

CIA

College of Liberal Arts

Fall 2015 ■ vol. 4, no. 1

The Uncommon THREAD

By involving students like Erin Porter in Very Special Arts projects, professor Lori Kissinger strives to bring art to all

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College of Liberal Arts

Middle Tennessee State University

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Fall 2015 ■ vol. 4, no. 1

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- African American Studies
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I AM *true* **BLUE**

Dean's Letter

CLA's Job One

Helping students succeed is, and long has been, job one for the College of Liberal Arts (CLA). This past year we have continued to develop ways to help our students learn and grow and to proceed expeditiously toward graduation. We are supporting a range of initiatives including course redesign, tutoring and supplemental instruction, and efforts to bolster students' interaction with faculty outside the classroom. The most ambitious program has been the hiring of new advisors to facilitate a more proactive approach to advising and to complement the work of faculty advisors. **Karen Austin, Brad Baumgardner, Ja'Net Davis, Christinaann Graves, Matthew Hibdon, Sarah Perkins, and Yuchun Schmidt** have joined MTSU veterans **Sonja Burk** and **Jeanne' Hoechst** under the leadership of advising manager **Lucy Langworthy** to form our CLA team.

We're also excited about two new college-wide academic programs. This fall brings the launch of our M.A. in Liberal Arts, which allows students to earn master's degrees through courses of study personalized to meet their own interests and needs. Earlier in the year, we initiated our Lifelong Learning Program, aimed at engaging members of the community who want to take interesting courses, but don't want academic credit—or homework!

Transitions

This year brought many organizational and personnel changes to our college. The Department of Speech and Theatre, a long-standing amalgam of different disciplines, split into two separate departments:

Communication Studies and Organizational Communication and Theatre and Dance. **Prof. Jeff Gibson**, who chaired Speech and Theatre, is chairing Theatre and Dance, and **Dr. Sharon Smith** is serving as interim chair of Communication Studies and Organizational Communication. The Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures has a new chair, **Dr. Roger Pieroni** (formerly of the University of Evansville), to replace **Dr. Joan McRae**, who has returned to the faculty. The Albert Gore Research Center has a new director in **Dr. Louis Kyriakouides**, who joined us from the University of Southern Mississippi. Finally, **Prof. Marisa Recchia** will be interim chair of the Department of Art; former chair **Prof. Jean Nagy** will again teach full-time. My thanks to each for their willingness to tackle these challenging administrative roles.

After many years of dedicated service to the college as manager of recruitment and resources, **Dr. Hilary Miller** has left us to become director of the University's new Veterans and Military Family Center. We'll miss Hilary, but we're happy for her and the University's large student veteran population she will serve. Hilary's departure prompted us to do some retooling of our office structure, consolidating her position with two existing part-time positions into a second associate deanship. We are pleased that **Dr. Dawn McCormack**, associate professor of history, assumed that job on July 1. She'll join **Dr. Karen Petersen** in helping me lead the college.

We're looking forward to this academic year and would love to have you visit us on campus. ■

Mark Byrnes, Dean

www.mtsu.edu/liberalarts



Mark Byrnes, Dean

Friends of the *Liberal Arts Board*

The board works to cultivate and maintain relationships with community, state, and national leaders; promote the achievements of CLA faculty and students; expose students to various career options; serve as mentors to those students; and pursue external funding.

Left to right: Rick Mansfield (vice chair), Karen Petersen (associate dean), Jim Brooks, Kevin Rayburn, Lauren Agee, Mark Byrnes (dean), Meredith Kerr (development officer), Bob Jones, Doug Young (chair), Susan West

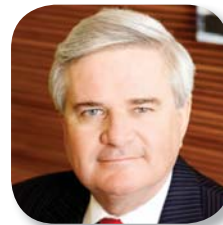
Not pictured: Jeff Davidson, Dan Elrod, Charlotte Gardner, Emily Gibson, Philip Hodge, Joe Klingemeyer, Marlene Sanders, Rocky Strickland

Meet the *New Members* of the Friends of the Liberal Arts Board



Gib Backlund has been chief of operations at Stones River National Battlefield since 1992. During his tenure, the park has nearly doubled in size; implemented a general management plan; added a new museum and film to the visitor center; completed a wayside exhibit plan; developed and installed new exhibits; built a

new entrance and tour road; and rehabilitated much of the cultural and natural landscape, including the earthen Fortress Rosecrans. Backlund grew up in Pipestone, Minnesota, near Pipestone National Monument, and attended the University of Minnesota, earning a B.A. in English and Humanities. He worked as a seasonal park technician at Fort Vancouver and started his career with the National Park Service (NPS) as a park aide at Cumberland Gap National Historic Park. Before he joined Stones River, he worked for NPS at Mammoth Cave, Glacier National Park in Montana, and Cape Hatteras. He earned a master's degree in History at MTSU, focusing on the Cold War and Mission 66, a ten-year program to improve the National Park Service that was completed in 1966. He has been an adjunct professor of history at MTSU, and he was awarded the 2001 Trish Patterson–Student Conservation Association Award for Resource Management in a Small Park for the Southeast Region.



Michael Dagley received a B.S. in History at MTSU and a J.D. from Vanderbilt. He has a 33-year record of success in high-stakes litigation involving many different industries. He is recognized as an innovative negotiator of settlements, most recently in software disputes on behalf of hospital and healthcare systems. In the past five years, he has prevailed in eight multimillion-dollar contingency cases. He works with corporations to pursue claims regarding fraud, and he has represented nearly every major hospital company in Nashville and many others across the nation. He also represents individuals and companies in a variety of complex business disputes and has earned a national reputation for effective litigation.



Meagan Frazier, a Dickson County native, joined the government relations firm of Smith Harris & Carr in 2003 and became a partner in 2008. She is a licensed attorney and a 2007 graduate of the Nashville School of Law. She graduated cum laude from MTSU in 2001 with a major in Mass Communication (Public Relations) and minors in Political Science and Marketing. In 2013, she was a finalist for the Nashville Chamber of Commerce's Emerging Leader Award in the Government category. Frazier is a past president of the board of directors for the Tennessee chapter of the ALS Association and past president of the Tennessee CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) Association Board of Directors. She is on the national ALS Association's board development and nominating committee and public policy committee. She is secretary of the board of the Tennessee Lobbyists Association and chair of the legislative committee of the Tennessee Bar Association. She serves on the Dickson County foster care review board and the board of directors of the Community Foundation of Dickson County. She is a member of the Nashville Bar Association, the Dickson County Bar Association, the Dickson County Chamber of Commerce, and the Nashville Kappa Delta Alumnae Chapter. ■



Coordinator's Note

This spring I had the opportunity to work with tnAchieves, a statewide program that offers mentoring for high school students as they complete senior requirements and prepare to apply to community colleges or four-year institutions.

It was my pleasure to work with six Oakland High School students, getting to know them and some of their families while helping them fulfill their job shadowing senior requirement. It gave me a better perspective of what seniors are doing to prepare for college. I was a first-generation college student and graduate myself, so I certainly understand some of the unknowns these students face.

We still have students entering MTSU and other institutions who will be the first in their families to pursue higher education. Helping these students with the lingo and paperwork was an honor. I wish all the best to the tnAchieves students who will enter this fall and to all incoming and returning students. ■

*Connie Huddleston, Coordinator
Connie.Huddleston@mtsu.edu*



SUPPORT MTSU LIBERAL ARTS

The College of Liberal Arts features programs in humanities, social sciences, and the arts that are the foundation of a thriving democratic society.

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A photograph of two men standing in front of a large red door and a stone archway. The man on the left is wearing a tan blazer and dark trousers. The man on the right is wearing a brown blazer and dark trousers. The background shows a stone building with a large red door and a stone archway.

Liberal Arts **ALUMS TEACH** **AMERICAN POLITICS** **ABROAD** *at Sciences Po*

by Kim Harris Mullins ('89, '98)

Two MTSU liberal arts alums traveled across the Atlantic in January to teach a course on American politics and campaigns at the Paris Institute of Political Studies, commonly called Sciences Po, one of the world's top five universities in politics and international studies.

Former congressman Bart Gordon ('71) and Political Science Department lecturer Kent Syler ('83, '98), both former MTSU student body presidents, taught American Government and Modern Political Campaigns to a class of 52 students during Sciences Po's Winter School.

"In my next life, I hope to be teaching some, and thought it would be a good opportunity and experience," said Gordon, who retired from the U.S. House of Representatives in 2011. Sciences Po knew Gordon as something other than a former politician. In 2012, Gordon was given the insignia of Officer in the French Legion of Honor, the highest honor bestowed by the French government to an individual.

Kent Syler ('83, '98)

Bart Gordon ('71)

continued on page 8

ALUMS TEACH AMERICAN POLITICS ABROAD *at Sciences Po*

continued from page 7

Syler, Gordon's former chief of staff, designed the curriculum around two of the courses he teaches at MTSU, Introduction to American Politics, and Political Campaign Management. Gordon added an insider's view of the process, telling behind-the-scenes stories and giving examples of how issues played out during the 26 years he served in the U.S. House of Representatives to a class including three Americans and a diverse mix of other nationalities.

"They had been watching [Netflix's] *House of Cards* and wanted to know if that's the way Washington works. I told them it's not representative, and there are no murders," Gordon said.

Gordon and Syler conducted the class through a combination of lectures and hands-on learning, where the students actually ran a campaign. Students were assigned to teams representing

"They were extremely bright students. Like the saying that Ginger Rogers did everything Fred Astaire did, only in heels and backward, these students didn't have English as their first language."

—Bart Gordon



Former congressman Bart Gordon, Kent Syler, and their French students.

prospective U.S. presidential candidates and chose class members to be the "candidates." Team members then built competing campaigns around these students.

"They loved it. They hadn't been able to learn that way," Syler said.

"This was a freshman class, and they had listened to a lot of lectures, but didn't have much interaction at this point in their academic career," Gordon added.

For their last assignment, students were asked to write a paper on security versus freedom. The class met a week after the January 7 attack on the *Charlie Hebdo* magazine office in Paris, during which two gunmen killed 12 of the publication's staff in retaliation for their cartoon satire of the Prophet Muhammed. A total of 17 people were killed, following three days of attacks in the French capital.

"There was a huge demonstration and a lot of discussion about the battle of giving up liberty in order to be secure," Syler said. Following the attacks, French military in uniform, with weapons and military vehicles, were posted at airports, train stations, synagogues, and other public places.

The students impressed Gordon and Syler throughout the course. "They were extremely bright students. Like the saying that Ginger Rogers did everything Fred Astaire did, only in heels and backward, these students didn't have English as their first language," Gordon said.

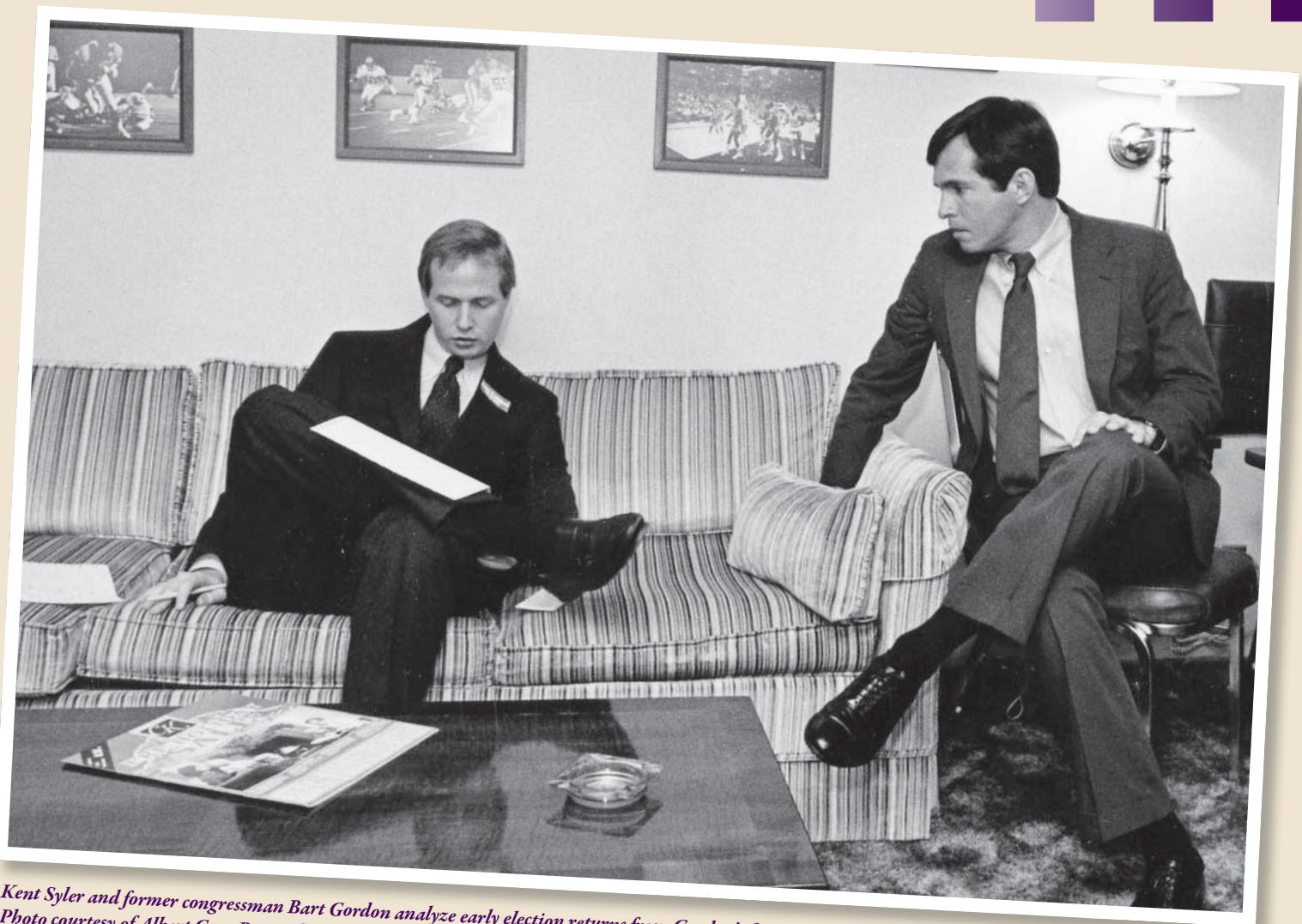
Courses are taught in English, but the program includes several hours a week of language classes, with the objective that all students be English-French bilingual at the end of the first two years. German, Italian, and Spanish are also taught.

"When I was going to MTSU, I only had to compete for a job within 50 miles or so," Gordon said. "We have a global economy now where students have to compete for jobs with the whole world. Having language skills is a tremendous help."

An emphasis on writing and communication are hallmarks of education in France. Gordon described the students' papers as "exceptional," and suggested Syler might use them as examples in his political science classes. "The writing style is heavily structured, but once learned, the students always have that foundation from which to expand—just as Picasso started off as a traditional artist," Gordon said.

The freshmen from Gordon's and Syler's class will complete two years at Sciences Po and then take their third and final years at an American or Canadian university, and American students will take their last year at a French university. The students will attend top schools such as Harvard, Columbia, Princeton, University of Oxford, and University of Cambridge which have partnerships with Sciences Po.

"We are trying to pitch MTSU as a sister school," Syler said. He left a packet of information about MTSU for the Sciences Po administration.



*Kent Syler and former congressman Bart Gordon analyze early election returns from Gordon's first congressional race in 1984.
Photo courtesy of Albert Gore Research Center*

Syler said his MTSU undergraduate and graduate degrees and the political science and sociology classes he took helped prepare him for a successful career. "A liberal arts education really prepares you for many things," he said. "That broad education prepared Bart and me to work in politics, to know how to frame an argument and how to persuade."

Gordon and Syler will return to Sciences Po to teach the American Government and Modern Political Campaigns course during the next Winter School in January. Perhaps their persuasive skills will help foster a partnership between Sciences Po and MTSU.

Gordon is now a partner in the global law firm K&L Gates and a distinguished fellow at the Council on Competitiveness. He is a member of the Brookings Leadership Advisory Board and a project member for the American Academy of Arts and Sciences' New Models for U.S. Science and Technology Policy. He is a board member of the U.S.

Association of Former Members of Congress and the MTSU Foundation and is on the board of counselors for the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress. The Murfreesboro

native graduated cum laude from MTSU in 1971 and received a Doctor of Jurisprudence from the University of Tennessee—Knoxville in 1973.

Syler has been involved in Tennessee politics for over 30 years. He managed Gordon's first campaign in 1984 and his tough reelection campaigns in 1994 and 1996. He has been involved with dozens of other campaigns, ranging from city council to governor and U.S. Senate. Syler has taught as an adjunct professor, assistant professor, and lecturer in the Political Science Department since 2002. He received a B.S. in 1983 and an M.S. in 1989, both from MTSU.

Sciences Po alumni and former staff include 28 heads of state or government, including three of the last four French presidents; 13 past or present French prime ministers; 12 past or present foreign heads of state or government; a former United Nations secretary-general; the former head of the International Monetary Fund; the former head of the European Central Bank; and the former head of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. ■

by Darby Campbell

Sky High *Artistry*

The next time you fly out of Nashville International Airport (BNA) you'll likely see art connected to the Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival, and some was made by MTSU students.

Arts at the Airport, in cooperation with the Bonnaroo Works Fund, is sponsoring a series of artwork in the skylights of BNA's three concourses to commemorate the music festival, which just celebrated its 14th year. Among the international artists showcased are MTSU art students Amber Lelli, Sadie Monroe, and Whitney Proper. Their installation, *Dancing Sound Wave*, near gates 9 and 10 in concourse C, will be on display through January 24, 2016.

Arts at the Airport praised the students saying, "Honoring the Bonnaroo Code to play as a team, Amber Lelli, Sadie Monroe, and Whitney Proper are combining strengths from various technical backgrounds and have created a skylight installation that radiates positive energy and exemplifies Bonnaroo's fan atmosphere. Collaboratively, they have created one giant dancing sound wave made up of translucent vibrant green, fuchsia, and blue dancing figures. The dancers are suspended in ascending and descending row formations to create a singular sound wave, representing various types of people dancing together in one vibration. As light shines through the figurines in accordance with the sky, color sensations and movement—the influence of nature—become prominent in the piece, bringing the flowing, energizing, outdoor, Bonnaroo fan atmosphere to life inside the Nashville International Airport." ■

Dancing Sound Wave
Amber Lelli, Sadie Monroe and Whitney Proper

www.whitneyproper.squarespace.com | bonnarooartsfund.org | flynashville.com/arts-and-music
This is funded by the Bonnaroo Works Fund, the Bonnaroo Music & Arts Festival and Arts at the Airport.

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DANCING SOUND WAVE
Figures Detail



Left to right: Sadie Monroe, Amber Lelli, and Whitney Proper

photo: Darby Campbell

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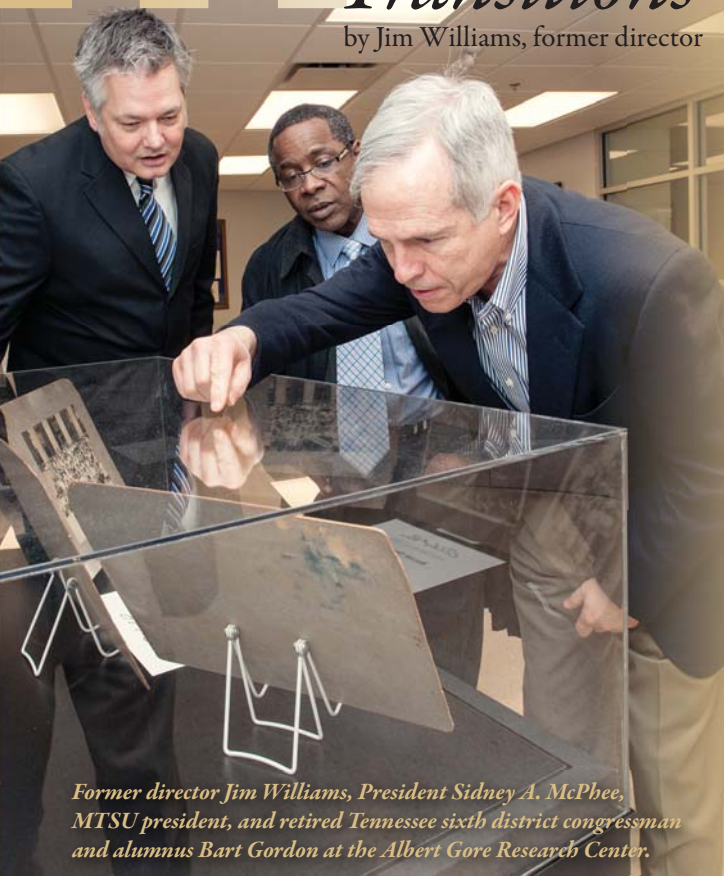
Transitions

by Jim Williams, former director

Albert Gore

ALBERT GORE RESEARCH CENTER

Every director of the Albert Gore Research Center has shepherded the center through transformative change. Jim Neal was the founder and quickly and continuously built the mission and collections of the center. Lisa Pruitt guided the center into its new location and split the Rutherford County Archives into an independent entity. Building on their work, as the third director I enjoyed leading the center through other transformations. In particular I am proud of the role that the center played in MTSU's centennial celebration and that we emerged as the official University archive, a role the center had performed informally from its creation. Our relationship with other enterprises on campus is stronger than ever, and our reach extends nationally through our membership in the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress and the Congressional digital records project I spearheaded as director. Our collections grew from 2008 to 2015, most substantially with the addition of the papers of Congressman Bart Gordon ('71). Our website provides more information from our collections than ever before, including hundreds of hours of oral history interviews like those in our vibrant collaboration with the Library of Congress Veterans History Project. And thanks to the generosity of many supporters, I was able to establish our first endowment in support of the Margaret Lindsley Warden Library for Equine Studies. I am confident that the center's archivists, graduate assistants, and undergraduate student workers will work well with Louis Kyriakoudes, the fourth director, to preserve our past, engage our present, and enrich our future. ■



Former director Jim Williams, President Sidney A. McPhee, MTSU president, and retired Tennessee sixth district congressman and alumnus Bart Gordon at the Albert Gore Research Center.

photo: J. Intintoli

Under the Impression Bookarts and Letterpress Exhibit

Under the Impression, an exhibition of works created by book arts and letterpress students, ran April 21–28. Most students were introduced to the media through letterpress or book arts classes. Artists in the exhibition interpreted their initial impressions: the literal impression put on paper by a printing press or being under the impression that a book needs to have a specific form; using new thinking and old technology; collaboration; and exploring nontraditional book structures. The MTSU book arts and letterpress program offers a particular perspective of book arts study to students enrolled in the many degree programs offered by the Department of Art and to interested students

in other degree programs. Book arts courses focus on the physical and theoretical aspects of traditional and contemporary bookbinding, box making, image-making techniques, papermaking, and the use of paper as a creative medium. Letterpress courses introduce printing on the letterpress using a range of old and new technologies. Student projects are designed to explore creatively the use of specific skills with an emphasis on understanding materials and mastering craft. Concepts are covered using creative exercises, hands-on demonstrations, examples, readings, research projects, library visits, and visiting artists. ■



Letters, 2015, Mixed media (pictured), a modified flag book structure that was a collaboration between visiting artists Peter and Donna Thomas and Kathleen O'Connell's Book Arts 1, Book Arts 2, Letterpress 1, and Letterpress 2, spring 2015 classes.

Participating artists included: Donna Thomas, Peter Thomas, Kathleen O'Connell, Ahmad Alamiri, Kimberly Connors, Veronika Gajdosova, Jordan Hawkins, Shelby Hicks, Salem Powell, Shelby Rehberger, Maria Rojano, Abby Taylor, Damarea Watts, Keli Hardin, Jackee LaFever, AJ Stills, Timothy Rudolph, Kaitlin Savage, Alisa Stoll, Andrew Turner, Ariel Tyndell, Aly Booker, Noel Moses, Sarah Smalley, Katie Stephens, Melody Tang, DJ Townsend, Lindsey Yost, and Luke Graves.

A Lasting Tune



by Patsy B. Weiler

John and Bobbie Duke turn their lifelong love of jazz into a scholarship for the woodwind-inclined

Dr. John R. Duke and his wife, Bobbie, have composed a fascinating life together. Like a catchy melody matched to beautiful harmony, they are a perfect team.

Married for 63 years, they have raised a family, supported each other in their careers, served their community and, together, have endowed the John R. and Bobbie J. Duke Woodwind Jazz Scholarship.

Still vibrant and active in their 80s—they love to dance, take yoga classes, and worship at St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church—music has been a constant in their lives. They met at a “Teen Town” dance in East Nashville when Bobbie was a dark-haired, 14-year-old beauty. At only 16, her husband-to-be was playing in the band. And, with just a nod, and a little tweak to the title of the great jazzy hit by Frank Sinatra, “the best was yet to come.”

Both Nashville natives, Bobbie, an admitted “people lover,” was one of the top realtors in the Murfreesboro area when she retired from Bob Parks Realty. John taught for 25 years at MTSU and worked professionally as a session musician and a conductor at Opryland USA (a former music theme park associated with the Grand Ole Opry), in the stage band for the nationally televised *Johnny Cash Show*, and on the Dove, Country Music Association, and Grammy awards shows. He was also part of the committee appointed by former MTSU president M. G. Scarlett to develop the popular Recording Industry degree.

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photo: Andy Heid

A Lasting Tune

continued from page 13



John and Bobbie Duke in their home

Sitting in their comfortable home, the Dukes, whose three children are all MTSU graduates, reflected on how they combined their love of music, Murfreesboro, and MTSU when they began their estate planning.

"I received a small scholarship when I went to college, and it helped me," John said. "I know students often need some assistance, so we established something in the Music Department."

Bobbie also wanted their gift to support students who share their passion for jazz. "I saw this as a good opportunity to help an individual who is interested in jazz and wants to keep this style of music alive," she said. "I've been listening to jazz music all my life, and I want to see it continue."

The Duke legacy began in 1970 when John was hired to teach the woodwind instruments.

"Back then, the department was small, maybe 30 woodwind students total," he said. "Today, you might have 30 students specifically studying just the clarinet!"

His superiors encouraged the new faculty member to continue his working relationship with Johnny Cash. His teaching schedule was arranged so he didn't have classes on Thursdays, when show rehearsals took place in Nashville.

"Some of my students would see me on television," John said. "It was good for them to see there were opportunities for their field." He added, "It was a great experience working on the show. There was incredible talent, from Bob Dylan to Dolly Parton, coming through each week. I met all kinds of interesting people."

John also recorded with Elvis Presley, Louis Armstrong, Perry Como, Roger Miller, Al Hirt, and Doc Severinsen and did live shows with Sonny and Cher, Glen Campbell, and others.

During the summers, John interacted with young adults from around the world who were performing in Opryland musical productions.

"John wrote original scores for the *I Hear America Singing* and the *Dixieland* shows," Bobbie said. "He met kids from everywhere and recruited several of them to come to MTSU."

In the mid-1970s, Dr. Neil Wright, then head of the Music Department, asked Duke to supervise the fledgling jazz program.

"I agreed—if they would put jazz into the curriculum and develop coursework," John said. "At that time, there were only a few colleges across the country offering jazz studies. Now, they are all over and even in the high schools."

He remembers the challenges the program faced in the beginning. Not all the music teachers liked the change. "Our students voted to name their jazz group the Blues Crusade because it really was a crusade to get it going," he said. "Initially, we didn't even have our own rehearsal space."

The determined professor refused to listen to the dissonance and continued to build the program, reinforcing instruction by bringing jazz masters to MTSU to perform. Working with then student-programming director Harold Smith, artists who appeared at MTSU included trumpet players Arturo Sandoval and Dizzy Gillespie, the great jazz clarinetist Buddy DeFranco, and drummers Buddy Rich and Duffy Jackson.

Once, when rehearsals ran a little late at the Duke's home, famed Italian saxophone player Denis DiBlasio was treated to a healthy meal.

"I had been working late and didn't have any time to cook," said Bobbie. "I pulled out a Lean Cuisine and popped it in the microwave. I told Denis it was his home-cooked Italian meal! We all got a laugh out of it."

Like a proud parent, John is hesitant to single out any one accomplished student he has taught. "Oh, gosh, there have been so many outstanding ones," he said.

"I received a small scholarship when I went to college, and it helped me. I know students often need some assistance, so we established something in the Music Department."

—John Duke

Trumpet virtuosos Mike Haynes and John Blount and one of the top Nashville saxophonists, Mark Douthit, all passed through John's MTSU classroom and went on to national prominence.

The Duke Scholarship continues to attract high-quality players to the MTSU jazz program. The 2015–16 recipient is saxophone talent Kyle Morgan of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

The influence and respect former students have for John was evident during a Blues Crusade alumni reunion in February. "We had people return to campus who had not been here in decades," said Dr. Michael Parkinson, director of the School of Music. "When we called John to the stage to direct the former Blues Crusade members, the audience erupted in applause and gave him a standing ovation. It was an amazing, amazing evening."

In his typical reserved manner, John said the most important contribution he made to the University was that he "taught students and helped develop their ability to teach and play." Stressing Bobbie's involvement through the years, he added, "It's nice to know when we're gone, our scholarship will still help somebody and give them a little boost along the way."

To find out how you can leave your legacy and help current and future College of Liberal Arts students, contact Meredith Kerr at Meredith.Kerr@mtsu.edu. ■



John Duke (far right) during his teaching days with members of the Blues Crusade.

background photo:
Andy Heidt



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IMPACT

Fulbright Scholars Go to Brazil

Benetti-Longhini and McDaniel

Brazil was the destination this summer for Jennifer Elizabeth Benetti-Longhini and Kevin McDaniel, MTSU's newest Fulbright Scholars. The program sends students, young professionals, and artists abroad to teach and/or conduct research for up to a year. Benetti-Longhini is 28 and lives in Tullahoma; McDaniel, 30, is from Memphis.

Benetti-Longhini continued an ecological study jointly funded by the United States and Brazil called "Assembly and Evolution of the Amazonian Biota and Its Environment."

McDaniel, an anthropologist and archaeologist who had already visited Brazil twice, continued his work mapping prehistoric sites in the country.

Benetti-Longhini is from Chula Vista, California, in metropolitan San Diego, and she is a graduate of the College of Basic and Applied Sciences and the College of Liberal Arts. She earned undergraduate degrees in Biology and Foreign Languages (Spanish) in 2013. She is working on her master's degree in Biology.

Benetti-Longhini helped with a multidisciplinary international project conducted with professor Andre Freitas at the University of Campinas, or UNICAMP, in the state of Sao Paulo, Brazil.

"We're trying to discover what we can about the natural history of the Amazon region," she said. Her study will focus on two species of butterflies, and her data will be integrated with findings of collaborators as part of a larger project aiming to model the natural history of the region.

"Brazil is a country that, because of its exuberant biodiversity, offers the unique and exciting opportunity to work with hundreds of students who are interested in natural history, ecology, and organismal biology," Benetti-Longhini wrote in

her Fulbright application. "Working in this environment would be an extraordinary way to launch my career as an ecologist." Biology professor Andrew Brower, who also conducts butterfly research, is Benetti-Longhini's mentor.

When she isn't studying butterflies, one of Benetti-Longhini's hobbies is playing bagpipes. She performs at 9/11 memorial ceremonies and funerals for local military personnel and police and firefighters. She and her husband, Leo, own Jonker Sailplanes in Tullahoma.

McDaniel earned his undergraduate degree in Anthropology from MTSU in 2013. He also studied Portuguese and archaeology. He pursued the Fulbright opportunity, he said, to get into research on a professional level and broaden his horizons. "We're part of a big global family," said McDaniel, "and the Fulbright gives you the ability to understand one another. The way to understand people is to talk to them, and it's a way to break down barriers and stereotypes."

McDaniel traveled to Brazil in 2011 to complete an interdisciplinary minor in Portuguese Studies guided by Soraya Nogueira, an associate professor in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. He returned in spring 2012 to conduct an archaeological survey with one of his mentors, professor Richard Pace.

McDaniel's 2012 trip was the basis for the cover story in the fall 2012 edition of this magazine. Dr. Tanya Peres (Sociology and Anthropology) associate professor and archaeology expert, was another of McDaniel's mentors. She advised him to pursue the Fulbright.

McDaniel conducts his research primarily through studying soils that indicate the presence of civilizations and by examining ceramics and other artifacts. With his Fulbright, McDaniel also participated in community outreach activities through the Goeldi Museum in Belem, Para, Brazil.

The Fulbright fellowship, one of the world's most prestigious educational exchange programs, is funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Recipients are chosen on the basis of academic or professional achievement and demonstrated leadership potential.

Benetti-Longhini's and McDaniel's awards bring MTSU's number of Fulbright Scholars since 2008 to 14. Twelve were Liberal Arts majors. Visit mtsu.edu/honors/fulbright.php to see a list of winners. Laura Clippard, undergraduate fellowships coordinator for the Honors College, helps student apply for the Fulbright and other fellowships. ■



Jennifer Elizabeth Benetti-Longhini

Kevin McDaniel

photo: J. Intintoli

MTSU Debate: *The Rise of the Raiders*

by Michaela Edwards and Patrick Richey



Four years ago, Dr. Patrick Richey was hired to reinvigorate MTSU's debate team. With hard work and dedication from him and a handful of students, the team has become one of the best in the nation. During the 2014–2015 season, Blue Raider debaters won the Tennessee state title, the south east regional title, and the International Public Debate Association (IPDA) national title in addition to more than 100 individual and team awards.

The year began with debaters recruiting and welcoming new students during summer CUSTOMS sessions for incoming freshmen. This and other recruiting brought in 20 new debaters. The 2014 meet-and-greet was the largest ever. The team, under the leadership of Debate Club captain Hailey Lawson (a senior) and cocaptain Michaela Edwards (a junior), worked many hours with the new debaters shaking the rust off after hosting the IPDA National Tournament in spring 2014. The team's first outing was the University of Northern Georgia's Chicken and Egg Debates. MTSU brought home 21 awards. The team then earned the first-place sweepstakes title at Walter State and first in debate at Belmont/Carson-Newman's Tennessee Porch Swing competition, at which the novice National Parliamentary Debate Association (NPDA) team of Liana and Mitchel Brisbon took first place. The team also did well at the Tennessee State University Music City Swing, Valdosta State Trail Blazer, and Mississippi College Deep South debates.

The team took a holiday break and was back on the tournament trail the first weekend of the semester. The team dominated the University of Tennessee–Knoxville Volunteer Classic for the second year in a row, winning multiple sweepstakes awards. The team then traveled to the South East Regional Tournament and took the top team award. Richey was honored as the South East Regional Coach of the Year. The team then went to the Tennessee Intercollegiate Forensics Association state tournament hosted by TSU, where it won a debate sweepstakes award with the duo of Brisbon and Brisbon taking the novice NPDA state title. The team took a few weeks off and had a local scrimmage with students from Motlow State Community College. The competitive season ended at the IPDA National Tournament and Convention hosted by Boise State. Freshman Katelyn Brooks, junior Michaela Edwards, and senior Hailey Lawson just missed breaking into outbounds, which determine how the best competitors place. Freshman Abbey Barnes won victories until the semifinals, placing her third in the nation for the tournament. Senior Communication Studies major Leigh Stanfield, after a grueling 14 rounds, won the tournament to take the

national title home for MTSU. While MTSU has made it deep into outbounds at national tournaments previously, to the best of Richey's knowledge, the team has never before won a national title in its 102 years of competition.

The Blue Raiders not only excelled on the tournament trail but also on campus. After the nationals, Richey and Hailey Lawson drove to Atlanta to pick up the *Irish Times* National Debate Champions from Dublin, Ireland. The College of Liberal Arts and the Department of Communication Studies and Organizational Communication hosted three Irish debaters for a week and sponsored an open campus debate on the United Nation's obligation to protect." The Irish debaters visited the Ryman Auditorium, attended a Vince Gill concert, toured the Jack Daniel Distillery, and enjoyed Southern hospitality.

The debate honor society, Pi Kappa Delta (PKD), also hosted debates on campus led by PKD president William Griffen. Eight new PKD members were inducted (who are now eligible to participate in the prestigious PKD national tournament).

Debate team members ran two food drives this year. They placed donation boxes in all the dorms at the end of each semester. The debaters believe that rather than trashing unwanted food, it is better to collect it and give it to the MTSU Food Pantry. This year, hundreds of pounds of food were collected and donated. MTSU debaters also worked with high school debaters from the Memphis Urban Debate League/Shelby County Debate Society. This included judging at the Memphis City Championship.

MTSU Debate is already gearing up for the 2015–2016 season. Debaters are present to welcome students at every CUSTOMS session. They are also staying active this summer preparing to defend their many titles and awards. For more information or to donate to MTSU Debate, please contact Patrick G. Richey, at patrick.richey@mtsu.edu, or visit www.mtsu.edu/debate. ■

Inset photo: Tennessee Intercollegiate Forensics Association Tenn. State Tournament. March 2015; top row (L–R): Michaela Edwards, senior, cocaptain; Alex Lempin, sophomore; middle row (L–R): Abbey Barnes, freshman; Jason Watkins, freshman; bottom row (L–R): Katelyn Brooks, freshman; Hailey Lawson, senior, team captain

Lifelong Learning *Back To School*

by Connie Huddleston

The first classes studied Tennessee with the help of Dr. Fred Colvin (professor emeritus of history and pictured right), who taught Tennessee History. Dr. Shannon Hodge (sociology and anthropology), Mr. Phillip Hodge (Dept. of Transportation), Ms. Tori Mason (Nashville Zoo), Ms. Sarah Levithol and Mr. Aaron Deter-Wolf (both of the Tennessee Division of Archaeology) taught Tennessee Archaeology classes with anthropological artifacts and research. The classes were held in the newly renovated MT Center in the Ingram Building on Middle Tennessee Boulevard.

It was great looking out over the crowd of participants to see notes being taken and hear questions being asked. Evaluations were over the top for both classes this spring, so Dean Mark Byrnes has approved three classes for spring 2016. We will offer the Civil War taught by Dr. Robert Hunt from the History Department. The second class will be Sports in America, taught by Dr. Fred Colvin, Dr. James Brooks, Dr. Warren Tormey, and another instructor to be announced. The third class will be The Philosophy of Happiness, taught by Dr. Phil Oliver (philosophy).

The fee is \$20 for each course. For more information, contact Connie Huddleston at (615) 494-7628 or connie.huddleston@mtsu.edu. ■



A fond elegy for MTSU's *Rite of Spring*

by Phil Oliver

Every spring for the past decade, the College of Liberal Arts and the English Department (and tireless organizers Ron Kates and Warren Tormey) have hosted an event that to me had come to seem as promising a harbinger of the season as April showers and the first flowering forsythia: the Baseball in Literature and Culture Conference, which convened for the 20th time (following a decade in Indiana) this past April 3.

And now, abruptly, it's leaving us, heading north to Kansas City. (More precisely to Ottawa, Kansas, across the Missouri-Kansas border to the home of the Kansas City Royals and the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum.)

I've been privileged to participate in this sunny event every year since 2008, making it nearly as much a perennial source of personal renewal for me as the game itself. Besides the usual throng of scholars from across the country, the conference always drew a "name" ex-Big Leaguer to deliver a luncheon keynote and sign our books, programs, pennants, cards, or whatever. The inner child, no matter how old or sober-faced the outer scholar, was always thrilled.

We were graced here by pitchers, mostly—Denny McLain, Mudcat Grant, Fergie Jenkins, Jim Rooker, Tommy John, Jim Bouton, Bill "Spaceman" Lee—so it was nice to see hitters of the stature of Willie Wilson and Ken Griffey Sr. stepping up to the lectern in the conference's final at bats.

For the record (it being baseball, after all, a game suffused with record keeping): in my conference talks over the years I discussed Ted Williams and John Updike; George Plimpton's apocryphal (but amazing) Sidd Finch; the meaning of life, umpires, and rules; heroes of my St. Louis youth like Bob Gibson and later semi-villains like Mark McGwire; time and eternal recurrence; Nashville's old Sulphur Dell ballpark; spring training and the perennial renewal of life. Next year I was finally going to do something on one of Murfreesboro's favorite sons, legendary sportswriter Grantland Rice. ("It's not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game.") And why shouldn't I? What else is there for me to do on the first Friday in April?

Guess I'm leaving town for the 2016 conference . . . Kansas City, here I come! ■



A PROPER BU

by Gina K. Logue

HERE LIE 20 UNKNOWN INDIVIDUALS
WHO LIVED AND WORKED ON THIS PROPERTY,
REINTERRED WITH REVERENCE AT THIS SITE ON THE
12TH DAY OF JUNE, 2014

JURIAL

Dr. Shannon Hodge and her archaeology students help the Nashville Zoo reinter the human remains of its plantation past

In the preindustrial South, cotton was king and Africans brought here against their will labored long hours to pick it. Now, because of what expert bio-archaeologist and MTSU associate professor of anthropology Dr. Shannon Hodge and her crew recently accomplished at a Nashville construction site, 20 slaves whose eternal slumber was to be disrupted by modern commercial development have new resting places.

The bodies of nine adults and 11 children were recently reinterred on the site of Grassmere Historic Farm at the Nashville Zoo in preparation for the construction of an entrance kiosk near the original burial grounds. A plaque at the site of the new cemetery reads, "Here lie 20 unknown individuals who lived and worked on this property, reinterred with reverence at this site on the 12th day of June 2014."

Hodge's colleague at MTSU, Dr. Kevin Smith, first took interest in the cemetery when he was a graduate student at Vanderbilt. The zoo, however, did not begin making plans to relocate the cemetery until 2013. That's when Hodge was called in to handle the delicate work. She performed DNA analysis on the remains, and her work offered remarkable experiences for her student researchers, who were involved in every aspect of the process, from excavating to washing to inventorying and DNA testing.

"It was a real beginning-to-end experience for the students," Hodge said.

Sophie Plant-Moran, a senior from Yellville, Arkansas, did the skeletal inventory, laying out the bones in their correct anatomical positions. "It was like having it laid out there in technicolor," Plant-Moran said. "When the remains are historical as opposed to ancient, they feel closer in time."

JoBeth Sorensen, who has graduated and now lives in Clarksville, also helped with the inventory, which included flat underground stones that might have been used to mark the original graves. The stones were placed with the remains at graves in the new cemetery.

"It was like having it laid out there in technicolor. When the remains are historical as opposed to ancient, they feel closer in time."

—Sophie Plant-Moran (pictured at right with Dr. Hodge)

"This project gave me a self-pride that no other project has before," Sorensen said. "Being able to give people that were mistreated in the past a restful place to lay and to show the truth of their history to the living was astounding."

The bodies of infants and children were not suitable for testing, but much data was gleaned from the remains of the adults. Hodge said the crew was able to determine age, gender, and, to a degree, the injuries and illnesses the slaves had suffered.

"We don't have a cause of death in particular for any of these individuals," Hodge said. "Most likely they would have died of some infectious disease that doesn't leave its trace on your skeleton."

After analysis, the bodies were reinterred with the greatest of care.

continued on page 22



Dr. Hodge with anthropology student Sophie Plant-Moran in the lab



A PROPER BURIAL

continued from page 21

“It brings tears to my eyes every time I think of the project. A piece of me and my heart will always rest with those people”

—JoBeth Sorensen

“We’re working under the assumption that they were buried in family groups,” Hodge said. “So we wanted to make sure they were back in their original arrangement so that families were still buried together. It would be inexcusable, personally and professionally, not to uphold that degree of respect.”

The Grassmere Farm, which originally was willed to the Children’s Museum of Nashville to educate people about animals, was passed down through five generations of family ownership. It includes a house built in 1810, a livestock barn, gardens, outbuildings, and cemeteries. Census records dating between 1830 and 1860 show that there was an average of 30 to 35 slaves living and working on the property.

While this was the zoo’s first foray into collaboration on an archaeological project, Tori Mason, the zoo’s historic site manager, certainly doesn’t rule out the possibility of future similar partnerships with MTSU.

“We tend to find shards of pottery and buttons and things like that,” Mason said. “We know that there was a lot of activity, especially up around the historic farm with different structures that were here.”

The site once had a barn for sheep and lambs and other buildings. Mason believes there may have also been a blacksmith’s forge.

Nashville Zoo officials received a Commissioner’s Award from the Nashville Metropolitan Historic Commission in May for its role in the cemetery relocation project that MTSU steered.

“It brings tears to my eyes every time I think of the project,” said JoBeth Sorensen. “A piece of me and my heart will always rest with those people.” ■

Shannon Hodge at the Grassmere Historic Home



Global Discourses in Women's and Gender Studies *2015 Conference*

MTSU has become a magnet for feminist scholars who want to present their research in a professional, open-minded environment. That's largely because of the biennial Women's and Gender Studies Conference.

The 11th interdisciplinary gathering last March welcomed scholars, activists, nonprofit professionals, and graduate students. With the theme "Global Discourses in Women's and Gender Studies," scholars made presentations on a wide variety of issues including youth, gender, and sexuality in education; health and wellness; campus assaults and sexual harassment; bullying and homophobia in schools; and gender pay equity. A highlight of the conference was Lisa Ling, executive producer and host of *This Is Life* on CNN, who was the keynote speaker for the conference and for National Women's History Month.

Rachel Simmons, author of *New York Times* bestsellers *Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls* and *The Curse of the Good Girl: Raising Authentic Girls with Courage and Confidence*, presented a professional development workshop on campus interaction in the age of social media. Students mingled with conference attendees, networking and exchanging ideas and perspectives. Student Showcase Day, which has been a regular feature of the conference since 2009, "reflects [our] commitment to encouraging and nurturing students' scholarly pursuits and fostering a student-centered learning culture," said Dr. Newtona (Tina) Johnson, director

of the Women's and Gender Studies interdisciplinary minor and cochair of the conference. The next conference is scheduled for March 2017.

Nilaja Sun performed her one-woman show *No Child . . .* as part of the biannual Global Discourses in Women's and Gender Studies Conference. Sun is an actor, playwright, and teaching artist, and *No Child . . .* is based on her experiences teaching in New York City public schools. The play includes a cast of 16 characters, and Sun plays them all, shifting from troubled youth to gutless teacher to omniscient janitor in the blink of an eye. (Her extensive acting experience includes her role as Juliet in the NBC drama *Madam Secretary*.) *No Child . . .* has won an Obie Award, a Lucille Lortel Award, the John Gassner Playwriting Award for New American Play, and two NAACP Theatre Awards, among others. The MTSU audience was treated to a spectacular performance and a discussion after the show. While in town, Sun also taught two workshops for theatre and playwrighting students. These events were supported by the Women's and Gender Studies program, the Department of Theatre and Dance, and the Virginia Peck Trust Fund. ■

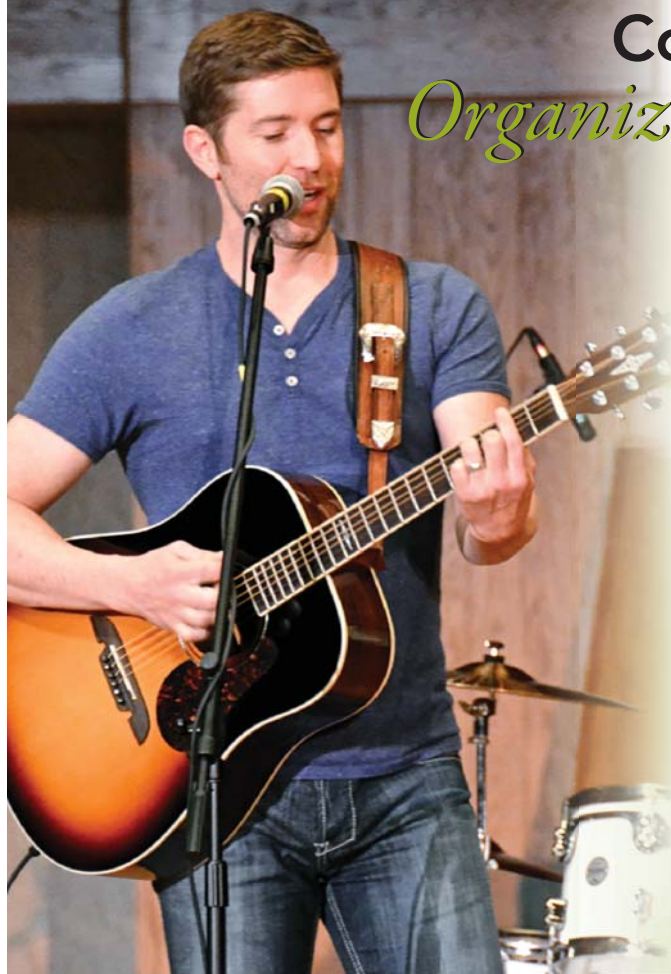


Lisa Ling



Nilaja Sun

Josh Turner



Communication Studies and *Organizational Communication*

Organizational Communication (ORCO) students lead busy lives. Last March, they worked with country music singer Josh Turner (pictured left) to produce the annual Young Soloist Music Competition for young people with disabilities. Held in Hinton Hall in Wright Music Building, the event was part of an international contest sponsored by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Students also recently worked with children with disabilities to make quilting squares as part of an international celebration about the power of the arts to bring people together. The completed quilt has been shown at the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Capitol. ORCO students also held a Caribbean-themed event that raised \$10,000 to feed children in Haiti, and interns worked with faculty member Lori Kissinger, middle school students, and senior citizens on an art exhibit that demonstrated the effects of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The exhibit was displayed in Nashville as part of the ADA Legacy Tour before it went to the U.S. Capitol this summer. Finally, in collaboration with the Jennings A. Jones College of Business, the College of Liberal Arts, and ORCO faculty members, the second annual Nonprofit Summit was held in March. The event included a keynote address by entrepreneur Miki Agrawal, sessions with professionals, and an internship fair. ■

Dean Mark Byrnes with Josh Turner





nce Upon a Website

Heidi Anne Heiner bridges the digital divide for the next generation of fairy tale lovers

If the words “fairy tales” conjure up the sanitized, happily-ever-after stories made famous by Disney films, Heidi Anne Heiner has a little warning: Fairy tales are not child’s play.

Heiner, who graduated from MTSU in 1997 with a major in English, has helped thousands discover the depth of fairy tales through her meticulous research—a never-ending endeavor that has made her website, www.SurLaLunefairytales.com, a favorite among scholars and casual readers alike.

Casual readers can dig for days on the website to learn more about Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, Hansel and Gretel, and many other lesser-known fairy tale characters. Scholars often cite SurLaLune. The site offers 47 annotated tales, 1,600 more tales in e-books, links to Heiner’s own books and recommended titles, 1,400 illustrations, and abundant commentary. The site averages 2,000 to 3,000 unique visitors per day.

“I’m not a true academic,” Heiner said. “I’m a website ambassador for fairy tales.”

Since 2010, Heiner has published 10 books based on her fairy tale research. At any given time, she’s working on two or three new books. Her latest, *The Grateful Dead*, was released in April 2015. Her thrill is finding as many versions as possible of a tale, getting lost in research in her own 3,500-book library and online databases. Most of her books take a year to write, compile, edit, and sometimes translate. Her books are weighty, going to the maximum 828 pages allowed by Amazon’s CreateSpace.

How did her writing life get started? As an undergrad, she wrote a paper about *Nancy Drew* and the *Goosebumps* series of children’s books that landed her a spot at an academic conference. It was the first of several she would be invited to, and she discovered that the librarians at such events seemed to have the most fun.

“I called an audible, as my husband would say,” Heiner said. So after graduating from MTSU, she went to the University of Tennessee to earn her master’s in information science.

As a grad student, Heiner had to create a website for an HTML project. One option was to annotate a fairy tale. “Oh, that was it,” she said. SurLaLune was born, named with a nod to her original major, astrophysics, and her concentration, French. She went above and beyond with her annotated *Bluebeard*.

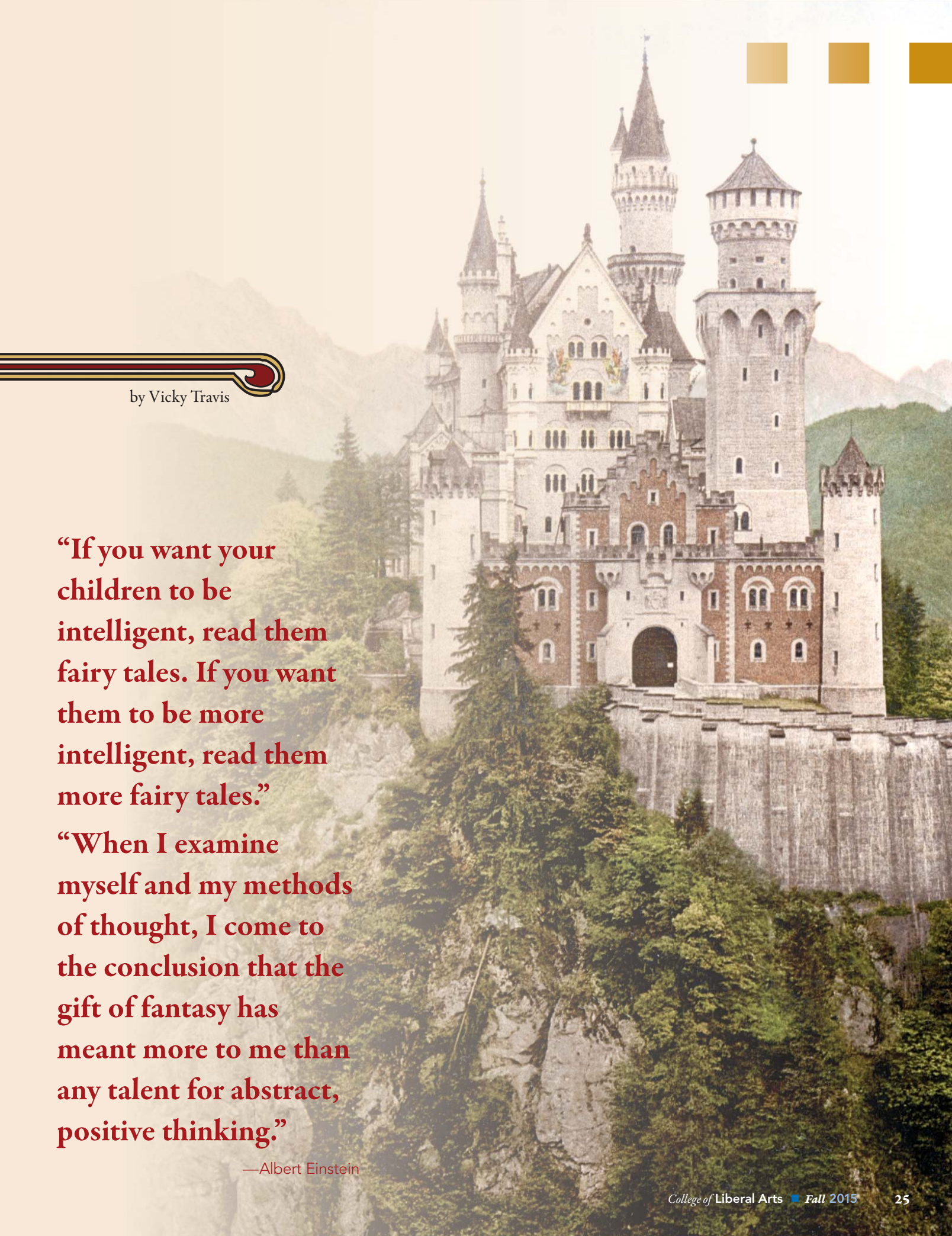
“The semester ended, and I’d had too much fun,” she said. “I had to learn more. I love sharing it.”

True academic or not, Heiner’s research brings praise from scholars, authors, and MTSU professors past and present.

Dr. Ellen Donovan (English) teaches adolescent literature and composition and oversees graduate teaching assistants. She knows that her children’s generation approaches the world through websites first while her generation seeks out books first. “What we’re seeing now is a bridge across that digital divide,” Donovan said. “Heidi is that bridge.”

The librarian in Heiner loves to make deep research accessible to the general public. Donovan said making that connection shouldn’t be such a stretch. “Historic folk tales are the pop culture of their time period,” Donovan said. “They show how a culture values children, family, regular folk, and coming of age... even the Grimms don’t capture the upper class but rather the middle—the folk.”

Heiner, now 43, credits MTSU with much of her success. She started college with plans to become an astrophysicist but soon switched to her true love, English. “The English Department was perfect for me. I thrived,” she said, adding that MTSU broke ground in taking folklore and children’s literature seriously—something that some universities resisted.



by Vicky Travis

“If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales. If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales.”

“When I examine myself and my methods of thought, I come to the conclusion that the gift of fantasy has meant more to me than any talent for abstract, positive thinking.”

—Albert Einstein



Once Upon a Website

continued from page 24

"Back then, it was male, white, and dead," said Heiner of authors studied at most universities. "Now it's more common, but then, it was groundbreaking to offer classes on women and science fiction."

Professor Emerita Margaret H. Ordoubadian also played a key role in Heiner's growth as a fairy tale expert. Ordoubadian, who has recited hundreds of fairy tales to her 10 grandchildren over the years, said, "Children need that nonsentimental story sometimes." Citing *Hansel and Gretel*, she continued, "They had to go deeper to get out," she said. "And when they go home, it's not the same way they came. It's always looking toward the future."

Ordoubadian's class, according to Heiner, stripped the innocence from many students who grew up with Disney tales. (Heiner likely already knew about topics like Rapunzel's premarital sex or the rape of Sleeping Beauty.) When Heiner

published *Bluebeard* 12 years after college, she included a dedication to Ordoubadian, her "first fairy tale mentor."

Ordoubadian offers high praise for Heiner today. "She makes things accessible from rare libraries," she said. "She is meticulous as a researcher. MTSU should be very proud. People respond from all over the world on her blog."

With her popular and influential website, Heiner has concentrated many of her passions in one place, recommending books, reading and writing about folklore and fairy tales, using her information science background, and assessing pop culture. SurLaLune, according to Heiner, will never be "finished."

Not as long as its creator continues to read, study, and learn more about timeless fairy tales and folklore. ■



Heidi Anne Heiner and a selection of her collected works

MTSU and *China*

Middle Tennessee State University and China's Hangzhou Normal University partnered in 2009 to establish a Confucius Institute, which works to enhance understanding of Chinese language and culture. The University is now creating a Chinese music and cultural center on University property with the help of a \$1 million grant from Hanban Confucius Institute in Beijing, an organization sponsored by China's education ministry that oversees more than 440 Confucius Institutes in 120 countries.

In collaboration with MTSU's sister university, Hangzhou, the new center will promote music as a vital element in education and the understanding of Chinese people and culture. It will be a component of the University's overall international outreach effort, which has earned MTSU recognition as a leader in global studies.

The 3,200-square-foot center, which is expected to open by fall 2016 or earlier, will be in the former Middle Tennessee Medical Center building on Bell Street. The center will showcase instruments from each of China's 56 national ethnicities. At the ceremony announcing the new center, Hangzhou University donated the first instrument, a guzheng, a 21-string instrument of ancient origins.

The University has hired ethnomusicologist Dr. Mei Han to direct the center. Under the auspices of the College of Liberal Arts and the School of Music, the director will develop courses involving Chinese music. There will be active research at the center and presentations and publications that should burnish MTSU's national and international reputation in global studies. ■

Inset photo: President Sidney A. McPhee, right, and Hangzhou Normal University President Du Wei pluck a few strings on a guzheng, a Chinese musical instrument, donated by Hangzhou Normal as the first instrument for MTSU's new Chinese Music and Cultural Center.



inset photo: J. Intintoli
background photo: Sidney A. McPhee



The Uncommon

by Vicky Travis

By involving students like Erin Porter in Very Special Arts projects, professor Lori Kissinger strives to bring art to all



“Art Education majors don’t always have the opportunity to be with English language learners or special needs children. This was a great opportunity to work with them.”

—Erin Porter (pictured at left with Lori Kissinger)

Lori Kissinger's work as a full-time instructor in the Department of Communication Studies and Organizational Communication at MTSU dovetails nicely with her work as executive director of Very Special Arts (VSA) Tennessee, which opens the art world to special needs students. VSA, created by former U.S. ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith in 1974, has affiliates worldwide that provide arts and education opportunities for people with disabilities and increase access to the arts for all.

Kissinger's combined passions recently brought hundreds of MTSU students and faculty in various departments together to realize her vision to showcase the special relationship between art and students who are often excluded from that world. In May 2015, an international quilt and the 40 Days Around the World Digital Arts Festival was featured in Todd Art Gallery. The digital festival, which showcased 40 art programs for special needs students here and abroad, went live June 16. (Find it at www.40days.vsatn.org.) The 100-by-100-foot international quilt with panels from VSA affiliates in 36 states and 38 countries then went to Washington, D.C., for receptions at the State Department and the Capitol.

“This doesn’t happen without MTSU,” said Kissinger, who also said she was blown away by campus support for the project. “No wonder I bleed Blue,” said the Indiana native.

Turning Empathy into Effort

Kissinger's passion for artistic expression began after a serious bout of scarlet fever as a child. After being quarantined with a poor prognosis, she healed but lost some hand-eye coordination. As a result, recess at her parochial school in Indiana wasn't fun, but dreaded. A cruel teacher made playing ball a forced activity for everyone, so she regularly escaped and hid underneath a church pew. In the quiet safety of a church, she wrote songs.

In high school, a choir teacher took notice. But Kissinger froze on stage, so she learned to play piano. But it was harp lessons that awakened her love of music. She eventually learned to play 100 instruments, specializing in folk music. Shyness moved aside as she performed at festivals and parks, teaching her audiences about the music's history.

“There were no nerves then,” she said. “I had a passion for it, and I was giving it away.”

After college, Kissinger became a children's librarian in Evansville, Indiana, and planned to get a library science master's degree. She did, but a nudge from her boss to take a job with the local arts council led her in an unexpected direction.

Just 23 and still quite shy, she was asked to become the council's executive director after just six months. For the next 11 years, she learned on the job how to write a grant, how to speak at

meetings and in TV interviews, and even how to deal with the mayor. Early in her new job, her quiet persuasiveness dissolved his opposition.

“It was trial by fire,” she said of that job. Now, part of her organizational communication class includes real-world experience writing grants. “I don’t want them to go through what I went through,” said Kissinger.

Filling the Void

While in Indiana, Kissinger discovered VSA accidentally as she worked on a grant for the arts council. Once she performed with special needs children, she saw the power of art education for the disabled. “These kids, so many times, were told what they couldn’t do,” she said. “Maybe they just need to do it in a different way. It’s about empowerment.”

For instance, Kissinger once worked with a nonverbal boy and discovered just how much was inside by introducing him to the harp. He answered questions by plucking strings.

Kissinger eventually started teaching at the University of Southern Indiana. While there, she earned her second master's degree from Indiana State.

Her husband's job change brought the Kissingers and their son to Tennessee in 2001. She taught as an adjunct at MTSU, Belmont, and Volunteer State. She joined MTSU full-time in 2003. When Kissinger found out there was no VSA Tennessee chapter, she called the VSA national leadership, who said that if she'd create bylaws, they would find someone to lead a chapter. More than a decade later, Kissinger is still working hard, often seven days a week, teaching at MTSU and leading VSA Tennessee.

“Lori is hugely dedicated to serving people with disabilities through the arts and has single-handedly grown VSA Tennessee exponentially over the years,” said Stephanie Litvak, manager of VSA Affiliates. “She really brought in the community connections that are needed for success.” “This is my niche as a teacher,” Kissinger said. “I’ve thought about pulling back, working less on VSA, but to be a better teacher, I need to stay involved.”

The international quilt project and the 40 Days Around the World Festival celebrated 40 years of VSA's influence. Last year, as its leaders brainstormed ways to involve state affiliates in the anniversary, Kissinger suggested creating something for Jean Kennedy Smith: a quilt with squares from all over. The response? Great idea. Now do you want to lead it?

That wasn't her intention when she came up with the idea, but Kissinger accepted. As the project grew in scope, and the digital component came alive, her enthusiasm brought several MTSU departments on board. Textiles students from the Department of Human Sciences put the quilt together with help from visiting

continued on page 30

The Uncommon **THREAD**

disabled students. A campaigns class worked on promotion. Students and advisors in Recording Industry, Electronic Media Communication, and WMOT also participated. Interns in Political Science, Organizational Communication, Education, and Art including Erin Porter, an MTSU senior majoring in art education, created an Americans with Disabilities Act display of information and layered artwork by middle schoolers and senior citizens, which went to Legislative Plaza in Nashville in March.

"Art education majors don't always have the opportunity to be with English language learners or special needs children," Porter said. "This was a great opportunity to work with them. Lori puts lots of care into everything," she said. "And it really shows."

At one point in the planning, Kissinger got word that a planned Washington, D.C., presentation of the quilt was no longer happening. "Then I met a little girl with special needs who was helping with the quilt who asked about it going to D.C.," she said. That was it, she thought. This had to happen. "I called (Rep.) Diane Black and sent a 'Hail Mary' email to the State Department," Kissinger recalled.

Rep. Black invited Kissinger to a Capitol reception. Meanwhile, the State Department agreed to display the quilt in its gallery and then in its Hall of Flags. The ADA exhibit was also planned to go to the Capitol reception. After its summer presentation, plans call for the quilt to travel to embassies around the world.

Home Base and Launching Pad

Kissinger said that none of these accomplishments would have been possible without the support of the University and the efforts of MTSU students. Kissinger's department has roughly 300 students majoring in Organizational Communication, said Sharon Smith, interim chair. Its 500 graduates have entered to for-profit and nonprofit fields such as event planning, human resources, and fundraising.

Senior Hannah Holladay, 21, interned with Kissinger from August 2014 to May 2015, and her work included coordinating a VSA event. "It turned on a switch in my heart," she said. "I recommend her classes to everyone."

As an intern, Holladay dealt with emails from all over the world as she helped coordinate projects between countries and their U.S. partners for the digital arts festival. When she saw Japan didn't have a partner, she created and led a handweaving project with Metro Nashville schools. Overcoming nerves, she taught Antioch High School special education students how to weave.

"Words can't describe how sweet they were," Holladay said. Another VSA project showcasing art related to river life had Egyptian children learning about the Nile River while children in Memphis learned about the Mississippi River.

As evidenced by the Digital Arts project alone, Kissinger is a tireless worker and advocate. Incredibly, she still somehow finds time for other good works projects. For instance, in the last three years, she has raised more than \$50,000 for various MTSU departments to support programs that marry service learning for MTSU students with high schoolers and students with disabilities. True Blue! ■



TUCKER THEATRE EVENTS

Boutwell Dramatic Arts Building

Dog Sees God:

Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead

September 30–
October 9, 2015

7:30 p.m.

UNCLE VANYA

November 4–8, 2015

7:30 p.m.

COLLAGE

A COLLECTION OF DANCE

November 19–21, 2015

7:30 p.m.

alm♥st, maine

February 24–28, 2016

7:30 p.m.

COMPOSITIONS

MTSU FACULTY DANCE CONCERT

March 31–April 2, 2016

7:30 p.m.

WEST SIDE STORY

April 20–24, 2016

7:30 p.m.

For tickets, visit www.mtsu.edu/mtsuarts or call 1-888-71-TICKETS.

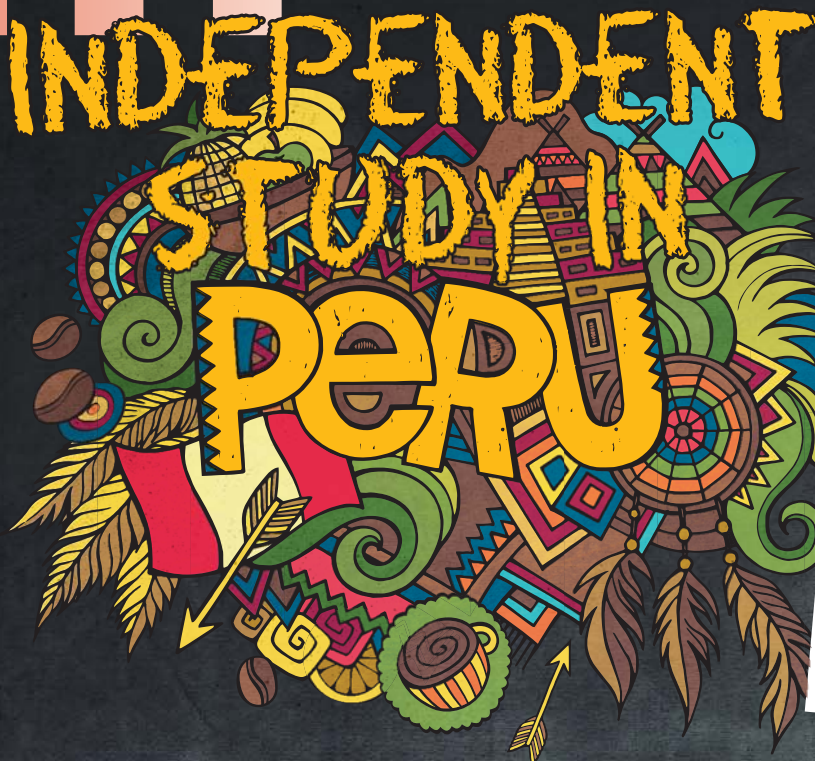
MTSU student tickets are FREE with student ID at the box office.


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Mountain Man

Samuel Kane Hulsey's independent study in Peru aims to improve ecosystems in the Andean mountaintops

by Samuel Kane Hulsey



It all began the fall semester of my sophomore year. As a Spanish student, I was eager to study abroad but also felt that I was ready to get away from the structure of a university-organized program and immerse myself. I had spent the previous summer working in Juneau, Alaska, as an eco-tour guide, and that experience prompted me to add an Environmental Sustainability and Technology (EST) minor. I became interested in climate change and was eager to find a way to combine my passions of language learning and the environment, leading to a search for opportunities in Peru that would allow me to solidify my language skills while also gaining relative experience in my field of study.

I knew that I was going to be studying in Cusco, Peru, for the spring semester through the MTSU affiliation with International Studies Abroad (ISA); however, I began researching additional opportunities to remain abroad after the program ended in May. I came across a six-week program in Sao Paulo, Brazil, hosted by Columbia University, called Summer Ecosystem Experiences for Undergraduates (SEE-U). The intensive Field Methods in Conservation Biology/Ecology course was exactly the kind of experience that I was looking for. It gave me an opportunity to conduct independent research while learning about the realities of climate change in Latin America. This experience was made possible through several grants and scholarships and was the ideal foundation for the internship with the Peruvian environmental NGO, the Mountain Institute, that would follow.

I met with Dr. Doug Heffington from Global Studies and Cultural Geography before departing for Cusco, and he brought up the option of finding an internship and pursuing independent study. This was an option through the office of International Affairs, which allows students to earn credit by participating in an academic internship. Some Global Studies students had done this before, but it was not common. The great part was that it could be applied directly to my major requirements.

At this point, I began researching environmental NGOs in Peru, sending out emails inquiring about internships. I came across Instituto de Montaña (TMI), an international environmental NGO whose work I found particularly appealing. The organization was founded in the Appalachians (Spruce Knob, West Virginia, 1972) and has since started programs in the Himalayas (Kathmandu, 1985) and the Andes (Huaraz, Ancash, Peru, 1996). The mission of TMI is to protect the world's mountains by conserving ecosystems and empowering people in mountain communities, with a particular emphasis on water resources, biodiversity, and cultural conservation. Working with this organization would be the perfect opportunity to gain experience in my academic fields through immersion in a professional working environment. This was my dream internship. I sent an email with a cover letter and CV directly to TMI's president in Washington, D.C., who promptly put me in touch with Dr. Jorge Recharte, director of the Andean program. Dr. Recharte told me that there would be an opportunity for an internship with the TMI team in Huaraz, and he put me in touch with the team coordinator.

We agreed to an internship with TMI's Andean program from July through December immediately following the SEE-U program in Brazil. I was ecstatic, although I knew that I was going to an unfamiliar city where I had no contacts. Nevertheless, after four months in Cusco, my Spanish and cultural fluency were strong, and I was confident that all would work out.

I arrived in Huaraz in July 2014 and soon found myself at TMI in the office of the team coordinator, Vidal Rondan, who, after a few seconds, remembered my emails and who I was. He explained the project that the team was working on: Asegurando el Agua y los Medios de Vida en las Montañas, (Securing Water and Ways of Life in the Mountains—"Agua Seguro" for short). Funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the three-year-long project's aim is to build climate-change adaptation capacity in the region by creating stronger ties between the local



university, policymakers, and rural communities. Before I knew it, I was integrated directly into the community component of the team. I was expecting to be given office chores, not conduct research as part of a professional team. I seized the opportunity to learn and contribute as much as I could as the only English-speaker on the team.

During my five months with TMI, my initial research involved conducting interviews with actors in what is called the “water regime”—all entities (private and public) that have anything to do with water distribution in the area or any interest in water allocation. This included public entities such as local and national water authorities who regulate water usage and monitor flow and availability. I was also involved with Huascarán National Park, which focuses on environmental conservation; professors from the Department of Environmental Science at the local university, UNASAM; EPS Chavin, a private water distributor; presidents of canal committees in rural locations; and independent environmental engineers.

I had two goals for these interviews: First, I was trying to find existing/potential conflicts over water resources between users. For example, if a community at a higher altitude uses more water than they are allocated or is using practices that may be contaminating the water for users in lower areas, there may be a conflict between the two. One of the goals of Agua Segura is to find such conflicts and implement a pilot “Mechanism of Compensation for Environmental Services.” Through this, the community in the lower zone may opt to help with projects in the communities in the higher zone such as reforestation of native tree species that would help retain and filter water.

My second aim was to evaluate perspectives regarding the effects of climate change on water availability in the region. Throughout the Andes, water is definitely the hottest environmental topic, but the issue continues to be little understood. The region in which I was working was particularly vulnerable because the rural communities focus exclusively on subsistence agriculture. They are not selling crops for profit but rather using them exclusively for their own consumption. Furthermore, these rural farmers rely on seasonal rains and glacial melting for irrigation. However, rains are becoming increasingly unpredictable and flow from glacial melting has been decreasing significantly in the dry season. I found that there are several major disagreements about the true source of water deficiency in the region. One group points to climate change while the other suggests that weaknesses within the water infrastructure and policymaking processes drive the deficit.

After completing my first investigation, I spent most of my remaining time conducting diagnostic interviews in rural communities. My goal was to continue searching for water conflicts, report the concerns of the people, record their

observations of how climate has been changing, and search for grass-roots adaptation initiatives. In all of the interviews I conducted, a lack of water was the number-one concern. Almost all participants reported a noticeable difference in water availability and increasing irregularity in seasonal rains. The lack of water has put pressure on people in rural communities to move to urban hubs, which often breaks traditional cultural ties.

One of the ideas that guides the project is that academics, scientists, and general outsiders will not be the ones to come up with solutions to water availability problems in these rural communities. Rather, solutions or adaptations will come from the communities themselves. The place of outsiders will be to promote the implementation of successful techniques. During the search, I helped document some extremely interesting and innovative adaptations. There were several rural farmers who were experimenting with homemade sprinkler systems made of PVC pipe and Coke bottles. There were others who were having success growing crops that traditionally have not been possible to cultivate in higher altitudes. This is primarily due to rising temperatures in the mountains that now make it possible to grow certain fruits and vegetables that one would typically find near rivers, on the coast, or in the jungle. Some rural communities have been taking advantage of the climatic changes rather than moving to the cities.

After finishing my five-month internship with TMI, I returned home in December and jumped right back into classes this past spring. I’m working on my Honors thesis, in which I am focusing on the conflicting perspectives of the impact of climate change on water availability. With the help of a grant, I returned to Huaraz this summer to continue my work with TMI. Through University funding, I will be able to conduct more interviews and delve deeper into the issue of how differing perspectives among actors can impede effective climate-change adaptation.

I also plan to continue studying Quechua during my time in Huaraz this summer. Known as the language of the Inca, Quechua is the most widely spoken native language in South America with nearly 10 million speakers throughout the Andes. I was studying the language during my semester in Cusco and was able to put it to use a bit during my interviews with rural farmers.

I was also fortunate enough to receive a Foreign Language and Areas Study (FLAS) grant from Vanderbilt’s Center for Latin American Studies to attend a six-week intensive Quechua program in Carhuaz, a small town about 45 minutes from the TMI office in Huaraz. My hope is to continue working with climate-change adaptation initiatives in Andean countries after graduation. There are several graduate programs that have my attention, but I’d like to explore my fields of interest a bit more before narrowing down a topic for further study. I could definitely see myself continuing working with TMI in the future. ■



GOING VISUAL MANTRACKING

**Two students
gain a new
perspective
when they learn
to see beyond
the obvious to
find what they
were looking for**

by Amber Lancaster
and Lauren Smith

Finding yourself in the middle of the woods during the hottest hours of the day with your eyes trained on the ground searching for the slightest clue (like one twig pressed more deeply into the soil than another or a subtle crimp in a curled leaf) is to find yourself in an interesting position. The sun is beating down, and no matter how much bug spray you've applied, the gnats and mosquitoes have proven to be more persistent. But you can't help but catch your breath when you finally see it. On the forest floor just under your nose a tree root stretches up out of the ground, exposed to the light and elements, and as you kneel down to confirm what you see, you smile. There are scuffmarks, seemingly fresh due to the lighter coloration of the tapered bark. You know that you're now on the trail.

The beauty of visual mantracking is the satisfaction of finding what you're after in real-life situations where success may end in the apprehension of a criminal or the return of a lost person to a family. There's a thrill in knowing that the more you practice, the more finely honed your skill set becomes and the more likely you are to contribute to a successful tracking outcome. Advancing from an amateur visual mantracker to the master level is no small task, as master instructors Hugh Berryman, Levi Montgomery, and Keith Lowery can confirm. This trio has taught tracking to law enforcement, the military, and search-and-rescue agencies in the U.S. and Canada. The instruction one receives in the tracking course offered by MTSU's Forensic Institute for Research and Education (FIRE) is available to anyone who enjoys learning more about nature, including its mysteries. It's the program's goal to help others become master instructors who will share their knowledge.

We were in a class with Dr. Berryman when he mentioned an upcoming visual mantracking opportunity. From the moment he first enthusiastically spoke of the course, we knew it was something we wanted to do. We remember his words, "You'll never look at the ground the same way again."

Before heading into the wild, we attended a classroom portion of the course that introduced us to our fellow mantracking aspirants: other students, law enforcement officers, EMS personnel, death investigators from the medical examiner's office, and five tracking instructors who were there both to teach and log more hours in their pursuit of master status.

The classroom covered the history of visual mantracking and its misleading name. The term "visual mantracking" is specific. If used in a shortened form such as just "tracking," the meaning can change. Visual mantracking, sometimes called tactical mantracking, is the term for the tracking of lost persons or criminals on the run. The use of Native American trackers by the military in the late 1800s was essential. Early mapping of unexplored regions would have been a much more daunting challenge had explorers not known the secrets of following trails and keeping account of their positions as they made their way across unfamiliar terrain.

A tracking team consists of four people, each of whom have specified positions and roles. One person takes point and is in charge of identifying and protecting the last known sign while maintaining the direction of travel; the left and right

flankers work under the direction of the point person and scout their perimeters for new and fresh signs; and the rear observer looks ahead for anything the point and flanks might miss. It is important for the team to rotate positions every fifteen minutes so that the pressure of being point does not wear any one person out. Rotations also allow a different set of eyes to look at the scene with a new perspective. Every thirty minutes or so the entire team pauses and looks away from the ground for a few minutes to rest their eyes. The ability to track in the wild isn't about who has the best vision. It's about pattern recognition, the incongruity of patterns, and sometimes the lack of patterns. The best mantrackers are the kinds of people who can glance down at the grass and spot a four-leaf clover without effort. It takes something of an artistic eye to spot the subtle clues and hints needed for success.

After the lecture, we hit the woods, where we warmed up by dissecting freshly laid footprints to familiarize ourselves with the effects of a shoe and its impression on the ground. "Every time that person takes a step, it leaves behind a clue," our master instructors told us, emphasizing that these clues look different depending on the terrain and weather. Clues in the forest are also found above ground. "Flags" and "flashlights"—as the instructors called them—are bent and torn branches that have been moved out of the way somewhat violently, causing the bright white of the stem to shine in a manner that seems to shout, "Hey, he went this way!" The forest floor and all its foliage offers little hints, such as "depression" and "crushing," where twigs and leaves have been pressed into the soil and begin to "bruise" in response. In an open field or area with tall grass the stalks typically display "brush-back," bending toward the direction of travel and often shimmering in the sunlight. Wet, muddy terrain offers opportunity for "track traps," where a tracker searches in rain or shine for imprints of the shoe. These are the types of clues and variations you learn to pick apart from the puzzle-like story the ground and trees can tell you, and it requires a bit of work to discern what piece of the puzzle fits where.

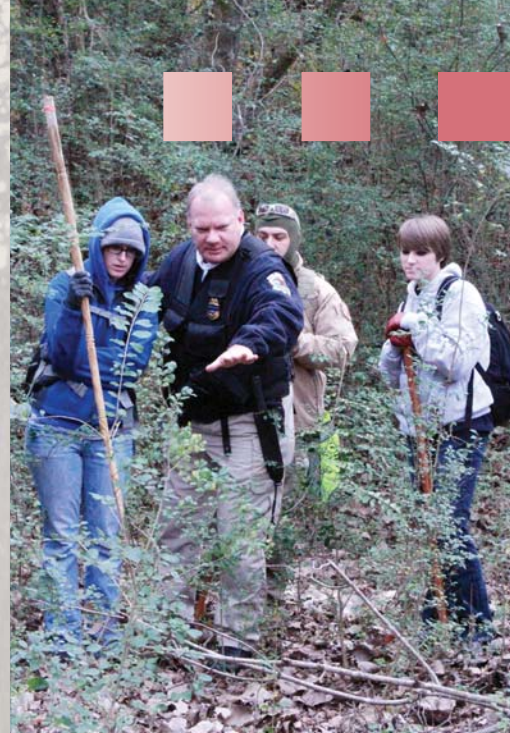
Perhaps the most frustrating part about learning this skill is accepting that you're going to make plenty of mistakes. All too often, the team hits an area where no matter how much they scan and search, no one can find the next clue. When this happens it is important not to give up; it is part of the process and even the masters will have to backtrack every now and then. Losing the trail is a component of any sort of tracking. More often than not, rotating, resting the eyes, and sending the flanks off on a wider perimeter while the point holds the last known position can bring a solution. Sometimes using the tools

of the trade, such as a stride stick, can help with the rediscovery of the trail as well. The stride stick is a visual mantracker's best friend because it's used to mark the stride length of whoever laid the trail. It can serve as a quick reference for where your eyes should be searching. When someone does find the next clue, there is a sigh of relief and then the race continues. Next is the rewarding part of the process, the part where you catch up to the target and realize you've successfully followed a trail to its end.

Days and weeks after the course was over we still found our eyes naturally seeking out small trails in autumn foliage or spotting from a car window the place where an animal entered the forest. Every time we saw a footprint, we wanted to find where the next step fell and would wind up following some student to class just to let them know we found them. You truly do perceive the ground, and nature in general, in a whole new light after you teach your eyes to see beyond the general outlines of the grass and forest. We can no longer walk through campus or simply to our cars without spotting some sign of travel. After this class your eyes almost magnetically fixate on the ground.

We will always remember one of the master trackers saying that because we wanted to be out there looking for trails and little hints rather than sitting at home on the couch watching television for a weekend meant that someone in our family may have been a visual mantracker—that this desire to see beyond may be in our genetic makeup.

We encourage you to explore this kind of experience. You may find yourself soaking wet and cold, covered in bug bites, sunburned, exhausted, and still struggling to find a trail, but when you do hit your mark, the determination pays off, even if the reward is just the white of a broken twig waving right in front of your nose. ■



Lauren Smith (left) and Amber Lancaster (right) with law enforcement officials training in the field.

The ability to track in the wild isn't about who has the best vision. It's about pattern recognition, the incongruity of patterns, and sometimes the lack of patterns.

CLA News

Congratulations to **Pansey Carter** (Sociology and Anthropology), who was named Secretary/Clerical Employee of the Year; **Sisavanh Houghton** (Art), who won an Outstanding Teacher award; **Dawn McCormack** (History), who was named an Outstanding Teacher in General Education; and **Jonathan M. Bradley** (English), who won an Outstanding Achievement in Instructional Technology award.

This spring, **Mary Beth Asbury** (Communication Studies and Organizational Communication) received the Dwight L. Freshley Outstanding New Teacher Award from the Southern States Communication Association. The award honors members who demonstrate excellence in communication teaching early in their careers.

Lucy Langworthy, advising manager, received the Staff Student Success Award for 2015.

On March 31, 2015, the MTSU Holocaust Studies program sponsored a presentation titled “Nazi Antisemitism and the Christian Churches” by historian Dagmar Herzog. The event, held in the Faculty Senate Room of James Union Building, drew a near-capacity audience. It was cosponsored by the College of Liberal Arts and the Jewish and Holocaust Studies interdisciplinary minor. Herzog is a distinguished professor of history at the City University of New York. She has published extensively on the histories of sexuality and gender, theology and religion, Jewish-Christian relations, and Holocaust memory.

Tina Johnson was appointed interim Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. She is a professor of English and the director of the Women’s and Gender Studies program. Tina has been a Fellow for the American Council on Education, and also participated in the Bryn Mawr Summer Institute Higher Education Resource Services program.

Student News

Several students presented papers and posters during Scholars Week.

Hailey Lawson, a senior and captain of the debate team, won a speech contest.

English Ph.D. students **Nancy Blomgren** and **Rhonda McDaniel** were selected as participants in a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar: “The Materiality of Medieval Manuscripts: Interpretation through Production.” You can find a little blurb about it at the English Department blog at <http://mtsuenglish.blogspot.com/2015/04/two-from-mtsu-english-department-to.html>.

William Duke, from Murfreesboro, is a graduating senior and has been awarded a fellowship for graduate study in voice performance at the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana. He will receive a \$10,000 annual stipend and will be studying with internationally famed baritone Nathan Gunn. At MTSU, Duke received the Linse Bock Scholarship. He is a graduate of Siegel High School.

During the Japanese Speaking Contest in April 2015, MTSU had two winners, **Whitney Rhodes** (First Prize, level 1) and **Daniel Avila** (Consul General Prize, level 3).

Philosophy News

Ann Taves, professor of religious studies and Virgil Cordano OFM Endowed Chair in Catholic Studies at the University of California–Santa Barbara, was the spring 2015 Strickland Visiting Scholar in the Department of History. Dr. Taves is a past president of the American Academy of Religion and a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. She has published widely in the areas of modern Christianity and American religion, focusing especially on religious experience. Her forthcoming book, *Revelatory Events: Extra-Ordinary Experiences and New Visionary Movements*, explores the role “unusual experiences” play in three movements: Mormonism, Alcoholics Anonymous, and *A Course in Miracles* study groups. During her visit in March, Dr. Taves presented a portion of her research in a lecture titled “Prophet, Visionary, or Fraud? Joseph Smith and the Materialization of the Golden Plates.”



Mary Magada-Ward (Philosophy) recently received a Faculty Teaching Award. She was recommended by a student who is a double major in Philosophy and Psychology. The student wrote the following: “Occasionally my experiences are so exceptional that I am compelled to let the professor and department chair know about it. Dr. Magada-Ward is concise, objective, and patient. She also has realistic expectations. She makes it clear that she recognizes our responsibilities in life and with other classes. She gives us soft deadlines, instead of rigid rules and expectations. She welcomes discussion and free thought, which, for me, is the heart of higher education.” Dr. Magada-Ward said she was extremely honored to receive the award. “I have been privileged to work for many years with colleagues who are not only gifted teachers but engaged philosophers, and so this recognition will, I anticipate, further strengthen my aspiration to live the philosophical life.”

English News

The College of Liberal Arts hosted the Ninth Annual MTSU Linguistics Olympiad on March 21, a competition for middle and high school students with a passion for learning languages. Sponsored by the Department of English with support from a public service grant to **Aleka Blackwell**, the 2015 competition had more than 140 participants from 20 schools. Thanks to faculty, alumni, and student volunteers who served as judges, puzzle authors, pre-testers, and activity coordinators, the event was a success. A parent whose daughter has competed for several years said, “With the increased traffic, the event has not lost its exemplary organization. Every year, we particularly look forward to [the] eclectic selection of enrichment activities. In a world increasingly globalized yet diverse and fragmented, linguistics plays an important role in creating harmonious dialogue. In that regard, the Linguistics Olympiad serves a very important scientific and social role.” Medals were awarded for three events (individual, two-member team, and four-member team) in two competitions (middle school and high school). In the individual event, medals and honors were awarded to students from Ravenwood High School, Franklin High School, Battleground Academy, Athens City Middle School, Sunset Middle School, Woodland Middle School, and MLK Magnet School. In the two-member team competition, medals and honors went to teams from Ravenwood High School, Shelbyville Central High

School, Siegel High School, Rogers Creek Elementary, Englewood Elementary, a home school, and Poplar Grove School. In the four-member team event, winners were teams from Battleground Academy, Franklin High School, Central Magnet, and Rogers Creek Elementary.

Jennifer Kates took a group of students to the Southern Literary Fest (<http://mtsuenGLISH.blogspot.com>).

"Deeds Not Words: The Battle Cry of Spike Lee's *Miracle at St. Anna*," written by **Laura Dubek** (English) and **Jesse Williams Jr.** (English), will be published in the *Journal of Popular Film and Television*.

Becky King (English) won an American Academy of Religion individual research grant based on her paper "Judaism, Jesus, and Evangelical Rabbis: A Study of Jewish-Affinity Christians." She recently became book review editor for *Critical Research on Religion*.

Michael Neth (English) received the Faculty Research Award in Liberal Arts for his work on *Complete Poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley* published by Johns Hopkins University Press. In particular he was recognized for his monumental editing of Shelley's 4,800-line epic *Laon and Cynthia*, an accomplishment that has earned him an international reputation. The effort took several years of intense and time-consuming work. The usual painstaking work of collating a text's various published editions and manuscripts was complicated because Shelley completely rewrote the poem as *The Revolt of Islam*. Neth's edition records all the textual variants introduced in Shelley's rewrite and includes a collation of all significant later editions of the work. Especially impressive is Neth's introduction, commentary, and supplements, which constitute nearly 400 pages in Volume 3 of the edition.

MTSU hosted the **Joss in June** Conference June 26–27. The conference is devoted to the work of television and film auteur Joss Whedon (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Marvel's The Avengers*). Cosponsored by the English Department, the College of Graduate Studies, and the College of Liberal Arts, the conference was chaired by the English Department's **David Lavery** and graduate students **Cori Mathis** and **Stephanie Graves**.

Political Science and International Relations News



Tandra Martin (International Relations, 2015, Omicron Delta Kappa, Buchanan Fellow) was a Blue Elite Tour Guide and a Student Ambassador and worked with Read to Succeed, World Servants, and the Student Government Association philanthropic committee. She received the MTSU Community Service Award and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission's Harold Love Outstanding Community Involvement Award. Tandra also completed an internship with the

Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C., and studied in Costa Rica and Israel. She was named a Public Policy and International Affairs Fellow and received a David L. Boren Scholarship to study Arabic language and Islamic society and politics in Morocco. She also won a Fulbright Scholarship for study in South Africa, and the President's Award for her outstanding commitment to service and the University.

Davis Thompson, (Political Science and Mass Communication, 2015) was a Truman Scholarship finalist, former Honors Student Association president, and Omicron Delta Kappa national leadership honor society member. A winner of the 2015 Provost's Award, he was part of the Presidential Fellows program at the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress in Washington, D.C., and a spring 2015 intern in the office of First Lady Michelle Obama.

Many alumni have discovered that they can assist Political Science students and recent graduates by helping them get started. For example, **Jim Free**, an alumnus with the Smith-Free Group in Washington, D.C., is giving recent alumnus **Jared Adams** the opportunity to learn how to have a successful career as a lobbyist. You can really help students by offering them the chance to see what you do, how your company works, and what the careers are like in your field. If you interested in offering an internship, please contact the Department of Political Science at (615) 898-2708 or pdavis@mtsu.edu.

Jim Free ('69, '72) and Jared Adams ('13)



David Carleton (Political Science) dedicates himself to the success of students. He has long worked to improve his own classroom instruction and the quality of classes throughout the department. He received the 2015 CLA Faculty Student Success Award. Dr. Carleton played a pivotal role in revising a research methods class, working closely with other faculty members to introduce greater rigor into the course. He interacts directly with students in this particular class, conducting a number of one-on-one, face-to-face meetings with each student and using step-by-step exercises to introduce them to skills needed for basic research. As part of a broader but related initiative, Dr. Carleton has also promoted research among students, emphasizing its role in their academic training. He has developed a series of online courses over the years and, more recently, an experimental hybrid course that potentially can provide quality control for adjuncts. Last year he and **Dr. Vanessa Lefler** devoted time and energy to exploring, developing, and incorporating new pedagogical tools into the PS 1010 Foundations of Government class. Dr. Carleton is also an effective faculty advisor. He advises all teaching licensure students and played a role in redesigning that program and serving on the University committee that revamped the College of Education's requirements for teacher training. Dr. Carleton also coordinates the Washington Center program, which sends students to Washington, D.C., for semester-long internships with a variety of agencies and institutions. Dr. Carleton put together and maintains the Student Services Portal on the Political Science and International Relations Web page, which has information for students on careers in political science, internships, graduate schools, and research and public service opportunities.

Communication Studies and Organizational Communication News

The Global Communication Certification Council (GCCC) is a standard-setting and assessment council for communication professionals. The inaugural council was appointed by the international executive board of the International Association of Business Professionals (IABC) and is made up of officers representing communication professionals around the world.

Janet McCormick, IABC student chapter faculty advisor, is the first chair of the council. She holds doctorate, master's, and bachelor's degrees in speech communication. She has taught in higher education since 1987 in the U.S., England, Argentina, and Singapore. She is a past president of the Tennessee Communication Association and past chair of the President's Commission on the Status of Women at MTSU. Janet also chaired an international council to create rigorous certification for communication professionals. The council created procedures for a certification program and exam and developed marketing strategies for the launch of the program.

Mary Beth Asbury and **Jessica Kratzer** are taking part in MTSU's Tinnovation project, which seeks to partner professors with organizations that could use their expertise. Asbury and Kratzer worked with Nissan on a diversity policy including an LGBT guidebook.

Center for Historic Preservation News

The MTSU Center for Historic Preservation has awarded the 20th annual Dorothy Williams Potter Scholarship to **Bob Beatty**. The scholarship is sponsored by the Thomas Lygon and Prudhomme Fort Chapters of the Tennessee Society Colonial Dames XVII Century. It was established in 1995 in honor of Potter, honorary state president and national scholarship chair of the National Society. Potter is an active historian in middle Tennessee, a recipient of the Tennessee Historical Commission's Certificate of Merit, and the author or editor of over 100 historical and genealogical publications. Beatty is a doctoral candidate in the Public History program. He is interim president of the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH). As vice president for programs, he directs AASLH's professional development efforts, providing onsite and online workshops, organizing and conducting annual meetings, managing more than 200 volunteers in affinity groups, and directing other initiatives. He is editor of *History News* magazine and a member of the editorial advisory board of AASLH's book series with Rowman & Littlefield.

The weekly blog of the Center for Historic Preservation (CHP), *Southern Rambles*, gives graduate research assistants an opportunity to showcase their training in preservation and their research in the field. So far this year, students have written about their experiences creating exhibits about the Trail of Tears, writing lesson plans on the music of the Civil Rights movement, engaging undergraduates in archival research at Fisk University, assessing a 19th-century stone building in Bedford County, reviewing the decorative arts collection at Glenmore Mansion in Jefferson City, highlighting shipping container architecture in South Africa, and surveying cemeteries in Rutherford County. *Southern Rambles* is a great way for the CHP to introduce itself to prospective students and new partners. Subscribe at chpblog.org or like the CHP on Facebook, and you will receive the weekly blog in your news feed.



CHP graduate research assistant **Amanda Barry** (below, far left) with former students of Sitka School in Gibson County, Tennessee.

Music News

Music faculty members with new music in release include **Don Aliquo** (with alum **Jim White**), **Matt Lund**, **Paul Osterfield** (featuring **Andrea Dawson**, **Angela DeBoer**, and **Lynn Rice-See**), **Michael Linton** (with **H. Stephen Smith**), and **Jamey Simmons** (with **Arun Nadgir**).

The MTSU Wind Ensemble, conducted by **Reed Thomas**, has a CD out with **David Loucky**, low brass professor, soloist, and a major work by recent alum **Jesús Santrander**, the new composer-in-residence for the Beijing Wind Orchestra.

The independent Nashville music label Refinersfire released *Seven Franchetti Songs* by **H. Stephen Smith**, professor in the School of Music, in May. The settings of poems by the contemporary Italian-American poet Cody Franchetti, were premiered in March 2014 at Carnegie Hall by Smith and pianist David See and received critical praise.

Matt Lund's jazz quintet released an album last November called *The Lund McVey Group*. It is the group's first studio album and was recorded at MTSU's Studio B. Lund, an adjunct faculty member, is also an MTSU master's graduate. Saxophone player **Jason McVey** received his bachelor's and master's degrees from MTSU, and bass player **Adam Bond** is an undergraduate alumnus of the MTSU jazz program. The album contains ten of Lund's original compositions. See www.reverbnation.com/lundmcveygroup for more information.

Art News

Professor **Debrah Sickler-Voight** was the only representative from the American continent to be part of the jury for Lidice Gallery's International Children's Exhibition of Fine Art in the Czech Republic. The exhibit is a collaboration with UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and was developed to commemorate over 80 children who were purposely killed during WWII (<http://www.lidice-memorial.cz/en>).

History News

Brad Miller (History) won the best graduate student paper prize at the annual Phi Alpha Theta Regional Conference at Austin Peay State University in February 2015. His paper was "Built for the Living: African American Funeral Homes Across Tennessee, 1880s–1960s".

The 14th Annual History Day Competition during the spring semester attracted more than 250 students in grades 6 through 12. One student said, "This is great and I really like your facilities." A parent said, "MTSU is a great place, and we love history." The department is grateful for all the judges who spent time evaluating the various entries and the graduate students who helped with coordinating and logistics. Thanks are also due to the College of Liberal Arts and Dean Mark Byrnes for their steadfast support of History Day. **Becky McIntyre**, associate professor and coordinator of History Day, continued her superb work, especially this year, when the entire event had to be rescheduled because of inclement weather.

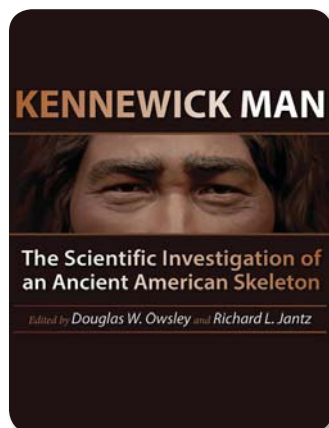
Theatre and Dance News

The Studio Theatre in Boutwell Dramatic Arts Building has been named for longtime faculty member **Deborah Anderson**. Along with her husband and fellow faculty member **Crosby Hunt**, Anderson retired this year. A special thanks to both of them for their dedication to students.

Many MTSU folks were involved in the March 2015 production of *Death of a Salesman* at TPAC, which was produced by Nashville Repertory Theatre. The production featured **Chip Arnold**, **Rona Carter**, **David Compton**, **Geoff Davin**, **Rebekah Durham**, **Matt Garner**, **Eric Pasto-Crosby**, **Patrick Waller**, and **Derek Whittaker** with interns **Emily Eytchison**, **Abigail Kairdolf**, **Lindsey Mapes**, and **Will Miranne**. **Abbey Kairdolf** is a current student, and Nashville Rep's resident costume designer is an alum, **Trish Clark**.

Sociology and Anthropology News

Andrea R. Eller (B.A., Sociology, MTSU 2007; M.S., University of Oregon 2012) is a doctoral student interested in comparative primate evolution mostly from an osteological perspective. Her research focuses on Old World monkeys. Her dissertation work includes documenting variation in developmental pace, body size, diet, and geographic diversity. She is a collaborator in a vervet ethnoprimate study on Saint Kitts (West Indies), documenting similar variation in these adaptive monkeys. Andrea is assistant curator of the UO Comparative Primate Collection at the University of Oregon.



Hugh Berryman (Sociology and Anthropology, Forensic Institute for Research and Education) is the author of a chapter in *Kennewick Man: The Scientific Investigation of an Ancient American Skeleton*, published in late 2014 by Texas A&M University Press. He also was named to the Crime Scene/Death Investigation Scientific Area Committee Anthropology Subcommittee in the Organization of Scientific Area Committees.

Recent M.A. in Sociology graduates who have entered doctoral programs or professional schools: **Lisa Walker** is in the School of Law at the University of Baltimore; **Barbara Pennington** is pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of Alabama–Birmingham; **Grady Lowery** is completing a Ph.D. at the University of Tennessee; **Dustin Brown** has a Ph.D. from University of Texas and is now a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Michigan; **Shaonta Allen** was recently accepted into the Ph.D. program at the University of Cincinnati; **Alla Chernenko** is working on a Ph.D. at the University of Utah; **Kim Wingard** is pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of Florida; **Lauren Norman** is in the Ph.D. program at the University of Central Florida.

Some M.A. graduates in Sociology have gone directly into the workforce: **Jaime Fuston** is a full-time faculty member at Volunteer State Community College in Gallatin; **H. Craig Neel** is a district director, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Labor Management Standards; **Laura Swanson** is senior research coordinator with the Tennessee Housing Development Authority; **Juan Canedo** is executive director of the Progreso Community Center in Nashville; **Amanda Watson** works for the Washington, D.C. Metro Transit Authority.

Featured Speaker



Colonel William James "Greg" Gregory (retired), shown above with his daughters, **Cookie Ruiz** (left) and **Gretchen Davis** (right), a 30-year veteran of the U.S. Air Force, was the featured speaker for the College of Liberal Arts Lecture Series in April. His topic was "Leading and Living in Turbulent Times: The Cuban Missile Crisis, Vietnam, and the Development of Aviation." Gregory commanded the high-altitude reconnaissance U-2 squadron that confirmed the military build-up of the Soviet Union and mounting tensions in Vietnam during the early 1960s.

In Memoriam

Michael "Doc" Sniderman, a retired faculty member from Speech and Theatre (now the Department of Theatre and Dance), died May 28. In addition to teaching at MTSU from 1980 to 2011, Professor Sniderman was a scenic and lighting designer and a technical director. In his last years on the faculty, he taught public speaking to many MTSU students. We offer our condolences to his family and friends.

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