

Creating
Experiences

Creating
Partnerships

Creating
Momentum

THE MESSENGER

McMURRY UNIVERSITY FALL/WINTER 2019



1923

**McMURRY
UNIVERSITY**

2023

CENTENNIAL ERA





HAPPY 96



H **BIRTHDAY**





FROM THE PRESIDENT

The definition of create is to bring something into existence. As we welcome the year of Create, I cannot help but reflect on all the ways that we epitomize this at McMurry University. Whether it is in the tangible sense, as creating a magnificent work of art, or in the more intangible sense, as creating an opportunity – creating is something that we do every day at McMurry.

This year we celebrated yet another year of increased enrollment with a very large freshman class as well as high retaining numbers of our junior and senior students. Programs and strategies created to serve our students such as the Master of Accountancy degree and the Campus Master Plan are off to a stellar start, with five enrolled in the MACC program and progress towards creating a new student center. Building on the opportunity created last spring, Edwards Field, soon to be home to War Hawk Softball, is under construction and set to be completed next fall.

Opportunities to create are in abundance on our campus and students enjoy more facets of creating than ever before. After years of work and planning, Men's Basketball took a once in a lifetime trip to Portugal, creating memories and experiences that are for the record books. With new energy and passion at the helm, our Theatre Arts program is gaining momentum and working to create an even more robust community. Identifying a means to filling the teacher shortage locally, McMurry's Education department created a partnership with the Abilene Independent School District and the Abilene Education Foundation that help support our newly created Aides-to-Teachers program.

Creativity surrounds us. As Maya Angelou said, "You can't use up creativity. The more you use the more you have." So, we are going to stay busy at work and keep creating. I am filled with pride at all of the ways that our campus and community work to serve our students. It truly is a wonderful time to be a part of McMurry University.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandra Harper". The signature is fluid and cursive.

SANDRA S. HARPER, PH.D.
PRESIDENT

THE MESSENGER

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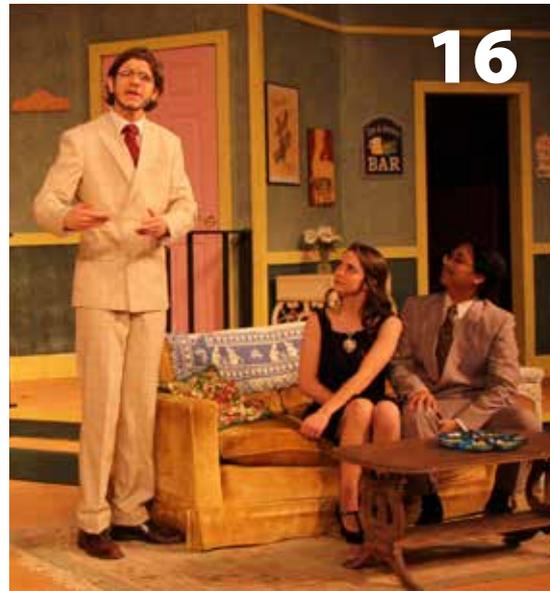
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Around Campus

1. 96 YEARS

McMurry celebrated fall Convocation on Thursday, September 19. This year marked the second celebration of McMurry's Centennial Era, reflecting the past and celebrating the future each year leading up to the Centennial in 2023.

The Convocation address was given by McMurry graduate, George Levesque '96. Levesque serves as the executive director of the Historic Paramount Theatre in downtown Abilene. A 1996 graduate of McMurry University majoring in theatre and minoring in political science, Levesque hails from Colorado City, Texas. Though most recently recognizable as a news anchor for Abilene's ABC affiliate KTXS, Levesque began his broadcasting career during college. First serving as a radio disc jockey through much of college, he then hosted a daily two-hour sports talk show for nearly six years in the late '90s before joining KTXS. After a total of 18 years at KTXS, Levesque switched gears for his current job a year and a half ago. Levesque says his proudest McMurry memory was being selected in the inaugural group of student written plays to be produced at McMurry. His play, *Kingdom Hall*, was seen on McMurry's stage in the spring of 1996. Now back to his roots, Levesque describes the Paramount as an 89 year-old non-profit theatre, movie house, live production venue, and an Abilene treasure.

McMurry President Dr. Sandra Harper presided over the event, which included the awarding of the Trustee Emeritus designation to three former Board members – Ted Johnson, Charles Irwin, Dr. Girvin Harkins '60 – and the recognition of the 2019 Trailblazers. Trailblazers are described as McMurry Alumni who have lifetime giving of \$100,000 or more. The four Trailblazers presented with a maroon blazer during the ceremony were Dr. Esperanza "Hope" Medina Harmon '55, Jimmy Stallings '50 and Mildred "Millie" Lawrence 'ex55. Immediately following Convocation, McMurry students celebrated the 96th year with a birthday celebration on the quad.



2. GUEST SPEAKER

In October, we welcomed Mohammed Al Samawi, peace activist & author of *The Fox Hunt*, to campus to discuss his terrifying escape from Yemen with the help of Christians, Jews and Muslims. Al Samawi's addressed the community and public with "Building Bridges: Interfaith Dialogue Across the Islamic, Jewish, and Christian Communities" on October 14. He also had the opportunity to address campus as the featured Chapel speaker as well as addressing the McMurry First Year Seminar class, discussing "Collaboration and Teamwork to Accomplish the Impossible" on October 15.



3. WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP LUNCHEON

The McMurry University Center for Free Enterprise and Entrepreneurship presented the second annual Women's Entrepreneurship Luncheon on Tuesday, October 22.

The luncheon, in honor of Women's Entrepreneurship Week, acknowledged the contributions and success of local entrepreneurial women in hopes of inspiring current and future women entrepreneurs. Speakers for this year's event included Karen and Christian Light, owners of Texas Roots Salon; Alex Terrell Russell, co-founder of Oddly Natural and JAR Land and Investments; and Michele Kilbourn, who owns and operates Cakes by Birdie. Following the speaker presentations, the luncheon also included a panel discussion with the local leaders in entrepreneurship.

Women's Entrepreneurship Week is a globally recognized event celebrating women who have successfully overcome gender stereotypes and who continue to serve as an inspiration to others.

4. 2019 COLLEGE OF DISTINCTION

McMurry University has received national recognition for the integrity of its truly individualized and engaging education. As an institution whose primary goals are based on student success and satisfaction, McMurry confirms its honor as one of the renowned Colleges of Distinction.

This award is unique among popular college guide classifications, which typically rank schools on the basis of hollow or unclear numbers like the size of endowment, selectivity, and faculty salaries. McMurry instead earns its recognition for the excellence exhibited in the classroom, incorporating High-Impact Practices throughout every student's undergraduate education with student-centered programs such as First Year Experience and Mindset for Success.

Colleges of Distinction's selection process consists of detailed interviews and research for each institution's freshman experience and retention efforts alongside its general education programs, career development, strategic plan, student satisfaction, and more. Schools are accepted on the basis that they adhere to the Four Distinctions: Engaged Students, Great Teaching, Vibrant Community, and Successful Outcomes.



Around Campus

5. McMURRY STUDENTS PRESENT RESEARCH

Students from McMurry University Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry recently presented their research at two regional meetings. At one of them, Yejide Oyewole won first place for best presentation in her section.

Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry regularly attend local, regional, and national meetings where students present research. The American Chemical Society (ACS) Meeting-in-Miniature on the University of North Texas campus and the Abilene Christian University (ACU) Undergraduate Research Festival are the two conferences attended by students last spring. Students and faculty representing universities from all over Texas attended the ACS conference, and while the conference was open to students at all levels, the presenters were about 75% graduate and 25% undergraduate students.

Yejide Oyewole won first place for best presentation in her section at the ACS conference, competing against both undergraduate and graduate students.

Students present research either orally or by poster with discussion. This research is high quality – so much so that at least three papers will be submitted to professional journals of chemistry upon completion.

Other students to participate in these conferences were Mark Izbrand and Yuwei Bao.

Students delivered two presentations at both conferences:

- Biological Activities of Dihydroxamic Acid Derivatives in HDAC1 and HDAC8 in MDA-MB-231 and MCF-7 Breast Cancer Cells (Mark Izbrand, Yejide Oyewole, Paul Pyenta PhD, Hyunshun Shin PhD).
- Analyses, using Computer Modeled Docking Studies, of Potential Anti-cancer Drugs as HDAC Inhibitors (Yuwei Bao, Paul Pyenta PhD, Hyunshun Shin PhD).

Funding for travel costs to the ACS meeting was provided by The McMurry Science & Math Advisory Board (SMAB) and research funding was provided by the Welch Foundation departmental grant.



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6. NEW DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS COMMUNICATIONS AND OPERATIONS

In July, McMurry named Mike Ezekiel as the Director of Athletics Communications and Operations. Ezekiel oversees all athletic communications, social and digital media, and the website for the War Hawks' 21-sport intercollegiate programs that include 450 scholar-athletes. He joined McMurry following his time at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tennessee. Ezekiel brings skills and experiences in traditional print and broadcast roles working with a Division I athletics program, as well as minor league baseball serving as media relations assistant and public-address announcer. He also served as a staff writer and sports editor for university newspapers, and hosted and operated the podcast "Varsity Talk," covering prep football. He served as a weekly guest commentator on public radio shows in Florence, Alabama and Johnson City, Tennessee. His work as a writer, broadcaster, and statistician combined with sports marketing skills brings depth of experience to McMurry.

Ezekiel earned a bachelor of science in Mass Communications (Journalism Multimedia) from the University of North Alabama and his master's in Sport Management from East Tennessee State University. He was named the Department of Communications' most outstanding student at the University of North Alabama. He has served in multiple capacities including ETSU's Media Relations Graduate Assistant, Media Relations Assistant/PA Announcer for the Kingsport Mets/NY Mets Organization and Broadcaster/Sports Information for UNA Athletics.

7. ARTISTS FEATURED DURING YEAR OF CREATE

The McMurry University Art Department has had a very busy fall semester epitomizing the year of Create with art exhibitions, homecoming artists' talks and the President's Appreciation Reception. Senior Art Exhibitions ran from October to December and featured a weeklong exhibition concluding with an artist talk and reception. Senior shows included "Promises of Forever" by Marya Wilson, "That's Life" by Keifer Cokonougher, "Eustress" by Logan Shary and "Empowered" by Rhonda Fujiwara. During homecoming, Jonathan Kimbrell '04, Brady Nichols Sloane '04 and Patrick Messersmith '05 were featured as the homecoming artists and had specially commissioned pieces displayed. This year, Dr. Harper hosted the President's Appreciation Reception in the Amy Graves Ryan Fine Arts Building. The evening's theme matched the centennial theme and was quite fitting as art for the event was provided and created during the event by current students. Kendra Brown, a featured artist for the evening, described how she enjoys capturing light and how it interacts with different subjects. "I use vibrant colors with dramatic cast shadows to bring out the highlights of my paintings. Painting 'Golden McMurry' in this light gave the watercolor life in a soft and peaceful way," said Brown. Art student and another featured artist for the event, Brittany Brzymialkiewicz, hopes that those who view her art take more away from it than just a pretty piece. "I hope they feel something and can feel the emotion it portrays or the emotion that was put into it," said Brzymialkiewicz.

NEW FACULTY FACES

Dr. Kim Tribou '04

Dr. Tribou '04 returns to the Johnson School of Business as an Assistant Professor of Accounting. She serves as one of the two instructors for the Master of Accountancy program as well as teaching courses in Audit, Accounting Information Systems, Federal Income Taxation, and Ethics/ Business Law and overseeing the graduate internships in accounting. Dr. Tribou believes that you learn by doing, so she creates opportunities for students to apply the content of their textbooks to practical applications. She hopes to instill a healthy sense of humor in her students and hopes they remember that they can have serious ambitions without taking themselves too seriously. Dr. Tribou wants students to walk away from her courses with confidence and the skills they need to be successful.



Ms. Melissa Bulls '95

Ms. Bulls '95 is technically a new face though she has served as an adjunct for a few years. She is the new Instructor of Curriculum & Instruction in our Education Department, teaching Elementary Math I and II; Planning, Curriculum & Assessment in Schools; and Social Studies. These courses are for pre-service teachers to help them prepare to be successful in the classroom. Ms. Bulls loves getting to know the students and watching them grow through their time at McMurry. She hopes that her enthusiasm for helping students learn rubs off on her students and instills in them a love for helping students be successful.



Ms. Amanda Neal

Ms. Neal serves in our Education Department as another Instructor of Instruction & Curriculum, teaching Introduction to Teaching Reading, Balanced Literacy, and Theories and Practice in Early Childhood Education to name a few. Ms. Neal enjoys the challenge of making new course content engaging, meaningful and applicable to her students as well as the relationships that she is creating. She hopes that students leave her courses with knowledge and tools that give them confidence stepping into a classroom full of kids and wants them to know that she is always available for support as they transition from her classroom to their own.





Mr. Jeff Scott '97

Servant Leadership has a new director, although he is not necessarily a new face to McMurry. Jeff Scott '97 returned to campus in December 2018 and is Director of the Servant Leadership Program. Mr. Scott, who brings 15 years of higher education experience, teaches the core curriculum of servant leadership courses, and likes sharing real life experiences with students to help edify content. He hopes that students learn that servant leadership is a philosophical way of life that can be practiced in many ways, and he wants to instill in students the ability to frame the personal problems of individuals as social issues that can be addressed rationally, responsibly, and humanely.



Mr. Benjamin Druffel

If you hear a new type of sound coming from Bynum band hall, it might be because Mr. Benjamin Druffel is now helping lead our music program as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Music and Director of Bands. Mr. Druffel directs the Marching War Hawks and Wind Ensemble as well as teaches courses in conducting and music education. His goal is to lead the students beyond the notes and rhythms to explore the deeper layers of the art and instill a belief that music feeds the soul. Mr. Druffel does not like to have easy days in rehearsal and hopes his students adopt these high performance standards throughout their professional careers.



Ms. Brooke Wright

Ms. Brooke Wright is another new face to campus. She is a Human Health Science Curriculum Specialist and Instructor, and teaches Human Anatomy, Physiology I and Medical Terminology I & II, Intro to Nutrition, Public Health, Contemporary Issues in Research and Healthcare, and Junior Seminar as well as helping to develop the HHS program and new courses within the program. Ms. Wright loves being able to spark curiosity in students and seeing their interests spark for more knowledge on new subjects. She hopes to instill a love of learning with each student and hopes they walk away from her courses feeling confident in their ability to learn and understand new and challenging information.



Creating Experiences

McMURRY SENDS MEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM ON DREAM TRIP TO PORTUGAL

THEY WERE McMURRY'S DREAM TEAM.

Ten members of the men's basketball team and their coaches and trainer went jetting off to the Iberian Peninsula this summer to play ball in a fishing village on the Portuguese coast.

"Everything we did every day was just life changing and something I'd never done before," said Khalil Butler '21, a junior from Baltimore, who plays multiple positions for the team. "It was probably one of the most fun times I've ever had in my life."

The dream began with Head Coach Zach Pickelman and Assistant Coach Rob Yeatts, who decided as soon as they came to McMurry five years ago that they wanted to create a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for their players by taking them on a foreign trip. The benefits to both students and team were clear. Many of the players had never been to another country, let alone one in which people spoke a different language. The trip would allow them to strengthen their friendships with each other and their hosts and get to know their coaches better -- building a bond to last well beyond their college years. And it would help with the basketball too, first as a recruiting tool and then because of the extra practices.

"The NCAA allows basketball teams to take a foreign trip every four years," Pickelman said. "It's beneficial from a basketball standpoint because, along with that foreign trip, the NCAA allows us 10 days of practice. Our competition wasn't able to get those practices. Nobody else in our league had a foreign trip."

The students had to get their own passports and pay for some of their meals and incidentals. The basketball program covered the rest, thanks to generous donors and money saved from a series of lucrative games against Division I and Division II schools over the past few years.



"This is a basketball team and a basketball trip, but basketball was the last thing on the mind," Yeatts said. "I can only imagine being a 20-year-old and going and experiencing that for the rest of your life. When they're in each other's weddings or are there for each other's firstborns, they're going to remember that time we went to Portugal."

The experiences began before the team even left campus, during the 10 days of practice before leaving for Lisbon. It was August, and the cafeterias were closed. So Pickelman and Yeatts were faced with the prospect of feeding 10 young and active athletes two to three meals a day.

Pickelman sent out a campus-wide email at 4 p.m. on a Wednesday, asking for help with dinners. The response was overwhelming. By 9 a.m. the following day, every meal for the next 10 days was covered -- not only dinners, but lunches, too.

"We met and ate and had fellowship with just about every aspect of campus that we could," Pickelman said. "We had Career Development and Counseling, we had Financial Aid, we had faculty, deans, Marketing. We had administrators. It was an unbelievable amount of support we got for those 10 days."

In addition to the practical response, the turnout showed the team how much the McMurry community cared. And it also helped introduce them to people on campus who can be resources for them in the future, such as the head of the Career Development office.

"After almost every practice or workout, there were

different people who were taking care of us," said Dedrick Berry '20, a senior point guard from Fort Worth. "They loved having us around and we loved being there, and they made us some great food. Every meal that we had, I think I met someone new."

According to Berry, those new connections have paid off since the team's return to campus. It's not just the resources he discovered. He also enjoys running into the team's supporters around campus and being able to say "hello" and "thank you." His teammates agree.

"That was cool to see how everyone supported us," said Isaac Moreno '21, a junior point guard from Abilene. "We're so busy, we don't really get to appreciate how much they do for us. It was cool to go to their houses and hear what they think about things like jobs and classes on campus that we should take."





And then it was time to go.

“It was a trip of a lifetime for most of our guys,” said Charity McCright, McMurry’s head athletic trainer, who accompanied the team to Portugal. “Some of them may never have this experience again. There were some of them that said, I have my passport now, so I can go

somewhere else. It opened up their eyes to more possibilities than being in the United States or being in Texas. They realize that there’s a whole world out there that they can go and explore.”

The team was in Portugal for a week, staying in Cascais, a small fishing village outside Lisbon. Their hotel overlooked the beach, and some of the players had never seen the ocean. They toured Lisbon, saw castles and heard about the country’s centuries of history. They went on a sailing cruise and a scavenger hunt and tried different kinds of food -- including lots of fresh seafood. One highlight everyone mentions is the paddle boarding experience.

“It made us all vulnerable because I don’t think any of us had ever done it before,” Pickelman said. “Nobody wanted to fall into the water because it was freezing. You’d be paddling along and then you’d hear someone go in the water. The wind was really tough. We had a couple of guys who almost got taken out to sea. But then you’d look up at the beaches and the architecture and the houses and you’d gain a perspective of what you’ve been walking through all week.”

And there was the basketball.

The McMurry team played two games against squads fielded by Belenenses, Portugal’s sports club best known for its soccer program, which also has a professional

basketball team along with youth teams funneling into the pros. McMurry won the first game against the youth team, whose players were roughly the same ages as their American counterparts, but lost the second game against the pros in overtime.

“Even though they speak a different language, they play the same game that you do on a high level,” Berry said. “It’s amazing that the game of basketball is able to take you to places like that.”

The games were especially memorable for Assistant Coach Yeatts.

“Coach Pickelman surprised me and told me he was going to allow me to be head coach for those two games and he was going to be assistant,” Yeatts said. “His doing that for me is something I’ll never forget and he’s helping me grow.”

But the trip was about so much more than basketball. Butler, Berry and Moreno said the Portugal trip brought them closer together and gave them shared memories they’ll never forget. And they hope that other athletic programs on campus will be able to follow their example and take trips of their own.

That’s part of the plan, according to McCright. “Now that other teams have seen a McMurry team take a foreign trip, they’ll be wanting to do the same. We’ll start that conversation and start fundraising for other teams to go as well,” she adds.

And their biggest boosters may be the men’s basketball players. “It was just too amazing for someone not to experience that,” Butler said. “If I can help in any way, I definitely want to do it.”



CREA



A T T I N I N G

PARTNERSHIPS

McMurry Helps Turn Classroom Aides to Teachers

Many of them have known for years that they wanted to become teachers, but life got in the way.

Deanna Jordan was able to answer her call to the classroom by becoming a teacher's aide at Haskell Elementary School in Haskell, Texas, when her now 40-year-old daughter was in the second grade. She always wanted to complete her degree in education but was only able to take courses off and on over the years.

Now the 64-year-old is enrolled in McMurry's Aides-to-Teachers program, which helps teacher's aides complete their studies while working full time. The program offers 12 credit hours of courses a semester after 4 p.m. or online and during summer classes.



DEANNA JORDAN AND STUDENT



"It allows us to offer something at a time when it's convenient for them," said Dr. Gae Lynn McInroe, associate professor of curriculum and instruction and the staff lead for the program. "They still have to follow all the same rules for observation. They have to learn the exact same information. They get their bachelor's degrees."

Aides-to-Teachers is the only program of its kind locally that's specifically designed to address the challenges faced by aides who want to get their teaching certificates. It first began accepting students in the fall of 2018, when 17 enrolled.

"It's really difficult since I'm working full time -- all of us who are in the program, we spend lots of late hours," said Jordan, who is set to graduate in May. "But it's worth it. I can see light at the end of the tunnel now."

Krista Gonzales, now a fully certified teacher in Abilene who started out as an aide, brought many of the problems that she faced as a student to the attention of her advisers at McMurry. Though she graduated before the formal Aides-to-Teachers program was launched, her difficulties in getting into the classes she needed helped inspire the program.

"They just kind of worked with me and my situation, and they worked with me to get things done to graduate quicker," she said. "It's kind of hard for nontraditional students to go through it because you work and have a home life and most of us have kids. For the most part, it's time consuming but you do reap the reward at the end."

One thing that inspires the program is the fact that there's a teacher shortage in Texas and districts are having trouble finding enough to fill classrooms -- particularly on the elementary school level.

"In a lot of campuses, you have a lot of aides who are very talented, and what's keeping them from teaching is that they don't have a teaching certificate," said Mike Thomesen, instructor of curriculum and instruction at McMurry. "We realized that if we could create a program that offered classes

at a time when working teacher's aides could take them, we would help both the aide and the school district at the same time."

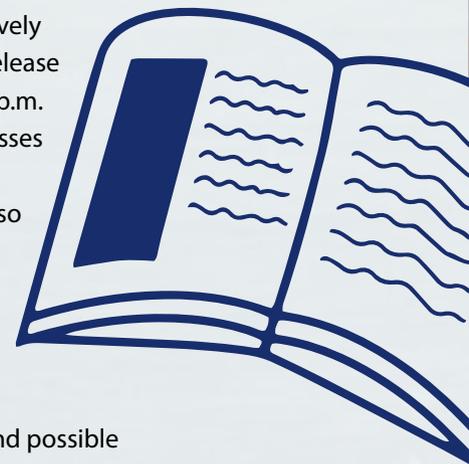
Last year, the Abilene Independent School District had 20 teacher vacancies on the first day of school, and it had six or eight this year, according to the superintendent, Dr. David Young, who helped the university get the program off the ground.

"We've really struggled to find strong candidates -- or even any candidates -- by the end of the summer," Young said. "How can we find a solution? We have had a few aides in our school district who have found a way to go back to school at night or on the weekends and become a teacher, and our experience has been that they do a fantastic job."

The question was how to lift the barriers to success. One relatively straightforward way was to release aides a bit early -- say at 2:30 p.m. -- so they could make it to classes on time at 4 p.m..

"Student teaching was also a challenge, because aides had typically been forced to resign their full-time jobs and give up their salaries to become student teachers,"

Young said. The challenges and possible solutions were discussed at a meeting of the McMurry University Education Advisory Board in the fall of 2017. That discussion and subsequent planning helped jump-start the Aides-to-Teachers program. The district then coordinated with McMurry and the Texas Education Agency and created a workaround that enables aides to retain their jobs while student teaching. They student teach for fewer hours each day, but over a longer period of time.





But the partnership didn't stop with the district and the university. Young and Thomesen also sought help from the Abilene Education Foundation (AEF), a nonprofit that supports the students and teachers of Abilene ISD. It responded with multiple \$500-a-semester scholarships to aides in the district. Together, the district, the foundation and McMurry's Education Advisory Board have become key partners in the Aides-to-Teacher program's success.

"Some of our aides are fantastic and would make fantastic teachers," said Christine Curtis-Carr, executive director of the AEF. "We want to make it more affordable and incentivize aides to become teachers because we do have a teacher shortage in Abilene."

According to Curtis-Carr, becoming a teacher can have a huge financial impact on some families, and an aide's salary typically starts at \$14,000 to \$16,000, while a teacher's starting pay is about \$47,000.

"To change a family's financial situation and get an excellent teacher, that's a win for both that family and the district and that's something our foundation wanted to support," she said.

Jessica Leach, who drives 50 miles round trip from Clyde to participate in the program, currently

takes two classes each on Monday and Wednesday afternoon, beginning at 4 p.m. and ending at 8:30 p.m. It gives her less time to spend with her sons, ages 14 and 11. But she says they're excited for her and that achieving her goal will make all the sacrifices worthwhile.

"I really think that this is a wonderful program and am so grateful that McMurry has offered it," said Leach, who is set to graduate in 2021. "If they hadn't, I might not be in the position I am now and about to fulfill my dreams as an adult."

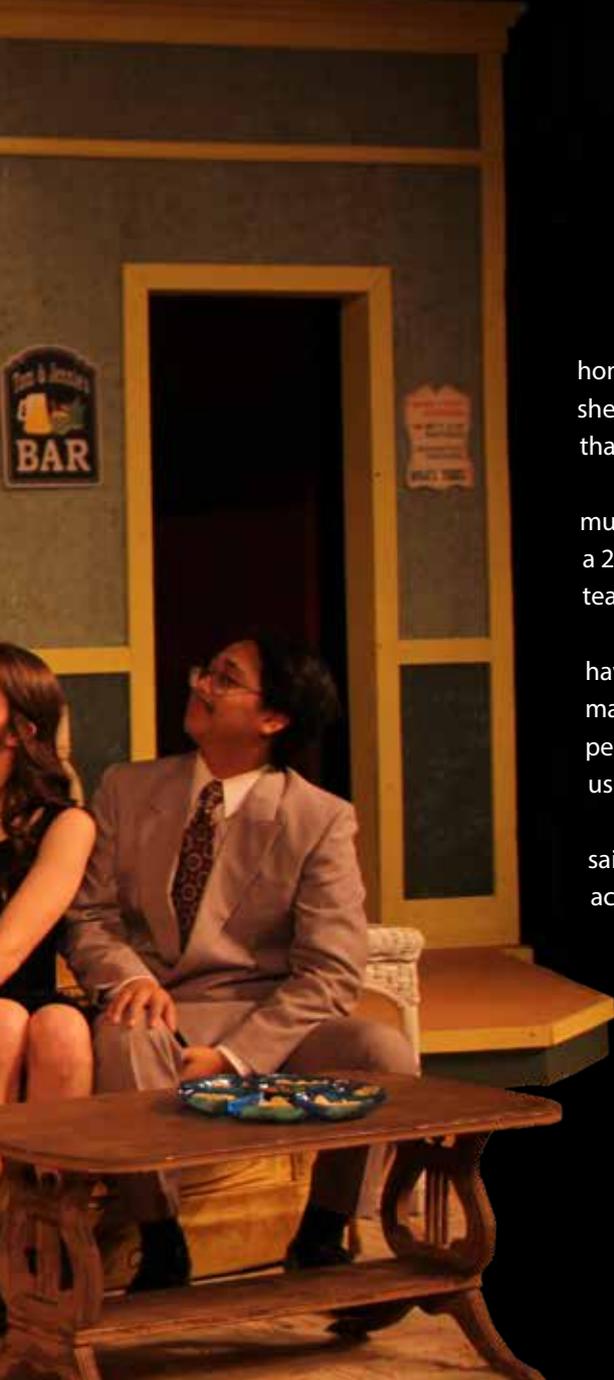


All the V a Stage M C



World's

McMurry Theatre Program Creates Momentum



When Madi Melbourne '23 was cast as Sally in the homecoming musical, *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, she knew that she'd get a lot more out of the production than just a role.

Once a tradition at McMurry, the homecoming musical had been on hiatus for six years, but Kerry Goff, a 2010 alumnus who returned to campus a year ago to teach, was determined to bring it back.

"I think it's such an exciting thing, because they haven't done one in a while," said Melbourne, a freshman majoring in theatre education. "It's a great way to get people introduced to the world of theatre. People usually like to watch the world of musicals."

"But drawing in the audience is only a part of it," said Goff, who directed the *Clark Gesner* musical and is actively working to revive enrollment and community support for the theatre program, which had fallen off since he was a student. It's also about teaching students a broad array of skills and reengaging the alumni.

And so far, it's working.



At the same time she was starring in the show in October, Melbourne was painting sets, working backstage and auditioning for the next production in November -- The Female Version of the Odd Couple by Neil Simon. She is accomplishing all of this while taking her general education classes.

"You do every part of theatre, not just acting, but costumes and sets as well," said Melbourne, who sees the program as a launchpad to a career in high school and youth theatre. "The community is small, so you get to know the people you're working with -- your directors and others."

According to Goff, that well-rounded approach to theatre is a natural extension of the liberal arts education that McMurry provides. He makes students audition for everything, including pushing those who don't identify as singers and dancers to try out for those parts. But it doesn't stop there.

"We follow that model of developing our students to obtain a wide array of skills," he said. "When they graduate, they can direct, design, be in the costume shop, and have some management experience."

That's important because you never know where a McMurry theatre alum will end up or which skills they'll need to draw on professionally. A number have gone into Texas public schools and have to be able to do it all. Other graduates' career tracks have included becoming a professional scenic carpenter in New York, a set designer in Austin, a personal

assistant for Winona Rider and an employee of George Strait.

"We find that a lot of our majors are employed in the arts in some way," Goff said. "It's not always about being on Broadway touring shows. Our people who are teaching in Fredericksburg are just as exciting as people touring with George Strait. They've found their passion, they're in the arts and they're using their degree."

That message has proven compelling in the year since Goff's return to campus. Enrollment in the Theatre Department has risen to 32 majors and minors from 18 in the fall of 2018, partly because of a large freshman class he actively recruited.

"We've had a lot more coming to McMurry," he said. "No matter how serious I thought the prospect was, they always got a follow-up email from me. How are we doing? How can we help you? McMurry prides itself on that extra care and extra touch from professors. Also, we have great theatre scholarships, and I spent a lot of time marketing that."

One of the ways Goff did that was by reaching out to alumni in the school systems to let them know that McMurry had theatre scholarship money available. But he also wants them to reengage with the university in other ways.

“Without question, there is a buzz about our department.”



“The department has our own Facebook page, we keep track of pictures and video, and what’s going on in rehearsals. People I bump into on campus say ‘thank you’ for bringing musicals back. There are lots of ‘likes’ and ‘shares.’ People on campus are just excited about these shows that are coming up.”

Performances in the spring will include *Cap and Bells* by Luigi Pirandello, directed by faculty member David Ainsworth; *The Cocktail Hour* by A.R. Gurney, directed by student Kevin Roberts; and a series of student-directed one-act plays in April and May. Kerry Goff will direct *Greater Tuna* by Jaston Williams, Joe Sears and Ed Howard in May, and Ashleigh Goff will direct *The Miracle Worker* by Williams Gibson in June. Then the season ends with the summer musical.

Productions in 2019 included *I Ought to be in Pictures* by Neil Simon as well as *I Do! I Do!* and *You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown*.

Melbourne, who rehearsed monologues on everything from jump ropes to Shakespearean tragedies as Sally in *Charlie Brown*, said she loved sharing the show’s innocent and “poignant” humor with audiences: “You leave with a little bit of joy afterward, and that’s my favorite part.”

“We brought back the summer theatre season,” he said. “Summer theatre is about showcasing alumni. Everyone in those casts will be alumni. If we can reengage them physically, I think we will see a surge in donations from them.”

Goff and his wife Ashleigh, a choreographer and a 2006 McMurry alumna, took center stage -- literally -- for the first summer musical, starring in *I Do! I Do!* by Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt in August. And they’re planning to bring back the large-scale musical in the summer of 2020 with Rodgers & Hammerstein’s *Carousel*.

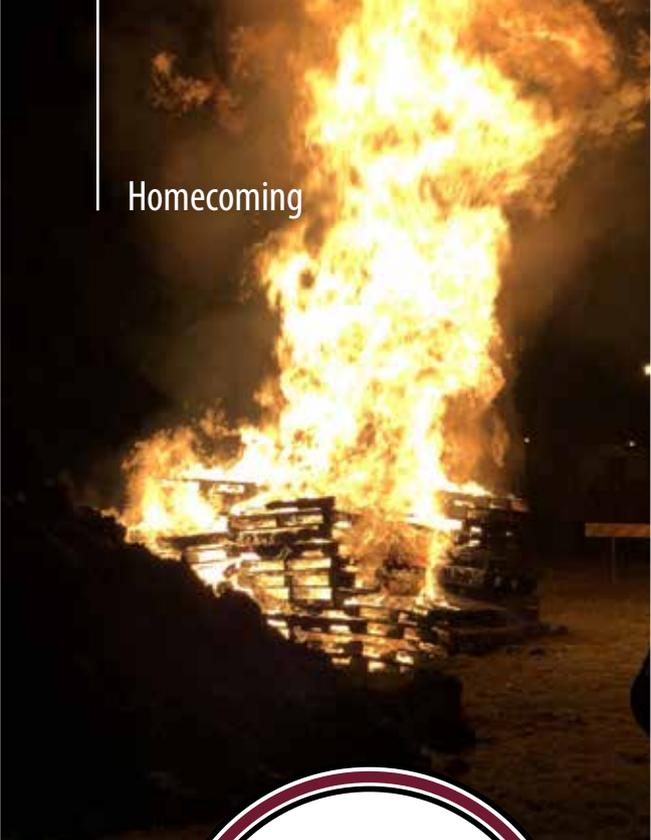
“We want to be the summer theatre in town,” he said. “We want to be the place that’s really producing a nice collection of works in the summer.”

Another goal for alumni engagement, according to Goff, is the creation of master classes to give students new approaches and new perspectives to their work, Goff said. He’d also like to include alumni in the department’s year-end banquet -- perhaps using it to announce the new theatre season.

In the meantime, he’s using social media and other tools to actively create excitement on campus around the remaining performances this season.



Homecoming



MCMURRY UNIVERSITY
HOMECOMING
•2019•





Homecoming

Our alumni make McMurry Homecoming such an incredible experience!

Thank you to everyone who came back!

We hope you'll join us in celebrating 97 years of McMurry University at

Homecoming 2020, October 15-17!



THE McMURRY FUND

“McMurry Fund scholarships allow students like me to have new opportunities. My scholarship is helping me get one step closer to graduation and the future I’m pursuing. McMurry’s ability to give scholarships, such as the one I received, has relieved so much stress from my family and countless others. I am so thankful for the generosity of those who support the McMurry Fund because without it, I might not be able to chase my dreams.”

- Caitlin Bela '21



The McMurry Fund scholarships are often the financial support that fill the gap and allow students to attend McMurry University.

Help support our students in pursuing their dreams by giving to the McMurry Fund.

mcm.edu/give

Did You Know?

The McMurry Alumni Association offers an online Book Club? It is a community where alumni and friends enjoy books related to business, social issues, psychology and more. The only cost to participate for McMurry Alumni is the purchase of the books! Learn more & sign up at pbc.guru/mcm.

McMurry Baseball First Pitch Dinner & 25-Season Celebration

Saturday, January 18, 2020

We are excited to announce our inaugural First Pitch Dinner at McMurry, which will be celebrating 25 seasons of baseball! Mark Saturday, January 18, on your calendars and make plans to be in Abilene for this incredible evening. Tickets will be on sale beginning December 12. Our guest speaker for the evening is Jason Marshall, former Head Coach at UT San Antonio. For info go to join.mcm.edu/firstpitch.



Night of Distinction

Friday, April 17, 2020

Join us on campus as we celebrate alumni achievement at our signature awards event. We hope to see you there!

Spring Alumni Weekend

April 17-18, 2020

Join McMurry alumni back in Abilene the third weekend in April and celebrate our Spring Alumni Weekend! Enjoy local tours and events in Abilene, including Friday evening's Night of Distinction. On Saturday, be sure to join us for our alumni golf outing at the Abilene Country Club! There truly is something for everyone and *SO MUCH FUN* to be had by all – we hope to see you in Abilene this April!



McMurry Serves

Saturday, February 8, 2020

McMurry Serves is a one-day, nationwide event bringing together students, alumni and members of the greater McMurry

community to give back in the form of community service. Our 2020 event will be on Saturday, February 8. For more information, visit alumni.mcm.edu/mcm-serves

Save-the-Dates

Homecoming 2020 – October 15-17

Final Ala Cumba – Saturday, October 17

For an up-to-date calendar of all alumni events and activities, please visit join.mcm.edu/events. We hope you'll join us for an alumni event soon!

Women's Leadership Luncheon

Thursday, March 26, 2020

McMurry's Annual Women's Leadership Luncheon will feature guest speaker Jayann Sepich of New Mexico.

Consider Rolling Over **Your IRA** Today!

By taking a distribution from your IRA this year, you will likely pay more in taxes and may even be in a higher tax bracket. **Rolling over** part of your IRA's "Required Minimum Distribution" or RMD to McMurry University can help you to reduce your tax bill while supporting the University.

An **IRA charitable rollover** gift can benefit both you and McMurry's mission! Contact your IRA Administrator to get started with your gift. While you will not receive an income tax deduction, you will not pay taxes on any distributions made to McMurry. Please inform us of your plans so we use your gift in a way that means the most to you.

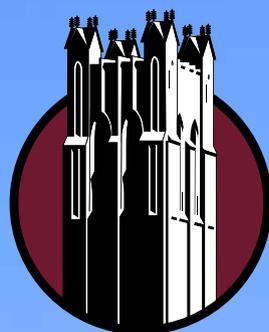
Debra Hulse | 325-793-4761 | hulse.debra@mcm.edu

70 1/2 or Older You Can Direct Up to \$100,000

ARE YOU A MEMBER?

Ever wonder if you're a member of the McMurry University Alumni Association? If you've attended at least four semesters we have great news for you – you are! The Alumni Association is a non-dues-collecting organization with the purpose of reconnecting alumni to McMurry and to each other, providing valued service to alumni and students, and supporting McMurry's mission of preparing students for a life of leadership, service and professional success. Helping to direct the initiatives of the association is the Alumni Association Board of Directors (AABOD), a representative body of alumni serving as a liaison between the association and McMurry. The AABOD represents alumni interests and contributions as a vital component in maintaining the success and fulfilling the core values of McMurry University. It focuses on celebrating McMurry's history and helping to build its future, instilling a strong sense of connectedness and pride, and creating a culture of philanthropy and stewardship for McMurry University.

Do you want to be more involved? Get reconnected and give back with your time and expertise? We'd love to have you on the board or in our pipeline! Please consider nominating yourself or other alumni you think would be an asset on the board, online at alumni.mcm.edu/association



McMURRY
ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION



GETTING TO KNOW YOUR ALUMNI BOARD

**Kimberly Tate '07****President****McMurry University Alumni Association Board of Directors**

Kim Tate began her career in higher education by serving as an Admissions Coordinator, Director of Admissions, and then Director of Athletic Admissions at McMurry from 2008-2015. With customer service at her core and student experience as her passion, Kim has lead initiatives aimed at better serving the 21st century population of students and built more effective and efficient enrollment management teams throughout her career. An experienced higher education professional, she has worn many hats and overseen multiple departments at both large and small institutions. Kim currently serves as the Associate Registrar for Operations at the University of Texas at Arlington.

"Looking back, I chose to attend McMurry because I immediately fell in love with the family-like atmosphere during my campus tour and athletic visit. I knew I wanted a smaller university where I was not just a number. I found that in McMurry," said Tate.

"Serving on the AABOD is an opportunity to support the university that I love so much. The AABOD is a team of committed and engaged individuals who share that same passion for McMurry. My hope is that we can continue to foster an enthusiastic and engaged community of alumni, as well as support the goals of the Board of Trustees and University administration."

1960s

1. John Curry '67 was honored in August when the new Van Horn High School gymnasium was named after him. Mr. Curry is the former boys basketball coach at Van Horn, where he coached for 13 seasons with multiple district and regional championships, along with a Class 1A State Championship. Congratulations Coach Curry!



1980s

2. Mark "Red" Behrens '82 was acknowledged in a story by the Abilene Reporter News for his success as a high school football coach – great job, Coach Behrens! Read the article at bit.ly/2K2klgA

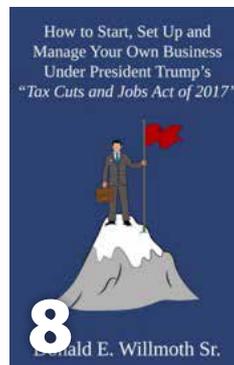


1990s

3. Dr. Allen Gradnigo '95 graduated in May with his Doctor of Education from Fayetteville State University in Fayetteville, N.C. His dissertation was titled "A descriptive study of diversification efforts at selected postsecondary education institutions in North Carolina" and was published by ProQuest.

In addition to advancing his education, Dr. Gradnigo was recently promoted to the position of Manager, Digital Learning Services at Skyline Advanced Technology Services (ATS). He joined Skyline ATS in September 2016 to lead their IT platform team. In his newly expanded role, Allen will continue to lead the IT platform team, along with growing and developing the content team and digital learning product offerings.

4. Kenneth Jowers '95 was named boys track and field coach for the Guyer Wildcats in July. He will also serve as the wide receivers coach – Congratulations Coach Jowers!



5. Josh Winegarner '99, Director of Industry Affairs at the Texas Cattle Feeders Association, has launched his campaign for Texas Congressional District 13 – Good Luck Josh!

2010s

6. Jeff Hatcher '10, pastor at Wylie UMC in Abilene, completed a 17-year journey to ordination as an elder in full connection in June at the Northwest Texas Annual Conference. Read more about Pastor Hatcher's journey in the Abilene Reporter News article online: bit.ly/2CuwWdu

7. Rebecca Schneller '15 completed her Master of Fine Arts at Stephen F. Austin University in May and is now in Kansas serving as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Art at Bethany College. Congratulations!

Books Published by Alumni

8. Donald Willmoth Sr. '68 has published a book sharing the crucial steps in opening your own business, especially with the difficulties of understanding President Trump's tax cuts and job acts. Willmoth owns his own business, AFTE Financial Services in Houston, Texas. His successful business has been featured in Entrepreneur Magazine, a small-business opportunity magazine, and Home Office Computing magazine. In 1981, his company was featured by IBM in their Freedom '81 Tour across the nation, as a front-runner in the business use of early personal computers.

Social Media

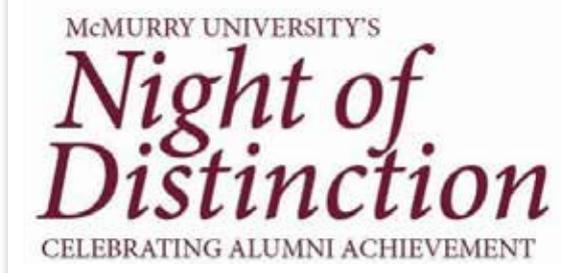
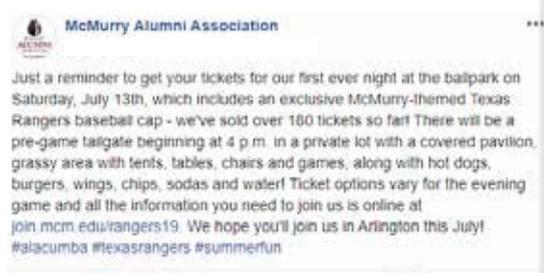
Watch our page for occasional throwback photos! You might see someone you know or even be featured yourself!

GET SOCIAL WITH US



SOCIAL.MCM.EDU

Alumni Association Facebook
Keep in touch with us to see what fellow classmates are up to and be in the know about different alumni events!



THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

JOSH LEE RETURNS HOME AS McMURRY'S BASEBALL ASSISTANT COACH.

"There's no place like home."

Applying an applicable adage for many in the tight-knit area of Abilene, Texas, a star baseball player from California found his way to McMurry University in the early 2000s and has claimed West Texas as his home ever since. Meet Josh Lee.

Lee is the only player in American Southwest Conference history to win the Player of the Year award twice (2003, 2004), a second team All-American his senior year and was a former draft pick and professional player in the Detroit Tigers organization. He also played a key role in multiple conference championships for the War Hawks.

Fifteen years removed from his playing career at McMurry, Lee and his wife Stacey decided it was time to come home.

"My heart has always been with McMurry," said Lee. "I've always thought, in a great baseball world, that I would have the opportunity to be back here and be a coach one day, but

I didn't know it would take me on the path it's taken me. I'm super stoked to be back in Abilene and at McMurry."

Lee's journey began as an 18-year-old graduate, fresh out of nearby Cooper High School, who had a life-changing decision to make on where to continue his career.

Lee said he had scholarship offers across all levels, including NCAA Division I member UT San Antonio and numerous NCAA Division II, NAIA and JUCO offers, but McMurry's young and blooming tradition and the opportunity to play as a freshman drew him to Lee Driggers' program.

"Jason Marshall was the assistant coach and recruiting coordinator at McMurry at the time, and he was connected to Cooper because he's a Cooper guy," said Lee. "He was at our practices a lot, so he was recruiting us hard. I was the first in-home visit he ever made. He actually came and sat in my house with my folks. He told me why McMurry was the right place for me. That was the staple."

While succeeding both as a pitcher and a hitter at McMurry and in the summer ball ranks, Lee drew interest from bigger schools to transfer as a senior, but opted to stay in Abilene.

"I was committed to McMurry," he said. "That's where my heart was. There were a lot of factors that played into it, but



the main one for me was that the coaches took a chance on me. I wasn't going to walk away from that and turn my back on the ones that had supported me."

As a senior, Lee knew he either wanted to coach baseball or try playing professionally after college.

"I got more buzz as a junior on the draft side than I did as a senior," he said. "It was pretty common to see scouts at our games my junior year. My senior year, I had a chip on my shoulder. I didn't feel I had anything to prove within the conference or to my teammates, but I could taste the opportunity to go pro and it drove me."

Following his pro stint with the Tigers, which took him to the West Michigan Whitecaps of the A level in 2005, Lee came back to his alma mater as an assistant coach. With over a decade to reflect on his first coaching stop at McMurry, Lee now has a new perspective for this time around.

"It's a different beast," he said. "In 2008, I was a young coach that just basically jumped on ship. I didn't have near the experience I have now. At that time, my role as a coach was less involved. I was a little bit more in the back seat, and now it's more of a leadership role with Coach (John Byington) and I being the two front-runners having the opportunity to rebuild and right the ship."

Byington, who enters his 21st season with McMurry and his 11th as the head coach, said he believes Lee is part of the recipe in restoring the program's perennial success.

"We are extremely excited to have Coach Lee back on board," said Byington. "He is an impact person. He brings excellence to everything he does and will add tremendous value to McMurry Baseball in every aspect of the program. His hire is a key piece in what I anticipate as great days ahead for our program."

Lee has been part of three of McMurry's four conference championships, twice as a player in 2001 and 2004 and once as a coach in 2008.

That winning culture is what Byington, Lee and the War Hawks look to produce for the seasons to come.

"I think moving forward, the culture is going to be driven by our guys and the legacy that they're going to leave," said Lee. "We've had some alumni come in and talk, and the legacies they've left are second-to-none. That's the mentality these fellas need to have. They're not only playing for the guy next to them, but also setting the tone for the guys coming behind them. That's how cultures are created, and I'm confident this group will do that."



Friends We'll Miss

Billy Alexander '57 of Bullard, TX died June 9, 2019.

Richard Bacon of Abilene, TX died June 28, 2019.

Dr. H. Verdain Barnes '58 of Centerville, OH died June 24, 2019.

Roger Bauernfeind of Abilene, TX died May 20, 2019.

Barbara Beasley of Abilene, TX died November 26, 2019

Glenn Bennett '55 of Sweetwater, TX died October 18, 2019.

Benny Blythe '67 of Lake Kiowa, TX died November 21, 2019

Marcelle Weems Bynum of Lawton, OK died June 16, 2019.

Betty Kiker Carter '47 of Snyder, TX died November 17, 2019

Matthew Chalmers '72 of Gainesville, TX died June 8, 2019.

Sue Childers '75 of Arlington, TX died November 9, 2019

Mary McGilvary Collier '51 of Fort Worth, TX died June 16, 2019.

Suzan Collins Headrick '85 of Lubbock, TX died July 23, 2019.

Durwood Corley of Abilene, TX died June 15, 2019.

Winnie Adair Cox '69 of Ballinger, TX died June 3, 2019.

Billy Dunlap '66 of Abilene, TX died July 16, 2019.

Billy Edwards '63 of Abilene, TX died June 2, 2019.

Rev. Glenneth Harrington '53 of Bryan, TX died October 10, 2019.

Charles Hogsett, Jr. '47 of Abilene, TX died August 14, 2019.

Gerald Holden '81 of Abilene, TX died September 15, 2019.

James Holmes, Jr. of Abilene, TX died June 8, 2019.

Clifford Howell '45 of Abilene, TX died May 12, 2019.

Gordon Hubenak '70 of North Richland Hills, TX died September 11, 2019.

Wilma Johnson Huddleston '58 of Austin, TX died June 24, 2019.

Dianne Kemp Johnston '61 of Salado, TX died May 17, 2019.

Maxine Wright Kelton '39 of Abilene, TX died June 4, 2019.

Patty Boothe Kirby '54 of Dallas, TX died October 16, 2019.

Thomas Lanz '83 of Dallas, TX died August 20, 2019.

Shirley Hall LeBow of Santa Fe, NM died June 14, 2019.

John "Bill" Lebus '67 of Dallas, TX died July 17, 2019.

Rob Marsh of Abilene, TX died July 8, 2019.

Bertram Mayes '64 of Dallas, TX died July 16, 2019.

Mary Long McMillan '59 of Brady, TX died October 19, 2019.

Donna Franklin McMinn '59 of Pampa, TX died June 8, 2019.

Mary Brown Meadows '60 of Abilene, TX died August 15, 2019.

James Pruett '65 of Arlington, TX died July 18, 2019.

Frances Reed Quiett '57 of Vernon, TX died July 29, 2019.

Charlene Ross Reily '51 of Bedford, TX died July 11, 2019.

Virginia Buckley Reynolds of Abilene, TX died June 21, 2019.

Mary Wheeler Rowlette '41 of Lubbock, TX died July 13, 2019.

Rev. Robert Sewell '61 of North Las Vegas, NV died August 1, 2019.

Robert Sivley '60 of Runaway Bay, TX died July 2, 2019.

Rev. Arnel Smith, Jr. '62 of Richardson, TX died June 28, 2019.

Emily Hendrix Smith '51 of Chattanooga, TN died July 3, 2019.

Dr. Clyde Smith, Jr. '50 of Rio Rancho, NM died July 8, 2019.

Glenn Snider '60 of San Antonio, TX died June 16, 2019.

Johnny Joe Speer, Sr. ex '60 of Wichita Falls, TX died October 31, 2019.

Rev. David Stephens '60 of Ocean Springs, MS died June 21, 2019.

Kelly Carroll Sybert '94 of Lawn, TX died September 1, 2019.

Gary Taylor of Colleyville, TX died July 4, 2019.

E. Kenneth Tooley of Austin, TX died June 9, 2019.

Marian Marshall Turk of McAllen, TX died July 2, 2019.

Mary Beard Turner '41 of Austin, TX died August 9, 2019.

Barbara Vanderpool of Pampa, TX died November 22, 2019.

Tommy Varner '74 of Abilene, TX died September 11, 2019.

Rev. Joe Walker '64 of Quanah, TX died June 5, 2019.

Charlsi Castles Webeck '60 of Greeley, CO died October 21, 2019.

Steven Wilson '82 of Abilene, TX died June 21, 2019.

Brandon Yerger '04 of Abilene, TX died November 26, 2019.

A photograph of two men standing on a porch. The man on the left is older, wearing glasses, a tan suit jacket, a white shirt, and a dark patterned tie. The man on the right is younger, wearing glasses, a light blue short-sleeved button-down shirt, and blue jeans. They are both smiling and holding a framed oval portrait of a young woman with blonde hair. The background shows white horizontal siding and a wooden door.

CREATING SOMETHING SPECTACULAR

McMurry alumnus John Keith '73 is a modest man of modest means. However, after inheriting stock from his father, Keith had a opportunity to do something spectacular to honor his mother's long-held wish that the proceeds be used for McMurry's benefit.

Using the stock, Keith created a charitable remainder trust as part of his estate planning. This trust establishes that upon his death, half of the remaining resources will fund a scholarship in honor of his late sister, Kathryn Keith '73 and the other half will fund the Dr. Robert Monk Distinguished Professorship in Religion. Monk, an esteemed member of McMurry's Department of Religion and Philosophy, taught for 31 years. During this time, he influenced the lives of countless students, often without knowing the depth of that impact.

"My story is the impact McMurry had on Kathryn, and the support she received to pursue her ultimate dream of attending seminary and becoming an ordained United Methodist minister," Keith said. "Dr. Monk was her head cheerleader."

According to Keith, Monk recognized something special in Kathryn. He saw her determination and commitment to the Church and he recognized that she worked hard to overcome obstacles. With Monk's encouragement, Kathryn entered seminary and was ordained in 1977, blazing the trail for future women United Methodist ministers.

Often, those of modest means think they cannot make a difference. John Keith's gift shatters that myth. "Keith's legacy of funding Kathryn's scholarship, which recognizes McMurry's contribution to her experience and honors Dr. Monk's relationship to that experience, will be transformational to McMurry," said Debra Hulse '80, vice president for Institutional Advancement.

"This gift is just one example of how you can make an impact," Keith said.



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



Join us for Giving Day on March 17 at mcm.edu/give