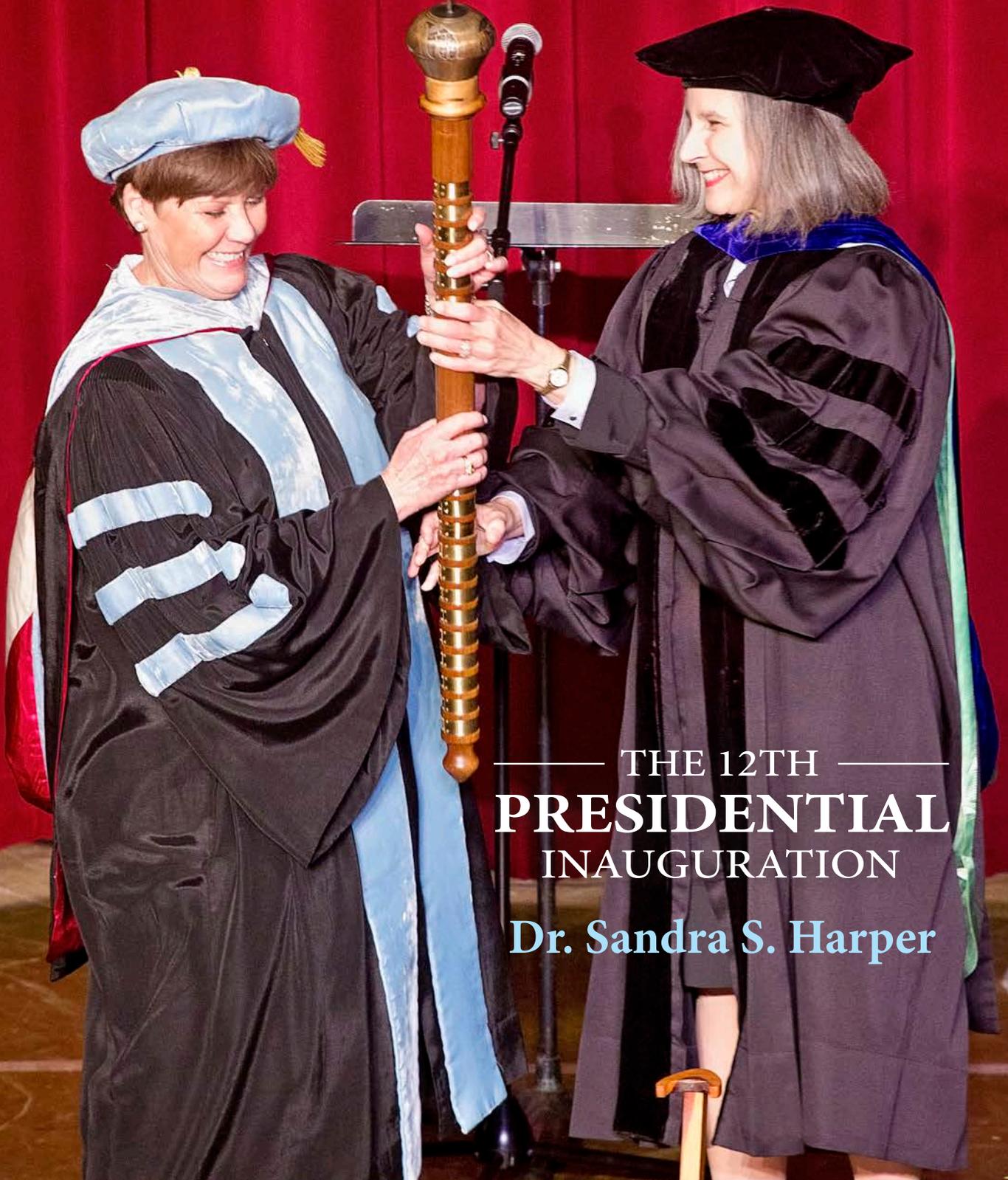


the
messenger

THE MCMURRY UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI & FRIENDS

SPRING 2014



— THE 12TH —
PRESIDENTIAL
INAUGURATION

Dr. Sandra S. Harper

Alumni and Friends,

Oftentimes it is an unenviable task to embark upon the search for a new leader. In the summer of 2013, the Board of Trustees met with just such a situation upon the retirement of President Dr. John Russell. Embarking upon a momentous undertaking such as this for my alma mater, both personally and as Chairman of the Board, could not have ended more favorably.

As we celebrate the installation of Dr. Sandra S. Harper as the 12th president of McMurry University, I can truly say today we are blessed with the very best from a vast collection of highly-qualified candidates from across the country.

The positive energy and sense of urgency exhibited by your Board of Trustees and the Search Committee led by Dr. Weldon Crowley '57, which included alumni, members of the cabinet and faculty, was truly inspiring. The level of diligence, teamwork and professionalism demonstrated by these stakeholders revealed unsurpassed devotion to McMurry at a time when it was needed.

Every member of the McMurry community should take great comfort and pride in the fact that an extremely large number of highly-qualified applicants were profoundly attracted to and passionately vying for the chance to make a difference at McMurry. A

disciplined and well-orchestrated assessment process revealed that Dr. Harper stood above the rest.

She fully appreciates the weight of the challenges facing higher education. She believes in culture and leadership as core to overcoming obstacles and positioning teams for success. She appreciates the balance of fiscal responsibility while investing in the future of our community, most importantly our students.

As a former professor and administrator at McMurry, Dr. Harper knows the strengths of our institution, our heritage and our passions. She knows us, our culture and our community. She has returned home.

Dr. Sandra Harper is already putting her imprint on this wonderful institution that she knows so well. She brings passion, inspiration and resolve to the position of President. Dr. Harper is someone I am extremely proud to know and our appreciation of her is certain to grow as the years go by and McMurry University stands even prouder still.



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Board of Trustees Achieve 100% Donor Participation

For the second year in a row, the McMurry Board of Trustees has achieved 100% participation in giving to the McMurry Fund. This year, total Board giving achieved \$148,166, exceeding the goal of \$120,000 by 23%. In addressing the board, outgoing Chairman Chuck Fallon stated "It is with a sincerely deep sense of pride that I can now share with you the results of our McMurry Annual Fund Century Plus Campaign for this fiscal year. I cannot begin to express the joy this brings and how blessed I am to be associated with this Board of Trustees. Thank you all so very much for your commitments to McMurry and each other. You all have given of yourselves to this exceptional institution and have committed to a purpose which is coming at a most important time in our rich history."



Students Win Prestigious Award

McMurry delegates, representing Timor-Leste at the 2014 National Model UN conference in NYC, won Honorable Mention! This award is extremely prestigious, as 196 delegations from every country and 3 NGO's participated. Kudos to: from left to right, (seated) Douglas Alldredge '15, Salome Block '15, Evelyn Gonzalez '16, Laetitia Doria '15, Ashleigh Hoover '14, (standing) Matthew Brown '16, Joshua Brooks '15 (Head Delegate), Megan Rausch '14, Kirk Hodel '15, and Keith Wagner '15.



Chris Veail demonstrates the "Flying Push-up" for KXVA sports reporter Alex Sims during a recent interview.

When Push (up) Comes to Shove

Sophomore Chris Veail '16, a member of the War Hawks track and field team and a product of Abilene High School, got a impulse that he wanted to attempt to do the highest "Flying Push-up" ever recorded. Today, Veail is the world record-holder in that category. On January 10, Veail propelled himself 4'6" to eclipse the previous "Flying Push-up" record by an inch. Four days later, Veail received an email confirmation from the organization RecordSetter, that his effort was accepted as a new world record in the event. A "Flying Push-up" is done with the competitor in a typical push-up position on the floor, surrounded by four pillars at an equal height at each "corner" of his body. The object is to explode upward out of the push-up position, catch your hands and feet at the top of each pillar and then "push" yourself upward into a completed push-up position on top of the pillars.

Art Students Works Accepted into Competitions

Several art students received awards in the annual Intercollegiate Art Competition, a juried exhibit of artwork by students from Abilene colleges and universities. Eric Britt '14 a senior studio art major graduated in December, won Best of Show with a piece about President John F. Kennedy and Christian Palmer '14, a senior double major in studio art and theater from Abilene, won first prize in 3-D with his ceramic torso. Keith Waggoner '15, a junior English major from Abilene, won third place in photography. Rebecca Schneller '15, a studio art major from Abilene, Austin Chapman '14, a studio art major from Hawley, and Taylor Cass '15, a studio art major from Abilene, all had art accepted into the professional Art Competition, Stars of Texas, in Brownwood, Texas.



Fall 2013 Commencement Awards 53 Degrees

The McMurry Alumni Association added 53 new members to its ranks as they walked across the stage to receive their degrees during the Fall 2013 Commencement in Radford Auditorium. Dr. Philip LeMasters, Dean of the School of Social Sciences and Religion, Director of the Honors Program and a Professor of Religion at McMurry University, was the featured speaker. Dr. LeMasters joined the University's faculty in 1995 after teaching briefly at both Wake Forest University and Northeast Missouri State University. The recipient of the Gordon R. and Lola J. Bennett Award for Outstanding Teaching, Leadership, and Service in 2001, he has also held the Turner Distinguished Chair in Religion. The School of Arts & Letters awarded seven degrees; the School of Business awarded 16 degrees; the School of Education awarded 12 degrees; the School of Natural and Computational Sciences awarded four degrees; and the School of Social Sciences and Religion awarded 14 degrees.

LeMasters Presents Talk

Under the auspices of the Faculty Colloquium Series of the School of Social Sciences and Religion, Dr. Philip LeMasters gave a talk Tuesday, March 25, based on the paper he presented at the national meeting of the Society of Christian Ethics entitled "Philanthropia in Liturgy and Life: The Anaphora of Basil the Great and Eastern Orthodox Social Ethics."

Knox-Bennett Writers Series

The McMurry Knox-Bennett Writers Series presented nationally acclaimed writer Peter Turchi on March 27-28. Mr. Turchi, a professor of creative writing program at the University of Houston, presented a lecture based on his new book, *A Muse and A Maze: Writing as Puzzle, Mystery, and Magic* in the foyer of the Ryan Fine Arts Building.



Erika Larson '14 and Jaclyn Burch

Education Names Top Student Teachers

The McMurry School of Education is proud to announce the Student Teachers of the Year for 2013-14. The Outstanding Elementary Student Teacher of the Year is Erika Larson '14 and the Secondary Student Teacher of the Year is Jaclyn Burch. Larson has been actively engaged in volunteering in the community and at St. John's Episcopal School. She is a member of Phi Theta Kappa, Kappa Delta Pi and Alpha Chi honor societies. She recently represented the School of Education at the Women's Leadership Conference held on the McMurry campus. She has been named to the Dean's Honor Roll and the Dean's List each semester during the time she has been at McMurry University. She will receive her Bachelor of Science degree in May. Burch is a 2011 graduate from California State University of Northridge and holds a Bachelor's degree in Art Education. She is enrolled in the FasTrack program at McMurry University and is currently student teaching and completing Texas certification. She will be certified to teach EC-12 Art and completed her certification requirements in May.



Students gathered on a chilly spring morning beside the library. Some ran, some walked, and some did a little of both—all in memory of a special McMurry alumnae, Lauren Bump '10, who was murdered in San Antonio while running over Christmas break. Above, Lauren's old social club, Gamma Sigma, gather to remember their sister.

McMurry Named a Best College for Veterans

McMurry University was one of 234 ranked schools nationwide included in the list of *U.S. News & World Report's* inaugural "Best Colleges for Veterans." McMurry was recognized in the Regional Colleges – West Region. The 234 schools in the new list scored well in terms of graduation rate, faculty resources, reputation and other markers of academic quality measured in the 2014 edition of the U.S. News Best Colleges. To qualify for the new rankings, the schools also had to be certified for the GI Bill and participate in the Yellow Ribbon Program, two federal initiatives that help veterans reduce the cost of school.



Student Plays in Inaugural Intercollegiate Band

Senior Joey Gonzales '14 participated in the inaugural Intercollegiate Band for the Southwest Division of the College Band Directors National Association. Members were selected from undergraduate and graduate students from Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. Joey was the only student selected from any school in west Texas.



Dr. Frazier prepares for his interview with The Travel Channel's Steve DiSchiavi.

Frazier Featured on Television Show

Dr. Don Frazier visited with former NYPD homicide detective Steve DiSchiavi of the Travel Channel's "The Dead Files" about local Indians, buffalo hunters, and one of the area's earliest land owners, John Hunter Herndon in the Jay-Rollins Library. The show is scheduled to air later this summer.

"The Dead Files" is an American paranormal television series that premiered on September 23, 2011, on the Travel Channel. The program features psychic medium Amy Allan and DiSchiavi as they investigate locations that are reported to be haunted. The show initially airs new episodes on Fridays. Dr. Frazier also was featured on The Travel Channel's "Dig Wars" this summer.

Chemistry Student Wins Award

Bradley Rowland '14 was selected to receive a Pfizer SOT Undergraduate Student Travel Award for the 2014 Annual Meeting of the Society of Toxicology (SOT) in Phoenix, AZ. Brad is currently working at the TTU School of Pharmacy with Dr. Irene La-Beck and applying to graduate schools with programs in biotech. He has helped to develop a digital algorithm to count blood vessels in whole tumor sections.



History Majors Dominate Statewide Competition

History majors achieved top honors at the annual meeting of the Texas State Historical Association (TSHA) in San Antonio. Besting their peers from universities and colleges from across the state, Katie Hinton '15 and Ashley Dandridge '15 brought home first- and second-place awards in the upper division of the TSHA's C. M. Caldwell Memorial Awards for Excellence in History. Hinton earned a first-place certificate and a \$400 award for her paper entitled, "Time in Stitches: Quilting in Floyd County." Dandridge secured the second-place award and a \$300 award for her paper, "Black Education in Hamlin, Texas: Early Years to Integration." Both women are also inductees of Phi Alpha Theta, the national history honor society. Ashley Mayer, the president of the McMurry chapter, attended the annual conference of Texas historians and was present as her classmates accepted their prizes. Stephen L. Hardin, McMurry history professor and Phi Alpha Theta sponsor, also attended the award ceremony. Hinton and Dandridge wrote their award-winning monographs as part of the History Department's Historical Methods and Senior Seminar courses, co-taught by professors Stephen L. Hardin and Robert T. Maberry. These awards are a testament to the efficacy of the department's celebrated writing program, which devotes an entire semester to teaching the techniques of historical research and another to scholarly writing. The achievements of these young women are all the more impressive when one considers that the TSHA meeting was the first scholarly conference they had ever attended.

Chemistry Department Receives Welch Grant

The Chemistry department has received a \$25,000 Welch Foundation grant for the 2014-15 school year. This grant is instrumental in funding the department's summer research program. The Welch foundation grant assists in underwriting undergraduate research, supervised by faculty members. Each summer, several students are accepted into the program and work alongside faculty members. They attend a seminar where they present their research to other students at local universities, and construct a poster. "This program is very important to the School of Natural and Computational Sciences, and we are pleased that we will be able to continue our legacy of involving students in chemical research," said Dr. Alicia Wyatt.



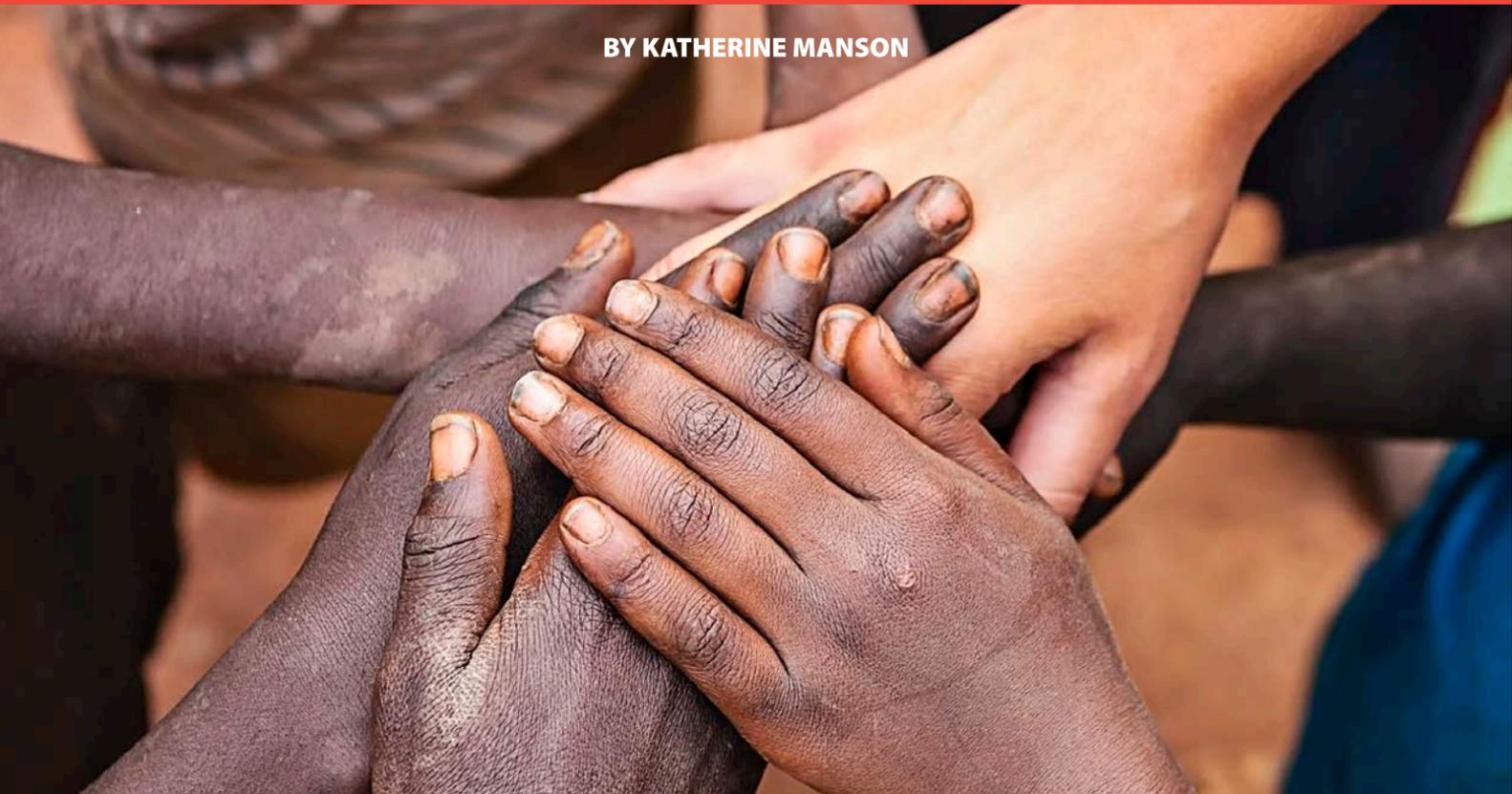
REHAB Volunteers

Twelve McMurry staff, students and family members took part in the 2014 West Texas Rehabilitation Center Phone-a-thon on January 15. The WTRC raised \$42,500 over the three-hour calling period.



Promoting Peace to Others Around the World A Passion to Help

BY KATHERINE MANSON



Shannon Sedgwick Davis '96 believes in listening to your heart, and doing exactly what it is you are uniquely created to do in this world. For the McMurry University and Baylor Law graduate, that purpose is promoting peace and fighting for social justice, international human rights, and ending atrocities across the globe.

“I believe each person is created with a very special, unique set of gifts and abilities to contribute to others, and to contribute to the world,” Shannon said.

Shannon has been passionate about helping others all her life. Prior to her professional career, Shannon believes the freedom she was given as a child and in her education at McMurry, helped shape and reinforce what it was she was created to do.

While enrolled at McMurry, Shannon was extremely active in a number of organizations and activities; including student council, Model UN, the political science department, and Servant Leadership.

“It was a real blessing to be a part of those opportunities that further prepared me for precisely what I was built to contribute in my lifetime. McMurry continued to further sharpen the heart that I had for service to others,” Shannon said.

According to Shannon, the Rwanda genocide is one that truly impacted her life. As a member of the Model UN team at McMurry, Shannon urged her teammates to choose Rwanda as their country to represent, regardless of its small size, because of her strong passion.

“It really is quite embarrassing to me as a human being, that a million people were wiped off the planet in a period of ten weeks and I feel like I didn’t even really hear about it until bodies were floating in the river that much later,” Shannon said. “It’s such an incredible sore on humanity.”

It’s these injustices that drove Shannon to help organize McMurry’s first annual service day, while she was a student at the school. The service day is still organized each year and unites the McMurry



Shannon Davis travels the world to promote peace.

student body together in a variety of projects geared towards bettering the city of Abilene, and the community as a whole.

“The biggest benefit that McMurry brought to me, that I think you would really have a hard

“It’s beyond academics. It’s about having teachers invested in who you become as an adult, and in your life on this planet. There’s just a true commitment from McMurry to that.”

time finding in any other institution, would be the investment of the professors who were just extraordinarily invested in each student,” Shannon said. “As long as students have a real desire to want to understand and figure out what makes their heart beat fast, and how they should be investing in the world, those professors are there to help facilitate that.”



Shannon Davis works with women and children worldwide to further human rights.

“It’s beyond academics. It’s about having teachers invested in who you become as an adult, and in your life on this planet. There’s just a true commitment from McMurry to that.”

Shannon was recognized by the McMurry Alumni Association Board of Directors in 2011 as the inaugural Spirit of McMurry Award winner. The award is presented each year to alumni who have shown excellence in their professions and in service to their community. Working for the better good of humanity is something Shannon is grateful to wake up and strive for each day.

“The heroism of the mothers and children that I work with is incredibly humbling. They’re living on the front lines of some of the world’s greatest injustices, so when you hear their stories and they are being told to you, parent-to-parent, mother-to-mother, you have no choice but to respond with what you have, and it’s such a privilege to do that,” Shannon said.

“This amount of suffering, of five-year-olds being sold for sex in a brothel, kids dying because they don’t have enough food to eat while we live over here with crazy amounts of excess, children being forced to kill their parents and then carry a gun and fight in a rebel war with a cause that’s not even a real cause; it’s hard to reconcile those things,” Shannon said.

Shannon is currently the CEO of the Bridgeway Foundation, the charitable giving arm of Bridgeway Capital Management, Inc., a company that focuses whole-heartedly on their philanthropic mission of eliminating genocides and promoting peace, reconciliation and human rights around the world. The company donates at least half of their profits each year, many times more, in the pursuit of stopping injustice.

“Our heart is that we will live in a world where we all recognize how valuable we are to each other,” Shannon said. “Whether we live across the



Shannon Davis poses with The Elders, an independent group of global leaders founded in 2007 by Nelson Mandela.

globe from each other, we’re next door neighbors, or biologically brothers or sisters, it’s that greater understanding of our interconnectivity that drives us to show up for others when bad things happen. Show up early and show up on time in a way that is able to affect the situations, and hopefully that’s leading to a more just and peaceful world.”

She previously served as vice president of Geneva Global, a philanthropic consulting firm specializing in international development, global healthy, and poverty solutions; and as Director of Public Affairs at International Justice Mission, a human rights agency in Washington, D.C. that focuses on rescuing victims of slavery, sexual exploitation, and other forms of violent oppression.

The San Antonio native has accomplished much throughout her career, yet feels there is always more that can be done. Of her many accomplishments, she is most proud to be the mother of her two young boys, but as far as her mission work, she says it is each present day and the significant strides that make her proud.

“One of the biggest responsibilities I have as

a parent is to model to my children a life that I would want them to pursue, and to not be scared to do the right thing in the face of injustice,” Shannon said.

Shannon has experienced first-hand what most have only read about. She has traveled to countries experiencing profound suffering and witnessed profound need. Her wisdom comes with years of fighting for peace, and for justice for all human beings.

“Every day, no matter where you are whether it’s here at home or overseas, we as human beings have the responsibility to show up, and show up on time. That’s such a key thing. The world tends to show up after the crisis has emerged and so what I do for myself, whether I’m at home or abroad, is to try to be fully present wherever I am,” Shannon said. “Just be present wherever you are. Take the lead. If there’s something stirring in your heart and it has been stirring in your heart more than once or twice, it’s probably because you were born to do it. If you listen to that, you can figure out what’s next and follow whatever dreams you have.”

Relationships & Leadership

Dr. Sandra Harper's Early Years at McMurry

BY SHANA BRISTOW '92

As McMurry prepared to celebrate the inauguration of Dr. Sandra S. Harper as president, the university also celebrated the return of a respected colleague. Those who were able to work and learn with her during her initial

tenure at McMurry from 1985-1995, recognize what she represents – a dynamic force for good.

A quick look at her activities and honors are testament to her accomplished work:

- Chaired or served on numerous task forces and committees that heavily influenced academics
- Helped guide McMurry's delicate transition from college to university and became the first dean of the College of Arts and Sciences
- Served as faculty council chair for four years and on a presidential search committee
- Garnered peer and community recognition through dozens of authored papers and presentations
- Co-authored many grants to strengthen academics and bring technology to campus
- Served as McMurry Student Government sponsor 1991-95
- Named Outstanding Faculty Member in 1988 and Outstanding Administrator in 1993

She, along with other campus innovators, founded the Servant Leadership program before the term was commonplace. Under her guidance, it quickly became a program which encompassed the values a McMurry education represents and taught students how to become effective leaders with pragmatic experience.

All the while teaching classes and raising a young family.

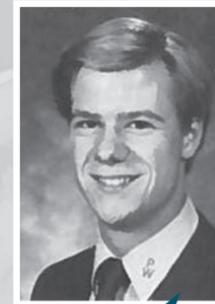
Those who know her would say that she will give you the straight truth in the most diplomatic manner. Her statements are intentional, well-thought out. She has a wicked sense of humor. If you were her student, you know you earned your grade – and you come away yearning for the next class.

Several of her former students give their perspectives on Dr. Harper as professor, advisor, and mentor. What you'll read about is vintage Sandra Harper. A common thread of distinct traits run through everyone's experience with her – and makes her beloved, respected, and unforgettable.

"If you were her student, you know you earned your grade – and you come away yearning for the next class."



From a caption in the the 1994 Totem: "Dr. Sandra Harper brings the house down with greetings from the administration" at Dr. Robert Shimp's inauguration.



Parker Wilson '89

Favorite Memory:

Dr. Harper was my academic advisor and mentor throughout my McMurry experience. My best memory was of our speech class (forensics team, and Pi Kappa Delta). Dr. Harper was a good leader with a great sense of humor, and a great instructor who motivated and challenged us. She was always smiling and always had some positive, intelligent, and motivational things to tell us, and was a pleasure to be around.

Experience:

Her door was always open, and she was easy to talk to. She would always listen to me when I had something to discuss (good or bad) and was very motivational, but challenged me to challenge myself, and do my best. She was a great mentor.

Lasting Impact:

I was able to achieve more, and have more self-confidence due to the skills that she helped instill in me. I have always been in a managerial or sales role, so what she taught me has always been put into practical use and beneficial to my career in the "real world," which are skills that are so important for a young person to have when entering the work force. Many colleges don't teach you a lot of things that you can immediately use in the real world to achieve success, but McMurry and Dr. Harper gave me those things... and I still use them today.

"Her door was always open, and she was easy to talk to. She...challenged me to challenge myself, and do my best."

Marli George Chapman '90

Favorite Memory:

When I graduated, Dr. Harper took Jennifer Finch '91 and me to a nice dinner at a local steakhouse. If you know Dr. Harper, she has such a commanding voice, not terribly 'girly'. When dinner was over, she told the waiter, "Check, please," in this cute little girly voice that I had never heard before. It was just out of character for her, and we laughed and laughed about it.

Experience:

Dr. Harper was both my advisor and a professor in many classes, including Intro to Communication. In class, she was extremely tough, but always fair. She expected your best, but would go above and beyond to help you achieve your best. As an advisor, she cared about you as an individual and the other things

"She helped me gain such confidence in myself and my abilities that I had lacked before taking her classes."

going on in your life when planning your schedule, but also suggested classes she knew would interest and challenge you.

Lasting Impact:

Because of my class with her my very first semester at McMurry, I changed my mind entirely on the direction and focus for my life. She made communication interesting and fun. I changed my major, and she helped me see all the areas of business and life that a degree in communication could take me. She helped me gain such confidence in myself and my abilities that I had lacked before taking her classes. She truly became my role model for a successful woman. I respected her as a professional, particularly a professional woman, which I hadn't seen much of at that point in my young and inexperienced world.





Len Wilson '92

Experience and Lasting Impact:

It's not hyperbole to say that Sandra Harper changed my life.

Like most incoming freshmen, my career plans consisted of an indiscriminate stew of eclectic passions. I loved writing, history, cultural studies, music, film, radio, television and computers, ministry and more. I was an English major, but like many freshmen, I was searching for direction.

In my first semester, an English professor's cynicism made me question my field of study. Fortunately, or perhaps providentially,

I'd also taken Dr. Harper's Presidential Communication elective, which offered real time analysis of the fall 1988 presidential political campaign. From her intelligence, enthusiasm, and expertise as a teacher, I fell in love with the discipline of communication.

I went on to apply communication studies to ministry in a variety of church settings, and have just completed my tenth book in the field. For any impact my calling has had on the ability of congregations to communicate the gospel of Jesus, I credit Dr. Harper with being the catalyst.

"From her intelligence, enthusiasm, and expertise as a teacher, I fell in love with the discipline of communication."



Denise Wilks Saltz '92

Favorite Memory:

A short time before graduation, my college roommate, Shana Norman Bristow '92, and I scheduled

a time with Dr. Harper because we were panicking and wanted her input as to "what we should do with our post-McMurry lives." I have no idea if she contributed anything to actually ease those anxieties, but I do remember after

several minutes of her trademark laughter, as we were leaving her office, she left us with this final wisdom: Make sure you wear off-black hose under your graduation robe. It looks SHARP. Of course, we did.

Experience:

It was a scrawled comment Dr. Harper wrote at the bottom of a speech critique that led me to spend the next three years in the Ryan Fine

Arts building. She suggested that if I was not a communication major, then perhaps I should be.

The remainder of my McMurry years included essentially every course offering with "Harper" listed in the corresponding instructor column, and while many of the techniques she taught are now forgotten, the strong sense of ethics she instilled has shaped my perceptions and interactions in innumerable ways. She taught what it meant to be a "servant leader" before I knew a term for those qualities.

Lasting Impact:

I was very excited to receive the 2013 email that Dr. Harper had been named president of McMurry University. When I remember her has a professor, McMurry Student Government advisor or mentor for what in the early 1990s was an innovative and inaugural Servant Leadership program, I recall the same straightforward wisdom that I know will prove invaluable to the future of McMurry University.

"She taught me what it meant to be a 'servant leader' before I knew a term for those qualities."

Dutch Driver '94

Favorite Memory:

I have favorite memories spread across mass communication and persuasion classes and the pre-test review sessions. These sessions were bonding, as she took time to sit with a class and review the research of our findings on the "study guide" outline she provided. I asked her once if she constructed the actual test *after* the review session so she could fashion her test questions based upon what we didn't know. No answer except that whimsically impish grin she has when she knows more than she is going to disclose to a mere student.

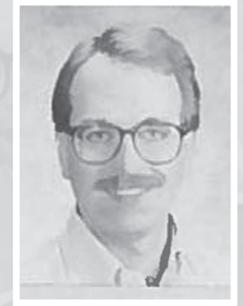
Dr. Harper assigned Lon Outland '93, Kelly McGill '92, Matt Drumheller '93 and I to present a group project on a mass communication subject. We chose CMT (Country Music Television). She grouped us together thinking the group dynamics of four highly driven students would implode ... thinking we'd have to learn to get along or fail miserably. BUT, we got along famously, delegated roles and tasks and on presentation day, we blew her away with our research, unity and presentation ... Machiavelli Harper had not figured us out

quite right and gave us a 99.5 because she didn't believe in students getting a perfect mark or some such malarkey and commented that it was one of the best presentations she'd had.

Lasting Impact:

I was working on a paper for one of Dr. Harper's classes and received notice from her assistant that Dr. Harper wanted me to come by her office to pick something up. She left a brown paper envelope with a newspaper clipping of an article that was relevant to my paper. I knew she was extremely busy, and for her to take time to clip the article and get it to me meant a great deal. To this day, I share links of articles with family, friends, and colleagues partially to "pay it forward," but also because somewhere in my past is a dear professor who is busier than me and clipping newspaper articles for her students.

"To this day, I share links of articles with family, friends, and colleagues partially to 'pay it forward,'..."



Shana Bristow '92

Like others profiled in this piece, my own experiences with Dr. Harper have shaped me, even in ways I did not fully realize until later. Working as a summer research assistant not only afforded me the opportunity to learn the key principles of academic research, but also honed my organizational skills. Being a preceptor in the first Servant Leadership class gave me the opportunity to both learn and immediately apply that knowledge, something I continue on a daily basis.

When I was working on my honors thesis and nearing a major deadline, she worked with me until the middle of the night guiding me on shaping it. I learned to take constructive feedback to make something better and that supporting someone sometimes means going the extra mile (or hours).

It's what I try to do with my own work teams now. I still consider her my mentor and am proud to have such a strong woman as a leader, role model and friend.

I learned about the search for a new president and, had absolute confidence the best candidate was Dr. Sandra S. Harper. She's just what McMurry needs. But don't take my word for it. Those who know her will say the same thing. She'll always have McMurry's best interest at heart, and she'll genuinely care about individual students and their success.

What more could you ask for in a president?





THE 12TH PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION

When Dr. Sandra S. Harper was announced McMurry's 12th president, everyone wanted to celebrate, meet her and hear about her vision. Four days of activities gave every arm of the McMurry community a chance to do just that, with events tailored for students, women, alumni, and the Abilene community.

100 Women, 100 Words Art Exhibit and Reception

This exhibit by women about womanhood was the brainchild of Dr. Chris Wilson, Dean of Arts and Letters. Visually and verbally, women portrayed their ideas and feelings about being a woman. The canvases provided intimate glimpses of victories and challenges unique to each woman "artist" and consequently, a fitting incorporation into our Women's History Month inauguration festivities.



Women's Leadership Luncheon



Women leaders converged on McMurry's campus for a luncheon to celebrate the collective achievements of women leaders and to glean wisdom from keynote speakers who shared their life experiences and journeys to success in their fields. Keynote speakers were Dr. Sarah Weddington, Pam Benson Owens and Dr. Harper. A surprise announcement of the launch of the Dr. Sandra S. Harper Women's Leadership Scholarship was a highlight of the event that served to enrich relationships and inspire excellence.





THE 12TH PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION

Student Forum and Alumni Reception



Students enjoyed the unique opportunity to interact with three phenomenal women leaders who shared their personal leadership journeys. Dr. Harper, as the first woman president of an Abilene university, inspired the young leaders during the forum, as well as the alumni who came to greet her during the alumni reception on the eve of her inauguration.

Inaugural Concert, Inauguration Reception and Prayer Breakfast

Breathtakingly beautiful music and spiritually uplifting prayer set the tone for the inauguration ceremony of McMurry's 12th president with pomp and reverence. The McMurry Chanters, concert bands and ensembles showcased student talent and inspired pride, and the prayer breakfast united hearts in prayers for Dr. Harper and the University. A reception after the inaugural ceremony was a celebration of the end of a successful week of festivities and the official launch of a new era at McMurry University.





“Now, let’s get on with it!”

In one enthusiastic command, Dr. Sandra S. Harper, McMurry University’s 12th president, ended her inauguration speech and kicked off an exciting new era in the life of our university.

BY LORETTA FULTON

THE 12TH
PRESIDENTIAL
INAUGURATION
CEREMONY



DR. SANDRA S. HARPER

“McMurry is about building lives as if they were works of art.”





THE 12TH PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION

Harper's speech, delivered during the March 20 inauguration ceremony, was met by a standing ovation from dignitaries, faculty, staff, students, trustees, and friends of the university.

Just before the conclusion of her speech, Harper had laid out some objectives for the university as it heads toward its centennial year in 2023. As she ended the outline of her envisioned path forward, Harper quoted the late Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, who once told a group of young people, "Above all, remember that you must build your life as if it were a work of art."

"That is what we are about at McMurry University," Harper said.

The inauguration ceremony highlighted a week of festivities heralding Harper's tenure as McMurry's first female president and the first woman to lead any of Abilene's universities. Opening of the innovative "100 Women, 100 Words" art exhibit got inauguration week off to a grand start, followed by student events with Harper, meeting with the Northwest Texas and New Mexico Conferences bishop's cabinet, concerts, and the Women's Leadership Luncheon.

Harper opened her inauguration speech by thanking everyone who made those events run seamlessly.



"You make everyone at McMurry proud," Harper said. "Especially me."

Harper's powerful speech was just one component of the inauguration ceremony, titled, "A New Academic Era Begins: Educating for the Greater Good."

Harper began her presidency October 1, 2013, moving back to Abilene from Baton Rouge, La., where she was president from 2006 to 2013. Prior to that, she was provost and vice president for academic affairs and professor of communication at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi from 1998 to 2006.

Harper began her service at McMurry in 1985 as an assistant professor of communication. During the next ten years, she was awarded tenure and rose through the academic ranks to professor of communication. She also began her administrative career at McMurry, serving as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

One of the inauguration speakers and former co-worker with Harper, Diana Ivy, noted that

"If education's only role were job creation, we wouldn't recognize our own society."

March is Women's History Month, making it the perfect time for Harper's inauguration. She also noted that this will be Harper's second presidency. As much as Ivy appreciates "firsts" in women's history, it's the follow-ups that are really impressive.

"It's the seconds, thirds, and fourths I want to celebrate," she said.

Ivy saluted McMurry for its wisdom in hiring Harper, who she worked alongside at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

"Amen, well done," she said.

In her speech, Harper cited a recent article from *The Chronicle of Higher Education* that noted the fleeting tenures of college presidents.

"The colleges and universities they serve is what endures," Harper quoted. "College presidents are links in a great chain of institutional being."

Harper said that chain was symbolized by the presence of Dr. John Russell and his wife, Gerri, as well as family members representing the late Dr. Thomas Kim and Dr. Gordon Bennett.

She talked about the vision that Dr. James Winford Hunt had for establishing a Methodist

college in West Texas. Harper cited a passage from a history of McMurry, "Pride of Our Western Prairies," which showed the university's support of and dependence on women faculty members from the beginning.

"So impactful were these women," Harper said, "that even to this day alumni as recently as this past month were asking me to spearhead a project to make sure they are memorialized on this campus."

Throughout her speech, Harper used the phrase, "McMurry Matters" because of the quality liberal arts education it provides in preparing students for the workforce and for life, and the core values it instills.

"If education's only role were job creation," she said, "we wouldn't recognize our own society."

While continuing to do what it always has done, McMurry also will see some new initiatives over the next decade. Harper listed several objectives, among them:

Expanded commitment to **community partnerships**

Expanded commitment to **first-generation students** and the expectation that McMurry will become a Hispanic Serving Institution

Emphasis on service in all its forms to the level that McMurry will be recognized as a **Carnegie Community Engaged Institution**

Expanded commitment to global competency with the **launching of a new Center for Global Leadership**

The expectations and commitments will extend McMurry's impact, Harper said, but the vital question is, "What is it all about?" And, then she issued her charge to the faculty, staff, students, all present who love McMurry.

"Now," she said, "let's get on with it!"



To watch a video of Harper's inaugural address, visit about.mcm.edu/inaugural

Portraits OF SUCCESSFUL ALUMNAE

Success can be measured in many ways. But however you measure success, attaining it requires certain characteristics – sacrifice, challenge, motivation, hard work, knowledge, skill and attitude.

The following stories highlighting successful McMurry women recognize their many accomplishments and talents and, underlying it all, their alma mater's role in developing and equipping them for success on their life journeys.



ASH Almonte '08

BY LORETTA FULTON

McMurry graduate Ash Almonte '08 could rightfully boast about several achievements in the world of fine art.

But perhaps the best evidence that she has “made it” in that highly competitive world isn’t what’s hanging on walls in public facilities and private homes. Maybe it’s in what she said.

“I can eat!” Almonte exclaimed, signifying that she has, indeed, made it as a full-time artist.

Almonte earned a bachelor of fine arts degree from McMurry in 2008. She acknowledged that many people had helped her get to where she is today, including her husband, Erwin Almonte '05, who also is a McMurry graduate, and folks in the McMurry art department.

Today, the couple lives in Austin where Erwin works for a software developer and Ash paints in her home studio. Her works, all abstract impressionism, are for sale at the Russell Collection Fine Art Gallery in Austin. An imaginative work also can be seen in the new center for breast cancer patients at Seton Hospital. The 3 by 7-foot work is a collection of fingerprints of everyone who helped establish the center. Someone who saw Almonte’s work in the Russell gallery commissioned the work.

“I’ve never done anything like that before,” she said.

Almonte knew as a child she wanted to be an artist and found support first at Hawley High School and then at McMurry. Her Hawley art teacher, Eynne Cassey, convinced Almonte that she could go to college, major in art, and become a full-time artist.

Once she got to McMurry, she found others who nurtured and inspired her, including Judy Deaton who at the time taught art history at McMurry and art professor Kathie Walker-Millar.

Walker-Millar’s husband, Larry Millar, knew Almonte’s husband and was aware of Ash’s talent.



He and his wife helped persuade Ash to attend McMurry. She immediately took to Kathie Walker-Millar and her classes.

“I felt like I knew someone,” Almonte said. “I felt comfortable around her.”

The relationship blossomed and today Walker-Millar has equally high praise for her former student, whom she has invited back to campus to speak to current art students.

“She’s a jewel,” Walker-Millar said.

While at McMurry, Almonte worked extremely hard, was an insatiable learner, and took her opportunity seriously. Almonte had many good traits, Walker-Millar said, but one characteristic really stood out.

“She was extremely teachable,” Walker-Millar remembered. “She was extraordinary.”

Almonte was born and raised in Abilene. Her father, Herschel McCoy still lives in Abilene. Her mother, Montie Deaver, and stepfather live in Austin.

Almonte graduated from Hawley High School in 2002 and began thinking about college and learning to be a professional artist. She was awarded the Perry Bentley Art Scholarship, which made it possible to attend McMurry.

Her training under expert eyes at McMurry made it possible for Almonte to reach the goals

she has attained in the competitive art world. In 2010, she was commissioned by the Abilene Philharmonic Association to create a painting in observance of the philharmonic's 60th anniversary. The painting was auctioned and used to create posters and mailings.

Now, she has been commissioned for the Seton Hospital piece and has sold works to private citizens who want to add some pizzazz to their walls.

Almonte credits her expert tutelage and

enriching environment at McMurry for giving her the tools she needs to succeed. She enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere, comfortable setting, and knowledgeable, caring faculty.

Now, it's time to celebrate. Almonte has the credentials to say she has "made it" in the art world.

"It has been challenging, but nice," she said. "I make sure I give thanks every day."

JORI Sechrist '01

BY KATHERINE MANSON

For Dr. Jori Sechrist '01, McMurry has always been a part of her life. The 2001 graduate not only married a fellow graduate; but her older sister, cousin, and sister-in-law are all graduates as well.

"McMurry has always held a lot of history to me and my family," Jori explained. In the fall of 2014, she will continue building upon that

factors in the success of students. They work really hard, and professors that work hard alongside of them make a big difference."

While a student at McMurry, Jori participated in a number of social and leadership activities including T.I.P. and student government.

"My experiences at McMurry helped shape me, and also make me successful in my career," she said. "My involvement helped shape my leadership skills, confidence, and also being able to navigate social relationships. The challenges of time management I learned while at McMurry especially helped me succeed in graduate school."

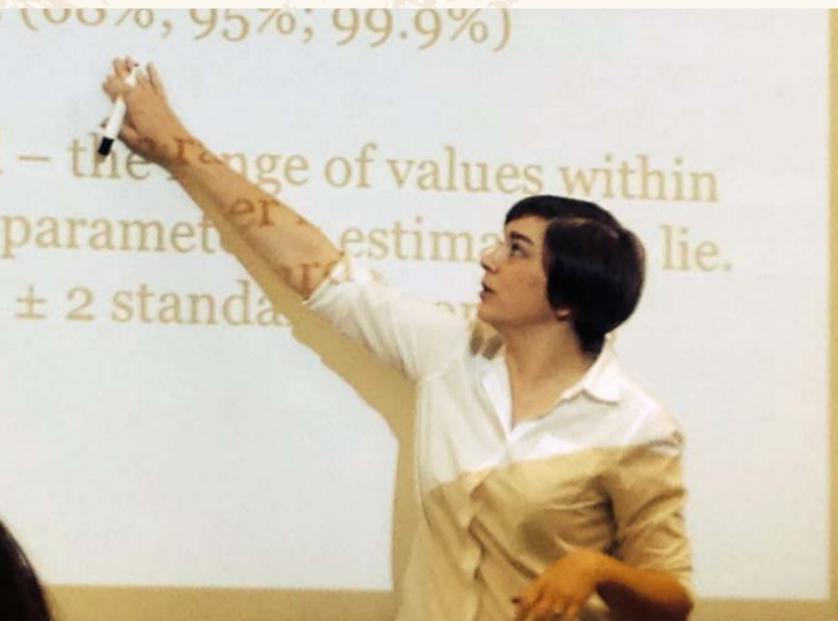
After she graduated McMurry, she received her master's and Ph.D in sociology from Purdue University where she focused her research and studies on family caregiving, aging, race and ethnicity, health and well-being, and intergenerational relations. She began teaching at the University of Texas-Pan American as an assistant professor of Sociology.

"Part of what I do in class is to get students to understand first, that old age isn't as bad as everyone on the young age of the spectrum thinks it might be. But also, that it is connected to what we do now," said Jori. "All of our health, our well-being, and our financial well-being, is connected to the decisions we are making right now."

It was her undergraduate experience at

history as a new Assistant Professor of sociology in McMurry's Sociology department.

"I'm really excited to go back to McMurry. I think hard work is one of the most important



JENNIFER Harper '93

BY LORETTA FULTON

Jennifer Harper '93 isn't shy about giving credit to God and to people in her life for her success. That's why it is easy for her to talk about her McMurry experience, where she got all the support she needed as a non-traditional student and was nurtured by a Christian environment.

She easily points to people at McMurry who made it possible for her to earn a bachelor's degree in business administration/finance in 1995 when she was in her late 30s, had a full-time job, was a wife and mother.

Harper's husband, Melvin Harper Sr., was still in the military then, having been transferred from Germany to Dyess Air Force Base in 1981. When Jennifer decided to get her degree, she didn't have to look far. Right away, she knew McMurry was her choice.

"They had more to offer to non-traditional students," Harper said. "And, I liked that it was a

was able to take a scientific discipline and dive into thinking about why society is the way it is, and why people act and behave in a certain manner.

"It's fun to interact with students and get them to start thinking about issues of social justice and social inequality," said Jori. "One of the cool things about sociology is being able to expand an individual's world view, and getting them to think about other cultures, both in the United States and outside the United States, and how society works."

Her undergraduate time at McMurry broadened her world view and encouraged her to dedicate her efforts to the research and teaching of the science of sociology. The University that has always held a special place in her heart, will soon be even closer than before, as she begins her next chapter as an assistant professor at McMurry.

"McMurry has made a huge impact on my life," Jori said. "It's one of the reasons why I'm going back, to be a part of the family again."

Christian school."

Just like today, Harper was a full-time employee of First Financial Bank in the 1990s when she enrolled at McMurry. She had started work there in September 1981 when the bank was known as First National Bank. Her first job at the bank was as a savings teller.

Harper, now 57, has steadily climbed the ladder, thanks to her college degree, and today is senior vice president for treasury management for First Financial Bank. Her duties include giving presentations to employees of the bank's business partners, assisting with one-to-one banking programs and sales.

Harper took the long route to McMurry, but she is happy she landed here. After graduating from Booker T. Washington High School in Shreveport, La., in 1974, she attended Louisiana State University for a year and then graduated

from the American Express teller training school in Frankfort, Germany, where her husband was stationed.

Harper also graduated from a banking school at Texas Tech before enrolling in McMurry and working at First Financial Bank. Except for



January 1998 to August 1999 when Harper was assistant director of financial aid at McMurry, she has been employed by First Financial Bank.

The two are in her blood, and she credits First Financial Bankshares President and CEO Scott Dueser, along with others at the bank, and people at McMurry for helping her succeed. Harper said that while she was a student at

McMurry, a network of other students and faculty was especially beneficial.

“They were very supportive,” Harper said. “The common goal was for everyone who was there to be successful.”

Among those she cited as being an excellent mentor at McMurry was Ann Liprie-Spence, who teaches in the School of Business and formerly was director of the university’s Servant Leadership Center of the Southwest. “She was very encouraging on that path,” Harper said.

Harper also cited Dr. Phillip Egdorf, a former business professor, who led a one-week study trip to England that Harper took part in. Those people, and more, made it possible for Harper to achieve her goal against a number of odds.

“It was a challenge, but it wasn’t hard,” she said, because of the support she received. “You have to work hard for what you get.”

Her experience at McMurry was so positive and her enthusiasm so contagious that one son, Melvin Harper Jr., also went to McMurry, graduating in 1999. Another son, Justin, is a 2001 graduate of Central Michigan University.

Harper learned more than just business at McMurry. She grew up in a family that stressed religion and community. At McMurry, she found a place where both were nurtured, and she today she continues to stress both.

She serves on the board of directors of the United Way and the Abilene Education Foundation. She also is on the administrative team of Bible Study Fellowship and is a Sunday School teacher at Macedonia Baptist Church. For years, she worked with the Boys and Girls Clubs, was on the Salvation Army board and was on a committee that helped get the All-America City status for Abilene.

“I like to give back to the community,” she said, “and I like to help people.”

She credits that attitude to her upbringing and to her church background. “The Holy Spirit leads me,” she said. “I give God all the honor and the glory.”

OGONNA Merritt '00

BY GARY ELLISON

Many times, students entering college have a plan laid out for their future - and sometimes those plans change. Ask Ogonna Merritt '00, who came to McMurry as a communication major and ended up as a Dallas-based attorney with her own practice specializing in Social Security Disability Law.

Merritt admittedly took a different path to law school than most.

“Originally I was a communications major. I was taking a lot of English courses as my elective classes. It was my hobby - reading and writing.”

Merritt had taken several courses from Dr. Chuck Etheridge and “he pulled me to the side one day and said I probably had enough English hours to double major. He was right. I finished with a double major in English and communications.”

It wasn’t until Merritt’s senior year that she decided she wanted to become an attorney. After graduating from McMurry, she earned a law degree from Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University in 2004. She was with the firm of Binder & Binder in Houston and Dallas before striking out on her own in 2009.

The double major was beneficial in preparing her for law school.

“I didn’t make the decision to go to law school until my senior year. It was helpful to have a variety of experiences in my academic career, not just majoring in political science like many students who attend law school.”

Merritt already had some McMurry connections when she arrived in Abilene from her hometown of Midland.

“My uncle, Earnest Merritt '84, and his best friend, Arthur Pertile '83, attended McMurry, so I was familiar with Abilene and the campus.”

While at McMurry, Merritt was a star both in the classroom and on the basketball court.

An Academic All-American, Merritt also is



the all-time women’s steals leader at McMurry. She was elected with the 2013 class to the University’s Athletic Hall of Honor.

She started at point guard all four years at McMurry and finished with 1,194 career points to rank No. 5 on the all-time scoring list. She is easily No. 1 in steals with 414 career thefts, including 12 in one game against Trinity, and is No. 2 in assists with 398.

During her senior season in 1999-00, the team was 24-5 and advanced to the Division III Sweet 16. Merritt led the team in scoring at 13.1 points per game and averaged 4.6 steals and 3.5 assists. A two-time American Southwest Conference West Division Defensive Player of the Year, she was second-team All-South Region and honorable mention All-American as a senior.

While excelling on the court, she was also excelling in class.

Merritt was a writing tutor at the Academic Enrichment Center, helping freshmen, especially athletes, with their writing skills. She was also a

member of Alpha Psi Alpha women's social club and wrote for the Galleon literary magazine. Merritt credits McMurry's family oriented atmosphere with shaping who she is today.

"With a small school you tend to have more family oriented structure, always supportive and encouraging."

She especially recalls the support she received

from the athletic staff.

"Coach (Bev) Ball is still trying to teach me how to swim," Merritt said laughing.

"Coach Bill Libby always had an encouraging word to get you through hard times and (athletic trainers) Doc Hadley and Janet McMurray '96 were always there for us. It really was like a family."

CECILIA '91 Aragon

BY GARY ELLISON

Most college graduates can look back and identify a professor who had a profound influence on their lives. Dr. Cecilia Aragon '91 can immediately name several McMurry professors who shaped her life and career.

Dr. Aragon holds a joint appointment at the University of Wyoming as Director and Coordinator of Theatre Education and Theatre for Young Audiences in the Department of Theatre and Dance and Director of Latina/o Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Her interest in her own heritage blossomed when she took a class with Dr. Bill Short, who taught languages at McMurry for many years before his untimely passing in 2009.

"Dr. Short encouraged me to start the Hispanic Interest Student Association (HISA) on campus. I was the founder and first president," said Dr. Aragon. The association invited speakers to come and address students at lunch meetings. "A lot of Latina/o students came forward as a result. We found both differences and similarities and we realized that we are a pretty diverse group of Latina/o people coming from all places throughout the Southwest."

Dr. Aragon said HISA was a great opportunity to develop and exercise her leadership skills. "I'm very grateful for that experience." Leadership development was also a key element in her involvement in the Alpha Psi Alpha women's social club through her relationship with former

roommate and longtime friend, Dr. Cameo Harvey '89. "Through Alpha Psi, I learned a great deal about service learning, volunteering, and outreach to the community."

Returning to her first love – the theatre – Dr. Aragon named Professors Charlie Hukill and Dr. Philip Craik as inspirations. "They really taught me about the elements of the theatre making process – collaboration, experimentation, aesthetic perceptions, and looking at theatre as a form of cultural action - that made quite an impression on me. Like most theatre majors, I came to McMurry to act." She did act in several plays including a featured role in *Tea House of the August Moon* but found out there was a lot more to theatre than just acting. "They exposed me to all areas of theatre – history, playwriting, design, and directing among others."

And finally, Dr. Aragon developed an intense focus and interest in Latino and Chicano literature through her association with Dr. Chuck Etheridge of the English Department.

"I was a student worker for the English Department. Dr. Etheridge found out my uncle was Rudolfo Anaya, a famous Chicano literary novelist. I never knew there was a field called Chicano literature or Latino literature and that I had a famous uncle who was a prominent writer ... we just knew him as tío Rudy. Dr. Etheridge said I came from a very politically charged background and a very long tradition of the literary arts. He

sparked my interest in looking at Latino and Chicano literature."

Dr. Aragon began to explore this legacy on her own through her uncle's books and other Chicano literature. "I discovered the Chicano movement I had never heard of before. I never saw myself as part of the movement, but the politics aligned with my values and beliefs. It took a professor to put a mirror up against me. It was a profound pivotal moment in my life that made me realize that I came from a political life and a vibrant literary tradition in my family. At this point, I started to discover my own ethnic identity while inquiring about my Uncle Rudy's books."

After McMurry, Dr. Aragon taught at Haskell High School for several years and then decided to return to her hometown of Albuquerque, New Mexico, to get a master's degree in Theatre. "I decided on Latino theatre, poetry, and the works of Chicano writers. I was analyzing how we can bridge literature and the stage through Chicano writers creating dramatic readings and monologues for the stage. That became my entire master's thesis at the University of New Mexico, in addition to starting my own bilingual theatre company, *La Casa Teatro*." She followed that with a Ph.D. in Theatre from Arizona State University in 2003.

"That was my trajectory: Latino theatre and Culture, Indigenous Performances, the Chicano Movement, and Mythology and Folklore. These are my areas of expertise," Dr. Aragon said. "It all started with Dr. Etheridge at McMurry. He pushed me to look at myself in the mirror. He made the student position more than making copies, running errands, and mailing letters. He role-modeled a lot of his own philosophy in the way he lived his own life."

Dr. Aragon's experiences at McMurry, especially working with Dr. Beverly Lenoir also helped her to see how to shape a life as a professor. This had direct influences on Aragon becoming a professor and administrator at the University of Wyoming, where she teaches a range of interdisciplinary courses from U.S. Latina/o Theatre, Chicano



Folklore, Mexican American Literature, Chicano History, courses on gender, sexuality, and ethnicity, introductory classes in Chicano and Latino studies, and travels with students to Spanish-speaking countries. "Right now with the program, we offer a minor and are working to establish a major or bachelor's degree in Latina/o Studies."

Dr. Aragon's choice to attend McMurry and her experiences forever changed her. "I will always appreciate what McMurry has meant in my life."



ATHLETE PROFILE

Keisha Collins '14

When McMurry University women's basketball senior Keshia Collins '14 hit a pair of free throws with three seconds left versus the University of Texas of the Permian Basin on March 1, it marked an end to an amazing career that spanned four seasons and crossed into two different national affiliations. Those two points proved to be the final statistics for a player who labored in relative anonymity, but yet amassed career numbers that were a testament to a balance and greatness in her game like no other McMurry player before her.

Others topped Collins in certain categories. But no one can lay claim, as she did, to both the offensive and defensive aspects of the game. Her work ethic was pure "blue collar," day-in and day-out. Collins is the only player in McMurry women's basketball history to hit all four of the following career markers: 1,000 points, 500 rebounds, 250 steals and 75 blocked shots.

"Keshia has an internal desire to be successful," McMurry head coach Veronica Snow said. "She has been counted on to play great defense and you don't find many players who play defense with the intensity she does and also scores the points. The fact that she rebounds exceptionally well and plays great defense allowed her to score points in such a way that quietly increased her numbers. She didn't have to have the offense set to get a lot of shot opportunities because she was able to get points off steals and offensive rebounds."

In four seasons, Collins answered the bell for 106-consecutive games, never missing a contest. Her career per-game averages speak for themselves: 13.8 points; 6.5 rebounds; 2.7 steals; 1.9 assists, and; 0.9 blocks.



She leaves McMurry ranked No. 2 in both scoring and rebounds (trailing only Tarra Richardson), as well as steals (second only to Ogonna Merritt).

If you want consistency, consider that despite rolling up 1,466 career points – up until the very last game of her career when she scored a career-high 31 points at UTPB – Collins had never scored more than 27 points in any single game.

Collins has been named all-conference in each of her previous three seasons leading into her senior campaign. As a member of the ASC, she was also cited for her prowess as the top defensive player twice.

"Keshia came to McMurry with good athleticism and the experience at playing aggressive defense," Snow

explained. "After winning defensive player of the year her freshman year, she decided that she wanted to be an all-around player. She has a passion for the game which motivated her."

As a senior this past season, Collins accepted the challenges associated with the decidedly more difficult schedule for the War Hawks. She had her most productive season at both ends of the floor, with 441 points and 32 blocks in 2013-14.

With Collins' career now a finished body of work, one can look at the evidence of statistics and know for certain that we bore witness to one of McMurry's best players, ever. Her mosaic of greatness is complete.



ATHLETE PROFILE

Rachel Moore '14

When Alan Riches took over as head coach of the struggling McMurry University women's soccer program four years ago, he had a plan for its future. Riches knew that he could not change things overnight and, more importantly, could not do it alone.

Enter Rachel Moore '14.

"I just had a passion for soccer and was ready to play," Moore said. "Coach Riches was also beginning his career at McMurry and had the same drive. I had no idea that I would become a part of such an amazing experience and be able to see the program completely change in four years."

And change it did!

In incremental steps, Riches and Moore – as well as a handful of players with a common desire to succeed – began to usher in the new era for McMurry women's soccer. That first season in 2010, the team went a modest 2-15, after finally getting back in the "win" column for the first time since 2006. 2011 doubled the win total to 4-12. That was followed by a 2012 record of 5-13-1, which equaled the most wins ever achieved in school history (the 2006 team also won five matches).

But Moore's senior campaign of 2013 turned out to be the legacy-builder; a time when it became apparent that not only had Moore "matured" as a player, but so had McMurry's program. No longer was just an improved record the goal, but rather the mindset of knowing you can compete - wanting to compete - against all comers. The result was an 8-8-1 mark, the first time the program reached the .500 plateau.

"Not many people are able to witness a program change in that

short of a time, and have a coach that supports and pushes you the whole way," Moore reflected. "My experience at McMurry was one that I could have never imagined and will always cherish."

One of Moore's soccer experiences from the 2013 may well go down in history as the defining moment of the program's resurgence. It came on November 2, 2013 with the War Hawks playing on the road at NCAA II power St. Mary's University. On paper, it was a match in which McMurry had no chance. But the feisty War Hawks found themselves tied with the Rattlers, 1-1, after regulation and the match went to overtime.

Just 2:03 minutes into the extra segment, Moore stole the ball deep in McMurry's own end, beat the SMU

around to my team and having no one to celebrate with, because we had no relationship yet," Moore recounted. "It's not so much about the celebration, but having teammates who share the same passion as you and work hard with you to achieve a goal and in this sense, a literal goal. After the overtime goal at St. Mary's I realized that we were finally a team. I finally had a team that I loved and was willing to fight for. That goal was for my team, which was what the three years before was leading up to.

"Many people think that their college experience is measured by notoriety or prestige. However, I have learned that it is more about the relationships you build and the experiences you have. It's a huge learning experience when you are



defense and went the length of the field. Moore got into the open field and – facing St. Mary's goalie one-on-one – drilled home the game winner.

And that goal carried much personal symbolism for Moore, as well.

"I remember scoring my first goal my freshman year and turning

faced with challenges and you see what you have to do and what it will take to overcome and succeed. I'm so grateful for my experience at McMurry and would not change it for anything."



THE PAST SUPPORTING THE FUTURE

Alumni representatives from throughout McMurry's history were escorted by current students to the inauguration ceremony where they personified the foundation on which Dr. Harper will continue to build a bright future for our University.



Weeze Daniel '38 and Katy Headrick '17



Catherine Heath '16 and Ruby Jo Day '44



Ashley Hickman '15 and Walter Chalcraft '49



Rex Mauldin '50 and Calvin Middlebrooks '16



Kayla Hines '14 and Capt. Jack Darnell USN(Rt) '55



Nicole McGunegle '14 and Linda Rigsby '64



Jonathan McHugn '16 and Ralph McCleskey '65



Kim Martinez '15 and Margaret Settle '76



Ruth Olivas '17 and Danny Reynolds '76



Megan Rausch '14 and Cammie Petree '83



Tory Salazar '14 and Cameo Harvey '89



Melissa Bulls '94 and Audrey Sanders '16



Taylor Seaton '16 and Shaun Martin '99



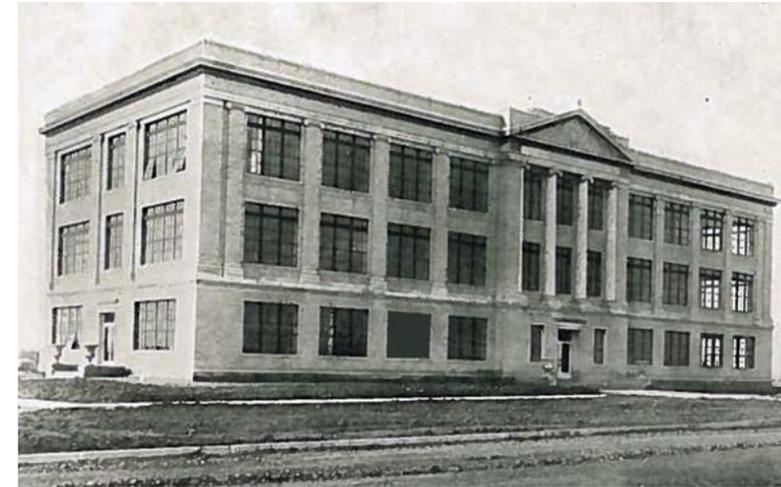
Samantha Shaffer '14 and Arimy Beasley '02



Jacquelyn Unruh '14 and Holly Stallcup '09



Ricky Harrison '14 and Janet Massey '12



The New Old Main

As the first building on McMurry University's campus, Old Main has been a symbol of our institution since its founding in 1923. During the recent Shaping the Future Campaign the need to restore this historic building was identified. After almost four years of vacancy, the restoration is almost complete and Old Main is scheduled for a ribbon-cutting and grand reopening on Saturday, October 11, 2014, during Homecoming!

The restoration process is bringing Old Main into the 21st century, while keeping the spirit of the building alive. Noted as being the last historic building in Abilene to be restored by the Abilene Preservation League, McMurry faculty, staff and students are eager to see this prominent landmark come back to life.

The grand reopening will also coincide with our JW Hunt Society festivities and inductions during Homecoming. The JW Hunt Society is McMurry's group of esteemed alumni who graduated 50 or more years ago and have laid the foundation for future generations.

Tours will be scheduled throughout Homecoming weekend (October 9-12) so everyone can see the "new" Old Main. We hope to see you there!

ALUMNI DIRECTOR

Dear Alumni,



Greetings to all of you and a heartfelt welcome to the Class of 2014! On behalf of the 11,500 alumni who have come before you, we wish you the very best as you embark on

the next phase of your life; we hope you will join us now and in the future to help McMurry continue to grow and prosper for future generations.

Our new President, Dr. Sandra S. Harper, was inaugurated in March; what a spectacular experience that was! If you were not able to return to campus for the installation ceremony, be sure to catch the full service online at about.mcm.edu/inaugural.

We've also been on the road with Dr. Harper, visiting alumni in several regions such as the DFW Metroplex, San Antonio, Austin, Lubbock, Midland, Houston – and we're traveling in June to Albuquerque, Roswell, Artesia and El Paso – we hope to see you on our travels!

The Alumni Association Board of Directors is busy preparing for a June meeting in which it will welcome its newest leaders. They are committed to continuing their efforts to increase engagement of alumni and students – and I am truly thankful for their time and service. If you want to help your Alumni Association in this endeavor, please reach out to me, because passionate alumni are always welcome!

Finally, I invite all of you to come back to campus this fall for Homecoming 2014! The weekend of October 9-12 will be an exciting time for all participating – join with students and show your McMurry Pride!

Suzann Coutts
SUZANN COUTTS
DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI RELATIONS

ClassNotes

'61 DR. PAUL STUBBS '61 was recognized on the cover of the Texas Dental Journal. He has received the Gold Medal for Distinguished Service, the highest honor the Texas Dental Association can bestow.



'73 DR. PUG PARRIS '73 was named chair of the Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies Program at McMurry. Dr. Parris will also

continue to teach in the Kinesiology Department.

'74 JAMES GREER '74, director of Counseling and Career Services at McMurry University, is recognized for 10 years of service with McMurry.

'83 CAMMIE PETREE '83, volleyball Head Coach at McMurry, has been awarded the National Christian College Apetree Ioresthletic Association's (NCCAA) "Game Plan 4 LIFE Character Award" for the 2013-14 year! The purpose of the Game Plan 4 LIFE Character Award is to recognize NCCAA athletic mentors who epitomize the Christian character qualities of Love, Integrity, Faith and Excellence.



'84 KAREN MARVEL SHUTE '84 was selected in 2013 for the sixth consecutive year to Texas Super Lawyers for Family Law. Texas Super Lawyers is a peer nominated journal

recognizing the top 5% of lawyers in the state. Karen is board certified in Family Law and practices with Bandoske, Augustine, Marvel, PLLC in San Antonio.

'86 MATT GARCIA '86 was promoted to vice president and principal client service manager for MWH Global in Dallas, Texas.



of the Gene Bryan Marketing Award and received the award at the Parker County Today Magazine "Whose Gonna Fill Their Shoes Banquet - The Top 40 Under 40". Leslie is pictured with Mr. Brent Baker, Vice President of Institutional Advancement for Weatherford College, who presented her with the award.

'01 BRAD PARRIS '01, assistant Track Coach at McMurry University, is recognized for 10 years of service with McMurry.

'02 DR. CHRIS ANDREWS '02, instructor of English at McMurry University, is recognized for 10 years of service with McMurry.

'04 SARAH INGRAM TETENS '04 and her husband Shawn

'99 LESLIE MCAVOY CHALMERS '99 was selected as the winner



'14 QUINTEN SMITH '14 and **BILLY DULAKIS '12** returned to campus in April to host this year's T.I.P. Sing Song, Rockin' Through The 80s. Here, Quinten and Billy take a cue from Ellen at the Oscars and attempt to break her record for most retweeted stage selfie.

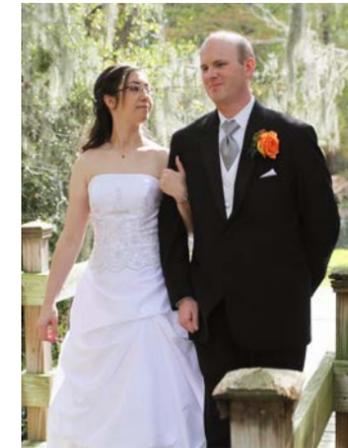


welcomed a baby girl, Brooklyn Sofia, on 10/31/13. Sarah and Shawn were married in March of 2011. Pictured are Sarah, Shawn, baby Brooklyn and big sister Payton (2).

'06 TIM PALMER '06 recently left his position as assistant chaplain at McMurry to devote full time to Re: ministries. Re: ministries was established by Tim and Erin Palmer, along with a group of friends and spiritual leaders, with the vision of seeing broken hearts restored and a broken world redeemed through the creative and extravagant love of God.

'06 TRISHA TEIG '06 was promoted to Assistant Dean of Students at Westminster College in Salt Lake City, UT.

'06 LAURA LOGAN '06 married David Spaulding on October 26, 2013. They had many friends and family to witness the beautiful wedding in Houston. They honeymooned in Jamaica and now reside in Bedford, Texas. Photo courtesy of Chevy Chey Photography.



'09 KATY WHITE '09 was promoted to Assistant General Manager for the Grand Prairie Air Hogs.

'13 KENDRA WILLIAMS '13, BMIS graduate, has been accepted into the UT-Houston Medical School. She will start next fall.



'14 RYAN GATTIS '14 (Education/Math) has been named EDICUT Student of the Year! Ryan will be employed by Hawkins ISD in Hawkins, Texas.



Moved? New Job?

Update your information and submit a classnote to let your fellow McMurry alumni know about the milestones in your life—including everything from weddings to births, retirements to awards, adoptions to promotions. We'll print your update and photos in *The Messenger* and deliver to over 11,000 of your McMurry friends and family!

Send your note by email to Suzann Coutts, Director of Alumni Relations, at coutts.suzann@mcm.edu or **fill out and mail this form** to The Messenger, 1 McMurry University, #938, Abilene TX 79697.

NAME

MAIDEN NAME (IF APPLICABLE)

EMAIL ADDRESS

STREET ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP

CLASS NOTE:

(use additional sheet of paper if needed)

The Messenger reserves the right to make the final selection of all photography based upon available space, subject matter and photo quality.

Wilford Moore

Legendary McMurry football coach Wilford Moore died on Tuesday, January 21, 2014.

Wilford Moore was the most successful coach in McMurry Indians football history and has the McMurry football stadium named in his honor.

Moore coached at McMurry for several years and was the head football coach from 1947-54 where he led the Indians to a 48-25-5 record, four conference championships, and was named the Texas Conference Coach of the Year in 1948, 1949 and 1953. His winning percentage of .610 is the highest among all the head coaches in McMurry history with a minimum of 20 victories. At McMurry he coached players like Les Cowan '50, Brad Rowland '51 and Grant Teaff '56.

A native of Littlefield, Texas, Moore earned his physical education degree from Hardin-Simmons in 1941. He was an assistant coach at Abilene High in the fall of 1941, but joined the United States Army Air Corps on December 9 following the attack on Pearl Harbor.

After returning from World War II, he served as an assistant in 1946 at McMurry and then became the head coach the next year, coaching at McMurry from

1947 to 1955. Moore led the Indians to the Oleander Bowl in 1949.

Moore later coached at Lubbock High School, Port Neches-Groves High School and Cleburne High School before returning to Abilene, Texas in 1972.

Johnny Ray Watson

Johnny Ray Watson '71, the gospel singer from a West Texas cotton town who traveled the world and performed for millions of viewers of the Billy Graham Crusades, then settled into the Bastrop area, died on January 21, 2014. He was 63.

Watson was born and raised in Lorenzo, a cotton town where a little radio introduced him to acts such as the Platters and the Four Tops. Johnny graduated from Lorenzo High School in 1968 and attended McMurry College, starring in basketball for Coach Hershel Kimbrell.

In 1971, he answered God's call to travel and sing, spreading the gospel through music all over the U.S., Canada and numerous other countries.

Watson's ministry took him across West Texas, then Texas, then the country, then to places as far-flung as Japan and Jamaica and Jerusalem. He sang in three Billy Graham Crusades in the mid-1990s.

Thomas Neel LeMond

Thomas Neel LeMond, affectionately known as "Coach Neel" to generations of McMurry students, faculty and staff, died March 2, 2014.

Coach Neel positively impacted the lives of thousands of McMurry students during his more than 50 years on the campus. At Homecoming each year, alumni from all generations would recognize and visit with Coach Neel. Neel took great pride in his family at McMurry University. Although he wasn't a student or a teacher, he was part of the campus life at McMurry

His newest quest was to obtain his Master's Degree in teaching from McMurry University. In his struggle to be one of the ordinary guys, his imagination would take flight and he would be a bus driver, coach, doctor, radio announcer, and teacher. His dream would take hold and he would become whatever he aspired to be.

Neel loved his Church, especially the one where his father was Pastor, many years ago. Although the Church had changed its name from Fairmont United Methodist Church to Southwest Drive Community United Methodist Church, it was his home.

William R. Baker of Knox City, TX, died 11/6/2013.

Harwell Barber of Abilene, TX, died 2/22/2014.

Van Marlin Boozer of Abilene, TX, died 1/21/2014.

John Wesley Bozeman 1972 of Abilene, TX, died 10/27/2013.

Ken Brown of Sageton, TX, died 1/20/2014.

Lauren Michelle Bump 2010 of San Antonio, TX, died 12/31/2013.

Margaret Crow of Abilene, TX, died 2/23/2014.

Myrla Holcomb Depew 1953 of Irvine, CA, died 10/13/2013.

Lee Elliott of Austin, TX, died 2/12/2014.

Raye L. Evers of Waco, TX, died 10/24/2013.

Shirley L. Garrison of Lubbock, TX, died 12/13/2013.

Betty Miller Lou Giddens 1961 of Clyde, TX, died 12/7/2013.

Ernest Allen Grant of Abilene, TX, died 1/26/2014.

Irma "Gene" Henson died 1/12/2014.

Jean Wood W. Holloway 1991 of Frisco, TX, died 10/14/2013.

Jeff Ingham of Spicewood, TX, died 10/27/2013.

Ted J. James 1952 of Richland Hills, TX, died 12/25/2013.

Daniel R. Jones 2005 of Abilene, TX, died 1/3/2014.

Thomas Neel LeMond of Abilene, TX, died 3/2/2014.

Timothy Deward Marcum 1967 of Leander, TX, died 12/5/2013.

Kathy Meador of Abilene, TX, died 12/3/2013.

Rex E. Moore of Abilene, TX died 10/15/2013.

Wilford Harve Moore of Amarillo, TX, died 1/21/2014.

Rex E. Moore of Abilene, TX, died 10/15/2013.

Barney Popnoe 1947 of Abilene, TX, died 11/3/2013.

Caroline Hodges Rankin 1962 of Abilene, TX, died 10/28/2013.

Sue Ellen Vinson Reek of Shattuck, OK, died 2/22/2014.

Wanda Partain Rucker of Abilene, TX, died 11/11/2013.

Norma Schaffer died 2/21/2014.

Bernie Strickland of Abilene, TX, died 2/27/2014.

Donna Ashby Ward of Murphy, NC, died 4/1/2014.

Johnny Ray Watson of Bastrop, TX, died 1/21/2014.

Jennifer Wood L. Wood-Vanderheiden 1983 of Corpus Christi, TX, died 11/16/2013.

WHY NOT REVISIT AN *old flame?*

MCMURRY HOMECOMING 2014

October 9 - 12

Help us rededicate Old Main on Oct. 11!

Charitable Giving
through your **IRA**

If you are like many individuals, your IRA has increased in value over the years and you have more income than you may need. If you are over age 70½ the Federal government permits you to make a tax-free rollover gift from your IRA. You could make a gift of \$1,000, \$10,000 or any amount up to \$100,000 this year to satisfy your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD).

Contact your IRA custodian and request that McMurry receive your generous gift.

To learn more about an IRA rollover gift and how it can benefit you and help McMurry, please contact us at 325-793-4761 or visit us online at mcm.edu/rollover.



CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

MCMURRY PROUD

Promote

A CAMPUS VISIT
TO HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS

SHARE

Mentor

• student interns at
• your business

• Your McMurry Experience

WEAR MCMURRY GEAR
on Fridays to show your support

**GIVE
BACK**

• VISIT
• CAMPUS
• or address
• a class

Let everyone know that you are
#McMIProud

