

1856

MARS HILL

THE MAGAZINE OF MARS HILL UNIVERSITY | FALL 2022



RECLAIMING MHU'S
CHERISHED SPACES

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Cover photo: This fall, MHU held Opening Convocation in Anderson Amphitheatre, one of Mars Hill's cherished spaces. Right: The President's office is temporarily in Marshbanks Hall, as Blackwell is transformed into the Campus Center.





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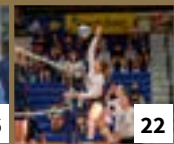
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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



As we send this issue to the printer, we've just concluded a tremendous homecoming weekend. Students are heading out for fall break and faculty are calculating mid-term grades. The campus is painted by nature in spectacular fall colors. We are celebrating and continuing to improve as we made a huge gain (10 places!) in the US News and World Report Best Colleges rankings. It's a great time to be a Mars Hill Mountain Lion.

It was wonderful to see so many of you here for homecoming, and if you weren't able to make it this year, I hope you'll find your way back to the Hill in the years to come. From beautiful choral concerts to exciting soccer matches to swim meets to tailgating—and to a big win in the homecoming football game—having our campus filled with so much energy was inspiring.

I hope as you look through the magazine, you, too, will feel inspired—inspired to connect with your alma mater and to the great work our students, staff, faculty, and your fellow alumni are doing. We also hope you feel inspired to support Mars Hill as we move forward with plans for our new campus center.

The work that our faculty are doing to keep students engaged in the classroom is evident throughout these pages. When I first started at Mars Hill, I dreamed of seeing our faculty and staff further develop into leaders on campus and led a cohort of faculty and staff through leadership training. One of the members of that first initiative, Dr. Chris Cain, was able to take an idea he had, research it, visit other schools to see best practices, and implement it at Mars Hill. Now we have a thriving center for teaching and learning that is helping raise the bar across our entire campus and getting regional recognition. In fact, Chris has just been selected to co-direct the Teaching & Learning track at the Appalachian College Association's 2023 Teaching and Leadership Institute.

Among these stories of scholarship winners, performing arts awards, athletic successes, and well-deserved honors are more reminders of the footsteps of all those who went before us. We see the spaces that were special and cherished. As we reclaim those spaces and create new ones, and see them occupied with new life, we are reminded of all the contributions woven into the fabric of Mars Hill across the generations.

Thank you for all of your support. I appreciate all that our wonderful alumni community does for us, and especially your prayers.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tony Floyd".

Tony Floyd, J.D.
President

RECLAIMING MARS HILL'S CHERISHED SPACES

Marshbanks Hall

Marshbanks Hall—then named Moore Hall—was once the central administrative building of Mars Hill College. The building has not held the president's office since 1978, when President Fred Bentley moved to the newly-completed Blackwell Hall.

During the summer of 2022, that changed, as Marshbanks became home again to the president's office, as well as the registrar's office, the financial aid office, and the business office. All these administrative offices moved to newly-renovated spaces in Marshbanks to make way for the major renovations that will transform Blackwell into MHU's new Campus Center. With its iconic cupola, enormous windows, and high ceilings, Marshbanks is a stately reminder of MHU's connection to the past, and its determination to continue serving students into the future.

Once the Campus Center is complete, several of the administrative offices— including the president's office—will move into the new center. Other offices, including the registrar's office, will remain in Marshbanks.

Clockwise from the top: The President's Conference Room, recently-retired Registrar Marie Nicholson, and the Financial Aid Office in their new locations in Marshbanks. INSIDE COVER: President Tony Floyd has taken up residence in his temporary office, awaiting the renovation of Blackwell Hall into the MHU Campus Center.



The Loft

The Loft, a student gathering space in what was once McConnell Gym, is experiencing a resurrection, of sorts.

MHU alumni from the 1980s through the early 2010s may remember The Loft as the site of dances, events, and even concerts. The space was closed in the early teens due to maintenance issues, but the Student Life Office, led by Vice President Dave Rozeboom, hopes to bring The Loft to life again.

“Back in the day, students had The Loft space to informally gather and build connections. With the coming addition of the new Campus Center, The Loft provides a current opportunity for social gathering and centralized programming that students currently

do not have, and it will also support the efforts of the new Campus Center. Many people helped realize my vision for that space, and there are many more pieces yet to come to enhance it even further.”

Right now, the space has a snack area and a dance floor as well as ping-pong, pool, and foosball tables. Several students enjoyed a recent “soft opening” of the space last month, but more improvements are needed before The Loft is open on a regular basis. Future plans include TV screens and an improved sound system.



Right: Students enjoy a recent “soft opening” of The Loft.

THE CENTER FOR ENGAGED TEACHING AND LEARNING

Supporting Faculty, Supporting Each Other

*by Teresa Buckner
Director of Publications*

Universities routinely hire people with terminal degrees for the role of professor because such an education guarantees that the professor, metaphorically speaking, has taken a deep-dive into the ocean of knowledge on a particular topic. But the job of professor involves more than knowing.

If universities like Mars Hill fulfill their missions, professors must also be experts at conveying that knowledge to the students in their courses.

The Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning (CETL), began in 2020 on the MHU campus, exists for the purpose of helping to “foster excellence in teaching and learning” and to “support quality and innovative instruction” at Mars Hill University. Through the center, MHU professors support each other in the constant pursuit of better and more impactful teaching.

Chris Cain, professor of education and director of the CETL, said that the work of the center is a group effort, led by the CETL board. That board consists of Cain; Marty Gilbert, associate professor of computer science; Kelly Spencer, associate professor of psychology and art therapy; Phyllis Smith, professor of history; Kari Hunt, associate professor of health, human performance, and recreation; Nicole Soper Gorden, assistant professor of biology; and Wendy Dover, instruction librarian.

“The center and our board are here to help faculty as we support each other in any way possible to meet the learning needs of our students.”

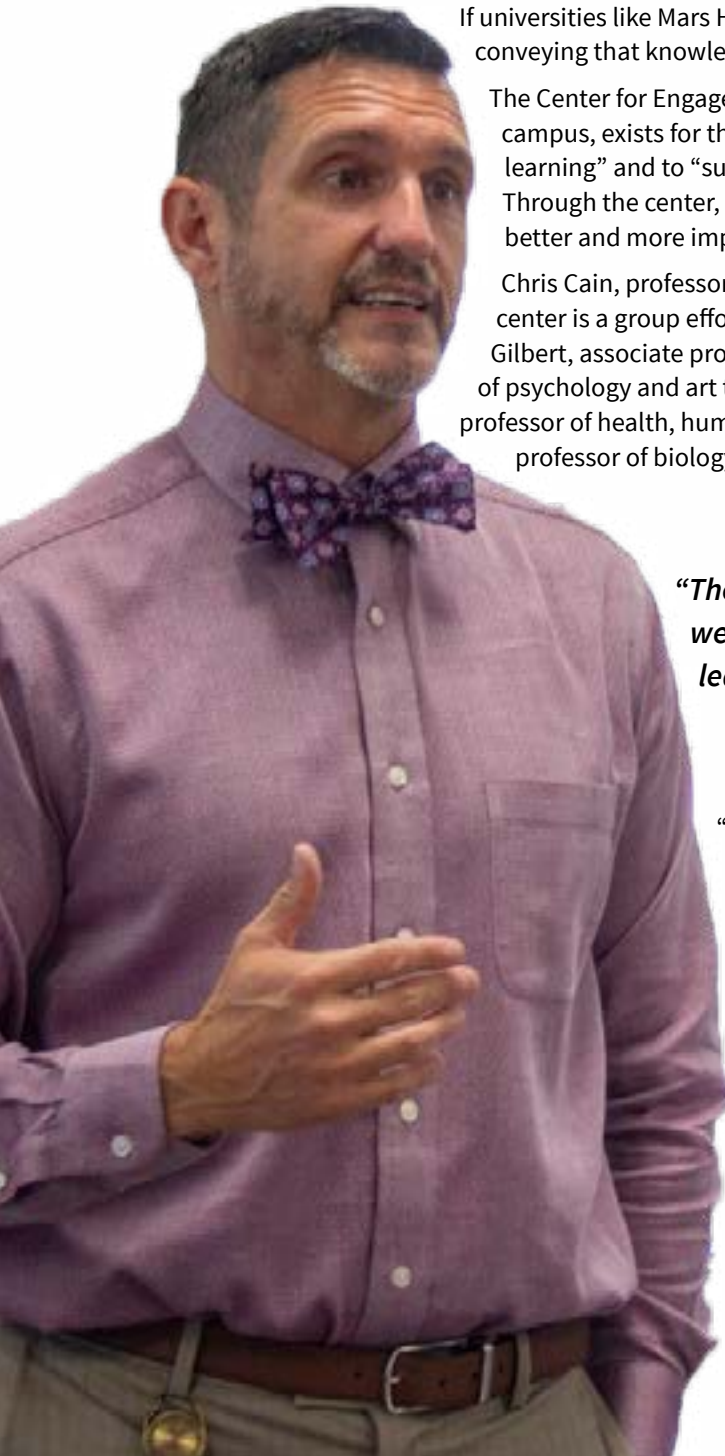
—Chris Cain, Director, CETL

“We’re not here to help with content. Our faculty know their content,” said Cain. “The whole point of the center is to help people who are experts in content get that content to the students. The center and our board are here to help faculty as we support each other in any way possible to meet the learning needs of our students.”

How people learn has always been a passion for Cain, he said. So, when, in 2018, President Tony Floyd put together a Leadership Cohort to examine the best programs in universities in the country, Cain jumped at the chance to be part of it.

“One of benefits of being a part of this cohort was that we got to explore whatever we wanted in higher ed. I had always had a passion about teaching, especially in higher ed, and so I started

At left: Chris Cain



looking at other universities that had centers in place to support their professors,” Cain said.

In particular, Cain found centers for teaching that were worth emulating at Elon University and Western Carolina University. As the Leadership Cohort project ended, Cain made a presentation to the faculty and the administration about those centers and how they aim to serve faculty and ultimately, students.

According to President Floyd, Cain’s interest was consistent with a desire among faculty members for a center for teaching and learning, as expressed to him in the early days of his presidency. “I also knew that the world is rapidly changing and young people are really changing before our eyes in response. Having a center for teaching and learning at MHU, I knew, would be very healthy as we all seek to keep up with those changes and serve this new generation,” he said.

A few months after Cain’s presentation to the faculty, Floyd approached Cain with the idea of making his presentation a reality on the campus of Mars Hill University. The CETL was established in January of 2020, and almost immediately faced a monumental challenge of teaching adaptation, when the COVID-19 pandemic began in March.

In response to the pandemic, the campus went entirely online for the next several months. Many MHU faculty had to upend a lot of what they knew about teaching in person and very quickly adapt their courses to an online format. Luckily, the CETL provided a forum for professors to share ideas and methods.

The CETL also sponsors MHU ACE (Adaptability, Connection, and Equality) training on the campus, facilitated by Kelly Spencer. The training was developed by Plymouth State University in New Hampshire in response to the specific needs of teaching during the pandemic. But according to Spencer, the skills taught by the training are more far-reaching than the current moment.

“Adaptability means really looking at being able to adapt to the different learning styles and needs of our students. Not only that, but the training helps us look at how much we’ve had to adapt to different ways to teach. This training is actually promoting a sense of flexibility as professors, rather than saying, ‘this is how you have to do it,’” she said.

As the name implies, the training also emphasizes connection in the classroom between professor and students, and between the students themselves. Equity, Spencer said, is the concept of teaching all students effectively, regardless of their different identities, experiences, and abilities.

Another major program sponsored by CETL on the MHU campus is an expanded mentoring program for new faculty. The program was coordinated last year by Phyllis Smith and this year by Kari Hunt.

“In the past, we have had a mentoring program for new faculty during just the first year of employment,” Smith said. “But getting to really know a place and how it works can take more time than one year. So, we designed a program for the entire pre-tenure period, which is the first five years of employment.”

During that time, an experienced faculty member is paired with a new faculty member and the two meet regularly to talk about issues and questions the new faculty member may have. Additionally, the CETL provides specific professional development for those pre-tenure faculty.

“It is important to welcome and nurture new faculty,” Smith said. “Providing them with a mentor that they can regularly meet with as well as specific programming allows the new faculty member to better understand MHU, teaching excellence, and the institutional climate. The benefits include making the new faculty member to feel comfortable, supported, and valued.”

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Maria Moreno (right), professor of French, is a mentor through CETL. She meets regularly with Bridget Morton, assistant professor of education.



MARS HILL GRADUATES 168 AND AWARDS HONORARY DOCTORATE TO ORALENE SIMMONS

*By Mike Thornhill
Director of Communications*

Mars Hill University conferred 168 degrees during its spring commencement ceremony on May 21, 2022. In addition to the bachelor's and master's degrees awarded, the university also presented an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree to Oralene Anderson Graves Simmons, who broke the color barrier at Mars Hill in the early 1960s.

Student speakers were Joshua Hager of Statesville, North Carolina, a music education major who was student body president for the 2021-22 academic year; and Shequita Haley-Ross of Charlotte, North Carolina, a business management major in the Adult and Graduate Studies program. Music education major Amy Vang of Morganton, North Carolina, sang a solo.

The university presented the diploma of Daniel Hudgins to his parents. Hudgins was a nursing major who died from cancer during his senior year.

Oralene Anderson Graves Simmons is a Mars Hill native who has become a well-known figure in the Asheville area for her decades of work in the community and in the civil rights arena. Among many





other contributions, she founded the Martin Luther King Jr. Prayer Breakfast in Asheville; was executive director of the YMI Cultural Center; and served as the cultural arts supervisor for the City of Asheville. Simmons, who attended Mars Hill from 1961-1963, was the first African American student to enroll at the institution. Board of trustees chairman Mike Kelly, a 1982 Mars Hill graduate and the university's first African American to chair the trustee board, participated in the hooding ceremony.

Keynote speaker for the commencement ceremony was Preston Blakely, mayor of Fletcher, North Carolina, and grandson of Simmons. His message encouraged the graduates to be the leaders of today and tomorrow. "It is the feeling of excitement, anxiousness, and eagerness that I experienced when I was elected," he said. "You take all those feelings, you build courage, and use that courage, and you take that leap of faith. And after you make that leap of faith, you make a difference. And when you make a difference, you become a leader."

Of the 168 graduates, 152 received bachelor's degrees in either arts, fine arts, nursing, science, or social work. The most popular undergraduate majors were business administration, nursing, and social work. The 16 graduate students received either the Master of Arts in Criminal Justice or the Master of Management.

Photos: Upper left: Preston Blakely and Oralene Simmons pose after the ceremony. Left, clockwise from the top: Scott Hudgins and Mary Fossett accept the diploma for their son Daniel, who passed away during his senior year; Members of the Black Student Association pose after graduation ceremonies; Amy Vang sings a solo; Board Chair Mike Kelly and Provost Tracy Parkinson place the doctorate hood on Oralene Simmons; Josh Hager, student body president and student speaker, receives his diploma. Directly above: Amber Vernon receives her diploma.

CETL, continued...

In addition to these programs the CETL has organized book studies; ongoing professional development sessions; and several breakfasts (with the help of Lucia Carter, professor of history) on topics such as supporting first-year students and first-generation students, and working with coaches and athletes. The center has also spearheaded workshops on making use of free, "Open Educational Resources" (OER) to expand teaching materials and their affordability. (The OER training created on the campus by Cain and Director of Library Services Kevin Mulhall has been adapted by the entire Appalachian College Association for the fall of 2022.)

The center has also established observational tools, so that faculty may have other faculty observe their classes and engage in conversation around the same ideas of "best classroom practices" and language.

According to Floyd, the center has met and exceeded all his expectations. "I am amazed by the offerings, the energy, and the work that is being done," he said. "I receive great feedback from faculty who have used CETL and it is obvious that it is meeting a great need on campus."

Floyd lays a lot of the credit for the center's success on Cain, and his energy and vision. "We could not have selected a more dedicated person for the task of building a vibrant center," he said.

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO SUPPORT THE TOGETHER WE RISE CAMPAIGN?

MHU Alumni Respond



"Students are at the core of what makes Mars Hill University such a remarkable place. I am proud to support the Campus Center campaign, which will elevate the student experience for many years to come."

Jeff Miles '01
Head of School
Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School

"I chose to support the Together We Rise campaign because I wanted to give substantially to the place that has given me so much. I cannot imagine my life without the experiences that Mars Hill provided me and this new building will create life changing experiences for generations of future students."

Austin Lee '03
Senior Client Strategist, BNY Mellon



"I am incredibly appreciative of Mars Hill University and the path it set me on as a young man. I have decided I'll do what I can with my time and treasure to promote and support the work of this great institution!"

Julian Cuthbertson '08
Vice President, Project Management
Bank of America



"Mars Hill has been my community for many years—first as a student and now as a faculty member in my 27th year of teaching. Having areas for students, faculty, staff, and alumni to gather is vital to building our community. This new student center will offer a welcoming space for all of us. Our students are the best! Thank you for contributing to this wonderful project."

Beth Vogler, Ph.D. '81
MHU Professor of Social Work



"I support the Together We Rise campaign because I want today's students and future students to be drawn to this place to obtain the same high-quality, Christian education I received. I want those students, the faculty, staff, and administration to have a lovely gathering space to work, play, exchange ideas, support one another, and obtain nourishment for the mind, body, and spirit. I believe the campus center will serve current and prospective students well."

Kellye Ratcliff '86
2022 Alumna of the Year
Business Owner
Michael's Janitorial and Floor Service

"Contributing to the Together We Rise campaign is an honor and a joyful experience. That we have the opportunity to be a part of helping enhance the lives of future MHU students for generations to come is exciting and gratifying. I encourage others to join the excitement!"

Mark Cabaniss, '82
President and CEO of
Jubilate Music Group



Learn more about the Together We Rise campaign, and the MHU Campus Center at www.mhu.edu/together-we-rise.

USING VIRTUAL ESCAPE ROOMS TO TEACH MATHEMATICS

In this issue's "Faculty Focus," Kerri Jamerson, instructor of mathematics, and Laura Steil, associate professor of mathematics, discuss their collaboration with colleagues through the Mathematical Association of America (MAA). The group collaborated on both a published article, "Escape from the MAA Storage Room" in Math Horizons magazine in July 2021, and a blog post, "Creating Virtual Escape Rooms," on the organization's Math Values blog in February 2022.

Jamerson and Steil's collaborators on the article were: Julie Barnes, Western Carolina University; Shih-Wei Chao, University of North Georgia; Rachel Epstein, Georgia College; Wei-Kai Lai, University of South Carolina; and Allie Ray, Birmingham Southern College.

*by Kerri Jamerson, Instructor of Mathematics and
Laura Steil, Associate Professor of Mathematics*



Kerri Jamerson and Laura Steil

Our involvement with escape rooms for mathematics started several years ago with in-person treasure hunts. We joined a team, led by Julie Barnes of Western Carolina University, that put together treasure hunts for students attending the Southeastern Section meetings of the Mathematical Association of America (MAA).

Our team is large (seven members collaborated for the blog and article explaining our work). This is a strength of the work. Everyone has their favorite part incorporating their expertise, and it all blends together nicely to create a good experience for students.

The Southeastern Section meeting is held at a university in the region. When schools travel to the meeting, typically the students need some activity the night before the main talks start. This is where the treasure hunt fits. The treasure hunts include six puzzles for students to solve earning clues that lead them to the "treasure" (small prizes usually themed to the meeting location, for example, small beach balls when UNC Wilmington hosted the conference). For the treasure hunts, we arrange teams so that students have team members from other schools. This activity is a very engaging event that helps get the students excited about working puzzles and working together. When COVID changed our

meetings from in-person to virtual, we wanted to find a way to replicate this excitement and engagement.

The answer for our team was the idea of an escape room. Students would still work together to solve puzzles in order to "escape" from the zoom room. Our team developed escape rooms for both the section meeting and the organization's national MathFest meeting in 2021.

As COVID numbers have diminished to the point of allowing in-person conferences, we have gone back to the treasure hunts at meetings. However, the use of the virtual escape room is a beneficial tool if students cannot attend classes or meetings for various reasons. Additionally, we see the use of the virtual escape room as a way of expanding collaboration. Without having to travel to a common location, we could include more schools in one event.

We plan to continue work with the treasure hunt/escape room team. It's too much fun to give up! The main highlights for us are the ability to collaborate with colleagues around the region and to see the excitement of student groups as they focus on solving puzzles. Additionally we can take those lessons into the classroom at Mars Hill.



Photo: Students gaming in the varsity team lounge.

ESPORTS FILLS A UNIQUE PLACE AT MHU

*by Teresa Buckner
Director of Publications*

On any given evening during the academic year, several students gather in specially-designed lounges in Wren Student Union and Wall Science Building, crank up computer systems, don headphones, and engage in online battles of epic proportions. Their competitors might be in the same room, or anywhere around the world.

To the casual observer, this activity might seem like simple entertainment. But according to officials and coaches at Mars Hill University, the advent of varsity and club esports teams at the university means that MHU has joined a tsunami-wave phenomenon with ties to the one of the fastest-growing industries in the world, and with implications for career and academic pursuits.

“Probably one of the largest global movements going on right now is esports, and Mars Hill is tapping into that movement,” said Chief Information Officer Ted Bruner, who supervises the programs.

According to Bruner, incoming first-year students are increasingly searching for esports programs in the colleges or universities they choose, and so the presence of these programs at MHU make a positive difference in recruiting and retention.

From a statistical point of view, he said, students who are interested in esports also tend to be interested in the STEM majors (science, technology, engineering, math), they tend to be more likely than the average student to complete their degrees, and they tend to be above average in terms of academic achievement.

And, importantly, for students who enjoy esports, there is really nothing that can take its place, Bruner said, so it fills a unique position in the university’s offerings.

According to President Tony Floyd, the benefits go far beyond student life, and include introducing students to career fields that didn’t even exist a few years ago.

“Esports is a growing industry and has a lot of career opportunities,” Floyd said. “Interestingly, the games

have art, music, and scriptwriting, in addition to the computer side. I see it as a growing phenomenon worldwide and a path to bring non-athletes to campus who are gifted students. We see it as a growth area for students from all over the country.”

Varsity esports coach Jamie Nickell recognizes that this introduction to career fields is a vital part of the program. He said: “A big part in what we offer through the program is experience-based opportunities, including social media management, graphic design, video editing, event management, club leadership, broadcasting, commentating, content creation, etc. These are careers that are growing exponentially right now, and the esports program gives our students experiences in those fields.”

According to Nickell, the benefits of esports are increased because MHU offers both a varsity team and a club.

“As we have recruited in the area, we have had numerous high schoolers mention they were interested in the program, but said they didn’t want to waste time applying because they weren’t good enough,” he said. “But that is where having the club is an advantage. Being able to offer both is huge, because few schools currently do that.”

In general, Nickell said, varsity is far more competitive, with strict practice schedules, game days, film review, just like any other varsity sport on campus. Club is more casual. The club is student-governed, and gives members free access to the club room, located in Wall 103. The club room offers thirteen personal computers and other necessary gaming equipment, all of which can be out of the budget for a college student.

Varsity teams (each game within the varsity program has a different team of players) have already experienced some success: last year both competing teams made playoffs during both semesters in their league, ECAC. The Smash Brothers team placed 4th overall in the spring 2022 semester as well. This year MHU is joining the NECC league and has added a Call of Duty team.

MHU’s program was also recently ranked 16th out of 300 schools based on social media presence by a company called “Esports Data,” beating out programs like as West Virginia University, University of Illinois, the University of California at Berkeley, University of Tennessee at Knoxville, and many more big schools.

“This is a big thing for us, as not only do we do all of our own social media, graphics, and video editing in house, but it is a big key to bring in more students,” Nickell said.

Bruner said that, whether as a varsity or club event, esports is a far more social activity than most people realize. And for some students, gaming is the very social outlet that might keep them at MHU.

“There is an idea out there that people who engage in esports tend to be loners. But there is a growing community of people who like to interact with esports as the centerpiece. The interaction is crucial for this set of students to feel connected at a university,” Bruner said.

Robert Zinna, professor of biology and advisor of the MHU esports club, agrees that the social aspect of gaming is an unexpected benefit that some students need to feel connected.

“One of the hardest parts of gaming, in my experience, is that most of these games are only fun if you have a group of friends to play with, and for students moving to a new place, on their own, this will be one of the first things they look for,” he said.

One student who found esports to be a centerpiece of his MHU experience was Nick Thorpe ’22, who recently graduated from MHU with a degree in computer science. Thorpe was the founding president of the MHU esports club and the team captain of the varsity team, and he was instrumental in helping organize the programs at MHU.

According to Thorpe, while esports is less physical than traditional sports, it has many of the same positive attributes of traditional athletics, like the challenge of improvement and the camaraderie of the team.

“Esports leverages a shared interest to create community and personal development,” he said.

Thorpe also pointed out that club numbers give insight into how many students view it as crucial to their student experience. “At one point, there were 80 people in the esports club, and that’s in addition to the varsity team,” Thorpe said, “so clearly without esports, these people might have had a worse college experience, or they may not have stayed at MHU.”

Coach Nickell plans to continue holding club competitions in conjunction with campus-wide visit days, which will make the program increasingly important as MHU seeks to recruit new students.

SCENES FROM HOMECOMING '22



The Lions' 49-14 homecoming win against Emory & Henry put them first in the mountain division with a 4-1 record in the SAC.



President Floyd presents the 2022 Homecoming King and Queen: Tyler Reese and Rhyan Whitson.



REUNIONS



Young Alumni



Class of '97 cross country team



Class of '72 50th reunion



Class of '82 40th reunion

KELLYE RATCLIFF '86 IS 2022 ALUMNA OF THE YEAR



Kellye Smith Ratcliff '86, of Greenville, South Carolina, has been chosen as the Alumna of the Year for 2022.

As the daughter of Walter and Pat Smith—long time employees of Mars Hill College/University—Kellye has literally been involved in the life of the Mars Hill campus all her life.

Now, she serves on the Alumni Board and was president of that board for six years. She also served on the Presidential Search Committee that hired President Tony Floyd, and she is currently serving on the “Together We Rise” Capital Campaign Committee for the new Campus Center.

As an MHU student, Kellye was active in Golden Pride. She also worked as a resident assistant in Huffman Residence Hall and a residence director in Fox Residence Hall.

Kellye graduated from Mars Hill in 1986 with a degree in business administration with a concentration in management. She then went on to earn her Master of Business Administration degree from Western Carolina University.

She married Michael Ratcliff and moved to Greenville, South Carolina, in 1990. Kellye managed a multi-specialty medical practice for three years before starting her own commercial cleaning and floor service company in Greenville in 1997 with her husband. They expanded their business in 2004 to the Williamsburg/Hampton/Newport News area of Virginia.

Kellye and Michael have three children and seven grandchildren.

NEH GRANT FUNDS PLANNING FOR A “REIMAGINED” MUSEUM

by: Project Director Karen Paar and Associate Project Director Leila Weinstein

Imagine attending an exhibition opening celebration at MHU’s campus museum—a celebration filled with students, families, faculty and staff, as well as the wider community. Imagine, too, that this high-quality exhibition was entirely created as a hands-on team effort—from concept, to research, to design, to implementation—by MHU students from several different disciplines.

Picture dropping into the campus museum on any other day and seeing not only history students, but also those from business, biology, psychology, and other departments, interacting with the museum space in exciting and innovative ways. Some are studying objects as part of a class activity; some are pursuing a newfound craft interest in the “maker space”; still others are in the museum just to hang out with friends in an inviting lounge area.

These are just a few snapshots of the larger picture envisioned by a multidisciplinary group of MHU faculty members working to reinvigorate the campus museum and make it an integral part of the student experience. The timing could not be more perfect, with MHU’s current focus on creating an enlivened upper quad.

The faculty members are doing this exciting work in the museum with the help of a recently-awarded National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Humanities Connections grant. This prestigious grant will fund a year of planning, consulting, professional development, field trips, and learning. All the year’s activities will build toward the production of a plan with specific ideas about how the space should be renovated to accommodate an expansion in the range of activities; a job description for a director/educator to guide such a museum; and details about how to bring a group of faculty members from a variety of disciplines, some in the humanities and others not, to lead their students in conducting research for museum exhibition. When this planning work comes to a close, the team will apply for an NEH Humanities

Connections implementation grant to bring this vision to fruition.

The Rural Heritage Museum (formerly the Rural Life Museum), housed in historic and beautiful Montague Hall, has been a beloved institution on the MHU campus for decades. Mars Hill alumni have launched museum careers by working there when they were students. Countless school children have visited over the years, as have many community members, including some who have donated their families’ treasures to the museum. The NEH planning grant will help the team figure out ways to build on this honored past and to bring the museum into the future.

Traditionally, visits to a museum consist of reading or viewing content designed to interpret objects and participating in a few interactive elements. Under this new vision, the museum will continue to present exhibitions but will also embrace the institution’s educational mission by expanding the quantity and variety of opportunities for interaction and engagement. The multidisciplinary team behind the NEH grant shares the belief that the museum can provide students with powerful hands-on learning experiences in courses from many disciplines. Their goal is also to expand these educational opportunities to area school children of all ages.

The Rural Heritage Museum has long had a strong focus on the Southern Appalachian region in its content and powerful ties to the community. The team working on reimagining the museum as an active learning space plans to continue in both these traditions as it moves forward. A workshop on place-based education will inform the group about ways to make local connections in MHU classes and carry these insights into museum exhibitions and other activities. The team will hold listening sessions during the planning grant year designed in part to hear from Madison County community members about what they want to see in this space.



Front, l-r: Leila Weinstein, Bridget Morton; Back, l-r: Susan Stigall, Kim Reigle, Karen Paar.

The reimagined museum will be an important hub that brings members of the campus and residents of the wider area together to learn about the region's rich past and consider questions about its future.

The project is being led by a core team: Project Director Karen Paar, director of the Southern Appalachian Archives and university archivist; Associate Project Director Leila Weinstein, program coordinator of the Ramsey Center for Appalachian Studies and Appalachian Studies Program; Bridget Morton, director of Teaching with Primary Sources and assistant professor of education; Kimberly Reigle, associate professor of English and Interdisciplinary Studies Program coordinator; and Susan Stigall, Department of Education chair and associate professor of education.

They are joined by a multidisciplinary faculty cohort: Ryan Bell, first year academic success and general studies; Laura Boggess, biology and environmental studies; Beth Cessna, business administration; David Gilbert, history; Michelle Gilley, biology and allied health sciences; Jonna Kwiatkowski, psychology and art therapy; and Kelly Spencer, psychology, art therapy, and women's and gender studies.

To follow the team's activities and learn about opportunities for input, please follow the museum and the Ramsey Center for Appalachian Studies on Facebook at MHUMuseum and mhuramseycenter. For more information, contact Project Director Karen Paar, kpaar@mhu.edu or Associate Project Director Leila Weinstein, lweinstein@mhu.edu.





“MHU SHOWED ME WHAT I WAS CAPABLE OF”

Carl Mattox '17, M.M. '18

Hometown: Athens, Georgia.

Undergraduate degree: Business Administration, class of 2017.

Graduate degrees: Master of Management, class of 2018, Mars Hill University; Master of Business Administration, Valdosta State University Langdale College of Business, class of 2022.

Current Job: Sun Belt Conference Assistant Director of Championships, New Orleans, Louisiana. That position, he said, “includes everything from securing and branding venues, to working with host locations to make sure we provide the best possible experience for student-athletes, coaches, and fans. In this role, I also help with sport administration.”



Photo courtesy of Sun Belt Conference.

How did Mars Hill help shape you, both personally and professionally?

“MHU did so much for me in the span of five years, both personally and professionally. Personally, MHU was where I met a lot of my friends. Being on the football team, I was instantly thrown into the busy world of college athletics and academics all at once. I was lucky that a couple of older teammates of mine stressed the importance of going to the library every night, whether I was tired or had a lot of homework or not. This advice taught me a lot about consistency. I can’t stress enough how important consistency has been in my life and career. Even when things get difficult with work, I lean on the good habits I have developed through consistency to weather the storm.

“Also during this time my coaches put a lot of effort into helping me. Each in their own way, all of my coaches at Mars Hill did whatever they could to help me to develop me as an athlete, a man, and a professional. From teaching me how to play a new position to helping me get through the death of my grandmother during my freshman year, they all took the time to make sure I had the tools to be successful.

“On a professional level, a lot of doors and opportunities opened through Mars Hill that I could never have expected at another university. I was given the chance to volunteer with the Southern Conference as a part of the M.M. (Master

of Management) program. After I graduated, I was offered a yearlong internship with the conference, and this set my career into motion.

MHU showed me what I was capable of. Before starting the M.M. program, I was nervous about the difficulty of a graduate degree. After the program, I had enough confidence to pursue my M.B.A. from Valdosta State University. The M.M. program taught me a lot of skills that I use to this day, including “soft skills” like how to conduct myself in a group project. As much as I hated group projects as a student, working in athletics is ultimately a big group project with your coworkers. The M.M. program did a great job of simulating real work relationships and teaching me how to get things done.

“And—as much as I resisted—the program taught me the value of reading. It never fails—when you meet someone smart, they read a lot. Continued education as an adult is important to stay competitive with the rest of the world. My time at Mars Hill really showed me a lot, and I’m forever grateful to the administrators, professors, and coaches on that campus.”

Read Carl’s entire interview at www.mhu.edu/magazine/mattox

MARS HILL UNIVERSITY ANNOUNCES SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Inaugural Laurel Scholarship Class

Mars Hill University announces the inaugural class of scholars to receive the university's most prestigious academic award, the Laurel Scholarship. The Laurel Scholarship, established in 2021 and awarded for the first time to members of the 2022–23 incoming class, covers the full cost of tuition.

The Laurel Scholarship is available to Incoming freshmen and early college students pursuing a full-time traditional undergraduate degree at Mars Hill. To be eligible, students must meet two out of three requirements: have a minimum 3.8 high school grade point average, be in the top five percent of their graduating class, score at least 1300 on the SAT or 27 on the ACT. Other factors taken into consideration include essays, recommendations, and interviews.



The inaugural class of Laurel Scholars are pictured left to right, with anticipated academic major: Davidson “Lon” Teachey, criminal justice; Jordan Hulsey, business administration; Kara Halouma, criminal justice; and Sawyer Parker, integrated education.

Second Judge Robert Blackwell Scholarship Class

Eight students will make up the second class of Judge Robert Blackwell Scholars at Mars Hill University. The Blackwell Scholarship is an academic and merit-based award made possible by the estate of Judge Robert Blackwell of Yanceyville, N.C., which recognizes students who are involved in leadership and citizenship activities in their high schools, and want to continue in those types of roles at Mars Hill University. In addition to receiving a significant financial award, Blackwell Scholars will work with on-campus mentors to help them develop leadership skills, broaden connections on campus, and engage in important events and projects on- and off-campus.

Blackwell Scholars for the 2022–23 academic year, with anticipated academic major, are: (top row) Aaron Adams, health & human

performance; Maya Adams, integrated health sciences; Kyle Beasley, business administration; Brennen Jones, integrated health sciences; (bottom row) Grace Mayer, integrated health sciences; Lance Richardson, elementary education; William Simpson, religion & philosophy; Ajani Wade, integrated health sciences.



GARCIA RECEIVES COLLEGE COMPLETION SCHOLARSHIP



A Henderson County woman will get the chance to complete her college education, several years after she had to drop out. Thanks to Mars Hill University's College Completion Scholarship competition, she'll be able to do so without paying for tuition or textbooks.

Charlotte Bailes Garcia was selected from the entries in the scholarship contest, which awarded one full-tuition scholarship to an adult who wants to earn a bachelor's degree in business, education, psychology, or social work through Mars Hill's Adult and Graduate Studies program.

Garcia initially attended Mars Hill following her 2013 graduation from East Henderson High School, but

life brought changes that forced her to hit the pause button on her college career. What she thought would be a brief break stretched into years.

She now works as the children and youth coordinator for her church and occasionally serves as a substitute teacher for Henderson County Schools. But her dream is to become a middle school math teacher.

"Finishing my degree would completely change my life," Garcia wrote in her essay. "I want to make up for the terrible debt I put myself in all those years ago; I want to take some of the financial burden off of my hard-working husband; I want to have a career in teaching, something I have wanted since I was a little girl; and most importantly, I want to show my daughters it is never too late to chase after your dreams."

THEATRE DEPARTMENT RECEIVES NCTC AWARD

The Mars Hill University Theatre Arts Department has received the North Carolina Theatre Conference's College/University Award for 2021. Two board members from the NCTC presented the trophy and individual awards to the students, staff, and faculty of MHU theatre arts during the department's Golden Lion Awards on Sunday, May 15, 2022.

The NCTC College/University Award is presented to a North Carolina college or university whose theatre program has demonstrated artistic, professional, and educational excellence. NCTC Executive Director Angie Hays cited MHU's commitment to keep

theatre alive under the difficult conditions presented by the COVID pandemic.

"They rose to the challenge of COVID and were able to provide critical opportunities for their students to learn and perform in a safe manner," she said.



MARS HILL UNIVERSITY JUMPS TEN SPOTS IN LATEST U.S. NEWS RANKING

Mars Hill University's ranking in one of the country's top rankings guides has jumped ten spots from last year.

The university ranked 29 last year in *U.S. News and World Report's* category of Best Regional Colleges–South and jumped to number 19 in that same ranking for 2022-23. *U.S. News* defines regional colleges as those with a strong focus on the liberal arts and programs such as business and nursing, and with a primary focus on undergraduate education.

“Jumping ten places in a national ranking when the competition is so fierce is a tribute to the people who work at Mars Hill University,” said MHU President Tony Floyd. “Over the last few years, we have experienced significant change and a lot of headwinds during the pandemic, but our people have selflessly given to our students and it is showing. Our dedication to being student-centric is causing us to rise across the board and word is spreading, people are noticing.”

“I'm proud to be associated with a remarkably dedicated faculty and staff,” added Tracy Parkinson,

executive vice president and provost at MHU. “When we see successful students and programs here, it is a direct result of their commitment.”

U.S. News also rated Mars Hill as the number-two institution in the category of Best Colleges for Veterans–Regional Colleges (South). That category recognizes the top-ranked schools that participate in federal initiatives helping veterans and active-duty service members pay for their degrees.

Mars Hill also made the list of Best Value Schools, coming in at number 27, and as a Top Performer in Social Mobility, which *U.S. News* defines as schools which do a good job of helping economically disadvantaged students enroll and persist through graduation.

The rankings are based on such criteria as academic peer assessments, graduation and retention rates, faculty resources, student selectivity, financial resources, and alumni support. *U.S. News* describes its rankings as the most comprehensive guide to colleges and college admissions.



GREGG MUNN '14 SELECTED TO NCAA DIVISION II MEN'S SOCCER REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Head men's soccer coach Gregg Munn '14, was selected to represent the South Atlantic Conference on the NCAA Division II Men's Soccer Regional Advisory Committee.



Gregg Munn

He will serve a three-year term that will conclude in the fall of 2025.

Munn said: “I'm honored to represent MHU, the SAC, and the NCAA with being selected for the Regional Advisory Committee. I look forward to learning

more about the process of our championships and selection process.”

Per the NCAA, “The role of the regional advisory committee is to assist the national committee in the evaluation of teams throughout the season, the evaluation of potential regional sites and the recommendation for the championship.”

Some of the responsibilities with the position include, but are not limited to, evaluating and ranking teams in their respective regions, ensuring teams under consideration of making the national tournament meet minimum game requirements, and formulating recommendations to the national committee regarding selections from regional draws.

VOLLEYBALL, MEN'S SOCCER CONTINUE TO SUCCEED

by Adam Williams, Director of Sports Information

The Mars Hill volleyball and men's soccer programs continued their success from 2021 over to the 2022 season, elevating their respective programs to new heights.

The volleyball team, after making the NCAA Southeast Regional Tournament for the first time in program history last November, opened the season on a record-breaking run. Mars Hill won their first 10 matches of the season, only dropping two sets at home during the run. The previous best mark was 7-0 to open the 1997 season.

During the 10-match winning streak, sophomore middle blocker Nikkayla Stewart was named the South Atlantic Conference Defensive Player of the Week on September 19.



Mars Hill men's soccer was one goal away from claiming the SAC Championship last November, but stormed out of the gates in the 2022 campaign, winning their first three contests and compiling a 5-2-2 record midway through the season. Sophomore forward Peter Plougmand was named SAC Offensive Player of the Week for the first two weeks of the season, scoring six goals and adding one assist in just three games.

On September 27, senior goalkeeper Brennan Whalen was named the SAC Defensive Player of the Week. Later that afternoon, Mars Hill was ranked 14th by the United Soccer Coaches Men's Soccer National Poll, their highest ranking since the 2012 season (12th).

Above: Nikkayla Stewart, left Peter Plougmand

CHAMBERS RECEIVES A FACELIFT

During the summer of 2022, Chambers Gymnasium received several renovations to enhance its appearance and contribute to MHU’s recruiting efforts. All upgrades were funded by the Lions Athletic Club.

On the bottom level of Chambers, laminate flooring was laid throughout the halls, replacing the previous tile flooring. The volleyball locker room also received new flooring.

In the lobby, Mars Hill custom wraps were placed inside on the five columns across from the concession stand. The men’s and women’s bathrooms also received upgrades with new paint, new blue floor tiles, and steel stalls along with new mirrors and lights.

Hanging high in Burt Stanford Arena are new banners, representing all South Atlantic Conference schools. The banners were designed and hung by Director of Gameday Operations Josh Matthews ’17.




CLASS NOTES

Mars Hill, the Magazine of Mars Hill University welcomes your personal snapshots when you send in news of weddings, babies, accomplishments, etc. Send your news and photos to alumni@mhu.edu, or *Alumni Office, P.O. Box 6792, Mars Hill, N.C. 28754*.

1950s

Bryan Edwards ’52, vice president emeritus of Clayton State University, recently received the “Good Shepherd Clinic 2020 Education Pillar Award,” at the university in Morrow, Ga. The presentation for the 2020 award was delayed due to the pandemic.

was Teacher of the Year at the high school. She was also chosen as a STAR teacher during her tenure.

1970s

George Woodrow Bullard Jr. ’71 retired as executive director of the Columbia Metro Baptist Association in June of 2022, following 54 years of Christian ministry. His retirement concluded 45 years of Baptist denominational service. Prior to that, he was a pastor in Louisville, Ky., and a student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he received M.Div., Th.M., and D.Min. degrees. He and his wife, Betty Boyd Bullard ’71, will relocate to Betty’s hometown of Simpsonville, S.C.

1960s

Rebecca “Becky” Sluder Costner ’69 was inducted into the Hall of Fame at Pelion High School in Lexington, District 1, S.C. in April 2022. Becky was a teacher for 38 years in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Florida. She spent 23 of those years teaching English at Pelion High, until her retirement in 2013. In 2006-07, Becky



Becky Costner



George and Betty Bullard

Congratulations to Cheryl Pappas '70, a member of the MHU Board of Trustees, who was selected as MHU's Baptist Heritage Award recipient for 2022. The awards honor people who have contributed to Baptist organizations in unique ways.



Cheryl Pappas

Pappas is a longtime supporter of the university. She has been a trustee for 13 years as well as a past chair of the board. She is chair of the trusteeship committee, and was chair of the Presidential Search Committee which hired President Tony Floyd. (Her husband, Chris '66, is on the Board of Advisors and serves on the Investment Committee.)

Dan Locklair '71 has composed a piece, *Fanfare Pro Humanitate*, which made its world premiere on March 24, 2022, at the inauguration of Wake Forest University president Susan R. Wentz. Commissioned by WFU's Presidential Inauguration Commission, *Fanfare Pro Humanitate* is scored for organ, brass quintet, and percussion. It is published by Subito Music.

Dr. Bobbi Beeler Lussier '73 retired July 1, 2021, from Middle Tennessee State University, where she held the position of executive director of professional teacher education and partnerships in the College of Education. She spent 47 years in the field of education in Tennessee as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, Tennessee Department of Education administrator, and MTSU College of Education administrator. During her career, she was honored as the Knox County Teacher of the Year, Tennessee Association of Middle Schools (TAMS) Teacher of the Year, Tennessee Middle School State Level Teacher of the Year, and Oak Ridge Woman of Distinction in Education. She recently relocated from Brentwood, Tenn., to Chattanooga to be closer to children and grandchildren.

Charles Michael Short '73 and Deborah Jean Pope Short '74, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 4, 2022. They met at Mars Hill College when Mike was a sophomore and Deborah was a freshman. They have three children and three grandchildren and have made their home in Fort Mill, South Carolina, since 1975.



Charles and Deborah Short

James Smith '75 was inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame of Scott's Branch High School, Summerton, South Carolina, May 19, 2022. Smith was head men's basketball coach at Scott's Branch for six years, and during that time, led his team to two South Carolina State basketball championships, in 1998-1999 and 1999-2000.

Kathy Anne Bennett Murdock '76 retired in February 2022, after 15 years as a senior branch office administrator with Edward Jones Investments in Marietta, Georgia.

Dr. Roger "Eddie" Bennett '77 was named the 2022 Distinguished Educator of the Year by the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust. Bennett is the executive director of the Georgia Council for the Social Studies.

David Jones '78 was inducted into the Henderson County (N.C.) Education Hall of Fame on April 26, 2022. Jones retired as superintendent of Henderson County Schools in 2016 after 38 years with the school system. During that time, he served as a teacher, coach, assistant principal, principal, director of testing and accountability, director of facility management, assistant superintendent, associate superintendent, and finally, superintendent. His numerous awards and recognitions include: The Order of the Long Leaf Pine in 2016, North Carolina High School Athletic

Mark Cabaniss '82, a member of the MHU Board of Trustees, has written a book titled, *Miracle of the Music Man: The Classic American Story of Meredith Willson*. The book recounts the story of composer Meredith Willson, who wrote "The Music Man," (now a movie starring Hugh Jackman). Cabaniss said he worked closely with Willson's (now late) widow, Rosemary, who was a personal friend.

"If The Music Man was Meredith's 'Valentine to Iowa,' as he called it, then this book is my valentine to Meredith and Rosemary," Cabaniss said. The book's foreword is written by composer and musician Rupert Holmes. According to Cabaniss, a portion of royalties from the book will be donated to The Music Man Foundation, the Willson's charitable foundation, which supports music programs to improve children's lives. The book was published in September 2022, by Rowman and Littlefield. It is available on Amazon.



Mark Cabaniss

Cabaniss is president and CEO of Jubilate Music Group. He lives in Nashville, Tennessee.

Association Superintendent of the Year in 2014, North Carolina Superintendent of the Year for the N.C. School Community Health Alliance in 2012 and Henderson County Principal of the Year in 1994.

Ellen Peterson Beck '79 retired from the Crosby (Texas) Independent School District in May 2022, after 26 years of full-time teaching English/language arts to third and fourth graders. Most of those years were spent at Newport Elementary School and a couple years at Crosby Elementary School. She lives in Crosby (about 21 miles northeast of Houston) with her husband, Alan.

1980s

Dexter Fisher '81 was elected as county commissioner for District 5 of the Athens Clarke County government in Athens, Georgia. Dexter will take office in January 2023, and his term will last for four years.

Wanda Dickey Nelson '84 retired in June of 2021 from her career as a special education resource specialist teacher. Wanda received multiple awards from the Community Advisory Committee for Special Education and was named Outstanding Teacher of the Year for Yorba Linda School District (Placentia, California). She is now enjoying her hobbies of traveling, being outdoors, writing, and spending quality time with family and friends.

James "Wally" Treadway '86 became a grandparent for the first time on April 26, 2022, with the birth of Livingston ToHi Bull Lane. Treadway retired in 2017 from the Swain County (N.C.) School System with 30 years of service.



Wally Treadway and Livingston Lane

1990s

Bradley Guth '92 has been hired as the economic development director for Madison County, North Carolina. Guth has more than 20 years of public sector experience in local government economic development, including 16 years as the business and community development director in Lincolnton, N.C.

JeanAnn Taylor '92 recent had her fifth children's book published. The book, titled *The Legend of Miren*, is based on an Irish legend and emphasizes the importance of staying true to who you are. The book is available on Amazon.

Patrick Crudup '95 was named assistant chief of the Asheville Fire Department in July of 2022. Previously, Crudup was a division



Patrick Crudup

Mike Kelly '82, chair of the MHU Board of Trustees, has written a book titled *Leaderfluence, Secrets of Leadership*. Kelly said he wrote the book because he felt that much of the training and information found on leadership focuses on leading others. But that approach leaves a gap in understanding leadership.

He said: "I wrote *Leaderfluence*, which is about how to take a more strategic approach to leadership and life. It provides insight and ideas on how to lead yourself well so that ultimately, you can better lead and serve others."

Kelly is a coach, speaker, consultant, financial planner, author, and entrepreneur. Together with his wife, Melinda, he is co-owner of Right Path Enterprises. They live in Cincinnati, Ohio. The book is available at www.rightpathenterprises.com. It will be available in the future on Amazon.



chief with the department. With his promotion, Chief Crudup becomes the highest-ranking African American in the history of the Asheville Fire Department.

Teresa Rizzo '99 has been named the director of the Flagler Education Foundation, the non-profit support arm of the Flagler County (Fla.) school district. In that role, she succeeds her husband, **Joe Rizzo '98**, who died unexpectedly in March. Rizzo, has also been the state regional literacy director for the Florida Department of Education since 2021 and has been a teacher in the Flagler County school district for over a decade.

2000s

Nancy Beutler Blackmon '03 married David Blackmon on December 27, 2020. The Blackmons teach in Lumberton, N.C.

Heidi Hughes Alexander '04 has been named the broker in charge for a new expansion office of Dream Mountain Realty, in Burnsville, North Carolina. Alexander has had her real estate license since 2015. She lives with her family in Burnsville.

Carolyn Kennedy Easterly '04 has been selected to be the learning and teaching coach at East Swain Elementary School in Bryson City, North Carolina. Previously, Carolyn was a teacher with Madison County Schools for 19 years. She and her husband, Glenn, have lived in Mars Hill for 35 years, where they raised their two sons, Tre and Tyler.

Becca Pizzi '02 ran the Boston Marathon twice in one day on April 18, 2022, with a 57-minute break between the two. The two, 26-mile marathons made up the longest distance that Pizzi has run in one day. The second marathon was Pizzi's 19th Boston Marathon. She is a two-time World Marathon champion, having run seven marathons on seven continents in seven days in 2016 and 2018. Becca (left) is pictured above with Boston Marathon race director Dave McGillivray, her husband, Joe, and her daughter, Taylor.



Travis Toms '06 has been hired as an officer with the Weaverville (N.C.) Police Department. Previously, he was a school resource officer for Buncombe County Sheriff's Office.



Officer Travis Toms

Amy Garrison '07 has been hired as a field adjuster for Farm Bureau insurance. She lives in Weaverville, North Carolina, with her son, Branson, who is 5.

2010s

Olivia Buckner Ellis '13 has been hired as an art teacher at Mountain Heritage High School, in Burnsville, North Carolina. She lives in Spruce Pine, with her husband, Wayne Ellis '13 and their children, Quinn and Palmer.



Amy Garrison and Branson

Carter Bengé '14 has been named the new assistant coach of the track and field and cross country programs at Southwestern College in Winfield, Kansas. Before joining the staff of Southwestern College athletics, Bengé was head cross country coach and assistant track and field coach at Harnette Central High School in Angier, North Carolina, from 2016-2021.



Carter Bengé

Amanda "Mandi" Buchanan Polly '15 has been named the executive director of the Mitchell County (N.C.) Chamber of Commerce. Previously, Polly had been working as the chamber's member services director and then, its interim executive

director. In addition to this position, Mandi and her husband, Cecil, run a septic service business.

Megan Currie '16 is the new Director of Admissions for McAfee School of Theology at Mercer University. She earned a Master of Divinity from McAfee School of Theology in 2019. In 2020, she began working in admissions for the School of Theology. Outside of Mercer, she serves bi-vocationally as the Minister of Virtual Connections at Joy Metropolitan Community Church in Orlando, FL.



Megan Currie

Quentin Powell '16 has been accepted as a doctoral candidate in social work and a graduate assistant at Spalding University in Louisville, Kentucky. His expected graduation date is May 2025. Powell lives in Kings Mountain, North Carolina, currently.

Ellen Marie Davis Harvey '18 married Andrew Harvey on April 2, 2022 in Greenwood, S.C. The couple plans to reside on James Island in Charleston, South Carolina.

Erin Maennle '18 and Spencer McCoy '19 were united in marriage on March 26, 2022. The couple plans to live in Andrews, North Carolina. They are both employed by Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort.



Erin Maennle and Spencer McCoy

Kourtney McCarthy Records '19 married Cameron Records on June 25, 2022. The couple lives in Rutherfordton, where Kourtney is a teacher at Sugar Ridge Elementary School.

2020s

Kiersten Foust '21 has been hired as the director of creative services for The Southern Conference. In that role, Foust primarily will be responsible for enhancing brand awareness of the SoCon through graphic design and social media. She spent the last academic year working as a social/digital media intern for Mars Hill University athletics.

Sadie Brooke Taylor '21 has been hired as the director of the Mars Hill Fund at Mars Hill University. In that role, she is responsible for connecting with alumni and friends at MHU to ensure funding for scholarships, operational costs, and projects not covered by specific campaigns.



Sadie Taylor

Faculty/Staff

Dr. Jo Ann Thomas Croom '57, retired biology professor, has co-authored a book called *No Work in the Grave; Life in the Toe River Valley*, with Katey Schultz. The book is drawn from the personal accounts of Croom's father and uncle, Walter and Monroe Thomas, who lived in the sparsely-settled Toe River valley in the early 1900s. The

book takes an in-depth look into a turbulent period of change that upended the socioeconomic culture of the valley. While it is the story of one particular family, it represents a microcosm of the history of the region. The book is published by Dykeman Legacy Press.



IN MEMORIAM

Since the last issue of Mars Hill, the Magazine, we have learned of the following deaths of alumni and other members of the MHU community.

1940s

Mary Mitchell Starner '40, Marietta, S.C., September 13, 2021

Sheila Moffat Gulley Plott '41, Toano, Va., February 6, 2022

Morris Edwin Eller '42, Winston-Salem, N.C., May 8, 2022

Gladys A. Balding Wilson '42, Weldon, N.C., December 1, 2021

Dr. John Wesley Chandler '43, Williamstown, Mass., August 5, 2022

Ruth Taylor Gray '43, Defuniak Springs, Fla., December 7, 2021

Betty Sue Sinclair Franks '45, Arden, N.C., April 28, 2022

Helen Runnion Hunter '45, Marshall, N.C., February 16, 2022

Clarence Ford Stirewalt '45, Evans, Ga., January 22, 2022

Mildred Eula Ingle Kitchin '46, Alpharetta, Ga., March 24, 2022

Betty Lou McPheters Phillips '46, Mars Hill, N.C., April 23, 2022

Frances Emma Orr Edwards '47, Union, S.C., January 31, 2022

John Truett Gibson '47, Huntersville, N.C., February 6, 2022

Robert Edward King Jr. '47, Jacksonville, N.C., July 23, 2022

Regina Styles Noble '47, Columbia, S.C., June 8, 2022

Wyndoland Elizabeth Wilbanks '47, Clinton, S.C., February 13, 2022

Rebecca Combs Pugh '48, Atlanta, Ga., June 2, 2021

Ada Lee Bailey Hipps '49, Green Mtn., N.C., March 5, 2022

Rev. Dale Grey Hooper '49, Hurricane, Utah

Randolph "Lee" Rhodes '49, Summerville, S.C., July 11, 2022

1950s

Anne Louise Puryear Hubbard '50, Shoreline, Wash., May 7, 2022

Capt. James Fritz Kirstein CHC, U.S. Navy, Ret. '50, Deland, Fla., August 26, 2022

Martha Lalla Stallings Martin '50, High Point, N.C., April 9, 2022

Elizabeth "Ann" Blair Roebuck '50, Rome, Ga., May 9, 2022

Margaret Alice Potts Smith '50, Raleigh, N.C., May 11, 2020

Mary Geraldean "Jerry" McManus Wood '50, Greenville, S.C., May 16, 2022

Frances Arabella Higley Collins '51, Lumberton, N.C., March 11, 2022

Jessie Jean Gantt Gragg '51, Asheville, N.C., April 9, 2022

Sarah Louise Anderson Helton '51, Raleigh, N.C., February 2, 2022

Ruth Ellen Monroe McDowell '51, High Point, N.C., August 7, 2022

Rex Beam Price '51, Forest City, N.C., March 31, 2022

Charles Dougherty Tomlinson '51, Winston-Salem, N.C., August 19, 2022

Anne "Ruth" Thames Andrew '52, Siler City, N.C., June 14, 2022

James "Jim" Elijah Fulghum '52, Havre De Grace, Md., August 11, 2022

David Taylor Garrett '52, Springfield, Va., July 3, 2022

Jessie Mae Thompson Riley '52, Fort Mill, S.C., April 1, 2022

Marjorie Fay Beam Shrader '52, Huntsville, Ala., May 22, 2021

Ted Roy Buckner '53, Charlotte, N.C., June 19, 2022

Rev. Warner Avery Bumgardner '53, Monroe, N.C., May 12, 2022

Demetria "Dee" M. Davidson Cox '53, Black Mtn., N.C., August 9, 2022

Robert "Bob" Charles Greenlee '53, Greenville, S.C., April 23, 2022

Grady Cline Griffin '53, Asheville, N.C., January 14, 2022

Bessie "Bess" Holland Oxendine '53, Kannapolis, N.C., September 16, 2021

Martha Glyn Williams Ransley '53, Greensboro, N.C., December 23, 2021

Dr. Eugene "Gene" Earl Allen '54, San Antonio, Texas, January 22, 2022

Robert "Bob" Monroe Allen Jr. '54, Dobson, N.C., May 23, 2022

Marcy Ware Jones Crimm '54, Falls Church, Va., December 6, 2021

Marjorie "Rejane" Joyce Goode '54, Kannapolis, N.C., February 15, 2022

Dr. Charles Richard Hughes Sr. '54, Cleveland, Tenn., June 23, 2022

Joyce Ellis Kile '54, Charlotte, N.C., August 31, 2022

Denford Harold Oxendine Sr. '54, Kannapolis, N.C., February 2, 2022

Betty Jean Moose Broome '55, Macon, Ga., February 11, 2022

Joe Henry Crump '55, Clarksville, Va., February 18, 2021

Janice Lea Isenhour Harrington '55, Laurel, Del., June 22, 2022

John Hardwick McElroy Jr. '55, The Villages, Fla., August 8, 2022

Wade Dean Meadows '55, Knoxville, Tenn., February 9, 2022

Katherine Elizabeth "Liz" Reid Parker '55, Roanoke, Va., February 14, 2022

Dr. Edwin "Scott" Thomas '55, Cary, N.C., May 19, 2022

James Melvin Hunter Jr. '56, Winston-Salem, N.C., November 27, 2021

William "Bill" Ladd Parker '56, Roanoke, Va., May 22, 2022

Larry Jordan Plumblee '56, Greenville, S.C., March 24, 2022

Carolyn Ann Kistler Poole '56, Mount Holly, N.C., December 20, 2021

Barbara Jean Abernethy Snyder '56, Burlington, N.C., February 28, 2022

Melvyn Lawrence "Larry" Tucker '56, Southern Pines, N.C., January 7, 2022

Elizabeth "Betty" Chester Whitener Land '56, Lenoir, N.C., July 12, 2022

Shirley Ann Marlowe Whiteside '56, Mills River, N.C., June 13, 2022

William Donald "Don" Briggs '57, Indian Trail, N.C., February 23, 2021

Franklin "DeWitt" Carriker '57, Concord, N.C., May 16, 2022

Danny Dale Connell '57, Cornelius, N.C., January 22, 2022

Dr. Bobby Jean Peek Rice '57, Marshall, N.C., August 8, 2022

Janice Cora Avery Wise '57, Plumtree, N.C., June 16, 2022

Stephen Collins Foster '58, Mooresville, N.C., February 24, 2021

Donna Carol Allen Holzer '58, Maryville, Tenn., February 3, 2022

Dr. Joel Thomas Land '58, Midlothian, Va., April 26, 2022

Peggy Jane Hester Staley '58, Gibsonville, N.C., February 13, 2022

Claudia Gwendolyn Arrowood Edmiston '59, Charlotte, N.C., March 14, 2022

Harold "Guy" McCall Jr. '59, Greensboro, N.C., May 8, 2022

Larry Eugene Sloan '59, Mooresville, N.C., February 1, 2021

Sandra Lee Thorne Trammell '59, Memphis, Tenn., May 5, 2022

1960s

George Albert Abbott Jr. '60, Lakeland, Fla., January 3, 2022

Peggy Jean Hill Huffstickler '60, Gastonia, N.C., July 6, 2022

Donald "Don" Walker Shuman Jr. '60, Candler, N.C., May 30, 2022

Richard "Dick" Lewis Albert '61, Bedford, Va., January 29, 2022

Lyndall Gerald English '61, Mars Hill, N.C., June 30, 2022

William "Kelly" Johnson '61, Montezuma, N.C., April 18, 2022

Marie Ellen Newton Johnson '61, Wilmington, N.C., June 12, 2022

Rev. Herbert Nelson Osborne Jr. '61, New Port Richey, Fla., December 6, 2021

Judith "Judy" Anne Messer Smith '61, Waynesville, N.C., March 14, 2022

Jerry Lee Stanfield '61, Costa Rica, April 1, 2022

Linda Sue Whittington Speaks '62, Mooresville, N.C., June 6, 2022

Virginia "Ginny" Atkins Banks '63, Burnsville, N.C., April 26, 2022

Billy Mason Williams '63, Chester, Va., March 18, 2022

Luke Woodbury III '63, Lenoir, N.C., August 3, 2022

James "Jim" Calvin Bone '64, Virginia Beach, Va., May 27, 2022

David "D.J." Jacob Hughes Jr. '64, Thomasville, Ga., March 26, 2022

Peggy Patterson Garland '65, Montross, Va., July 31, 2021

Robert Caldwell Lewis Sr. '65, Lincolnton, N.C., January 10, 2022

Larry Joe Phillips '65, North Wilkesboro, N.C., February 17, 2022

Judy Louise Duckworth Tallent '65, Morganton, N.C., March 15, 2022

Bette Ann Barden '66, Allen, Texas, July 3, 2022

Marvin Leonard Carriker Jr. '66, Southern Pines, N.C., April 20, 2021

Troy Hilliard Parham III '66, MHU trustee, Kingsport, Tenn., July 4, 2022

Phillip Leon Arrant '67, Fletcher, N.C., August 3, 2022

William Arthur "Art" Earp '67, Boomer, N.C., February 1, 2022

Henry Edward Hair '67, New Ellenton, S.C., June 17, 2022

Stanley "Stan" O'Neal Mock '68, Lewisville, N.C., December 31, 2021

Dr. Larry Baxter Atwell '69, Rome, Ga., April 27, 2022

Stuart Maxwell Caudill '69, Gastonia, N.C., December 24, 2021

Scott Alexander Samuels '69, Marietta, Ga., June 10, 2022

1970s

Ila Phillips McIntruff '70, Signal Mtn., Tenn., May 22, 2022

Barbara Jean Deese Marlowe '71, Charlotte, N.C., October 8, 2021

Frieda Annette Allen Ponder '71, Mars Hill, N.C., May 31, 2022

George McDuffie Stone '71, Camden, S.C., January 30, 2022

Cynthia "Cindy" Seaberg Butner '72, Greensboro, N.C., May 20, 2021

William "Dickie" Carey Johnson III '72, Fayetteville, N.C., August , 2020

Dora "Dobby" Grace Charlton Wall '72, Surf City, N.C., May 21, 2022

Joan Yvonne Ponder Ramsey '73, Mars Hill, N.C., April 19, 2022

Patricia "Pat" Catherine White Widdowson '73, Pilot Mtn., N.C., February 20, 2022

Harold Carman Brookshire, II '74, Franklin, Tenn., February 11, 2022

Priscilla Anne Canupp Chamlee '74, Mauldin, S.C., April 5, 2022

Joyce Elaine Cutshall '74, Marshall, N.C., June 5, 2022

Sharon "Sherry" Maria Walker '75, Raleigh, N.C., April 19, 2022

Kina Marie Swimmer '76, Cherokee, N.C., August 3, 2021

LT Bruce Edward Fore '77, Asheville, N.C., March 31, 2022

Thomas "Tom" Eugene Hall '77, Hialeah, Fla., December 12, 2021

Deborah "Debbie" Kay Ramsey Peek '77, Marshall, N.C., January 9, 2022

Frieda Beatrice Flerl '78, Hendersonville, N.C., June 19, 2021

1980s

Agnes "Amanda" Anderson Klein '80, Kingsport, Tenn., February 27, 2022

Bishop Mildred "Bonnie" Bernedatta Hines '81, Los Angeles, Calif., May 23, 2022

Roy "Chip" Thomas Waters Jr. '82, Hildebran, N.C., December 2, 2021

Ruth Barlowe Williams '83, Marion, N.C., June 5, 2022

Don Allen Deaton '85, Greensboro, N.C., July 20, 2021

Thomas "Tommy" Neal Gentry '85, Marshall, N.C., January 13, 2022

Linda Kathleen "Kathy" Croom Beck '87, Mars Hill, N.C., August 7, 2022

Deborah "Debbie" Kay Leininger Weidenhamer '87, Cherryville, N.C., June 2, 2022

Alvin “Michael” Joy ’89, Piedmont, S.C., December 22, 2021

1990s

Michael Sylvan Shelton ’90, Marshall, N.C., April 25, 2022

Jonathon “Jon” Wesley Israel ’92, Asheville, N.C., January 25, 2022

Wilma Lee Edwards Clubb ’95, Mars Hill, N.C., July 14, 2022

Joseph “Joe” Andrew Rizzo ’98, Flagler Beach, Fla., March 7, 2022

Matthew Davis Littleton ’99, Griffin, Ga., December 29, 2021

Sandra “Sandy” DeMicco Woolley ’99, Asheville, N.C., March 3, 2022

2000s

Laura Elizabeth Humphreys ’03, Greeneville, Tenn., March 5, 2022

Troy Parham III ’66, of Kingsport, Tenn., a long-time volunteer and committed member of the university’s Board of Advisors, passed away on the 4th of July. Troy was an outstanding track star while a Mars Hill student and enjoyed an accomplished career in financial services. Troy was a lover of the outdoors, a motorcyclist, an avid runner, a marathoner, a cyclist, and a traveler. His family knew him as a great father, a man of faith, and a beloved husband.



Troy and his wife, Ruth ’65, met while students at Mars Hill. They have two daughters. Ruth is a member of the MHU Board of Trustees and the Parhams have been faithful supporters of the university, giving generously to MHU Athletics, the Mars Hill fund, facilities upgrades, and other projects as needed.

Sandra Lee Thorne Trammell ’59, of Memphis, Tenn., passed away on May 5, 2022. Sandra and her husband, Charles S. Trammell Jr. ’59, a trustee of MHU, have been faithful and generous supporters of the university for many years. Sandra was a gifted pianist and soloist. She was a dedicated choir member and soloist at Central Church and performed in numerous community plays in Memphis. She enjoyed gardening, exercising, water and snow skiing, white water rafting, traveling, and attending Memphis Tigers and Grizzlies games. She also served special needs children for



Dorothy “Rachele” Poole Regan ’09, Montville, Conn., February 15, 2022

Trustees, Faculty, and Staff

Betty T. Wade, former trustee, Winston-Salem, N.C., May 31, 2022

Dorothy Mae Griffin Rice, former staff, Mars Hill, N.C., April 25, 2022

Linda Laughrun, retired staff, Mars Hill, N.C., May 15, 2022

David Martin Mace, retired staff, Marshall, N.C., March 19, 2022

Roberta “Bobbie” S. Williams, retired staff, Tryon, N.C., March 30, 2022

Nancy Medford Wood, math professor emerita, Mars Hill, N.C., September 12, 2022

(A tribute to Nancy Wood is planned for the spring, 2023 issue of Mars Hill, the Magazine.)

thirty-seven years along with her husband. Sandra was described as a faithful Christian and an encourager of others. She and her husband met while they were students at Mars Hill. They were married for 63 years and were the parents of two daughters.

Following Sandra’s death, Charlie Trammel created the Sandra Lee Trammel need-based scholarship for MHU students.

Bishop Mildred “Bonnie” Hines ’81, the first female bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, passed away on May 23, 2022. Hines was the 98th bishop of the AME Zion Church, and the sole female bishop of the historically Black denomination. At the time of her death, she was presiding prelate of the South Atlantic Episcopal District and chair of the Clinton College (Rock Hill, S.C.) Board of Trustees.

Hines received a Bachelor of Arts from Mars Hill in 1981. She received her Master of Arts in Psychology from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and later received M. Div. and a D. Min. degrees from the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Ga. She pastored several churches, served as a chaplain, and served on numerous community boards in both Mecklenburg and Gaston counties in N.C. Later, she pastored Los Angeles First AME Zion Church in California before being elected as the first female bishop of the AME Zion Church in 2008. In 2013, she became the first woman to lead the board of bishops.



photo courtesy of The Star of Zion

MARGARET PAT MERCHANT VERHULST

Date of Death: October 12, 2021, Burnsville, N.C.

MHC Professor of English 1971–1998

In one of Pat Verhulst’s last journal entries, she wrote, “Writing is the refuge of all we cannot say,” followed by, “What is asking to be seen? I ask myself this every day.”

Pat Verhulst saw education as far more than passing on knowledge of a “subject”—in her case, writing and reading poetry. With Pat, the subject was always Life Itself, and she took great interest in the life that lay in each of her students as individuals. She encouraged us first to explore ourselves. We often did that through the poetry we wrote, and poems written by others, famous and not famous. But we also did that outside class, often with Pat somewhere she had invited us to be, including us in things and places she believed would help us expand and deepen our understanding. Being around Pat made you want to fling open the doors of imagination, no matter what lay behind and no matter where those open doors might lead. Life was a grand adventure, and you didn’t have to go anywhere more dramatic than your own soul to experience it. She made us believe we had what it took to “go there.”

Pat had strong views but respected our views when they differed from hers. She was patient with us while new and sometimes scary ideas and dreams were taking shape inside us. While most of us were in awe of her and her big personality, we also felt welcomed and “seen” by her, valued for who we were and who we could become. Pat was a voracious and wide-ranging reader, gravitating toward poetry, art, spirituality. Nothing was too radical or too subtle for her. She was never apologetic for her big views, her big passions, her big emotions. Her presence filled whatever room she entered; it was as if all the air



Pat Verhulst in The Laurel, 1981

suddenly belonged in her and out through her, back into those of us who were nearby. It’s the snapshots I remember most about Pat: how she “raffled off” some of her belongings each semester to her students (I still have the Oriental vase I “won” one year); how she walked in front of Fox dorm decked out in her wool poncho against the coming cold; an image of her driving away from campus one autumn Friday afternoon in her orange VW; the big rocking chair in her office that held so many different stories from those of us who sat and shared; her throaty voice that moved like music, low and honeyed; the way she twisted her hair up on the back of her head; the fact that she loved a little tea in her cream, instead of the reverse! Pat lived in the courage to be her own self, no matter how different her self was from others around her or how daunting it might have seemed to them. There was only one—and would always be only one—Pat Verhulst. Benedicite, our mentor and our friend. Benedicite.

*Kimberly R. Myers, Ph.D.
Professor of Humanities and Medicine,
and Distinguished Educator
Pennsylvania State College of Medicine
MHU Class of '83*



P.O. Box 370
Mars Hill, N.C. 28754



THE MARS HILL UNIVERSITY CAMPUS CENTER

is the single funding focus of the
Together We Rise
Capital Campaign.

Located in the heart of campus, the project will bring together under one roof myriad offices centered on supporting and elevating the student experience, as well as a state-of-the-art fitness center, multiple indoor and outdoor dining areas, a gaming area, and meeting and hang-out spots.

Be part of the future of MHU! Learn more at:

www.mhu.edu/together-we-rise



COMING SOON!