination by hiring young, pretty women instead of him. But Johnson takes it all in stride. She says her MTSU professors prepared her well for the rough-and-tumble media business. She

**Johnson calls herself very lucky to be able to move to such big media markets so quickly.**

stays focused as her fame keeps growing—she's hosted local fashion and auto shows, done field reporting for the Lakers and the Dodgers, and made guest appearances on sports radio and television and in movies.

Johnson says attending MTSU—a place she says many in California haven't heard of—was the best decision she ever made. "I'm so proud of my time at MTSU. I got all the education and real-world experience I needed to be as successful as possible."

On the red carpet, an actor often takes big steps toward the next career phase. Johnson's red carpet stretches all the way from Hollywood back to MTSU, and her future steps seem certain to lead to an even brighter career. **MTSU**

Ava Lorraine Hicks

## BABY RAIDERS

**Addison Ruth Lodes**, born Feb. 1, 2012, to **Lance ('94)** and **Laura Lodes** of Edmond, Okla.

**Cordy Renee and Piper Vondell Fortner**, born Mar. 27, 2011 to **Corey ('97)** and **Robbie Fortner** of Greenbrier.

**Walter Dylan Kussman**, born Dec. 4, 2011, to **Dylan and Amy C. Kussman ('99)** of Chattanooga.

**Rylan Edward Bernhardt**, born Mar. 14, 2011, to **Nathan and Tiffany Melton Bernhardt ('00)** of Olive Branch, Miss.

**Clara Victoria Frances Sutherland**, born July 24, 2011, to **Pete and Melissa Figart Sutherland ('00)** of Virginia Beach, Va.

**Jackson Thomas Tolbert**, born Oct. 10, 2011, to **Ryan ('01)** and **Margaret Gammon Tolbert ('04)** of Antioch.

**Evan Andrew Grimes**, born on June 11, 2011, to **Andrew ('02)** and **Kelly Mains Grimes ('02)** of Raleigh, N.C.

**Maggie Carter Harmon**, born Oct. 17, 2011, to **Jonathan ('03, '04)** and **Cynthia Waldron Harmon ('09)** of Smyrna.

**Cooper Grant Hice**, born March 1, 2012, to **Joshua Grant Hice ('03)** and **Laura Baltz Hice ('06)** of Tullahoma. Grandparents are **Steve Hice ('76)** and **Kathy Grant Hice ('77)** of Tullahoma; **Louis J. Baltz III** and **Lesla Murphy Baltz ('82)** of Tullahoma. Uncle is **Richard Jordan Hice ('09)** of Tullahoma.

**Hannah Elaine Belk**, born Dec. 23, 2010, to **Jesse and Kristen Belk ('04)** of Friendsville.



Maggie Carter Harmon



Cooper Grant Hice

**Evelyn James**, born May 10, 2011, to **Steven ('04)** and **Grace Venable James ('02)** of Murfreesboro.

**Grayson James Samsel**, born Dec. 17, 2011, to **Wes and Amanda Newman Samsel ('04, '06)** of Murfreesboro.

**Ella Clare Campbell**, born Feb. 10, 2012, to **Jon ('05)** and **Melissa Campbell ('05)** of Memphis.

**Kendall Elise Lawson**, born Dec. 9, 2011, to **Wesley and Marsha Lawson ('05)** of Knoxville.

**Jackson Kiyomi Newsom**, born Oct. 10, 2011, to **Jesse Raye ('05)** and **Natalie Stone Newsom ('05)** of Jacksonville, N.C.

**Layla Marlene Cartwright**, born Feb. 21, 2011, to **Charlie and Michele Cole Cartwright ('06)** of Smyrna.

**Kellen Hunter Foster**, born Aug. 2, 2011, to **AJ and Jennifer Denice Foster ('06)** of Smyrna.

**Sophia Rose Smith**, born Jan. 5, 2012, to **Joshua ('06)** and **Stephanie Smith** of Nashville.

**Ava Lorraine Hicks**, born Apr. 19, 2011, to **Lee and Kelly Dewey Hicks ('07)** of Bradyville.

**Benjamin Harris**, born Jan. 12, 2012, to **David ('06)** and **Melissa Beene Harris ('10)** of Nashville.

**Lee Andrew Daily**, born Aug. 8, 2011, to **Aaron Jefferson Daily** and **Brianna Danielle King ('10)** of Smyrna.

Jackson Kiyomi Newsom



Layla Marlene Cartwright



Cordy Renee and Piper Vondell Fortner



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