

CLA

College of Liberal Arts

Middle Tennessee State University ■ www.mtsu.edu/liberalarts

Fall 2013 ■ vol. 2, no. 1



Defending the relevance of a liberal arts education

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College of Liberal Arts

Middle Tennessee State University

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Fall 2013 ■ vol. 2, no. 1

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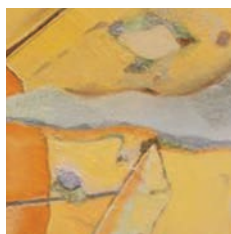
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Podium Power

Student Mary Choate recalls the effect that Sandra Day O'Connor, retired associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, had on her. The first woman to serve on the nation's highest court came to MTSU in 2012 for the College of Liberal Arts Windham Lecture Series, an annual event founded by Professor Emeritus William Windham, former chair of the History Department, and his late wife, Westy.

"Seeing the first female Supreme Court justice renewed my passion for the law," Choate says. "My main goal is to become a lawyer, and hopefully one day I will be in her shoes."

It is exactly this type of inspiration that I see as a reason to make guest lectures a high priority at MTSU. I believe in the power of the spoken word and am passionate about building an endowment to enable the College of Liberal Arts to bring more national and world figures to speak at the University.

We have been very fortunate in recent years to have found funding to host speakers such as O'Connor, author David McCullough, and musician Béla Fleck, to name a few. Another recent speaker was MTSU alumnus Wayne White, an internationally recognized artist and performer, who is profiled in a feature story in this magazine (see page 16). These are people who have helped shape their respective fields and our world. We want to be able to continue this tradition for our students and the surrounding community.

Lectures such as these really embody the value of a liberal arts education—helping people become more reflective about their beliefs and choices, more creative in their problem solving, more perceptive of the world around them,

“Lectures such as these really embody the value of a liberal arts education”

and better able to inform themselves about the issues that arise in their lives. The power and virtue of a liberal arts education is at the heart of the cover story in this edition of the magazine, which takes a look at the relevance of liberal arts during a time when some policymakers are too focused on using higher education institutions exclusively as job-training vehicles.

State funding for bringing distinguished guest speakers to campus is increasingly hard to come by. MTSU will need donors willing to help support an endowment. As you read the following pages and ponder the value of a liberal arts education, I ask you to consider making a gift to the college.

Visit www.mtsu.edu/supportliberalarts to learn more, or contact Meredith Kerr, Meredith.Kerr@mtsu.edu, (615) 898-5223. ■

Mark Byrnes, Dean



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Editor's Note

Welcome to the second magazine of the College of Liberal Arts! The first was a learning process for all of us, so I hope we hit the target for all our readers. The goal of our magazine is to keep you in the loop for all things Liberal Arts. In this edition, you will find information about many student and faculty achievements plus some spotlight articles on alums who have risen to the top in their careers. We cover student trips, faculty performances, and guests who have come to campus to present, lecture, and perform. We hope you enjoy seeing the world through the eyes of Liberal Arts! ■

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Hardly Academic

IT SEEMS COUNTERINTUITIVE TO question the relevancy of academic disciplines that date back to humanity's earliest civilizations. Nevertheless, people steeped in the liberal arts disciplines are accustomed to debates about the viability and relevancy of their work. In stagnant economic climates, those debates have a tendency to grow louder.

At its least intellectual level, the discussion is whether philosophy and sociology can prepare the workers of the future to make more and better widgets. This type of discussion is filled with stereotypes about tweedy professors in ivory towers operating in their own mental zip codes, oblivious to anything

remotely resembling "real life." On a higher rhetorical plane, the discussion is whether liberal arts should adopt new technologies in innovative ways or even consider altering its mission in some sense, including adding other disciplines, to better

meet the needs of the modern workforce. Related to the issue is how academia should promote liberal arts education to the general public. Some explanations seem to have more currency than others in clarifying the value of the liberal arts degree for taxpayers and voters who don't have a college education.

It's a debate unlikely to subside, but there's no shortage of those eager to defend the value and relevance of a liberal arts education in today's job-obsessed environment. And one doesn't need to go to an ivory tower to find them—plenty of MTSU alumni, now established business leaders in their own right, consider the liberal arts degree a crucial tool for workplace success.

There's no shortage of those eager to defend the value and relevance of a liberal arts education in today's job-obsessed environment.

DEFENDING the value of a liberal arts education in a workforce development-obsessed culture

by Gina K. Logue

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Hardly Academic

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WITNESSES FOR THE DEFENSE

MTSU alumnus Doug Young ('71) owns City Tile and Floor Covering in Murfreesboro. His business sells and installs flooring including tile, stone, wood, laminate and carpeting. With only seven employees including him, he's in competition with Home Depot, Lowe's, and every big-box store with a franchise in the area. He says he would hire liberal arts majors at his business "in a heartbeat."

"Anybody will tell you that generally the best salespeople don't have business degrees," Young says. "Liberal arts majors would be my first choice because they're well-rounded. They're not tunnel-visioned."

According to Young, his double major in urban sociology and urban planning prepared him for his other job—city councilman, a position he has held for 11 years.

The assumption that a liberal arts education is a loser in at least one area of the job market is disputed by Col. Darrell D. Darnbush, commander of the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment of the Tennessee National Guard, the largest unit in the state. Darnbush earned a bachelor's degree in political science from MTSU in 1986 and is enrolled in the master's program in strategic studies at the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pa. After a period in which the military focused on attracting and recruiting people from the hard sciences, Darnbush says the armed forces are now tending to recruit from the social sciences.

"This is because, in the past five years, there has been a constant review of policy and doctrine," Darnbush says. "There is great demand for strategic thinkers who can identify the problem and develop approaches that require critical thinking."

MTSU alumnus Jim Burkard ('82, '85) earned a bachelor's degree in English and a master's in economics, a combination that upsets stereotypes some people have of college majors and their purposes. As an organizational coach at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Burkard finds that communication is the key to confronting and overcoming operational challenges.

"The foundational skills and experiences provided within a liberal arts education never go out of style," Burkard says.

Another MTSU alumnus, Gordon DeFries ('63), echoes the view that the diversity of a liberal arts education serves as a foundation for future learning in any profession.

"It enables you to function fluidly and effectively and to use various pieces of knowledge from different areas in different ways," says DeFries, professor emeritus of social medicine and epidemiology in the Schools of Medicine and Public Health at the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill.

DeFries majored in sociology and political science at MTSU but turned to medical behavioral science and medical sociology for his doctorate at the University of Kentucky.

"Our medical school [at UNC] wouldn't want its doctors to have only a science background," DeFries says. "They wouldn't make very good doctors. And the same is true for our law school."

While the need for college graduates to fill jobs in the STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) like medicine has



Emily Gibson

'98 (B.S., Criminal Justice Administration); '02 (M.A., Sociology)

Emily Gibson is director of Budget and Fiscal Services for the Tennessee Department of Correction.

What is your top professional accomplishment?

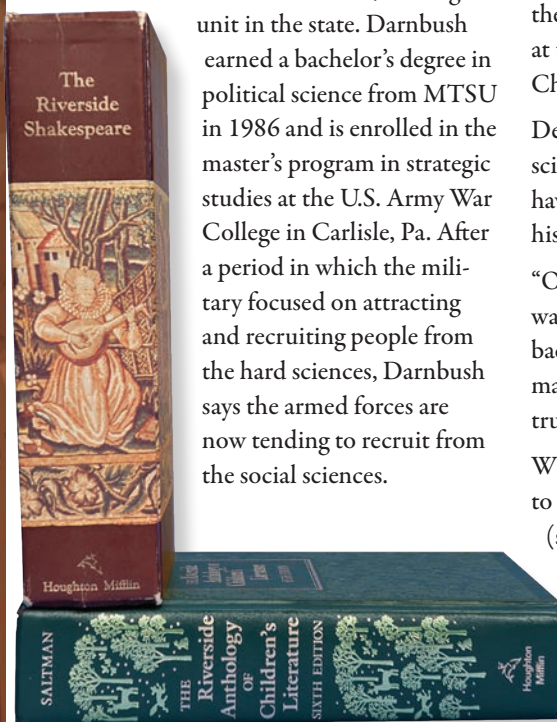
I'm proud of the work I have done on specific projects, including research on the death penalty in Tennessee as well as on global positioning systems to monitor sex offenders on probation and parole, which has helped secure funding.

How did your liberal arts degree help you get where you are today?

College not only taught me technical and subject-matter skills in criminal justice and sociology but also (and equally as important) soft skills such as writing and public speaking, organization, time management, respect for others, thinking under pressure, and networking and building contacts.

What advice do you have for current liberal arts majors?

Never stop learning!



been documented, some observers seem to want to pit the sciences against the humanities. Kira Hamman, who teaches mathematics at Pennsylvania State University–Mont Alto, makes a compelling case for STEM educators to support their liberal arts colleagues. In an April 12, 2013, article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, she asserts that the two areas are not as different as some think they are.

“Both the sciences and the humanities require deep creativity and intellectualism, an ability and desire to use reason, and a willingness to change your mind,” Hamman writes.

GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

Even with plenty of business leaders making the case for the value of a liberal arts education, are the general populace and the legislators who represent them convinced? And have academics made their case adequately to the populace as a whole? Nannerl O. Keohane, a former president of Wellesley College and Duke University, puts a large part of the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of college presidents and other top university leaders.

Eisner wrote, “I would much rather hire an executive who has taken courses in history and philosophy and language and art and English and Russian literature than somebody who has only studied a single element of one subject.”

“First and most obvious, they should use the bully pulpit of the college presidency deliberately and effectively—at convocations, commencements, [and] groundbreakings for new buildings; in speeches to the local Rotary Club or the state 4-H Club convention; and [in] addresses to alumni clubs,” Keohane wrote in a Jan. 29, 2012, *Chronicle of Higher Education* piece.

Keohane says university leaders should cite examples from literature, history, and the arts in both formal and informal discourse, making a subtle endorsement of the disciplines by working them into conversation.

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Jeremy Cowart

'99 (B.F.A., Art)

Jeremy Cowart (www.jeremycowart.com) founded his own graphic design company, Pixelgrazer, in 2001. A painter and graphic artist, Cowart really only began taking photographs in an effort to bring texture into his design work. But before he knew it, he realized that photography was his true passion.

Starting in 2005, Cowart

switched over to full-time photography. He has quickly become respected in the industry. Having shot many celebrities (including Taylor Swift, the Kardashians, and the cover of Tim Tebow's best-selling book), his list of clients includes *Rolling Stone*, *USA Today*, and *Time*, among others. Cowart lives in Nashville with his wife and two children. (Follow him on Twitter @jeremycowart.)

What would you say is your top professional accomplishment?

Probably the thing I'm most proud of is creating Help Portrait—a project designed to allow photographers all over the world to give back to the less fortunate. We held our first Help Portrait day in December 2009. Photographers all over the world came together to take portraits of people who are least likely to ever have a portrait. That year over 40,000 portraits were given to people in 42 countries.

How did your liberal arts degree help you get where you are today?

I had some outstanding professors. What they taught me was invaluable. I left MTSU with a diverse set of skills—graphic design, art, photography. There were a lot of options available to me because of what I learned there.

What advice do you have for current liberal arts majors?

Find your voice. Passing a test or making the grade is not as important as knowing who you are and knowing your voice and knowing how to share it with the world.

Hardly Academic

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In an interview, Keohane urges her colleagues to point out that the acquisition of a broad-based education, instead of specializing in one skill that could become less important in a decade or two, actually prepares students to handle the serpentine twists of the job market over the course of a lifetime.

“Remind people that our counterparts in other countries, including most of the fast-developing economies of the second tier, are now promoting the liberal arts as the best way to prepare professionals for future accomplishment,” Keohane says.

Perhaps one way to change public perception of the value of a liberal arts degree—and salary surveys like the one cited below—is to highlight nationally and internationally noteworthy liberal arts majors who have succeeded in the marketplace. Michael Eisner, the former Disney CEO, who majored in English and theatre at Denison University, paved the way with an article he penned for the Dec. 2, 2010, issue of the *Wall Street Journal Magazine*.

Eisner wrote, “I would much rather hire an executive who has taken courses in history and philosophy and language and art and English and Russian literature than somebody who has only studied a single element of one subject.”

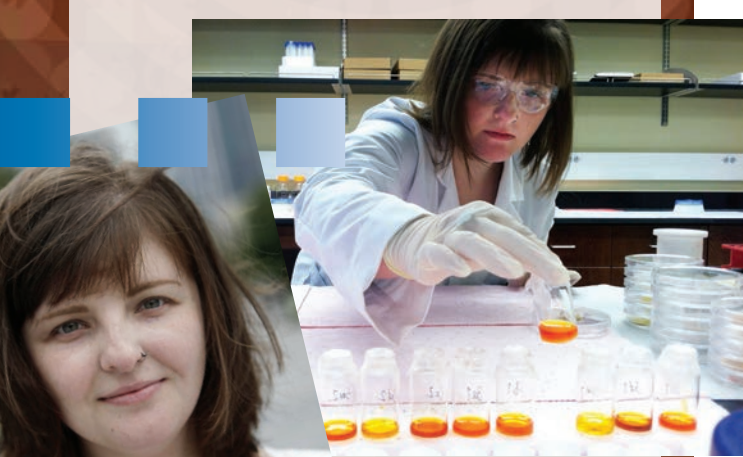
The December 2012 issue of *Business Insider* listed 30 liberal arts majors who have ascended to the heights of major businesses, including Gannett CEO Gracia Martore, American Express CEO Ken Chenault, Delta Airlines CEO Richard Anderson, Bank of America CEO Brian Moynihan, Sprint Nextel CEO Dan Hesse, and Sherwin-Williams CEO Christopher Connor. What did these titans of industry glean from their liberal arts educations that helped propel them to their current positions? Jim Burkard says it’s necessary for an economist to have a good working knowledge of history as well as an understanding of classic human decision making often reflected in great works of literature.

“There are some great contemporary American economists, such as Steven Levitt, who use their understanding of human nature and likely behavior patterns within their economic models. That ability comes from a well-rounded education, which includes an awareness of history, literature, philosophy, business, etc.”

IN GOOD COMPANY

Is it even appropriate to talk about “selling” liberal arts to the public as a stepping stone to promotable skill sets for the workplace? This also raises the question of whether to state the case in purely economic terms.

The U.S. Census Bureau’s most recent analysis of work-life earnings by major, measured in millions of dollars, shows engineering, computers and math leading the way with political science and social science in the middle, literature and liberal arts toward the end, and education bringing up the rear. Similarly, a salary survey released in April 2013 by the National Association of Colleges and Employers shows that none of the top 10 highest-paid jobs for new



Jessica Morrison

'08 (B.S., Geoscience)

Jessica Morrison is a freelance science writer who has been published in *Slate*, *Scientific American*, and the *Chicago Tribune*. In addition to her MTSU degree, she holds a Ph.D. in actinide geochemistry from the University of Notre Dame (2013). She lives in Washington, D.C., with her husband (and fellow MTSU alumnus), Brandon Morrison ('05), and their two cats, Gypsum and Drupal.

What do you consider your top professional accomplishment?

On one hand, it must be earning a Ph.D.—sticking with one thing, diving in deep, creating new knowledge, and defending that work—especially given my background as a first-generation college student. On the other hand, if I consider the professional accomplishments on the journalism side of my budding professional life, I would say that writing two front-page stories for the *Chicago Tribune* is pretty high on my list.

How did your liberal arts degree help you get where you are today?

Having a liberal arts education is valuable, particularly working in science. It can be very easy to become so focused on the tiniest details of your work that the big picture is lost. Exposure to the humanities, the arts, and the sciences allowed me to grow intellectually during my time at MTSU. Sometimes it felt as though I was flitting from one subject to another, but in actuality, I was becoming well-rounded.

college graduates pertains to liberal arts. In this survey, business tops the list of highest paying disciplines, followed by communications, computer science, education, engineering, health sciences, humanities and social sciences, and math and sciences.

Hamman says not all measurements of the value of a liberal arts degree should be financial in scope. “I don’t think we want to live in a world where the dollar value and not the intellectual value of a discipline is what matters,” she says. But if the paycheck is indeed the preferred yardstick for measuring liberal arts relevance, then a survey by the Association of American Colleges and Universities might prove interesting. The organization surveyed 318 U.S. employers

“Remind people that our counterparts in other countries, including most of the fast-developing economies of the second tier, are now promoting the liberal arts as the best way to prepare professionals for future accomplishment.”

in January 2012 and found that 74 percent of business and nonprofit leaders recommend that college students get a liberal arts education “in order to prepare for long-term professional success in today’s global economy.”

Liberal arts advocates, however, would argue that basing any assessment of the humanities solely on students’ preparation for getting a job is inaccurate and shallow.

“It’s important to make a living, of course, but we should want more than that,” Hamman says. “Real success is in living a good life—that is, a happy life that contributes to making the world a better place in some respect . . . There are many ways to do this, but people who are engaged in the world around them, who are intellectually curious and understand nuance, have a much better chance of achieving it than people who lack those things.”

Said another way, in an age of constantly transforming and shifting work environments, the ability to keep one’s eyes open and to see the big picture—the picture that serves the community, the state, and the nation best—may be the most valuable workforce skill of all. ■

Don Goldman

'74, (B.S., Speech)

Don Goldman is vice president of Word & Brown University (part of the Word & Brown General Agency) in Orange, California, where he develops and implements training programs for brokers entering the insurance business, continuing education programs for experienced brokers, and motivational presentations for all industry professionals.


Goldman was recently elected vice president of the National Association of Health Underwriters, which is headquartered in Washington, D.C., and represents more than 100,000 professional health insurance agents and brokers who provide insurance for millions of Americans.

Nationally recognized for his in-depth analysis of the health care insurance market, Goldman’s career as an insurance broker spans more than 30 years. He has worked with many political, entertainment, professional, and educational talents.

Goldman spent three years of his career working outside the insurance industry. During that time, he was one of eight regional sales managers with Whitehall Laboratories, the pharmaceutical company that introduced the pain reliever Advil to the U.S. market.

Goldman’s son is named after his godfather, Dr. James Brooks, retired professor emeritus in the Department of Speech and Theatre, former associate dean of the College of Liberal Arts, and the former debate coach for MTSU.





The spring Philosophy Lyceum featured **Richard Shusterman**, who presented “Pragmatism, Somaesthetics, and Contemporary Art.” Shusterman is the Dorothy F. Schmidt Eminent Scholar in the Humanities and a professor of philosophy at Florida Atlantic University. He is internationally known for his work in pragmatist aesthetics and is the author or editor of twenty-two books published in fifteen languages.



David Holmes came to campus in March as the Windham Lecturer to speak about his research on the faiths of former presidents. Holmes has written two books on this topic, and his lecture to a large crowd in T. Earl Hinton Hall was followed by many questions. Holmes’s books are *The Faiths of the Founding Fathers* and *The Faiths of the Post-War Fathers: Truman to Obama*.



David Thelen, distinguished professor emeritus at Indiana University, was in residence teaching Current Issues in Public History Practice during the three-week Maymester term. A prolific scholar, Dr. Thelen’s wide-ranging publications include one of the most-read books in the literature of public history, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (1998).

Paulette Sutton, an expert in bloodstain pattern forensic analysis, was the guest of the Forensic Institute for Research and Education (FIRE) at its spring 2013 William M. Bass Legends in Forensic Science lecture. Sutton retired from the University of Tennessee Regional Forensic Center in Memphis, where she served for more than 30 years. She spoke to the crowd concerning some of the cases she has worked. “Physical evidence always tells the truth,” said Sutton, explaining that the examination of bloodstains is done by applying scientific principles. She used a case from Toledo, Ohio, taking the audience through the examination of the evidence and the trial, which ended with a verdict of guilty.

Visiting Speakers



Jeff Ashton was the fall 2012 speaker at the William M. Bass Legends in Forensic Science lecture. Ashton, a prosecuting attorney, took the audience back to the trial of Casey Anthony in Orlando, Florida, in which she was charged with murdering her daughter, Caylee. After a month of testimony, Anthony was found not guilty to the surprise of Floridians and the nation. Ashton was asked how Anthony beat the evidence against her. He replied that the trial had been influenced by the media, and the prosecution could not prove the means of death.

George C. Herring, professor of history emeritus at the University of Kentucky, was the Strickland Lecturer for fall 2012. Herring presented “Vietnam: The War that Never Seems to Go Away,” taken from his book *America’s Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950–1975*. Herring also spoke about the policies made during the Vietnam era and how they still affect U.S. foreign policy today. Herring won the Robert Ferrell Prize from the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations for his book *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776*.

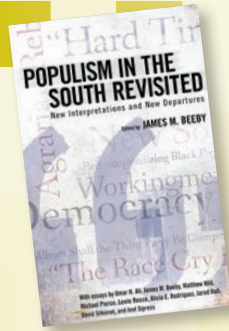
Heidi Beirich was the keynote speaker at the Undergraduate Social Science Symposium in October 2012. Beirich is intelligence project director at the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Alabama.



Spring brings baseball and the Baseball in Literature and Culture conference each year to Middle Tennessee State University. This spring **Jim Bouton**, famed author of *Ball Four* and former Yankees pitcher, was the featured speaker for the 2013 conference, which was chaired by Ron Kates and Warren Tormey (English). Bouton told many stories of baseball in the sixties and seventies and how he took notes throughout his career, knowing that someday they would be important to baseball fans. Many say *Ball Four* changed the face of baseball; players were depicted as normal, fallible individuals with problems and demons of their own. Bouton was considered a snitch for exposing the lives of many of baseball greats—Mickey Mantle to mention only one. Bouton has revised his book with the release of *Ball Four: The Final Pitch*.



History News



James Beeby (History) has a new book, *Populism in the South Revisited:*

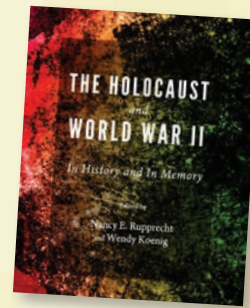
New Interpretations and New Departures (University Press of Mississippi).

Van West (History, Center for Historic Preservation) and **Ken Middleton** (Walker Library) received a TBR research grant for \$59,994 for

a project titled “Separation and Exclusivity among Tennesseans Past and Present.”

Nancy Rupprecht (History) contributed two articles and coedited the recent thematic, interdisciplinary volume *The Holocaust and World War II: In History and in Memory*.

The collection is based on papers presented at MTSU’s 2009 International Holocaust Studies Conference (which is a biennial event). Dr. Rupprecht



served two terms as director of the Women’s Studies program and has chaired the Holocaust Studies program since 2000.

Congratulations to Professor **Van West** (History, Center for Historic Preservation), who was named by Governor Haslam as the new Tennessee state historian. This distinction

speaks highly of West’s excellent work as a scholar and historian and his commitment to excellence and to the state and people of Tennessee over many years.

The 11th Annual International **Holocaust Studies Conference** will be held October 16–18, 2013, in James Union Building. On October 18 a survivors and liberators panel will be held from 2:45 to 3:45 p.m. and is free and open to the public.



On a brisk fall day in November 2012, a plaque was laid on the east side of Peck Hall at the base of a towering oak tree that had been planted many years ago to commemorate the dedicated teaching and service of **Bart McCash**, a professor and former chair of the History Department, who died in 1991 after a thirty-year career at MTSU. His widow, June McCash, and stepson, Bren Martin, along with many friends and colleagues, spoke about McCash’s contribution to the History Department and the University. You might remember that a computer lab was also dedicated to McCash; many students continue to use it for research and study for futures in the field of history. ■



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You're Just Agreeing With Me

Nixon



WAYNE WHITE IS ONE OF THOSE increasingly rare beings: an artist who makes a living by turning his wildest ideas into tangible, talked-about pieces that others want to see, hear, feel, and share.

He also may be the embodiment of a liberal arts education: a person well-versed in enough fields to connect with almost anyone in his audience. Art is more than just a theory; it's a fusion of many disciplines—the physics of building a sculpture, the chemistry of mixing colors, the psychology of self- and other-awareness, the wordsmithing that plays with meanings.

Sometimes it's a funny story and a flailing buck dance across a stage, too.

The MTSU alumnus repeatedly brought a full house in Keathley University Center Theater to laughter and applause last March during a screening of the 2012 documentary about his life and work, *Beauty Is Embarrassing*.

"The world is dying for stuff that's done out of love. Most everything in the world now is done out of fear: fear of losing your job, fear of making someone angry. Art is one thing that's done out of love. That's what the world needs."

White, a native of Hixson, earned his bachelor of fine arts degree from MTSU in 1979, then was off to New York City. He worked as an illustrator for several publications there, including *The New York Times* and *The Village Voice*, and in 1986 became a designer and puppeteer for *Pee-wee's Playhouse*, earning three Emmy Awards in the process.

He and his wife, artist and author Mimi Pond, then moved to California, where he continued his TV work with sets and characters for *Shining Time Station*, *Beakman's World*, *Riders in the Sky*, and *Bill & Willis*. White also worked with music videos, winning Billboard and MTV Music Video Awards as an art director for his work on "Tonight, Tonight" by the Smashing Pumpkins and Peter Gabriel's "Big Time."

After a long struggle with Hollywood hierarchy led White to work himself nearly to a frazzle, he embarked on a "second act" in the new century, creating paintings, sculptures, and public works exhibited worldwide. White's most recognized works now are his word paintings, which use thrift-shop "sofa painting" landscapes as backdrops for detailed, deadpan words and phrases like

"He Acts All Weird for No Good Reason," "Awopbopalubop," "You're Just Agreeing with Me So I'll Shut Up," "I Took Off Work and Came All the Way Down Here," and "Hoozy Thinky Iz?"

"I'm a real oddball because I'm a middle-aged man living out a five-year-old's fantasy," White remarks at one point in *Beauty Is Embarrassing* before dancing a jig wearing a giant cardboard puppet head of Lyndon B. Johnson. He happily describes himself as a "painter, sculptor, cartoonist, puppeteer, set designer, illustrator, and animator."

How does someone travel from a Tennessee childhood filled with unexpected artistic influences and gentle family encouragement to a drawing class in MTSU's old Art Barn to work under Art Spiegelman and Red Grooms in New York? Where does the route twist from preparing puppets with friend Quinn for a show called *Mrs. Cabobble's Caboose* onto a road of winning Emmys, exhibiting sculpture at Rockefeller Center, seeing designer Todd Oldham edit a book of your artwork, and being called "one of the founding fathers of American Pop Art" by the lead singer of Devo?

by Gina E. Fann

WAYNE'S WORLD



Beauty Is Embarrassing

Failed Seventies Paintings



“It’s not easy, and I’m not quite sure how I’ve pulled it off, but I am in a unique position. I think people are fascinated by that,” White said in a recent telephone interview from his Los Angeles home (that he shares with his wife Mimi and children Woodrow and Lulu), an interview sandwiched between artist’s residencies, new art installations, family celebrations, and cross-country publicity trips.

“I like to have as many options as possible; I don’t want to be tied down to a gallery or one kind of marketplace. I like to be able to show my work in as many venues as possible. I try to keep my integrity too, but I’m so used to showbiz that it doesn’t bother me anymore.”

The publicity from the Oldham-edited *Maybe Now I’ll Get the Respect I So Richly Deserve* (a 2009 400-page monograph of White’s work) led to the *Beauty Is Embarrassing* documentary, directed by Neil Berkeley. The film was first shown at the 2012 SXSW Film Festival.

Beauty has created more opportunities for White. He recently completed one of the coveted inaugural residencies on Captiva Island, Fla., sponsored by the late

artist Robert Rauschenberg’s foundation. He’s opened a new exhibit, *Halo Amok*, at the Oklahoma City Museum of Art, featuring giant cubist cowboys and horses, that runs through September 1. He’ll make a much-anticipated return to Houston in September, this time for a one-man exhibit of his word paintings.

Beauty even helped get him a gig judging the “The Friskies” Award for Best New Internet Cat Video of 2012 and a new project on the grounds of the Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival near Manchester.

“Jonathan Mayers, who’s CEO of the whole Bonnaroo organization, saw the movie. That inspired him to call me,” White says. “That’s another example of the power of that movie; it’s really opened up a lot of doors.”

“I’m doing a big permanent sculpture on the Bonnaroo concert grounds that’ll take a while to finish. It’s going to be a 30-foot or taller tree made of steel and wood, mostly steel. It’s like a big cubist abstract tree, with big square shapes instead of leaves, and a steel trunk, and at night it turns into a psychedelic light show.”

He hopes to return to MTSU very soon, perhaps to work again as a visiting artist “making prints in the printmaking studio and sculptures in the ceramic department” as he did before *Beauty Is Embarrassing* brought him to PBS’s *Independent Lens* and Netflix and Amazon.com and Tumblr and Pinterest.

White noted during his spring MTSU visit that he’d traveled all over the United States and into Canada as a result of *Beauty Is Embarrassing*, constantly hearing “I didn’t know you did all *that* stuff!” from admirers.

“That’s every artist’s dream,” he says.

“Actually, it’s everyone’s dream. It’s what everyone wants: to know that you had an impact on people somehow.” ■



Wayne White frolics among influences, **creating art** that refuses to be pigeonholed.

SOME VENTURE

MTSU alumnus Byron Smith ('84) applies his liberal arts education to build companies and create jobs. After graduating from MTSU with a double major in political science and economics (and later receiving an M.B.A. from the University of Chicago), he spent eight years in brand management and packaged goods marketing with Proctor & Gamble and Pepsico. He then ventured into the technology field at GTE Wireless (now Verizon), where he ran all sales, field marketing, and advanced data products.

After a stint at AT&T running the consumer long-distance business, Smith moved to Silicon Valley to become executive vice president (EVP), general manager, and chief marketing officer (CMO) for Excite@Home. A few years later, Nashville-based Asurion (then a small private company in the cellphone insurance business) brought Smith back home to middle Tennessee as its EVP/CMO.

Smith later broke into venture capital with his firm Mountain Group Capital. The company invests partners' funds, TNInvestco funds (administered by Limestone Fund LLC), and funds from outside investors (MGC Venture Partners Fund). Smith's focus is on growing life sciences and consumer-technology-focused companies.

Among Smith's most recent investments (via Mountain Group Capital) is Aspire Health, a palliative care physician network launched by former Senate majority leader Bill Frist. The company aims to improve care and lower costs for patients with chronic illnesses.

Smith has taught entrepreneurship at Vanderbilt's Owen School of Management and serves on several local boards, including MTSU's University Honors College.

The following is a Q&A with Smith in part about his views on the value of a liberal arts education in today's marketplace.

“The most important thing a liberal arts education teaches you is to be intellectually curious”



How well do you think a liberal arts education prepares graduates to navigate the world we live in today both professionally and personally?

The most important thing a liberal arts education teaches you is to be intellectually curious. If you take that away from your college, you will benefit forever. You rarely find rising stars who aren't intellectually curious.

Those who view education as a trade school are pigeonholing themselves into doing the same thing forever. A liberal arts education teaches you to think broadly about the big themes. Having a macro view and macro understanding of history, culture, and ideas enables you to have a framework through which to sift individual ideas and challenges and help you address big questions and big problems.

What advice do you have for current liberal arts majors?

You need to work at this. You need to master the subject. Coming out at the end, if you've really crushed it and really learned everything you've needed to learn, you will have proven that you can work hard and master difficult material. Companies can teach you a specific skill or industry, but they are looking for those who work hard and can think.

Complete this sentence: “When I was a student at MTSU, I can't believe I . . .”

. . . led the team to sabotage Tennessee Tech—we released pigs and chickens painted blue on their campus!

What do you consider your top professional accomplishment?

Making the switch from a large corporate environment to an entrepreneurial startup and then on to venture capital. My current role allows me to be around young, creative thinkers, to mentor them and help them to work toward their dreams—to invest in them literally and figuratively.

photo: Darby Campbell

THING IRED

by Drew Ruble

Your company is one of the select few venture capital firms chosen to participate in the relatively new TNInvestco program. Could you briefly describe the state program and its results?

The program has three goals. First, to create jobs for the state via venture capital funding and mentoring startups. Next, to create and nurture an entrepreneurial infrastructure in the state that is sustainable and self-perpetuating. Last, to return cash to the state when the investments are sold. Because this is early-stage venture capital, success will really be measured in years six through ten of the program.

What role do you believe institutions of higher education—specifically MTSU—could play or are playing in partnerships with industry for the state of Tennessee?

When we think of entrepreneurship and startups, we often think of Silicon Valley. We don't realize it, but Silicon Valley is really Stanford University and Sand Hill Road—the address for the most storied venture capital firms in the country. If universities like MTSU will cultivate intellectual curiosity, leadership, and a passion to change the world within their students, then entrepreneurship and innovation will happen. Great ideas and great people can always attract capital.

Tell us about a couple of the companies you are invested in, including Streamweaver, a video-sharing app whose investors include one of the earliest ever investors in Facebook.

One company connected to higher education is Panopto, which provides lecture-capture software for universities. Panopto is in 500 universities and is used by over four million students around the world. There is also a version used in corporate environments for training and knowledge transfer.

Our most recent investment in life sciences is Myomo, a company founded at MIT. It is a computerized/motorized exoskeleton for use by people with paralysis of the arm. The most common cause is stroke. I am joining the board of directors so I'll be in Cambridge, Massachusetts, fairly often. This is a great example of doing well by doing good. There is nothing better than that!

One of my consumer tech companies worth checking out is SwingPal, a company for golfers. We provide the SwingFix service for the Golf Channel and power much of the Golf Channel Academy app. Another is Streamweaver, a synchronized social video app that was chosen by Apple as a featured app in the iTunes Store. Both of these companies are TNInvestco investments. ■

Alumni News

MTSU Alumnus Wins Rangel Fellowship to Pursue Foreign Service Career

The Charles B. Rangel Foundation recently awarded **Patrick Pratt** (B.S., B.A. '10) its coveted International Affairs Fellowship. He is the first graduate from a Tennessee university to receive this honor. The program is a collaborative effort between Howard University and the U.S. State Department that seeks to attract and prepare outstanding young people for careers as diplomats in the U.S. Foreign Service. The program seeks individuals who are interested in helping shape a freer, more secure, and more prosperous world through formulating, representing, and implementing U.S. foreign policy.

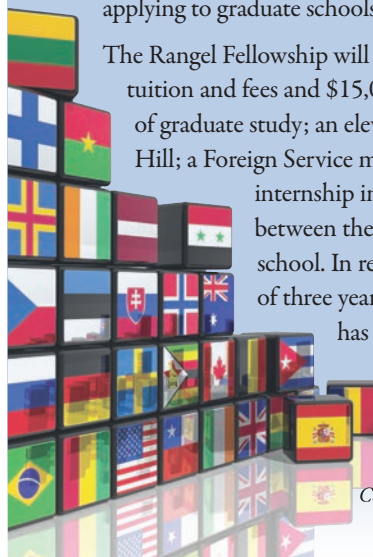
At MTSU, Patrick majored in international relations and political science, minored in geography and African studies. He served as vice president of the Geography Club for a year and as president of the Society for International Affairs for a semester. He also received the Political Science Department's Meritorious Service Award for his leadership in student service organizations.

Patrick was awarded the David L. Boren Scholarship to study African International Relations and Swahili in Kenya. This scholarship encourages college undergraduates and graduate students to study subjects and languages critical for U.S. national security. Before going to Kenya, he completed a summer internship with Constituency for Africa while enrolled in a program of professional development through the Washington Center for Internships in Washington, D.C. This internship was made possible through generous funding from the Tennessee Board of Regents Washington Center Scholarship.

Patrick was also awarded a Fulbright Grant that sent him to Tanzania, where he studied civil society and public accountability in development supported by the University of Dar es Salaam. He also spent three months studying Swahili at the State University of Zanzibar while living with a host family. When he returned to the U.S., he completed an internship at the Africa Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C., while applying to graduate schools.

The Rangel Fellowship will provide up to \$20,000 a year for tuition and fees and \$15,000 a year for expenses for two years of graduate study; an eleven-week internship on Capitol Hill; a Foreign Service mentor; and a ten-week overseas internship in a U.S. Embassy during the summer between the first and second year of graduate school. In return, Patrick will serve a minimum of three years as a foreign service officer. Patrick

has been accepted to several of the top-ranked schools of international affairs in the world, and he is now weighing his options. ■



Friends of 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, as well as overall public image; expose students to various career options; serve as mentors to those students; and pursue external funding.

Lauren Agee

B.A. (Political Science) 2001; senior legislative advisor to State Senator Jim Kyle; 2009 Young Alumni Achievement Award recipient

James Brooks

retired CLA associate dean and Department of Speech and Theatre chair; 30-year faculty member; Professor Emeritus (2001)

Charlotte Gardner

B.A. (English) 1958; community volunteer and dedicated MTSU supporter (School of Music Orpheus Competition)

Phillip Hodge

B.S. Anthropology (1997); archaeologist supervisor, Tennessee Department of Transportation

Robert Jones

retired after a forty-year career teaching history at MTSU, where he also served as associate provost for Academic Affairs; earned his undergraduate degree at the University of Virginia and his graduate degrees at Vanderbilt University; Jones and his wife, Roberta, live in Murfreesboro but enjoy traveling following retirement

Joe Klingemeyer

MTSU supporter and parent; owner, Culver's restaurant; board member, Linse Bock Foundation, which funds School of Music scholarships

Rick Mansfield (Vice Chair)

B.A. History (1980); MTSU parent and Murfreesboro attorney

Alice Nunnery

M.A. English (1983); retired English professor

Doug Young (Chair)

B.A. Sociology (1971), owner/operator, City Tile in Murfreesboro; city council member; MTSU Alumni Association board member; former MTSU Foundation member

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

Jeff Davidson is a native of Nashville who now lives in Eagleville. Col. Davidson graduated from MTSU in 1985 with a B.S. in history.

An armor and cavalry officer with more than 30 years in the U.S. Army, Davidson served in a variety of command and leadership positions, including cavalry troop commander, battalion executive officer, brigade operations officer, joint and combined exercise planner

and battalion commander, director of the U.S. Army Armor School, chief of staff of the U.S. Army Armor Center and Fort Knox, and command inspector general. Davidson served multiple combat tours including Operation Desert Shield/Storm and Operation Joint Endeavor/Guard in Bosnia/Herzegovina. Most recently, he served as a senior military advisor to the Iraqi Joint Force Headquarters assigned to Multinational Security and Transition Command Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Davidson's military education includes armor officer basic and advanced courses, the cavalry leaders course, Combined Arms and Services Staff School, the Defense Language Institute (French), the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, and the U.S. Air Force Air War College, where he earned an M.S. in national security.

Davidson's awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, the Bronze Star with oak leaf cluster, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the Army Commendation Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the Joint Service Achievement Medal, the Army Achievement Medal with oak leaf cluster, the Joint Meritorious Unit Award with oak leaf cluster, and the Valorous Unit Citation.

Davidson is now serving as deputy mayor of Rutherford County. He is married to the former Elizabeth Hoefler (Cary) of Knoxville, and the couple has two daughters, Erin and Casey. ■





Dan Elrod is a member of the law firm of Butler Snow in Nashville and serves on the firm's executive committee. He graduated with a B.S. degree from MTSU in 1970, where he majored in political science. He continued

his education at Tulane University School of Law and received his J.D. degree in 1973. While at Tulane, he received the American Jurisprudence Award in Federal Practice and Procedure.

Dan has practiced law in Nashville since 1973, with an emphasis on administrative and regulatory practice, healthcare and insurance law. His practice includes the administration of the Tennessee Life and Health Insurance Guaranty Association, which has distributed over \$70 million to benefit Tennessee residents who were covered by life or health insurance policies issued by companies that became insolvent. Dan's professional accomplishments have been recognized by his peers and others in various publications and lists, such as *The Best Lawyers in America*, *Mid-South Super Lawyers*, *The Nashville Post* and *The Tennessee Business Journal*.

Dan is married to the former Zita Black (B.S., '70). They have two grown sons, one grandson, and a rescued pit bull. ■

Marlene Sanders is manager of state government affairs for the southern region for Merck & Company. She is responsible for the management and direction of state legislative policy, coordination of relations with state Medicaid programs, and support of Merck's vaccine division initiatives.

Before joining Merck, Marlene served as a public affairs liaison for Eli Lilly and Company, where she was responsible for support of state government affairs, grassroots networking, and Lilly's legislative agenda and community relations. Before joining Lilly, she was an associate of Smith Johnson and Carr government relations firm in Nashville, lobbying full-time for a diverse number of not-for-profit and corporate entities.



Marlene received a bachelor's in political science from MTSU and a master's in public administration from Tennessee State University's Institute of Government.

Marlene serves on the boards of Nashville Cares, Planned Parenthood of Middle and East Tennessee, and the Susan G. Komen Foundation of Greater Nashville. She is active with the Tennessee Kidney Foundation; Better Decisions, a Nashville nonprofit that provides life skills training for inmates at the Tennessee Prison for Women; the Nashville Women's Collaborative; the Nashville Women's Breakfast Club; and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Nashville Alumnae Chapter. A native of Ooltewah, Tennessee, Marlene is a member of Lake Providence Missionary Baptist Church. ■

Roscoe L. "Rocky" Strickland III was born and raised in Murfreesboro. His parents were Roscoe and Lucy Strickland. The Strickland family has long been involved with MTSU. Rocky attended Campus School and Central High School, and he played cello in the MTSU Community Orchestra. After high school, he went to Texas



to attend Baylor University and later began a career in metal heat-treating. Since 1984, he has lived in Raleigh, North Carolina, where he owns East Carolina Metal Treating Inc. His sister Rachel lives in San Francisco, and his daughter Tracy lives in Raleigh.

Rocky is an active member of the Kiwanis Club of Raleigh and enjoys community service work. The Strickland family created the Strickland Visiting Scholar Program in the History Department to honor the memory of Rocky's father, who taught history at MTSU for 23 years. The family also created scholarships in memory of Rocky's mother and two sisters.

Even though Rocky has not lived in Murfreesboro since 1971, he still thinks of it as home and enjoys visiting and keeping up with what is going on at MTSU. ■



photo: Darby Campbell

What do you do with over 9.6 million sheets of paper? Feed it to a monster, that's what. Professor **Erin Anfinson** (Art) and her art students decided to create a paper-consuming monster, which they thought would serve as a playful representation of the need to recycle. The installation was made entirely of reused paper from the library recycling bins. The hope is that the project will cause students, faculty, and administrators to think before they print. Students involved were Jacob Bagby, Jessica Booker, Kenzie Haro, Alex Hibbard, Megan Huffman, Denesha Jones, Chelby Pickett, Ben Rasmussen, Kelsie Richards, John Saad, Tasha Storie, and Charles Williams.

Professor **Tanya Tewell** (Art) presented her show *Etruscan Echoes: Tanya Tewell* at the Parthenon in Nashville in March–June. Nineteen of Tewell's paintings, which she worked on for over four years, were in the show. They are based on old frescoes and Etruscan tomb painting in Italy.



Tewell

Professor **Erin Anfinson** (Art) had an exhibition at the Frist Center for the Visual Arts and a two-person exhibition at Antelope Valley College in Lancaster, California, titled *Collective Residence*.

Professors **Meghan O'Connor** and **Andrew Koster** (Art) worked with Vanderbilt, TSU, Belmont, Murray State, and Austin Peay to organize a regional printmaking symposium.

Professor **John Donovan** (Art) had a juried show at the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton, Virginia, and a solo exhibition at the Huntsville Museum of Art.



Donovan

by Nora Hibbard

Imperfect Beauty



Last fall, the Department of Art had the honor and delight of hosting ceramics master **Masakazu Kusakabe** ("Sensei," a Japanese term of respect, for

short) to work with some very lucky ceramics students. Associate Professor **Marisa Recchia** worked tirelessly to bring this master potter to MTSU and to build with him a world-class kiln.

Sensei Kusakabe is considered a national treasure in Japan, and he has been traveling the globe to share his vision and innovation. He has designed a unique wood-fired kiln that fires at a high temperature and emits very little smoke or pollution—the ash is recycled.

The interior of the kiln is formed to catch the ash and let it drop back onto the pottery. This process cannot be contrived or controlled and creates almost magical, serendipitous effects.

Recchia had been searching for a wood-fired kiln to enrich the ceramic program. When she found Kusakabe, she knew she had found the very best. She also knew that the project, which would require the kiln to be built on site, would be massive but that the rewards would be far-reaching. Since the kiln was built outside, it's more a part of the entire campus and is adaptable in ways Recchia envisioned could serve the wider community.

One exciting feature of the Kusakabe kiln is a baking chamber. Food can be cooked (presumably in unique, handmade pottery) while ceramics are being fired. Different international educational groups or festivals could use the

communal oven, and bowl-and-food fundraising events could be organized to benefit women's shelters, programs to feed the hungry, or disaster relief.

Kusakabe and Recchia worked with students for six weeks to build the kiln. It is the only smokeless wood-fired kiln in Tennessee and is a serious step toward greener practices at the University. It's also one of few in the country. "Even better than Harvard," Sensei said with a mischievous smile. He worked with the Harvard ceramics program to build a similar kiln in 2009, but this one improves on that design.

As Sensei worked with Recchia and her students, he taught much more than how to build an innovative kiln. The Japanese/Zen concept of wabi-sabi informs the art and teaching of Kusakabe. The wabi-sabi aesthetic embraces the quiet impermanence of natural beauty. Objects of wabi have a lovely spare and irregular "rightness" of beauty pared down to the essential—and nothing more. Wabi pottery, like the work Kusakabe does, bears the spirit and gestures of the potter rather than the precision of mechanized production. "I appreciate symmetry," Sensei says, "but I find asymmetry more attractive. Examined closely, nature is in itself asymmetrical—the beauty of distortion, of physical rhythm/movement."

This brings us to the sabi component of the wabi-sabi aesthetic.

Sensei has taken a long, winding road to get where he is now. As a small child he was attracted to a fire and crawled into it, permanently disfiguring his right hand. His reshaped hand—he lost most of three fingers—makes throwing and shaping pots easier in some ways. He doesn't have to hold those extra fingers out of the way. Sensei talks of this as "meant to be." He is damaged or handicapped but shaped by the world and time. Sabi finds beauty in the patina that time bestows on a beloved object: tarnish, a chip, the loss of polish, our own scars and broken parts. We are all a bit chipped by time, but this is not bad—this is who we are becoming. "Of course," Sensei laughs, "there is also the good story about how I was always attracted to fire."

Later in life, a diagnosis of terminal cancer gave Kusakabe another dose of imperfection. After chemotherapy, his doctor asked him to draw happy faces. The unusual prescription helped Sensei and also his fellow patients in the cancer ward. His sumi-e (ink wash) drawings of laughing faces and roly-poly figures seemed to be good therapy. Though doctors may say that he simply beat the odds, Sensei attributes his cure to his intense concentration on creating and sharing smiles. As a cancer survivor, Sensei has plenty of life etched upon him, but in his view and following the wisdom of sabi, life's beauty is greater.

While the kiln was being built, Sensei taught clay students and gave demonstrations in teacup making in the wabi way. "One instantaneous stroke produces a vivid feeling of life," he says. The precept also applies to the art of sumi-e ink drawing, which Sensei demonstrated for the University community. He also performed a modified tea ceremony, one that honored the practice but was not three or four hours long.

After more than a month of intense labor, Recchia coordinated a celebration/inauguration of the kiln that was held October 24. Students shared food cooked in the oven of the kiln while their pots were firing. The ceramics program now has a world-class wood-fired kiln, and those who met Sensei Kusakabe have been etched (sabi style) by an unforgettable experience. ■

"For me the kiln is the universe in miniature. Inside is the big bang, where bright firelight, galaxies, and stars (my pieces) are born."
— Masakazu Kusakabe

New Chairs in *Liberal Arts!*



James Beeby began his tenure as chair of the History Department in fall 2012. He comes to us from Indiana University Southeast, but you might detect a slight accent—not one from Indiana but the United Kingdom. Beeby earned his B.A. in history at the University of Wales, Lampeter, and his M.A. and Ph.D. from

Bowling Green State University in Ohio. His specialty is American culture studies. He is the author of *Populism in the American South: New Research and Interpretations* and *Revolt of the Tar Heels: The North Carolina Populist Movement, 1890–1901*. Dr. Beeby is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society of Great Britain. We welcome him and his wife, Robin, and twin daughters Rosamund and Guinevere to Murfreesboro, where we hope they will make their home for many years. ■



Warner Cribb has been named chair of the Geosciences Department after serving two years as interim chair following the service of Ron Zawislak. Cribb joined the department in January 1993 as assistant professor and is now a tenured professor. A former Faculty Senate president, Dr. Cribb is a devoted teacher and

researcher. He earned a B.A. from Vanderbilt University, an M.A. from George Washington University, and a Ph.D. from The Ohio State University. We wish him the very best! ■



William Michael (Mike) Parkinson is the new director of the School of Music. He previously served as director of the school of music at Ohio University. He is also the former music department chair at Webster University in St. Louis, where he taught courses in jazz studies and performed with the Webster Faculty Jazz

Ensemble and the Paul DeMarinis Quartet. Dr. Parkinson grew up in Cleveland, Tennessee. He earned a bachelor's in music education at the University of North Texas, a master's in music at Kent State University, and a doctoral degree from the University of Cincinnati College–Conservatory of Music. Welcome, Dr. Parkinson! ■

MTSU Foundation Awards, August 2012

Outstanding Teacher

Ron Kates (English)

Angela Mertig (Sociology and Anthropology)

Outstanding Public Service

Jennifer Kates (English)

Creative Activity

Claudia Barnett (English)

Reed Thomas (Music)

Tenured and Promoted in 2012

Promoted to Professor

Michael Arndt (Music)

Craig Cornish (Music)

Laura Dubek (English)

William Levine (English)

Deanna Little (Music)

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Erin Anfinson (Art)

Shannon Hodge

(Sociology and Anthropology)

Melissa Lobegeier (Geosciences)

Tenured as Associate Professor

James M. Beeby (History)

Patricia Gaitely (English)

Bonnie Rushlow (Art)

Recent Retirees

Fred Beemon (History)

Carol Chapman (English)

Martha Foster (History)

Janet Higgins (Art)

Albert Ogden (Geoscience)

Lorne McWatters (History)

George Riordan (Music)

Other Awards and Honors

- **Nancy Goldberg** (Foreign Languages and Literatures) was awarded the 2012–13 MTSU International Faculty of the Year Award as the faculty member who “has done the most to foster a more global campus.” The award was presented at the close of the annual Education Abroad recognition ceremony. Dr. Goldberg was selected by the IEEC and the 2011–12 recipients of the award for her contributions to student advising for MTSU students abroad, in particular her France education abroad summer program.
- **Mary Beth Asbury** (Organizational Communication) has been given the 2013 Bob Womack Award for outstanding faculty member and classroom teaching.
- April 24 began as a normal day for **Peggy Slater**, but two surprises were waiting for her. First, she was named Secretarial/Clerical Employee of the year. Second, her husband, Fred, and daughter, Meghan, were hidden in the audience to cheer her on as she received the award. Slater was cited for her professionalism, her strong communication skills, and her energy and for always being ready to help. Slater is an essential part of the Liberal Arts staff, and we congratulate her on the award and her promotion to graduation coach for the college.
- The **theatre and dance** program received a \$38,000 TBR Diversity and Access Grant for a three-week residence for Cynthia Gutierrez-Garner, Kanta Kochhar-Lindgren, (Evolving Door Dance), and Heidi Clemmens. These renowned artists and educators will offer MTSU students rich opportunities to expand their understanding of the arts. ■

Geosciences News

The Tennessee Wars Commission awarded \$20,000 to the Tennessee Civil War GIS Project, an interactive web-based mapping program that allows users to view maps of battle sites and other important areas. **Zada Law**, **Lydia Morehouse Simpson** (History Ph.D. student), and **Catherine Hawkins** (History master's student) are working on this project, which continues to reveal new information.

Mark Abolins received \$368,331 from the National Science Foundation's Division of Earth Sciences Education and Human Resources for his proposal "REU Site: Geoenvironmental Challenges in the Southeastern U.S.: A Summer Undergraduate Research Experience for Pre-service Earth Science, Biology, and Chemistry Teachers."



Foreign Languages and Literatures News

June Hall McCash, professor emerita, former chair of

the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, and first director of MTSU's Honors program, has published *Plum Orchard*, a novel set in Cumberland Island, Georgia, during the plantation era, and named Georgia author of the year.

The Foreign Languages and Literatures Department received

a U.S. Department of Education Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) grant to fund language teaching fellows. The grant will be used to expand the Master of Arts in Teaching program by adding four fellowships. The program is expected to appeal to traditional graduate students and those who are typically under-represented or from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Paolo Volpe-Rinonapoli was named Favorite MTSU Professor in the *Daily News Journal* Ruthie Awards.

Ric Morris completed his documentary *Cuba in the Raw: A Story of Sugar*, and it premiered on campus to a crowd of students, faculty, and community members. Morris traveled to Cuba several times over the years to gather information on the story of the sugarcane fields and farms that were started by slave labor and later became the source

of a valuable commodity fought over by Spain, Britain, and the United States. After the showing, sugarcane and its connection to commerce, politics, and war was discussed by special guests **Maria Clayton** (English), who was born in Cuba, and **Steve Livingston** (Political Science), who talked about personal and political influences of Cuba. For over 500 years, sugarcane was considered the "white gold" of the Caribbean.



Congratulations to **Lori Kissinger** on her selection for the 2012–13 EXL Outstanding Faculty Award. Lori has been teaching EXL (experiential learning) courses since spring 2006. Through her EXL service projects, she has brought in thousands of dollars in grant funds and has had a significant impact in the community.

Bethany Hoppe has written a children's book titled *Molly B.*



Golly's Wonderful Dancing Debut. The book is about a young girl with a disability who uses her magical wheelchair to make her dreams come true. The book is published by Lightning Source, a division of Ingram Content Group. We understand that *Molly B. Golly* will become a series of books.

Speech and Theatre News

In fall 2013, MTSU's dance program will be directed by Assistant Professor **Marsha Barsky**. She succeeds Professor Kim Nofsinger, who was recognized by Jeff Gibson, chair of the Speech and Theatre Department "for his dedication to the leadership and development of the dance program over the past decade."

Barsky is a nationally and internationally known performer, choreographer, and administrator who served as director of Vanderbilt's dance program before joining MTSU. She received a B.F.A. in dance from Arizona State University and an M.F.A. in performance, choreography, and somatics from the University of Colorado–Boulder.



Sociology and Anthropology News

Kevin Smith was awarded a 2013 Tennessee Historical Commission Certificate of Merit for History Preservation. No more than ten of these awards are given each year. Professor Smith directs our anthropology program.

English News

The Middle Tennessee Writing Project hosted its 6th annual Fall Writing Conference in 2012. Over 150 area teachers and administrators attended, representing eight school systems and grades K–college. **Ellen Donovan** and **Ron Kates** of the English Department directed the conference, which offers teachers the chance to discuss and compare experiences in the teaching of writing and how to use writing to help students master knowledge across content areas.

Newtona Johnson has been added to the 2013–14 class of faculty members and administrators in the ACE Fellows Program of the American Council on Education. This is a prestigious appointment, one that is considered a stepping-stone to top positions in higher education. Professor Johnson also received the 2013 John Pleas Faculty Award, which is given to minority faculty members who demonstrate teaching, research, and service excellence.

Global Studies News

Ten Days in Fukushima: Tent Houses, Soup Kitchens, and Relentless Hope

MTSU students participated in a panel discussion about their experiences in Fukushima, Japan, during their summer trip in 2012. Fukushima made the news when three nuclear reactors were damaged following a tsunami and earthquake that hit northeast Japan in 2011. Ten MTSU students took the trip to help with the recovery process

and get a first-hand look at how the Japanese people were coping with the devastation. The group was organized and led by **David Schmidt**, vice provost of International Affairs, and **Doug Heffington**, director of Global Studies. Heffington moderated the panel discussion. The students spoke about the tight living conditions in the area and the devastation that was still apparent. One student said that mounds and mounds of rubble lined the roadside as they traveled through the area. Asked if language was a problem, the students said that laughing and dancing bridged many communication barriers. This will be an area that will take years to repair, but the people there are optimistic.

Having an Impact

Corey Perkins, along with Marisela Tapia (Murfreesboro City Schools), have developed a program in which MTSU students volunteer to be tutors to students (Hispanic and Latino) for whom English is a second language. Many children assist non-English-speaking parents in filling out tax forms, helping with employment applications, and reading mail. This program helps children facing these struggles, and by the end of the semester, the elementary students have taught MTSU students about their cultures: truly an exchange of ideas and language.

Study Abroad

Few things enrich a student's college experience like studying abroad. In 2012–13, 185 majors in Liberal Arts departments did so, accounting for half of all MTSU students who studied abroad that year. Global Studies majors led the way, with 49 students going abroad.

Our faculty took students around the world.

- **Nancy Goldberg** (Foreign Languages and Literatures) went to France.
- **Jette Halladay** (Speech and Theatre) and **Debrah Sickler-Voigt** (Art) traveled to Denmark and Norway.
- **Marissa Recchia** (Art) made her annual journey to Italy.
- **Karen Petersen** (Political Science) and **Mark Byrnes** (Dean) ventured to Israel.
- Leading trips to Great Britain were **Ted Sherman** (English) and **Scott Boyd** (Speech and Theatre).
- **Nuria Novella** and **Paolo Volpe-Rinonapoli** (Foreign Languages and Literatures) went to Italy.
- **Derek Frisby** (History) led two trips, one to Vietnam and one to Germany and France.
- The reigning champion of study abroad is **Doug Heffington** (Global Studies), who led three trips—to Costa Rica, Japan, and Canada.





Kip Crowder ('93), son of Don and Deana Crowder of Murfreesboro, and director of the Barren County Band, moved to Kentucky for graduate study following his MTSU experience. He earned a master's in music education and a doctorate of musical arts from the University of Kentucky. While there, he met and married his wife, Monica, who is the band director of Barren County Middle School. Crowder says that Lalo Davila, his music professor at MTSU, taught him to "take care of business; don't get caught off guard; be on time; and always have

a level of professionalism." Crowder also gives credit to his friend and mentor Chuck Campbell, North Hardin High School band director in Radcliffe, Kentucky. Many may remember Campbell from his appearances at the MTSU Contest of Champions. Campbell recommended Crowder and the Barren County Band to the Mid-America Production Company. The Barren County Band prepared a list of accomplishments and presented five years worth of recordings to the company for review. After being accepted, 55 band members headed to New York for the performance of a lifetime. Campbell also recommended Crowder to the International

Band Masters Group, into which Crowder was inducted. Music is also important to the Crowder's daughter, Brianna, who attends the Glasgow School for gifted and talented students. The ten-year-old has already performed in over 20 plays and musical theatre productions. Maybe she, too, will become a Blue Raider.

Silviu Ciulei (Music, '08) continues to impress with his guitar talent. Ciulei completed his undergraduate degree at MTSU and is now at Florida State working on his doctorate. He recently won one of the most prestigious awards in the world—first place at the Indiana International Guitar Festival and Competition.

Tierra McMahon (Philosophy, '03) recently graduated magna cum laude, with an M.A. in international relations and diplomacy from American Graduate School in Paris, France.

Terri Richter-Franklin (Music, '93) is moving to the west coast to begin a D.M.A./Ph.D. at UCLA: a dual degree in voice and musicology. Richter will be performing this summer and fall as Marie in Donizetti's *La Fille du Régiment* in Seattle.

D. J. Creech (Music graduate student) was awarded a scholarship to the Rome Festival and has also been offered a student/faculty position at Sewanee this summer. He will be joining the faculty brass quintet and assisting in teaching and mentoring Sewanee brass students. He will also be studying with Peter Bond from the Metropolitan Opera during his time in residence. He was selected from a group of master's students nationwide.

In Tune magazine lists the MTSU School of Music as one of the best for 2013. *In Tune* is a contemporary music publication sent to all secondary music educators who are members of the National Association for Music Education.

Carol Nies conducted fifteen performances at the 2012 Rome Festival, including three performances of *Die Zauberflöte*, orchestral concerts, and operatic suites from *La Traviata*, *Carmen*, *Die Zauberflöte*, and *L'elisir d'amore*. Nies also served as guest conductor of the 2011–2012 New York All-State String Orchestra at the Eastman School of Music.

Reed Thomas and six students traveled to Shanghai last summer, where Thomas was a

guest conductor for the Central China Honor Band and taught conducting master classes and score study to music teachers. Students gave private lessons to Chinese musicians, held master classes, conducted small-ensemble rehearsals, and played solo and chamber pieces. Chelsea Short (flute), Chase King (clarinet/saxophone), Gabriel Molina (clarinet), Jim McCarol (trumpet/brass), Brooke Huffman (percussion), and Tyler Hildreth (percussion) were the lucky students.

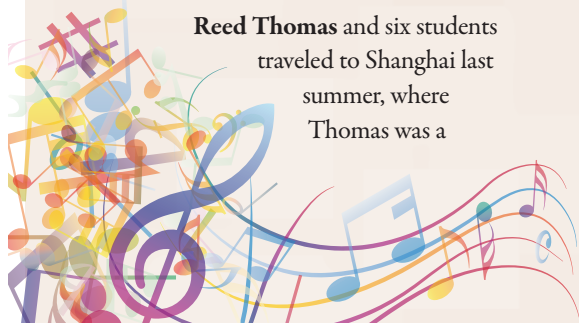
The Tennessee State Chapter of the National Association of Teachers of Singing student auditions were held at East Tennessee State University in October 2012. Professor **Christine Isley-Farmer's** students either won or placed: Beth Ann Stripling took first place in the freshman women category and second in musical theatre; Will Duke was first among sophomore men; Elizabeth Elliott

Music News

took third place among junior women; and Sarah Wofford finished second among senior women.

Lalo Davila was named "Best Latin Jazz Musician" in the *Nashville Scene's* 2012 "Best of Nashville" issue. Davila has had a positive impact on School of Music students at MTSU by his musicianship, enthusiasm, and sense of humor.

Cedric Dent will receive a 2013 Heritage Music Award from the National Association of Negro Musicians (NANM), which was founded in 1919 and is the country's oldest organization dedicated to the preservation, encouragement, and advocacy of all genres of African American music.



Student News

Liberal Arts scholars dominate 2013 Scholars Week, a celebration of scholarship and creative activity by undergraduate and graduate students and faculty. This year brought out the very best in Liberal Arts.

Undergraduate Tie for First Place

Rita Jones (Speech and Theatre) and **Yang Soo Kim** (faculty)
“Communication Experiences of International Students in the U.S.A.: Comparison Study of Cross-Cultural Adaptation between European and Asian Students”

Mahmud Brifkani (Political Science) and **Vanessa Lefler** (faculty)

“Islamic Law in International Relations: A Case Study of Iran and the Conflict over Its Nuclear Program”

Undergraduates Tie for Second Place

Stephanie Bottum

(Speech and Theatre) and **Virginia Donnell** (faculty)

“Medea: Passion, Rage, and Revenge”

Lucas Osborne (Speech and Theatre) and **Patrick Richey** (faculty)

“Why Does America Hate Socialism? A Rhetorical Analysis of American Values and Their Contrast with the Economic System that Is Socialism”

Graduate First Place

Janie Delk (Music) and

Jamila McWhirter (faculty)

“Improvisation in Performance: A Survey of Secondary Choral Music Educators in Tennessee”

Graduate Second Place

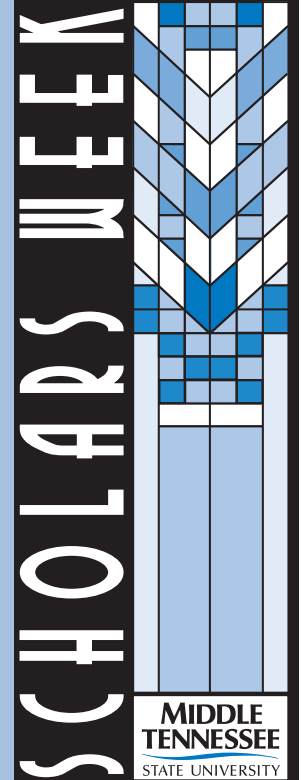
Kayla McNabb (English) and **Philip Phillips** (faculty)

“Discovering Poe as a Composer: Edgar Allan Poe’s ‘The Philosophy of Composition’ and Process Theory”

Graduate Third Place

Clint Bryan (English) and **Mohammed Albakry** (faculty)

“Checking Out Language: Using Corpora to Look Up Phrasal Verbs in Freshman Composition”



by Tiffany Saul

Say Yes!



“Never say no to an opportunity!”

That is the greatest lesson I have learned from working with Dr. Hugh Berryman, forensic anthropologist and director of the Forensic Institute for Research and Education (FIRE). Because I have followed that advice, I have had many adventures while studying at MTSU.

This summer, I will complete my M.S. in biology. I have been afforded an unusual opportunity to work collaboratively with a committee of biologists and anthropologists at MTSU to complete research on identification of human skeletal remains through the use of dental metrics. While the defense and publication of a thesis will be a tangible product of my academic efforts, I’ve had so many other learning experiences that just don’t appear on the checklist of degree requirements. These experiences allowed me to realize dreams and pursue passions.

Every student who asks to meet with Dr. Berryman receives a similar introductory speech regarding careers in forensic anthropology. He encourages students to set themselves apart through research and academic excellence. He discusses his own experiences, encourages students to complete coursework, and suggests they apply for the Forensic Anthropology Search and Recovery (FASR) team. He also never fails to mention professional opportunities available to anthropologists at the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command Central Identification Laboratory (JPAC-CIL) in Hawaii. I was no exception. I received the same talk during my first meeting with him. I committed

Tiffany and Dr. Hugh Berryman at the JPAC-CIL.

STUDENT ADDY®

THE FUTURE OF ADVERTISING

Creative art/design students won big in local and district American Advertising Federation ADDY Awards competitions:

Best of Show: Aaron Johnson

Judges' Choice: Mandy Haskins

Gold: Alexa Gamaes, Mandy Haskins, Ethan Farmer, Aaron Johnson

Silver: Taylor Watson, Anthony Crawford

District ADDYs

Gold: Ethan Farmer, Mandy Haskins, Aaron Johnson

Silver: Taylor Watson

Student News

The following art students found success at the fall 2012 Student Art Alliance (SAA) Juried Student Show:

Amber Lelli, Josh Rhoton,

Honorable Mention

Amanda Phillips, Second Runner-up

Justin Barker, First Runner-up

Claire Coleman, Best of Show

Catherine Betts, a freshman music education major won the 2013 Young Artist Solo Tuba Competition at the Midwest Regional Tuba-Euphonium Conference, which was held at

Illinois State University. The prize was \$200. Her instructor, Dr. Benjamin Miles, commented, "I listened to her performance through the door and thought that she played wonderfully."

Rachel Lee won the President's Award for her achievement in academics and volunteerism.

Morissa Duke, a history major who finished her student teaching last spring, has been accepted into Teach for America.

Continued on page 30

each suggestion to memory, and I used them as my roadmap and benchmarks for personal success.

I was invited to join the FASR team after completing the required coursework and application process. This team, under the direction of Dr. Berryman, assists state and local law enforcement with crime scene search-and-recovery operations involving skeletal human remains. We also work with the medical examiner's office to help identify skeletal remains. MTSU's FASR team is unique, and I could not have received this type of experience at a student level anywhere else.

Because of my role on the FASR team and experience with human skeletal remains, I was invited to participate in a summer study-abroad opportunity through the History Department. In 2010, Dr. Derek Frisby led a group of students on Expedition Peleliu, a World War II battle site survey of a small island in Micronesia. When I was approached about participating, all I heard was, "... tropical island in the Pacific..." so I immediately said, "I'm in." What I got was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see a battlefield frozen in time. Once our group landed on the island (after many plane transfers and a couple of boat rides totaling almost 24 hours of travel to the other side of the world), we explored a lush jungle hiding the remnants of one of the longest and most costly battles of World War II. Daily hikes revealed tanks parked in the same places they stopped at the end of the battle,

I could not have received this type of experience at a student level anywhere else.

U.S. canteens and mess kits, Japanese fighter plane crash sites, and even abandoned weapons. We spent our evenings reading aloud from the memoirs of U.S. soldiers who published accounts of their experiences on Peleliu. Each day, their words would echo through the blazing heat across the unforgiving terrain of the island's landscape. Nothing could have created an understanding of the hardships faced by soldiers more than this experience.

My visit to Peleliu strengthened my resolve to one day assist with the ongoing efforts to recover and identify the remains of U.S. military personnel, which is the mission of JPAC-CIL. During our first meeting, Dr. Berryman described his experiences as a consultant for this lab, located on the island of Oahu in Hawaii. Forensic anthropologists work collaboratively with military personnel to provide closure to families of the approximately 83,000 Americans still missing from past conflicts. I had heard about the laboratory and its scientists through lectures and conference presentations, but nothing compared to seeing the facility in person, which was an opportunity I was granted in January of this year.

Dr. Berryman is a member of the Scientific Working Group for Anthropology, or SWGANATH. This group of forensic anthropologists, with years of professional experience, is working to develop best-practice guidelines and establish minimum standards for the discipline of forensic anthropology. The group meets twice each year, and their January meeting is held at JPAC-CIL in Hawaii.

It was an incredible honor to be among the few students invited to attend last January's meeting. My trip was financially supported by

Continued on page 30

Student News



Say Yes!

Continued from page 29

the College of Liberal Arts, the College of Graduate Studies, the College of Basic and Applied Sciences, and the Forensic Institute for Research and Education. I gained a great amount of appreciation for my chosen discipline as I observed my mentor and other respected practitioners working diligently to strengthen and improve our scientific field. I also received a tour of the laboratory and was able to observe various stages of the identification process. During the week of the meeting, the remains of several individuals were brought in for identification. Seeing the reverence with which this process was conducted was humbling and inspiring.

I have had countless other remarkable experiences throughout my time at MTSU, none of which would have been possible without the spirit of interdisciplinary education that the University embraces. I served two years as a visiting scientist through the National Science Foundation Graduate Fellow program. I have explored archaeological excavation and research techniques under the direction of Dr. Kevin Smith in the Sociology and Anthropology Department, examined biological materials microscopically using scanning and transmitting electron microscopes in the MIMIC lab with Dr. Brian Miller and Joyce Miller, and reconstructed lifeways of early inhabitants of the Southeastern United States alongside my bioarchaeologist mentor, Dr. Shannon Hodge. Most recently, I assisted Dr. Tanya Peres with her zooarchaeological research examining the use of marine shells by ancient peoples of Tennessee.

None of these experiences would have been possible without the support of several University departments. My major professor and advisor, Dr. Amy Jetton (Biology) has supported each opportunity offered to me in my dual existence as a biologist and anthropologist. Drs. Tony Farone, Mary Farone, and Kim Sadler, all from the Biology Department, opened leadership and educational doors throughout my two-year fellowship. Though I am registered as a graduate student in the College of Basic and Applied Sciences, I have not been restricted in subject matter or experience. The wonderful thing about anthropology is that it extends to science, history, art, and all other aspects of humanity. I have been fortunate to learn a set of career and life skills, rather than just stay in the classroom. I could have simply completed my degree requirements, but why say no to opportunity? ■

Continued from page 29

In June, the Office of Education Abroad announced that twenty MTSU students were awarded a total of \$30,325 to support their studies abroad from outside organizations such as the Gilman Foundation, the Japan Student Service Organization, the University Studies Abroad Consortium, and the Council for International Education and Exchange. Five of those students received Gilman Scholarships totaling \$19,000 to support their education abroad

- For summer 2013, **Lydia Harris** (History) received \$3,500 for study in Galway, Ireland, and **Ra'Shaun McAllister** (Sociology) received \$2,500 for study in Heredia, Costa Rica.
- For study in fall 2013, **Mitchell Plumer** (Global Studies and Japanese minor) received \$3,000 for study in Osaka, Japan.
- For the 2013–2014 academic year, **Dimitre Avila** (Global Studies and Japanese minor) received \$5,000 for study in Saitama, Japan, and **DeAngelica Rose** (English) received \$5,000 for study in Seoul, South Korea.

The Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship program offers grants for U.S.-citizen undergraduate students to pursue study abroad to better prepare them to assume significant roles in an increasingly global economy and interdependent world. The Gilman Scholarship program was established by the International Academic Opportunity Act of 2000.

MTSU is proud that a record 193 students received a total of \$279,000 in institutional scholarships to support their studies abroad this summer and in the next academic year. Sixty percent of MTSU students who study abroad participate in signature programs led by MTSU faculty.

The MTSU Debate Team (photo below) takes debating to the next level with the help of coach **Patrick Richey** (Speech and Theatre). The team recently went up against students from Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan, via a Skype debate. Richey said it was a life-changing experience for the students, especially since the Afghan students were risking their lives to participate in the live debate. The team—Marquwan Fultz, Hailey Lawson, William Phillips, Tearinye Covson, Dale Sikkema, William Griffen, and Tevin Mason—was briefed on cultural and security concerns. The students from Afghanistan were in Balkh (the country's fourth-largest city) in an area with five universities. Richey said the Afghan students were quite good debaters, and he hopes to have more global debates in the future.

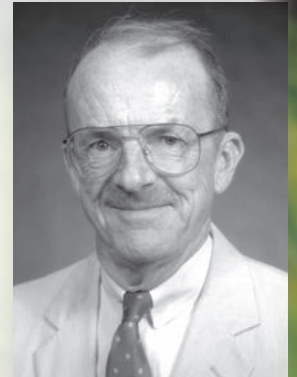


In Memoriam

The College of Liberal Arts lost three faculty members over the last year.

*All of them contributed to the college
and the University in significant ways.
We offer sincere sympathy to all of their
families and friends.*

Everett Wilford Cunningham died January 4, 2013, in his hometown of Russell Springs, Kentucky. Professor Cunningham taught in the Political Science Department from 1966 to 1998. Cunningham coauthored a book on Kentucky politics, and was a member of American Political Sciences Association, Southern Political Science Association, and the Tennessee Political Science Association. His specialty was political theory. He was a soft-spoken gentleman with very definite ideals and a strong love for his home state of Kentucky.



Michael Dunne died November 27, 2012, at his home. He taught American literature and popular culture in the Department of English from 1969 until his retirement in 2006. He earned a B.A. from Fordham University and an M.A. and Ph.D. from Louisiana State University. Dr. Dunne came to MTSU to help initiate and teach in the newly created Doctor of Arts program. In 2003 he assisted the department in its transition to the Ph.D. Department chair Tom Strawman called Dr. Dunne a bridge between the past and the future and someone who held the department together as a cohesive group dedicated to upholding academic integrity and effective teaching.



Lewright Browning Sikes, who taught in the History Department for 26 years, died September 25, 2012. Dr. Sikes received a undergraduate degree from Maryville College and a graduate degree from University of Tennessee–Knoxville. He specialized in colonial and early national America. He was also a professional musician who performed with the Nashville Symphony Chorus, Nashville Opera, and the Jackson [Tennessee] Symphony and at a number of churches in Tennessee.



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