

# The Prompter

Spring 2018

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

## Work in Another Field? “Never”

By Josh Carter

Katie Rogers, a Communications Specialist at Entergy Nuclear Operations, says that the education she received in the Communication Department at Mississippi College has been instrumental in her becoming the person she is today. Ironically, her journey in Communication almost never happened, for she was originally a different major altogether.

“I came in freshman year as an English Writing major from Oak Hill Academy,” says Rogers. “I loved English, loved reading and writing. I just thought that that was what I needed to be doing - studying English.” But upon doing a study abroad program to London, a friend suggested that Rogers take a Communication course, and to possibly make it her minor. She decided to take Public Speaking with Mignon Kucia, affectionately known as “Dr. K,” and after that, Rogers says things just clicked. “It was very obvious to me that I loved Communication and that was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I didn’t want to teach, I didn’t want to just write. I wanted to do more, so that’s why I switched my major to Communication.”

What stuck out most to Rogers about the Communication Department was the fact that the professors seemed to genuinely care about their students. “The investment that the professors made in us, and the fact that they believed in us and our passions just really helped me to see that I could be successful in my field.”

Rogers would then go on to complete her master’s in PR and Corporate Communication from MC, a program built by Communication Chair Cliff Fortenberry. “I can’t say enough for that program. I can definitely say that it helped me to prepare for the real world, and to see that I really had found what I wanted to do for the rest of my life.”

Everything Rogers had learned during her time at Mississippi College, from putting together a Communications plan, to writing a press release, and even using programs like InDesign and Photoshop have helped exponentially in her career. “I just did a huge project earlier this year about focus areas for 2018 and I got all these people from our organization, top level leadership, and people in the community. It was a huge success. Everybody loved it. Being able to see the end product and to know what I wanted it to look like, just those basics that I learned in class really helped build the

foundation for how to put together a successful video.”

On who her favorite professor was during her time at Mississippi College, Rogers says that each teacher has his or her unique set of skills, but there is a special place in her heart for “Dr. K.” “She was just really cool, down to earth,” admits Rogers. “I really felt like she invested and believed in



us. But I love the entire Communication Department - all the professors.” Fortenberry sometimes gets the reputation as the “scary professor that teaches Com. Law,” but Rogers says that he’s not that at all. “He really cares about you and your future and he was just there every step of the way.” Reid Vance was also an asset to Rogers, who she viewed more as a friend than a professor. “Any time that I needed advice on anything, I would go to him and ask his opinion on things. Having that close relationship really helped me in grad school.”

Rogers now works at the Entergy Nuclear Headquarters in Jackson, Miss., as the business support communicator. She cannot say enough for how much she enjoys the business that she is in, and gives all thanks to her professors for teaching her all that she knows. “I can’t see myself working in any other field, ever.”

# Sanders: “God Still Slays Giants”

By Joelle Youngblood

“It has been a spiritual journey to get to this point,” said Chrissy Hill Sanders, an alumnus of Mississippi College and the Communication Department.

Sanders, a native of Grenada, graduated in 2010 with a degree in communication with an emphasis in theatre and a minor in ministry. Only two weeks after graduation, she married Steven Sanders, who is also a graduate of MC.

She was a counter server at Newk’s in Clinton after graduation. “I was one of those that knocked on doors, and the doors were closed because of my lack of experience,” said Sanders.

About a year and a half later, Sanders became a theatre teacher at Terry High School for ninth through twelfth grade students. “Getting to direct plays” is what Sanders enjoyed the most while she was working at Terry. She would work at Newk’s during the summer while school was not in session.

Having that theatre background is what Sanders said was really useful for her when it came to presenting herself and talking in front of other people, which in the communication field is important.

“If you’re a theatre major, you are good in front of people, so if you know what you are doing, you can get a job pretty much anywhere as long as you can sell yourself,” Sanders said. Even though her emphasis was in theatre, she had to take “all of the same classes as PR and journalism and other concentrations.”

After leaving Terry, she went on to teach special needs children that were younger than 6 years old. “That was a huge jump,” said Sanders, “and I didn’t have the knowhow, the special ed. background, or the training that the other teachers had.”

The job was only part-time, and “the supervisor was really, really bad” to Sanders. She began to stop trying when it came to her appearance because she dreaded the day ahead.

“I vented in my prayer journal about it and I said, ‘Look I know I should be thankful for this because a job is a job, but these are my days and this is what I’m going through,’” said Sanders.

Soon after, Sanders got an opportunity to move to a salary job because “Newk’s needed a manager.” She said, “I was in the right place at the right time.” Because she had worked there extensively before, she already “knew the four walls of that restaurant backwards and forwards.”

About a year later, managers were being hired and fired from the restaurant, and Sanders never got the opportunity to move up and fulfill that role. “I kind of sunk into another depression, and I was like, ‘God I know that I should be thankful for this because you gave me a really good paying job with benefits, and I get some days off during the week to be with my son, but these are my days and this is what I’m going through,’” said Sanders.

After a member of the Newk’s team tragically lost his life,

she was “desperate to get out of that situation,” so she began to look for other jobs. “I was on LinkedIn, and in the description for the job I have now what stuck out to me was the fact that they were looking for a storyteller,” said Sanders.

Sanders now works for the Cirlot Agency in Flowood as the brand strategist. “I had never worked for a PR firm before, but I was certainly not against it because it is what I have a degree in,” said Sanders.

After deciding to apply for the job, she “pretty much prayed and forgot about it.” Only a few weeks later she received a phone call to go into the agency for an interview. She was nervous because all of the other applicants had significant background in the communication

field, so she left the interview thinking, “This is way too good for me.”

During the time between her first and second interview with Cirlot, she went to church and a guest preacher was preaching on David and Goliath. The sermon was “basically about how David was not qualified and all he could bring was a sling and a stone.”

God spoke to her and said for her to take what He had already given her and use it. After her second interview, she felt great about it, but the days came and went without a word from the agency. Just as Sanders was about to lose hope, the COO of the agency called and wanted to meet her the next day because he was considering her for the job. After that day, the job was hers.

“God still slays giants, and this was a giant,” said Sanders. She has been working with Cirlot since November 2017.

Sanders resides in Clinton with her husband, three-year-old son named Sterling, and a soon to be son, who will be named Ransom.



# Kinsey Makes Courses Better

By Tamia Craft

With his lips pressed to Cups Espresso Café's medium sized cup, Wes Kinsey, MC alumnus and structural design specialist at Holmes Community College, sat across a square table sipping his hot herbal tea while discussing his life.

Wes Kinsey, who graduated from MC 10 years ago, was born in a small town called Polo, Miss., just 15 miles west of Hattiesburg. As a child Kinsey wrote stories. "Just rambling things that didn't matter, but as a teenager I did a lot of journaling." While he was an adolescent, Kinsey focused on self-reflection, describing his childhood as interesting. "I grew up on a farm. My grandparents grew up on one side, I grew up on the other." Growing up in a wooded area where there was plenty of land to run and play on, "I worked in the fields over the summer."

Kinsey knew from an early age he had a passion for theatre and writing. "I was involved with theatre in my church. We had a small community Baptist church, and we would have musicals every winter, spring, and sometimes over the summer during vacation Bible school."

Before enrolling at MC, Kinsey searched for colleges out-of-state, in states, such as, Tennessee and Alabama, but based on his family's circumstances he settled on attending a college not too far from home. "I wanted to go somewhere small. I didn't want to go to a big university where I could lose myself." He enrolled at MC and spent his first two years studying psychology. By the time he reached his junior year, taking upper level courses, he knew the field of psychology was not meant for him. "I did what you aren't supposed to do your junior year and switched my major to English Writing. I minored in theatre, psychology, and Spanish because I had just enough hours to do that."

Kinsey said MC is: "A great place for you to find people, my closest friends until this day are from MC." While at MC, Kinsey had friends from different majors and who participated in various activities while Kinsey was active in theatre. He starred in William Shakespeare's productions: Othello and The Taming of The Shrew. As a theatre minor, Kinsey was required to take a course called Directing I where he had to direct a one-act scene for "Fall Scenes." His scene was a fairytale. "The night of the performance my lead actress couldn't speak because her voice was hoarse." He said they nursed the actress back to health, and she regained her voice. "In Directing II, we had to direct scenes from two different eras and two different styles."

Now that Kinsey has two children, a five year old, Jedidiah, and a three year old, Emmaline, "I have not been in theatre for a year, but we show support as often as we can."

His first job was working as resident assistant at MC. Then he worked in human resources before he taught Spanish and English at Clinton Junior High. So, does Kinsey speak Spanish fluently? "Heaven's no. When I was in college, I took conversation courses, and I could hold a good conversation."

Kinsey learned several aspects about life after college. "Resumes are not about having a list of jobs, but the length of time the person was with that job, and what skills they gained at that job." Kinsey currently works as an instructional design specialist in the online learning department at Holmes Community College. "I work with instructors to make their courses better, and I train them on how to use our systems."

Kinsey resides in Clinton. "My wife, Brittany, is from this area. Before we had kids we came to Main Street Trivia." Although he lived on MC's campus as a student, he did not feel like an official Clinton resident until he graduated. Kinsey and his family dine in several of Clinton's restaurants, such as, Newks, Lilies, and The Bank, Clinton's pizza shack.





# My Sister's Road Story

By Terressa Jordan

In 2012, my sister, Cheryl Ann Jordan, graduated from high school. For her, finishing school was a unique accomplishment compared to other students. Cheryl was born with autism spectrum disorder and struggled with many developmental milestones.

Growing up, she was not able to be in regular lectures, and instead was in classes for kids with special needs who had similar qualities as her. Throughout school, her teachers worked on her motor skills, speech, handwriting, and performing certain tasks independently.

Despite our educational differences, we helped her practice everything that her teachers worked with her. Even though I could not relate to what her curriculum was like, I was in constant awe of how she persevered through objectives that I took for granted daily. With each passing school year, her speech improved drastically, she could write her name without assistance, and interact in social settings with ease.

Children on the autism spectrum can accomplish way more than people give them credit for and Cheryl is proof of that. During elementary school, Cheryl went to Gary Road Elementary and soon after, Raymond Elementary. At both schools she met instructors and friends that she is still in contact with.

When it was time to advance to what would be middle through high school, she attended the Special Kids program at Saint Richard's Catholic School. Saint Richard's was Cheryl's favorite school and fostered more needs than the other schools had. Her classroom was a small house that the school had bought specifically for the teachers and students of the program.

The rationale behind using a house for their learning environment was because the students felt more at ease in a place that felt like home. The environment improved her living skills and overall quality of life that would later be beneficial when Cheryl would go to summer camp, and eventually move into Boswell Regional Center.

As planning for graduation got closer, my family realized that Cheryl's journey through the Special Kids program was almost over. At 21 years old the state mandates that special needs students are eligible to finish school and receive their certificate of completion. Cheryl's teachers felt that she still had more to learn and told our parents that it was no problem for her to stay in the program until her twenty-second birthday. Cheryl turned 22 on April 25, 2012 and graduation in May was approaching fast. Instead of a traditional graduation, we held a banquet and a dinner for her in the foyer of



Saint Richard's Church. My mom explained to me that this was the biggest event of Cheryl's life. She will never be able to marry or have children, so it was important that we made her accomplishments as memorable as possible.

Watching my older sister finally see everything she had worked so hard for inspired me to do the best I could as a student.

Cheryl's graduation ceremony was everything that we hoped for. My mom and I went to Party City and bought decorations, ordered a cake, and had a catered dinner. All of Cheryl's friends, classmates, teachers, and family came to celebrate her big day. We have always

done our best to give her the world and that day truly showed the impact that she has had on everyone around her.

## Dreams She Never Knew She Had

By Jennifer Kennedy

This image was hastily taken as I was squashed into a corner with fellow communication students to observe Maggie Wade of WLBT deliver the 4 p.m. news in the Spring 2017 semester. The studio was mesmerizing and this moment heavily impacted my decision to focus on broadcast journalism. As uncomfortable as I was while taking this photograph in a crowded room, it was opening my eyes to what I wanted to do with the rest of my life.

Prior to taking this picture, Ryan Capell's Television Workshop I class toured the WLBT/WDBD station. As a class of approximately 25 students, we walked through the newsroom and the control room until our tour ended in the studio. The studio had two large cameras and the studio crew consisted of the cameramen. One operated the studio camera and the other operated the Chyron camera. The well-lit studio had a way of making every student in class feel much smaller than they were.

As we toured the station, we were given a brief overview of what took place in each area. I knew after visiting the control room that I wanted to be a part of this integral news system. I wanted to belong in this particular world. The hustle and bustle of what goes on in a newsroom is unfamiliar to most people, especially to the viewers who watch the television for hours each day. There was something different about this place and about the people who chose to work here.

This image is now a part of my reality. I was accepted as an

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On this page and following are essays written by students in Tim Nicholas's Journalism II class. Their assignment was to bring a photo and describe it and its meaning to them in about 500 words.

# I'm Flying, I'm Flying!

By Abby Holcombe

The best part about this picture is glaring: it's absolutely candid. I will be the first to admit skepticism to the authenticity of this genuine moment captured of myself. Every time I see this picture, I'm filled with gratitude and awe. This memory that rests amongst hundreds of other photos holds a special place in my heart. It immediately takes me back to that moment: I can smell the dried grass, feel the humid Alabama heat on my face, and hear the most joyous laugh I know.

Two years ago, my mom and I took my niece Emerson to a more rural part of Alabama to visit family for the day. Em and I watched trees replace street lights outside our window. We felt the road become less paved beneath us until it turned to gravel. We took backroads to a cousin's house, where we were greeted with hugs and food. We all sat by the lake, swinging on the pier while people came and went. Everything was serene and peaceful, and Emerson sat quiet and well-behaved. But something was wrong. I tried to capture the moment over and over again. I snapped pictures from different angles, and we moved towards and away from the light. I sifted through dozens of selfies searching for the memento of that day to no avail.

I finally abandoned my mission, put my phone down, and walked with my family across the farmland and through the woods. Em and

I kept ahead of the pack, jumping over every tree root and imagining a world only we could create. At some points, I think Emerson truly thought she was a fairy.

We passed under a tunnel of trees to a clear, wide pasture. The sun glowed gently and our lungs filled with the air of open space. We were away from the hustle of city-life, dreaming in that pasture. With one look, Em and I knew there was only one thing to do: run.

I laughed and she squealed as we ran around through the grass. In glances over my shoulder, I saw white sandals trying to keep up with me. I finally stopped breathless. I stood ten feet away from an ecstatic ginger girl who stared at me with wide-eyed wonder. Again, I knew what to do. I stretched out my arms, and Emerson ran. She almost fell into me as I lifted her face to mine, and we spun around and around. Between laughs, Emerson managed to yell, "I'm flying, I'm flying!" We spun until we were both dizzy, and fell to the ground. We laughed, stood up, and spun again.

My mom took this picture, which is the only one I liked from the day.

It's funny how the best picture from that day was uncontrolled and spontaneous. This picture represents the moment before, the rise before the climax. In this moment, only Em and I understand the world we've imagined around us. And that world is bliss.



## "Dreams She Never Knew She Had" continued

intern at WLBT six months after we visited the station. Six months after the start of my internship, the executive producer hired me as an associate producer. I have enjoyed every hectic minute of it. This image is a reminder of how far I have come in life. In an eight year period, I went from being a pregnant teenager who had no hopes of ever having a happy life to someone who is semi-successful and pursuing dreams she never knew she had.

It's astonishing to know that when strangers look at this image, they will not know the impact it has had on my life. Showing my 8-year-old daughter this picture, she is amazed by how glamorous it looks. Everything I have worked for is to establish a good future for her, so this picture reassures me that everything I have worked will pay off.

Choosing this image was difficult, because I have copious amounts of photographs that I love and that signify something of importance to me. Images of my daughter, my best friend eating large amounts of cake icing, and my family were the ones I had first considered. Instead of those, I chose the picture that was taken secretly as I stood behind my classmates that tells the tale of how I went from clueless about my future to inherently knowing I would someday belong to this crazy news world.



# The Dinner Table Tells a Story

By Kelsey Dowdy

A dinner table can be so much more than just a place to eat. This dinner table, the one in the picture, tells a story: a story of hope, of loss, of restoration, of love, of sadness, of fun, of friends and of family. For as long as I can remember, this dinner table, which seats eight, has been a staple in the kitchen at my home.

This table played a role in shaping me into who I am today. Since I was a little girl, I have sat around this table and learned about life. This is where my family sat and studied the Bible. It is where we sat every morning, day and night and learned what it means to love. At this table, I learned that family is not dispensable.



In 2007, we went from eating around this table as a family of eight to eating around this table as a family of seven. I was nine years old when my dad decided to walk away from my family. We suddenly found ourselves with very little money and very little means to make money, but most of all we found ourselves with an empty seat at this beloved table. For years, there was a hole, a missing place in all of our hearts because of the absence of my father.

Shortly after my dad left, we downsized to a smaller house while my dad moved back to stay at our original home (the one in the picture). We moved four times that year, ending up back at the house in the picture. Slowly and little by little, God has placed the broken pieces of our hearts back together. We went from being a broken family, with broken hearts and missing pieces, to a family who found themselves whole again, despite the absence of someone.

This dinner table has been a place where many tears have been shed because of that missing person, but it is a place where we sit today and rejoice. In the absence of one family member, we have filled it with more people: a brother-in-law, a niece and nephew, and friends who have become like family.

Because of the brokenness we as a family once experienced, I have learned to see others in their brokenness and pick them up. We went from one table of eight, to two tables seating 16 people.

This picture shows a family that was once broken, but now is whole and happy.

In this picture, at this table, are the people I love the most. These are the people who have seen me and loved me at my worst. Through the hardest times, the biggest hurts, and the massive fights, they have been my constants. This kitchen is a place where we cheer each other on, encourage one another, and fight for each other. In this kitchen, at this dinner table, these people have taught me that family is forever and that no matter what, we choose to love one another.

## “What’s My Girl’s Name?”

By Lexey Monceaux

From the age of about four until I was around eight years old, I firmly believed that I had two last names, Hoffpauir and Monceaux. This was because of my grandfather. He never made it a secret when I was younger that I was his special little one, which was unsurprising to most of the family as I was nine years younger than any of his other grandchildren. Whenever I would go and visit him we had a routine conversation; first he would say,

“What’s my girl’s name?” Which I would respond to with, “Lexey Makinsey Monceaux Hoffpauir!”

Next, a command. “Now, show me how you are ambidextrous!” I would start to hurriedly rub my tummy and pat my head, a skill that he was very proud I could perform. Finally, he would put his hands to his chest as if holding a basketball and yell,

“Quick! Go for the jump shot,” as he would say this he’d pass me his imaginary basketball which I would catch and then shoot, always making sure I kept my hands up to follow through. My grandpa would then start clapping, grab my waist and lift me up into his arms saying,

“That’s my No. 10!” No. 10 was my other name, my grandpa loved saying he had 10 grandchildren and would often forego calling us by our names, instead choosing to call all of us by our numbers instead. While the others rolled their eyes at being called a number, I loved being my grandpa’s number 10. When I was over during the summer, he would tell me 10 things he loved about me and let me have 10 scoops of ice cream (He would use a little spoon.)

Our days were filled with adventure and I loved every second. Every morning we would wake up and have coffee milk in my grandpa and grandma’s great big bed and watch the news, we would eat breakfast; French toast and hot chocolate, or eggs and bacon, or our favorite cereal Cocoa Pebbles and finish it off with another cup of coffee – something I still do to this day.

During the day I would sneak out to the barn and leave “snake tracks” in the dirt for my grandpa to find, or a draw a heart, or a smiley

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# MC: “Greatest Four Years”

By Drake Denson

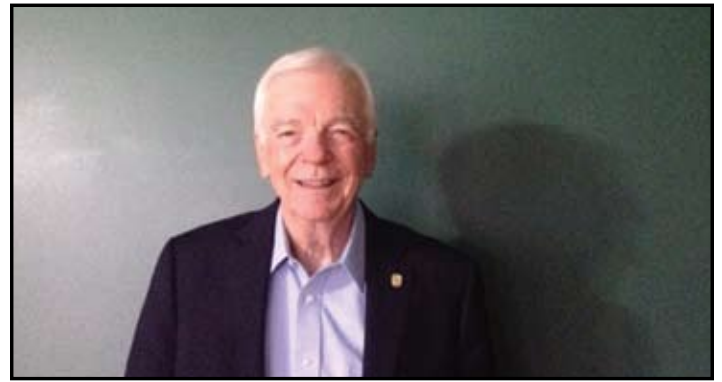
A Hattiesburg, Miss., native, Larry Grantham moved to Clinton attend Mississippi College in the speech field in hopes of becoming a moving force in Christian development for younger children.

During this time, the Communication Department was not nearly as diverse as it is today. Speech was the main major in the field that included theatre, drama, radio, and debate. Grantham was also involved in the debate team at Mississippi College.

Graduating from Mississippi College in 1960, he went on to seminary in Memphis to pursue his goals of getting into early Christian development. He stayed there for a short few years and then went on to teach in Texas, but shortly after came back to Mississippi College to work with students for a short five years after which he obtained his doctorate from the University of Southern Mississippi back in his home town. With this doctorate he was able to apply for larger scale jobs that would help him grow in his Christian faith.

After receiving his doctorate, Grantham moved up north to North Carolina to pursue his next job opportunity at Western Carolina University where he taught counseling for the next 22 years until he would retire. Once retired, Grantham decided to stay in North Carolina because of the roots he and his wife had laid down.

When speaking to Grantham his love for Mississippi College



could be felt through the phone when he began to discuss all the ways the college and city shaped in the man he became. “The four years at Mississippi College was the greatest four years of my life,” said Grantham.

Having being molded into a mature young man at the college, Grantham was able to meet the love of his life on the grounds of the school as well. Being from a Christian-based family, the small town and equal belief atmosphere helped Grantham stay comfortable and stay true to his mission of getting a degree from a highly credited school in the amount of time necessary.

He offered advice on what could come after college and how to achieve goals. “Take advantage of any job opportunities that are thrown your way. You never know where they may lead.”

Grantham is one of many Mississippi College graduates who have gone out and conquered the world in their own way, and as many other past graduates he dedicates a large amount of his success to Mississippi College and the excellent staff that helped him through the best four years of his life.

## “What’s My Girl’s Name?” continued

face. We would pick vegetables from the garden and ride the four-wheeler to go and pick up trash. I’d listen to him tell stories while grandma and I would shell peas, or shuck corn, we’d sit and have dinner – always a meat and vegetables, and then after, while Jeopardy was on we’d each get a bowl of ice cream. My grandparents had vanilla, I would get chocolate chip cookie dough.

About halfway through my bowl, when my grandma would get up to put on her night coat I would run quickly over to my grandpa and let him have one or two pieces of cookie dough before she returned, I would giggle as she came back into the room, cookie dough was one of our special secrets. When it was time to go to bed, I would snuggle between my grandparents, one hand holding onto my grandma and one hand holding onto my grandpa, the sound of their breathing and the crickets outside would lull me to sleep as my dreams took me into the next day.

In 2009 my grandfather was diagnosed with cancer. Over the

next three years I saw him grow weaker and weaker, but his spirit remained strong. We didn’t go out to the barn any more, we didn’t ride four-wheelers to pick up trash, not as many stories were told. A year before he passed on my 13th birthday was the last time we

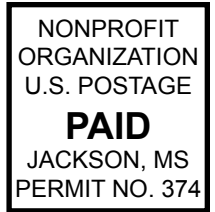


performed our routine, it was much quieter than when I was little, and he could no longer pick me up or even get out of bed to hug me, but he still smiled. Soon after, his mind became affected by the medicine and his memory started to go away, this included his memory of me.

A year and almost a month later, on Nov. 11, 2010, my grandfather lost his battle with pancreatic cancer. Most of my memories of him have become fuzzy and tinged with gray around the edges like an old film. I know one day I’ll get to see him again, and even though it’ll be different as we’ll be in heaven, I hope our greeting will be the same, because the only question I’ve ever missed being asked is, “What’s my girl’s name?”



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## Helping is Easy and Painless

By Cliff Fortenberry

As we come to the end of another school year, I hope that your 2017 – 2018 has been wonderful so far. My 2018 has begun very well while working way too many hours, with the best folks in the world, and in one of the best places to call home.

Melanie and I have been in a different house for the past 18 months and are just now beginning to find where we put most of the “necessities.” The dog has made himself at home and leaves us fuzzy white hair all over everything. Students are still finding their way to the Communication Department and graduating to show the world just how bright they are. We are so blessed to be at Mississippi College.

Tax time is upon us. I hope that you have completed your taxes by now. If so, that is wonderful. If not ... better get busy. As you think about ways to reduce your tax burden this year while

doing something for others, let me suggest that you employ a tax strategy of supporting the Communication students at MC. Think now about next year and plan to give to the COM Department.

You may never know what your gift could mean in the life of a Communication student. What you do today will live long after you and I are no longer able to influence them. Years ago I chose to continue to give to the Communication Department, so that, no matter what, the next group of young bright minds can continue the work that began long before I got to MC. Let me encourage you to do so as well. It really is both easy and painless, it just takes a little planning.

I pray that this Spring and Summer are the best ever and that you continue to enjoy great success.