

# U TODAY



## HOME AWAY FROM HOME

FIRE FOR FAITH LEADS  
ROBERT WEGBREIT ON LIFE QUEST

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**Russell Bloodworth '01** captured this image just off the highway near Gunnison, Colorado, while on the road to Moab, Utah. "Occasionally the setting, lighting, weather, and season align perfectly like this to create a truly stunning vista," he says. Bloodworth serves as director of Social Media and Content Strategy at Walmart in Bentonville, Arkansas, but he also has a photography business ([russellbloodworthphotography.com](http://russellbloodworthphotography.com)). The Bloodworths are a creative bunch. Patriarch **Rusty Bloodworth '63** paints watercolors and just published his third book (see page 19), and **Christopher Bloodworth '08** has written and illustrated a children's book (*A Girl and Her Bear*, 2018).





## FEATURED THIS ISSUE



- 6** Robert Wegbreit '80 finds faith, family, and home in Israel
- 14** Jay Schoenberger '00 builds farms to harvest solar energy
- 19** Rusty Bloodworth '63 explores Exodus passage in book
- 20** Author Robert Davis '82 dispels weight-loss fallacies
- 25** Jim Russell leaves legacy of excellence
- 32** Billy Dunavant remembered as friend to MUS

### Correction

A senior award listed in the fall issue of MUS Today was misidentified. The correct name is the Brescia Award for Excellence in Dramatics. The Brescia Award was established by the parents of Matthew Richard "Buddy" Brescia '64 to honor that senior who, in the opinion of the Fine Arts Department, has given the most unselfish service to MUS theater.



## IN EVERY ISSUE

- 4** From the Headmaster
- 5** Student Lauds
- 19** U Review
- 22** Faculty News
- 31** Board News
- 46** Class News and Milestones
- 60** Gifts in Memory and Honor
- 65** The Last Word

## ON THE COVER



Rabbi Asher Baruch "Robert" Wegbreit '80 overlooks the Old City of Jerusalem, a city he has called home for three decades. His spiritual journey began with a recollection of "how boring and uninteresting Judaism was" and led him to "an incredible passion for the study of the Torah." Read about how this seeker discovered his vocation along with his spiritual and physical home in Israel. See page 6.

### Director of Advancement

**Perry Dement**

perry.dement@musowls.org

### Director of Alumni and Parent Programs

**Ann Laughlin**

ann.laughlin@musowls.org

### Editor, Director of Communications

**Liz Copeland**

liz.copeland@musowls.org

### Assistant Director of Communications

**Rebecca Greer**

### Communications Specialist

**John McBride '17**

### Graphic Designer

**Kaitlan Koehler**

### Contributors

Greg Cravens, *freelance illustrator based in Memphis*

Robert Gordon '79, *freelance writer and filmmaker based in Memphis*

Yochanan Katz, *freelance photographer based in Israel*

Lance Murphey, *freelance photographer and filmmaker based in Colorado*

Karen Pulfer-Focht, *freelance photographer based in Memphis*

Jane Schneider, *freelance writer based in Memphis*

Gaye Swan, *freelance writer based in Memphis*



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*Founded 1893*

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Memphis University School is a college-preparatory school dedicated to academic excellence, cultivation of service and leadership, and the development of well-rounded young men of strong moral character, consistent with the school's Christian tradition.

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# Owls Better Their Worlds Here and Away

The deep footprint of MUS in Memphis is quite a story. The school and its alumni have played and continue to play major roles in the region. Reading the 2020-21 Community Impact Report, prepared by our Communications Specialist **John McBride '17**, underscored this point in my mind. (See the report on our website, [www.musowls.org/CIR](http://www.musowls.org/CIR).)

With an annual operating budget of nearly \$19 million encompassing numerous vendor contracts with local businesses, MUS contributes mightily to the Memphis economy.

Equally impactful is the school's commitment to the greater community as demonstrated by students serving over 21 nonprofit organizations last year, including MIFA/Meals on Wheels, the Mid-South Food Bank, and The Salvation Army.

It is remarkable what the school's presence does for the Memphis economy and what our students, advised by faculty, do for the city in the form of good works throughout the year. When combined with the extraordinary academic program and the rich array of extracurricular pursuits available, our graduates leave 6191 Park Avenue well-rounded and ready for the challenges of adulthood – ready to make their mark as alumni.

I have long been associated with fine institutions that have impressive alumni bodies, including my own high school alma mater. As impressive as these groups are, they come up short when compared to those who hold an MUS diploma. I frequently interact with alumni at school, at school-sponsored gatherings, and at events around town, witnessing firsthand the expanse and depth of their influence in Memphis and the Mid-South.

The statistics are revealing: 2,804 of our alumni live in the region; 486 hold corporate officer or founding member positions at local companies; and they hold 572 seats on local nonprofit boards. Twenty of the *Memphis Business Journal's* Top 100 Companies have MUS alumni in leadership positions.

In *Memphis* magazine's Power Player honor roll, a staggering 45 Owls are listed.

MUS influence is not limited to our home base. Alumni throughout the country enrich their communities in similar ways. As I have visited with them at gatherings in Nashville, New York, Atlanta, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Dallas, I have encountered recurrent themes of professional success and commitment to the greater good. In this issue we read about how **Jay Schoenberger '00**, based in Denver, built a company devoted to renewable energy because he "liked the idea of starting something that could be successful and make a difference in the world." There is no doubt that the core DNA of MUS is felt beyond West Tennessee.

We also have Owls whose interests and careers have taken them beyond these shores. Alumni are spread across six continents. In this issue, we learn about **Robert Wegbreit '80**, whose calling led him to make a life in Jerusalem. As with so many alumni profiles, Robert – now Rabbi Asher Baruch Wegbreit – shares great memories of MUS experiences. I know you will enjoy his story, told by Owl soccer teammate **Robert Gordon '79**.

As longtime Board of Trustees member, former chair, and alumni dad **Trow Gillespie '65** has said, "MUS is a school for a lifetime." I repeatedly see evidence supporting this statement among our alumni – whether their lifetimes are lived within a mile of campus or continents away.

*Veritas Honorque*



**PETER D. SANDERS**

HEADMASTER

[PETE.SANDERS@MUSOWLS.ORG](mailto:PETE.SANDERS@MUSOWLS.ORG)



# BRINGING HOME THE LAUDS

## Musicians Named to National Honor Ensembles



*Evan Wu, left, and Dannie Dong*

Two students from the Class of 2024 have been selected for National Association for Music Education All-National Honor Ensembles (ANHE). **Dannie Dong** has been chosen for the Concert Band, timpani; and **Evan Wu** for the String Orchestra, viola. They have been invited to participate in a virtual program January 22-24, 2022, that will include several rehearsals with 2021 ANHE conductors and workshops with renown clinicians. Each ensemble will create a final, recorded performance that will premiere on the Music in Our Schools Month website ([nafme.org/programs/miosm](http://nafme.org/programs/miosm)).

“Being selected to the All-National Ensembles is a great honor,” said Music Instructor **Chris Piccuch**. “In a normal year, these students would be invited to perform in Carnegie Hall. Congratulations to these young men and to all the students who auditioned.” ■

## 23% of Seniors Honored Nationally

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation and College Board recently recognized 21 students from the Class of 2022 and one student from the Class of 2023 for their strong performance on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test.

Seniors **Simeon Betapudi, Mark Hieatt, Evan Jones, Forest Rudd, Witt Smith, Garner Uhlhorn, Christopher Yarbro, and Kerry Zhao** are among 16,000 students identified as National Merit Semifinalists, representing less than 1% of high school seniors in the United States who took the exam. Seniors **Will Chandler, Collin Craft, Noah Emmert, Edward Grinder, Jordan Infeld, Dex Jack, West Loden, and Reece Needham** received the designation of National Merit Commended Student for their performance on the exam.

Additionally, seniors **Ayo Adebiyi, Kyler Herring, Loro Lado, Vincent Ores, and Johnathan Ray**, and junior **Kyan Ramsay** were designated College Board National African American Recognition Program Scholars for their performance on the exam.

“We are very proud of all our students who earned recognition from National Merit and the College Board,” said Assistant Headmaster **Barry Ray**. “These young men worked diligently in their courses and prepared themselves well for the PSAT. The six young men recognized in the National



*National Merit Semifinalists Simeon Betapudi, Mark Hieatt, Evan Jones, Forest Rudd, Witt Smith, Garner Uhlhorn, Christopher Yarbro, and Kerry Zhao.*

African American Recognition Program represent the largest number of MUS students honored in this program to date. We congratulate all of our honorees and look forward to celebrating their future accomplishments.” ■



# Soul Man

Robert Wegbreit's spiritual journey takes him  
home *and* far from home.

BY ROBERT GORDON '79



*Rabbi Asher Baruch "Robert" Wegbreit '80 has lived in Israel since 1992. This view of the Old City in Jerusalem overlooks the Western Wall and the Dome of the Rock. "Despite the fact that the Temple was destroyed over 2,000 years ago by the Romans," he says, "this wall has survived."*

*Photos by Yochanan Katz*

From East Memphis to the Middle East, from Saturday school punishment to Saturday Sabbath prayers, **Robert Wegbreit '80** has had quite the quest. A seeker interested in the mind's possibilities, Wegbreit has gone from *optimus* Latin student to eminent Torah scholar, gaining ordination as a rabbi, writing authoritative texts, and leading prestigious religious institutions in Jerusalem.

He was in seventh grade when his family, Jewish but decidedly not religious, moved to Memphis from Atlanta, and in the middle of the eighth grade, he joined MUS. Funny and smart, Wegbreit excelled in Latin under Mrs. **Marilyn Reinhardt** (back when she was **Miss Green**). He learned early about humility when, confident that he had aced a state Latin exam, he received a score of 0; he had mistakenly erased part of the test's printed code, rendering it ungradable. "A lesson for life," he laughs.

His journey east began with a decade in the West, initially at Pomona College in Claremont, California, for his undergraduate studies. Part of what got the college's attention was his high school hypnotism practice.

After Dr. **David Jackson's** wife, Kay, visited class, discussed the mind's depths, and hypnotized Wegbreit, he studied and became a master mesmerizer himself, soon putting summer campers and trusting classmates under his spell.

He kicked around retail management in Los Angeles after college graduation, then returned to Claremont Graduate School, pursuing a joint degree. He earned a Ph.D. in organizational psychology and, but for the intimidating mathematics required for the finance classes, would have completed his MBA.

Two graduate school friendships altered the course of his life. One was the professor Vijay Sathe, who had made a quality-of-warmer-life move from Harvard to Claremont. Wegbreit shared Sathe's interest in applying group management skills to individuals, and Sathe became his mentor. "Being his research assistant opened the doors to Kaiser Permanente and Philips Electronics and the opportunity for me to live in France, Germany, and Amsterdam and make very good money," says Wegbreit. "Moreover, he provided me with a glimpse of what the top of my field and success would look like, including the glamour of living and traveling abroad."

The other big influence was his assigned roommate, Ling from Beijing, who was trying to work from within the Chinese government to bring home democracy. Ling's pursuits brought him to America, and when the Tiananmen Square protests occurred, "He was doing covert operations with the Chinese Army from our dorm room. He was faxing a lot!" Ling shared his respect for the Jewish people. "He felt Jews were as wise as the Chinese, yet

the Chinese had a large mainland and security for thousands of years, whereas the Jews were driven from one country to the other, miraculously surviving." School gave him a means to financial success, but Ling sparked in him an intellectual and spiritual thirst for meaning. "I studied Eastern philosophy with Ling and soon immersed myself in the study of psychology and modern philosophy." His peregrinations included a meditation retreat on a mountaintop near the college. "The singer Leonard Cohen was there at the time," Wegbreit says, adding "It was two Jews on the wrong mountain!"

The spirit of questioning naturally led him to his own faith. "I had this memory of how boring and uninteresting Judaism was," he says, "so it wasn't on my radar." But he read the novels of Rabbi Chaim Potok and a popular philosophy book by Rabbi Harold Kushner, and the wanderer began warming to what was close to home. He paid a visit to the religious center in Claremont. "I go in there and ask for a rabbi. I'm imagining my *zayde*, an old man like my grandfather." He was very surprised by the receptionist's response.

*Rabbi Wegbreit teaches Torah to adult professionals at Yeshivas Rabbi Akiva in Old City, Jerusalem. "Rabbi Akiva was one of the greatest Torah scholars of all time, and he only began study at the age of 40," Wegbreit says. "I began at the age of 31... it's never too late to start learning Torah."*





נתרם ע"י 'ירקס'  
VA EMBROIDERY

“ I felt an incredible  
*passion*  
 for the study of the Torah.”

“The secretary says, ‘She’s on the phone, she’ll be right with you.’ She was from Harvard, very intelligent, and we studied the stories of [eighteenth century scholar] Rabbi Nachman. It was one-on-one learning, sharpening each other’s minds, a *chevruta*.”

Everything changed with his first trip to Israel in 1992. He immersed himself in religious studies at a yeshiva (a Jewish school that focuses on the study of traditional religious texts), and the seeker had found his destination. “I felt an incredible passion for the study of Torah. I was amazed to see the depth of this ‘ancient wisdom’ and was surprised how hidden from the larger world this was. It was like discovering a secret society that had existed for thousands of years that I was never

taught about in history classes.”

A few days later, he made an international call to his parents. “The fire of the spirituality was right on me. I made my first call home, said ‘Hi, Dad,’ and he heard it in my voice. He said to my mom, ‘He’s never coming back.’” Dad was essentially right; Wegbreit’s search for meaning led back to his own spiritual home – Judaism – but away from his hometown.

Wegbreit had peeked at the heights of corporate consulting through Sathe. He fully appreciated the choice before him. “My experience with Vijay enabled me to compare this professional pursuit to the pursuit of Torah and Israel.” He knew he had his mentor on his side. “As Vijay

himself teaches in his work on career development, this glamorous career didn’t compare with the sense of calling and vocation that I discovered in my own backyard.”

“Robert” began to use his Hebrew name, “Asher Baruch.” Most yeshivas are geared to post-high school students; Wegbreit was 31 and found a place for those who were older and didn’t have the religious background. Soon he would marry an Israeli-born wife, Ayelet, and have a family of seven children (and now two grandchildren). Within five years, he was a teacher at Yeshivas Bircas HaTorah in Jerusalem’s Old City. Over his three decades there, he published four books and rose to the position of *mashkiach*,

which is a fusion of guidance counselor and spiritual leader.

He left the yeshiva a couple years ago; it had been trending toward younger students and “my heart is in adult education. After 25 years, I’d accumulated a lot of approaches for adults, especially the non-religious.” He was working from home, beginning to teach classes online

Left, Rabbi Wegbreit stands by the Western Wall.

Constructed of massive limestone blocks, the ancient wall is considered an impressive engineering feat.

Right, Rabbi Wegbreit’s family celebrates the wedding of oldest daughter, Basia Nina, in 2018. From left, son Yosef Chaim, daughter Puah Rochel, wife Ayelet, the bride, the rabbi, and sons Yehoshua Leib, Yizchak Nissan, Yissachar and, in front, Elchonon.



# Even when an explorer finds a *home*, he does not settle.



Both Robert Wegbreit '80 and Robert Gordon '79 (writer of this article) played soccer at MUS, including on the 1978 varsity team. Wegbreit is in the middle row, and Gordon is in the back row.

when COVID hit.

“I was in place for this shift in communication,” he says. He now teaches online to students in Dallas, New York, London, and South Africa.

His latest project is a series called *Kavanah L'Mitzvos*, which translates to Bringing Soul to Good Deeds. He had noticed, having left the yeshiva, how many ceremonial actions and good deeds he and other observant practitioners did by rote. “Torah, the Bible, is stimulating,” he says, “and the *mitzvos* [commandments and good deeds] are sometimes experienced as ritualistic and repetitive. Repeated practice of anything can lead to a sense of disengagement and malaise. I began creating tools that stimulate engagement. I’ve refocused my energy on intentionality. I’m showing people how to feel excited and enriched when they practice good deeds and study the Torah. I focus on pre-intention, which jibes with mindfulness. People tell me it’s not a game changer, it’s a life changer.”

Wegbreit’s enthusiasm is infectious and can

be felt in the video lectures on his website. He’ll be making a point, and he gets excited because of how it connects to another idea. His eyes shine, the crooked high school smile returns, and as he skips along on those jags, topic to topic, connecting disparate concepts, it feels like a smooth stone skipping across a pond: Something that is usually weighty, even onerous, is actually flying, joyous.

Wegbreit’s classes in English are available for groups or individuals (and he would love to hear from any Owls). Many of his students share a secular background like his own. “Even the non-religious are relating, because *mitzvos* are opportunities for fulfillment. *Mitzvos* are a way to put ideals into regular practice. *Mitzvos* are a spiritual path and a hero’s journey.”

Even when an explorer finds a home, he does not settle. Wegbreit continues to dig into his foundation, probing texts and investigating concepts. In this journey, neither the questions nor the quest ever ends. ■

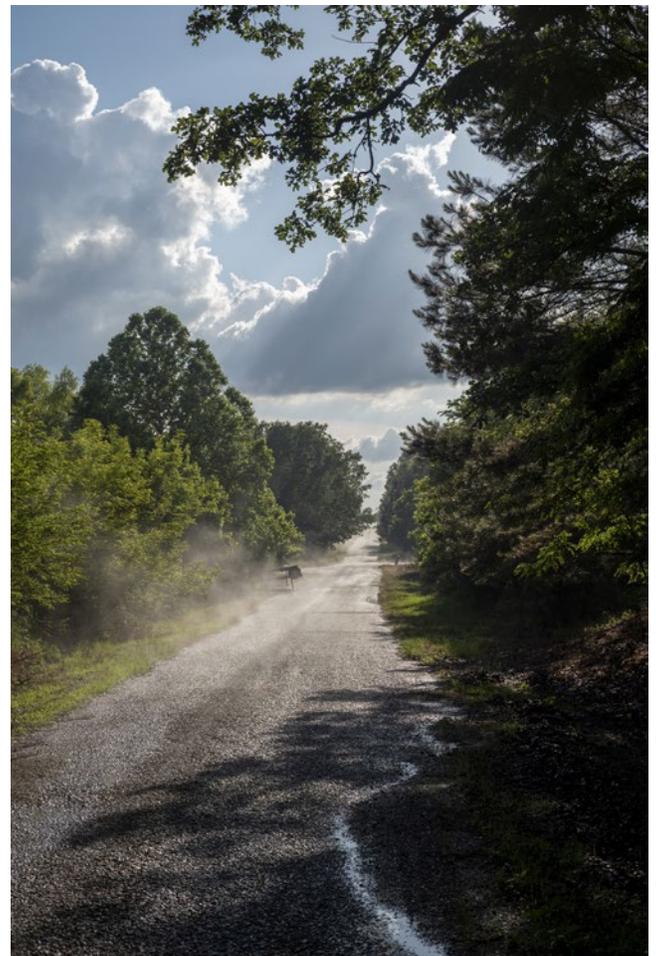
Videos and more information about Rabbi Wegbreit’s program are available at <https://kavanahlmitzvos.com>. His books are available at <https://www.rabbiwegbreit.com>.



Huger Foote, *Untitled*, 2021  
Courtesy of David Lusk Gallery

## Huger Foote Captures Light and Life at Home

When the pandemic landed New York-based photographer **Huger Foote '80** back in Memphis for a time, he took the opportunity to explore his home once again. The result was the October exhibit *Light is a Place* at David Lusk Gallery. "Finding himself back in his artistic birthplace, Foote set to work with his camera," writes Mary Ann Phan for *The Daily Memphian*. "Most of the exhibit's material was born of drives around the I-240 loop, where Foote would stop and explore each exit. Additional adventures led him deep into the Delta via Highway 61 and many smaller gravel roads and dirt paths. Reveling in solitude and stillness amidst a tumultuous news cycle, Foote reclaimed an inspiration that he said doesn't happen anywhere else for him. An intended visit became a full return home to Memphis. Foote has said he feels like fate guided him back to the place he belongs." See another photo on page 68. ■





# POWER SUMMIT

BY JANE SCHNEIDER

# Jay Schoenberger's career rises with demand for renewable energy

When President Joe Biden announced his administration's ambitious plans to combat climate change by reducing emissions and growing clean energy, business owner **Jay Schoenberger '00** took note. His company, Dakota Power Partners, creates utility-scale solar and battery-storage farms for rural communities.

With a 15-year career in renewable energy, Schoenberger has ridden the wave of growth that's taken place as solar farms and wind turbines, once on the fringe of energy production, have steadily moved front and center, spurred by renewable energy's cost competitiveness, climate concerns, and demand for emissions-free energy.

Schoenberger worked for many years with solar and wind companies before teaming up with two other clean-energy experts to launch Dakota Power Partners (DPP) in 2018. With only five full-time employees, DPP is efficiently managed. All three principals work remotely: Schoenberger, company principal and co-founder, from Denver (where he lives with his wife, Melanie, and their three children); and his two partners, principal and co-founder Tim Daniels and principal David Capparelli, from Utah and Florida.

The Dakota Power Partners team has participated in the development of more than 3,300 MW of operating and in-construction wind and solar projects around the U.S. – an investment in rural communities of more than \$4.1 billion. Utility-scale farms sell power directly to regional utilities – or increasingly to commercial and industrial customers – rather than to residential customers.

“We do everything required to get a power plant built, from the land permits all the way to getting the power onto the power grid,” says Schoenberger.

Collectively, the DPP team boasts more than 80 years of experience, with each “doing a little bit of everything” to bring DPP's solar projects to life. The company also relies heavily on “an army of consultants” notes Schoenberger, experts who address issues from engineering and environmental concerns to understanding local law and interconnection challenges. Company members communicate electronically, meeting in person at project sites as needed.

*Jay Schoenberger '00, pictured in the Flatirons area outside Boulder, Colorado, has long enjoyed hiking in the mountains. Love of nature influenced his selection of renewable energy as a career choice.*

*Photos by Lance Murphey*

# DEVELOPING SOLAR FARMS

Schoenberger likens the development of a solar farm to that of a car assembly line, in which each component or step in the process needs to be completed before the next component can be added. Proposals typically start with a market analysis to determine areas where demand for solar energy outstrips supply. Once a market is identified, the company looks for transmission connectivity (i.e., the ability to readily connect to the region's power grid) and available acreage that meet their criteria – that is, very flat land that can be developed without causing harm to the environment.

Next begins the often lengthy process of partnering with landowners, local and state governments, environmental regulators, and other state and federal agencies, each of whom must sign off on a project before it can move forward.

Farmers and ranchers typically lease their land to solar-farm or wind-turbine developers for 20 to 30 years, and such agreements provide reliable, long-term rent income. At the end of a lease, a community must decide whether the plant repowers or is decommissioned. Returning the site to its former use as arable land is fairly straightforward, notes Schoenberger, once the solar equipment (which is largely above ground) is removed.

“Farmers are often our biggest supporters,” Schoenberger says. “Solar farms can generate more income, and they don't have to work the land.”

The creation of a solar farm also brings construction jobs and tax revenues to rural

communities. The timeline from proposal to power generation is typically three to six years.

While creating renewable energy today is more economically viable than it was even a decade ago, Schoenberger says moving forward requires a real paradigm shift: “We have to see energy as a technology instead of a resource we dig out of the ground.”

While the United States is not behind other countries when it comes to producing clean energy, Schoenberger says, the push to develop more solar and wind projects has been increasingly driven by demand from the private versus the public sector. That demand is directly linked to the growth in technologies that connect us to the internet and its instant information.

“Big tech companies [like Google and Facebook] are requiring renewable energy be in place to power new data centers,” says Schoenberger.

Data centers are storage facilities built to house computing and networking infrastructure (think servers, routers, fiber optic cables, and so forth) that help power the internet. These power-hungry centers have helped make the U.S. one of the largest energy consumers per capita in the world.



*Farmers lease their land to Dakota Power Partners for the installation of solar panels and reap the benefits of regular income. These panels are installed in Jasper County, South Carolina.*

A man with a dark beard and mustache, wearing a blue denim button-down shirt and dark trousers with a brown belt, stands in a field of tall, golden-brown grass. He is leaning on a wooden fence post. In the background, there are rugged, rocky mountains under a clear blue sky. The lighting suggests late afternoon or early morning.

**"We have to see energy as a technology instead of a resource we dig out of the ground."**

# SEEING ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN ACTION

It's perhaps no surprise that Schoenberger wound up owning a business; he grew up in a family of entrepreneurs. His father ran an executive search company, and his grandfather sold food and beverage equipment to restaurants across the Midwest.

"I always wanted to start my own business," says Schoenberger, who turned 40 last year. "I saw the flexibility, autonomy,

and agency that comes with entrepreneurship. I liked the idea of starting something that could be successful and make a difference in the world."

Schoenberger's years at MUS, influenced by Instructor in English **Terry Shelton** and other teachers, helped hone his critical thinking skills and taught him "to challenge assumptions and the presumed narrative."

Following graduation, he spent a month with NOLS, an outdoors education program based in Lander, Wyoming, backpacking through the Wind River Range and reading

books about the environment. In fact, it was Bill McKibben's *The End of Nature* that opened his eyes to the devastating impact man has had on the planet, effects evident even in the wilderness of Wyoming. That summer, he pledged to dedicate himself to environmental preservation.

Schoenberger went on to earn dual undergraduate degrees in Spanish and human and organizational development

from Vanderbilt University and an MBA from Stanford Graduate School of Business.

His energy career began in New Jersey during the mid-2000s when he worked with a solar panel company doing residential installations.

"But I didn't think I could move the needle doing small projects. I was looking for a technology that had the potential to yield greater results," he says.

At that time, wind turbines were in their infancy, so Schoenberger learned about their operation and developed wind farms for Invenergy, now one of the largest multinational producers of wind and solar power in the United States.

Of course, the clean energy business is not without its challenges. The nation's aging transmission grid – technology that will require billions of dollars to upgrade – creates capacity issues that leave new solar providers at the back of the line when getting onto the network. And while clean technologies are emissions-free, wind and solar power generators are reliant on nature delivering their fuel. They can be less reliable than traditional power plants, although battery storage helps mitigate that difference.

Despite the obstacles, Schoenberger sees progress. DPP's solar farms are steadily bringing about the greater change he has envisioned. The company's projects are providing clean energy for rural communities and leaving farmers with land that can be cultivated again at the end of the lease when the solar panels come down. ■

It was Bill McKibben's  
T H E E N D  
O F N A T U R E  
that opened his eyes  
to the devastating  
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on the planet, effects  
evident even in the  
wilderness of Wyoming.

## Faith Examined: Russell Bloodworth releases new book that explores the meaning of God in our lives

BY JANE SCHNEIDER

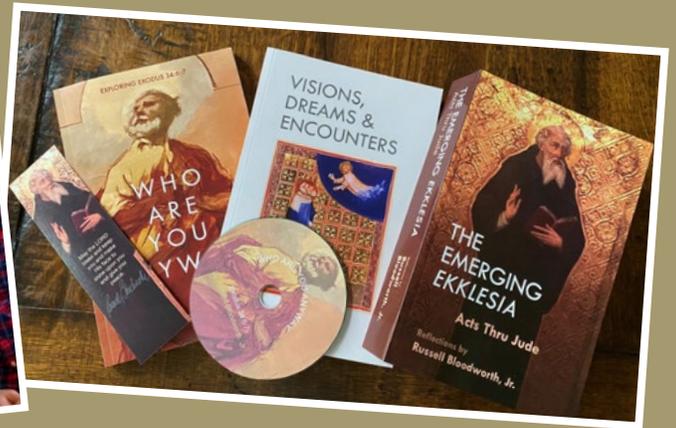
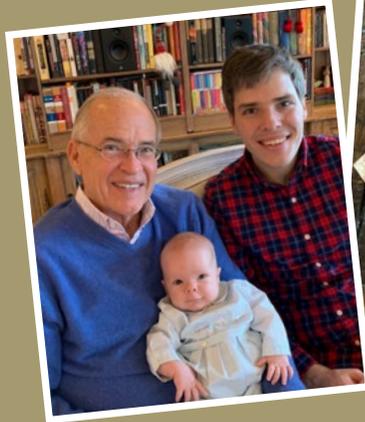
If you're familiar with **Russell "Rusty" Bloodworth, Jr. '63**, it might be from his architecture and planning work developing real estate with Boyle Investment Company where he served as executive vice president. Or perhaps it's through his leadership at Memphis University School, where he shared his professional guidance as a member of the Board of Trustees from 1990 to 2010. You might have seen some of his watercolor paintings, including his depiction of Humphreys Hall that graces MUS notecards.

But you may not know that Bloodworth is also an accomplished writer. No, he's not penning the great American novel. Rather, he's been delving into the foundation of his Christian faith and learning more about its Jewish roots while also cultivating a vibrant relationship with God.

### Searching for truth

Bloodworth was raised in a fundamental Christian setting, but "as a kid, my parents put great emphasis on not believing everything you hear in doctrine." Some of that thinking was echoed during his school days at MUS, where critical analysis was fostered by teachers like **Bill Hatchett** in English and **David Morelock** in French.

Bloodworth graduated from the University of Virginia with a degree in architecture and went on to do graduate work at Yale in environmental design. But throughout his college years, he



*Rusty Bloodworth, pictured with son Christopher and grandson Oliver, has written three books in the past four years.*

found himself questioning his faith. It was during an academic fellowship in Sweden that he encountered a book he says would ultimately change his life. As part of the fellowship, he studied the founding of new communities – including Vällingby, a suburb of Stockholm – but he used some of his free time to read more in-depth about world religions. One afternoon he purchased a copy of the New Testament at a bookstore in Stockholm and proceeded to read the slender volume on his commute home to Vällingby. While he was familiar with portions of the New Testament, he had never read it start-to-finish. He was so taken by the book's contents that he read through the night.

"That book created an internal shift in me," he says. "It rang true."

That truth centered Bloodworth, and since then he's remained involved with a small house church ministry where fellow disciples gather to study the Bible and share their faith journeys. This

longstanding fellowship has kept Rusty and Fran, his wife of 48 years, grounded in their faith and helped them raise four children, including **Russell III '01** and **Christopher '08**. They now have 12 grandchildren.

### Finding his voice

After a 50-year career, Bloodworth semi-retired from Boyle in 2016 and found himself searching for a new intellectual endeavor.

"I've always been creating books of one kind or another," he says of his interest in writing. "But it took a year to feel like there was something I really wanted to say."

The answer came in more fully exploring his faith, which ultimately led to the publication of three books starting in 2017.

Bloodworth drew inspiration for his first book from his personal journals, writing he's done over the course of his

life. *Visions, Dreams and Encounters* (2018) discusses ways in which God has been revealed to him and touched his life as well as the lives of others. His second book, *The Emerging Ekklesia: Acts Through Jude* (2019) is a weighty – 678 pages – examination of the evolution of the early Christian church, a history that’s long held fascination for him.

“It was a joy to do that book,” Bloodworth says.

His latest book, *Who Are You Anyway?* (November 2021), is much more compact but no less far-reaching. Here, Bloodworth refocuses yet again, going from macro to micro by examining a single yet vital passage of the Bible, Exodus 34:6-7. This verse gives a robust description of the nature and attributes of God. It is in Exodus that Moses encounters the Creator at Mt. Sinai and God calls on the Israelites to live out the principles spoken to Moses, which include the Ten Commandments.

It is evident that Bloodworth enjoys contemplating and writing about

ideas. Like any dedicated scholar, he is unwilling to accept concepts at face value. Rather, he digs deeper to gather and weigh information from rabbinical and Christian writers as well as early scribes. He also examines the original Hebrew text to discern the underlying meaning of each word and dedicates chapters of the book to exploring those meanings in contemporary life. This approach is intended to prompt similar reflections for the reader.

As part of the Exodus passage, readers encounter the Hebrew word *rachum*, which describes a person/God as the embodiment of deep compassion and tender mercies. The word profoundly resonates with Bloodworth, so much so that he chose it for his license plate, “because I need to frequently be reminded that I want to be compassionate toward others just like my Father in heaven is compassionate toward me,” he says.

“We’re all made in the image of the Creator and need to treat one another with kindness and compassion.”

## Looking forward

He opted to self-publish his books rather than approach publishing companies because, “self-publishing has become so easy. I didn’t want to give up control of my work.” He even mastered audio recording well enough, with assistance from son Christopher, to produce his own readings for Audible. Rusty hopes his book will find an audience among Christians and Jews. It’s available on Amazon, Kindle, and Audible. Proceeds from the sales will go to Indigenous Advance Ministries.

Rusty is collaborating with Christopher – whose children’s book, *A Girl and Her Bear*, was published in 2018 – on a collection of fictionalized family stories they are illustrating. “The grandkids love hearing these family stories,” he says. “It’s been fun to write.”

As for his time he spent contemplating God? “It was a long year,” says Rusty, “but a great year.” ■

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## Robert Davis Dispels Weight-Loss Supersized Lies

BY GAYE SWAN

**T**he dedication to *Supersized Lies* by **Robert J. Davis ’82** reads simply, “To Daniel, who’s winning the battle.”

A lifelong friend of the author, Daniel is **Dan Schneider ’82**, known for his career as an actor, writer, and producer, especially in children’s television.

“He has struggled with his weight for years, but he’s lost more than 100 pounds

and is keeping it off,” Davis says. “The dedication is my way of showing how proud I am of him.”

Schneider has been successful by losing weight his own way, using the methods that work for him, Davis explains – which ties in perfectly with the premise behind *Supersized Lies* (Everwell Books, 2021). Americans are bombarded with weight-loss advice,

diets, and plans; yet obesity continues to be a national health issue. In his book, Davis cuts through the myths, hype, and misinformation to help readers find better ways to control their weight.

An award-winning health journalist, Davis accessed thousands of studies and meticulously researched eight major topics for his book. In the first four chapters, he sheds new light on

the “villains” of weight gain (think fat and carbs), questions the effectiveness of counting calories, discusses the role of exercise, and takes on superfoods. In chapter five, he dissects the adage that *when* we eat is just as important as *what* we eat; chapter six is a thoughtful examination of “Bottled Bunk,” a.k.a. the pills and supplements that may cause more harm than good. Chapter seven looks at why our weight ideals may actually be unreal. The book ends on a positive note: In the final chapter, Davis discusses what actually works.

Throughout the book, Davis answers Myth or Truth questions about gluten, “negative” calories, snacking, aerobic exercise, probiotics, and much more. Sprinkled throughout each chapter are encouraging and relatable stories of real people who found their own path to a healthy weight. Readers also learn the science – or in some cases, pseudo-science – and history behind diet crazes, health food trends, and weight-loss strategies, as well as gain new insight on weight-related conventional wisdom. Both entertaining and enlightening, the book is written in an easy-to-understand style, with sympathy and

understanding for those experiencing weight-loss troubles. In chapter one, he tells about being an overweight child (when his mom told him to cut bread from his diet, he reluctantly ate his fast-food burgers without the bun).

“I wanted the book to have the tone of a trusted friend laying it all out,” Davis says. “No subject has more myths, half-truths, or hype surrounding it than weight loss.”

After becoming interested in nutrition in college at Princeton University, Davis earned a master’s degree in public health from Emory University and a Ph.D. in health policy from Brandeis University. As *The Healthy Skeptic* (healthyskeptic.com), he hosts a series of video segments that evaluate nutrition, fitness, and wellness claims.

His health media company, Everwell, has a similar mission, creating informational videos for healthcare settings.

“Just as with my book, I don’t tell viewers what to do,” he says. “My goal is to help them make better decisions by presenting information honestly and thoroughly.”

*Supersized Lies* is his fourth book, and Davis says he is taking a break from writing at least for now. In the meantime, he is keeping busy with book promotion

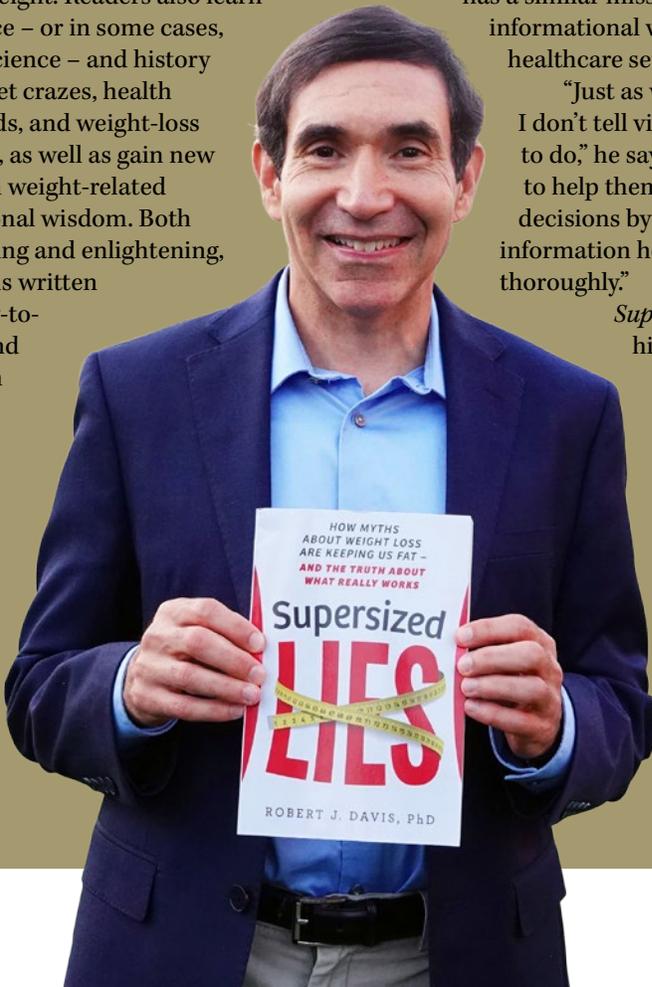
and journalistic endeavors. He sits on the board of *The Daily Memphian* as vice president, taking a role as point person for editorial matters. A former editor-in-chief of *The Owl’s Hoot*, he co-founded a fellowship in honor of the student paper’s longtime advisor, L. Edwin Eleazer III Chair of Excellence in Teaching **Norman Thompson**, with the financial support of a number of former editors. Every summer income from the Journalism Summer Fellowship Endowment enables *The Owl’s Hoot* editor to attend the Columbia Scholastic Press Association high school journalism workshop at Columbia University (held virtually during the pandemic).

“The teachers at MUS made a big difference in my life. I’m very grateful to my English teachers for teaching me to write,” Davis explains. “They made it possible for me to pursue this career, and they all are why I continue to be connected to the school.”

Davis makes his home in Los Angeles and splits his time between that city and Atlanta, the headquarters of Everwell. He is also on the board of the Center for Health Journalism at the Annenberg School of the University of Southern California.

“I help train journalists who are fellows of the program, teaching them skills to become healthy skeptics who think critically about the information they receive regarding weight loss, nutrition, fitness, tests, treatments, and other health topics.”

His role provides yet another platform through which Davis can counter “supersized lies” and promote healthful – and skeptical – living. ■





# Andy Saunders Celebrated for Lifetime of Work

**F**aculty emeritus and longtime MUS theater production and stage director **Andy Saunders** could almost be called a theater lifer. The Memphis Ostrander Awards added more support to that moniker when they awarded him the 2021 Eugart Yerian Award for Lifetime Achievement in August.

The Ostrandrs announcement heralded Saunders as “an indispensable presence in the Memphis theater community. ... Onstage, Saunders is celebrated not only for his nuanced and charismatic acting style but also for his beautiful, operatic singing voice.”

**Leigh MacQueen** hired Saunders, a grad student in 1968, to design the set for *Charley’s Aunt*, one of the school’s first productions. In 1972 after military duty, Saunders joined the faculty, over the years teaching all the Lower School science classes,

Bible, ecology, mechanical drawing, theater production, cinema, English, and cultural history, plus he helped coach ninth-grade football. Until 1977 he designed and built the sets for plays directed by **George Elder**. When Elder left, Saunders stepped into the lead role.

For nearly a decade, he directed not only on the stage but also backstage. Over his career he played a part in more than 135 productions. In 1983 he was joined by **Flip Eikner ’77**, and the two alternated directing and staging roles.

He retired from MUS in 2010, but he has kept his hand in the theater world. Other beneficiaries of Saunders’ time and talents have included the Memphis Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, Opera Memphis, Theatre Memphis, and Germantown Community Theatre. The latter two have each named him Volunteer of the

Year. And now he can add a lifetime achievement award to those honors. ■



*Above, Andy Saunders holds his 2010 board resolution, flanked by his son and wife, IT Assistant Director Jonathan Saunders and Advancement Services Manager Jean Saunders. Below, Jonathan and Andy work on an opera project, and Ken Farmer '03 poses with his mentor in the MUS theater shop.*





## Faculty Welcomes Three New Teachers



**Shelley Harrison '86** has returned to his alma mater as an instructor in English. Harrison is an experienced writer, editor, and teacher who began leading test-preparation classes in 1990 and has created curriculum materials for the LSAT, law school, and California Bar exams. He runs the Upper School English Lab and teaches the Literature and the Fantastic night class. During his time at MUS, he served on the Honor Council, was editor-in-chief of *The Owl*, played on the football team, and received the Russell Johnson Creative Writing Award. He earned a bachelor's in English from Stanford University and a J.D. from University of Virginia.

**Anna Hedgepeth** has joined the faculty as an eighth- and ninth-grade English teacher. Hedgepeth taught writing at Briarcrest Christian School from 2017-21, serving as the eighth-grade team leader. She created the Middle School Literary Magazine each year. She earned a bachelor's degree in human development and a minor in education from Cornell University, where she worked for two years as program coordinator for Upward Bound, planning and facilitating programs for 63 low-income high school students. She also served as a developmental sociology teaching assistant and a research assistant in the Early Childhood Cognition Lab. Anna earned a master's degree in education with an instructional focus in English language arts from Union University.



Instructor in French **Miriam Rosario** has joined the Classical and Modern Languages Department to teach Honors Accelerated French I and II as well as French III. Rosario brings experience teaching English, French, and Spanish nationally and internationally since 1992 in France, Florida, and Tennessee, most recently at Lausanne Collegiate School and Faith Christian Academy. She earned a bachelor's degree in international relations from Florida International University in 1994 and a master's in teaching a second language from Bennington College in 2004.

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## Three New Staff Members Announced



**Kathy Cook** has joined the Lower School as administrative assistant. From 2011-20 Cook served as a houseparent at Tennessee Baptist Children's Home - Ranch, responsible for the daily care of eight teenage boys. Most recently she was education coordinator at the ranch, supervising virtual school for the residents and providing enrichment and skill-building activities. She taught at Hutchison School from 1989-2000, serving as a second- and third-grade teacher, after-school care director, and after-school proctor. A graduate of Briarcrest Christian School, she earned a bachelor's degree and K-8 teaching certificate at the University of Memphis.

**Austin Hasenmueller** has joined the Development Office as assistant director of Annual Fund and Alumni Programs. She has worked in public relations and fundraising since 2017, and her most recent role was as alumni engagement coordinator for Leadership Memphis. She is a 2012 St. Mary's alumna, and her brother, **Buckner Loaring-Clark**, graduated from MUS in 2013. Hasenmueller is a mentor at Memphis Athletic Ministries, a member and volunteer at Island Community Church, and the social media coordinator for the Samford University Memphis Alumni Chapter. She earned her bachelor's in journalism and mass communication with a concentration in public relations from Samford in 2016.



**Kaitlan Koehler** has joined the Communications team as graphic designer. Koehler earned a Bachelor of Arts in Visual Communication from Berry College where she served as editor-in-chief of the college magazine, *Valkyrie*, from 2019-21 and as Arts and Music section editor from 2018-19. In addition, she was online editor of *The Campus Carrier* for two years, transferring newspaper content to the website and designing web pages. Accomplished in layout and design, she also has experience in reporting and writing.



# Gadbois Elected to National Math Congress, Coordinates Tennessee Math Conference

**I**nstructor in Mathematics **Steve Gadbois** has taken on statewide and national mathematics leadership roles. He is the representative-at-large for the interests of high school mathematics teachers for the Mathematical Association of America Congress (MAA), and he serves as secretary for the Tennessee Mathematics Teachers Association (TMTA).

During his three-year term with MAA lasting through June 2024, Dr. Gadbois hopes to address the topic of math doctorate students being steered toward university-level careers.

“I’ve been a tenured professor at a selective college, and I much prefer – and do a better job – teaching at a strong high school,” Gadbois says. “The entire math community would be better served if more highly trained mathematicians chose to teach, effectively, below the university level.”

The MAA, headquartered in

Washington, D.C., is the world’s largest community of mathematicians, students, and enthusiasts. Gadbois was one of 20 teachers nationwide awarded the 2019-2020 Edyth May Sliffe Award for Distinguished Mathematics Teaching in Middle School and High School by MAA. He also received the award in 2016.

In his Tennessee Mathematics Teachers Association role, he coordinated the organization’s conference at MUS October 22-23. According to Gadbois, “The TMTA fall conference was much anticipated because last year’s conference – as well as the high school math contests in both 2020 and 2021 – were canceled because of the pandemic.”

About 80 teachers from around the region participated in the conference sessions. Sophomores **Gabe Chen** and **Dannie Dong** on the violin and piano provided luncheon entertainment. ■



*Dr. Steve Gadbois*

*From left, math instructors Darin Clifft, Sabrina McCullough, Heather Davis, Elizabeth Hopper, Caroline Hollis, Shelli Henry, Nancy Gates, Steve Gadbois, and Chris Fiano at the MUS Tennessee Math Teachers Association conference.*





# Jim Russell remembered for excellence, gentility, and 'a quality of eternal reassurance'

BY ROBERT GORDON '79

**W**hen he arrived in 1965, **James D. "Jim" Russell** was fresh from a graduate teaching program at Vanderbilt University. He stepped off the train from Nashville and hailed a cab to deliver him from Downtown Memphis to his first teaching job. But the driver emphatically shook his head, saying, "Park Avenue doesn't go out that far." The young Mr. Russell insisted, and as the skeptical driver proceeded eastward into woods, fields, and undeveloped land, Mr. Russell saw what he recognized in each new class of students: "A blank canvas. So many possibilities."

Upon his retirement 48 years later (2013), he remembered feeling from the start that he and the school were a good match. "I became a teacher largely because the subject matter drove me," he said. "I've always loved literature, writing, and grammar. Teaching gave me the opportunity to make those subjects my life's work. Beyond that ... collaborating with my fellow teachers was always stimulating, and watching students gain understanding of the subject matter very rewarding. The enlightenment of students sustained me."

That enlightenment extended to a range of subjects – English, humanities, art and music appreciation, AP Art History, Shakespeare, British literature, southern renaissance, and modern literature. With English teacher **Terry Shelton**, he created and published *The Owl English Handbook*, a valued reference for students and faculty since 1985.

"I've had the ability to create my own lesson plans, design my own courses, and make some innovations along the way," he said. "It's been very satisfying



*Mr. Russell is pictured at his 2014 portrait unveiling with his son, Brad Russell '00.*

on many levels. Beyond scholarship, there's a great deal of tradition here. And I don't mean tradition just for tradition's sake. The traditions observed at MUS are for the coherence of society and offer a foundation from which students can go forward."

His lessons have resonated long past graduation.

"Mr. Russell was as generous with his time and friendship as anyone I've ever known in school, church, or workplace," said global media executive **John Marcom '75**. "I don't know how many other pairs of eyes and ears he opened to see and hear all the things that man has created, but he accelerated the evolution of my own sensibilities and tastes. Any time I go to a concert, an opera, or a museum, I silently give a little thanks for his introductions."

**Sandy Schaeffer '74**, University of Memphis Fogelman College instructor in the Department of Business Information and Technology, describes himself as a "hard-science kind of student" while at MUS, "but Mr. Russell's classes stood out as the exemplar of making literature engaging and exciting – especially for a 15-year-old boy. ... I continue to enjoy reading any and all kinds of literature and often look back on my time with Mr. Russell as a high point in my educational life. I was truly fortunate and blessed to have known him and benefited from his expertise as an educator."

Mr. Russell's influence helped make some of his students great teachers, too.

"Entering his classroom was like entering his living room, or his study," remembered English professor, author, and poet **William Ruleman '75**. "Our



## IN MEMORY

readings of Kant, Rousseau, Hegel, and other great thinkers in his humanities course have stood me in good stead, coming back again and again whenever I've drawn a blank at the blackboard while trying to explain the philosophical influences upon literary periods."

**Richard Dietrich '77, Ph.D.**, a lecturer in history at Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey, once wrote to Mr. Russell, "I feel compelled to thank you for the classes you gave – art and music appreciation,



A 1971 *The Owl* caption reads: "English and humanities were not the only subjects in which Mr. Russell excelled. He was known by many friends as a terror on the tennis court."

utopian literature, and an introduction to philosophy. They were classes that inspired me and pushed me to learn more. At an often confusing time in life, you provided a safe and sage adult perspective that was reassuring. You have made a difference, and you are remembered with both respect and affection."

His colleague **Norman Thompson** remarked during Mr. Russell's 2013 retirement ceremony that he "has represented a standard of excellence that epitomizes what MUS is all about, what all of us lucky enough to be here hope, on our best day, to exemplify."

Then-Headmaster **Ellis Haguewood** described Mr. Russell as "a gentleman of impeccable integrity, an unpretentious scholar, a proficient musician, who has offered inspiration and wisdom to hundreds upon hundreds of MUS students and who has served as a mentor to many a young faculty member like me. He is a man, in Tennyson's words, whose manner inside and outside the classroom exhibits 'high thought and amiable words and courtliness and love of truth and all that makes a man.'"

Fellow English teacher **Elizabeth Crosby** compared Mr. Russell to *The Great Gatsby* protagonist at the retirement chapel. "Each has the gift of making people around him blossom. Like [Jay] Gatsby, Mr. Russell looks at his young students – at their worried parents, at his well-intentioned colleagues – and

smiles 'one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it that you may come across four or five times in life. It faced . . . the whole external world for an instant and then concentrated on you with an irresistible prejudice in your favor. It understood you just as far as you wanted to be understood [and] believed in you as you would like to believe in yourself. It's no wonder that this school has blossomed all around him."

At Mr. Russell's 2014 portrait unveiling, his *Owl English Handbook* collaborator Terry Shelton said, "Through all his teaching, through all his classes – Humanities, Utopia and Satire, AP Art Appreciation, and all the others – Jim has passed on the books and music and art he has learned and the understanding he has developed so that what those books are and what he is will not die ... but that which he is will live through his students and colleagues and through their students and colleagues and children to the verge of time."

During Mr. Russell's tenure, the campus changed dramatically from the undeveloped tract of farmland he and the reluctant cab driver encountered decades back. But Mr. Russell's presence in the English Department was a reassuring constant. Generations of MUS men are glad that taxi driver took a risk on a young passenger who knew where he was going. And, as it turned out, who knew where he was staying.

– Liz Copeland contributed to this article.

## James Dennis Russell 1941-2021

**J**ames Dennis Russell, 79, who enlightened generations of students in English and the humanities during his 48 years at Memphis University School, died on September 23, 2021.

Born November 30, 1941, in Decatur, Illinois, Jim Russell earned his bachelor's

degree from Tulane University and his master's degree from Vanderbilt University before joining the MUS faculty in 1965. He became chairman of the English Department in 1969, a position he would hold for the next 44 years, teaching English, Shakespeare, British literature, Southern renaissance literature, modern

literature, and art appreciation, among other courses. With fellow English teacher **Terry Shelton**, he created and published *The Owl English Handbook* in 1985, a reference manual still used today.

Mr. Russell received numerous awards and honors during his tenure. He held the Sue Hightower Hyde Chair



After his 2013 retirement chapel, Mr. Russell posed with his wife, Kay, and family members, at left, Natasha and Bill Sublette and their children, William, Duncan, and Luke; and Nina Sublette

of English and received the Jean Barbee Hale Award for Outstanding Service, the John M. Nail Outstanding Teacher Award, and the school's first Distinguished Teaching Award. The Tennessee Association of Independent Schools honored Mr. Russell with its Loyalty Award and the Hubert Smothers Award for distinguished teaching and dedicated service.

He was a communicant of St. George's Episcopal Church, where he served as a member of the vestry, a member of the choir, a lay eucharistic minister, and a lector. Along with fellow parishioner Leonard Hughes,

he wrote *St. George's Episcopal Church Germantown, Tennessee, The First Twenty Years* in 1984, still an authoritative history of the church.

Mr. Russell is survived by his wife, Kay; his children, **Brad Russell '00** (Katy), Nina Sublette (Greta), John Sublette (Carina), and Bill Sublette (Natasha); his grandchildren, Emma, Katie, Brittany, Matthew, Tait, Duncan, William, and Luke; his brother-in-law, Charles Hanebuth (Carol); his cousin, Wayne Russell; and two nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, Harmon and Florence Russell, and his sister, Carol Payne. ■

## Joan Katherine Flynn Ryan 1931-2021

**J**oan Katherine Flynn Ryan, age 90, of Memphis, passed away September 13, 2021.

Mrs. Ryan worked as a full-time mother to her seven children before coming to MUS in 1978 to run the bookstore three days a week. Her duties soon expanded beyond the bookstore; and, just a year later, she became the Lower School secretary. Her efficiency and dependability were recognized by all, and, in June of 1986, Mrs. Ryan was named the school's financial secretary/controller. She then took college accounting and computer classes so she could stay up to date with technology.

She received the Jean Barbee Hale Award for Outstanding Service in 2001, given each year to a member of the MUS staff who has exhibited outstanding loyalty, responsibility, dedication, and commitment to excellence in service to the school. Her life at the school exemplified those virtues for more than three decades.

Mrs. Ryan retired in 2009, but she continued to attend MUS football games and faculty-staff luncheons.

At her retirement chapel, then-Headmaster **Ellis Hagewood** said, "Mrs. Ryan is what I would call pre-punctual (always early). She is discreet, tireless, honest, straightforward, thrifty, a trustworthy advisor, and friend. She likes to be busy, and she often works on holidays and weekends, if necessary. Energetic and efficient, she takes an old-school, no-nonsense approach to her job, though she has a wonderful wit and sense of humor.

"She was always the adult in the room. She kept me straight because I never wanted to disappoint her. I deeply appreciate her work and her moral character."

Mrs. Ryan was born on July 3, 1931, in Westbrook, Minnesota, to Herbert and Esther Flynn. She graduated from the University of Minnesota with a Bachelor of Arts in Accounting. While there she met her husband, William "Red" Terrance Ryan.



She is survived by her seven children and their spouses: Michael and Olga Ryan, Terrance and Gretchen Ryan, Allen and Patricia Krum, Shawn and Renea Ryan, William Ryan, William and Catherine Preaskorn, and Theresa Fairchild; 17 grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. Joan is also survived by her two sisters, Jerry Erickson and Dorothy Zaroni. She was predeceased by her husband and her parents. ■



# Alumni Board Honors Four Fellow Owls

BY ANN LAUGHLIN AND LIZ COPELAND

Every year the Alumni Executive Board honors alumni for their outstanding service to the community and the school. As the 2020 event was postponed by the pandemic, last year's honorees joined those from 2021 in a tented reception on Blankenship Field during Homecoming Week. AEB President **Ted Simpson '85** presided, introducing 2020 Alumnus of the Year **Steve Threlkeld '82** and Volunteer of the Year **Derek Clinin '03** and 2021 Alumnus of the Year **Henry Turley '59** and Volunteer of the Year **David Lee '12**. For more photos, see page 44.

## VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

The Volunteer of the Year Award is presented to an alumnus who serves MUS in a significant and needed way throughout the year, seeking opportunities to promote the interests of the school.



Head Coach Derek Clinin, back row, third from left, with the 2021 seventh-grade football team after their championship win in November

### Derek Clinin '03 2020 Volunteer of the Year

Widely known for his football accomplishments as an MUS student and at the University of Memphis, **Derek Clinin '03** has proven to be a dedicated Owl volunteer. Clinin, a vice president at Raymond James, began coaching Lower School football in 2011 and currently leads the seventh-grade team as head coach. At the awards reception September 23, he had to leave early to coach his young athletes in a game against Arlington (a win, 32-0). The team went on to win the seventh-grade East Shelby Middle School Football League championship November 4.

Athletics Director **Bobby Alston** remembers Clinin as a dedicated athlete: "Derek's great attribute as a player was his passion for the game. He played with relentless effort."

As a volunteer coach, Clinin shares

that same passion with his coaching staff and players. Board Chair **Jim Burnett '83**, who coached Lower School football for 25 years, has fond memories of his former assistant coach – "an obvious choice to join our staff both from his love of the kids and knowledge of the game."

Burnett recalls inviting the grandfather of one of the boys to watch practice one day. After practice the man told Burnett, "I played on an SEC championship team, and I saw more coaching today from that young man [Clinin] than I received in four years of college."

In 2013 Clinin spoke to the senior class, challenging them to stay connected to MUS as alumni and to support the Annual Fund. He has certainly led by example. In addition to coaching and mentoring, he has served on the Emerging

Leaders Executive Board and as Emerging Leaders president.

In accepting the honor, Clinin said he coaches for three reasons: love of the boys, love of the school, and love of football.

"I take great responsibility in setting a godly example for the boys I coach. I treat them and care for them like I do my three boys. ... I've found it's been a blessing for me more than they realize."

Clinin said he is grateful for the opportunity to give back to the school that helped shape him into "the man, the father, the husband, and the coach" he is today. Thanking the MUS faculty and his parents, Barbara and Ken Clinin, he added, "Last but most importantly, I thank my wife, Kristen. Without her sacrifice and willingness to allow me to do this over the last 10 years, it wouldn't be possible."



## David Lee '12 2021 Volunteer of the Year

As an MUS student, **David Lee '12** had a well-rounded experience, contributing to *The Owl* yearbook staff, the Wilson Society, Beg To Differ, and the bowling team. Looking back, it is apparent he recognized the importance of working together with his peers to achieve and to make a difference.

Fast forward a decade, and Lee is director of business development and sourcing for Crestview Collection, a home decor company. He also launched Porch View Home, a decor company that focuses on designers and high-end boutique stores.

Looking for a way to give back during a tough time for many Memphians, Lee reached out to Civic Service Organization advisors **Jonathan Large** and **Eddie Batey**. Then, with a matching donation from his parents, Crestview Collection founders Jerry and Anne Lee, he donated funds to purchase 3,600 pounds of pork roasts for a Mid-South Food Bank drive-through event hosted on campus December 23, 2020. In addition, the Lees and other company associates assisted with the distribution alongside students.



*David Lee with his mother, Anne, and sister, Christina (St. Mary's '08), at the December 21, 2021, campus food distribution. The Lees donated funds to purchase 300 turkeys for the event and brought more than two dozen associates from Crestview Collection to help.*

The Mark Twain quote young Lee chose to accompany his senior picture in *The Owl* 2012 is telling: “Years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn’t do than by the ones you did.” The Alumni Executive Board recognized that he used his resources to provide for the less fortunate in Memphis and in doing so set a powerful example for the MUS community.

In accepting the honor, Lee thanked many who worked to make the food distribution a reality, including Large and Batey, the Civic Service Organization, Alumni and Parent Programs Director **Ann Laughlin**, and others behind the scenes. He also expressed gratitude for the

education he received at 6191 Park Avenue.

“MUS teaches true ethics and builds great gentlemen,” he said.

He thanked the team at Crestview Collection,

led by Executive Vice President Bryan Williams, for their patience and guidance, and his parents “for ingraining in me at a very young age the value of culture and perspective.” Lee said he was blessed to travel around the world with his family as a young man, visiting factories and vendors. The experiences provided a window on the world and life.

“I can never imagine the strength it took to leave Taiwan and come to America and build the American dream,” he said, as he thanked his parents for their never-ending love and support.

In closing, he added, “This is such a tremendous honor. Thank you.”

## ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

The Alumnus of the Year Award is presented to an alumnus who exemplifies community leadership and personal integrity, personifying the school's guiding principle of developing well-rounded men of strong moral character.

## Steve Threlkeld '82 2020 Alumnus of the Year

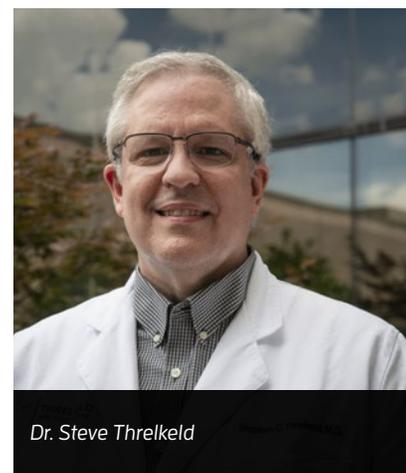
Epidemiologist **Steve Threlkeld '82** has been at the forefront in the fight against COVID-19 in the Mid-South since early 2020. His frequent media briefings for Baptist Hospital have provided clear, balanced information and advice, an antidote to the misinformation, fear, and panic that can proliferate during a time of crisis.

Threlkeld said his route to receiving the Alumnus of the Year Award was “basically to have an international calamity crash in my front yard. When you have that sort of calamity, you have to rely on a lot of people, and I certainly have, chiefly my wife, Ginger. You’ve heard the old expression ‘She handles

all the small stuff, and I handle the big stuff. ... The big stuff is what to do about the Russians.”

Threlkeld expressed his gratitude to his English teachers in attendance, **Ellis Haguewood**, **Norman Thompson**, and **Lin Askew**, and to his partners at Threlkeld Infectious Disease, his brother, **Mike Threlkeld '75**, and Imad Omer, the parent of two current MUS students and an alumnus. Finally, he called out **Robert Davis '82**.

“I learned in ninth-grade Latin to say whatever Robert Davis told you to say, and I still do that. He’s an acclaimed journalist related to health care, and it’s typical for me



*Dr. Steve Threlkeld*



Alumni Executive Board President **Ted Simpson '85** welcomed new board members at the reception: **Galloway Allbright '98, Harley Steffens '98, Alston Meeks '99, Scott Adams '02, Preston Battle '07, Edward Lake '13, Cal Edge '14, and James Sexton '14.** Alumni Executive Board members serve up to two, three-year terms.

to call and say, 'Robert, what should I say about this?'

"In all honesty, I've had the privilege and blessing to work at and under some of the best institutions and people in the world, and I have always irritated them tremendously by telling them ... the best institutional education I have ever received was from my small high school in Memphis, Tennessee. The best peers I have had are the 87 people in my high school class. Their accomplishments have been

amazing, and it is truly a privilege for me to have this award."

Threlkeld graduated magna cum laude from Rhodes College and attended medical school at the University of Alabama School of Medicine in Birmingham, from which he graduated with numerous awards for outstanding achievement. In addition to an internal medicine residency at UAB, he undertook post-graduate training at Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General

Hospital. He became board certified in infectious disease in 1997 and is a managing member of Threlkeld Infectious Disease. He is also the medical director for infectious disease with Baptist Memorial Healthcare and a media spokesperson for Baptist, and he serves as an assistant professor at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center.

For more on Steve Threlkeld, see the Summer 2021 issue of *MUS Today* here: [tinyurl.com/Threlkeld82](http://tinyurl.com/Threlkeld82)

## Henry Turley '59 2021 Alumnus of the Year

Since 1977 **Henry Turley '59** has been leading his company to undertake projects that he thought Memphis needed. But for a glimpse into what may have sparked his interest in preserving a development, refer to the March 1959 *The Owl's Hoot* article, "The Heroic Senior Class Saves School from Wrath of Fierce Forest Fire." (Turley was co-editor of the student newspaper along with **Bill Deupree '59.**)

"At first sign of smoke, the seniors rose as one, in a spontaneous burst of courage and selfless service," **Allen Morgan '60** reported, "Schas and Turley valiantly fought the fire back at a creek ... From this point on, it seemed that the spirit of the fire had been conquered."

Apparently, their efforts – coupled with a tremendous thunderstorm – extinguished the fire.

As recently featured in WKNO conversations with influential Memphians, Turley revealed that his first question for any project is, "Does the city NEED this to happen?" His motivation to redevelop Memphis into a city that residents and businesses want to call home continues to drive his success. The work of the Henry Turley Company can be seen in the neighborhoods in and around Downtown, including the South End, Harbor Town, and Uptown communities. The company is currently working with the University of Tennessee Health Science Center to reshape the Medical District with a project



Henry Turley in the window of Malco Powerhouse Cinema Grill near Downtown's Central Station in 2019. Photo by Karen Pulfer-Focht

called Orleans Station, "transforming a 10-acre site from a mix of obsolete institutional buildings and parking lots into a fully realized, urban, residential neighborhood." Another project is a collaboration with the City of Jackson to revitalize two inner-city schools and their neighborhoods.

In accepting the award, Turley told about the time the headmaster, Col. **Ross Lynn**, "hit me so hard with a paddle we ultimately became friends." Turley and others were "acting outrageously" in 10th-grade English, and when the teacher summoned Col. Lynn, he marched into the class and said, "Turley, get up." The two proceeded to the old dining hall where the headmaster began to carve a handle into a 2-by-4 while telling the sophomore what he thought of his behavior and his character. Lynn delivered "one mighty blow

... and I was only stopped by the ice cream sandwich machine." Content with what he had done, Lynn returned to his office, and Turley returned to class and, he said, acted much better.

Later in life the headmaster and the student became close personal friends. "When I felt close enough, I said, 'Col. Lynn, we all acted awful, and I still regret the way we acted, but why did you pick me?' He said, 'Turley, I wasn't sure you were guilty, but I knew you weren't innocent. ... I was aggravated because I have such high ambitions for you all. You all enjoy special privilege; therefore, you are going to exercise disproportionate influence on the way this city develops, and I want you to do it right, not wrong.'

"I always remember that," Turley said and added a simple, "Thanks."



# Brandon Arrindell Joins Board of Trustees

BY REECE NEEDHAM '22

**B**randon Arrindell '04, senior analyst and principal at Southeastern Asset Management and part-owner of the Memphis Grizzlies, has invested in the future of MUS by joining the Board of Trustees.

During his years at MUS, Arrindell not only participated in the Civic Service Club and the Government Club but also became Student Council president, the first Black MUS student to hold the office. He received the Dartmouth Club Book Award and the Randall Ash Perkins Memorial Scholarship Award (presented annually to a student “whose moral character is beyond reproach and whose school citizenship is exemplary”).

Arrindell went on to earn his bachelor’s degree in economics from Harvard College. After graduation he worked as an investment banking analyst at Morgan Stanley in New York City. In

2009 Arrindell returned to Memphis to join Southeastern Asset Management as an analyst, rising to senior analyst and principal. He serves on the board of directors at tech company Ubiquiti Inc.

In a 2019 interview with *The Daily Memphian*, Arrindell recalled sitting in an MUS computer lab in ninth grade when he discovered an NBA team was moving to Memphis: The Grizzlies. He and his friends, Arrindell said, glanced at each other in disbelief. This same astonished ninth grader, once a point guard for Second Presbyterian Church’s basketball team, invested in a slice of the Memphis Grizzlies in 2019. As a self-proclaimed “fantasy basketball nerd,” he said he felt “optimistic... [that the Grizzlies are creating] a winning culture and winning team.”

Arrindell is an alumnus and executive committee chair of BRIDGES, an organization dedicated to inspiring

diverse youth to become leaders in Memphis. He praises BRIDGES for the impact it had on his life by unifying his various, diverse worlds. He is on the board of directors of Star Academy charter school. He also supports Church Health, a faith-based healthcare organization for underserved individuals in Shelby County, and The Collective, a nonprofit that works to create career pathways and equitable access to opportunities for young adults.

He is married to Ebony M. Smith, and they have a 3-year-old daughter, Hudson.

Arrindell brings his management and leadership skills to the Board of Trustees, and he will no doubt help guide the school to a bright future. ■



# Sam Graham Retires from the Board

**S**am Graham '80 retired from the Board of Trustees in May after serving for 17 years, including seven years as chair (2013-20) and two as vice chair (2011-13).

During his tenure on the board, Graham presided over the Headmaster Search Committee and welcomed **Pete Sanders** in 2017, and he lent his wisdom and experience to many committees – Strategic Planning, Governance and Trustee Development, Admissions and Public Relations, Athletic, Development, and Drug and Alcohol. He also served as Thorn Society president from 2004-06 and as an Alumni Executive Board member from 1998-2003.

In a letter to faculty and staff before he stepped down as chair, Graham described his appreciation for his alma

mater. “My deep sense of reverential gratitude for MUS dates to the late 1960s, when I first stepped foot on campus ... as a scrawny, towheaded 7-year-old participant at summer day camp. Like so many other boys, I had no idea those hallowed grounds would be the setting of some of my most defining experiences. Most of the heroes who shaped my life are no longer on campus. However, their portraits hang in our campus Dining Hall and in Humphreys Hall foyer. Those men and women left an indelible mark with their ‘steady pressing down of the stamp upon the wax.’ Because of them, 40 years following my graduation, I continue to strive to be a better man, a greater contributor to society, and a lifelong learner with a thirst to understand all that is noble, beautiful, and true.”



Graham is CEO and co-founder of Diversified Trust, a wealth management firm based in the Southeast with over \$8 billion of client assets.

He is married to the former Margaret Stone, an alumna of St. Mary’s Episcopal School’s Class of 1980. Sam and Margaret are the parents of **Nelson Graham '08** and **Garrott Graham '12**.

For more on Graham and his seven-year tenure as board chair, see the Fall 2020 issue of *MUS Today* here: [tinyurl.com/GrahamBoardChair](https://tinyurl.com/GrahamBoardChair). ■



# William B. "Billy" Dunavant, Jr., 1932-2021

**B**illy Dunavant's obituary summed up his life eloquently: "William B. 'Billy' Dunavant, Jr., world-renowned revolutionary Memphis cotton merchant who loved his family, his God, his dogs, his business, his city and somehow happily and flawlessly intertwined them in his 88 remarkable years on earth, died on September 11, 2021."

He was also a dedicated friend and supporter of Memphis University School, serving on the Board of Trustees from 1967-82 and contributing generously to the school. (See the sidebar on next page.)

Billy – a moniker he preferred to Mr. Dunavant – built the business his father started in 1952, W.B. Dunavant & Co., into a global cotton company that would become Dunavant Enterprises. Billy took over in 1961 when he was 29, and over the years helped shape the cotton futures market. He was inducted into the Futures Industry Association's Hall of Fame in 2007. His son **Bill Dunavant '78** took

*The Dunavant family at the dedication of the Dunavant Upper School in 2002*



over as CEO in 2005, but Billy remained chairman of the board. When the cotton business was sold in 2010, Dunavant Enterprises refocused on logistics, investments, and land development.

"My dad was one of the greatest business leaders," Bill Dunavant told *The Commercial Appeal*. "And that's his history. He was involved with it to his death. He and I talked often about what we were doing with this company that my grandfather created. We continued to work in both their legacies during his lifetime and will continue to."

Beyond his broad and deep influence on Memphis commerce, Billy's contributions to his hometown included purchasing the Memphis Showboats, a U.S. Football League franchise, in the hope of getting an NFL expansion team; donating money to help the city land the headquarters of Ducks Unlimited; and developing The Racquet Club into a world-class tennis center.

For all his accomplishments, he was unpretentious and down-to-earth, "at ease and as interested in kibitzing with a security guard or a waiter or any



*Dunavant family members at the dedication of the Dunavant-Wellford Tennis Center in 1998*

hard-working average Joe as he was schmoozing with presidents of countries and CEOs." So reads his obituary, which concludes:

"Billy is survived by [his wife] Tommie, his eight children, 22 grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren.

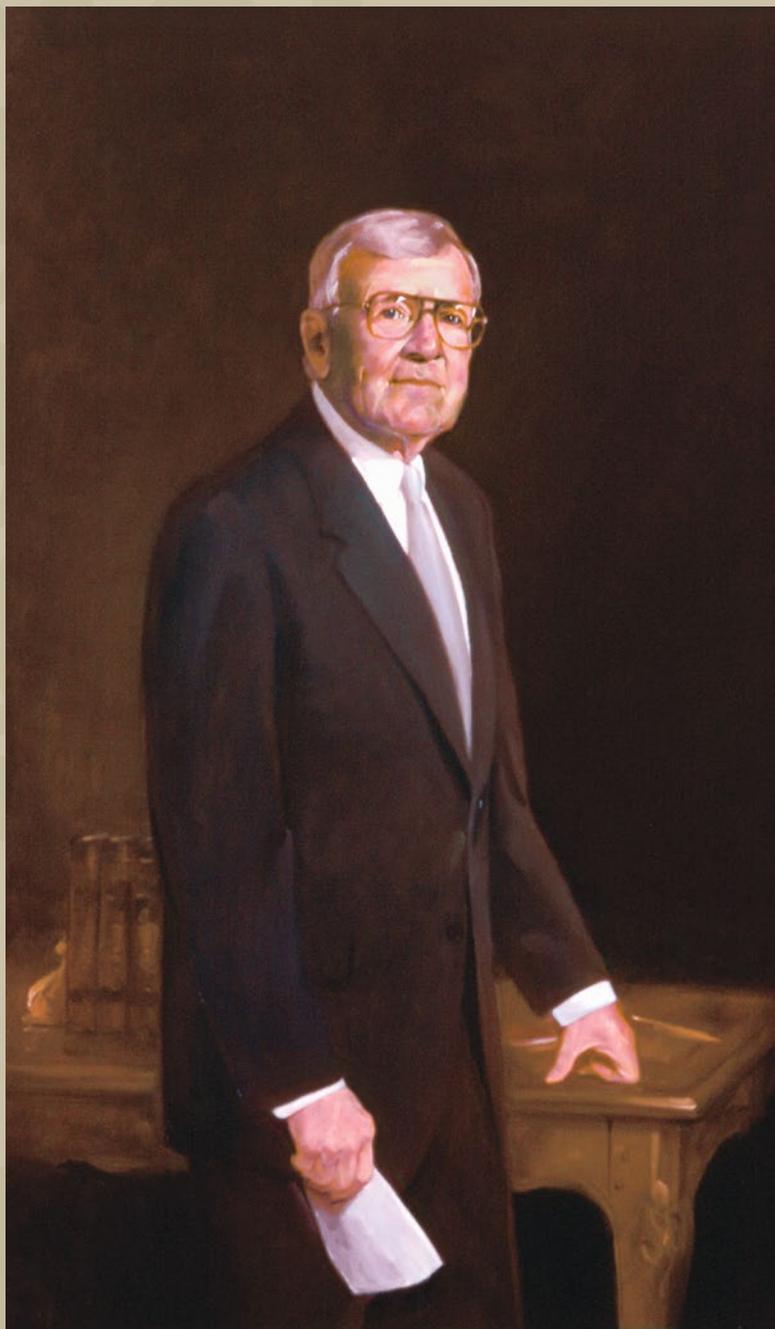
"A private service [was held] for Billy as he wished, which is a request reflecting exactly who he was.

"A big deal who didn't think he was a big deal."



## His Name is Writ Large at MUS

BY HEADMASTER EMERITUS ELLIS HAGUEWOOD



**B**illy Dunavant was a magnanimous friend of Memphis University School. For decades, he provided visionary leadership for the city of Memphis, and that vision included a belief that we must always have a school whose alumni would provide that same visionary leadership for the next generation and the next. He served as a member of the Board of Trustees from 1967-82. His financial commitment to MUS played a substantial role in helping this great school become the premier educational institution for boys in the Mid-South. I cannot imagine where we would be today without the depth and breadth of his generosity, especially his major gifts to every capital campaign that the school undertook since the early 1980s. Faculty support, bricks and mortar, academic enhancement, endowment – his extraordinary support made them all possible.

His name is writ large at MUS – on our Upper School academic building and on our Lower School lecture hall – and his influence permeates the school through the generosity and leadership of his family. One of his sons is a current trustee, and his two sons-in-law were outstanding board members for many years. All his male children and grandchildren are MUS alumni (one is a current student), and all his children are greathearted supporters of the school.

Billy took seriously that part of our mission that includes “developing young men of strong moral character, consistent with the school’s Christian tradition.” I spent a very pleasant morning one day outlining for him the various ways that MUS is consistent with our Christian tradition.

Proverbs says, “A generous man will himself be blessed.” (22:9) Surely then, Billy was one of the most blessed men on the face of the earth. ■

## An MUS Family Legacy

Billy Dunavant (MUS Board, 1967-82) did not attend MUS, but his sons did: Bill Dunavant '78 (MUS Board, 2014- ), John Dunavant '82, Buck Dunavant '90, Woodson Dunavant '97, and Forrest Dunavant '05. His grandsons have: Galloway Allbright '98, William Adams '03, Hunter Adams '06, Dobson Dunavant '13, Billy Dunavant '16, Buchanan Dunavant '18, Harry Dunavant '18, and Woodson Dunavant '27. And his daughters married alumni: Connie to Lou Adams '70 (MUS Board, 1998-2017), and Dot to Dick Fisher '72 (MUS Board, 1988-2011).

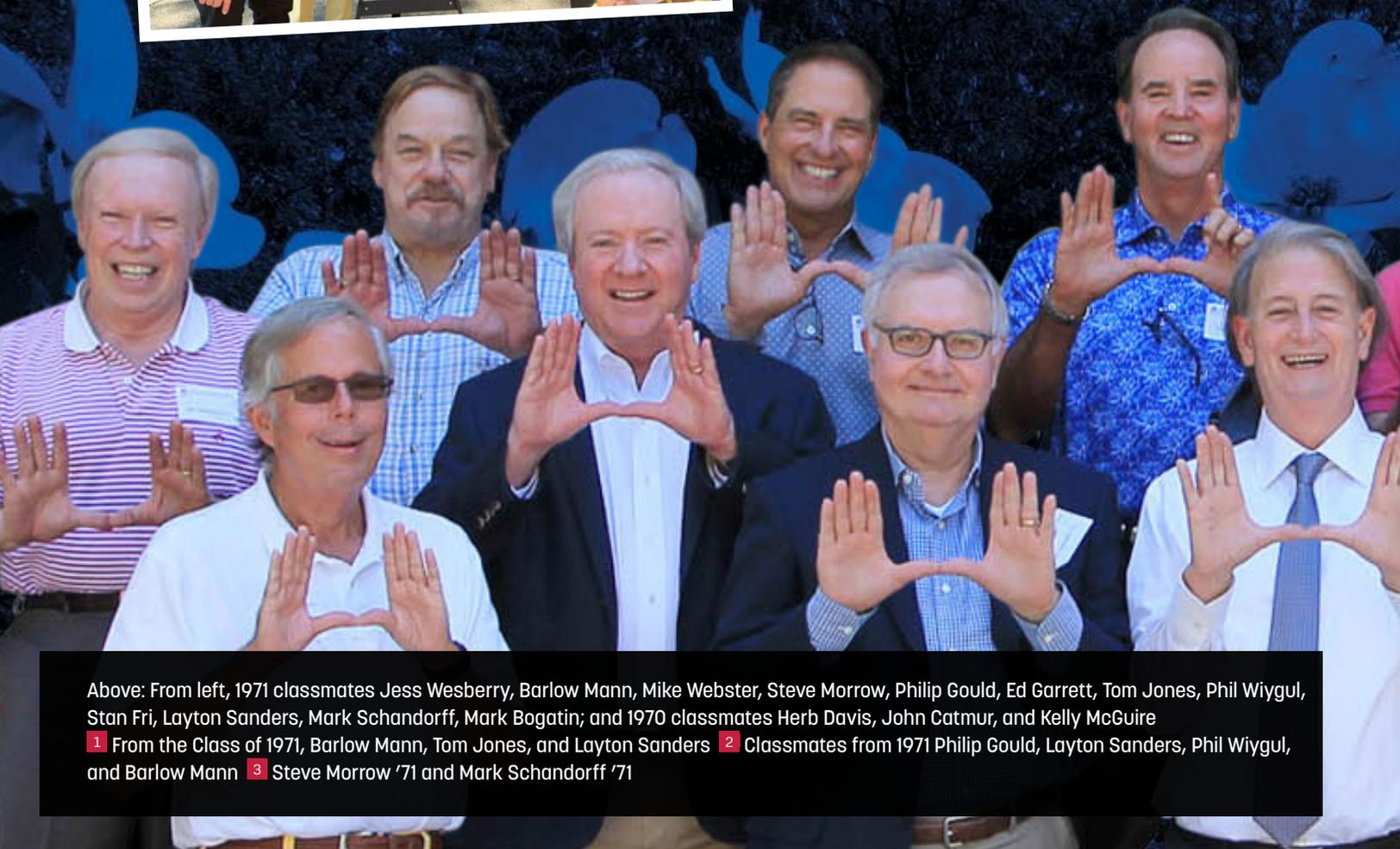


HOME  
COMING  
2021

# 50th Luncheon



The classes of 1970 and 1971 celebrated 50 years since graduation with a luncheon in Morrison Courtyard during Homecoming.

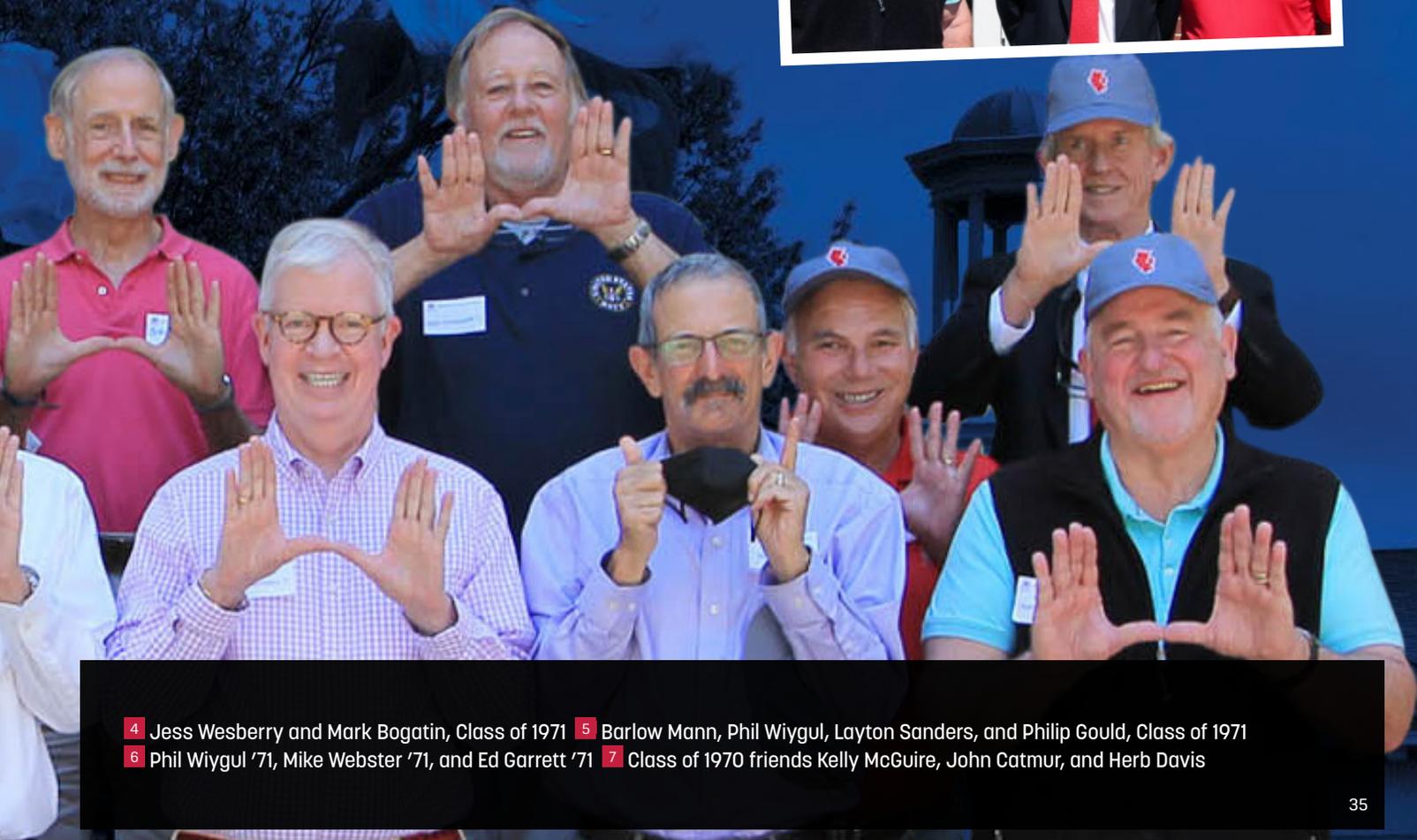


Above: From left, 1971 classmates Jess Wesberry, Barlow Mann, Mike Webster, Steve Morrow, Philip Gould, Ed Garrett, Tom Jones, Phil Wiygul, Stan Fri, Layton Sanders, Mark Schandorff, Mark Bogatin; and 1970 classmates Herb Davis, John Catmur, and Kelly McGuire

**1** From the Class of 1971, Barlow Mann, Tom Jones, and Layton Sanders **2** Classmates from 1971 Philip Gould, Layton Sanders, Phil Wiygul, and Barlow Mann **3** Steve Morrow '71 and Mark Schandorff '71



HOME  
COMING  
2021



4 Jess Wesberry and Mark Bogatin, Class of 1971 5 Barlow Mann, Phil Wiygul, Layton Sanders, and Philip Gould, Class of 1971  
6 Phil Wiygul '71, Mike Webster '71, and Ed Garrett '71 7 Class of 1970 friends Kelly McGuire, John Catmur, and Herb Davis



HOME  
COMING  
2021

# Homecoming Dinner



**1** Student Ambassadors, from left, Abdullah Elahi '23, Max Mascolino '23, Talal Siddiq '22, Jordan Infeld '22, Coleman Whitehead '22, Jacob Musicante '22, Samuel Lim '22, Matthew Mellone '22, Turner Bishop '22, Lou Zhou '23, Forest Rudd '22, Mark Hieatt '22, and Noah Emmert '22 **2** Daria and Cullen West '11, Anand Patel '11, Avery Tosi '11 and Anya Schwartz **3** John Remmers '69, Bobby Barruel '68, and Headmaster Pete Sanders **4** Amy and Andy McCarroll '86, Kevin Russell '81, Dee and Jim Burnett '83 **5** Les Nicholson '58 and Carl Olsen '60



HOME  
COMING  
2021

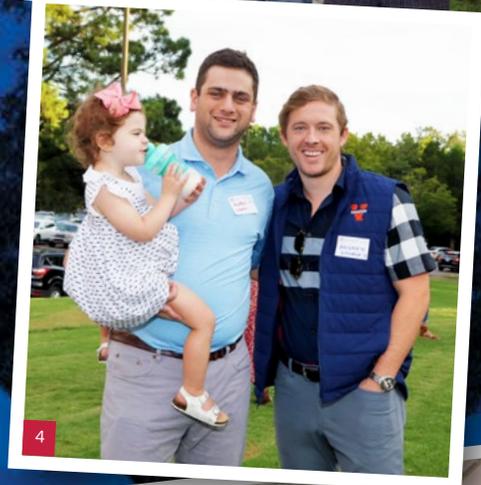
Hunter Barnes '22



1 Class of 2011 alumni Shea Gabrielleschi, Ben Roberts, Terrence Cole, Forrest Baty, John Edwards, Cullen West, Anand Patel, and Sam Cox 2 Paige and Paul Gillespie '01, Trow, Grace, and Bailey 3 Keith Killebrew '81 and Marie King 4 Sarah and Curt Cowan '80



HOME  
COMING  
2021



**1** Ray Brakebill '64, Les Nicholson '58, Carl Olsen '60, and William Gotten '60 **2** Margaret and Trip Monger '81, Rick Thornton '81, and Bud Thrasher '81 **3** Alex Creson '15 and Thomas Hayes '15 **4** Matthew Schaefer '10 with daughter, Emmalyn, and Andrew Gardella '10 **5** From the Class of 1975, Fun Fong, Dan Johnson, Bob Winfield, and Andrew Wu **6** 1971 classmates Barlow Mann, Layton Sanders, Phil Wiygul, and Mike Webster



HOME  
COMING  
2021

# Class Parties

Alumni from the classes of 1958, 1959, and 1960 gathered at the home of Kathy and Scott Ledbetter '60 in Middleton, Tennessee.



**1** From the Class of 1959, Bill Simmons, Bryan Nearn, Don Austin, Ted Bailey; and Les Nicholson '58 **2** From the Class of 1960, Gene Stansel, George Owen, Syd Butler, Phillip Patterson, Willis Willey, Sam Rembert, Scott Ledbetter, William Gotten, Ferrell Varner, Alex Wellford, C.D. Smith, Robert Dillard, and Todd Slaughter



Photos by Dee Burnett

**3** William Gotten '60 and Phillip Patterson '60 **4** Laureen and Les Nicholson '58 and Jim Burnett '83



HOME  
COMING  
2021

## Class Parties

There was double the fun as 2020 reunion gatherings – postponed last year because of COVID-19 – joined 2021 reunion parties. Alumni in class years ending in 0, 1, 5, and 6 got together to remember old times and catch up on current happenings.



# "71

The Class of 1971 gathered at the home of Donna and Robert Sharpe.



# "75

Chickasaw Country Club hosted the gathering of the Class of 1975.



# "76

Nancy and Gib Wilson welcomed the Class of 1976 to their home.



# "81

The Class of 1981 toasted its 40th anniversary with Kathy and Jeff Harris in their home.



# "85

The Class of 1985 enjoyed a party at the home of Jessica and Ted Simpson.



# "86

Loflin Yard was the setting for the Class of 1986 celebration.



HOME  
COMING  
2021



"90

The Rooftop Bar/Lounge at Hyatt Centric on Beale provided a picturesque setting for the Class of 1990.



"91

Carrie and Trevor Benitone opened their home to the Class of 1991.



"96

The Class of 1996 partied at the home of Rebekah and Rusty Shappley.



"00

Chavanne and Jay McDonald welcomed the Class of 2000 to their home.



"01

Hyatt Centric on Beale hosted the gathering for the Class of 2001.



"06

The Class of 2006 swapped stories and caught up at Grind City Brewery.



"10

Crosstown Brewery was the backdrop for the Class of 2010 reunion.



"15

The Class of 2015 headed to Railgarten for their get-together.



HOME  
COMING  
2021

# Golf Scramble

Is it about earning bragging rights? Is it about reconnecting with fellow Owls? The Homecoming Golf Scramble provides opportunities for both. We suspect winning – or at least playing well – makes reconnecting with old friends that much sweeter.

- Closest to Pin No. 5** : Mark Schandorff '71
- Closest to Pin No. 9** : Ben James '99
- Closest to Pin No. 12** : Robert Shy '81
- Longest Drive No. 17** : Win Loeb '10
- Best Class Team** : Class of 1999: Josh Winters, Wilson Baird, Ben James, David Forsythe
- First-Place Team** : Class of 1981: Bud Thrasher, David Rudolph, Kevin Russell, Rick Thornton
- Second-Place Team** : Class of 2006: Russell Nenon, Donnie Malmo, Hunter Adams, Jesse Zellner
- Third-Place Team** : Mark Schandorff '71, Robert Shy '81, Brad Conder '86, Chance Carlisle '01

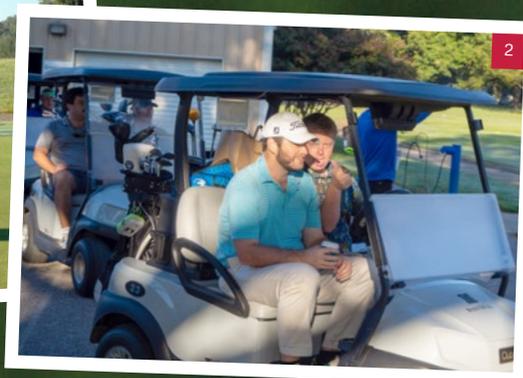


- 1** Class of 2006: Russell Nenon, Jesse Zellner, Donnie Malmo, and Hunter Adams
- 2** Class of 1981: Bud Thrasher, Robert Shy, David Rudolph, Rick Thornton, and Kevin Russell
- 3** Brad Conder '86, Chance Carlisle '01, Mark Schandorff '71, and Robert Shy '81
- 4** Class of 2010: Jake Rudolph, Peter Rainer, Win Loeb, and Tyler Efir
- 5** Class of 2001: Tread Thompson, Paul Gillespie, Michael McLaren, Bond Hopkins, and Battle Williford
- 6** Class of 1999: Josh Winters, Wilson Baird, Ben James, and David Forsythe





HOME  
COMING  
2021



**1** Peter Rainer '10 lines up a putt. **2** Tyler Efrid '10 and Win Loeb '10 head out to the course. **3** Wilson Baird '99 prepares to tee off. **4** Bud Thrasher and Kevin Russell from the Class of 1981 get started on a first-place finish. **5** Tread Thompson '01 demonstrates his backswing. **6** Tyler Efrid '10 looks to putt this one in.



HOME  
COMING  
2021

# Alumni Reception

The Alumni Executive Board celebrated honorees from two years at a tented reception on Blankenship Field. Alumni of the Year were Steve Threlkeld '82 (2020) and Henry Turley '59 (2021). Volunteers of the Year were Derek Clenin '03 (2020) and David Lee '12 (2021). Read more about how these alumni improve the Memphis community and MUS beginning on page 28.



Kristen and Derek Clenin '03



David Willson '99, Ginger and Steve Threlkeld '82, Ted Simpson '85, and Jim Burnett '83



David Lee '12 and Austin Hasenmueller



Tracey Sanders and Alumni Executive Board President Ted Simpson '85



Jessica and Andy McArtor '86, past AEB president



Henry Turley '59 with Ginny and Bryan Nearn '59



Peggy Haguewood, Carole and Norman Thompson, and Alston Meeks '99



HOME  
COMING  
2021



Robert Davis '82, Ellis Haguewood, Norman Thompson, Steve Threlkeld '82, and Lin Askew



Edward Lake '13 and Cal Edge '14



Lin Askew, Jim Burnett '83, Norman Thompson, and Robert Davis '82



Harley Steffens '98 and K.C. Horne '92



Henry Turley '59 addresses the gathering after receiving the 2021 Alumnus of the Year Award.

# Extra! Extra!

## CLASS NEWS

### '58

**Les Nicholson** and his wife, Lauren, have sold their home in Washington, D.C., and have moved to Baton Rouge, where Les was a star tennis player at LSU.

in Olive Branch, Mississippi, almost every week.

**Allan Gold** can still recite much of the prologue of *The Canterbury Tales* in Middle English dialect, thanks to **Mr. Hatchett**.

**Kent Ingram** has enjoyed trout fishing this year in Montana at Big Hole River and Ennis. After years in West Memphis, he is living in Downtown Memphis.

On the way to the reunion at **Scott Ledbetter's** home, several classmates had good visits with

**Kingsley Hooker**, who has been housebound as of late. Kingsley mentioned **Todd Slaughter**, **Ferrell Varner**, **Robert Dillard** with wife, Laura, as well as **Bryan Nearn '59**, with whom he recalled an outing in Chickasaw Gardens with **Bill Deupree '59** years ago when they attached some construction smudge pots to the rear bumper of Deupree's 1954 Plymouth Mercury.

With a number of MUS graduates on hand this fall, **Ferrell Varner** gave a couple of public lectures at Idlewild Presbyterian's conference room

that focused on the explanation of conspiracy theories by non-experts, now that everyone has access to the internet. Topics included a discussion of critical race theory and QAnon.

After losing track of him for over five years, we talked with **Didi Strong**. He and his wife, Jean Marie, have been living in Enterprise, Alabama. My previously unconfirmed recollection was that Didi's parents arranged for Madame Chiang Kai-Shek, first lady of the Republic of China, to talk and meet with students when we were at PDS in the 5th or 6th grade. **Phillip Patterson** had the same recollection. If anything like that occurred today, it would be headline news. It was something worked out by Didi's parents and approved by **Col. Lynn**. Didi is retired but was unable to come to the reunion. He would have loved the sporting clays, something Phillip enjoyed, having taught it to so many students over the years. Didi and Jean-Marie have four children (including son Ben, a home builder) and three

### '60

**Alex Wellford** reports: **Jimmy Allen** has worked over 47 years for Fastenal, enjoying it enough to plan to stay at least 50 years. He and his son Harwell spend time together at a country house



Alumni from the classes of 1958, 1959, and 1960 gathered at the home of Kathy and Scott Ledbetter in Middleton during Homecoming. See more photos on page 39.

grandchildren (including Eddie, born this past July).

## '61



*Class of 1961 friends Scott May, Hammond Cole, Henry Morgan, and John Bell*

**Scott May** reports: In the 1940s and 1950s, PDS and MUS did a marvelous job vetting their student applicants. The MUS Class of 1961 is a perfect example of their hard work. Although our class was only 35 in number, we have maintained close relationships with the schools and one another over the years. Most of us returned to the Memphis area for employment and many are considered our city leaders. When our hometown or schools call, we respond. Most of my closest friends graduated with me in 1961.

Now that we are 77-78 years of age, we are often reliving our past adventures at funerals, either of our classmates or their spouses. Such an event occurred November 12 when we celebrated the life of and our love for **Hammond Cole's** recently departed wife, Kay. They had shared 56 years of marriage, and only Alzheimer's could separate them. Kay was buried in the family plot at Elmwood

Cemetery on a beautiful fall Friday morning. Kay was a longtime member of Grace-St. Luke's Episcopal Church, and the officiant was the Rev. Laura F. Gettys who did a marvelous job. After the service, the family and guests gathered for brunch at the newly opened Memphian Hotel in Overton Square. Pictured with me are three of my oldest and closest friends: Hammond, **Henry Morgan**, and **John Bell**.

We all started together at PDS and were in the first MUS class to go 7th-12th grades. Henry, Hammond, and I were in the same carpool from the third grade to the 10th (dads drove mornings and moms afternoons). Our love for hunting, fishing, and the "great outdoors" have kept us together, as we have traveled the Western Hemisphere in pursuit of the sporting life; sometimes just two of the group but many times the entire Four Horsemen. It is noteworthy that our outdoor skills were honed at Grace-St. Luke's where we were all members of the famously successful Troop 34, all of us becoming Eagle Scouts. Hammond has moved to Atlanta to be closer to his daughter, Atlanta attorney Mindy Pillow. Don't worry, he still has the same cell number, and I know he would love to chat.

## '62

**Jerry Bradfield** reports: **Nat Ellis's** wife, Pat, has shared her musical talents with us over the years. We are pleased to

hear she is recovering well from recent surgery. They share a big number of grandchildren! I asked him why he consistently supports MUS and Millsaps, and he replied that he's proud of his alma maters, and he also likes to see the list of others who are too. Yay, Nat! We are pleased with all of our consistent supporters. The school depends every year on all of you.

As usual, **Cole Wilder** is a big "informant" for Class News, some of which I cannot print. He reminded me that we were in the same Miss Hutchison's Ballroom Dance Class (that and typing at MUS were two of the most beneficial classes I ever took!). Cole is not working as much but has taken the opportunity to lose weight, much like he did while in the Air Force stationed in Blytheville, Arkansas. He said he dropped 65 pounds back then while working for six years in the Reserves at the hospital there. He received very valuable "medic training" during that time. Cole also mentioned spending time at their family's farm near Galloway. (The first time I'd heard of Galloway was when we attended **Barney Witherington's** funeral near Mason, his family's farm location.) Cole has had both hips replaced satisfactorily. He enjoys tending to the garden at the farm – when the deer aren't hungry. He says they plant zinnias, which are apparently deer-proof.

**Pete Shearon**, who recently lost his brother **Tom Shearon '65**, has once again come to my assistance with the Phonathon

calling. I don't see how he has time since he's still working full-time and running, of course. He recently had a brief hospital stay due to a blood clot in his leg, but that doesn't seem to have slowed him down. He was hoping a big deadline at work would not prevent him and his daughter Elizabeth, who works in the Memphis Public Defender's office, from meeting his other daughter, Laura, her husband, and two girls at Disney World for Thanksgiving. I think he's a fan of The Tower of Terror, and he mentioned attending the first week of the Harry Potter exhibit at Universal back in 2010 with Elizabeth. Wow, he's still young at heart! As if that were not enough, he mentioned in passing that he had taught at the University of Memphis Law School for several years. He believes that he, **Philip Crump**, and a student from Memphis Central were the first Memphians to attend Duke.

Donna and **Dan Copp** have recently refurbished their home. Donna is an accomplished artist, and her work hangs throughout the house livening up the walls with her excellent taste of colors. I understand they

Remember to submit photos whenever possible with your Class News items!  
Email [ann.laughlin@musowls.org](mailto:ann.laughlin@musowls.org).

IN MEMORY



**Thomas Harsh Shearon '65**  
May 3, 2021



**William Ashby Smith, Jr. '69**  
December 8, 2021



**Willis Edward Ayres III '72**  
October 16, 2021



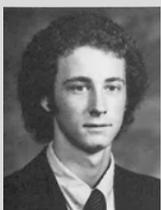
**Stewart Thomas Peters '73**  
September 5, 2021



**James Christopher Humphries '74**  
June 24, 2021



**Anthony Dobson Settles '75**  
July 19, 2021



**Edward Orgill O'Brien '77**  
November 1, 2021



**Mark David Johnson '79**  
October 30, 2020

IN MEMORY CONTINUED ON PAGE 58

are entertaining a lot. Dan is also planning some exciting additions to their home and is quite immersed in his gardens with their huge and numerous tomato plants. They also are finding time to travel, having recently returned from a cruise down the Danube.

I had a nice visit with **Jamie Hall**, who stays busy tending his impressive yard. We discussed many things of the past and future. He and his wife, Canon, have hosted many reunions in the past for both MUS and Rhodes College (where she and my wife and I attended).



**Richard Gary Ford** says he has become impassioned with high performance driving and racing his 2021 mid-engine Corvette. "I have raced circuits at the NCM Motorsports Track in Bowling Green, at Barber Motorsports in Birmingham, and at Spring Mountain Motorsports in Nevada. After Thanksgiving I raced for two days at Road Atlanta, where they just had the Petit Le Mans. In 2022 I plan to race at Sebring and Virginia International Raceway, and Daytona. These are two-day, all-day races against similarly classed sports cars like Porsche, Ferrari, BMW, Mustang, and Mercedes, as well as other Corvettes. We usually don't go over 140 mph, but the top-end speed depends on the track, your car, your experience, and your nerve. Speed has never killed anyone. Suddenly becoming stationary, that's what gets you."

'63

Rusty Bloodworth has published his third book, *Who Are You Anyway?*, a deep exploration into Exodus 34:6-7. Read more on page 19.

'66

**Stephen Crump** is retired and enjoying an extended hiatus.

'68

**Ernie James** is the latest name picked from **Terry Wilson's** Stay-In-Touch box.

Ernie writes that he and his wife, Dana, have been blessed to have made it this far COVID-free. His son and daughter have both had it with no lingering effects. Both his son-in-law and daughter-in-law have had it TWICE but are doing fine. "The pandemic reminds us of all that death and suffering are very real possibilities for each of us. And that we are indebted to those frontline caregivers who have served so well." Ernie has retired from serving as pastor after 42 years, but he has served as interim pastor to four different churches over the last four years. His five wonderful grandchildren are each unique, gifted, and full of energy and expectation. They range in age from 9 to 16. "We are experiencing voice changes, driving instruction (prayers appreciated), soccer games, etc. ... all sorts of fun. The longer I am married, the more I realize I married over my head. Dana has been a wonder to watch as a mother, college instructor, pastor's wife, Pier 1 sales star, and my sweetheart."

We are still having fun as we groan together whenever we experience the aches and pains of our high-mileage bodies. God has blessed us and my ride on what I call SPACE ROCK #3. It has been the ride of a lifetime – till Jesus takes me home.”

**Bob Caldwell** reminisced about the time he was asked to do a sound check as everyone was gathering for chapel. “Without thinking, I stepped to the microphone and announced [a profane phrase]. Well as my voice boomed out over the loudspeakers to everyone in the auditorium, I suddenly realized what I had done, and I exited stage left with much haste and started preparing to suffer the opprobrium of **Col. Lynn**. No one ever said anything. It was as if I had shouted into an empty cavern. I guess whatever teachers were in the room must have just figured they were going to let it slide or thought they must have heard it wrong or something.” Bob was never asked to do a sound check again, and he never offered!

## '70

**Ben Harrison** is still practicing law but spends a lot of his free time at his home in North Carolina.

## '71

**Buddy Best** and his wife, Debbie, came into town from Nashville for the reunion and then went on to welcome their new grandchild.

**Mark Bogatin** and his wife, Karen, came from California for the reunion weekend and visited his mom while in town.

It was great to see **Tommy Jones** at the reunion and hear about retirement from his dental practice.

**Layton Sanders** flew in from New York for the reunion and then on to France to visit Normandy and other historical sites.

**Mark Schandorff** and his wife, Patty, joined classmates for the reunion events and was on the third-place team and closest to pin No. 5 in the alumni golf tournament (see page 42) after not playing for nearly 15 years.

Many, many thanks to Donna and **Robert Sharpe** for hosting our class party in their lovely home around the corner from MUS. The gathering brought back many memories. A great time was had by all at events over the course of the weekend.

**Mike Webster** has just published a fascinating book, *Retreads: Fighter Pilot Heroes of Two World Wars*, which tells the tales of young men who enlisted in the fledgling Air Corp in WWI and then put family and professional lives on hold to come back and play a critical role in the WWII air war.

## '73

**John Bryce** recently purchased a home in Miramar, Florida.



Jimmy Ogle with Jackson Peters

**Jimmy Ogle '70** has been keeping busy with youth and college golf tournaments in five states. In September he was a scorer, marshal, and starter for the Memphis Regional Qualifier of the Notah Begay III Junior Golf National Championships held at Orgill Park Golf Course in Millington.

“When I was announcing players on the first tee, I noticed a name of a player, **Jackson Peters '25**, from Memphis. With one look at the face, I knew that he was a PETERS. My first question to him was “**Jeff, Jud, Jon, or Jason?**” Boy, did he give me a funny look!” (His father is **Jon Peters '84**).

“He got the CliffsNotes-version of the Jimmy O/Buzzards story and my appreciation for his family. Jackson and five other Owl golfers – **Clarence Chapman '23, Austin Bibb '24, Milling Chapman '25, Wils Moore '25, and Cooper Solberg '25** – represented MUS in a fine manner, on and off the fairways and greens, as we would expect no less.”

**Rob Jones** is six months into a hip replacement. He is happily retired and thankful to have survived COVID.

'74

**Chuck Day** had no idea that turning 65 and having Medicare DEMAND his enrollment would be so complicated: "I own my business, and they're the government: Nuff Said! Government 1/ Chuck Day 0!"

'75



**Fun Fong**, who dropped by Morrison Courtyard during Homecoming Week, was pleased to see students playing chess.

Fong, who was president of the MUS Chess Club back in the day, serves on the executive board of the United States Chess Federation. His day job is working as an emergency room physician in Smyrna, Georgia. Pictured, from left, are Fong, **Isaac Palmer '23**, **Alex Nail '24**, **Cort Jones '25**, and **Stanton Miller '25**.

Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Specialist **Albert Jones** has recently opened his own solo practice.

students, faculty, and staff for the following school year. This year the program explores our city's iconic musicians and their influence on world music, including the blues, jazz, gospel, and rock. Gordon spoke to the school community September 10 about his own history and his work.

'80

**Huger Foote's** photos from his Mid-South wanderings were highlighted in *Light is a Place* at David Lusk Gallery in October. See a few of his photos on pages 13 and 68.



**Harvey Kay '75**, chairman of the PURE Youth Athletics Alliance Board, and **Liam Shepherd '23**, who has volunteered with the organization, introduced PURE Executive Director Melvin Cole, center, during a chapel presentation October 22. "Melvin ... got a full-ride scholarship to play football at Bowling Green State University," Kay said. "He graduated with a [bachelor's degree]. He was a drug dealer. He's a convicted felon. And he's one of my heroes." Cole gave an eye-opening account about his journey from rough beginnings to gang life to prison to a heavenly promise to founding PURE. The nonprofit, private residential school in Memphis "empowers underprivileged school-aged males through academics, mentoring, and athletics." Cole recognized the opportunity to help youth build a better life. "Opportunities are everywhere," he told the boys in Hyde Chapel, "Who's going to step up? ... Take advantage of an opportunity of a lifetime in the lifetime of the opportunity." The Owls played the PURE football team that evening.

'76

**Cage Carruthers** has received a patent for his Medical Mattress with Bed Pan Recess (from the side), and he is working to find a manufacturer.

'81

The Class of 1981 reunion was a big success with the largest turnout to date. Thanks to everyone who planned, attended, and celebrated 40 years!

'79



**Robert Gordon's** alternative look at local music history, *It Came from Memphis*, was one of this year's selections for Owls Read, the annual program in which the MUS community reads a work selected by the headmaster and a faculty committee. The annual summer reading selection encourages discussion among

After MUS graduation, **Jeff Fuller** went on to the University of Texas in Austin. He graduated with a degree in geology, which he put to good use in the oil and gas industry. For the past 20 years or so, Jeff has been an environmental consultant. He and his wife, Anita, have two daughters who grew up in Dallas. Jeff has two hobbies, fishing and poker (interesting combo). He travels to Las Vegas once a year to gamble and play poker. When asked about an experience at MUS that resonates even today, Jeff had two good stories. The first one

# '84

“Waterman” **Bruckner Chase**, who started the Ocean Positive Foundation “to positively impact how we feel, think, and act towards our oceans and our communities through programs that protect us all,” spoke in chapel in October about swimming 28 miles in the company of jellyfish, overcoming fear, and finding your mission, asking, “How much more can you do if you’re just open to everything?” Read our story about his work on page 5 of the Winter 2021 *MUS Today* with this QR code:



was from seventh grade when Jeff and **Brian McCrary** got into a fight after school. When asked who won, Jeff exclaimed, “Well I did not lose.” The second story relates to summer reading in which the class had to read a book on Albert Einstein. This particular book on Einstein was hard even by MUS standards. Jeff apparently got the extra credit questions correct to the surprise of the English teacher. According to the English teacher, who later pulled Jeff aside, only one other classmate got these questions correct.

**Bud Thrasher, David Rudolph, Rick Thornton, and Kevin Russell** represented the Class of 1981 and won first place at the Homecoming Alumni Golf Tournament (See page 42).

# '82



**Joel Lazarov** won a 2021 Emmy Award for Outstanding Television Movie as co-executive Producer of *Dolly Parton’s Christmas on the Square*. He was nominated last year in the same category for *Dolly Parton’s Heartstrings: These Old Bones*.



**Jim Burnett '83** met up with **Tom Owen** in Big Sky, Montana, where Tom has owned Gallatin Alpine Sports since 1995.

**Barton Thrasher** has been serving as a family medicine physician since he opened his practice, The Thrasher Clinic, in Fayette County in 2006. The practice has grown from a staff of three to 17, including five nurse practitioners, and offices in Oakland and Collierville as part of Consolidated Medical Practices of Memphis. Barton is passionate about helping

people be the healthiest versions of themselves by educating them to eat better and live healthier lifestyles. He and his wife, Cristin, have three children: Adi, a sophomore in the Chancellor’s Honors Program at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where she is also on the crew team; Bo, a Blount Scholar at the University of Alabama; and Sarah, an AFS Exchange student in France for her junior year of high school.

# '83

Upon entering Sewanee, **Taylor French** won the springboard diving conference, having had no previous diving experience. Next up for Taylor is the 50-plus cliff diving championships in sunny Acapulco, Mexico.



**Chris Beard '84, Jim Beard '79, and Chip Wood '79** do some sightseeing at the Grand Coulee Dam during a recent golf trip to Washington State.



**Richard Greenwald**, president and CEO of the Soulsville Foundation, spoke in a chapel assembly in October. The foundation, made possible in part through the contributions of many MUS alumni, operates Stax Museum of American Soul Music, Stax Music Academy, and the Soulsville Charter School. Greenwald encouraged the boys to embrace the arts as a way to broaden their worlds and cultivate compassion. “Look right here at MUS and open yourself up to others. Use the arts as a way to learn about other people and cultures in Memphis and beyond. Stax provided, and still does, a vehicle through the arts to communicate emotion and feeling and experience among people. Find your vehicle.” In other news, Richard commutes

between Memphis and Philadelphia, where his wife and four children reside. Thanks to Richard for initiating a recent Zoom party for the Class of 1983.

**Trey Jordan** is celebrating 30 years of marriage to Anne. Both of Trey’s children are working in the food industry with him.

**John Kramer** lives in Menlo Park, California, where he teaches tennis as a side business. He has three sons.

**Andrew Shainberg** lives in the New York City area where his wife of 31 years, Robin, is from. He is the chief compliance officer of Global Atlantic Financial Group owned by KKR.

**Jeff Siewert** lives in Roswell, Georgia, and still enjoys playing guitar in his band. He has written several songs, too!

**Jimmy Ringel** works in real estate development in the Memphis area and has two sons who graduated from MUS,

**Brad '10 and Brian '13.** Jimmy has been married to Janice for 32 years.

**Brad Flynn** lives near MUS, and his daughter is a serious equestrian hunter-jumper. Brad has been with Wright Medical for years and is recovering from triple bypass surgery. Get well, Brad!

**Larry Lee** is in the twin cities area of Minnesota practicing internal medicine. He is very happy not being on the insurance side of medicine. Larry is also very involved in teaching self-defense techniques and has challenged **Mac McCarroll** to a cage match at the Mid-South Coliseum.

'85



From The Owl 1985, Jay Steed tackles George Cantu of Germantown on the way to a 30-6 victory.

**Andy McCarroll '86** delivered a eulogy at **Jay Steed's** celebration of life in October. After describing Jay’s exceptional abilities on the gridiron that earned him the nickname “Magic Man,” his loyalty to family and friends, and his fun-loving spirit, Andy concluded, “In heaven, when

I get to my field of dreams, Jay Steed will be there. It will be Friday night, right before kickoff. He will be wearing that mischievous grin with a twinkle in his eye, and we will get to do it all again. Rest in peace, my brother.”

'89

**Caldwell Calame** and his family are still in Charlotte; daughter, Sadie Charles, is a junior at Washington and Lee and son, Tom, is a senior in high school.



**Cameron Jehl '89** of Jehl Law Group PLLC was named to *Memphis Business Journal's* Best of the Bar list. Cameron focuses on nursing home neglect and abuse, and he is licensed in seven states. *The Journal* citation reads: “He said he chose to pursue the legal profession because of its applicability in many facets of business.” Jehl says, “I watched my father struggle as a small business owner and felt that having a law license would help me no matter what path I followed in my business career.”

**Mark Poag** is going on 26 years in Houston where he co-manages a venture capital fund. He has two children in college and one in high school.



'90

The Ole Miss Chapter of the National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame honored **Sellers Shy** with its Contribution to Amateur Football Award during the November 9 game against Texas A&M.

**William Gotten** and his family moved this year from Virginia to assume an attaché position at the U.S. Consulate General, Hong Kong and Macau.

'93

**Sandy Hooper** is still holding down the fort in Birmingham where he defends product manufacturers against personal injury claims. He's excited to hear that Ford will be building a huge new truck plant outside of Brownsville where he grew up.

Over the summer **Thomas Quinlen's** older daughter graduated from the University of Richmond, got married, and started working as a copy editor for *Coffee or Die Magazine*. His son, **William Quinlen '19**, is a junior at Mississippi State and will begin an engineering co-op with Mercedes-Benz in January. Thomas' younger daughter is a senior at St. Mary's. He wishes those of you with kids in diapers and elementary school the best of luck.

'94

**Zac Zaricor** left a tax company after five years to create meaningful and effective learning experiences for children in grades K-12 with integration of software and hardware sales. After witnessing the decline of education for our children, he decided to do something about it and joined Presentation Systems South. He is working 100% remote, and his wife of 15 years is also remote, so they have been enjoying seeing the Texas Hill Country while maintaining their work-life balance. Go, Owls!

'95

**Jeff Breunig** is now the branch operations manager at the Shelby County Federal Credit Union. He manages the branch directly across from East High School, and he mentions that people don't have to work for Shelby County to bank or invest there.

**Bryan Parker** has taken a new position as operations manager at ModerNash Furniture Supply Corporation.

'96

**Oscar Atkinson** is now the vice president of operations at Wellaco Inc.



Hoops Owls

Nine teams battled it out in the Alumni Basketball League this summer, and when the dust settled, the TAMS had emerged victorious in the B League, and the Basketball Enthusiasts had topped the C League.

Above: B League champs the TAMS from left, **Henry Nickey '21**, **Josh Baney**, **Terence Patterson**, **Ayman McGowan '21**, **Gavin Murrey '21**, **Richard Burt '99**; not pictured, **Will Thompson '95**, **Paul Gillespie '01**, **Michael McLaren '01**, **Tread Thompson '01**, **Ross Montague '08**, **Taylor Reed '09**, and **Clint Dowdle**.

Below: C League champs the Basketball Enthusiasts from left, **Hall Ballinger '13**, **Jack Beard '21**, **Hunter Adams '06**, **Zach Moreschi**, **Matt Dowty**, **Colin Donoghue '13**, **Zach Terhune**; not pictured, **Michael Schaefer '03** and **Caleb Brock '20**.



'98

**Michael Black** is the owner/operator of Rising Roll Gourmet Cafe in Memphis.



**Erick Clifford** married Blaire Wheeler October 16, and she painted the art in the background of this photo for the wedding reception.

**Hunter Humphreys** has been promoted to vice president of Real Estate Development and Legal for Dollar General.

'00

**Omar Malik** has taken a new position as a real estate closing attorney with the Law Office of John D. Smith.



**Brad Russell**, pictured with wife, Katy, and daughter, Emma, is the resort manager of the Four Seasons Resort in Lanai, Hawaii, which was voted the best in the United States by *U.S. News and*

*World Report* for 2020 and 2021. In early 2022 he will become the hotel manager at the new Four Seasons Hotel in Nashville.

**Sina Yeganeh** has taken a new position with Hudson Bay Capital Management as a portfolio manager.

'01

**Russell Bloodworth** is director of Social Media Content Strategy at Walmart in Bentonville, Arkansas. He also has a photography business – check it out with this QR code and see page 1:



'02

**Brice Bailey's** Staks Pancake Kitchen looks to the Atlanta area for the initial franchised location.

**Thomas Bledsoe** has co-founded TBB Tutoring in Memphis.

**Justin Sharpe** has taken a new role as luxury home specialist at Red Luxury Real Estate, Marketing, and Productions.

**Greg Sossaman** is CEO of Planet Wealth, a financial-tech company based in Memphis.

'03

**George Edwards** is a managing director at IOG Resources where he is responsible for the firm's origination, analysis, structuring, and execution of investments.

'05

**Charles Askew** is now director of Financial Planning and Analysis at Blue Cross NC.

**Will Hickman** has returned to Erling Jensen: The Restaurant in Memphis as chef de cuisine. "We can experiment with new flavor profiles and new methods of cooking because there's the interest there," he told Michael Donohue of *The Memphis Flyer*. "The people coming there are coming there for the food. They want to experiment with something new, something good, but they still want their meat and potatoes. And we have the best mashed potatoes in town."



**Wilson McManus** is no longer full time as a naval aviator, but he still serves as a part-time Navy reservist. He is flying with United Airlines, based out LAX.

'06



Grace and **Alex Rainer** tied the knot at Piney River Ranch in Vail, Colorado; pictured from left, **Jimbo Rainer '05**, Missy Rainer, **Jim Rainer '77**, Grace, Alex, Daisy Rainer, **Wil Rainer '13**, and **Peter Rainer '10**.

**Drew Davenport** is working at Concourse Financial Group as a manager in financial planning.

**Zack Rutland** is now an associate vice president at Colliers International.

'07

**Alexander Folk** launched Memphis-based BBF Global Logistics in June 2020 and serves as president.

**Paul Kennedy** has been promoted to vice president of Destination Management at EDRAW Collaborative Port Logistics.



John Reinhardt with his mother, Latin Instructor Marilyn Reinhardt

Air Force Maj. **John Reinhardt** is the operations officer for the 164th Logistics Readiness Squadron, 164th Airlift Wing in the Tennessee Air National Guard. He is responsible for the command and control, planning, and execution of all wing deployment operations as well as the management of all ground and air transportation, vehicle maintenance, fuels, aircraft parts, and individual protective equipment for 1,000 airmen. He spoke in chapel about his career, which included

operations deployments in Iraq and Kuwait, and he called on students to follow their passion, vote, volunteer, and burst their bubbles of comfort as they travel through life.

'08

**Michael Cross** has completed a year as a clinical instructor and chief in Internal Medicine and has started a fellowship in Cardiology at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock.

'09

**Roy Fox** has taken a new position at Pilot Company as senior analyst of Commercial Trading.

**Kimbrough Taylor** has taken a new position as director of Digital Marketing Strategy at FirstLight Home Care.



**Erim Sarinoglu '07** of the Law Offices of the Shelby County Public Defender was named to *Memphis Business Journal's* Best of the Bar list. His nominator wrote: "Erim's legal profession involves a thankless job that is integral to the function of the criminal justice system and a staple of American justice since the founding fathers wrote the Constitution. At one point during his six years of service, Erim was the third-busiest attorney in Memphis, by caseload. In a city with its fair share of troubles, the Memphis community relies on diligent public servants like Erim to safeguard the integrity of the legal system."

A perennial volunteer with the MUS Mock Trial teams, Erim attributes his law career to his experience in the program at MUS. The magazine article states that his dream of becoming a fighter pilot was foiled by poor eyesight. "Thankfully, the same week I got glasses, my school held a mock trial. I did so well I thought to myself, 'If I can't be a pilot, I suppose I'll be a lawyer.'"

In other news, Erim is a candidate for Shelby County General Sessions Criminal Court Judge, and he will be on the ballot Shelby County-wide August 4.

**MARCH MADNESS  
BUZZARD BRACKET BATTLE**



March 13 - April 4, 2022

This bracket event pits alumni, faculty, and the Class of 2022 in a March Madness battle – with a few exciting twists! Compete for a watch party, prizes, and bragging rights – all while connecting with classmates and giving to the Annual Fund.

**Follow us on Twitter  
@BuzzardBattle**

**FOR MORE INFO**  
David Willson (901) 504-3260  
or david.willson@musowls.org

Austin Hasenmueller  
(901) 260-1412 or austin.  
hasenmueller@musowls.org

# '11

**Jian Roachell** was visiting in Memphis for a few months last fall. He works in Berlin, Germany, as a data science and methodology blogger and project manager for INWT Statistics GmbH and as a Transatlantic Digital Debate fellow for the Global Policy Institute. While in Germany he earned his master's degree in China Language and Economy at The Julius-Maximilians University of Würzburg Institute of China Business and Economics.

Jian says, "My day job is being a data scientist, and in my time off, I write and do research about big data technology's relationship to nation-states like China, Germany, and the U.S. This is one of the hybrid ways I can serve both the public and private sector, helping to establish the moral compass for a human-centered AI technology ecosystem while researching geopolitical and economic risks for nation-states. I'm at the center of a data science profession but still engaging in the public policy and ethical side of the big data."

His overarching goal is to use his skills to increase international understanding. As a Chinese-American living in Europe who speaks Chinese and German, he would seem poised to make inroads in this arena. He says, "Perhaps I can build better bridges."



# '10

**Alex Perry**, vice president at Biel Partners real estate firm, is heading up the company's downtown Midland, Texas, office. He was named to *D Magazine's* Power Brokers List.

**Brad Ringel** is now a financial planning and analysis manager at Team Cymru.

**Will Taylor** received his doctorate in physics from Brown University in December.

# '11

**Terrence Cole** has started a new position as project manager of Operations at the Cancer Institute and Sickle Cell Center at Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare.

**Jake Deason** has started a new business, Southeast Power Exterior Cleaning.

**Blake Hennessy** has been promoted to regional director with the Frito-Lay division of PepsiCo.

**John Hudson** is in Dallas working for JPM Chase in the wholesale payments division.

# '12



**Victor Cole**, pictured with Assistant Headmaster **Barry Ray**, is back in Memphis after pitching with the Russian National Baseball Team for over two and a half years.

**Tunkie Saunders** is a chemical engineering manager at Redwood Materials in Reno, Nevada. According to Bloomberg, the company "is

planning a massive new factory to move \$25 billion of the battery supply chain from Asia to the U.S."

# '13

**John Brand** has taken a job as a vendor manager with IMC companies.

**Marshall Clark** has taken a new position as customer support specialist at Tend.

**Nourse Fox** is engaged to Paige Vermeer and will be moving to Austin, Texas. His next assignment while serving in the U.S. Marine Corps will be in Japan.

**Farhan Kathawala** is engaged and has been working for a year as a software engineer for Shopify.

**Peyton Klawinski** has joined Red Door Wealth Management in Memphis as a wealth advisor,

focusing on investment analysis, financial planning, and client relations. He is pursuing a Certified Financial Planner certification.

**Bryan Luttrell** is now working at Raymond James in the Fixed Income Division.



**Trey Moore** has been named to the Top 40 Under 40 Urban Elite Professionals recognizing rising Memphians and their outstanding

achievements. His citation reads: "Trey is a corporate banking analyst at First Horizon Bank with experience in underwriting and credit risk analysis. Trey is a 2018 graduate of the University of Richmond where he majored in finance and was a four-year letterman in

football. He is currently enrolled in the University of Memphis MBA program. A strong believer in giving back, Trey coaches and mentors young men at [MUS]. He is a graduate of the New Memphis Embark Program and actively seeks opportunities to engage with the Memphis community. Trey enjoys playing golf but can also be found running at Riverside Park.”

**Wil Rainer** is working at the Cahaba River Society as an environmental educator leading river clean-up trips.

## '14

After graduating in 2018 with a mechanical engineering degree from Lipscomb University, **Connor Goodwin** lived in Greenville, South Carolina, and worked at Autolite Sparkplugs and CeramTec. While in college, he interned at MLGW, Nissan/Infiniti, and Calsonic. He now lives in Huntsville, Alabama, and is an engineering assembly specialist with Toyota Mazda Manufacturing, focusing on engines and front-end suspension.



**Garret Sullivan**, software engineer at Green Hills Software in Santa Barbara, California, visited campus in August and caught up with Instructor in Math **Nancy Gates**.

**Tejvir Vaghela** has taken a new position with Medallia as a corporate development manager.

## '15

**Cole Adams** is a senior analyst for Freddie Mac Multifamily in Atlanta and is attending Georgetown University School of Continuing Studies for his master’s degree.

**Max Meyer** is now working at Thomas H. Lee Partners as a private equity associate.

## '16

**Hudson Anthony** has taken a position as paid search manager at Musicbed.

**Will Buser** has started a new position as an investment banking analyst at Stifel Financial Corp.

## '17



Belhaven running back **Bradley Foley** won numerous accolades for his time on the field, including setting a school record for most career yards rushing and most rushing touchdowns. In addition, he was nominated twice for the Conerly

### BIRTHS

Emily and **Sean Alpert '97**, a daughter, Maya Clementine, born February 12, 2021

Cheryl and **Omar Malik '00**, a son, Jack Robert, born May 4, 2021

Callie and **Reid Wesson '06**, a son, James, born August 27, 2021

Anna and **Dex Witte '06**, a daughter, Penelope "Poppy" Louise, born August 16, 2021

### MARRIAGES

**Sean Alpert '97** to Emily Stoler on November 10, 2020

**Erick Clifford '98** to Blaire Wheeler on October 16, 2021

**Tyler Fisher '04** to Taylor Brown on September 12, 2020

**Tucker Witte '09** to Holly van de Rijn on May 4, 2021

**Ted Fockler '10** to Caroline Friday on October 9, 2021

**Cullen West '11** to Daria Schwartz on April 24, 2021

**Ben Benton '12** to Alexandra Chunn on October 24, 2020

**Joe Morrison '12** to Caitlin McCallum on October 23, 2021

**Forrest Field '13** to Caitlin Spillers on May 25, 2019.

**Edward Lake '13** to Shelby Bourgeois on July 17, 2021

**Bailey Buford '14** to Liz Chiozza on November 6, 2021

**Hayden Combs '14** to Lillie Burrow on October 23, 2021

Award, presented annually to the best college football player in the state of Mississippi. He is currently working on his master’s in business leadership after earning his undergrad in business administration.

**Jacob Suppiah**, senior soccer captain at West Point, has been named the Patriot League Men’s Soccer Scholar-Athlete of the

Year. Suppiah is the eighth Cadet in program history to earn the academic distinction. According to the West Point Nov. 9 announcement, “Suppiah emerged as the team’s primary goalkeeper for the 2021 season after a breakout season as a junior. [He] has started 13 games ... for the Cadets this year, leading the team to 6 wins and a tie while between the

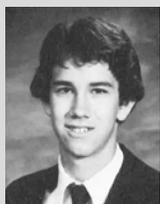
IN MEMORY



**Emory Bowen Miles '79**  
*October 2020*



**Kevin Cottrell Coleman '80**  
*April 15, 2021*



**Scott Russell Gamblin '81**  
*July 29, 2021*



**Frank Joseph Steed, Jr. '85**  
*October 10, 2021*



**Kyle Turner King '87**  
*October 11, 2021*



**Christopher Ward Kelly '92**  
*August 22, 2021*

SEE MORE IN MEMORY ON PAGE 48



posts. ... Cadet Suppiah, a member of Company F3, is an exemplary leader both on and off the soccer field. In the classroom, Suppiah excels. With a 3.964 CQPA as a space science major

and nuclear science minor, Suppiah has been on the Dean's List every semester at the Academy since his plebe year and achieved over a 4.000 TQPA in both 2020-1 and 2020-2. Additionally, Suppiah has received Patriot League Academic Honor Roll every season, as well as Academic All-Patriot League Honors in 2019. In addition to his academic pursuits, Suppiah is a leader within the Corps."

**Henry Trammell** has taken a new position as associate consultant at ClearPoint Strategy.

'18

**Alexander Goodwin** is on track to graduate from Lipscomb University in May with a data analytics degree

and a minor in marketing. He has worked closely with Richard Vining at The Edge Motor Museum since before its opening, started a small business designing and selling Vampire Weekend merchandise, delivered for Postmates during the 2020 shutdown, and interned last summer at Kythera Labs, a medical information technology company in Franklin, where he worked part-time during the fall semester.

'20

**James Smythe** contributed a story and photo on the Ferragosto Italian Festival to the *Fordham Ram* university newspaper.

'21



**Max Shackelford**, on a break from Davidson College, visited some of his teachers on campus, including **Norman Thompson**. He says he has felt well prepared for the abstract thinking required at college. "The MUS English Department makes the difference. The teachers teach us how to use the pen, and the pen sets you free. You have to start with the how, the rules of the pen. At MUS you learn the traditional rules and you learn how and when to break the rules."



While they were in Nashville for a Tennessee Association of Independent Schools conference, Math Department co-chairs **Darin Clift** and **Phillip Stalls** invited recent Owl grads in the area to join them at Taco Mama near Vanderbilt. Pictured in the front row are **JJ Johnson '19**, Stalls, **William Shepherd '20**, Clift, **Tate Bailey '18**; back row, **Jackson Dyson '20**, **Matthew Jones '21**, and **Harrison Finks '20**.

Send news to your class representative listed below or to Ann Laughlin at [ann.laughlin@musowls.org](mailto:ann.laughlin@musowls.org).

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'60 **Metcalf Crump:** metcrump@crumpfirm.com  
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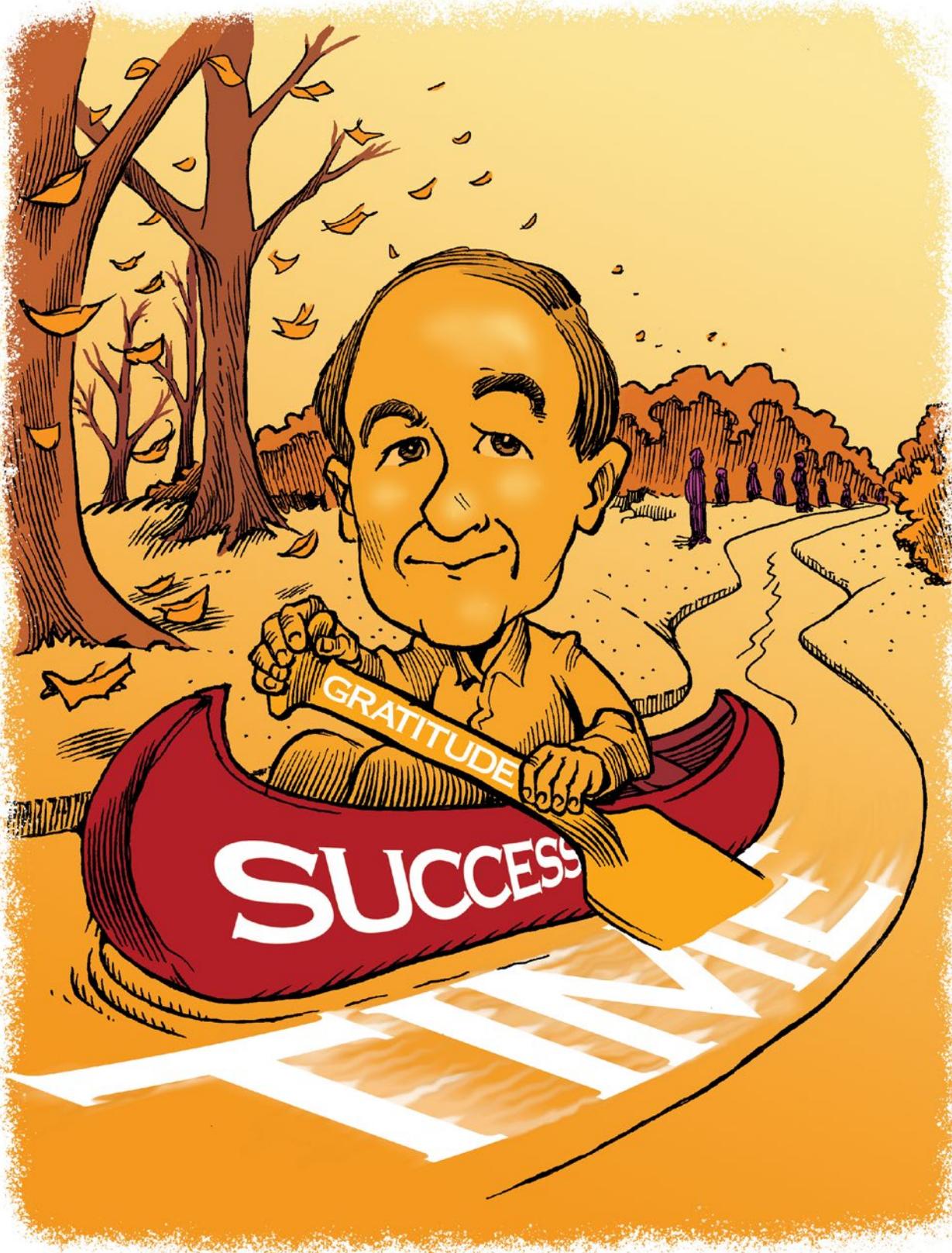


Illustration by Greg Cravens

# Reflections on Opportunities Forgone: Gratitude Felt but Not Expressed

by Norman Thompson

**A**s once again the seasons of the year have rolled around with heartbreaking inevitability, gathering speed and force, until we have arrived at that time of the year and that time of our lives when we begin to reflect on what has been and what is yet to be.

As once again we have wafted through the holiday seasons of Thanksgiving and Christmas, we are led to reflect on those things for which each of us should be thankful. As I gaze wistfully on the long procession of holiday seasons of my past, I realize how thankful I am for the myriad blessings that have serendipitously defined my life. But I am also led to reflect on the kindness, the thoughtfulness, of the people who I wish that I had thanked then and wish that I could thank now for the acts that have charted the course of my life.

And once again I find myself inspired by the spirit-buoying optimism of the holiday seasons and by the nostalgic mood evoked by the opening lyrics of a classic country song – “Back through the years I go wandering once again/Back to the seasons of my youth” – to express my belated gratitude.

I speak here not of gratitude to God, not to a loving family, not to lifelong friends, not to present teachers, not to heroes who defend our freedoms, for these we *have* thanked or still *may* thank.

No, here I speak of those whose influence on our lives we took for granted, whose acts at the time seemed infinitesimally small or insignificant, but whose influence on our lives become blindingly apparent only much later, too late for us to express to them the ineffable gratitude that wells up in our hearts. These people may have seen their acts as merely their duty or have considered them inconsequential, the acts of any decent human being. Still, I cringe to think that

those to whom I owe so much may have been hurt by my ingratitude. Amiens’ song in Shakespeare’s *As You Like It* expresses the pain inflicted by indifference to acts of kindness:

Blow, blow, thou winter wind;  
Thou art not so unkind  
As man’s ingratitude.

And I find no consolation in the words of American clergyman W.C. Bennett, who cynically wrote: “Blessed is he who expects no gratitude, for he shall not be disappointed.”

I hear the voices of inspiration and wisdom that speak to me over the expanding gulf of time and space. I yearn to speak back, to do what I had left undone, but while one can speak forward to the time to come, the veil of time is impermeable to the voice that would address those who have become one with the blowing dust of the Ages.

I hear even now the voice of Mr. Moe. His name was longer than this, but all my teammates on my junior church league baseball team called him Mr. Moe out of respect and admiration, as had a generation of little leaguers before us. I remember how in the previous year we had twice been soundly drubbed by our hated rivals, the Bears (whom we derisively called the Teddy Bears, despite the fact that they treated us as a grizzly standing in the rapids treats spawning salmon. Our games with them usually involved invocation of the mercy rule). But *this* year we were a year older; *this* year we were ahead going into the next-to-last inning. And what did Mr. Moe do? He put in all the young bench warmers, to the whining protestations of us hardened veterans of the dusty city park diamond. And what was his lame excuse? That on *this* team everyone played; that we were playing for fun and camaraderie. But we starters knew better. We were playing to *win*, to humiliate our opponents when

we had the chance. **Then** to shake hands and say, “Good game,” and pretend that we meant it. I perhaps protested loudest. Mr. Moe, with disarming kindness in his eyes, said to me, “Son, do you remember last year when we were ahead going into the last inning? Do you remember that though we lost, we had pizza afterward and joked and laughed as though the world were *not* ending? Did it matter *why* we lost?” I don’t remember how that game turned out, but I do know that it was many years later that I realized the truth of the lesson that he was trying to teach us. And I remembered *why* we had lost those games the year before. We had lost because Mr. Moe had put **me** and a couple of other bench warmers into the game.

I wish fervently that I could tell Mr. Moe that I finally came to understand the wisdom of his words and deeds. I wish that I could quote Albert Schweitzer’s words to him as an expression of my gratitude to him: “At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.”

I hear another voice from the abyss of the past, who spoke only one sentence to me that I remember. It was spoken by my junior high school typing teacher, Miss Branchwater (almost all my teachers seemed to be aging spinsters), a harpy, we freshmen thought, who ruled the typing room with an iron fist (or talon, if you like). Perhaps some of you can picture Miss Shields, the teacher in the movie *A Christmas Story*. Well, Miss Branchwater was from that era, but was otherwise unlike Miss Shields. Miss Branchwater wore shoulder-padded tweed jackets and shoes that a telephone lineman would covet. When she left the campus for the day (usually long after the last student had departed even the latest after-school

activity), she wore a felt hat with a long, pointed feather protruding from the starboard side. She looked like an aquiline Robin Hood, but always in shades of dark brown. No one would ever mistake her for one of Robin's Merry Men, though, for she was never seen to smile. One day she fixed me with her colorless raptor eyes glinting through her steel-rimmed glasses, a stare so chilling that I panicked and blurted out, "I can't do it; I give up." To pass the course, one had only to type something like an anemic forty words a minute with no more than three mistakes. And one could take the test repeatedly until one passed. I can still hear her words, her only words to me that I remember: "You **will** do it, because you **can** do it." And that class, one semester during my freshman year, was the most useful class that I ever took. I was subsequently able to type my own papers in college and graduate school, and to do so accurately and cheaply if not speedily. As I type something every day, I have reason to express my gratitude to Miss Branchwater every day. Perhaps even more important to me than the utility of the course was the lesson of perseverance that she taught me. But I never thanked her. I was too intimidated at the time, and it has been too late for a long time to do so now.

I wish that I could express my gratitude to a shadowy figure haunting the dark recesses of my memory, an adjunct professor of my undergraduate years, a man whose face and name have dissolved in the beaker of time. Nor can I hear his voice, but he speaks to me, nonetheless. He taught me much about critical thinking with only two memorable words that he wrote in the margin of one of my essays. He had assigned a critical analysis of a Shakespeare sonnet of the class's choice. I chose Sonnet 73. I consulted Perrine's *Sound and Sense* extensively. I commented on every poetic device in this book that I found pertinent to my chosen poem. I invoked every pertinent poetic term listed in the index of the book. Though he gave me a pretty good grade, he wrote only two words beside my concluding paragraph. He wrote, "So what?" I was first devastated and then angry. How dare this part-time professor make such a smug, insulting remark as the totality of his evaluation of my brilliant exegesis? But, as he had given me a good grade, I decided to ignore the

comment and endure the remainder of the course, which terminated in the grade that I wanted. It was only several years later, years during which I had done more reading and had expanded my familiarity with criticism and with Shakespeare that I realized how right he was. No matter how detailed an analysis is, if all its details and all its arguments do not coalesce to develop a coherent illumination of the central theme of the work, then that analysis is the work of a dilettante, a novice, whose best efforts will engender from the true scholar only a shrug and a dismissive "So what." I would like to thank the man who encouraged me for my effort by giving me a good grade, but who made me a better reader and writer by telling me the truth.

As I peer through the occluding mists of time at the many encouraging faces and hear inspiring voices, I see and hear one that always wrenches from me a rueful sigh as I think of my nonchalance at the life-altering service that he rendered me. I took what he did for me for granted at the time, and many years had to flow by until I realized the magnitude of what he had done for me without the slightest obligation on his part to have done so. This man, I shall call him Mr. Reynolds, was the principal of a public middle school, who had come to work one summer at the commercial establishment where I was employed. He was trying to pick up a little extra cash and intended to remain for the summer only. We became casual friends as we had common interests in things academic. Our interests were unlike those of our co-workers or our customers. One day as we lunched together, he asked me why I was involved in a business so alien to my interests. I had no answer other than to say, "Circumstance and inertia." As we drove away from the restaurant in his car, he said, "I would like for you to meet someone." He drove to a place that I had never before seen. We entered, and he asked to speak to the head of the establishment. He introduced me to Col. **Ross Lynn**, headmaster of Memphis University School, telling Col. Lynn that I would be a good fit for any opening that he may have in the English Department. As it fortuitously for me turned out, there *was* an opening, and as the platitude goes, "the rest is history." As we drove away, I said to

Mr. Reynolds that if I got the job, it would be because of his strong endorsement of me to his friend Col. Lynn and his knowledge of an opening on the faculty. With a sheepish grin and a glint in his eye, he turned to me and said, "I met Col. Lynn for the first time today, and I have never been on that campus before."

I never saw Mr. Reynolds again after that summer, which came to an end a couple of weeks later. So, half a century later, I look back on that summer afternoon and the brief friendship formed by a chance encounter, and see with clarity that my life, my career, was determined by someone who owed me nothing but paid me so handsomely.

Reflections such as these found expression in the conclusion of a chapel address that I delivered many years ago and seem appropriate here:

And so, if I may presume to give you young people some unsolicited advice, I would remind you that time is a swiftly flowing river; its swiftness seldom allows us to paddle upstream against its overwhelming current, to return to a place that we have passed, a place where we may have been more thankful to those who had helped us become what we are. I would submit to you that in this season of Thanksgiving the time to express gratitude to others is **now**. G.K. Chesterton reminds us, "When it comes to life, the critical thing is whether you take things for granted or take them with gratitude."

"No one who achieves success does so without acknowledging the help of others. The wise and confident acknowledge this help with gratitude." So wrote Alfred North Whitehead. And remember with the poet John Greenleaf Whittier,

For all sad words of tongue or pen,  
The saddest are these: "It might have been."

So, take it from me, if you care to, expressing your gratitude **now** will save you a lifetime of recrimination. Happy New Year, everybody.

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*Norman Thompson has been an MUS instructor in English since 1972, and he holds the L. Edwin Eleazer III Chair of Excellence in Teaching.*





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Internationally known photographer **Huger Foote '80** returned to Memphis and, of course, brought along his camera, capturing striking images from around the Mid-South. His work, including this untitled study of color, light, and texture, was featured in the October exhibit *Light is a Place* at David Lusk Gallery. See more images on page 13.

Parents Only: If this issue is addressed to your son who no longer maintains his permanent address at your home, please notify the MUS Development Office (901-260-1350) of the new mailing address. Because college addresses change so frequently, we are unable to use them for general mailing.



*Clay Smythe '85 donated this campus owl bench in honor of Sue Hightower Hyde Chair of English Jim Russell upon his retirement in 2013. Mr. Russell passed away in September, but his legacy lives on in the generations of boys he enlightened from 1965-2013. Read about our Titan of English and his incomparable contributions to MUS on page 25.*

