

UNIVERSITY HONORS COLLEGE

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY | FALL 2022

Areté

[excellence • virtue]

BEAUTY FOR ASHES, STRENGTH FOR TEARS

Alumna Jasmine Gray draws on the power of storytelling to overcome and inspire

**MIDDLE
TENNESSEE**
STATE UNIVERSITY.

FALL 2022

**MIDDLE
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STATE UNIVERSITY

I AM *true*
BLUE.

ARETÉ MAGAZINE

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Photo by J. Intintoli



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Many of the stories from the 2022 Winter Olympics in China focused on 15-year-old figure skater Kamila Valieva. After receiving intense criticism for testing positive for banned drugs, which she may or may not have known that she had ingested, she fell during her final skating routine and did not medal. As she tearfully left the rink, her coaches not only failed to sympathize with her ordeal but appeared to criticize her performance.

In analyzing what had happened, one commentator observed that these seemingly callous reactions may have reflected a *transactional*, rather than a *transformative*, view of coaching, which I sometimes witnessed in my years of coaching Mock Trial. The former approach makes an idol out of winning and accordingly extends praise or blame based on results. The other approach to coaching is less concerned with the number of victories won than in developing the character and protecting the health of its participants.

During my tenure as dean, we have emphasized the increasing number of our students who have completed theses and who have won national and international scholarships and other accolades, and we are certainly proud of them all. We also have tried to emphasize, however, that the process of learning how to craft such an application has value even for those who do not become finalists or winners. Most awards that our students apply for have relatively low acceptance rates, and students often apply for multiple awards before they get one, if any.

We have had occasions where we took pride in the fact that a student, originally slated to graduate with honors, was able to complete her course of study and receive a diploma, sometimes overcoming odds

that others could only imagine. In somewhat similar fashion, I can remember taking pride in my only C in college (just in case you wonder, this was my lowest and not my highest grade!) because I was confident that I had done my best.

It is said that it's not whether you win or lose but how you play the game. We accordingly recognize that no one who accepts the Honors challenge becomes a "loser" simply because their reach sometimes exceeds their grasp.

“ It is said that it's not whether you win or lose but how you play the game. ”

I am reminded of the farmer who, upon being asked what he grew, replied, "Children." He recognized that imparting values to his children was more important than the size of his crops.

As our "crop" of theses and awards continues to grow, we will continue our focus on providing a transformative environment that will cultivate the qualities of intellect and character that will support our students through both the highs and lows of life.

John R. Vile

areté
noun (ahr-i-tey)

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

PROSPECTING FOR GOLD

The annual Presidents Day Open House shows prospective students all that the Honors College offers at MTSU. The 2023 event will take place Feb. 20.

Photos by Andy Heidt



Honors Advisor Judy Albakry



Honors Advisor Susan Lyons



Honors Dean John R. Vile



Student Yaseen Ginnab



Eric Klumpe's Mad Science demonstration



Quinn Wilson



Usman Saeed

Marina Loza

A BUMPER CROP

Fellowships Office reports record year

During the 2021–22 academic year, more MTSU students than ever before applied for national scholarships and fellowships, resulting in a record number of Gilman Scholarships (20) and Critical Language Scholarships (3). The University also had students selected for the Fulbright, Goldwater, Japanese Exchange Teaching (JET), and National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) awards.

Receiving a record number of awards requires a great deal of work and cooperation. The Undergraduate Fellowships Office (UFO) conducted more than 50 campus sessions for students, faculty, and staff during the academic year to promote opportunities. Staffed by **Laura Clippard**, who works on fellowships on a part-time basis, and a graduate assistant, the UFO relies on many faculty and staff who volunteer their time to help students by writing letters of recommendation, reading applications and essays, and helping with Fulbright interviews. For example, Dean **John R. Vile** personally reads each fellowship essay that is submitted.

The process of applying for national scholarships and fellowships is not easy. Many of our MTSU students work part-time or full-time jobs, hold leadership roles on campus, have family responsibilities, and commute long distances to campus. In addition, fellowship

applications often demand multiple essays, need numerous references, and can be confusing at times. A number of MTSU applicants are low-income, first-generation college students or first-generation Americans who are unfamiliar with the process. Not every student who applies is selected, but the goal is to help students learn about themselves and reflect on their leadership goals.

“We wish to thank the MTSU community for encouraging students to apply and for volunteering their time,” Clippard said. She also encouraged faculty to contact her if interested in reading application essays to further contribute to student success.

2022 STUDENT AWARDS

Goldwater winner **Yaseen Ginnab** achieved a rare distinction this spring, earning three national and international awards, including a prestigious Goldwater Scholarship. The Biology and Psychology double-major, who was recognized as an outstanding third-year Honors student and received an Undergraduate Research Experience and Creative Activity (URECA) grant this spring, also won a Fulbright Mitacs Globalink Research Internship and a Gilman Scholarship for Costa Rica.

In addition, 19 other MTSU students landed Gilman Scholarships for spring and summer this year: **Marina Loza**, Austria; **Katheryne Greer**, France; **Tracey Ekwuazi**, Ghana; **Wang Hii**, South Korea; **Dimend Little**, Spain; **Marian Medley**, Switzerland and Italy; **Jaël Guest**, France; **Rossana Padilla**, virtual internship; **Kelsie Norris**, Austria; **Mahala Owen**, Spain; **Alexis Mahon**, Senegal; **Dominic Marcoaldi**, Chile; **Phoenix Harris**, Japan; **Brandi Pendergast**, Spain; **Sarina Vilaysane**, Austria; **Jessica Shrader**, United Kingdom; **Caimelle Bent**, South Korea; **Luz Soto Leon**, Switzerland and Italy; and **Randa Bland**, Gilman-McCain for the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands.

Justin Bosheers secured a Boren Scholarship and is MTSU's first Boren winner since 2014, while three students won Critical Language Scholarships (CLS): **Usman Saeed**, Arabic; **Gretta Maguire**, Chinese; and **Julie Witt**, Hindi. Four more students were selected for the Japanese Exchange Teaching (JET) program: **Ashley Borges**, **Larissa Emamalie**, **Sophia Maas**, and **Lauren Smith**.

Elizabeth Clippard received the very competitive NSF GRFP for three years of full funding for graduate school at the State University of New York (SUNY).

Four other students earned NSF Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REUs). **Janelle Valdez** performed research at Boston University; **Sydney Wilson** went to Cornell University; **Ahmad Mohammad** conducted research at Florida State University; and **Cameron Graf** traveled to South Dakota State University for her REU.

MTSU has had over 20 students selected for the Fulbright program in the last 13 years, including two this year: **Madeline Artibee** received a research Fulbright for Croatia, and **Darrika Morklithavong** landed a teaching Fulbright for Laos. These awards are in addition to Ginnab's summer Fulbright Mitacs Globalink Research Internship.

Transfer Fellow **Rachel Booher** captured the Freeman-Asia Scholarship to help fund her study abroad trip to Japan, and **Jaël Guest**, **Dimend Little**, and **Zoe Naylor** each received a Phi Kappa Phi (PKP) Study Abroad Scholarship. Guest also won a Fund for Education Abroad Scholarship.

Honors student **Maria Hite**, in the first cohort for MTSU's Early Medical School Acceptance Program, was awarded an \$8,500 PKP Fellowship to help with expenses while attending Meharry Medical College.

"National and international fellowships provide outside confirmation that Honors students are receiving an education that prepares them to be global citizens," Vile said. "The UFO office remains among the Honors College's most important endeavors."



Tracey Ekwuazi



Maria Hite



Dimend Little

HOW TO APPLY

Students can learn more about national and international opportunities by visiting mtsu.edu/honors/ufo or emailing laura.clippard@mtsu.edu.





Three by Airmail

Thesis traces the past of postal night-flying

The history of United States airmail, focusing on education and preservation of significant sites in the history of airmail, is the subject of Aerospace major **Ivy Adams'** Honors thesis, a project she calls "an excellent capstone to my academic experience."

As part of the project, Adams has maintained an academic Instagram account named **@airmailwithivy** to recap airmail history into daily tidbits. She also has made campus and community presentations about airmail's history in the U.S.

A Buchanan Fellow, Adams is a private pilot with over 250 hours of total flight time. Her major concentration is Aviation Management with a focus on airline management, and she is pursuing minors in University Honors, Business Administration, Asian Studies, and Chinese.

According to Adams, to develop its 18,000-mile network of federal airways and secure funding from Congress, the U.S. Post Office overhauled the standard of night flying in the early 1900s. Cooperating with illumination engineers and the Army Air Corps, the postal service saw a beacon of hope: lighting the night with 5,000 acetylene gas beacons erected in three-mile separations. With the acetylene beacons, routes became defined at night for the pilots.

Ivy Adams in Anthony, Kansas

Adams explained that most beacon towers were secured on concrete bases in the shape of an arrow. These 70-foot, yellow arrows lay horizontally on the ground, pointing the way to the next numbered arrow, forming a path to the destination for mail delivery. Beacons were primarily used for flying during the night, and arrows were primarily used during the day. During the peak of the early airmail service, over 2,500 navigational aids guided pilots across more than 30,000 miles of airmail routes.

Today, only 87 of these navigational aids remain, and as a private pilot, Adams has flown to three of the remaining locations: Shelbyville, Indiana; Newark, Ohio; and Anthony, Kansas.

MARKING THE HISTORY

These sites are situated on currently active, public-use airports that were formerly Department of Commerce intermediate landing fields for airmail pilots. Adams has researched site-specific history through observations at each site and interviews with local experts. As the culmination of her project, Adams is applying for these sites to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places and associated state registers.

Adams' first site visit was to the arrow at Shelbyville Municipal Airport in Indiana. "Only the arrow remains, and the concrete is cracking due to

subsidence," Adams observed. "The natural decay of this site demonstrates the need for recognition and protection of these markers."

Adams acknowledges that she is "glad to see interest from airport users in preserving the arrow." In an interview, the airport manager expressed great interest in preserving the site. In 2018, the arrow was repainted for increased visibility, but no further alterations have been made.

"There's a clear community interest in preserving this site," Adams said. "I'm glad to see that this site can continue to serve as a monument to the early airmail service."

Her second flight was to the site at Newark-Heath Airport Treneff Field in Ohio. This site was completely original, according to members of the local Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Chapter 402. The three major components of each station were the beacon tower, generator shed, and concrete arrow.

"The EAA chapter in Newark is very active, and they have put a lot of effort into preserving this site," Adams said. "It was a pleasure meeting members of their local chapter. I learned a great deal about the national airmail service, the specific beacon site, and each city's local history." This navigational aid is the last remaining marker in Ohio and the last remaining site on the Columbus-Philadelphia route.



“ I’m glad to see that this site can continue to serve as a monument to the early airmail service. ”

Adams in Shelbyville, Indiana

AMBER WAVES

Anthony Municipal Airport in Kansas was the site of the final station in Adams' project. The beacon and arrow were present at this location, and she was excited to see the International Derrick and Equipment Co. (IDECO) sign on the beacon tower.

"I had learned from the Newark EAA chapter that most of the beacon towers were made from repurposed windmill towers in nearby Columbus, Ohio," Adams said. "The IDECO sign acknowledged this remarkable connection."

She made another discovery at the Anthony site. "When I arrived, I thought the tail of the arrow was missing. As I was taking measurements and photographs of the arrow, I noticed a small piece of concrete inlay with the ground about 10 feet behind the tower base." The tail of each arrow was approximately 10 feet long and extended from the base of the tower. Adams noted that a large mound of dirt separated the piece from the tower base, but she was able to carefully remove a portion of the edge of the pile to reveal the tail of the arrow.

"When I saw the tail of the arrow, I was surprised to see spots of what I assume to be the original paint still present," she said. "Deviating from the standard yellow color, this arrow was red!"

Adams concludes that the red color was meant to make the arrow stand out more significantly against Kansas' waving fields of golden grain.

"I feel grateful to have had the opportunity to see this side of the country. Our country really is 'America the beautiful,'" Adams added.

Adams expressed her appreciation for her Honors thesis. "The Honors College experience has given me the opportunity to pursue my interests," she said. "The thesis capstone is a tumultuous task, but the Honors faculty have been incredibly supportive."

Adams expressed gratitude for her thesis director, Paul Craig, and thesis committee chair, Mary Evins, and for their enthusiasm and guidance regarding her project. "I will carry these skills learned through my thesis project with me into graduate school, my career, and beyond."



Adams in Ohio





John R. Vile as art buyer Roger Marx and Ivy Cook as artist Claude Monet



Aliou Ly as art buyer Henry LaRolle and Noah Farmer as artist Camille Pissarro



Abby Broughton's French class

MAKING AN IMPRESSION

Students role-play 1889 World's Fair in Paris

Students reenact the Paris World's Fair of 1889 in a combined course module for HIST 4740: American Cultural and Intellectual History and FREN 3110: French and Francophone Culture, co-taught by professors Susan Myers-Shirk and Joan McRae. The Reacting to the Past game called Art in Paris: Modernism vs. Traditionalism uses an innovative pedagogy of assigning roles for students to reenact the past at a pivotal historical moment. Here they relive the 1889 World's Fair in Paris, when the Eiffel Tower opened and art shows attracted high and low culture from around the world to see the paintings of the Impressionists, the Post-Impressionists, and the Academy of Arts' traditionalist painters.



Talia Harris as artist Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Abby Broughton as art buyer Pierre Muston

Traveler breathes in sights, sounds, and smells during a year in Europe

By **Emma Beard**, a Buchanan Fellow and double-major in Foreign Languages and in Global Studies and Human Geography

Uneven cobblestones sound beneath my feet. Church bells sing in my ear. Fresh flowers burst from my basket. I breathe and take it all in. A smile fills my face as I let these sensations imprint themselves in my memory, sensations of a Saturday morning in Caen, France.

I carry my “petits pains” down the café-lined streets and settle at a picnic table. I lift my eyes from my breakfast to gaze upon an 11th-century castle built by William the Conqueror that reposes in the middle of the city. A 13th-century cathedral stands regally to my left, the gargoyles watching over my shoulder as I sketch the mix of gothic and Renaissance architecture.

These moments are snapshots that encapsulate how my time studying abroad in Europe has looked. Throughout this year, I’ve filled my sketchbooks with drawings and reflections based on the sights I’ve seen and the foods I’ve tasted. My sketchbooks hold hundreds of moments captured by my pencil or my paints.

My rendering of a Banksy reminds me of the dark museum where I found his work. His graffiti led me to ponder the inequalities of our world from ages past. I travelled further back in history with the Changing of the Guard ceremony in front of Buckingham Palace. I now have a painting of those bright red coats and furry black hats to recall the precision of the parade.

My sketch of the Parthenon calls to mind the olive tree whose branches hung over my head as I tried to capture the ruins of the ancient monument. Other sketches from my Greece trip remind me of how it felt as I walked on the streets of Plato and imagined what secrets those dusty roads remember—the musings of Aristotle, maybe, or possibly the questions of Socrates?

Fast-forward a couple of millennia, and my sketchbook takes me to the 19th century when Anthony Gaudí designed La Sagrada Família. It was in this basilica where I took in a Mass in three languages and watched the sun bounce on the walls as it streamed through the brightly colored stained glass.

My sketchbook brings back memories of tastes, too. I remember afternoon tea in London with its tiny cakes, its mini sandwiches, its peach tea, and its scones with clotted cream and jam. My sketches from Greece hearken back to the crème-filled, powder sugar-coated bougatsa pastry I ate in a random park in Athens and the moussaka I tried at a hidden mom-and-pop restaurant off the beaten path. Patatas bravas and berenjenas con miel are food stories from Spain my travel journal tells.

My notebook tells a story—sometimes mundane, sometimes extraordinary. My sketches and paintings might never hang in a museum alongside Monets and Picassos, but my sketchbooks are my favorite souvenirs; they help me recall moments I spent in the shadow of centuries-old buildings who are themselves storytellers, silently waiting for the secrets hidden within to be discovered. And in this year abroad, discover them I did; I became a small part of the story those buildings tell other visitors. Their walls watched me, young American me, sketch and snack and bask in the culture that surrounded me.

I have been changed by the foods I’ve eaten, the art I’ve made, the history I’ve learned. That “changed” me can’t wait to reprise my role of small-town Tennessean and discover my new role as a global citizen returning home with new ideas and new perspectives bursting from her suitcase.



à travers Mes Yeux



Chinatown in London



Emma Beard at the Parthenon



Crepes in Caen, France



Afternoon tea in London



Painting of Victoria Gallery and Museum in Liverpool



Sketching and eating in Barcelona



The Colosseum

WHEN IN ROME

STEM major expresses “grazie” for Honors class trek to Italy

By **Ross Sibley**, a Buchanan Fellow from Redlands, California



As a Biochemistry major, I never really expected to fit in a study abroad experience during my time at MTSU. Through the Honors College, however, I was presented with a fantastic opportunity to spend two weeks in Italy with the Honors in Italy: Roma Æterna program.

I cringe as I remember that I was originally hesitant to take this leap abroad. Before I knew it, the awkward first few days soon turned into a natural flow of hopping on public transit to get across Rome, ordering gelato in Italian every night, and looking very fashionable in a new Florentine leather jacket.

In order to make the most of our time abroad, we attended six classes throughout the spring semester reading and analyzing prose and epic poetry written by influential Italian writers such as Virgil, Boethius, and Dante. Once in Italy, we visited many historical sites relevant to these authors and their written works, including Ravenna, where Dante’s tomb and bones are located. Overall, we lodged seven days in Rome and eight days in Florence and took day trips to several locations from Pompeii to Cinque Terre, a seaside paradise made up of five coastal towns. In addition, there were a few free days scattered throughout the trip where students could “Rome” about freely.

Experiencing another culture cannot easily be described, so I would encourage students to study abroad and experience a foreign culture firsthand. From the food to day-to-day life, it is an adventure to immerse yourself in a foreign culture.

From an academic standpoint, it helps to have a professor like Honors Associate Dean Philip E. Phillips, who is clearly very enthusiastic about all things Italian. At times, it felt like we had our very own private tour guide sharing his knowledge of Dante, ancient architecture, or Italian culture. Furthermore, we were able to listen to one of his Italian friends, Professor Fabio Troncarelli, as he spoke on the history of Italy and Dante in the most beautiful library I have ever seen. I am also grateful to Honors advisor Susan Lyons for encouraging me to participate and for her extreme dedication to organizing and spearheading our trip.

Last, but not least, my favorite part of this trip was the friendships that were created. I now have 20 lifelong friends across numerous majors who will always share this experience with me. As an Honors student and ambassador, I absolutely love the Honors College community and the environment established by the diverse population of students.

Just a few months ago, I was stuck in the headspace that I would not have the ability to study abroad as a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) major, but thanks to this short, interdisciplinary program, I was able to escape this mindset and experience the world.



Group at the Colosseum



Gondola ride in Venice

Trevi Fountain in Rome





“ I now have 20 lifelong friends across numerous majors. ”

Group at the Pantheon in Rome



True Blue in Venice



Apse of Basilica of San Vitale, Ravenna

Honors in Italy participants

Erica Allen, Celin Artoonian, Emma Beard, Rachel Booher, Halle Brandt, Julie Bush, Connor Chase, Eliza Corder, Jacob Davenport, Sam Dolinger, Jared Frazier, Grayson Garrette, Anara Holland-Holton, Riley Jacoby, Alexander Larabie, Lily Grace Lyons, Susan Lyons, Dalton Miksa, Sharmila Patel, Philip Phillips, Jessikah Riley, and Ross Sibley



From EXotic Foods to Fluffy Friends

Sesaleigh Whitaker with Samoyeds



Gyeongbokgung Palace in Seoul

South Korea trip offers taste of culture and history

By *Sesaleigh Whitaker*, an Honors Transfer Fellow majoring in Art

Studying abroad is one of the best things college students can do; it changes one's worldview, provides experience with diverse cultures, and gives insight into how other people in the world live.

Since 1948, South Korea has established deep cultural roots in the areas of fashion, art, architecture, and cuisine. While visiting the country this spring, I had an opportunity to wear a hanbok, a traditional Korean dress, which was from the Goguryeo dynasty. I wore the dress, which symbolizes age, class, and formality, at the Gyeongbokgung Palace in Seoul, the main royal palace built during Korea's Joseon dynasty.

The detail and beauty of the palace was breathtaking. The architecture was unlike anything I have ever seen. It extended from the landscape with a mountainous backdrop that appeared to be miles away. I felt small and unnoticeable as we toured the site.

One of my favorite things about South Korea is the food. When I first went to South Korea in 2019, I enjoyed many great dishes such as bibimbap, a rice and vegetable dish with a spicy red paste sauce, and kimchi jjigae. I was excited to return to Korea this year

and eat kimchi jjigae again. This dish consists of tofu, beef, and bean sprouts, with rice as a side dish.

To celebrate my birthday on the second day of my trip in May, I went to a popular food store called Paris Baguette, where I purchased my birthday cake—a sponge cake with a delicious blueberry yogurt flavor and whipped icing. This type of cake is very common in Korea. I went out with friends that night for chicken and beer (also known as "chimaek" in Korean) and shared the cake with my friends.

On our fourth day, we toured the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) site. Designed like a rollercoaster, the tour took us through an underground tunnel known as the "Third Tunnel." The underground tunnel was discovered in the 1970s and is located under North and South Korea's common border. Outside of the tunnel is a large DMZ sign, the perfect location for a photo op.

The DMZ site was part of the educational portion of my trip. I appreciated learning about the history of Korea and how the country separated into North and South. The DMZ is guarded continuously on each side of the border, but both countries respectfully avoid entering the DMZ as a means of keeping peace.



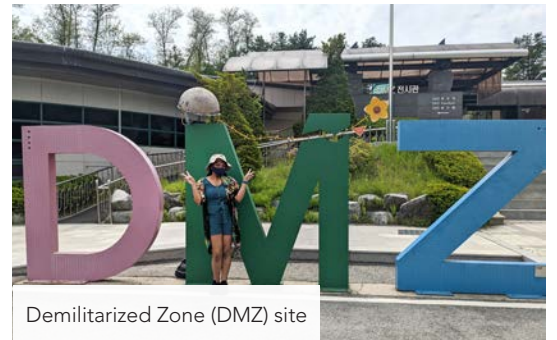
Whitaker in hanbok



Kimchi jjigae



Whitaker's birthday cake from Paris Baguette



Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) site

“ I had an opportunity to wear a hanbok, a traditional Korean dress, which was from the Goguryeo dynasty. ”

Each day in South Korea included exciting activities and visits to various sites, but I enjoyed going to the Samoyed dog cafe in Hongdae the most. We were able to interact with several beautiful, fluffy Samoyed dogs, which excitedly accepted treats and gave kisses. One dog insisted on eating all the treats I had and prevented me from sharing with the other dogs.

South Korea, known for its fast culture, has many things to do and see, and people are always in a rush. Their “bali bali” culture takes a while to get used to, but I eventually got the hang of it. When it comes to the Korean language, which I have been learning for six years, I consider myself a basic level learner, so I took every opportunity I could to converse in Korean, though it was a little overwhelming at times.

South Korea taught me how to adapt to a fast-paced environment and how to appreciate a culture far different than my own. I will fondly remember my visit to South Korea for years to come, and I look forward to an opportunity to return in the future. I now feel more comfortable traveling abroad and maneuvering independently in large cities like Seoul.

Kap Paull with Provost Mark Byrnes



HONORS TAKES TOP HONORS

College standouts collect campus and state awards



Winton Cooper



Cynthia Torres



Dean John R. Vile and Dara Zwemer

Each year four outstanding MTSU students are selected to receive campus awards, and this year all four are Honors students. In addition, one of the four also received a state award.

Best friends **Winton Cooper** and **Kap Paull** claimed the President's Award and the Provost's Award, respectively. Cooper, the 2021–22 Student Government Association (SGA) president and an Environmental Science major, received the President's Award for "exemplary character and achievements in scholarship, leadership, and service" from MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee at the annual SGA awards. Paull, majoring in Allied Health Science, received the Provost's Award for "outstanding academic achievement through scholarly activity" from Provost Mark Byrnes during the College of Basic and Applied Sciences awards program.

Two students from the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences, **Dara Zwemer** and **Cynthia Torres**, won two other campuswide awards at the SGA ceremony. Zwemer, a Buchanan Fellow and Psychology major, garnered the Robert C. LaLance Jr. Award in recognition of her determination, sacrifices, and contribution to the community. Torres, an Honors Transfer Fellow and Psychology major, was recognized with the Community Service Award for her achievements and contributions to MTSU and the community (*see related article on page 22*).

Torres, who has organized and facilitated various support groups to benefit those touched by addiction, infidelity, and trauma, was also awarded a Harold Love Outstanding Community Service Award and accompanying \$1,000 cash prize in the spring. The statewide awards, created to recognize higher education students and faculty/staff, are named for the late state representative who was known for his compassion and good humor.

DEAR SELF, YOU ARE ENOUGH

Torres trailblazing the truth of identity through service and self-talk

By Rachel Booher, a senior Transfer Fellow majoring in Japanese and English



In a world that needs humility and kindness, **Cynthia Torres** is the first person who would lend a helping hand to those in need. An advocate for mental health, she is dedicated to helping others find peace, healing, and their true identities, both spiritual and psychological.

Counseling couples, assisting clients with substance abuse, and facilitating classes in women's prisons has enabled Torres to discover her true calling: to become a licensed counselor. Her involvement with service led her to the decision to return to college and pursue a career with selfless drive.

“Being in the Honors College gave me a place to be. . . . I had a home.”

A first-generation college student, Torres attended several colleges before deciding on MTSU, where she majored in Psychology with minors in Music and University Honors. She received several scholarships, including the Honors Transfer Fellowship, Paul Martin Scholarship, and June Anderson full-tuition scholarship for nontraditional students. Attending a new university can create anxiety and concern, but Torres felt her worries ease because of the support of Honors College advisor Judy Albakry, who provided solutions when the struggles became overwhelming.

“Being in the Honors College gave me a place to be. . . . I was not one of the masses; I had a home,” Torres said.

Torres' love for people and service shines in all she has accomplished, and her gentle, nonjudgmental nature makes her an approachable person. As a child, she grew up dealing with various struggles, but none was more prominent than those of identity. She struggled with food and was taught to use food as a tool but was then scolded for gaining weight. Baffled and conflicted, Torres believed the lies about herself, molding those experiences into her identity. The clearest message she received during childhood

was “something is wrong with me.” This was the beginning of her entrance into the world of mental health, recovery, and identity lies.

MINISTERING TO PRISONERS

Time does not heal the wounds of the mind, but therapy and hard work begin the process of reclaiming peace of mind and spirit. Where Torres saw a need, she sought to fill that void. One of her first service endeavors was creating a therapy group for couples who had committed adultery.

“Nashville did not have a group, so I created one,” she said. She personalized the process for each couple, assisting them to forgive one another and become better versions of themselves. This led to her becoming a facilitator of theotherapy in women's prisons in 2014.

Theotherapy contains faith-based protocols for inner healing and “focuses on the lies we have been given and believed about ourselves, targeting past trauma and painful experiences, affirming the truth about self and what God says about himself and who we are,” Torres said.

Her goal to become a counselor was highly influenced by her service in the women's prison system. The stories of the female inmates inspired and motivated her to continue helping women discover their true identities and watch them transform into different people. These experiences, combined with her own journey of self-identity, encouraged her to research the topic of identity and self-talk.

SPEAKING TO OURSELVES

Torres' Honors thesis, “Exploring Gender Differences in Self-Talk Content and Frequency,” emphasizes how gender affects the ways humans speak to themselves. Self-talk is something we do all the time, every day, and we do not always realize what we tell ourselves. Through her research, Torres sought answers to questions like: How does gender affect self-talk, and how does it influence how we

speak to ourselves? Is it positive or negative? How do men and women influence each other's self-talk?

Most of the research involved gender differences across different fields and in certain environments. Depending on the struggles women and men face or how they view themselves, their perception of the world alters. Self-talk creates a lens through which individuals view the world outside of themselves.

Through her research she concluded that "men are at a disadvantage because they are so compartmentalized, whereas women are open and cognitive." Torres learned that most of the time, women think about how what they are doing will affect others and how people will look at their actions. If a couple or individual is struggling with communication, these findings can and will affect how therapy is performed. As a result of these discoveries, she feels even more motivated to help both women and men.

Thomas Brinthead, Torres' thesis director, praised her excellent academic skills, work habits, and temperament. He called her a "centered" student with great promise as a future productive and influential leader.

This spring, Torres was selected to receive MTSU's Community Service Award and a statewide Harold Love Outstanding Community Service Award. She graduated in May and is pursuing an online master's at Regent University.

Torres, who is also a songwriter, went to Ireland in 2017 to write music with Irish singer Justin McGurk. Together, they wrote a song called "You Are," which was used in a commercial that featured the first model with Down syndrome. This song embodies how Torres views herself and everyone else in the world: "We are all beautiful."



LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE CELEBRATES SWEET 16

Participants in the 2022 Institute of Leadership Excellence in May (l-r): front, Micheal Upshaw, Laine McPherson, Kimberly Harmon, Gerges Basta, Sarah Head, Ruba Khan, Nadera Shehabaddin, Jackson Wade, Janna Abou-Rahma, Lauren Henry, Mina Abdulkareem, Fritzi Solis-Lagunes, and Elaf Alkazzaz; middle, Domanique Lawrence, Fady Barsoum, Verina Rezk, Morgan Hutchins, Ellie Rivera, Sara Abdelmalak, Joaquin Dubon Crespo, Kenneth Boyd, Erin Bates, Kade-Jah Browne, Hannah Harris, Meghan Pittenger, and Teaya Oyinatumba-Reaves; and back, Brielle Walmsley, Anthony Ozoh, Olivia Washington, Jacob Pruitt, Ann Petty, Caleb Chunn, Ivy Adams, Chris Smith, Dale Clifford, and Mena Abdalla.

Instructors guided 36 undergraduate student participants in the 16th annual Institute of Leadership Excellence (ILE), a one-week intensive, unique, and interdisciplinary experience in leadership and leadership development for promising undergraduate students from across the University.

As a special treat this year and an inspiration to students for their own futures, Kelly Manix, an alumna of the inaugural class, shared her journey since graduating from ILE in 2006 to earning her Ph.D. in Management this spring.

In addition to sessions taught by Jones College of Business faculty, the institute invites highly successful individuals in a variety of fields.

The Honors College hosts the yearly institute in its amphitheater. Lunches are provided through generous sponsorships by local businesses, this year by First Horizon Bank, Pinnacle Financial Partners, Ascend Federal Credit Union, Greater Nashville Realtors, and A Mortgage Boutique.

Visit mtsu.edu/ile to learn about MTSU's Institute of Leadership Excellence



Anna Collins



Colman Connolly



Zoe Critchlow



Chloe Dye



Ethan Estes



Rowynn Farriss



Tanner Hicks



Peter Hoffpaur



Ty Hudson



Lauren Jenkins



Rachelle Laurel



Savannah Lowery



Ariel Nicastro



Olivia O'Shell



Emily Olson



Ethan Pinkston



Erin Pitcher



Noah True



Adrienne Ward



Jai Wilson

MEET THE 2022 BUCHANAN FELLOWS

Twenty incoming freshmen committed to the Honors College Buchanan Fellowship this fall. The program is named in honor of MTSU's Nobel Prize-winning alumnus, James M. Buchanan, and is the highest award given to an entering freshman at Middle Tennessee State University.

Anna Collins

Sycamore High School
Pleasant View

Colman Connolly

Fairfield Warde High School
Fairfield, Connecticut

Zoe Critchlow

Clarksville High School
Trier, Germany

Chloe Dye

Lewis County High School
Hohenwald

Ethan Estes

Cascade High School
Bell Buckle

Rowynn Farriss

St. Cecilia Academy
Nashville

Tanner Hicks

Dyer County High School
Dyersburg

Peter Hoffpauir

Homeschool
Glenelg, Maryland

Ty Hudson

Peachtree Ridge High School
Duluth, Georgia

Lauren Jenkins

Rhea County High School
Evensville

Rachelle Laurel

Central Magnet School
Smyrna

Savannah Lowery

Green Hill High School
Old Hickory

Ariel Nicastro

Independence High School
Franklin

Olivia O'Shell

Roane County High School
Kingston

Emily Olson

Mt. Juliet High School
Old Hickory

Ethan Pinkston

Johnson Ferry Christian Academy
Marietta, Georgia

Erin Pitcher

Carroll Senior High School
Keller, Texas

Noah True

Brentwood High School
Brentwood

Adrienne Ward

Rockvale High School
Murfreesboro

Jai Wilson

Blackman High School
Antioch



2022 Transfer Fellows (l-r): front, Samuel Baldwin, Robyn Forde-Whitefield, Deanna Lack, Emilie Conners, Lauryn Tyler, Savannah Buist, Cai Ward, Maxwell Abram Vick, Matthew Ferguson; back, Carter Elliot, Connor Mosburg, Sydney Fischer, Priscilla Hammermeister, Isabelle Legrain, Kalub Levinson, Vanessa Jarman, Cole Jones, Bennie Thompson Sr.

MEET THE 2022 TRANSFER FELLOWS

A new class of 30 Transfer Fellows includes students from Tennessee, Kansas, Michigan, Mississippi, Alabama, and Arkansas and one international student. The Honors Transfer Fellowship is the highest academic award given to transfer students at MTSU.

Abby Grace Alton
Business Administration
Dyersburg State
Community College

Samuel Baldwin
Audio Production
Johnson County (Kansas)
Community College

Savannah Buist
Biology
Northwestern Michigan College

Terri Bush
Recording Industry
Nashville State Community College

Eli Certain
Social Work
Motlow State Community College

Emilie Conners
Marketing
University of Tennessee–
Chattanooga

Carter Elliot
Recording Industry
University of North Texas

Matthew Ferguson
Video and Film Production
Northeast Alabama
Community College

Sydney Fischer
Political Science
University of Tennessee–Martin

Alexis Flick
Professional Studies:
Organizational Leadership
Columbia State Community College

Robyn Forde-Whitefield
Accounting
Volunteer State Community College

Alexander Hamilton
Communication
Wallace State (Alabama)
Community College

Priscilla Hammermeister
Management
Asheville-Buncombe (North Carolina)
Technical Community College



front, Tara Kirkpatrick, Abby Grace Alton, Alexis Flick, Aaralyn Ledridge, Terri Bush; back, Matthew Siciliano, Benjimen Neal, Alexander Hamilton, Brian Maxwell, Eli Certain, Grey Warren; not pictured: Elizabeth Smith

Vanessa Jarman

English
Motlow State Community College

Cole Jones

Management
Columbia State
Community College

Tara Kirkpatrick

Psychology
Motlow State Community College

Deanna Lack

Religious Studies
Motlow State Community College

Aaralyn Ledridge

Anthropology
Nashville State Community College

Isabelle Legrain

Environmental Science
Chattanooga State
Community College

Kalub Levinson

Leisure and Sport Management
Volunteer State
Community College

Brian Maxwell

Video and Film Production
Motlow State Community College

Connor Mosburg

Psychology
Cleveland State
Community College

Benjimen Neal

Music
University of Central Arkansas

Matthew Siciliano

Political Science
Volunteer State
Community College

Elizabeth Smith

Agribusiness
Columbia State
Community College

Bennie Thompson Sr.

Concrete Industry Management
Nashville State Community College

Lauryn Tyler

Art
Columbia State
Community College

Maxwell Abram Vick

Accounting
Columbia State
Community College

Cai Ward

Business Administration
Columbia State
Community College

Grey Warren

History
University of Tennessee–
Chattanooga

SPRING 2022 THESES DEFENDED



Madeline Aadnes
Biology
"Undergraduate Biology Students' Climate Change Communication and Training Experiences"
Liz Barnes, thesis director



Tessa Allen
Biology
"The Effects of Viral Infection and Lysis by Cyanophage LPP-1 on the Lipid Composition of the *Cyanobacterium Plectonema Boryanum*"
Jeff LeBlond, thesis director



Rija Asim
Biochemistry
"Changes in Social Motivation Following Oxytocin Receptor Inhibition"
Tiffany Rogers, thesis director



Ana Cannon
Graphic Design
"Arts-Based Critique of the Media's False Images of Racial Protests"
Roberta Chevrette, thesis director



Micah Casey
Animation
"The Love of a Sibling: Studying Sibling Relationships in Children's Television"
Richard Lewis, thesis director



Connor Chase
Audio Production
"From Soundscapes to Songs"
Misty Simpson, thesis director



Anika Chowdhury
Biology
"Cross-Breeding Industrial Hemp (*Cannabis sativa*) Varieties to Access Changes in Cannabinoid Content and Seed Yield"
John Dubois, thesis director



Erin Coleman
Animal Science
"Effects of Heat Stress on Reproductive Parameters, Milk Quality, and Cow Activity in Lactating Holstein and Jersey Dairy Cows"
Jessica Carter, thesis director



Madison Collins
Anthropology
"Mortuary Practices and Sustainability: The Rise of Natural Burials in the United States"
William Leggett, thesis director



Bernadette Comage
Music Industry
"The Future of Soul Music"
Joseph Morgan, thesis director



Katherine Corder
International Relations
"Confucianism in Chinese Politics: Comparing Mao Zedong and Xi Jinping"
Zhen Wang, thesis director



Briza Dedicataria
Biochemistry
"Investigation of the Weathering Effects on the Less-Volatile Component Profiles of Ignitable Liquids"
Mengliang Zhang, thesis director



Adam Dockery
Psychology
"Examining Sleep and Sleep Hygiene in a Sample of College Students and Differences Between On- and Off-Campus Housing"
James Loveless, thesis director



Hayley Gretz

Music Industry

"A Comparison of Giuseppe Verdi and Antonio Ghislanzoni's *Aida* and Elton John and Tim Rice's *Aida*"
William Perkins, thesis director



Robby Napier

Criminal Justice Administration

"Package Theft: Prevention Products and Methods"
Ben Stickle, thesis director



Christopher Hedden

Biology

"Embryogenesis of *Cannabis Sativa*"
John Dubois, thesis director



Mackenna O'Sullivan

Commercial Songwriting

"The Flower and the Serpent"
Pete McCluskey, thesis director



Maria Hite

Science

"Determining the Effect of *Cryptococcus Neoformans* Infection on the Phosphorylation and Subcellular Localization of CITED1 in Macrophages"
David E. Nelson, thesis director



Ashi Patel

Psychology

"Investigating the Functional Significance of N-MYC-WDR5 Interaction on Neuroblastoma"
April Weissmiller, thesis director



Sarah Kerr

Biology

"Diet Effects, Egg Laying, Biomass, and Stable Isotope Values in Tetragnathid Spiders: Use of a Novel Laboratory Technique"
Ryan Otter, thesis director



Kap Paul

Allied Health Science

"The Stressed-Out College Student and the Mood-Boosting Effects of Somatic Dance"
Margaret Brooker, thesis director



Hanna Kolwyck

Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology

"Noise Exposure: How It Affects Hearing in Music Majors Compared to Non-Music Majors"
Rebecca Fischer, thesis director



Jonah Peacock

Economics

"Flooding in Bangladesh: A Race Against Time"
Anthon Eff, thesis director



Savannah Lawwell

Biology

"Producing Pollen, Pollination, and Assessment of Seed Yields in Feminized Industrial Hemp (*Cannabis sativa*)"
John Dubois, thesis director



Cassandra Perrone

Forensic Science

"Cloning Successive Generations of Industrial Hemp (*Cannabis sativa*) to Assess Cannabinoid Profiles"
John Dubois, thesis director



Kacie Leonard

Animal Science

"The Effects of a Powdered Post-milking Teat Dip on Mastitis and Teat Condition in Dairy Cattle in the Winter Months"
Jessica Carter, thesis director



Joshua Smith

Vocal Music Performance

"Miles and Alaska: A Song Cycle Based on John Green's *Looking for Alaska*"
Angela Tipps, thesis director



Zachary Staton

Engineering Technology/
Mechatronics
"Getting A Good Push: Improving
the Baader 212's Head Pusher for
Increased Recovery and Quality"
Jason Sublette, thesis director



Meghan Wassam

Biochemistry
"Synthesis and Evaluation of
Antifungal Peptoid Derivatives
Against *Cryptococcus Neoformans*"
Kevin Bicker, thesis director



Kaytlin Stout

Philosophy
"The Implications of Virtue Ethics on
Emotional Intelligence"
Mary Magada-Ward, thesis director



Abigail Wells

English
"Poems of Confabulation"
Marion Hollings, thesis director



Sophia Taylor

Chemistry
"Synthetic Organic Electrochemistry
in Deep Eutectic Solvents"
Scott Handy, thesis director



Jacqueline Williams

Biology
"Assessing the Linkage Between
Aquatic Biodiversity and Water
Chemistry in the Stones River
Watershed"
Cole Easson, thesis director



Carina Vazquez Nunez

Physics
"Experimental Composition of Two
Systems: Ring Resonator Structures
and Y-Shaped Demultiplexer"
William Robertson, thesis director



Anna Yuhus

Forensic Science
"Initiation and Cannabinoid
Assessment of Trichomes on
Industrial Hemp (*Cannabis sativa*)"
John Dubois, thesis director



Jason Wasilewski

Marketing
"Higher Education Marketing
During the COVID-19 Pandemic:
A Facebook Content Analysis of
Middle Tennessee State University
and Peer Institutions"
Don Roy, thesis director



Aubrey Zurhellen

Theatre
"What Makes a Monster and What
Makes a Man: Uncovering the Key
to Disney Theatrical Productions'
Success in Transferring Animated
Films to Broadway"
Katie Goodwin, thesis director



DEANS' DISTINGUISHED ESSAY AWARDS

Laura "Percy" Verret, pictured left, is author of the graduate Deans' Distinguished Essay Award-winning paper for *Scientia et Humanitas*, "A Mind of One's Own: Individual Internality vs. Interpersonal Intimacy in *Mrs. Dalloway*." **Alfred Holman**, winner of the undergraduate award-winning essay, "Affection Deprivation and Weathering: An Exploratory Study of Black and African Americans' Well-Being during COVID-19," is not pictured.

Jessikah Riley and CLA Dean Leah Lyons



SCIENCE SCHOLARS MAKE A CLEAN SWEEP



Emaa Elrayah and CBAS Dean Greg Van Patten



Adam Dockery and CBHS Interim Dean Barbara Turnage

Honors students swept the College of Basic and Applied Sciences undergraduate category of the 16th annual Research and Creative Activity Exposition, taking home first, second, and third place. In addition, two other Honors students won awards for their research at the March 25 event.

Biochemistry major **Emaa Elrayah**, a previous winner of an Honors College Outstanding Student Award, took first place among undergraduate CBAS participants. She presented two posters, "Placental Metabolism of FDA-Approved Drugs Repurposed for Novel Tocolytic Use" and "Alternative Splicing of F36H2/CR2 Exon 12 in Response to Heat Stress in Nematodes." Jennifer Herington and Rebecca Seipelt-Thiemann were her faculty mentors for the two projects, respectively.

Second place for the CBAS competition went to Biology student **Madeline Aadnes**, whose Scholars' Day poster was titled "Undergraduate Students' Climate Change Communication Experiences and Training." Her faculty mentor was Elizabeth Barnes.

Third place for CBAS was awarded to Biology major **Sarah Kerr**, a researcher in Ryan Otter's lab. Her presentation was titled "Diet Effects, Biomass, Egg Laying, and Stable Isotope Signatures in the Bioindicator Spider Tetragnathidae: Use of a Novel Laboratory Technique."

Marketing major **Jessikah Riley**, under the direction of faculty mentor Rebekka King, presented the first-place poster for the College of Liberal Arts, "(dis)Connected: A Podcast Series on Society and Spirituality in the Modern World."

Adam Dockery, a Psychology major, placed second for the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences with his poster "Exploring the Equivalency of a Standardized Reading Battery." His faculty mentor was Emily Farris.

In total, the event that concluded Scholars Week 2022 included approximately 45 Honors student participants.



Sarah Kerr and Van Patten



Madeline "Maddie" Aadnes and Van Patten



Anna Yuhas



MTSU TCHC participants

STUDENTS PRESENT RESEARCH TO PEERS

Honors students from across the state traveled to the annual Tennessee Collegiate Honors Council Conference in February to make presentations and learn from other undergraduate presenters.

Honors advisor Judy Albakry recruited and accompanied 10 MTSU students to East Tennessee State University during the two-day event. MTSU's delegation represented nine disciplines, ranging from English to Science, with seven students making oral presentations and three making poster presentations.

Sophomore **Sydney Fischer**, a Political Science major, presented "Teacher Quality in Rural Communities: A Special Case." Two juniors, **Yaseen Ginnab** (Biology and Psychology) and **Rebecca Jones** (Information Systems), made presentations. Ginnab's talk was titled "Lake Michigan's Microbial Community Quickly Adapts to the Presence of Crude Oil to Degrade Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs)," while Jones spoke on "The Attitudes and Influences of Information System Majors."

Seven seniors participated in the conference, including Forensic Science majors **Cassandra Perrone** and **Anna Yuhas**. Perrone's poster was titled "Cloning Successive Generations of Industrial Hemp (*Cannabis sativa*) to Assess Cannabinoid Profiles." "Initiation and Cannabinoid Assessment of Trichomes on Industrial Hemp (*Cannabis sativa*)" was the topic of Yuhas' research poster.



Cassandra Perrone

- Other senior presentations were:
- "Mind Your Pressure: A Study on the Effect of Trait Mindfulness on Resting Blood Pressure," **Hailey Hall** (Psychology)
 - "The Effect of *Cryptococcus Neoformans* Infection on the Phosphorylation and Subcellular Localization of CITED1 in Macrophages," **Maria Hite** (Science)
 - "Noise Exposure: How It Affects Hearing in Music Majors Versus Non-Music Majors," **Hanna Kolwyck** (Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology)
 - "When Gods Fall: The Epic Conventions of Game Narrative," **Nash Meade** (English and Philosophy)
 - "Universal Design in the Restaurant Industry: Bridging the Gap Between ADA Guidelines and Customer Needs," **Rosemary Reid** (Tourism and Hospitality Management)



CAPITAL IDEAS AT THE CAPITOL

Honors researchers share synergy and energy

By Randy Weiler

MTSU undergraduate researchers, faculty, and staff (l-r) Logan Carver, Greg Rushton, Jamie Burriss, Hunter Brady, DeVonte Lewis, Sophia Taylor, Maria Clark, Carina Vazquez, Sydney "Quinn" Wilson, and Casey Penston

Bright futures appear to be on the horizon for Middle Tennessee State University undergraduate researchers, including four Honors College students.

Honors Transfer Fellow **Sophia Taylor**, a Chemistry major who graduated in May, will continue studying and researching in the field as a graduate student at Ohio State University. The Nashville native was one of seven undergrads from MTSU selected to attend the annual Posters at the Capitol in February, showcasing research in the Cordell Hull Building.

Posters at the Capitol, an effort coordinated by the Tennessee STEM Education Center at MTSU, brought together nearly 40 STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) researchers from seven state universities. They visited with state legislators during scheduled meetings and discussed their research with peers, faculty mentors, the legislators, and others.

Taylor's research in synthetic organic electrochemistry is timely.

"Potentially, I'll be doing research with batteries and sustainable synthesis research as well, making them [better]," she said. "The future in cars is electric batteries. There's a lot of research going on with batteries. It's an important field right now."

Carina Vazquez of Shelbyville, a Physics major whose research experimentally investigated two acoustic systems manipulating sound waves, said her study "has been successful."

"We used a paper by [Abdelkader] Mouadili, and we tested out his theory," Vazquez said of the Moroccan professor listed first on the 2020 paper. "Then we compared it to COMSOL, which is computerized simulation, and we also did it experimentally, so that all three things align up," she added.

"Right now, what I'm working on is the electrical analog of it, so I'm trying to see if the theory also works for electricity wires."

Transfer Fellow **Hunter Brady** (Biology) and **Maria Clark** (Chemistry), both of Murfreesboro, also participated in the prestigious event. Brady, whose faculty mentor was Anthony Newsome, presented research titled "Assessment of Antiviral Activity of Chlorine Dioxide Gas." Clark's research was titled "Synthesis and Characterization of the Therapeutic Potential of Antifungal Peptoid β -5." She worked with faculty mentor Kevin Bicker.

Other MTSU undergraduate researchers were senior Logan Carver (Biology) of Nashville, who plans to pursue a career in medicine and medical research; DeVonte Lewis (Physics) of Camp Springs, Maryland, who researched superconductors that are 21st-century quantum materials; and Sydney "Quinn" Wilson (Physics) of Smyrna.

Participating along with MTSU this year were Austin Peay, East Tennessee State, the University of Memphis, Tennessee State University, the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, and UT-Martin.



SCENE	TAKE	ROLL
1	1	2
DATE	Class of 2021	SOUND
PROD.CO.		
DIRECTOR	Dr. Jaz Gray	
CAMERAMAN		

Beauty for
ASHES,

Strength for
TEARS

Alumna Jasmine Gray draws on the power of storytelling to overcome and inspire

By Rachel Booher, an Honors Transfer Fellow majoring in Japanese and English

Jasmine “Jaz” Gray is a talented speaker, a creative writer, and a producer of motivational and advocating stories. She is a woman of color who daily overcomes personal challenges and a serious medical condition that has been part of her life since birth. Her unbending faith, her strength, and her resilience are inspirational, and her mission centers on seeking transformational change for those who are disempowered and dispirited.

A 2010 summa cum laude graduate with a degree in Mass Communication, Gray received both the Community Service Award and the President’s Award among many other accolades during her tenure at MTSU. She holds an M.A. from Syracuse University, where she was a Turner Diversity Fellow, and a Ph.D. in Communication from the University of North Carolina after defending her research in storytelling. But that is only the surface matter. Gray also has persevered and surmounted incredible difficulties throughout her journey to where she is now.

Born with a cranial facial condition that gave her some unique physical attributes, she has progressively undergone at least 47 surgeries starting at age 9.

“I knew early on that there was some kind of purpose for my life,” Gray said, and she found that purpose within the world of storytelling.

Storytelling was originally a way to cope with the traumatic experiences of multiple surgeries. But eventually, storytelling became a gateway that opened a wider field of opportunities, says Gray, who is now an assistant professor of Communication Studies at Pepperdine University in Malibu, California.

Throughout her high school years, she had to take classes from home because of her numerous medical procedures. Stories were a form of therapy, and, despite her isolation, she found peace and purpose within storytelling. As she listened to songs and stories from the people around her, Gray began to see the relationship between her challenges and her future. She was able to relate to the experiences of others, and this allowed her to begin to visualize her path.

“There is a connection between storytelling and a potential skill set for a career path,” she thought. This discovery motivated her to pursue an education focused on storytelling and communication. And that pursuit led her to MTSU.

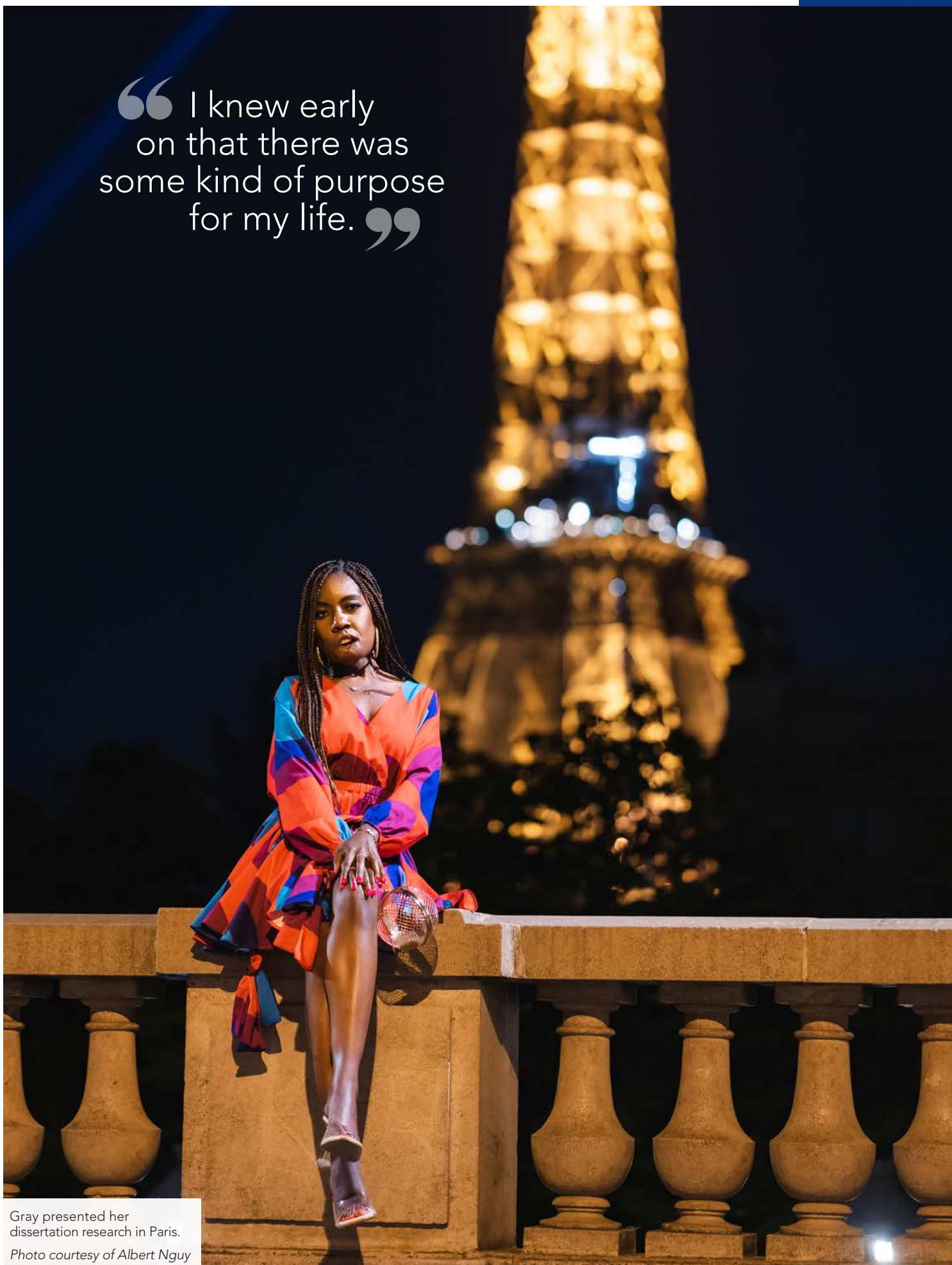
“No one person's approval or disapproval will determine your future.”



Jasmine “Jaz” Gray earned a master’s and doctorate after MTSU.

Photo courtesy of Antoine Lever

“ I knew early on that there was some kind of purpose for my life. ”



Gray presented her dissertation research in Paris.
Photo courtesy of Albert Nguy



Her film *More than Skin Deep* documents Gray's struggle with arteriovenous malformation.

Photo by J. Intintoli

BREAKING BARRIERS

Gray found that the media program at MTSU had an excellent reputation, along with being affordable, giving her opportunities to grow and “carve out my own path.” During her time at MTSU, she explored and discovered different facets of storytelling, including journalism, videography, and public speaking.

However, her craniofacial disability was a barrier that she had to break through. Asked if her disability was a hindrance or a form of motivation, Gray responds that it was both.

She recalls a time when she was late for class and, while rushing, did not notice the red spots on her shirt until she had entered her building. When she looked down, she realized her face was bleeding from a recent surgery, and she had left a trail of blood in her wake. Gray had social anxiety from her previous isolation and was fearful of being seen bleeding in the middle of the hallway. In fact, the incident was one of many, Gray says, but she was surrounded by people and faculty who supported her and “looked out for her.”

During her first year at MTSU, Gray encountered Jackie Victory, director of Student Organizations and Service.

“She helped me navigate and balance the challenges I was facing with service opportunities,” Gray said.

“Anytime we overcome a challenge, we have a responsibility to use that to advocate for others . . . to create opportunities for others.”

Specifically, Gray has a nonprofit outreach program called Jaz's Jammies, which she began in high school. The program is still active today and seeks to bring pajamas to children in hospitals and homeless shelters. When Gray met Victory, she decided to focus on how she could continue to help others through service rather than focus on the difficulties and challenges she faced. She credits Victory for helping her bring Jaz's Jammies to MTSU.

Gray also was active in the Honors College, serving as the editor-in-chief of *Collage* for two semesters and completing a thesis, “Contrasting Color: Juxtaposing Black Identity and Media Portrayal in America, Ghana, and England.” She says Dean John R. Vile, Laura Clippard, and Marsha Powers from the Honors team were influential and encouraged her throughout her

journey. Whether it was applying to graduate school, exploring new service opportunities, or searching for scholarships, the people within the Honors College provided constant support.

Some of Gray's other accomplishments during her college years included completing the Chips Quinn Scholars Program for Diversity in Journalism and freelancing for *The Tennessean* and the *Louisville Courier Journal*.

After graduation, Gray interned for media agencies, such as Cartoon Network and BET, and worked full time at Paramount Pictures. Her stories have been featured on news affiliates of NBC, ABC, and Fox, and Jaz's Jammies Inc. has donated more than 6,000 pairs of pajamas to children's hospitals and shelters across the nation.

TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

Gray is an advocate for people with disabilities and for removing barriers for others who are struggling. She moderates panels and leads workshops about topics including the power of stories, disability representation, bullying, and divine purpose.

For those who are struggling with racial identity, body image, a disability, or a unique physical

attribute, she advises, "No one person's approval or disapproval will determine your future," so do not put too much reliance on one person or one pathway.

"Anytime we overcome a challenge, we have a responsibility to use that to advocate for others . . . to create opportunities for others," because not everyone has the same opportunities as we have been afforded, Gray adds.

She agrees that she was given the opportunity while at MTSU to channel and transform her insecurities into strengths and navigate through her "very real barriers"—obstacles that will be present continually throughout the rest of her life.

Because of the resources, accessibility, and networking during her time at the University, Gray was able to reach the community in ways that would not have been possible elsewhere. MTSU was not only her foundation, but also her runway that would allow her life and career to take flight in directions she could not have dreamed.

Gray says that MTSU was "a blessing" and that her stories will continue to break barriers for those who are disempowered and dispirited. They have certainly inspired me. **A**



Gray with Eugene Robinson after his lecture for the Seigenthaler Chair of Excellence in Journalism



Now a faculty member at Pepperdine University
Photo courtesy of Madison Inman



The *Collage* staff met April 8 to complete editing of the spring issue. The team was led by editor-in-chief Steven Gavel (front left), and the magazine was designed by LaShaé Whyte (back row, second from left).

BACK-TO-BACK NATIONAL “CROWNS”

Collage captures ninth honor for excellence



By Marsha Powers

Collage: A Journal of Creative Expression keeps raising the bar.

The journal is now a nine-time Crown Award winner, having received a 2022 Silver Crown Award from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association (CSPA), an affiliate of Columbia University in New York. This honor follows a 2021 award and marks the third such recognition in four years.

In the award letter, Edmund J. Sullivan, CSPA's executive director, said that the publications produced by the *Collage* staff “rank among the best in student journalism.” Indeed, the New York-based association that has served student journalism since 1925 chose only 10 print art and literary journals to receive 2022 Crown Awards out of hundreds of eligible publications.

Initiated in 1968, *Collage* began as a showcase of student creativity sponsored by MTSU's Student Publications, which disbanded in 2004. At that time, *Collage* was moved to the auspices of the University Honors College and renamed *Collage: A Journal of Creative Expression*.

For much of the journal's 54-year history, a Crown Award eluded the staff, with all nine awards coming since 2007. The journal's recent success can be attributed in large part to partnerships with campus departments and the help of faculty who encourage students to participate. Professors such as **Martha Hixon**, **Noel Lorson**, and recently retired **Jackie Heigle** participated in the journal's 2004 transition to the Honors College and provided much-needed wisdom and student talent to *Collage*. Their support has continued, and many other faculty members have also backed the journal in recent years, enhancing the likelihood of producing award-winning publications.

The support of the Honors College since 2004 also has played a critical role in the recent success of *Collage*. Former Dean **Philip Mathis** and current Dean **John R. Vile** have provided financial support and encouragement. Advisors and staff members recommend outstanding students for staff positions and promote the journal to advisees and potential students.



“Collage has provided extraordinary leadership opportunities and valuable experience for MTSU’s . . . students.”

Another key contributor to success is the exceptional students who make up the staff semester after semester. The first Honors College-supported issue, in spring 2005, benefitted from the experience and dedication of the late **Amy Jones Foster Gray**. Gray, who died this March after contracting COVID-19, was art editor of the final Student Publications edition of *Collage* in spring 2004 and photographer for the 2003 *Midlander*. Subsequent staffs have increasingly drawn from top students recommended by professors and Honors students in search of a creative outlet.

“*Collage* has provided extraordinary leadership opportunities and valuable experience for MTSU’s diverse population of students,” said Laura Clippard, Honors advisor and Undergraduate Fellowships Office coordinator. “Many of our students already have strong communication, writing, and organizational skills, but participation in *Collage* takes those skills to the next level, and students from all majors have the opportunity to learn from each other. As a result, *Collage* has won many national awards, as the content is interesting and creative.”

The 2022 Crown Award honors the 2020–21 issues that were assembled during the COVID-19 pandemic under the leadership of editors-in-chief **Kelsey Keith** (fall 2020) and **Katrina Scott** (spring 2021), both Honors Buchanan Fellows. The previous two editions, directed by Honors student **Beatriz Dedicatoria** (fall 2019) and Honors Transfer Fellow **Anthony Czelusniak** (spring 2020), garnered a 2021 Crown Award. A 2019 Crown Award was bestowed for the fall 2017 journal with graduate student and professional photographer **Kimi Conro** as editor-in-chief and the 50th anniversary spring 2018 issue overseen by senior Buchanan Fellow **Rebecca Clippard**.

“Receiving the Crown Award for the fall 2020 and spring 2021 editions of *Collage* is a glowing testament to the hard work and countless hours of editing put in by our dedicated staff despite the obstacles of a pandemic,” Scott said. “It is pertinent now more than ever to acknowledge our accomplishments and successes wherever we can find them, and this is one worth celebrating!”

And, to a large degree, Crown Awards are an indicator of the impressive talent of MTSU’s students. If not for the varied skills of student writers, artists, and photographers who submit their original work each semester and the award-worthy designs of students from the Art Department’s Graphic Design program and from the College of Media and Entertainment, the work of the editors would be for naught. The perfect blending of highly creative student contributors and knowledgeable and dedicated staff is a recipe for success.



Kelsey Keith



Katrina Scott



Beatriz Dedicatoria



Anthony Czelusniak



Kimi Conro



Rebecca Clippard

WORKS OF ART

Collage Creative
Expression Awards



Eclosion by Valkyrie Rutledge

A biannual publication of the MTSU Honors College, *Collage* accepts submissions of original student creative work year-round, including art, photography, design, short stories, creative nonfiction, short plays, song lyrics, poetry, videos/films, and audios. Each semester, six submissions receive Creative Expression Awards, one from each major category. Winners receive \$75 awards.

Photography



Senior **Valkyrie Rutledge** submitted *Eclosion*, pictured above, which was created as a response to the “ever-creeping, relentless pressure to become a definition of ‘success’ upon entering adulthood.” The compelling photograph captured the Creative Expression Award for photography.

Rutledge, double-majoring in Dance and in Media and Entertainment with a Photography concentration, is pursuing collaborative multimedia projects working with local performing arts venues and businesses. She aspires to eventually produce photographic work consistently with major magazines and journals.



Prose

English master's candidate **Nicholas Allen Poe**, who earned a B.S. in Recording Industry from MTSU in 2015, is currently pursuing a career as a professional fiction writer. His

submission to *Collage*, "Because of the Clovers," which earned a Martha Hixon Creative Expression Award for prose, was inspired by an image of a "creepy house down a forested road."

"We often see stories about children afraid of haunted houses, and I thought it would be interesting to see the same house from a different perspective," he said. "It is a story about changing perspectives and shifting expectations, both of ourselves and the world around us."

 NicholasPoe.com

 [@NicholasPoe](https://www.instagram.com/NicholasPoe)

 [@NicholasPoe_](https://twitter.com/NicholasPoe)

Audio



An Americana song, "Skyline Drive" by freshman Recording Industry major **Maya N. Ronick**, won the Creative

Expression Award for audio.

The song refers to Skyline Drive, a road through Shenandoah National Park, and symbolizes escape from fear of the unknown.

Ronick's concentration is Commercial Songwriting with a minor in Audio Production. She is exploring options for careers in the music industry, including recording artist, producer, A&R, and music director/curator for a streaming platform or radio station.



 [@mayanicolemusic](https://www.instagram.com/mayanicolemusic)

 linktr.ee/mayanicolemusic

Scan to listen

Art



Faith Edwards,

an Art major, describes her painting "Disassociate" as a physical representation of the emotions of being overwhelmed, stressed, worried, and anxious.

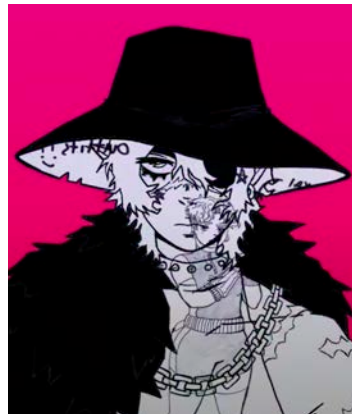
Her 3-by-3-foot painting submitted to the spring issue of *Collage: A Journal of Creative Expression* won a \$75 Lon Nuell Creative Expression Award for art. The painting was created "with the intent to develop a connection between the viewer and the painting," she said.

"The world seems to be spinning, and there is so much distraction around us," Edwards said. "I feel as if these emotions are common in all of us, and I wanted to create a piece that others may use when it is hard to find the words to describe how they are feeling."

A transfer student from Columbia State, Edwards plans to pursue a master's degree and become an art conservator, specifically in books.



Disassociate by Faith Edwards



Poetry



Laura "Percy" Verret, the 2021–22 editor-in-chief of *Scientia et Humanitas: A Journal of Student Research*, received a Creative Expression Award for her free verse poem "Receipt." After completing her M.A. in English last spring, she plans to pursue a doctorate in English. In the future, Verret hopes to employ her training in language to continue producing experimental poetry and multimodal projects while teaching literature in a postsecondary institution.

"I think that, as college students, a lot of us have this idea that if we put in the hard work now—if we crunch and strive and achieve now—we'll earn our way towards happiness, towards a state of rest," Verret said. "One day, while reflecting on what that 'state of rest' would look like for me, I realized that, if I ever achieved 'rest,' I probably couldn't 'rest' in it: that the crunching and striving and achieving had shaped my mind, trained my brain to need to prove its worth constantly through producing tangible results."

Verret wrote this poem "about that paradox—about how I imagined my mind, if placed in a 'perfectly restful' scenario, would act and how I hoped I would be able to recognize and embrace Life as it sprawled intangibly around me in quiet moments rather than pushing It to the side in a mad press to make my Life acceptable to history after It had ended, un-lived though documented in 'Receipt.' "

 @theblitheringbookster

Video



Animation and Religious Studies major **Morgan Ruth's** video *Mimzy*, pictured above, secured the \$75 Creative Expression Award winner for this category.

"I drew inspiration for this piece from the art of Yoshiyuki Sadamoto, who oversaw the visual development for *Neon Genesis Evangelion*," she said. "I really like how flash is utilized in the animated works and thought implementing flash in a creative way would allow me to showcase different character designs I've made inside the silhouette of the final design."

Her career goals are work toward a master's in New Transdisciplinary Technologies at the Paris College of Art and get as much internship experience as possible. "I would love to work for Pixar as a concept artist and Nintendo as a 3D artist," she said. "Ultimately, I'm creating my own show, which will incorporate aspects of both 2D and 3D. At some point I'd like to get into creating music videos. I can see myself taking these projects on for freelancing between big gigs."



On the web



View past issues or submit entries at mtsu.edu/collage



TENNESSEE CAMPUS CIVIC SUMMIT

The 2022 Tennessee Campus Civic Summit, held in conjunction with the American Democracy Project and the University Honors College, took place in MTSU's Martin Honors Building in February. A combination of live and virtual sessions, the summit featured speakers Aarian Forman, co-founder of Xceleader; Adam Gismondi, director of impact, Institute for Democracy and Higher Education; and Aftyn Behn, campaign director of RuralOrganizing.org.



PKP FIGHT AGAINST CANCER

Phi Kappa Phi student vice presidents and members represent the organization at the 2022 Relay for Life in the Student Union Building.



RARE BOOKS OFFER RARE OPPORTUNITY

“Exegesis” lecture series revolves around diverse texts

By Randy Weiler

Philip E. Phillips, Daniel J. Smith, and Tatum Hochstetler

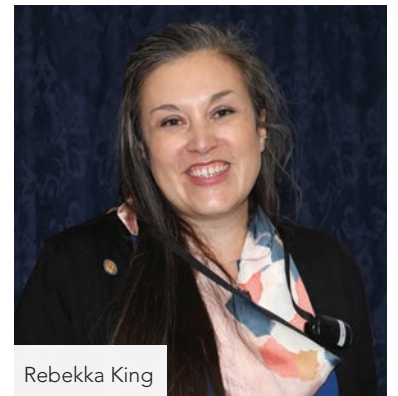
Thanks to a personal connection that Political Economy Research Institute Director **Daniel J. Smith** has with Texas-based The Remnant Trust, Honors Lecture Series students benefitted from a loan of rare books and manuscripts in the spring.

The borrowed collection of over 25 valuable books and papers included early copies of *The Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius, Machiavelli's *The Prince*, Sir Isaac Newton's *The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, and Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*; rare copies of the Bible; and more for a lecture series called “Exegesis”—a term Honors College Associate Dean **Philip E. Phillips** said is “more usually found in religious studies.”

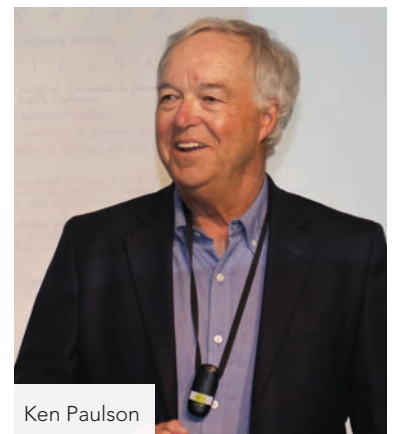
“But in our case, though, it refers more broadly to ‘the critical explanation or interpretation of texts,’ ” Phillips said.

The series used “Exegesis” as a way of pulling together diverse books from the disciplines of philosophy, economics, biblical/religious studies, physics/astronomy/history of science, early European literature/poetry, political science, women’s studies, and history. As an MT Engage class, the series gave students the opportunity to see, touch, and hold most of the rare books on loan to the Honors College.

Lecture Series speakers were members of the Honors residential and Buchanan faculty: Smith, Phillips, **John R. Vile**, **Rebekka King**, **Eric Klumpe**, **Ennio Piano**, **Joan McRae**, **Mary A. Evins**, and **Ken Paulson**.



Rebekka King



Ken Paulson



Ennio Piano



Joan McRae

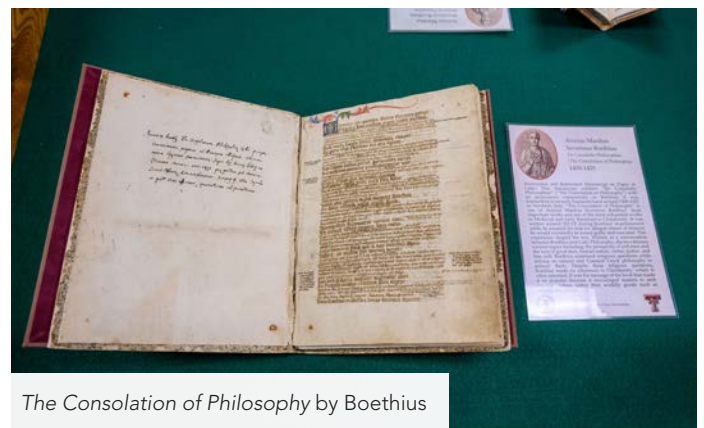


Honors student interacting with books from the "Exegesis"/ Remnant Trust collection.

The Remnant Trust, housed at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, is a public educational foundation sharing a growing collection of manuscripts, first editions, and early works dealing with the topics of individual liberty and human dignity. Some of its pieces date as early as 2500 B.C.

The Remnant Trust makes its collection available to colleges, universities, and other organizations for use by students, faculty, scholars, and the public. People are encouraged to touch, feel, and read the originals, including first English translations.

The Honors Lecture Series has been a staple each fall and spring for more than two decades, featuring topics and presenters from multiple disciplines on and off campus. The "Exegesis" series was led by Phillips with the assistance of Honors Coordinator **Tatum Hochstetler**.



The Consolation of Philosophy by Boethius

Student Projects at Lecture Series

Three students made thesis/creative project presentations to the April 25 Honors Lecture Series audience. **Josh Smith**, a Buchanan Fellow majoring in Vocal Performance, discussed "Miles and Alaska: The Creation of a Song Cycle Based on John Green's *Looking for Alaska*" with Miya Burt (l), a fellow Vocal Performance student. **Ana Cannon**, a junior Graphic Design major, presented "An Arts-Based Critique of the Media's False Images of Racial Protests." **Kacie Leonard** (r), an Honors Transfer Fellow majoring in Animal Science, talked about her research on "The Effects of a Powdered Post-milking Teat Dip on Mastitis and Teat Condition in Dairy Cattle in the Winter Months."





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MIDDLE
TENNESSEE
UNIVERSITY
A universe
of exciting
things to
discover

Photo by J. Intintoli



HOG WILD ABOUT STARS

Eric Klumpe makes his students the center
of the universe

By Patsy B. Weiler

An afternoon in conversation with **Eric Klumpe**, an MTSU Physics and Astronomy professor and University Honors College faculty member, is like climbing into a spaceship and exploring the Milky Way. Fasten your seat belt. There's much to discover about Klumpe, from the unusual pronunciation of his name (KLOOM-PA) to the fact he is an aeronautical engineer.

Fit and soft-spoken with glasses, a thatch of silver hair, a dry sense of humor, and an ever-present curiosity for learning, he describes himself as your "basic geek," which, in typical Klumpe laid-back style, is an understatement. Before arriving at MTSU in 1999, he worked for a dozen years at NASA's Jet

Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, where his efforts contributed to the *Voyager* spacecraft and Galileo Project—launched to explore Jupiter and its moons.

Most early mornings, Klumpe straps on a helmet and leisurely travels to campus on his Harley-Davidson—a motorcycle he has ridden over the Tail of the Dragon, a corkscrew stretch of mountain road near the Great Smoky Mountains featuring a dizzying 318 curves in 11 miles. He likes all kinds of music but has a weakness for "face-melting guitar solos. You know, the ones that you listen to while driving your car that tempt you to run a red light," he said with a hearty laugh.



Eric Klumpe at the MTSU Uranidrome with his Harley-Davidson
Photo by J. Intintoli

It is obvious Klumpe's world revolves around his three grown children and wife of nearly 40 years, Dr. Marynelle Klumpe, a radiologist, who shares his enthusiasm for hiking, riding bicycles, backpacking, and reading.

"I love words," Klumpe said. "My wife and I spend many hours every week reading to each other while enjoying morning coffee and sitting in two rocking chairs on our front porch."

Recent reads have included *Echoes of Eden* by Jerram Barrs and *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson. But his true passion, the activity that makes his face shine brighter than a full moon on a dark night, is being an

educator—one who challenges his students to work hard and believe they can reach far beyond what they thought was possible in life.

"I want to change students' lives for the better," Klumpe said. "Students register for my classes because they are interested in learning more about the subjects of astronomy and physics. But I also want to help them to identify what their strengths, gifts, and talents are and to utilize and develop those skills to reach their educational goals. I also try to help students identify those things in their lives that either need improvement or hinder their performance."



FROM BLACK HOLE TO CALTECH

Klumpe is a man of deep faith, holds a Fellowship in the Royal Astronomical Society, and earned six academic degrees—four of which are advanced (three master's degrees and his doctorate). He teaches an introductory Honors astronomy class to Buchanan Fellows—20 students who annually receive the best scholarship offered to anyone attending MTSU and named for alumnus James M. Buchanan (Class of 1940), a 1986 Nobel Prize winner in Economic Sciences.

"Dr. Klumpe has been teaching the introductory astronomy class to Buchanan Fellows since its inception, and it is common for students who entered the class wondering why they were there to say that it was one of the best classes they had taken," Honors Dean John R. Vile said. "He has an amazing ability to connect with students."

One of the surprising things these promising scholars learn about their professor is that after graduating from high school, he had basically fallen into a black hole with little hope of climbing out.

"I hated school," Klumpe admitted. "I had an attitude and had boxed myself in with so low of a GPA that no four-year college would accept me."

His life would be set on a trajectory of change when he accompanied a friend who was picking up admission information for Pasadena (California) City College. While waiting in an outer office area, Klumpe was approached by an admission counselor named John D. Reynolds, who encouraged him to just come in and talk a while, even though the tall, skinny teen had made it clear he had no interest in enrolling.

“ He worked for a dozen years at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory . . . where his efforts contributed to the Voyager spacecraft and Galileo Project. ”

"I was just a smart aleck who was too cool for school," Klumpe recalled.

Their time together struck a chord in Klumpe, who eventually asked the counselor to name the hardest degree to obtain. The answer: physics. Klumpe decided that was what he wanted to study.

"I had to take extra classes and summer school because I didn't have the higher-level math classes in high school," said Klumpe, who earned his associate degree and eventually went on to be accepted at the prestigious California Institute of Technology, popularly known as Caltech, where he completed a bachelor's in Engineering and Applied Science.

In his classroom, Klumpe focuses on teaching his students the value of hard work and opportunities higher education can provide them.

Harry Potter character "Kendra Dumbledore's epitaph is from Matthew 6:21 in the Christian Bible. It reads, 'Where your treasure is there your heart will be also,' " Klumpe said. "I want my students to treasure the opportunity given them within the classrooms at MTSU. Anything worth doing well will usually require hard work—generally, harder work than you initially



Klumpe's motorcycle vanity plate



Klumpe performs experiments at the annual Presidents Day Honors College Open House



Klumpe monitoring the telescope providing the campus broadcast of the 2017 eclipse

expected. Usually, freshmen are knowledge consumers. I want them to transition into knowledge creators before they graduate.”

Now on campus for almost 25 years, Klumpe is a strong advocate of MTSU and the Honors College.

“MTSU does many great things for the community,” he said. “There are numerous diverse educational opportunities here, and the University has done much to prepare thousands of students for the subsequent phases of their lives.

“The Honors College is one more facet of opportunity available to a student who chooses MTSU. Not every runner has to enter and complete a marathon. It takes commitment and discipline to finish the race, just like being a part of the Honors College,” Klumpe continued. “The student who is up to the rigor and academic challenge of the Honors College will be stretched and strengthened. The Honors College is what I would have wanted when I was in college and something I want to contribute to for the students at MTSU.”

Bassam Aboona (Class of 2018) came to MTSU to study Physics as a Transfer Fellow, the highest academic award given to transfer students at MTSU through the Honors College. After earning a bachelor’s in Professional Physics, he is now a graduate student

at Texas A&M, working at the university’s Cyclotron Institute, and plans to complete his doctorate in 2023.

“I met Dr. Klumpe in theoretical physics,” Aboona said. “It was a challenging course, but he was always there to help. He strived to connect abstract mathematical concepts to real-world experiences, utilizing examples from his previous careers. He was organized, accessible, and took great care in answering my questions. He became a primary professor for internship advice and was very proactive in writing personalized recommendation letters. I have adopted many organizational skills from him and learned how being patient and providing help to others can lead to great outcomes.”

A GALAXY OF FUN

Beyond the classroom, Klumpe contributes to the Honors College in a variety of other ways. He often serves as a thesis advisor for Honors students, has given several Honors lectures on contemporary discoveries, presents a physics “magic show” demonstration as part of the college’s Presidents Day Open House event that is enjoyed by attendees, and serves on the Buchanan Fellows Selection Committee every other year. He and his wife also host the freshman Buchanan Fellows at their home three times a year.

Brianna Bauman ('20, '21), now a vital issues engineer at the Nissan Field Quality Center in Smyrna, has fond memories of the impact Klumpe had on her time as a Buchanan Fellow. She earned her bachelor's in Mechatronics Engineering, with an emphasis in robotics and automation engineering, and her M.S. in Professional Science with an Engineering Management concentration.

"Dr. Klumpe is a wonderful professor," Bauman said. "I was in his Buchanan astronomy class my freshman year and had such a great experience that I later chose him as my thesis advisor. He truly cares about his students and loves to see them succeed. His class incorporates fun activities, and he is always available for help.

"He also plans several great events for his Buchanan students. Dr. Klumpe is one of the most kind, supportive, genuine people and one of the best professors."

Klumpe says he invites the Buchanan Fellows to his home to build relationships, with time to relax and learn about one another. Activities include everything from eating pizza and watching the *Galaxy Quest* movie to playing Hallmark Christmas Movie Bingo.

"The dinner table is an amazing place. Students are all different because they came from different high schools. But we all have a common thread because of the Buchanan Fellowship," Klumpe said. "We have a table full of tasty food, and it is amazing to me how sharing a meal with others breaks down barriers. A classroom has a dominant voice. The dinner table is

filled with many voices and laughter. We can talk about 'life' and not just astronomy.

"I hope my students can see me as a person who cares and is an astronomer, an academic, a husband, a dad, a guy who is socially awkward, and someone who has made his fair share of mistakes in life."

As director of MTSU Observatories, Klumpe oversaw the design and construction in the early 2000s of MTSU's Uranidrome, a hands-on, self-guided naked-eye observatory used to teach astronomy and geometry. It sits on a plaza near the campus telescope.

"The complex provides hands-on learning in both a modern context (the telescope) and an ancient context (the Uranidrome)," he said. "The Uranidrome puts my students in the shoes of people who did astronomy 2,000 years ago. It can elevate our respect for other cultures that existed a long time ago."

An advocate of community outreach, Klumpe and Chuck Higgins, his fellow Physics and Astronomy professor, organize the free First Friday Star Parties at MTSU annually. The public is invited to attend a short talk in Wiser-Patten Science Hall and, weather permitting, visit the observatory afterward.

Klumpe says he has learned a great deal traveling through different galaxies of life and likes nothing better than sharing his knowledge, inspiring his students to grasp the infinite possibilities of their own next frontiers. **A**

FIRST FRIDAY STAR PARTIES

First Friday Star Parties are a community outreach during the fall and spring semesters—and they're free to MTSU students, faculty, and the public.

Physics and Astronomy faculty bring 45–60 minutes of lively, interesting topics in Wiser-Patten Science Hall Room 102. Weather permitting, they are followed by telescope viewing at the observatory. Topics range from current events to comets, planets, stars, constellations, black holes, and more.

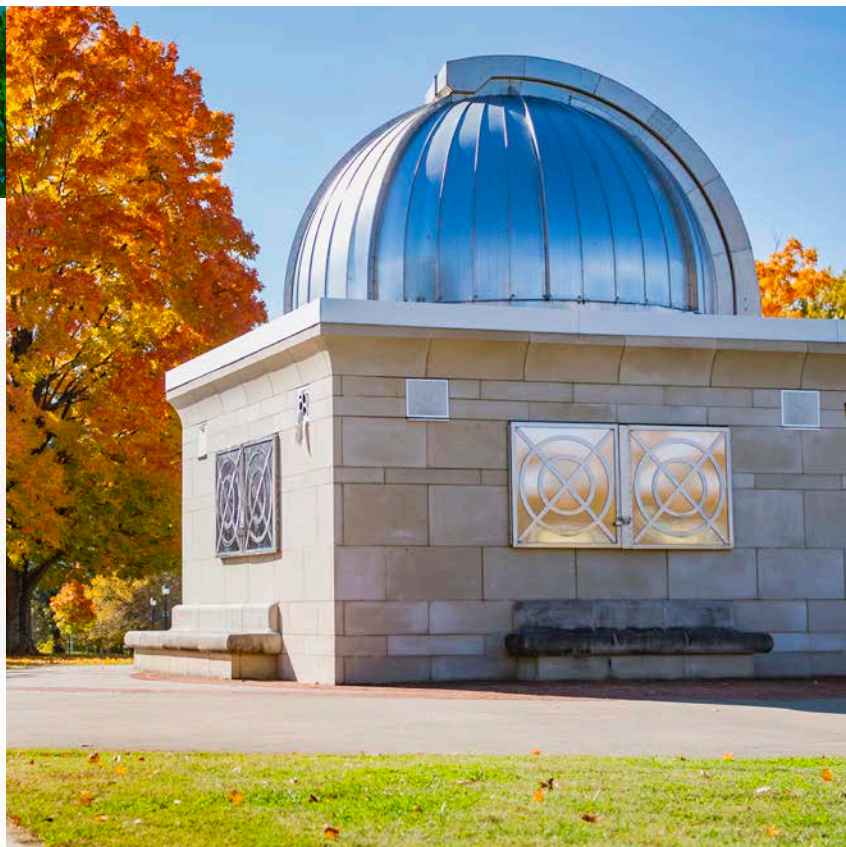
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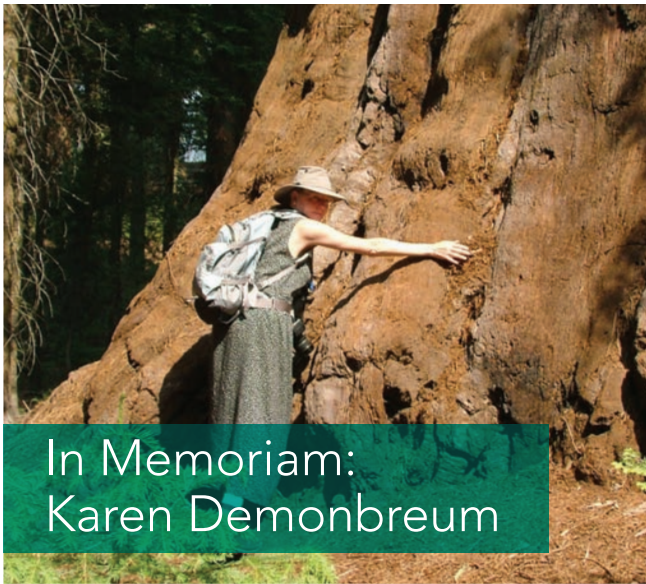
MTSU Observatory:

mtsu.edu/observatory

First Friday Star Parties:

mtsu.edu/physics/star-party.php





In Memoriam: Karen Demonbreum

Karen Ann Demonbreum passed away at her Murfreesboro home May 25, two weeks before her 68th birthday, following a battle with metastatic breast cancer. Her husband, Tim, and daughter Kasey Gregory were by her side in her final hours.

Demonbreum, hired by MTSU in 1998 to work in the College of Graduate Studies, moved to the Honors College as executive secretary in 2002 and retired in 2019 after over 20 years of service to the University. Many who visited the Honors administrative suite prior to her retirement remember the stunning, one-of-a-kind stained-glass window depicting a peacock that she displayed in the office for coworkers and guests to enjoy. Demonbreum was also a major caretaker for the Honors College fish tank and had a special fondness for the loaches.

A nature lover, she and Tim earned a certificate in August 2012 for visiting 58 national parks and filling their state park passport book with unique stamps from each park. They had “extraordinary experiences,” including riding a snowmobile in Yellowstone National Park in a blinding snowstorm, kayaking up to a tidewater glacier in Alaska, and riding mules down the Bright Angel Trail in the Grand Canyon.

In a 2013 *Honors Magazine* story “Fifty-eight National Parks in Twelve Years,” Demonbreum stated, “This has been an absolutely fantastic journey, and we wouldn’t trade our experiences for anything.”

Determined to have one last adventure, she and close friend Kathy Davis, former executive aide for the Honors College, made a bucket list trip to Key West, Florida, in March along with Kasey. They visited an Everglades alligator farm, rode on an airboat, toured botanical gardens, visited Hemingway House, and went parasailing.

“Karen was a quiet introvert who was a secret adventurer,” said Laura Clippard, close friend and

co-worker. “She came in early to work and was obsessed with Excel sheets, order, and procedures, but in her time off she was kayaking, swimming in the ocean, hiking, jet skiing, riding snowmobiles, visiting state parks, and having amazing adventures. She loved flowers, cats, puzzles, her husband, her family, traveling, hats, all things outside, making scrapbooks, beautiful stationery, and terrariums.”

Honors alumnus Matthew Hibdon (2012), currently strategic communications manager for the College of Liberal Arts, recalled meeting Demonbreum when he was still unsure about joining the Honors College and dropped by the week before he started MTSU. “She gave me a personal tour of the building, helped me add a second Honors class so I would be on track to graduate, and convinced me that Honors would be a good fit,” Hibdon said.

“To think of our friend Karen being gone is hard to accept; some comfort comes from remembering how much she enjoyed life—a great life—one that was filled with love of family, travel, meaningful work, and wry observations to share with others,” added retired dean Philip Mathis (2004–08). “My years in the Honors College cannot be recalled without thinking of Karen talking about her observations of synchronized mating of fireflies, her description of a mule-back ride down a precipitous ledge into the Grand Canyon, her being stranded on a zipline when at great heights prior to rescue, and episode after episode experienced during her travels shared in her annual Christmas letters (I have saved every one of them).”

Survivors include husband, Tim; daughters Kelly Brown Young and Kasey Brown Gregory (Josh); and grandchildren Brennan Gregory, Charlene Rose “Charlie” Gregory, and Madison Young.



PHILLIPS DISCUSSES POE AND DANTE

Philip E. Phillips at Aquinas College



Phillips gives presidential welcome at the Poe conference

Honors Associate Dean **Philip E. Phillips** shared his passion and expertise on two scholarly topics this year, serving as program chair of the 5th International Edgar Allan Poe Conference and presenting a lecture to mark the anniversary of Dante’s death.

More than 130 scholars from 16 countries were registered and delivered papers on a range of topics related to Poe at the April conference. Held both in-person and virtually at the historic Omni Parker House Hotel in Boston, the event was sponsored by the Poe Studies Association, where Phillips is the current president and a past president. Poe, born in Boston in 1809, was only recently recognized with a statue in the city, *Poe Returning to Boston*, by sculptor Stefanie Rocknak in 2014.

Phillips led a pre-conference bus excursion to Providence for some conference participants to see special exhibitions at both the Providence Athenæum and the Hay Library of Brown University. He also chaired two sessions on “Poe and Boston” and co-chaired with Paul Lewis (Boston College) the “Poe in Boston Roundtable,” in which he gave a presentation titled “Poe, Boston, and the Legacy of the Stage.” At the banquet, which featured acclaimed novelist Marilynne Robinson as guest of honor, Phillips presented awards for outstanding publications and contributions to Poe studies.



Phillips (r) with Boston speakers

He is currently working on a new collection of essays, *Poe Spaces*, drawn from papers presented at the Boston conference.

Earlier in the year, Phillips discussed “Dante Among the Poets” for the Siena Lecture Series at Aquinas College, a Catholic liberal arts college in Nashville owned and operated by the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia Congregation.

Sponsored by Ed Gaffney, the Siena Lecture each semester examines some aspect of the liberal arts tradition. On this occasion, which marked the 700th anniversary of Dante’s death, Phillips was asked to speak because of his expertise on medieval literature and his experience leading students in the footsteps of Dante in MTSU’s Honors in Italy program.

Phillips, a professor of English, was invited to present the lecture by Sister Mary Edith Humphries, vice president for academics at Aquinas College.

“As an artist, Dante gives himself the seemingly unachievable task of reporting what he is permitted to see and comprehend while also fashioning in the *Commedia* a whole system representative of God’s divine creation in all its splendor, complexity, and beautiful symmetry,” Phillips said in his lecture. “The *Commedia* continues to fascinate Christian and non-Christian readers alike because its issues are timeless ones rooted in the human condition. Dante asks the big questions concerning life and

the afterlife that human beings continue to ask to this day.”

Sister Mary Esther Potts, librarian at Aquinas College, is a former student of Phillips’. “We appreciated the breadth and depth of his knowledge of Dante, *The Divine Comedy*, and its influences,” she said. “His talk, ‘Dante Among the Poets,’ truly enriched us and was a fitting tribute to the poet during the 700th anniversary of his death celebrated this academic year.”

“Dante asks the big questions concerning life and the afterlife that human beings continue to ask to this day.”

The lecture was well attended and included questions and informal discussions that followed.

“My experience at Aquinas, especially talking with the sisters afterwards about Dante, Virgil, our favorite translations of classical works, teaching Latin, and traveling in Italy, was truly one of the highlights of the 2021–22 academic year for me,” Phillips said.



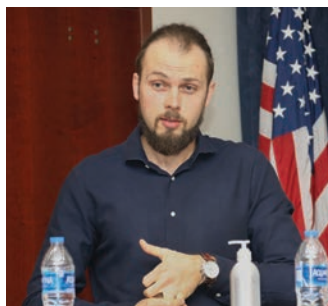
Andrei Korobkov



Benjamin Sawyer



John R. Vile



Mykola Kushnir

UNDERSTANDING THE CRISIS IN UKRAINE

One week after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February, the Honors College hosted “Perspectives on the Crisis in Ukraine,” a discussion moderated by Honors Dean **John R. Vile**. Panelists were **Andrei Korobkov**, professor of Political Science and International Relations; **Mykola Kushnir**, a graduate student in Finance; and **Benjamin Sawyer**, History professor.

In Memoriam: Tom VanDervort

The following is an excerpt from Dean John R. Vile's eulogy for Thomas R. VanDervort at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Murfreesboro. VanDervort, 88, a professor emeritus of Political Science who worked at MTSU for 35 years until retiring in July 1998, died April 14.

Given my past associations as a Mock Trial coach with **Tom VanDervort**, I feel as though I should begin by asking, "May it please the Court!"

. . . I came to Murfreesboro and to Middle Tennessee State University in 1989, as chair of the Department of Political Science. Dr. Tom VanDervort was a supportive colleague. In addition to overseeing the social studies curriculum, Tom authored a book to accompany his course on international law and another for his course on law and the legal system, and he enlisted me in my very first year to help establish our award-winning Mock Trial program. For many years, in addition to working individually with students, we devoted every Thursday night to scrimmages, sponsored one of the largest invitational tournaments in the country, and accompanied students on several trips a year. On a number of occasions, Tom and Elsa hosted students at their house.

Being somewhat more adventurous than I was, Tom drove the students to their first national tournament in Des Moines, Iowa, in a camper. He and I shared many subsequent trips together, usually driving large vans over long distances. Teams consisted of both witnesses and attorneys, and given the drama among students on many

of the trips, it often seemed that we had done better teaching the former roles than the latter.

Many of our Mock Trial graduates have become successful lawyers. I am here to share some of their own eyewitness testimony, albeit in the form of emails rather than signed affidavits. So, let the record reflect that:

A prominent member of the Board of the American Mock Trial Association called Tom "a good man, indeed, and a dedicated Mock Trial warrior."

As to MTSU alums, a married couple, both of whom are lawyers, fondly associated Tom with some of their "best college memories."

Another noted that Tom was the first person who said an encouraging word to him when he began Mock Trial and that his coaching had "changed the direction of my life."

My daughter reminded me of the bus trip on which Tom began imitating Captain Ahab in Melville's *Moby-Dick* in mustering students to get ready for a tournament. (Tom loved to fish.)

In closing, Tom was a great friend, great colleague, and a great coach. He was devoted to his family, had a dry sense of humor, and was open to new ideas and experiences. I will always be grateful for the memories that I share with so many of his students, and I know that they join me in thanking Elsa and the members of his family for sharing him with us.



In Memoriam: Howard D. Wall

Howard D. Wall, an MTSU graduate and former member of the University Honors College Board of Visitors, passed away peacefully at home Dec. 23, 2021, surrounded by family and friends. Born Sept. 3, 1940, in Rutherford County, he is survived by his wife of 39 years, Sally Jones Snow Wall.

After earning his degree in 1963, Wall was called to active duty for two years in the U.S. Navy, serving aboard icebreaker *U.S.S. Edisto* in Antarctica and was awarded the Antarctica Service Medal.

His legacy as builder/developer began in the early 1980s when he joined Sally Snow's real estate business as a sales agent. They soon became business partners, later married, and created Snow and Wall Realtors.

The Walls were members of the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce and were named Business Persons of the Year in 1992.

A dedicated supporter of the University, Wall served on the MTSU Foundation, provided funds for MTSU minority scholarships, and was

a generous donor to the Honors College. In addition, the Walls were avid supporters of Blue Raider athletics, and the baseball field's center field wall is designated "Howard and Sally Wall." In 1998, Howard received MTSU's Distinguished Alumni Award.

As a business leader and as chair of the Rutherford County Republican Party, Wall often recruited young talent into real estate and politics, training and mentoring them. "He was my one and only mentor," said John Floyd, founder and owner of Murfreesboro-based Ole South Properties. "Howard taught me how to be a businessman and how to be an entrepreneur."



LITTLE LION



A young visitor touring campus with his grandmother tries out an Honors lion for size.

JONES GRANT CONTINUES FOR HONORS TRANSFERS

One of the Honors College's most successful initiatives has been its appeal to transfer and other nontraditional students. Each year, it now awards 30 fellowships to incoming transfer students.

Through the efforts of Lisa Mitchell, the executive director of the Jennings and Rebecca Jones Foundation and the mother of an Honors student who is now in pharmacy school, the Honors College was able to secure a three-year grant for \$15,000 a year from the Jones Foundation, which supports educational projects in Rutherford County, to provide extra opportunities for these students. The foundation is named after the founder of the former National Savings Life Insurance Co. and director of Murfreesboro Bank and Trust Co. and his wife.

During this time, the grant has provided money for study abroad and for passport applications, participation in scholarly conferences, fees for honor societies, internships, and other worthy endeavors.

Dean **John R. Vile** and **Judy Albakry**, who advises Honors transfer students, met with Mitchell and Laura Jones, the benefactors' granddaughter, to discuss the impact that the foundation's support has provided for its students. After the June 2022 meeting of the Jones Foundation, the college received word that its support of \$15,000 a year would be renewed for another three years.

PAYING A VISIT



Taffy O'Neil Xu ('11, '15), a Buchanan Fellow who earned a B.A. and an M.A. in English, and daughter Beili dropped by the Honors College for a visit in February.

CLASS NOTES

Students



Marzea Akter (Psychology), pictured above, was the recipient of the 2022 Lawrence R. Good Scholarship.

Micaela Anderson (English/ Foreign Languages, French) won the June McCash Founders Award Scholarship for 2022–23.

Catheryn Bolick (Biology/ Music Performance) received the Gordon and Sara Bell Native American Studies Scholarship in the spring. Bolick, part of MTSU's clarinet studio, also presented her senior recital in April. Her program included vocal, clarinet, and dance performances.



Rachel Booher (Japanese/ English), pictured above, represented MTSU at the 2022 Southern Literary Festival in Columbus, Mississippi. She was selected for her poem "Kisetsu no Ai."

Ashley Barrientos (Journalism/English) was selected to represent MTSU at the 2022 Southern Literary Festival for her fiction story "Super Mercado."

Charese Harrison (Audio Production) earned a Michael Martinelli Memorial Scholarship for 2022–23.

Hailey Harrison (Aerospace) won the Ralph and Elizabeth Gwaltney Centennial Scholarship in the spring. The scholarship is funded by Carolyn and Don Midgett.

Lillian Hickman (Music Business) received a 2022 Hannah/Harris Study Abroad Scholarship.



Morgan Hutchins (Theatre), pictured above, accepted a Michael Martinelli Memorial Scholarship in the spring.

Rebecca Jones (Computer Information Systems) received the Bart McCash Scholarship.

Verina Rezk (Biochemistry) was selected for the Hanna Romans Witherspoon Scholarship.

Kap Paul (Science) was recognized as Senator of the Year at MTSU's Student Government Association awards ceremony in April.



Usman Saeed (Computer Science), pictured above, accepted a Joseph and Teresa Santiago Olmstead Scholarship at the spring Honors Awards ceremony.

Aubrey Stagner (Spanish) secured a Hannah/Harris Study Abroad Scholarship.

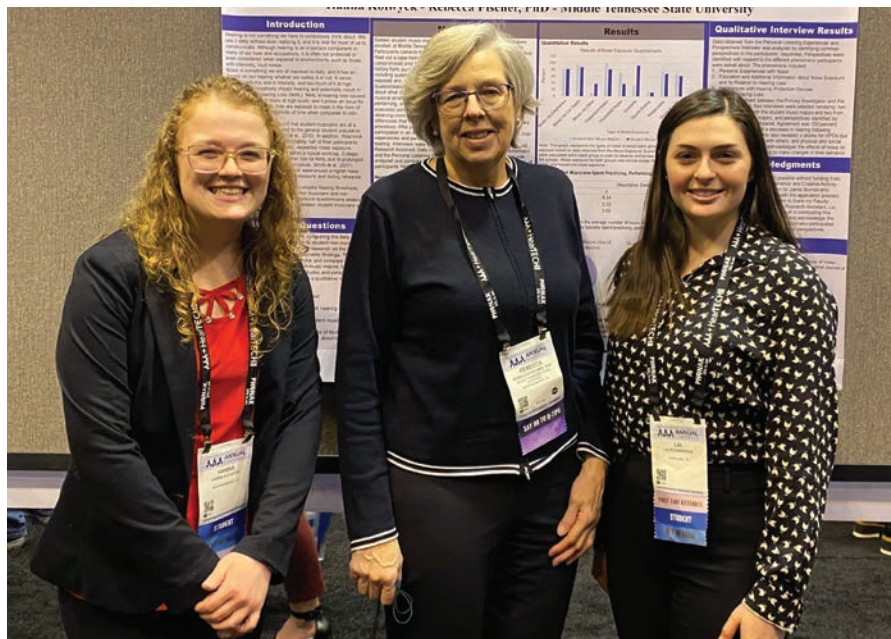
Christina Vongsiharath (Economics) was one of three MTSU Collegiate DECA Chapter members to receive a 2022 Individual Leadership Passport Executive Award from the organization.



Abigail Wells (English), pictured above, had her poem "The Rusted Bed Frame" and her essay "Desensitization, Dystopia, and Ballet Dancing: Varied Interpretations and the Influence of Kurt Vonnegut's Harrison Bergeron" selected to represent MTSU at the Southern Literary Festival in March.

Natalie Young (Nursing) earned the Julia W. Powell Scholarship.

Hanna Kolwyck (Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology), faculty mentor **Rebecca Fischer** (center), and research assistant **Lia Richardson** (r) attended the American Academy of Audiology's 2022 HearTECH Expo Conference in St. Louis, where she presented her research poster. Kolwyck researched noise exposure, hearing, and the attitudes and perspectives of noise exposure among student music majors and non-music majors. Kolwyck also was able to collaborate with other professionals within the field of audiology about her research and other research currently being conducted in the field.



Academic Achievement Scholarship winners

Briza Dedicatoria (Biochemistry)

Elizabeth Kowalczyk
(Forensic Science)

Connor Prim (Instrumental
Music Education)

Paul W. Martin Sr. Scholarships

Ivy Adams (Aerospace)

Emma Beard (French/Global
Studies and Human Geography)

Rachel Boohar (Japanese/English)

Drew Bray (Mechatronics
Engineering/Professional Physics)

Emaa Elrayah (Biochemistry)

Johari Hamilton (Journalism)

Trinity Henderson (Spanish/
Political Science)

Michael McGee (Supply Chain
Management)

Greta Muller (Art)

Zoe Naylor (Journalism/French)

Outstanding Honors Student Awards

First year: **Sevinch Kamaridinova**
(Biology) and **Hailey Harrison**
(Aerospace)

Second year: **Ivy Adams** (Aerospace)
and **Ross Sibley** (Biochemistry)

Third year: **Yaseen Ginnab** (Biology/
Psychology) and **Aaron Jollay**
(Accounting)

Fourth year: **Rachel Boohar**
(Japanese/English) and **Elizabeth
Clippard** (Biology/Plant and
Soil Science)

Spring URECA (Undergraduate Research Experience and Creative Activity Grant) recipients

Madeline Aadnes (Biology)

Rachel Boohar (Japanese/English)

Yaseen Ginnab (Biology/Psychology)

Hanna Kolwyck (Speech-Language
Pathology and Audiology)

Kacie Leonard (Animal Science)

Dominic Marcoaldi (Philosophy)

Greta Muller (Art)

Kap Paul (Science)

Connor Prim (Instrumental
Music Education)

Summer URECA (Undergraduate Research Experience and Creative Activity Grant) recipients

Charlotte Daigle (English)

Dominic Marcoaldi (Philosophy)

Karolin Abouelyamin (Biology)

Foram Patel (Computer Science)

Sylvia Zakher (Biochemistry)

Kate Matthews (Business)

Benjimen Neal (Music)

SGA and Center for Student Involvement and Leadership Award winners

President's Award: **Winton Cooper**
(Environmental Science)

Provost's Award: **Kap Paul** (Science)

Robert C. LaLance Jr. Achievement
Award: **Dara Zwemer** (Psychology)

Community Service Award: **Cynthia
Torres** (Psychology)

Phi Kappa Phi Honors Spring Initiates and Influential Faculty

Janna Abou-Rahma

Hunter Brady

Nicolas Morgan

Ross Sibley

Ana Marie Cannon

Daniel J. Gagliardi

Dawn McCormack (faculty)

Steven Sprick Schuster (faculty)

CLASS NOTES

Alumni and Friends

Madeline Aadnes (Biology, '22) is attending graduate school at Nova Southeastern University in Florida, where she is studying marine science.

Brandon Armstrong (Foreign Languages, '05) started a new position in January as project coordinator at Confluence International, a nongovernment organization in the Netherlands. He also is a junior lecturer at the University of Amsterdam.

Alison Blanton (Animal Science, '22) is studying at the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine.



Maria Clark (Biochemistry, '22), pictured above, is attending medical school at the University of Kentucky.

Katherine Corder (International Relations, '22) will be working next year with the Orthodox Volunteer Corps in Pittsburgh.

Anthony Czelusniak (Public Relations–Advertising, '20; M.S., Media and Communication, '22), a former Honors Transfer Fellow, accepted a position as communications coordinator for the department of pathology, microbiology, and immunology with Vanderbilt University Medical Center in March.



Pel Doski (Biology, '18), pictured above, started a new position in January as project manager at Fulbridge in Nashville.

Rachel Eccles (Science, '20), who completed an Honors thesis about human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine



Dani Westerman Bryson (Political Science) was named 23rd Judicial District Prosecutor of the Year for 2021–22. The district covers five Tennessee counties: Cheatham, Dickson, Houston, Humphreys, and Stewart.

barriers and initiatives, is working on a Pharm.D. degree at the University of Tennessee's College of Pharmacy and an M.B.A. through the University of Memphis. She recently presented her MTSU thesis research at an international conference, Pacificchem: The International Chemical Congress of Pacific Basin Societies 2021. Eccles worked closely on her Honors thesis with MTSU faculty mentor Judith Iriarte-Gross, who was also able to attend the conference and moderate Eccles' session.



Whitney Flatt (International Relations, '14), pictured above, began a new position in January as senior management consultant in the state of Tennessee's Office of Customer Focused Government in Nashville.

Jared Frazier (Computer Science, '22) was awarded an Amsterdam Merit Scholarship for the two-year Master of Science program in Computational Science organized by the Faculty of Science (Graduate School of Informatics) of the University of Amsterdam.

Eric Guyes (Physics, '13), who recently earned a Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering at

Technion-Israel Institute of Technology, has been hired by Lilac Solutions Inc. in Oakland, California, as a process engineer.

Debra Jackson (Philosophy, '96), who completed a Ph.D. in Philosophy at Purdue, is now a vice president at California State University-Bakersville.

Cassidy Johnson (Audio Production/Media and Entertainment, '20; M.S., Information Systems, '21), started a new position in January as a sales operations analyst for FLEETCOR.

Sarah Gallagher Kessler (Global Studies/English, '12) began a new position in March as director of brand and content marketing at Inception in Chicago.

Hanna Kolwyck (Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology, '22) is attending graduate school for the Doctor of Audiology at the University of Memphis.



Evan Lester (Aerospace, '16; M.S., Aeronautical Science, '19), pictured above, and wife **Ashley Sanders Lester** (Business Administration, '16; M.B.A., Business Administration, '18) welcomed a second daughter, Maggie Evamarie Lester, on March 21.

Collin McDonald (Aerospace, '17) earned his master's degree in Aviation Safety and Security in the spring and became a Pro Pilot faculty member with the Aerospace Department this fall.

Connor McDonald (Political Science, '17), who serves as vice chair for the Tennessee Young Republicans, won a seat on the Smith County Commission in August.



Molly Scott (Engineering Technology, '21), pictured left, who designed, built, and programmed a Sumobot for her Honors thesis, is pursuing a master's degree at State University of New York (SUNY) Oswego in Rochester. Since her graduation, the robot was taken to the National Robotics Challenge, where it won first place. Faculty mentor Vishwas Bedekar, Scott's thesis director and advisor for the SME Robotics Club, and current club member Matt DeZempen, who reprogrammed the robot for the competition after Scott's original programming was lost, took the robot to the national competition.



Lindsay (Gates) Paturalski (History, '12), pictured above, earned a Ph.D. from Boston College this spring.

Kap Paull (Allied Health Science Pre-Pharmacy, '22) is attending pharmacy school at the University of North Carolina.

Cassandra Perrone (Science, '22) is studying Biology in graduate school at MTSU and plans to go to medical school to become a forensic pathologist.

Haley Pimental (Chemistry, '12; M.S., Biology, '15) started a new position in January as a water treatment specialist for Metro Moore County Utilities Department in Lynchburg.



Mallory Melton Ray (Anthropology, '09), pictured above, began a new position as institutional effectiveness and assessment coordinator at Volunteer State Community College in January.

Asim Rija ('22) is attending the University of Tennessee College of Medicine in Memphis.

Lindsey Brown Schroeder (Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology/Spanish, '20) and **George Schroeder** (Biology, '20), both Buchanan Fellows, married in October 2020. George started physician assistant (PA) studies in Wichita, Kansas, in 2021, and Lindsey started PA coursework at the same school in 2022.



Kaylee Stallings (Biochemistry/Fermentation Science, '20), pictured above, is pursuing a doctorate in Microbiology at Clemson University.

Sophia Taylor (Chemistry, '22) is attending Ohio State University to attain a Ph.D. in Chemistry.



Jeff Whorley (Honors Board of Visitors), pictured above, was appointed by Indiana Gov. Eric J. Holcomb to the Ports of Indiana Commission. Whorley, executive vice president and head of First Data Education at Fiserv, is the nephew of the late James M. Buchanan.



Emily Aslinger Wise (Global Studies/Foreign Language, '14), pictured above, started a new position in March as coordinator of social science advising for Global Studies at the University of Tennessee.

Dara Zwemer (Psychology, '22) was accepted into a Ph.D. program in Experimental Psychology at Oklahoma State University. She will be working with Assistant Professor Kara Moore at the Cognition, Attention, Law, and Memory (CALM) Lab, studying how confident eyewitnesses are in identifying suspects. Moore was recently awarded a grant to study how much people know about their own memories (metacognition) and what affects their memories about scenes they witness through virtual reality headsets. In the spring, Zwemer received the Tyler A. Schultz Memorial Scholarship from MTSU's College of Behavioral and Health Sciences and the University's Robert C. LaLance Jr. Achievement Award.

CLASS NOTES

Faculty and Staff



Connie Bartemus, pictured above, has joined the Honors College as executive aide. She has clerical support experience in a range of fields, including association management, software development, and, most recently, K–12 education.



Paul Craig

(Aerospace) published his 14th book, *Flight Times: Instruction and Inspiration from the 2nd Best Flight Instructor*, in February. Chapter 31 includes

the story of Collin McDonald, an Honors student who successfully re-created the Vin Fizz cross-country flight of aviation pioneer Cal Rogers for his Honors thesis project. Craig was thesis director for McDonald and is currently thesis director for Honors Aerospace major Ivy Adams, who is researching the history of the U.S. Post Office airmail service and has visited navigation flight arrows in Indiana, Ohio, and Kansas (see [related article on page 8](#)).

John Dubois (Biology) received the Honors College Exemplary Faculty Service Award at the annual award ceremony in April.

Rebekka King (Philosophy and Religious Studies) was the recipient of the 2022 Outstanding Honors Faculty Award.

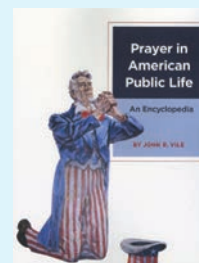


Judith Iriarte-Gross (Chemistry), pictured above with Vice Provost Cheryl Torsney (I), was selected for the Tennessee STEM Innovation Network Excellence in Advocacy Award. She is director of MTSU's Women in STEM Center.

Patrick Ritchey (Communication Studies) was given the John T. Bragg Sr. Award at the spring Student Government Association and Center for Student Involvement and Leadership annual awards banquet.

Philip E. Phillips (Honors associate dean) was elected president of the Poe Studies Association (PSA) for 2022–24. He served previously as PSA president (2014–16) and as a member of the editorial board of *The Edgar Allan Poe Review*. He is the recipient of the PSA's J. Lasley Dameron Award for his book *Poe and Place* (Palgrave, 2018).

John R. Vile (Honors dean) saw his book *America's National Anthem: "The Star-Spangled Banner" in U.S. History, Culture, and Law* (published January 2021) named as one of the top 10 Outstanding Reference Sources for 2022 by the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) of the American Library Association. His book *Prayer in American Public Life* was published this year by the First Amendment Press.



2021 CONTRIBUTOR HONOR ROLL

The Honors College deeply appreciates friends who have contributed to its success in countless ways. Philanthropic support has been integral to the college's history, most notably through the construction of our beautiful building. We are honored to recognize those who made giving to the college a priority in 2021.

Jane and Dennis Aslinger	Jennings and Rebecca Jones Foundation	Elise and Andrew Oppmann
Claudia Barnett and Gaylord Brewer	Jason Kadzban	Sharmila Patel and Philip E. Phillips
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Mary Evins	Carolyn and Don Midgett	Marsha Thompson
Hannah Tybor Fletcher	Lisa P. Mitchell	Linda and John R. Vile
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Mary Hoffschwelle	Nicholas Morrison	Jeff Whorley
Debra and James Hopkins	Kimberly and George Murphy	Hanna and Don Witherspoon
Alice and Bruce Huskey	Lilliana Napier	
Allison Ingram	Maria and Joe Olmstead	





HONORS CELEBRATES 50TH



The Honors College will be celebrating its 50th anniversary next year, beginning with Homecoming festivities in fall 2023 and more activities through spring 2024!

GIVE TO THE HONORS COLLEGE



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

Please consider making a tax-deductible gift.

- To make a gift online, go to mtsu.edu/supporthonors
- To make a gift by mail, please make your check payable to **MTSU Honors College** and send it to:
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Thank you in advance for your support!

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