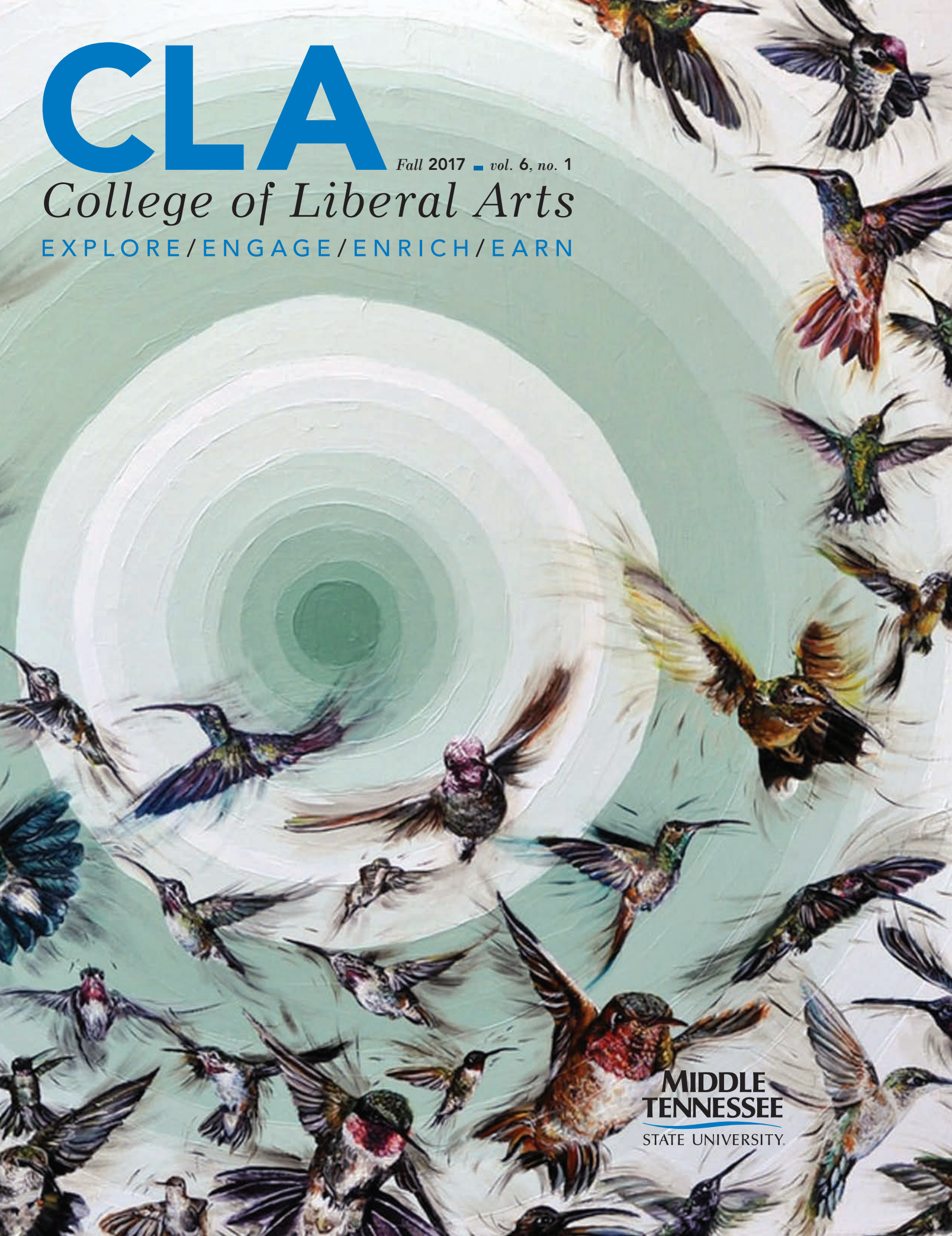


# CLA

Fall 2017 ■ vol. 6, no. 1

*College of Liberal Arts*

EXPLORE/ENGAGE/ENRICH/EARN



**MIDDLE  
TENNESSEE**  
STATE UNIVERSITY.



# CLA

College of Liberal Arts

EXPLORE/ENGAGE/ENRICH/EARN

Middle Tennessee State University  
mtsu.edu/liberalarts

Fall 2017 ■ vol. 6, no. 1

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**Cover image:** *Discombobulated*, acrylic on board, 36x36

**Framed artwork:** oil, resin, collage on board and bronze frames, in collaboration with Jarrod Houghton

At left (top to bottom):  
*Green Throated Hummingbird*, 11x9  
*Purple Throated Hummingbird*, 6x5

*Red Throated #3 Hummingbird*, 11x9  
*Purple Throated Hummingbird*, 6x5  
*Red & Green Throated Hummingbird*, 11x9

Upper Right:  
*Red Throated #2 Hummingbird*, 11x9



# Dean's Letter

**EXPLORE**  
YOUR WORLD  
*shape the future*

**ENGAGE**  
YOUR MIND  
*solve real-world problems*

**ENRICH**  
YOUR LIFE  
*showcase your skills*

**EARN**  
A LIVING  
*succeed with liberal arts*



## It's all about the story.

During the 2014–15 academic year, a team of faculty and staff crafted a strategic plan to guide us as we navigate the difficult environment facing higher education in general and the liberal arts in particular. One of the key themes that emerged from the process was the critical need to “tell our story.” While you and I appreciate and understand the value of our liberal arts education, it is clear that many people do not. From parents to politicians, the perception that a liberal arts degree is “worthless” is widespread and driving students away from the core disciplines that have always been the foundation of higher education.

What you will see woven throughout this issue of the magazine is our story. Working with faculty and staff, we created a clear, concise vision of what a liberal arts education does for students. In liberal arts, you will *Explore Your World*, *Engage Your Mind*, *Enrich Your Life*, and, ultimately, *Earn a Living*. Once we had a concept, we partnered with Creative and Visual Services to turn the concept into reality, hence the four-color scheme. I would like to thank CVS for working so effectively with us. In particular, Darrell Callis Burks ('00, Graphic Design), a graduate of the College of Liberal Arts, has been the creative force behind our efforts.

As you read about the exciting artistic and intellectual endeavors of our students and faculty throughout this issue, please consider ways you can partner with us to support the great work happening in the college. You can host CLA students as interns, speak to classes about your professional experiences, and give directly to the programs that interest you (*see page 37*). We hope you enjoy the reorganization of the magazine around our “story” and ask you to continue to share your experiences with friends, family, and community leaders. As always, we welcome your feedback and suggestions about the magazine and your involvement as an alum. You can contact us at [cla@mtsu.edu](mailto:cla@mtsu.edu) with comments or to arrange a visit. ■

Karen Petersen, Interim Dean  
[Karen.Petersen@mtsu.edu](mailto:Karen.Petersen@mtsu.edu)

[mtsu.edu/liberalarts](http://mtsu.edu/liberalarts)

## New Chapters

**Welcome to department chairs:** Nicole Foran, Department of Art and Design; Kevin Leonard, History; Michael Federici, Political Science and International Relations; and David Carleton as interim chair of our newest department, Global Studies and Human Geography

**Many thanks:** To Michael Baggarly (Art) and Susan Myers-Shirk (History) for service as interim chairs and Steve Morris for a productive tenure as Political Science and International Relations chair

**Position added:** An internship coordinator, Ella Weaver, to bolster our existing offerings and coordinate placements

**New majors:** Africana Studies directed by Louis Woods (History), Dance directed by Marsha Barsky, and Religious Studies co-directed by Jenna Gray-Hildenbrand and Rebekka King (*see page 16*)

**Joining our board:** Kristin Demos ('01, Sociology), whose expertise in fundraising, marketing, and community relations will be an asset to our Friends of Liberal Arts Board (*see page 36*)



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French concentration

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**EXPLORE/ENGAGE/ENRICH/EARN**



## *Coordinator's* Note

*Times They Are a Changin'*—the 1964 song written and performed by Bob Dylan—very easily could have been written about Middle Tennessee State University and the College of Liberal Arts for 2017. Our landscape is receiving a beautiful update along Middle Tennessee Boulevard, while we also are looking at some much-needed updating of our building. Not only are there changes in our outward appearances, but we also have developed a new branding and mission for our college. We will look at engaging, exploring, enriching, and earning as our guide to our faculty, staff, and students. This summer some of our students had the opportunity to travel the world with faculty to read and learn about the world around them, as well as to engage in the lives of those living around the world. The classroom is no longer relegated to a building, but the world is now the classroom for our students to go beyond the walls to experience life and learning.

While we embrace change, new ideas, and new people, we never forget our retirees. We encourage you to contact us and visit campus for any event. You were all intricate parts of building the College of Liberal Arts, and we will always give you the credit. As you will see in our magazine, we lost four members of our family—Dorethe “Dot” Tucker, Reza Ordaubadian, James Huhta, and Clyde Willis—we will miss you. ■

Connie Huddleston, Coordinator

[Connie.Huddleston@mtsu.edu](mailto:Connie.Huddleston@mtsu.edu)



# Giving BACK

## George and Charlotte Gardners' generous giving has taken many forms over the years

Charlotte Gardner has loved music her entire life. She sang and played trombone, piano, and organ, even played at church. When it came time to go to college, her family and friends just assumed that she would pursue music. But, to their surprise when she came to MTSU sight-unseen on the reputation of the music program in 1954, she went a different direction.

At that time, all of the freshmen gathered in the "Old Main" auditorium.

Choosing your program consisted of the University president calling out the names of all of the departments, with each department head walking out and any student interested in that discipline to follow. English came before Music and when Richard Peck, the head of the English Department, got up and started out, Charlotte says, "He was so good-looking that I just followed him. English had always been my best subject, but people thought I ought to do music.

But I didn't want to, so I just followed Dr. Peck right out. He used to say that English majors were 'something strange and wonderful.' He was my advisor all the way through graduation."

In 1955, she played Lady Capulet in an MTSU production of *Romeo and Juliet*, where she ended up meeting her future husband. The KOM auditorium (even then, it was 44 years old) needed new lighting, and George Gardner—a Navy veteran—had been an electrician and was recruited to install the new lights. They needed an actor to play Lord Montague and asked him to read for the part—as Charlotte says, "He was always there when you needed him."

George, always one to make a joke, used to tell everybody that he preferred their minor roles to major ones because "we had more time backstage."

George had originally attended UT—what they jokingly refer to as "George's socializing years"—and was asked not to come back, but found a second chance at Middle Tennessee



State College (as MTSU was known 1943–65). When Dean N.C. Beasley enrolled George for a probationary period, he buckled down and took school seriously for the first time, graduating with a degree in Business. George's career with State Farm took the young family to Knoxville, Hendersonville, and Memphis. After he was promoted to director in 1973, they moved back to Murfreesboro and settled for good.

Once they returned, the Gardners became involved with the MTSU choral program. They decided they wanted to give back. They gave back with their time, opening their home to host events, working to raise funds, even planning two of the Choral Society's European tours, and creating scholarships through their monetary giving. The impact of their giving has been multi-generational. Charlotte said she received a note from a scholarship student recalling her parents performing at the Gardners' home.

"Those without a liberal arts education, or some real push in the liberal arts, miss half of their education and their whole personal development," she said during a recent interview in her Murfreesboro home. "It makes you understand so many other things."

Charlotte also has supported a study abroad scholarship in the Department of Theatre and Dance and a general scholarship in the College of Liberal Arts assisting internship opportunities for students interested in local government.

"Charlotte has given to so many areas at MTSU," said Meredith Kerr, director of development for the College of Liberal Arts.

"When you're just getting started, we couldn't do a thing," Charlotte said of giving. George told her, "The University has done so much for me, I wish I could give something back." And they came up with the Chair of Insurance, the first completely-funded chair that the University created, not at least in part funded by the state of Tennessee. George worked with then-MTSU president Sam Ingram to raise the money and interest. Once they had established the Chair of Insurance, there was a push to create a Chair of Finance.

After George retired, the Gardners set up retirement accounts so that the money they took out could be donated to the University for scholarships for freshman Vocal Performance majors. One year he said to Charlotte, "Would you like to establish a scholarship?"

By that time Charlotte, a one-time teacher, had become deeply involved with the Choral Society and knew that was where she wanted to help. "She was so instrumental early on in supporting the choral society and the MTSU Foundation," said Raphael Bundage, professor and Middle Tennessee Choral Society director. "We will be forever grateful."

"Some of our voice majors have gone on to sing in the Berlin Opera and in the New York Met Opera, and numerous students are in higher education," Bundage added. "Many of them were helped out by Charlotte and George."

Charlotte lost her husband three years ago. Their son Carl died this spring after a five-year battle with cancer. "It's been a hard three years," she said. "But things are looking up." Still looking to give more, she plans to endow a scholarship in the Jones College of Business in son Carl's name.

Next year, she may endow another in Computer Science in the name of son Phil, who lives in Florida. Charlotte says that everyone in their family has benefitted from MTSU, so they are thrilled to give back: "It's a wonderful feeling. And the more that you get involved, the more you want to do—just as much as you can." ■



## Gardner Endowed Scholarships



George and Charlotte Gardner Leadership Performance Scholarship (general scholarship for all students)



Charlotte Gardner Freshman Vocal Performance Scholarship in the School of Music



George Gardner Outstanding Senior in Insurance Scholarship Endowment in the Jennings A. Jones College of Business

*Top image: Charlotte and George Gardner visit campus during June 1989 to create a scholarship*

*Bottom image: Foundation Heritage Society and Signal Society members George and Charlotte Gardner, 2004*



# HILLS OF JE TO C

## College of Liberal Arts offers students the chance to explore their world

By Cheyenne Plott

A 2015 MTSU graduate with a double-major in  
Foreign Language (Spanish) and Organizational Communication

Out of the blue, I received an email: “Congratulations! You have been awarded the Merit Scholarship covering full tuition for the M.A. in Nonprofit Management and Leadership at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.”

My heart was practically beating out of my chest as I read the email over and over. The Hebrew University is one of the most prestigious universities in Israel. I had not only been admitted into this master’s program but was now staring at the opportunity to attend on a full-ride scholarship.

I took a deep breath and glanced out the fourth-floor window of Kirksey Old Main, where I had dutifully completed scholarship hours for my studies at MTSU over the past four years. Watching the students below as they strolled to class made me reflect on my first months at MTSU and wonder how I had reached a point of endless opportunities—which, unbeknownst to me in that moment, would take me from the hills of Tennessee to the Judean hills of Jerusalem and then on to Capitol Hill.

When I graduated high school, I had no clear idea of what I wanted to do, so I spent my first two years “taste-testing” different fields of study. After two years of trial and error, I

decided on dual degrees from the College of Liberal Arts—a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Foreign Language with a Spanish concentration and a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Organizational Communication. This combination of majors from the College of Liberal Arts cultivated many useful skills in me, including leadership, creative thinking, problem-solving, communication, and a global perspective.

One of the most salient aspects of my liberal arts education, which helped to foster these skills, was my decision to study abroad. In Summer 2013, I participated in the first-ever MTSU trip to Israel with now CLA Interim Dean Karen Petersen and University Provost Mark Byrnes.

An interdisciplinary course on political science, religion, and history, this trip was my first time out of the country. We traveled around the tiny nation of Israel for 10 days, riding on buses, boats, and camels. We learned thousands of years’ worth of history; the nuances of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam; and the crucial context for current events in the Middle East. Observing the geographic lay of the land gave me greater understanding of both biblical and current events. This life-changing trip was the catalyst for exploring opportunities to study in Israel.

**“On public transportation, I would see  
Jews and Muslims sitting side-by-side.”**





# RUSALEM APITOL HILL

## Living in Israel Engaged My Mind

There I sat, eyes glued to the computer screen, re-reading the email yet again. The opportunity to live in Israel for an entire year and earn a master's degree in Nonprofit Management was right before me. And now I didn't even have to worry about tuition. It may as well have been served to me on a silver platter.

So off I went to Israel.

The experience of studying and living abroad added to the person I am and stretched me in many ways. It built gratitude and greater appreciation for my home country. It created a new appreciation in me for other cultures and nations. It laid a foundation for being able to connect with people of diverse backgrounds. It engaged my mind in ways I never thought were possible.

Each day brought a new challenge and required my best mental effort. For three days out of the week, I went to Hebrew class, which was comingled among my Nonprofit Management courses. I lived and attended school on Mt. Scopus, a mountain on the eastern side of Jerusalem. On my walk to class, I could see the entire city of Jerusalem, including the Temple Mount with its





shiny golden Dome of the Rock. Once I made it to class, I could look off the opposite side of Mt. Scopus and see the dusty neighborhoods of the West Bank. On a clear day, I could gaze into the east and see all the way to Jordan.

Despite the “wow” factor of living in this magnificent, ancient city, I still had to go about normal life such as running errands. I visited the grocery store nearby or, if I felt like bracing the crowds, I went to the outdoor marketplace, called the shuk. I often stopped for some fresh fruit juice or iced coffee with ice cream from the Israeli fast-food chain Aroma. Occasionally, I had to visit the post office, where, like many public places in Israel, your bags had to be searched before going in. Better safe than sorry.

I interned at a non-governmental organization (NGO) in downtown Jerusalem one day each week. On these days, I experienced what it's like to be an Israeli citizen: the morning commute on the packed light rail, the lunch breaks of shwarma and falafel, and the odd sensation of working on a Sunday (considered the first day of the week in Israel).

On one such day, I was traveling on the light rail train to downtown Jerusalem, and the train door closed on the skirt of an Orthodox Jewish woman. A handful of people on the train, including an Arab man and an Orthodox Christian priest rushed to help the woman yank her skirt out from the door and called the light rail driver to halt the train. The woman was free in a short time, and all her helpers went on their respective ways. In this one instance I gleaned a global perspective that I never would have received by watching the news at home in America.

One thing each week was certain—Shabbat. From sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday, public transportation does not run, and most restaurants and businesses are closed on Shabbat. The whole nation of Israel observes the Jewish day of Sabbath, although some cities such as Tel Aviv are less strict about what closes. In Jerusalem, however, Shabbat is an obvious break in routine and a great time to rest or meet up with a new group of people for dinner. Participating in this cultural phenomenon rejuvenated my mind and gave me new ideas about how to incorporate rest into my American lifestyle.

Every couple of weeks, I tried to take a weekend trip to a different part of the country. Tel Aviv was only an hour-long bus ride away. The Dead Sea was about the same distance in the opposite direction. I also had the opportunity to spend a few weekends near the Sea of Galilee and in the Negev Desert.

My global perspective expanded through daily life in Israel as well as in the classroom. Israel truly is a diverse, open, and modern society. Members of Jewish communities from all over the world immigrate to Israel (this immigration is called aliyah). Mix that with the Arab population and other international visitors (such as myself), and the result is daily exposure to different languages, religions, attires, and customs. The Muslim call to prayer frequently wafted through the classroom windows during





class, and on public transportation I would see Jews and Muslims sitting side-by-side, staring at their smartphones with equal concentration. I was able to easily navigate these daily encounters because I learned how to communicate effectively with people of various backgrounds in my Spanish language studies and courses in interpersonal communication at MTSU.

The communication, leadership, and global perspective I gained from my studies in MTSU's College of Liberal Arts aided me not only in my studies at Hebrew University but in my daily life in Jerusalem.

## Applying My Liberal Arts Skills in D.C.

As sad as it was leaving Jerusalem, the United States was in the throes of a presidential election, and I knew that I was returning to a key moment in America's history. In Fall 2016, one week before the election, I accepted an internship with the Heritage Foundation, a nonprofit think tank in Washington, D.C. Little did I know that I was going to be positioned to spend the "First 100 Days" of a historic presidency in our nation's capital. (Whether you view Trump's presidency as a positive or a negative, we can certainly conclude that it was as historic as it was surprising).

For me, living in D.C. was a stark contrast to living in Jerusalem. For example, each day in Jerusalem, I made sure to stay alert and keep an eye out for terrorist activities as I navigated the city. In D.C., however, my daily concern was often outfit-related, like making sure the newly-acquired run in my hose was not visible. It's fascinating how, when there are potential threats to our lives, we are more apt to see with clarity what is truly important.

Despite such a difference, I adapted to the fast pace of D.C. Through the internship, I gained real work experience and heard from conservative policy experts, as well as various government officials including Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas.

Most importantly, I was able to apply my liberal arts education in the development (fundraising) department of the nonprofit. All of the skills I had cultivated back in my College of Liberal Arts days— communication, creative thinking, problem-solving,

leadership, and a global perspective—were put to use immediately. Some of my projects required creative thinking, while others needed problem-solving. Solid communication was important at all times, whether speaking on the phone with a donor, drafting a quick email to a colleague, or framing a question for a policy expert.

Leadership also came into play in many ways. Leadership is not always being in charge of a group of people; sometimes it can be in the small things, such as taking initiative, coming up with new ideas, and being proactive and resourceful in your position instead of waiting for direction for every little task.

Liberal arts education effectively instills and encourages students to blend disciplines. Based on my own experiences, I've noticed that there are often many elements to a job, and in this internship, many of the fields I am interested in were combined: nonprofit operations, American history, and current events in Israel.

This internship engaged my mind constantly. I learned how to function in a high-energy, news-driven environment that was much different from the slower pace I was accustomed to. Everything that I gleaned from my education in the College of Liberal Arts proved invaluable with this experience and provided a solid foundation for me to continue to grow and develop these transferable skills further. This internship also launched me into my new job in another conservative nonprofit. I'm grateful that my liberal arts education gave me the skills and foundation needed to engage in meaningful work. ■

**“As sad as it was leaving Jerusalem . . . I knew that I was returning to a key moment in America's history.”**



By Gina K. Logue

# RESEARCH IN RUSSIA

## History professor gets NEH grant to study "Siberian Seven" standoff from Cold War era

Emily Baran, an assistant professor of History in the College of Liberal Arts, is investigating the "Siberian Seven," a group of Pentecostal Christians who sought refuge in the basement of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow in 1978 to avoid persecution by the Soviet regime.

Baran's two-month stay in Russia was funded by a \$6,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. She had already scoured newspapers and other publications in this country, including the papers of the Rev. Billy Graham, and used the trip to visit the State Archive of the Russian Federation.

"It's a challenge for . . . historians to get themselves over to the archives where they need to do their research, and this kind of funding is just absolutely essential to doing significant work on topics in the Soviet Union," Baran said.

In June 1978, eight members of two Siberian families who practiced the Pentecostal faith made a mad dash for the American Embassy in Moscow in a last-ditch effort to gain religious freedom. Soviet guards tackled, beat, and sent one of the protesters back to Siberia. The other seven made it into the building.

This put both countries in a no-win situation. The United States couldn't get the Pentecostals out of the USSR without exit visas, which the Soviets largely refused to grant until the final years of the Soviet Union's existence.

For the Soviets, the standoff brought increasing world attention to their continuing crackdown on the practice of any religion, especially Christianity. While religious organizations could seek registration with the government, the restrictions accompanying registration were tantamount to banning religion altogether.



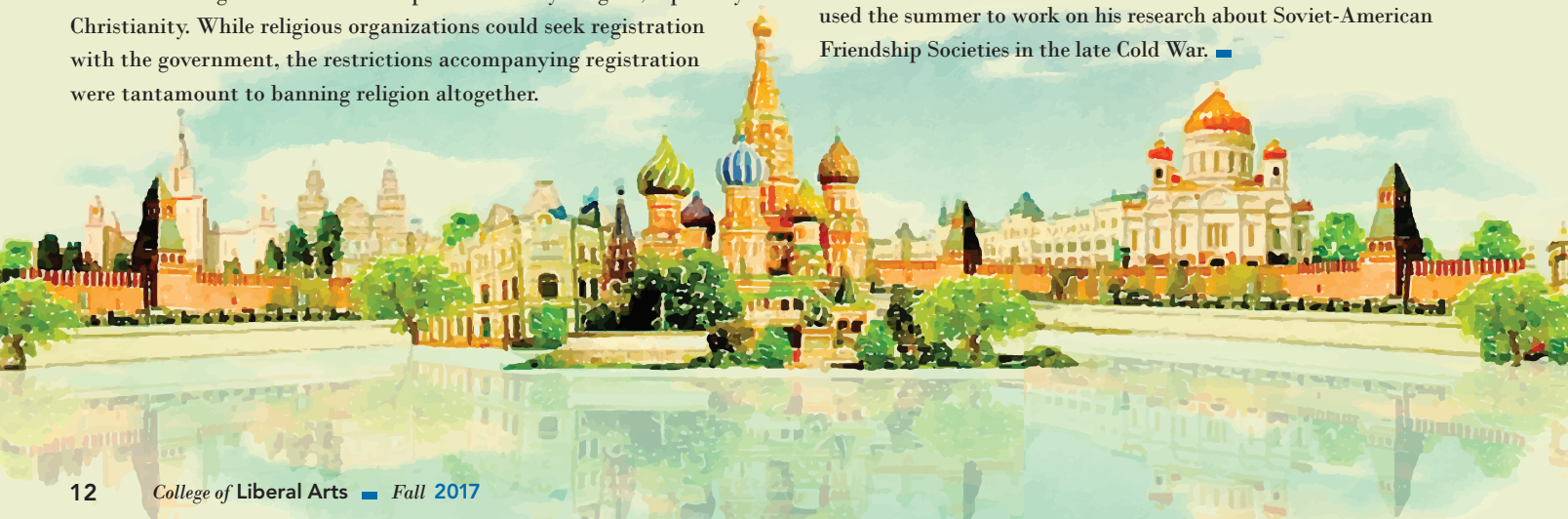
"You couldn't hold religious services in public," Baran said. "They had to be in a designated house of prayer. You couldn't perform charity work. You couldn't proselytize. You couldn't hold special youth group or children's activities."

In Russia, Baran focused on files from the Council on Religious Affairs, the state institution charged with monitoring religious life. "You really get a keen sense from these materials of how frustrating it must have been for religious believers to have to navigate the official bureaucracy. Of course, all of these materials only show the state's version of events. Luckily, my previous research in other archives in the United States has provided a wealth of documents from the perspective of believers," she said.

While the implications for world and religious history are important to Baran, she said it's equally important for her to ensure those who endured the ordeal are paramount in her work.

"I think their story is just so compelling on a human level that I want to be able to tell it in a way that doesn't lose that, that retains a very personal dimension," she said.

Baran's areas of expertise include the Soviet Union, the post-Soviet world, religious history, human rights, and church-state relations. She was joined on her trip by husband, Michael Paulauskas (both pictured above), who is also a full-time lecturer in the MTSU History Department. He is also a historian of Soviet-American relations and used the summer to work on his research about Soviet-American Friendship Societies in the late Cold War. ■





By Gina K. Logue

# Congress *to* Campus

Former congressional members Ronald A. Sarasin, a Republican from Connecticut, and Glenn Nye, a Democrat from Virginia, visited classes Feb. 27–28 for MTSU’s first Congress to Campus event.

The Congress to Campus program, a creation of the United States Association of Former Members of Congress, enlists former U.S. representatives and senators to donate their time to help improve civic literacy and participation through candid conversations with college students. Sarasin and Nye addressed students in classes such as American Public Policy, American Government and Politics, Public History, Tennessee History, and United States History. The Albert Gore Research Center, Department of Political Science and International Relations, and the American Democracy Project for Civic Learning joined with the College of Liberal Arts to sponsor the event at MTSU.

Sarasin is president and chief executive officer of the U.S. Capitol Historical Society, a nonprofit, nonpartisan educational resource chartered by Congress. He served Connecticut’s 5th Congressional District from 1973 to 1979.

“It’s a lot more partisan and divided than when I served there,” Sarasin said of the current Congress, adding that strong conservative Democrats from the South and moderate-to-liberal Republicans from the Northeast balanced each other out and often found common ground during his tenure in the House.

“The Congress to Campus program’s message of bipartisanship has never been more important,” said Kent Syler, an MTSU assistant professor of Political Science. “At a time when American politics is so polarized, it’s good to be able to show students that Democrats and Republicans can work together.”

Nye is a director at Datacoup, a personal data marketplace company, and an adviser at FiscalNote, a technology company that builds government relations management software. He represented Virginia’s 2nd Congressional District from 2009 to 2011. “Part of our goal is to dispel misconceptions and clarify for the audience how things work in real practice,” Nye said.

He said the two key drivers of the sharp partisanship in American politics are gerrymandering, which he said enables politicians to pick the voters instead of voters selecting politicians, and changes in the way the public obtains news.

“The Congress to Campus program allowed the students to gain a better understanding of the political process and the experience of governing our nation,” said Mary S. Hoffschwelle, a History professor and director of the MT Engage student success initiative. “The insights about the value of building relationships and finding common ground across party lines resonated with the students’ concerns and aspirations.” ■

**“At a time when American politics is so polarized, it’s good to be able to show students that Democrats and Republicans can work together.”**

—Kent Syler





## A harmonious partnership between MTSU's School of Music and the Recording Industry Department gives students world-class experiences

World-renowned composers and musicians could record anywhere. Some of them, however, have discovered a gem right here at MTSU with enthusiastic, committed, forward-thinking School of Music and Recording Industry Department students and faculty.

These students take direction and interact with the likes of composer Nigel Clarke, who travels from his home in Belgium to record here, most recently in February. They perform and record with greats like master trumpet player Jens Lindemann, who has played in every major concert venue in the world and teaches at UCLA. And MTSU's Wind Ensemble has two full CDs—performed and recorded by faculty and students—that are distributed through Naxos, the largest worldwide classical recording label.

These high-level interactions are, dare we say, almost commonplace. "It's just what we do here," said Reed Thomas, director of bands and professor of Music and Conducting at MTSU.

Thomas conducts the Wind Ensemble and University Chamber Winds and teaches undergraduate courses in conducting and instrumental methods, as well as graduate courses in conducting and wind and orchestral repertoire. He has been a guest conductor throughout the United States, South Korea, China, Brazil, Panama, Columbia, Costa Rica, Russia, and several European countries.

The world-class opportunities to engage students come about through diligent networking. "That's a huge part of my job," said Thomas, who nurtures contacts with composers, conductors, and musicians at three or more conferences every year.

In 2010, Thomas happened to meet Clarke, whose critically acclaimed compositions are played all over the world.

"By a fluke, we ended up sitting next to each other and Reed invited me to MTSU," Clarke said. Since then, he has recorded here several times with the Wind Ensemble and Recording Industry master's candidates.

"I have visited Middle Tennessee State University countless times and each project in its own way has been more complicated than the previous," Clarke wrote in March on his website, [nigel-clarke.com](http://nigel-clarke.com).

"On my most recent visit with Belgian cornet virtuoso Harmen Vanhoorne, you all rose to the challenge once again!"

Clarke, who has recorded at the famous Abbey Road Studios in London and with many other big names, loves MTSU and has served as visiting composer to its bands for several years now.

"What's really remarkable is that I've not seen anything to that scale ever within a university," Clarke said. From the technology to the teaching expertise and the committed students, the esteemed composer couldn't be more pleased.

Thomas has commissioned over 50 pieces since he's been at MTSU for himself or as part of a consortium (a group including other universities). Composers routinely send Thomas their works to play, and he points to three stacks of scores on his shelf: one pile is done, another hasn't been looked at yet, and the third pile is new arrivals—some of which are from Germany, Italy, Portugal, and more.

"We have the composer sitting on the stage telling players what he or she meant and how they'd like them to interpret this," Thomas said. "And they love the students."

Perfectly  
in  
Tune

By Vicky Travis



Said trumpet virtuoso Lindemann: "Reed has helped to create a culture here where the enthusiasm level of everyone from students to graduate conductors to recording engineers has sparked true camaraderie. It is very inspiring to be around such energy."

## A Win-Win

Collaboration with the MTSU College of Media and Entertainment's Recording Industry Department opened another area of opportunity starting in about 2007, after Michael Fleming had joined the Recording Industry faculty.

Fleming, also an orchestral violinist, connected with Thomas to allow his master's students to record classical ensembles. Then, it became a win-win as Thomas' Music students could learn session work, which is very different from concert performing.

The ongoing, massive project resulted in years of material, churning out audio engineers and musicians who are ultimately more employable.

"There are only a handful of engineers who routinely record larger ensembles," Fleming said. "I guarantee a professional is impressed if you say you've already done that."

That material, again through diligent networking, landed in the hands of industry giant Naxos. But the contract wasn't an easy thing to get, despite having the Naxos U.S. headquarters based just down the road in Franklin. It took three years before Naxos leaders even listened to MTSU's recordings. Once they heard the quality from this school in their backyard, it was on.

"MTSU may be operating 'under the radar,' but that may also very well be its greatest strength," Lindemann said. "The beauty of MTSU is that when you do see what's going on, you realize that you have discovered an enclave that couples a world-class recording program with passionate teachers and students."

The Wind Ensemble, led by Thomas, has two full CDs available on Naxos Records that were recorded here at MTSU with Fleming's Recording industry students. *Angels in the Architecture* was released in 2011, and the second one—featuring Clarke's "Earthrise"—came out in 2014. "We are the only school that has two full CDs with them," Thomas said.

"It's a unique opportunity that no one else has," he added. "In the Southeast, very few schools have what we are able to do, at the level we are able to do it. Belmont can't touch us." Thomas says that confidently, citing the sheer number of strong instrumentalists, size of the recording stage, and state-of-the-art equipment.

"The cool thing is that there is a positive trend toward collaboration in production, to breaking down barriers, demonstrating that high-quality performance and experience depends on content creators, engineers, producers, managers, and not just one niche," Fleming said. "You can't pull off a great event without engagement and collaboration with three or four departments making it happen."

## Passing the Baton

"Reed is forward-looking and wants to share experiences with students," Clarke said. "He's a very generous musician."

In fall 2016, composer David Maslanka, whom Thomas dubs "the Pavarotti of wind band composers," flew in from Montana and donated a week here to give master classes and record four pieces over three nights. Thomas provided the band, audio engineer, and recording space.

"He really is as big as they get in my world," Thomas said of Maslanka.

Rubén Darío Gómez, who earned his Master of Music in May with a specialization in conducting, had the opportunity to conduct.

"That experience was life-changing," Gomez said. "It was a very trusting experience from Dr. Thomas, an absolutely amazing opportunity that led us to work closer with the composer because we were responsible for this piece."

"Some programs don't give this amount of podium time. He [Thomas] tries this constantly. I can't conceive of a conducting program that doesn't do that, especially at this level."

Students like Gomez can now call this world-class composer a colleague. "We could discover his very, very human side and saw how his soul is in his music," Gomez said of Maslanka. "For everyone who had contact with him, it was terrific."

Armed with his MTSU master's, Gomez will begin his doctoral studies at the University of Nebraska, having earned a full-ride scholarship.

"This is very professionally organized and obvious that the student experience comes first and foremost," UCLA's Lindemann said.

And incoming students notice. "That's part of recruitment," Thomas said. "We can show who we've worked with in the last five years. We've had more incoming freshmen apply than ever before, so it's very strong. The whole School of Music is getting better."

The more than 280 students in the School of Music come from all over the United States and beyond. That's a change from when Thomas started here in 2003. The school boasts a retention rate of over 90 percent in part because the school requires an audition.

"There are many people who do a lot of talking when it comes to arts advocacy and education, and then there are a few like Reed who follow it up with action," Lindemann said. "This is the greatest gift that he brings to the students, and I hope they realize that before leaving. If they don't now, they will later!" ■

**"It's a unique opportunity  
that no one else has. . . .  
Belmont can't touch us."**

—Reed Thomas

# Divine Inspiration

## MTSU introduces a new major in Religious Studies

By Gina K. Logue

To explore one of society's oldest institutions in all its many incarnations with refreshing, exciting results is something any academic institution would want to achieve.

Beginning with the Fall 2017 semester, MTSU's Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies is embarking on that adventure by beginning a Religious Studies major, the first of its kind for a public university in the region.

"Middle Tennessee is becoming increasingly religiously diverse, and in growing this program, MTSU is showing that we are on the cutting edge, preparing our students for the workforce today," said Rebekka King, an assistant professor who specializes in Christianity, religious anthropology, and method and theory.

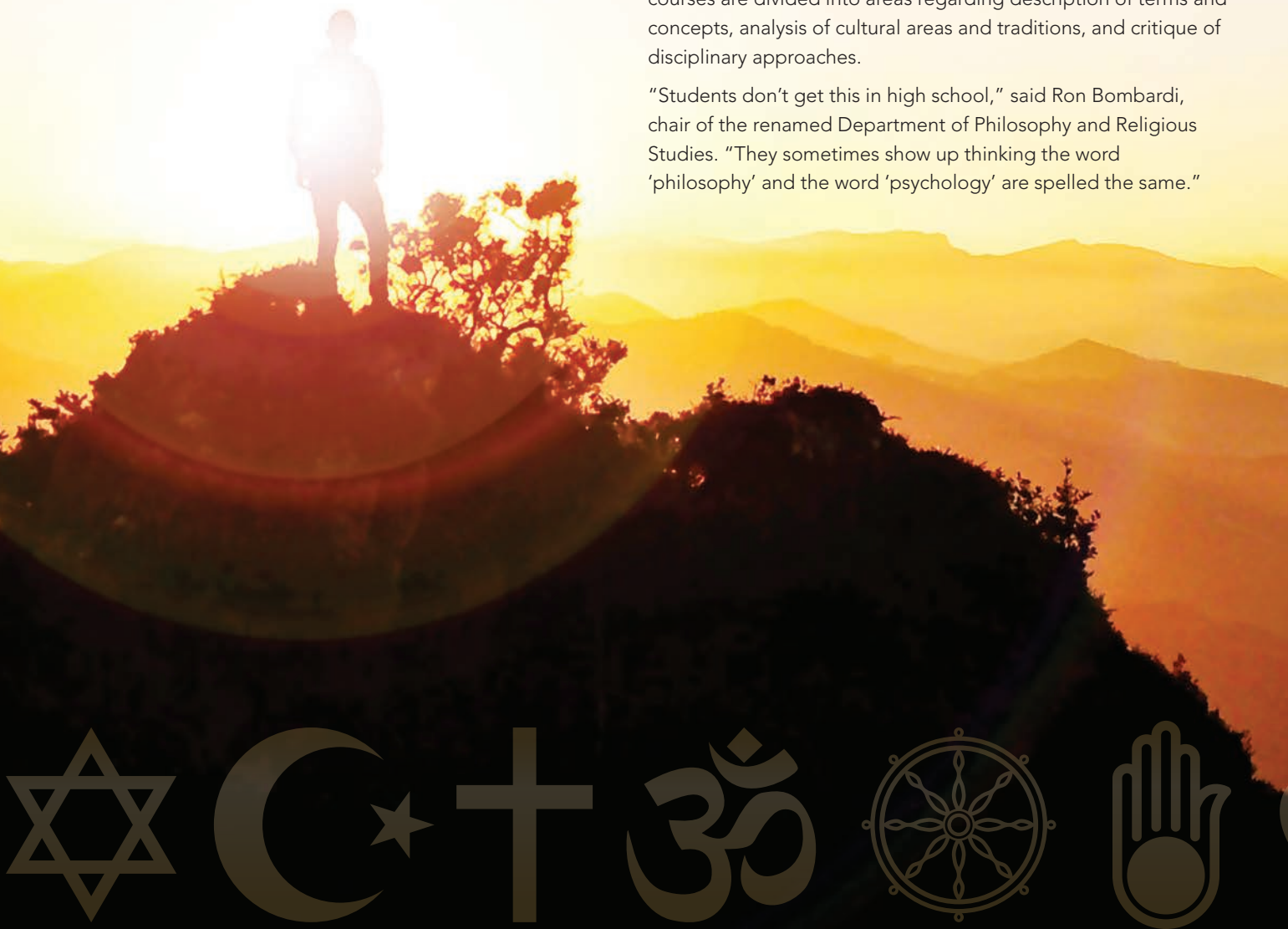
Building on the popularity of the department's Religious Studies minor, the program offers both Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degrees.

While MTSU does not have a divinity school, a number of Religious Studies minors who went on to perform religious work say they have found their courses to have been helpful. However, the level of diversity involved in these courses promises to serve students well regardless of their future careers.

Imagine, for example, that a nurse encounters a patient who refuses to accept a blood transfusion on religious grounds. Or a teacher finds that some of her Muslim students refuse food during Ramadan. A more holistic understanding of religions proves to be beneficial in all kinds of professions, not just the clergy. Education is the first step toward tolerance and understanding.

The requirements include 30 semester credit hours of Religious Studies classes, a minor or second major for both degrees, and a foreign language competency for the B.A. degree. Mandatory courses are divided into areas regarding description of terms and concepts, analysis of cultural areas and traditions, and critique of disciplinary approaches.

"Students don't get this in high school," said Ron Bombardi, chair of the renamed Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies. "They sometimes show up thinking the word 'philosophy' and the word 'psychology' are spelled the same."





In light of that fact, the Religious Studies faculty recruits students with a conscious effort to explain the critical difference between an academic approach to the study of religion and the instruction students may have received in their own houses of worship.

"They're not going to be converted away from or into a different tradition, because we're not dealing with those questions," said King, who taught seminary for a year at Emory University's Candler School of Theology in Atlanta while performing her post-doctoral work and teaches MTSU's Jesus of Nazareth course.

"Those ontological questions about the relationship between humans and the divine and how to live a moral, ethical life according to religious tradition are answered by theology and, in some cases, philosophy," King added.

"But we're social scientists. So we are answering these questions more . . . by looking at what people do with the answers to those questions rather than actually offering our own answers."

The antiquated approach of teaching comparative religion at the college level had centered around the so-called "big five"—Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism. By contrast, the MTSU program is inclusive of Eastern and Western traditions, indigenous traditions, and other religious movements.

"We want to look at the role of religion and the ways that it both informs and influences individual behavior and relationship to society," said Jenna Gray-Hildenbrand, an assistant professor who focuses on religion and the law.

That involves far more than just classroom lectures and discussion. Experiential learning is essential, especially in Gray-Hildenbrand's Religion and Society course.

"We take students out into the community to different religious sites where they conduct an analysis of a religious service," she said.

Among the locations students have visited are the Islamic Center of Murfreesboro, a Church of Scientology, St. Elizabeth Christian Orthodox Church, a Mormon Church, and the Padmasambhava Buddhist Center of Tennessee.

In addition to experiential learning, Religious Studies majors will benefit from small class sizes, extensive mentoring, and a sense of community with both professors and fellow students.

"There's just a great dynamic in that classroom because they've had to get out of their comfort zone and apply what they've learned outside the walls of MTSU," Gray-Hildenbrand said.

The Religious Studies Association, an official MTSU student organization, promotes guest speakers, seminars, and other activities. Communication on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram fosters that sense of community even more, and the sense of community, in turn, promotes retention and graduation. In fact, Bombardi feels that the major will be a tremendous recruiting tool in years to come.

"We're building this as we sit on the cutting edge of dramatic change in world culture," Bombardi said. ■

**"We're social scientists. So we are answering these questions more . . . by looking at what people do with the answers to those questions rather than actually offering our own answers."**

—Rebekka King



# THE MAGIC PLAY

Halena Kays, an assistant professor of directing in MTSU's Department of Theatre and Dance, acted as director for *The Magic Play*. Kays directed the first installment of the Rolling World Premiere of *The Magic Play* at Chicago's Goodman Theatre last fall, then returned for its mounting at Olney Theatre in Maryland this past spring.

Part magic show, part love story, *The Magic Play* is described as an evening of theater unlike any other—fusing the technical precision and improvisational crowd-work of a professional illusionist with the emotional and narrative arc of a master dramatist.

Kays brought along MTSU Theatre students Courtney Coppa and Skylar Grieco, who worked as assistant directors for *The Magic Play* at the Goodman Theatre and the Olney Theatre Center, respectively. ■



## Guest Playwright Performs, Shares Career Insights



A group of MTSU liberal arts students got a firsthand look—and perhaps a glimpse at a future career path—when award-winning playwright John Morogiello recently visited campus for a special guest artist performance.

The College of Liberal Arts' Department of English and the Virginia Peck Trust Fund sponsored the free public event April 11 in the Tom H. Jackson Building. Morogiello performed select scenes from several of his plays, with assistance from MTSU senior Theatre major Delaney Keith.

English professor Claudia Barnett said she usually hosts performances with theater professionals like this to give students an alternative look if they choose to continue their journey on the road to acting or producing plays.

"I often try to bring in someone who is different from me in terms of how we write, how we approach writing," Barnett said. "I love John's work. It's extremely clever."

Barnett, who teaches courses in playwriting, said holding events like this may spark interest in the many students who are thinking about writing and producing plays. ■





## HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE

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## A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

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Tucker Theatre



## Fall Dance Concert

November 30–December 2, 2017  
Tucker Theatre



## *The Taste of Sunrise*

March 1–4, 2018  
Tucker Theatre



## JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT

April 5–8, 2018  
Tucker Theatre



## Spring Dance Concert

April 19–21, 2018  
Tucker Theatre

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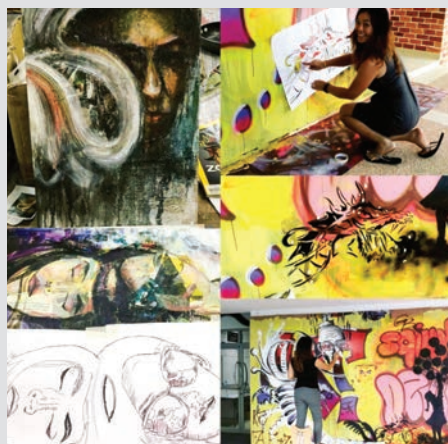
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## Sisavanh Phouthavong-Houghton is an associate professor of Art, teaching advanced level painting courses. She recently took a sabbatical to teach in Thailand.

### Tell us about your trip to Thailand.

The first two weeks in February, I was in Phuket (pronounced Poo-KET), Thailand. Dale Meier, a visual arts teacher and MTSU alum, invited me to visit Phuket International Academy as an artist/teacher in residence. I engaged with the students in a mural, demonstrated various painting techniques, was involved with on-going critiques, assisted in the classroom, and had a mini solo show of my collages on paper at the library. I toured downtown Phuket, where I visited local artists in their studio spaces. I connected with local businesses who were interested in bringing the arts to Phuket. Phuket is booming and supports muralists, graphic designers, photographers, painters, animators, and art educators. There is definitely opportunity for our alums to make an artistic impact in Southeast Asia. I also visited Ani Academy, a painting/drawing school on the island of Ko Yao Noi, run by Rodney O'Dell Davis. The rigorous curriculum is based off of artist Anthony J. Waichulis. Anybody from all over the world may submit their work, and if they are accepted, they spend 3½ years being classically trained. Students are only required to pay for housing and food.

The third week of February, I traveled to Northeast Thailand to Nong Khai, a historical site where over 17,000 Laotian refugees fled the revolution and the repercussions of the Communist group, Pathet Lao, after the Vietnam War. My memories of Nong Khai were through the eyes of a 4-year-old. As a child survivor of the Vietnam War, my understanding and comprehension of the hardship and experiences that my family and many other families have gone through cannot be put into words. As a visual learner, I needed to physically visit that specific environment.

The fourth week of February I spent in Bangkok visiting Chulalongkorn University, where I met with Sukumarl Leksawat, ceramic professor, and Krasin Inswang, printmaking professor. I connected and critiqued with some of the senior painters and ceramic students in their studio spaces. We discussed their artist residency program and curriculum. I visited Bangkok Art and Culture Centers, MOCA of Bangkok, National Gallery, Queens' Gallery, and Chakchuchak, a huge open market where you will find local artists working and selling their work on the spot.

### How did this trip impact you as an educator?

Working with our MTSU alum, Dale, was an amazing experience for both of us. I am still in contact with him and some of his students. The learning environment at the private school allowed me to see the pros and cons of private versus public schools. Their core mission statement is to create a warm, caring learning community that offers an all-round education with social emotional learning

and mindfulness. We meditated and sat in silence for about 10 minutes every morning. After visiting the Ani Academy classically trained art school, I was able to see that work ethic is still the core of education.

Visiting Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok was a great experience to see the similarities and differences in their program in comparison to ours in the States. Being able to sit in on a critique and hear similar conversations I would have with my own students was uplifting—a lot of commonalities in the approach and curricula. I also found out they have a year-long artist residency program for ceramic artists, which would be a great opportunity for our alums or faculty.

### Tell us about the personal side of reconnecting with a place your family had experienced as war refugees.

As a researcher in Nong Khai, I was able to truly immerse myself in the foreign land where I spent two years of my life as a child before we left for the U.S. I spent the week asking random strangers what their connection was to the refugee camp. I came to Nong Khai knowing that the refugee camp is no longer in existence. It is now a huge police/military headquarters, all fenced off from the public because the government is ashamed of the events that transpired in the refugee camps.

Most local people are not interested in sharing their experiences about the camp. The people who visited the Nong Khai refugee camps were builders, family members, lovers, salesmen/women, and partygoers. Being the youngest of seven, I have no memories of the camp, so I allowed myself to reflect, listen, and converse with the locals about their experiences with the refugees. Apparently, it was the place to visit. It sounds nice, but the facilities were horrible, people were starving, and overall, the quality of life was grim.

I ended the trip with over 20 interviews and a load of photos for future work. I am currently making an 18-foot-by-6-foot painting for Nashville Arts in the Airport which will be installed in February. I also have been invited to participate in a three-person show at Lauren Rogers Museum of Art in Mississippi starting in January.

### Your latest exhibit, *Legacies of War*, was recently featured at Tinney Contemporary art gallery. What went into making this series?

I met Channapha Khamvongsa, founder of the *Legacies of War*, at the Lao Writers Summit in San Diego in May 2016. The organization's mission is to advocate and educate for the removal of UXO (unexploded ordinance). About five years ago I started to make small works based on drawings of the victims of the bombings in Laos. However, it was not what I expected, so as an artist, I laid the idea to rest until I met Channapha and a great number of Laotian professionals. I was truly inspired by their stories, challenges, and the similarities we had as a group. Not only were we Laotian professionals in all fields, but we were passionate about

a cause that helped our own people even though most of us were born there but not raised there. This became a Laotian diaspora, where many Laotians were scattered mainly in France and North America. Even though I was in Laos for only two years, I realized I will always be connected to my birthplace because I am Laotian.

Channapha's speech was motivating, and her drive to make Laos a safer place is no doubt sincere. I find myself more of an advocate than an activist. I support and promote the cause. I am not trying to bring about a political change but am engaged in a humanitarian act of kindness. There has been some political struggle in Laos to get rid of the bombs, because some political figures do not want to relive that horrible historical event. Some would rather forget it and forge on, even though 20,000 people have been injured or killed from UXO explosions and 50 percent of them have been kids.

### **As a war refugee yourself, has the current political climate informed your artwork?**

My work has always been a little political and about social change or awareness. It is important for me to contribute as an artist, but more importantly to have a conversation about what is going on

in the world—to not be ignorant, but open to all ideas whether one agrees or disagrees. This work does explore the challenges of being a refugee and an immigrant, no doubt via the gestures, movement, hard and soft edges, imagery, and traditional Laotian colors. The feeling of displacement and the confusion of traditional Laotian roles and expectation as a woman was all a lot for a kid who grew up as the youngest with four brothers and a sister. As I got older, I came to terms with my struggle with my Laotian roots and tried to understand, respect, and accept the culture.

Even if you do not know anything about art, my hope for the audience was to get hit in the face with bright colors, chaos, movement, confusion—become discombobulated in the fractal landscape because that is how my family and all refugees and immigrants feel when they move to a country where they don't speak the language, know the terrain or even the culture. Most step into darkness hoping to find their footing and a path that will lead their kids to safety, hope, and opportunities they could not provide them in their native war-torn country. Nothing different from what is going on in Syria's Civil War: similar conflicts, refugee crisis, violence, abuse, death, and destruction. ■







sisavanhphouthavong

Follow

sisavanhphouthavong Great News! These four pieces will be going to a permanent collection in the new American Embassy building in Paramaribo, Suriname (smallest country in South America) Collaborated with awesome And talented Jarrod Houghton! Thank you Sarah and Susan Tinney ! <http://tinneycontemporary.com> #resin #artinembassies #oilpainting #bronze #hummingbird #victorian #collage

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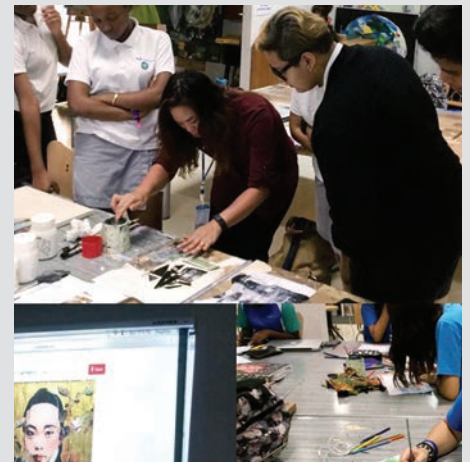
mikegenostudio Nice!

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# A PROPER HOMECOMING

By Andrew Oppmann



With dignified precision befitting the honors due to fallen American soldiers, as many as 13 skeletal remains unearthed from what was a Mexican battlefield 170 years ago were welcomed home to the U.S. at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware on Sept. 28, 2016.

The solemn movement of the two flag-draped transfer cases, believed to contain members of the Tennessee militia who died in the Battle for Monterrey in 1846, was the culmination of more than five years of diplomatic negotiation, sparked by the urging of an MTSU Anthropology professor. That professor, Hugh Berryman, director of MTSU's Forensic Institute for Research and Education, stood on the flight line at the home to the Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations and the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System to witness the transfer of the remains from the Army C-12 aircraft and to pay his respects.

For Berryman, his work has just begun. He is now leading a team of MTSU professors, including Shannon Hodge, a bioarchaeologist with a specialty in paleopathology, and Derek Frisby, a military historian in the Global Studies Department, along with experts from other academic institutions, who have volunteered to assist the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System in the historical, bio-archaeological, and forensic analysis of the remains.

"The skeleton is excellent at recording its own history," Berryman said. There's a remote possibility, he added, that they may even be able to identify the remains. From U.S. Army press releases to coverage by news outlets around the country, the story made national headlines.

Berryman's involvement with the repatriation of the remains dates back to 2013 and began through his work as a consultant to the military's forensic efforts. Intrigued by the potential tie to Tennessee, Berryman mounted a concerted effort to have the remains brought to the U.S. The project earned a \$55,000 grant from the Tennessee Wars Commission and picked up support from members of the state's congressional delegation.

Joining Berryman in Dover was U.S. Rep. Diane Black, R-Gallatin, as well as MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee, Provost Mark Byrnes, College of Liberal Arts Interim Dean Karen Petersen, and retired U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Keith Huber, the University's senior adviser for veterans and leadership initiatives.



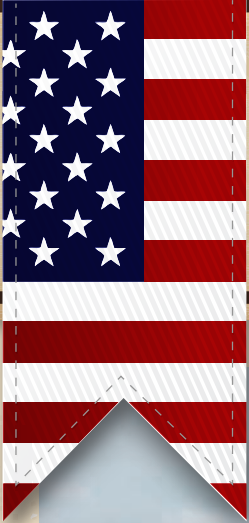
Also, presiding over the movement was U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Robert Moore, a native of Murfreesboro and Riverdale High School graduate, who received his master's degree from MTSU's Jones College of Business in 1990. "After five years of ongoing negotiations with the Mexican government, we have finally returned our fallen Volunteer State heroes back to American soil," said Black, whose congressional office joined the push in 2011.

In 2013, U.S. Rep. Scott DesJarlais, R-South Pittsburg, asked the Department of Defense to secure the remains and for Tennesseans to be buried in the Gallatin City Cemetery, the site of a Mexican-American War memorial. Black and U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tennessee, also signed the letter. U.S. Rep. Jim Cooper, D-Nashville, and U.S. Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tennessee, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, joined the effort as well. McPhee thanked the entire congressional delegation and praised Berryman and the other MTSU professors affiliated with the project.

"The work by Professor Berryman and his colleagues reflects the very best of our University's commitment to innovation, dedication, and public service," he said.

The Mexican-American War cemented Tennessee's reputation as the "Volunteer State." American soldiers, both regulars and volunteers, engaged in urban combat for the first time at





## MTSU experts spearhead the effort to bring the remains of Mexican-American War soldiers with Volunteer State ties back to the U.S.



Monterrey, and the lesson proved costly, particularly for many Tennesseans. Due to the logistical difficulties in transporting the dead, many of those killed were likely buried near the Tannery Fort site.

Over the next 150 years, Monterrey expanded rapidly around and over the battlefield. In 1996, construction of an apartment/parking complex revealed human remains believed to be those of Americans killed during the Battle of Monterrey. Historical evidence strongly indicates that these burials are likely those of Tennesseans or Mississippians who fell taking Tannery Fort. ■

*Left: Hugh Berryman speaks to media at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware. Behind him are U.S. Rep. Diane Black and MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee.*

*Top: Members of the U.S. military conduct the “solemn movement” of a flag-draped transfer case containing skeletal remains unearthed from what was a Mexican battlefield. On the left is retired Lt. Gen. Keith M. Huber, MTSU’s senior adviser for veterans and leadership initiatives.*

*Right: U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Robert Moore, who received his master’s degree from MTSU’s Jones College of Business in 1990, also presided over the movement.*

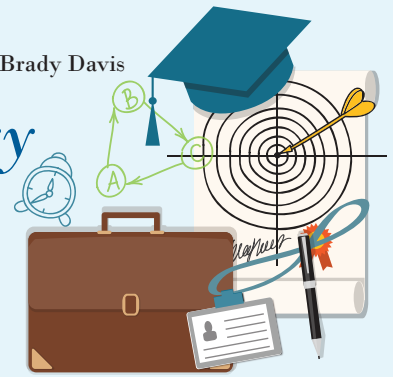




# Digging Down Deep

## *How a handful of Anthropology professors willing to invest in me radically changed my life*

by Brady Davis



Before attending college at MTSU, I had made some questionable decisions, and I was unaware that I had the potential to succeed or be a leader. I graduated high school in the spring of 2004 and was working for a company that owned multiple restaurants and a movie-location catering business. Over the course of a year, I would work in D.C., New York City, Baltimore, rural Virginia, and a few other places. Occasionally, while home in Nashville I would drive to Murfreesboro to visit friends at MTSU. During one visit in the summer of 2005, a close friend asked me if I ever planned to attend college. I hadn't thought about it since I was making great money; however, I was working long hours and most holidays—something I didn't want to do the rest of my life. I said if he helped me through the process, I would apply for the next semester. I started school that fall. I was admitted on a conditional basis, considering my high school GPA and ACT scores were below minimum requirements.

During my first two years of college, I changed my major three times, but I took every available Anthropology course while completing my general education—they were my favorite. After I declared Anthropology as my major, I had a rush of motivation to become more involved; however, I was still making some rather poor life decisions and it was bleeding over into my academics. I had taken a couple of my core classes, experienced my first field school, and decided that anthropology and archaeology were what I wanted to do, but I needed direction.

I remember walking out of class one day and sitting down in the Peck Hall plaza. Shannon Hodge sat down next to me and asked if everything was all right. I was eager to learn, but was still very immature. This was the first time someone asked me what I wanted to do and offered to invest in me. This moment was a turning point that had a major effect on my life choices and led me to where I am today. I am forever grateful. I am pretty sure I made a fool of myself more than once, but my professor saw potential worth investing in—something I didn't see. Thank you, Dr. Hodge. I didn't know that I needed someone to invest in me, and when that happened, I heavily invested in myself. It was the motivation I needed to focus and excel. It drove my passion to succeed. This eventually led me to more great opportunities while I was at MTSU, and even more once I moved on to my graduate degree and then into my job with the Chickasaw Nation.

**“I was provided so many opportunities in MTSU's Anthropology program that I was well ahead of the majority of my peers when I entered graduate school.”**

—Brady Davis

After that experience with Dr. Hodge, I got much more involved. I became an officer in the anthropology society and also volunteered. Even as an undergraduate-only program, we were pushed to attend conferences, help with research projects, and make presentations. I didn't recognize it then, but I was joining a family.

A few other experiences at MTSU had a profound effect on me. Dr. Hodge later encouraged me to develop a senior thesis topic and apply for an Undergraduate Research Experience and Creative Activity (URECA) grant. I went on to complete the first senior thesis in the Anthropology program. It taught me much more than how to do basic research, such as time management, focus, and how to write better. Writing was never my strong suit, but going through the editing process with Dr. Hodge taught me patience and writing skills. Another gratifying experience was working on the Forensic Anthropology Search and Recovery Team (FASR) with Hugh Berryman.

I was provided so many opportunities in MTSU's Anthropology program that I was well ahead of the majority of my peers when I entered graduate school in 2010. I was the only graduate student entering the program who had multiple field schools, had co-authored a publication, completed a senior thesis, attended multiple conferences, presented at a conference, and had osteology, forensic lab, and field experience.

Dr. Hodge suggested I look at the University of Southern Mississippi for graduate school. While at USM, a colleague of mine learned the Chickasaw Nation was seeking another archaeologist to manage an archaeological preserve in Tupelo, Mississippi. He recommended me for the program. The opportunities, inclusiveness, and kindness the Chickasaw Nation has provided me are countless, and the gratification I gain from the work I do never ceases. I began managing the single preserve in Tupelo, but new positions of leadership were created for me as our program developed. Multiple staff now carry out field archaeology; research; historical and cultural educational programming; historical and cultural tours; consulting; public talks; natural and cultural resource management; and many special projects working with government agencies. I now serve as director of one of our programs in north Mississippi.

I would never be where I am today if I didn't say yes to my friend who offered to help me apply for college on a whim, or if Dr. Hodge, Dr. Berryman, and other professors hadn't invested their time and effort into a struggling mediocre student who didn't see his own potential. I was fortunate to have people invest in me when I needed it the most. Words will never be able to show the gratitude I have for the MTSU Anthropology program and all the amazing professors who dedicate themselves to their students. ■



# Why Students Choose the Liberal Arts

by Sherri Marquez



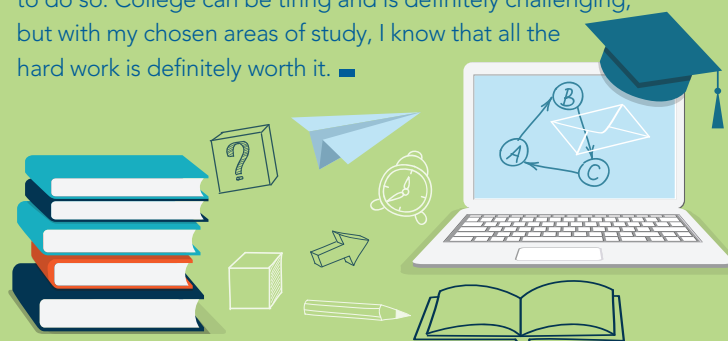
I am a non-traditional student returning to complete my degree at MTSU. I was born and raised in Mexico, then moved with my husband and son to middle Tennessee in 1999. When my son started high school a few years ago, I thought it was time to get a degree. After I earned an associate's degree from a community college, I transferred to MTSU to obtain my bachelor's degree in Sociology.

Sociology was almost an obvious choice for me, since I consider myself a bicultural person and I have always been intrigued by human behavior. Often I get asked "What will you do with a degree in Sociology?" or "Why did you choose Sociology?" And I remind people that there are over 7 billion of us in the world and we're still counting, which means that it is critical to understand social patterns and people's actions and motivations.

My major in Sociology and minors in Anthropology and Global Studies all offer me critical thinking skills and knowledge that open career opportunities. In today's ever-changing, globalized world, the College of Liberal Arts and my major and minors increase my ability to recognize trends and understand group behaviors, enabling me to make contributions to my community. Further, the courses within CLA connect and relate ideas from other disciplines. I benefit from the link with math, history, economics, politics, and law that are part of my studies in Sociology and Anthropology. I believe that the best way for me to better serve my community and obtain my career goals is with a degree in these disciplines.

I serve as a Sociology and Spanish tutor at a community college, where I get to work with young students, many of them straight out of high school. I often remind them when we start a session that "sociology is all around us—you can see it in the way we act and the way we are expected to respond to those around us." I hope to help them develop a better understanding of how they, as individuals, fit into the larger, ever-complex world in which we live and work today.

MTSU has been truly welcoming and supportive, from scholarships the University provides to the services and resources MTSU makes available. Additionally, the professors' and staff's helping and understanding attitudes have supported my educational journey. I am learning so much here, and I feel fortunate for the opportunity to do so. College can be tiring and is definitely challenging, but with my chosen areas of study, I know that all the hard work is definitely worth it. ■



# An Award-Winning Support System

Academic advisors at MTSU play a big role in students' success while enrolled at the University, routinely checking emails and answering phone calls, even after hours, to make sure students succeed.

College of Liberal Arts Advisor Matthew Hibdon is the latest to be recognized nationally for his efforts with an award from the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). Hibdon received a 2017 Region III Excellence in Advising—New Advisor Award this spring.

Hibdon, who has worked at MTSU over the course of nine years and has also earned two degrees from the University, said the award was "a validation of our approach to advising within the College of Liberal Arts."

"I enjoy helping my assigned students, but I cannot do it alone," he said. "I help students navigate the logistical parts of their degree programs, while faculty advisors serve as the curricular and career experts for students. Great teamwork between us has made all the difference."

Hibdon's award follows last year's honor for fellow CLA Advisor Brad Baumgardner, who advises Music majors. He received a 2016 Region III New Advisor Award. Baumgardner has worked at MTSU for a little over two years, a time during which the University has increased the number of advisors as part of its Quest for Student Success initiative to improve graduation and retention rates.

"I was honored to receive the award, mostly because I feel that it reflects the commitment to student success that I see daily in my department, college, and across the University," Baumgardner said. "I applied for the award in hopes of drawing attention to the changes we've been making in the advising model here at MTSU and the results we've been able to achieve."

"To receive a NACADA award means two things to me," said Lucy Langworthy, who manages the Liberal Arts advisors. "First, it means that the advisor is committed to making himself/herself a better advisor by taking advantage of this very resourceful professional organization. Second, getting a NACADA award reflects well on MTSU and recognizes the work that our young leaders are doing on our campus to help students be successful." ■



# "walking" in Ireland



The cast, crew, and designers of MTSU's original production *Walking in Sunlight: The Life and Legacy of Uncle Dave Macon* toured the show in Ireland and Northern Ireland during May 5–23. The script was developed by MTSU's Jette Halladay (Theatre professor), Claudia Barnett (English professor and established playwright), and the ensemble of students during the spring of 2016, with premier performances at Tucker Theatre last September. This spring, the troupe took the show to various area schools.

The play commemorates the life of Rutherford County resident and musician Uncle Dave Macon, who rose to fame as a *Grand Ole Opry* member. Part of the show's mission is to focus on the resilience of humanity. *Walking in Sunlight* was created for upper elementary and middle school audiences.

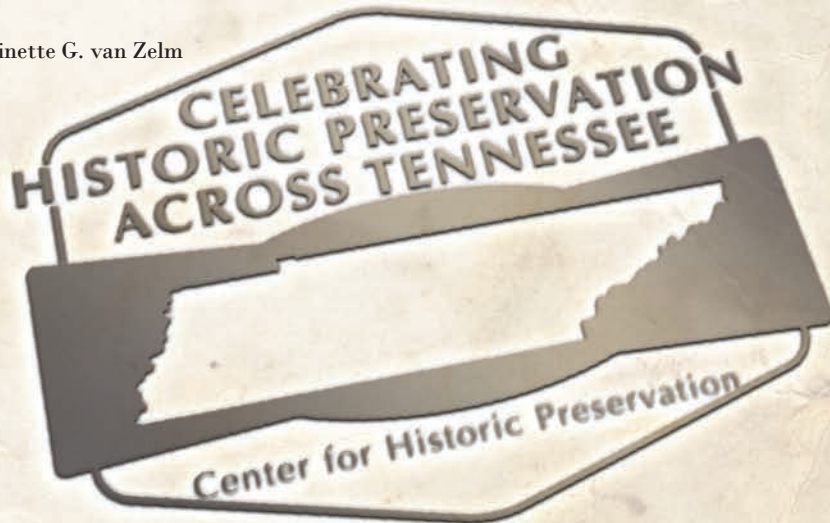
The course was organized by Halladay, with extensive assistance from Virginia Donnell, professor emerita of Theatre, and Darren E. Levin, assistant professor of Theatre. Twelve students from the Department of Theatre and Dance participated, representing both the department and College of Liberal Arts.

The touring company is grateful to the MTSU Office of Research Services, the Provost's Office, and especially Theatre and Dance for their assistance in bringing about this immersive experience. In addition, many thanks to the primary schools and partnerships in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland that hosted the MTSU group during this valuable experience. ■

## Activities abroad included:

- Visiting Galway, Inis Oírr (one of the Aran Islands), Dublin, and Kilkenny in Ireland
- Private tour of the Antrim Coast, including the Giant's Causeway, Carrick-A-Rede Rope Bridge, and Carrickfergus Castle, Carrickfergus, Northern Ireland
- Performances at Good Shepherd Primary School and St. Teresa's Primary School, Belfast, Northern Ireland
- Performance at St. Patrick's College, Maghera, Northern Ireland
- Private tour of the Peace Walls with locals who lived through the Troubles (period of conflict in Northern Ireland)
- Private tour of the Burren region of Ireland, as well as hiking along the Cliffs of Moher
- Performance at Áras Éanna Arts Center, Inisheer, Ireland
- Additional activities chosen by the students in each city, such as cathedral tours, historical tours, street performances, theatrical performances, and musical performances





MTSU's Center for Historic Preservation (CHP) commemorated not just one but three milestones in the field of historic preservation in November with the statewide community. CHP celebrated with its partners across Tennessee to mark the 20th anniversary of the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area (which is administered by the CHP); the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act; and the centennial of the National Park Service.

CHP recognized these achievements to emphasize the significance of the deeply rooted sense of place that historic buildings and landscapes provide, enriching the lives of Tennessee's citizens every day.

Events were hosted by organizations that have partnered with the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area over the past 20 years to tell the whole story of the Civil War and Reconstruction in Tennessee, which included the:

- Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County
- Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County
- Glen Leven Farm in Nashville
- Hiwassee River Heritage Center in Charleston, Tennessee
- East Tennessee History Center in Knoxville
- Parkers Crossroads Visitor Center

Co-sponsored by the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development, the anniversary events were open to the public, and formal remarks were kept brief in order to focus on recognizing Tennesseans for their commitment to the Heritage Area. "Our strength comes from our many dedicated partners who have enabled the Heritage Area to thrive and serve all 95 counties of the state. It was our pleasure to thank them personally," said Carroll Van West, CHP director and Tennessee state historian, who will also receive the 2017 College of

Arts and Sciences Scholarly Achievement Award from the University of Tennessee in September.

Among those thanked were members of the MTSU community and residents of Murfreesboro. At the Heritage Center event, CHP staff and students greeted professors, alumni, and community members, some of whom were visiting the Heritage Center for the first time. Guests also had the chance to meet Kevin Triplett, state Tourist Development commissioner, and Brenda Waters, superintendent of Stones River National Battlefield in Rutherford County. Triplett and Waters attested to the importance of both preserving the past and encouraging young and old to explore that past by visiting historic sites.

The November events also provided a great opportunity to connect MTSU students with the CHP's statewide partners. Both graduate and undergraduate MTSU students from the College of Liberal Arts have been absolutely essential to the success of the Heritage Area over the years. "Just about every Heritage Area project has benefited from student involvement. The students' research, field work, and outreach has been phenomenal and, in turn, has provided them with great professional development for successful careers," said Laura Holder, the Heritage Area's federal liaison, a graduate of MTSU's Public History master's program, and a former CHP graduate research assistant.

CHP staff and students are looking forward to continuing to engage with citizens across the state over the Heritage Area's next 20 years—and beyond. For more information about the Center for Historic Preservation and the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, please visit [mtsuhistpres.org](http://mtsuhistpres.org), join the CHP's Facebook page, or call 615-898-2947. ■

## THE HISTORY BEHIND THE CELEBRATIONS

### 1916

The National Park Service was created within the Department of the Interior to manage the nation's 35 national parks and monuments, including the world's very first national park at Yellowstone, established in 1872. Today, the National Park System includes more than 400 areas comprising more than 84 million acres in the U.S. and its territories.

### 1966

Congress approved the National Historic Preservation Act to promote preservation in local communities through programs like the National Register of Historic Places. MTSU's CHP works with the Tennessee Historical Commission to help communities participate in these and other federal preservation programs.

### 1996

Congress created the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area as a partnership unit of the National Park Service. MTSU's Center for Historic Preservation (CHP) administers the Heritage Area, working in partnership with state government and Tennessee communities to tell the whole story of the Civil War era through exhibitions, publications, public programs, historical markers, and historic property studies.



# CLA Highlights

## Faculty News

Zheng master **Mei Han**, School of Music associate professor and founding director of the Center for Chinese Music and Culture at MTSU, has recorded her first international CD release. *Classical and Contemporary Chinese Music* contains exquisite recordings of rare Chinese traditional treasures and groundbreaking original works by Han and her Red Chamber ensemble.



**Jenna Hildenbrand** (l) and **Rebekka King**, the co-directors of MTSU's new Religious Studies major, have been selected as the 2016–17 Outstanding EXL Faculty Award recipients. (See *Divine Inspiration* on pages 16–17.)



English professor **Michael Neth** has been asked to guest-edit a special issue of the peer-reviewed journal, *The European Legacy*, dedicated to the topic of Improvisation and Hybrid Genres in British Romanticism. Neth has recruited 10 world-class Romantics scholars and essayists.

**Kristin Naylor**, a lecturer for Organizational Communications and Communication Studies, has been named the Learning, Teaching, and Innovative Technologies Center 2017–18 Academic Year Teaching Fellow.



**Betsy Dalton**, assistant professor of Organizational Communications and Communication Studies, secured Faculty Research and Creative Activity grant funding from MTSU this summer for her research entitled “Disclosure, Trust, and Prenatal Care: The Trust-Attraction Hypothesis in Obstetric Nurse-Patient Communication.”

**Debrah C. Sickler-Voigt**, professor of Art Education, was named Favorite MTSU Professor for the Murfreesboro *Daily News Journal*'s 22nd Annual Ruthies Award.



Artwork by MTSU student Abigail Tompkins





## Student News

## FBI

**Erika Helgeson**, a senior International Relations major with a minor in Middle East Studies and Arabic, interned for the FBI in summer 2016, spending 10 weeks at the Baltimore office in a paid internship program. She spent her internship getting an up-close look at the day-to-day operations for the bureau, learning about special agents, intelligence analysts, and operations support careers. Her internship offered a wide variety of exposure to various aspects of the bureau including trainings, tours of operations centers such as the FBI's training facility at Quantico, and a valuable mentorship.

### The FUND for AMERICAN STUDIES

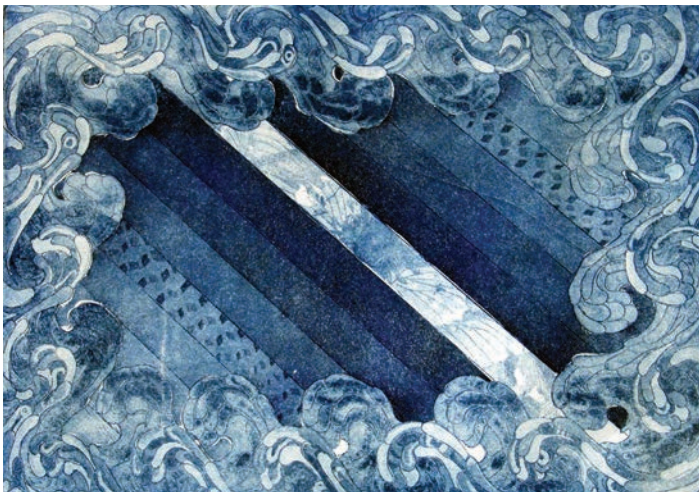
International Relations sophomore **Kayo Beshir** spent two months in the nation's capital with students from across the globe through The Funds for American Studies (TFAS) program. Beshir was paired with the Institute on Economics and International Affairs, took an economics course and lived on the George Washington University campus, and interned for the nonprofit Columbia Light House for the blind in Washington, D.C. He also networked with other TFAS students/alumni and listened to guest speakers like Trevot Thrall, of the Cato Institute, and Arthur Laffer, known for his conception of the Laffer Curve. In addition, Beshir attended weekly briefings at various agencies and departments including the World Bank, U.S. Institute of Peace, Peace Corps, Mexican Embassy, and the United Nations Refugee Agency. "One highlight of my time in D.C. was group sessions at the State Department with retired and current foreign service officers," he said.



School of Music students **Emily Magee**, **Kyle Hammock**, **Jeff Upshaw**, **Nick Mason**, and **Rosa Wesfall** won first place at the 2017 Winter Guard International World. **Zack Hudson** and **Nichole Davis** placed sixth.



English doctoral candidate **Rachel Donegan** was selected as a recipient of a 2017 Disability in College Composition Travel Award from the Conference on College Composition and Communication. This award is designed to support scholarship dedicated to improving knowledge about the intersections of disability with composition and rhetoric, the value of disability as a source of diversity, inclusive practices and the promotion of access, and the value of disability as a critical lens.



Artwork by MTSU student Gage Lozano

## Alumni News

**James Pritchard** ('14, Global Studies B.A.; '15 Cultural Geography B.S.) works for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services in Orofino, Idaho, alongside the Nez Perce Tribe, as purchasing agent and operations support for the Dworshak and Kooskia fish hatcheries. Pritchard previously spent two years at the Peace Corps headquarters in D.C., managing, purchasing, and setting up global deliveries of all medical kits, mosquito nets, and eyeglasses for every new volunteer in all 64 countries. He even sent supplies to volunteers going to the same village in Fiji where he studied abroad while at MTSU. "Since I was young, I have always been fascinated by the changing world," he said. "I've wanted to see the world, have a better understanding of different cultures, and make lifetime memories through my travels and work. The experience I gained through the Global Studies program is invaluable."



**Jessica Shotwell** ('17, Global Studies B.S.) spent her final summer year as a health equity intern at the Center for Global Policy Solutions, a social action think tank in Washington, D.C. She enhanced her online research and data analysis skills while publishing two blogs and completing an evidence-based policy solutions database on health equity, among other experiences. Shotwell also was

able to work on her Honors Thesis during a research and writing seminar. "The Washington center provided several networking opportunities and graduate school resources for students and always served as a helping hand throughout the summer," Shotwell said. "I gained lifelong friends and grew to love D.C. as if it were home."

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# Tyler Warren + QUEEN + Adam Lambert

Two of Queen's original bandmates and songwriters—iconic drummer Roger Taylor and legendary guitarist Brian May—have teamed up with Adam Lambert to form Queen + Adam Lambert, along with touring musicians Spike Edney (keyboards, backing vocals), Neil Fairclough (bass guitar, backing vocals), and MTSU alumnus **Tyler Warren** (percussion, drums, backing vocals).

Warren began his life in music at an early age, playing along with Mötley Crüe and Queen records on drums as early as age 3. He then began playing guitar and studying classical percussion at age 9, eventually performing in top wind and percussion ensembles until he graduated with a Bachelor of Music from MTSU.

At age 16, Warren began writing and recording his own songs. He has been a prolific songwriter during the past four years, releasing three full-length albums and one EP. Warren records and releases music independently from his home studio, frequently performing all the instruments himself, including guitar and vocals. ■

## SUCCESS YOU CAN'T ARGUE WITH

By Patrick G. Richey

MTSU Debate has a long and distinguished history reaching back to 1911. The tradition of excellence continued this past academic year. Competing in six tournaments in the fall and seven tournaments in the spring, the team brought home more than 100 awards including many first-place and team awards.

Debaters traveled to Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas for competition. They won the Tennessee state tournament and took two regional tournament titles. Finishing the school year at the International Public Debate Association National Tournament hosted by Arkansas Tech, MTSU's team competed with over 300 debaters from 40 universities across the country vying for coveted national titles. MTSU debaters rose to the occasion, and Michael Tant won the Professional division to secure MTSU's second national title in three years. The team as a whole placed fifth at the tournament, defeating much larger universities.

This past academic year, the team expanded to include individual events (IEs). Assistant coach Natonya Listach worked with IE captain Alex Lempin, a junior from Shelbyville, to establish and grow this part of the team. MTSU team members competed in events such as poetry, impromptu speaking, after-dinner

speaking, persuasive speaking, and many more. The new part of the squad won several state awards.

While competition takes up a large portion of the team's time, MTSU Debate members were still able to stay active on campus. The spring's big event was once again hosting the Irish Times National Champions from Dublin. Team members were generous hosts, showing their guests a good time in middle Tennessee. Provost Mark Byrnes and retired Lt. Gen. Keith Huber, an MTSU senior adviser, hosted the Irish national champions for a truly Southern hospitality luncheon before the big campus debate. The Irish team debated the topic of university education costs against three of MTSU's best debaters.

MTSU Debate capped the year with its annual awards banquet, where individual awards were returned to debaters. The banquet also celebrated the induction of alumni Mary Choate and Joseph Huckleberry into the MTSU Debate Hall of Fame. Listach was inducted in gratitude for her tireless sacrifices over the past six years. Also honored was retiree Peg McCree, former assistant coach under Russell Church, Hall of Fame member, huge Predators fan, and continual supporter over many decades. She truly embodies the True Blue Spirit! ■



# Brett Warren

Brett Warren (Art, '09) is the 2017 recipient of the Nashville Fashion Forward Fund, which averages a \$5,000 award, and will travel to work in London and Paris this October. Created by Nashville Fashion Week and the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, the fund provides an educational experience for an up-and-coming fashion talent in Nashville. In Europe, Warren will test with agencies, meet with editors, and take in all the unique inspiration each city has to offer.

Warren, who grew up in McMinnville, Tennessee, minored in Photography with a Graphic Design concentration for his B.F.A. "While studying design and photography at MTSU, Brett became passionately inspired to present the world as it could be through images which would appeal to the mind and imagination," said Chelsea Beauchamp, his studio manager. "What started with a dream and a Nikon Cool Pix has turned

into a means to convey emotion and to share untold stories and convictions. Along the way he found encouragement through a personal encounter with Wayne White, a more-than-serendipitous internship with Annie Leibovitz, and invitations to shoot at New York Fashion Week."

"Warren has worked behind the scenes on sets for *Vogue*, art-directed major label music videos, had his work featured in local and national publications, produced multiple events, and spoken at universities. He also has served on the Nashville Fashion Week advisory council. Warren has been recognized among his peers for his point of view and built long-lasting relationships in and out of the fashion world. He has worked with recognizable brands such as Billy Reid, *Surface Magazine*, and *GQ*, but is just as passionate about working with some that may not be as familiar . . . yet," Beauchamp said. ■



# Amy Kinslow



After graduating from MTSU with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design in 2010, Amy Kinslow founded Southern Fried Design Barn, which she describes as “half design studio and half stationery and gifts.” Her company’s products are available wholesale and retail, with currently 100-plus retail stores nationwide carrying the line. While at MTSU, she was an AIGA student member and president of Kappa Delta Delta Pi. Kinslow was raised on a cattle and quarterhorse farm in Lebanon, Tennessee. While her line of stationery and wares pull heavily from Southern culture, she credits her grandparents’ influence on her vernacular.

Local retailers like Acme Feed and Store, Loveless Café, and Batch carry the Southern Fried line. Kinslow has exhibited at the National Stationery Show in New York City and the Atlanta Wholesale Gift and Apparel Market, plus is

represented by two groups in the Southeast and Midwest. Products range from greeting cards, notepads, and gift tags to kitchen towels and shirts. Two Southern Fried products were featured in the *Southern Living* 2016 Holiday Gift Guide.

While creating a successful business is impressive, the truly amazing part of Kinslow’s story is what she has done with her success. After wildfires devastated the Great Smoky Mountains in late 2016, she pledged to donate all of the net profits from sales of her exclusive *Southern Living* “Dolly For President” shirt to Dolly Parton’s My People Fund. Just the night before, Dolly had announced the fund’s creation that would give each family who lost their home \$1,000 a month for 6 months. Kinslow’s post went viral. By the end of the year, the company wrote a check to Dolly’s fund for over \$10,000! That’s a true impact. ■



# Marlene Sanders

A government affairs executive at Merck and Co., Marlene Sanders ('93, Political Science) credits much of her career success to an internship at the Tennessee state legislature. Sanders called it “an invaluable experience,” leading directly to her first post-graduation job as an executive assistant for Smith Johnson and Carr. She went back to school and completed a Master of Public Administration, which led to a public information position at Eli Lilly.

Working as a lobbyist for Merck was not really on Sanders' radar during her matriculation at MTSU. “When I was a student, I was involved with Young Democrats and Student Council and thinking I might even someday run for political office,” she said. But once she graduated and had a few years of contract lobbying under her belt, Sanders says she sort of hit her stride, “feeling very comfortable in that role.”

When asked how her Political Science degree helped prepare her for her current career, she sings the praises of Liberal Arts. “Liberal Arts degrees develop people who keep digging for answers until they are satisfied they have a better solution to a given problem,” Sanders said. “In Liberal Arts disciplines, you are trained to keep looking for answers and discovering new possibilities. We still need people in the workforce who are trained to ask questions and to think critically, not just science questions, but about all manner of things. Public policy is my world now, and thinking critically and intelligently applies to questions of policy. And that includes budgetary policy, legislative policy, social policy, and just governmental policy in general. The world needs people who aren't afraid to think outside of the box and search for new, more effective answers to the problems and challenges we face.” ■



# Peter and Kristin Demos



Entrepreneurs who are engaged in the community socially and politically, Peter ('95) and Kristin ('01) Demos reflect the value of a liberal arts education. Both graduated from MTSU's Sociology program, and Peter went on to earn his J.D. and practice law. He realized quickly that law was not his passion and returned to Murfreesboro to work in the family's restaurant business. Kristin, driven by a passion for working with and helping people, started her career with the United Way. She, too, became an integral part of the Demos family business, particularly when the couple launched Peter D's.

Kristin's training in communication at MTSU and her work with the MTSU Dance team allow her to function well in front of large groups, something she does professionally and as part of her community involvement and with small groups of employees. Peter specifically draws on his work with the

MTSU Debate team and his speech classes when engaging professional audiences or speaking to the community.

According to Peter, the key ingredient to success in business is in the details: If you can see problems, analyze them, debate them, and think broadly, you can be successful. Liberal arts, according to Peter, are more valuable than professional degrees because you learn those skills and more. He and Kristin both like to hire someone with a liberal arts background because they know that person will come with a wealth of knowledge and the critical thinking ability necessary to operate in a complex, fast-paced environment. Peter and Kristin, who are "self-taught" in the industry, credit their liberal arts background with development of the acumen and skills necessary to learn new things quickly and adapt to a changing business environment and culture. ■



# College of Liberal Arts

We hope you've enjoyed this edition of the *CLA Magazine* and are as excited as we are about the accomplishments of the College of Liberal Arts students, alumni, and faculty. Please consider a tax-deductible gift to support one of the programs highlighted in this issue—your generosity makes innovative learning in and out of the classroom possible.

## Thank you for your gift to Liberal Arts of

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## Graduate Student Day

A first-time event for the MTSU College of Graduate Studies has organizers already excited about future Graduate Professional Development Days. A capacity crowd of 80 students attended the recent event on campus. The professional development day featured presenters providing career insight, guided assistance theses and dissertations, curriculum vitae/resume writing, and how to connect with fellow alumni through the MTSU Alumni Association. To learn more about the College of Graduate Studies, call 615-898-2840 or visit [mtsu.edu/graduate](http://mtsu.edu/graduate).

[mtsuneews.com/graduate-professional-development-day-2017](http://mtsuneews.com/graduate-professional-development-day-2017)



## Spring Minority Grads Honored

In looking back over her academic experience at MTSU, Sociology graduate Jessica Shotwell sees a rich adventure that allowed her to grow as a student and as a person from the first day she stepped on campus as a freshman. "I'm now stronger and wiser than the freshman Jessica Shotwell," said Shotwell, president of the Iota Tau Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, who credits sorority involvement for teaching her about the importance of serving others. She shared those reflections and more during the recent spring Intercultural Graduation Reception.

[mtsuneews.com/intercultural-graduation-reception-2017](http://mtsuneews.com/intercultural-graduation-reception-2017)



## Gold, Silver for Yelverton

Music professor William Yelverton won a world championship gold medal and a silver medal at the Indoor World Masters Athletic Championships in Daegu, South Korea, this spring. A professor of guitar at MTSU's School of Music in his 28th year, Yelverton has in recent years competed in masters track and field events on the national and international level. This year's world championships included 4,700 athletes from 75 countries. He now has won four individual medals in world championship races since the 2015 meet in France.

[mtsuneews.com/yelverton-masters-track-2017](http://mtsuneews.com/yelverton-masters-track-2017)



## Making Dreams Come True

Honors graduate Davis Thompson ('15, Political Science) recounts his journey from an internship in the nation's capital to a Fulbright scholarship in Slovakia to a presidential campaign. "In November of 2012, my second year at MTSU, my friends and I watched with nervous excitement as the presidential election results were announced . . . and knew that I wanted to be a part of a presidential campaign in the future. I never imagined that it would happen in the next election cycle," Thompson said.

[mtsuneews.com/davis-thompson-honors-spring-2017](http://mtsuneews.com/davis-thompson-honors-spring-2017)





## Dorethe “Dot” Pigg Tucker

# In Memoriam

Mrs. Tucker, Theatre professor emerita, died Jan. 8 at the age of 97. A former American Academy of Dramatic Arts (AADA) student and then-Middle Tennessee State College graduate, she joined the faculty in 1956 and became a member of the Speech and Theatre Department when it formed in 1965. Mrs. Tucker worked as a theater director and sponsor of MTSU’s Buchanan Players, allowing students to create and put on new plays, until her retirement in 1981. She taught acting and directing, sponsored the honorary dramatic fraternity, and directed almost 100 plays, helping provide training and experience for students and entertainment and enlightenment for MTSU and the community. Mrs. Tucker was a Tennessee Theatre Association founding member, president, executive board member, and chair of its college and university division and a Tennessee Arts Commission member. In 1987, the University named the Boutwell Dramatic Arts theater in honor of her and husband H. Clayton “Clay” Tucker, former College of Liberal Arts dean. Mrs. Tucker’s legacy of dedication to MTSU and the program continues through a scholarship and The Dorethes awards. ■



## Reza Ordoubadian

Dr. Ordoubadian died April 11 of complications from Parkinson’s Disease at age 85. He grew up in Iran and received his B.A. from Tehran University in 1954. After coming to the U.S. in 1956 as a Fulbright Scholar at Duke University, he earned his M.A. (’65) and Ph.D. (’67) from Auburn University. Dr. Ordoubadian taught at The Webb School in 1958–62, then joined the MTSU English Department faculty until retirement in 1989. He was well known for his work in linguistics, particularly as president of the Southeast Conference on Linguistics and editor of its journal. Dr. Ordoubadian later was a visiting professor at Umea University in Sweden for several semesters. He also was a published writer and translator of the Persian mystic poets Hafez and Abu Sa’id. Dr. Ordoubadian’s students described him as a true intellectual, who pushed them to become original, critical thinkers. “He was supportive of other faculty, scholarly in his work, and cordial, always greeting us with a smile in the Peck hallways,” English Professor Bené Cox said. ■



## James Kenneth Huhta

Dr. Huhta died April 23 at the age of 79. The son of Finnish immigrants, he graduated from Baldwin Wallace College and then earned his M.A. and Ph.D. in early American history at the University of North Carolina. In 1965, Dr. Huhta joined the MTSU History faculty and later served as assistant vice president for academic affairs. He founded the MTSU Historic Preservation program in 1973 and was director until 1990. Dr. Huhta also was director of MTSU’s Center of Excellence in Historic Preservation from 1984 until retirement in 2002. He was appointed to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (1994–2002) for two terms by President Bill Clinton. Dr. Huhta also authored the plan for the National Heritage Area on the Civil War in Tennessee and served on the National Trust for Historic Preservation Board of Advisors (1981–90). He chaired the Rutherford County Courthouse Restoration Committee, construction projects of the Stones River and Lytle Creek greenways, and Bradley Academy. Dr. Huhta co-chaired the Rutherford County Bicentennial’s Horizons Program, which created Cannonsburgh Village. ■



## Clyde E. Willis

Dr. Willis, Political Science professor emeritus, died July 24 at age 74. He began teaching at MTSU in 1999 and led students in mock trial and mediation at a nationally competitive level. Dr. Willis practiced law for 25 years, with the Federal Trade Commission and then in Rogersville, Tennessee, and Knoxville. He also was Rogersville mayor (1975–77) and Holston Electric Cooperative general manager. Dr. Willis earned his B.S. from East Tennessee State University and law degree from the University of Tennessee. Following a calling to teach, he completed his Ph.D. at UT in 1991 and taught Political Science and coached the mock trial team at Valdosta State University. He was visiting law professor at Russia’s Syktyvkar State University in 1996 and received a 1997 Fulbright Distinguished Award that sent him to strife-torn Ethiopia as an Addis Ababa University law faculty member and Ministry of Justice consultant. Known as Clyde to students, he was proudest that students were more apt to call him friend than professor. An MTSU scholarship fund honors his memory. ■



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