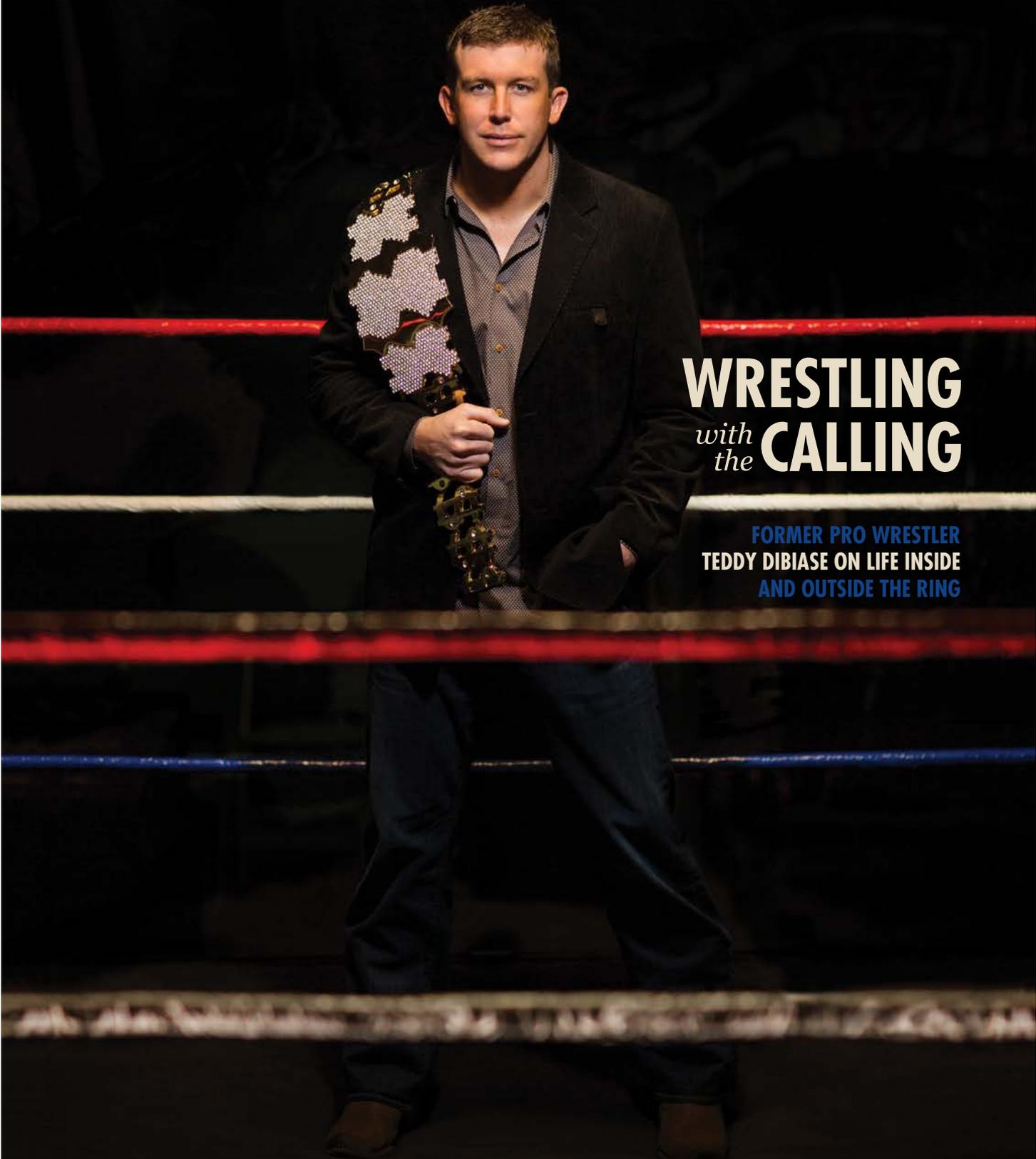


MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE | SPRING 2014

# beacon



## WRESTLING *with the* CALLING

FORMER PRO WRESTLER  
TEDDY DIBIASE ON LIFE INSIDE  
AND OUTSIDE THE RING



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

LEE GARDNER ROYCE

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

When I hear those words, written to people who were suffering in exile and would continue to suffer there for many years to come, I think about what an extraordinary amount of faith it takes to receive that verse. Claiming Jeremiah 29:11 means believing in things hoped for but not seen.

In this issue of the *Beacon*, you'll meet people who have been challenged by career changes, suffered the consequences of poor choices, and faced the loss of loved ones. Yet, they cling to Jeremiah 29:11 and their belief in things hoped for but not yet seen. They understand, too, that while they might see glimpses of God's plan here on earth, the whole picture won't be revealed to them – or to any of us – this side of Heaven.

Tragedy and struggle are the nature of a fallen world, and each of us will face our own periods of exile. But we can take comfort in Jeremiah 29:11, which reminds us that God *always* has a plan for us, and that as Christians, we can look forward to a day when we will understand that perfect plan completely.

*Lee Royce*

# beacon

## BY THE BEACON'S LIGHT

*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. — Jeremiah 29:11*

The prophet Jeremiah wrote these words to the Israelites who had been captured and taken from Jerusalem to Babylon, where they were being held in exile. His encouraging words let them know that God had not forgotten them. Even in this difficult situation, God still had a plan for their lives.

Rescue, however, was not coming immediately. Jeremiah 29:7 instructs the people, "But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare." God's plan for the people was not exclusively to benefit them, but also to bless others *through* them.

In the following pages, you'll meet people who have found themselves in difficult, confusing, and even tragic situations. While their challenges are all different, their responses have one thing in common. They have chosen to cling to God's promise of a plan that will give them hope and a future. And in seeking God's plan for their own lives, they are touching the lives of others.



*On the Cover:*  
Ted "Teddy" DiBiase, Jr.'s prayer that God would send him to a mission field led him into the ring as a professional wrestler. For more on Teddy's life inside and outside the ring, see page 28.



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TRAGEDY



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The *Beacon* is available online with videos, on-camera interviews, in-depth details, and more web-exclusive content. Look for the **b** symbol, which indicates an article with online content, then visit [www.mc.edu/beacon](http://www.mc.edu/beacon) for the rest of the story.



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Spring 2014

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## NEW ON CAMPUS

### *MC Reports Record Freshmen Enrollment*

MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE POSTED A RECORD FRESHMEN enrollment of 615 in the fall of 2013. The rising number of freshmen helped boost the state's largest private university's overall enrollment to 5,030.

The 2013 freshmen enrollment topped the previous record of 538 students in 2010 and easily bested the fall 2012 freshmen enrollment of 496. Fall 2013 also saw 324 transfer students enroll at MC, for a total of 939 new undergraduate students on campus.

Jennifer Bullard, a freshman from Florence, Mississippi, cited MC's Christian environment, the depth of her business administration classes, and an excellent education at an affordable cost as the reasons she chose MC.

"This is one of the best-priced private universities," Bullard said. "I also liked the atmosphere and welcoming environment at MC."

Freshman Sarah Welch, a music major from Germantown, Tennessee, left the Volunteer State to attend Mississippi College for similar reasons. "For me, it was the combination of the excellent music department and how friendly the people are here."



#### RISING ENROLLMENT IN 2013

615 freshmen, *a new record*  
324 transfer students  
939 new undergraduate students  
5,030 total enrollment



# MC'S LEADING MAN

*President Lee Royce Wins Executive Leadership Award*

MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE PRESIDENT Lee Royce has received a major award from one of the nation's premier higher education organizations.

Saluted for creating a vision for his university, inspiring others, encouraging innovation among faculty and staff, and other notable accomplishments, Royce was the 2014 recipient of the Council for the Support of Education's (CASE) District III Executive Leadership Award. The honor is presented annually to chief executives at universities in the group's Southern region spanning Florida, Kentucky, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Alabama, and Mississippi. Echoing the CASE endorsement, colleagues at MC agree that Dr. Royce was an excellent choice.

"Lee Royce is a remarkable leader who knows how to create a compelling institutional vision and then inspire faculty, staff, and students to unite in efforts to turn that vision into reality," said Ron Howard, vice president for academic affairs.

A Vanderbilt University alumnus who became president in July 2002, Dr. Royce has led a Mississippi College construction renaissance, seen enrollment skyrocket, successfully pushed for greater financial stability, and

spearheaded the "Growing the Vision" campaign, which raised \$87.4 million.

"Thrilled, but not surprised," was MC trustee Andy Taggart's response when learning that Royce had been recognized with the high honor. "MC is a great university for many reasons. We should all be gratified that those whose profession is higher education realize that Dr. Lee Royce is one reason we are where we are at this time in our history."

The CASE honor also recognizes campus leaders who create a positive image of their school and actively support fund-raising with a high level of success. Under Royce's leadership, Mississippi College's operating budget has climbed 69 percent and enrollment has increased by 82 percent. MC has seen an 89 percent reduction in long-term debt, and the institution has hired 42 more full-time faculty members. In short, said Debbie Norris, graduate school dean, "Dr. Royce leads Mississippi College in ways that have truly made our faculty and staff proud."

"Lee Royce leads by doing and gives his all to assisting others in applying their talents to the task at hand," said Howard. "He's taken MC to new levels of academic achievement and Christian commitment."

## UNDER DR. LEE ROYCE'S LEADERSHIP

Mississippi College's operating budget has climbed 69 percent.

Enrollment has increased by 82 percent.

Long-term debt has been reduced by 89 percent.

The Growing the Vision campaign raised more than \$87 million for MC.

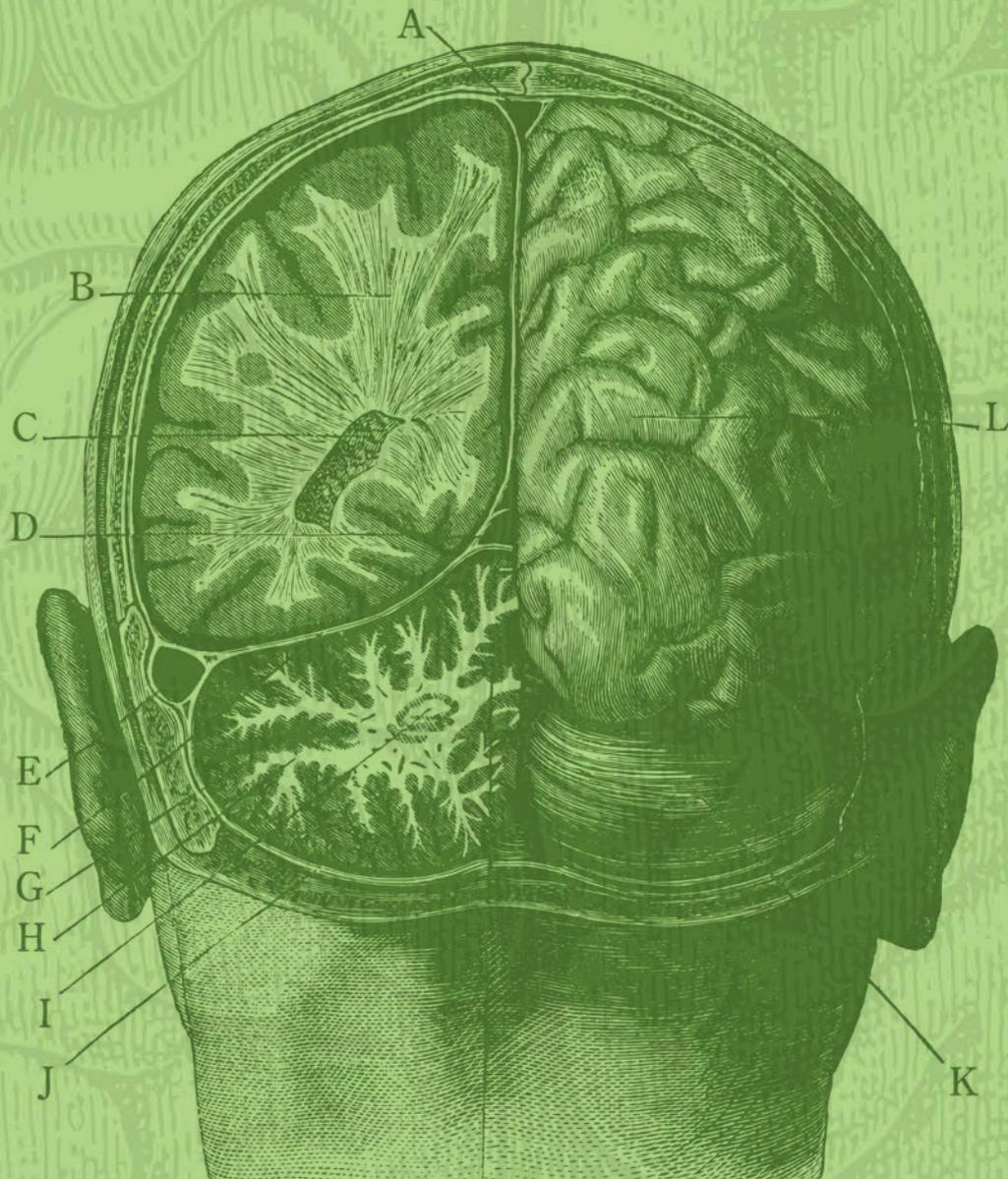
"Lee Royce is a remarkable leader who knows how to create a compelling institutional vision and then inspire faculty, staff, and students to unite in efforts to turn that vision into reality."

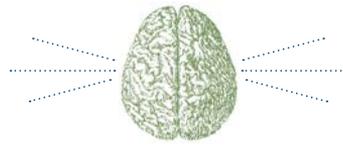
RON HOWARD, VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS



— *Don't Miss* —  
**YOUR CHANCE TO PICK  
BENJAMIN  
CARSON'S BRAIN.**

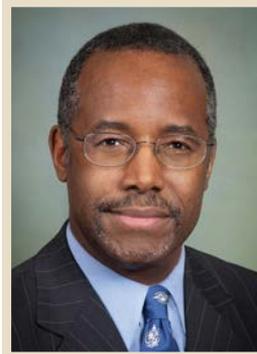
*Prominent Physician and Author to Headline  
the 2014 MC Spring Scholarship Dinner*





**“GOD HAS GIVEN US MORE THAN 14 BILLION cells and connections in our brain. Why would God give us such a complex organ system unless He expects us to use it? When we feed our 14 billion brain cells with information that will enrich us and help others, we are really learning TO THINK BIG.” — Benjamin Carson, M.D.**

ONE OF AMERICA'S premier physicians and a prolific author, Benjamin Carson, M.D., will headline Mississippi College's annual scholarship dinner on April 22, 2014. Dr. Carson achieved his childhood dream of becoming a physician despite the challenges of dire poverty and low self-esteem. His success has allowed him to become an inspirational role model for others.



“Dr. Benjamin Carson is an immensely talented pediatric neurosurgeon, motivational speaker, and author of successful inspirational books,” says Ron Howard, vice president for academic affairs. “His memoir, *Gifted Hands*, reveals a man of deep commitment, real grit, and perseverance. Dr. Carson overcame long odds to become a world class surgeon and opinion maker, and we're honored to have him share his experiences and insights with Mississippi College.”

Dr. Carson is an emeritus professor of neurosurgery, oncology, plastic surgery, and pediatrics at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore. He directed pediatric neurosurgery at the Johns Hopkins Children's Center for 39 years prior to his retirement in June 2013. He holds more than 60 honorary doctorates and has received hundreds of awards and citations. CNN and *Time* magazine have both recognized him as one of the nation's 20 foremost physicians and scientists. In June 2008, he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in the land.

Dr. Carson is a contributor to FOX News, and serves as president and co-founder of the Carson Scholars Fund, which recognizes young people of all backgrounds for exceptional academic and humanitarian accomplishments.

The fund has awarded more than \$5.6 million to more than 5,600 scholars throughout the United States. Dr. Carson's fifth book, *America The Beautiful: Rediscovering What Made the Nation Great*, was a 2012 *New York Times* bestseller. His latest book, *One Nation*, is scheduled for release in May 2014.

Dr. Carson joins an all-star roster of MC scholarship banquet keynote speakers who have headlined the event since its inception in 2008. Previous speakers have included former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush in 2013 and former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in 2012. The banquets have generated more than \$1.6 million in scholarship funds for Mississippi College.



## MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE 2014 SPRING SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET

APRIL 22, 2014 • 6:30 P.M.

**Tickets are \$200 per person, with sponsorship opportunities available at many levels. For additional information, contact Amy Rowan at 601.925.3257 or [rowan@mc.edu](mailto:rowan@mc.edu). For more information or to purchase tickets online, visit [www.mc.edu/banquet](http://www.mc.edu/banquet).**

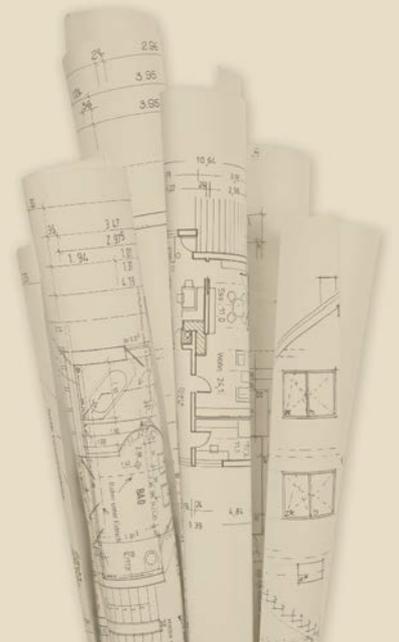
*There are more than 14 billion good reasons to attend.*



Home  
**SWEET**  
★ HOME ★

MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE  
WILL UNVEIL A  
NEW PRESIDENT'S  
HOME IN THE  
SUMMER OF 2014.

ABOVE: RHODA AND LEE ROYCE  
WITH DON AND SUE PHILLIPS





BUILT ON A RISE OVERLOOKING HISTORIC OLDE TOWNE Clinton, the four-bedroom residence will serve as a convenient, attractive location in which President Lee Royce and future leaders can welcome faculty, staff, students, alumni, and other guests at MC. The president's home will complement the quaint shops, restaurants, and businesses along Olde Towne's brick streets, and make Clinton's vibrant historic district all the more appealing.

Dr. Don Phillips '54, '84 and his wife, Sue, made the generous lead gift to fund the construction of the house, which occupies the former site of the old Hilltop Theater. The home will be known as Phillips House.

In addition to the Phillips' gift, a number of other donors have contributed to the project. "All of the costs of construc-

tion will be paid from private gifts and the sale of the existing home," said Vice President for Advancement and Legal Counsel to the President Bill Townsend.

Dr. Royce and his wife, Rhoda, currently live in a university-owned residence in another part of Clinton, but look forward to moving closer to campus. Tara Lytal, director of Main Street Clinton, is also pleased with the new construction project.

"Building a Mississippi College landmark at one of the gateways to Olde Towne will benefit nearby businesses," Lytal said. "The many Mississippi College visitors who will be entertained at the residence are sure to be charmed by the friendly atmosphere and historic beauty of our brick streets. The new home will be an asset to MC and to our community."



*MC Rejoins NCAA Division II*

**IT'S TIME TO MAKE THE BIG GAME EVEN BIGGER.  
IT'S TIME TO COMPETE AT A HIGHER LEVEL.  
IT'S TIME TO BE II.**

.....

Mississippi College is moving back to NCAA Division II play and the Gulf South Conference (GSC).

MC was a respected member of the GSC from 1972 to 1996. In the fall of 2014, the Choctaws will once again take the field against former GSC rivals, including West Alabama, Valdosta State, and North Alabama, as well as former in-state rival Delta State University. Others in the Gulf South Conference athletic lineup include Shorter University in Rome, Georgia; Union University in Jackson, Tennessee; the University of West Florida in Pensacola, Florida; and Christian Brothers in Memphis, Tennessee.

Mississippi College fans around the South will be able to tune to CSS stations for cable TV broadcasts of Gulf South Conference football games of the week. The TV coverage reaches some eight million homes in the region, and means added exposure and awareness for MC.

For the MC Choctaws, there's no better Time to Be II.

.....



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Division II compliance rules differ from those of Division III.  
For detailed information on compliance rules for Division II  
student athletes and teams, please visit [www.mc.edu/d2](http://www.mc.edu/d2).  
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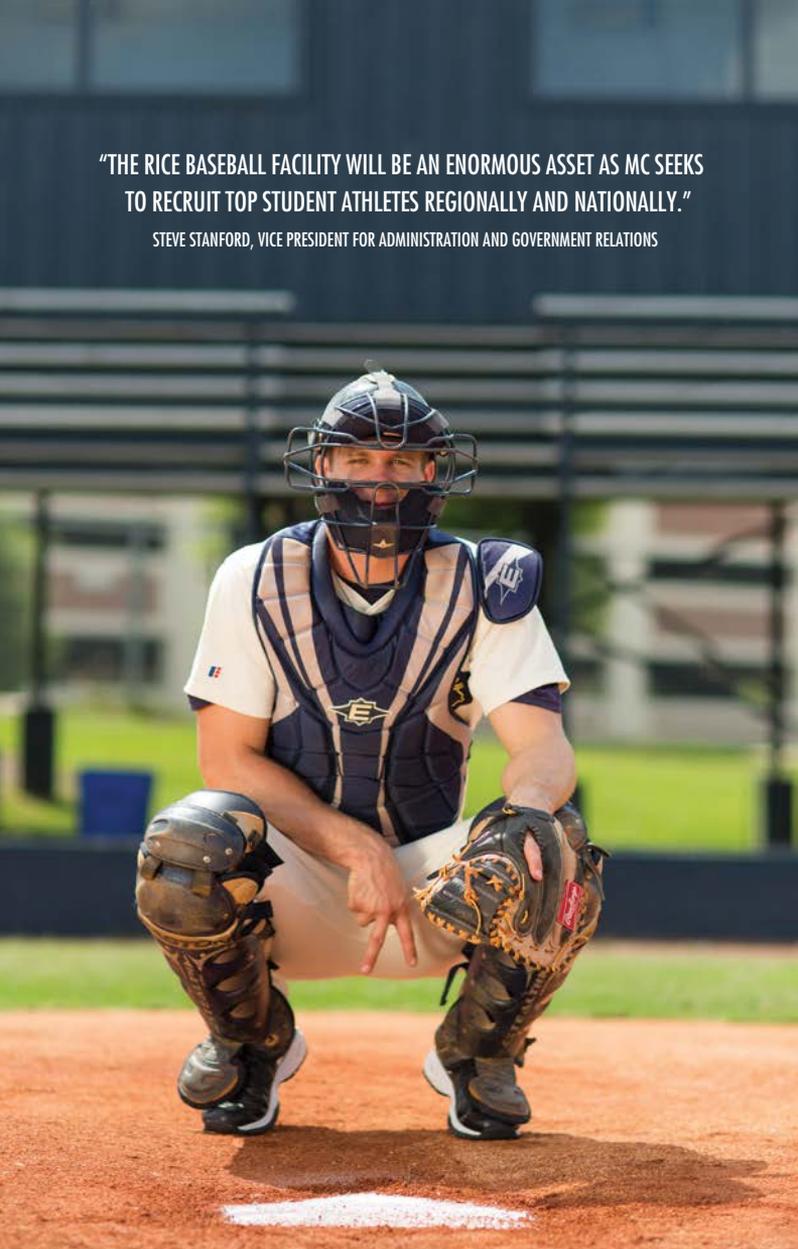


"MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE  
WILL HAVE THE  
CHANCE TO COMPETE  
FOR CONFERENCE  
CHAMPIONSHIPS.  
THAT IS OUR GOAL  
AND OUR PLAN."

JOHN BLAND,  
HEAD FOOTBALL COACH

"THE RICE BASEBALL FACILITY WILL BE AN ENORMOUS ASSET AS MC SEEKS  
TO RECRUIT TOP STUDENT ATHLETES REGIONALLY AND NATIONALLY."

STEVE STANFORD, VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS



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🌐 learn more at:  
[mc.edu/d2](https://mc.edu/d2)

# Choctaw SPORTS ROUND-UP

## CHOCTAW FANS CHEER FOR NEW FOOTBALL COACH JOHN BLAND

John Bland is ready to hit the recruiting trail and the field as the Choctaws new head football coach.

A success as head coach of the University of the Cumberland in Kentucky, Bland is well positioned to lead MC as the university transitions to NCAA Division II and rejoins the Gulf South Conference (GSC). A former Arkansas Razorbacks quarterback and head coach at the University of Southern Arkansas, Bland didn't hesitate when he told reporters the GSC "is the best Division II conference in the country." Rejoining the GSC in fall 2014, Mississippi College will "have the chance to compete for conference championships," Bland said. "That is our goal and our plan."

Over the past eight seasons, Bland compiled a strong record of 70-21 as head coach of the University of the Cumberland Patriots. During his tenure, the Patriots won the Mid-South Conference championship five times. In December 2013, Bland led the Patriots to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) national championship game, capping a 13-1 season.

MC Athletic Director Mike Jones and a university committee led the search for the new Choctaw head coach. Bland was chosen from more than 40 outstanding candidates.

"John Bland exemplifies everything we were searching for," Jones said. "He is someone who meets the mission of Mississippi College and is a proven winner. His strength in recruiting includes choosing student athletes who are not only fine players, but people of character."

## MC TO UNVEIL THE MIKE RICE BASEBALL FIELD HOUSE

Named in honor of a prominent Alabama businessman and Mississippi College trustee who once led the Gulf South Conference in home runs, the new Mike Rice Baseball Field House will add sparkle to the Choctaws dynamic program on the diamond.

Scheduled for completion in May 2014, the 2,500-square-foot facility will include a locker room, coaches' offices, training facilities, and equipment storage space. The facility is named for Mike Rice '77, a power hitter who was among the national collegiate leaders in home runs and led the GSC in doubles and triples. Rice was inducted into the MC Sports Hall of Fame in 2006. The president of Master Boat Builders in Coden, Alabama, Rice contributed a major gift that made the enhanced MC baseball complex a reality.

"The Rice baseball facility will be an enormous asset as MC seeks to recruit top student athletes regionally and nationally," said Steve Stanford, MC vice president for

administration and government relations. "With Mississippi College in the process of rejoining the Gulf South Conference and NCAA Division II ranks next season, this complex will be a wonderful addition to the Clinton campus."



## AMERICAN SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE HONORS DAVID NICHOLS AND THE MC SPORTS INFORMATION TEAM

Assistant Athletic Director for Athletic Communications/Sports Information David Nichols '06, '08 devotes an incredible amount of energy,

talent, and time to promoting the 15 NCAA sports in play at Mississippi College. The American Southwest Conference (ASC) recognized his efforts, honoring Nichols and Mississippi College's sports information department as the best in the conference for 2012-2013.

Nichols said he feels blessed to be serving his *alma mater*, and emphasized that he's thankful to be working with an extraordinary staff, including sports information graduate assistant Whitney Vance, communication professor and Choctaws announcer Reid Vance, photographer Aaron Boersma, and student assistant Brandon Spain.

"It is truly an honor for our department to be given this award," Nichols said. "This would not have been possible without the outstanding work done by Whitney, Reid, Aaron and Brandon last year."

Nichols juggles many assignments, from interviewing student athletes to producing sports media guides, from logging statistics to handling social media. He also oversees all game-day media operations, manages press boxes at home events, and runs MC's athletics website, [www.gochoctaws.com](http://www.gochoctaws.com).

According to Reid Vance, "The hours on the job are long and often inconvenient and the long road trips run from August to May, but David produces work all Choctaws can be proud of."

Nichols served as a graduate assistant and the No. 2 man in the Choctaws athletic department under former sports information director Chris Brooks from 2006 to 2010 before assuming his current position.

Nichols and his colleagues "have raised our sports information department to the highest level," said Athletic Director Mike Jones. "With MC moving back into Division II, the sports information team can look forward to a greater level of excitement and an even brighter spotlight on Choctaw sports."





POTENTIAL AS BIG AS THE

# OUTDOORS

**MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE IS  
TAKING RIDING, SPORTING  
CLAY SHOOTING, AND FISHING  
TO THE NATIONAL LEVEL**

IT ALL BEGAN WITH THREE Mississippi College students out for a drive on a sunny day. As they motored through rural Hinds County, the young women, all avid horseback riders, came upon a scene of pastoral beauty. A rustic barn rose from the rolling hills, overlooking a tranquil lake and acres of well-maintained pastures. On a whim, the students stopped and asked the owner if she would consider letting their university begin an equestrian program on the beautiful property. To their surprise, the owner, Jamie Martin, said yes.

THE MARTIN FAMILY had christened their retreat "Providence Hill Farm," a testimony to their belief in God's providence. In keeping with its name, the property and the programs it launched have been blessings to Mississippi College and its students.



"BUT ASK THE ANIMALS,  
AND THEY WILL TEACH YOU; OR THE BIRDS IN  
THE SKY, AND THEY WILL TELL YOU; OR SPEAK TO  
THE EARTH, AND IT WILL TEACH YOU; OR LET THE  
FISH IN THE SEA INFORM YOU. WHICH OF ALL  
THESE DOES NOT KNOW THAT THE HAND OF THE  
LORD HAS DONE THIS?" — *Job 12: 7-9*

## FROM THAT INITIAL REQUEST MADE BY THREE COLLEGE STUDENTS OUT FOR A DRIVE, THREE IMPRESSIVE OUTDOOR SPORTING PROGRAMS

– equestrian hunter and jumper, sporting clay shooting, and bass fishing – were born at Mississippi College. MC launched the equestrian program in 2007, followed by sporting clay shooting and bass fishing in 2010. All three programs are headquartered at 2,000-acre Providence Hill Farm, a breathtaking retreat just a 15-minute drive from the MC campus, but a world away from the hustle and bustle of college life.

IN THIS SERENE SETTING, students learn more than just how to ride, shoot, and fish. They develop skills that will serve them in their lives outside of sports, and have an opportunity to connect with the beauty of God’s creation. More than just another part of the curriculum, the outdoor programs have proven to be a life-enhancing experience for the students who participate and an impressive drawing card for recruiting new students to Mississippi College.

In his multiple roles as MC’s director of outdoor programs and as vice president for enrollment services and dean of students, Jim Turcotte sees the impact of the outdoor programs on student recruiting first-hand. Participation in each program is growing, with many students choosing MC based solely on the opportunity to ride, shoot, or fish.

“There is no other college in Mississippi with access to a world-class equestrian, sporting clay shooting, and fishing facility like Providence Hill Farm,” Turcotte says. “By furthering these sports at the collegiate level, MC is offering students unique opportunities they won’t find at many other universities.”

All three teams are led by experienced coaches and have posted impressive results in national collegiate competitions. In 2014, the equestrian team finished third in its region. In 2012, the bass fishing team placed second out of 40 teams to qualify for the first regional tournament in MC history, and the sporting clay team placed third at the National Sporting Clays Association competition in Texas.

“Our vision is to see these three programs reach the top tier in the country, with MC earning national rankings in these life sports,” Turcotte says. “Looking at the early successes of these programs and the effect they’ve had on recruiting, I can honestly say that after 20 years at MC, the outdoor program is one of the things of which I’m most proud.”

### SADDLING UP

The MC equestrian hunter jumper team competes in the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association, local Mississippi Hunter Jumper Association horse shows, and regional competitions.

Providence Hill Farm offers superior facilities for MC students who wish to hone their riding skills, including a well-equipped, 36-stall barn, a European covered horse walker, and a covered arena that allows students to ride in inclement weather. MC students have the opportunity to ride and to bond with 17 horses, including 12 owned by the university and five available through Providence Hill Farm.

In addition to fielding the competitive team, MC offers a popular physical education course in equestrian skills that offers any interested MC student the opportunity to ride. The equestrian program allows students from diverse backgrounds who have dreamed of riding but could not afford to own a horse the opportunity to experience the unique connection between rider and mount.

Chosen from a field of 40 applicants, Tina Davey joined the program as coach in 2012. A native of California, she brought an impressive record as a competitive rider and as the founder and coach of the University of California Irvine equestrian team. Davey left a position as general manager and trainer of a top riding academy in Huntington Beach, California, to lead the MC program.

“I was drawn to MC because it is a Christian college,” Davey says. “Months before

I heard about the position here, I began feeling that God wanted me to go somewhere new. I toured the MC campus and Providence Hill and met some of the students, and I felt so strongly that the MC job was what God wanted for my life.”



ALL THREE OF MC’S outdoor programs have posted impressive results in national collegiate competitions. In 2014, the equestrian team finished third in its region. In 2012, the bass fishing team placed second out of 40 teams to qualify for the first regional tournament in MC history, and the sporting clay team placed third at the National Sporting Clays Association competition in Texas.

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**SPONSORING THE OUTDOOR PROGRAMS AT MC** While MC’s financial investment in the equestrian, sporting clay shooting, and bass fishing programs is offset by the number of new students the programs attract, outside support is critical. In addition to encouraging future generations to learn new sports and experience the outdoors, sponsors have the opportunity to participate in riding, shooting, and fishing activities at Providence Hill Farm, and to see first-hand what a life-changing experience these programs can be. ➔ Financial support and in-kind donations of gear and sports equipment are welcome. Many of the equestrian program’s horses were donated to MC, and the fishing club is in need of a bass boat. ➔ *For more information about supporting the outdoor programs and to schedule a tour of Providence Hill Farm, please contact Dr. Jim Turcotte at 601.925.3809 or turcotte@mc.edu.*

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@mcbassclub

learn more at:  
mc.edu/providencehill



JIM TURCOTTE

Many of the team's 23 riders came to MC specifically to join the equestrian team. Riders from Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Mississippi, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, and Texas are saddling up.

"The equestrian program is what brought me to MC. I'd considered riding in college for quite a few years, but it's hard to find a school with a good program that isn't absurdly expensive and doesn't require you to be winning on the A circuit before coming into college," says Elizabeth Langford, an MC freshman from Oregon. "During my visit to MC, I came out to Providence Hill Farm and talked to Tina about the team, and that sealed the deal for me. My original plan was to transfer out my sophomore year, but once I got here, I ended up loving both the team and the community at MC so much that I've decided to stay for all four years."

The equestrian program was also a deciding factor for Orlando, Florida, native Leah Katynski '13, who is now serving as a graduate assistant with the program while she earns her MBA from MC.

"I toured Providence Hill Farm and had a chance to ride on my visit, and that put the golden stamp on it. The next fall, I was here," Katynski says. "I've made lifelong friendships and I have great memories from the competitions. Under Tina's leadership, I see the equestrian team just getting better and better, and I've met with prospective students on preview days at the farm and seen how important it is to recruiting. This program gives students a chance to be part of a winning team with Christian values that's more like a family."

## GOING GREAT GUNS

MC followed the successful launch of the equestrian team with a sporting clay club, using the national-caliber sporting clay course at Providence Hill Farm as its training ground. Nestled in a pristine setting of forested paths and trails, the sporting clay range offers targets that mimic teal, doves, and pheasants, and includes a 13-station sporting clay course, duck flush, and trap skeet overlay. The MC program

has attracted noted guest marksmen, including John Satterwhite, a former Olympic and World Championship shooter.

The team's male and female members compete in local and regional collegiate tournaments. Just two years after they fired the first shot, the MC team placed third in the 2012 National Sporting Clays Association competition. The success of the program has prompted other educational institutions, including some at the high school level, to consult with MC on launching their own programs.

Sporting clay coach Jimmy Grant brings a special connection to Providence Hill Farm; he designed and built the property. Grant operates a successful consulting business specializing in agricultural and recreational land use development, and was hired by Providence Hill Farm's owners to transform their land into the outdoor showplace it is today. Grant emphasizes that the sporting clay program isn't about practicing for hunting, but is instead focused on proper mechanics of competitive target shooting.

"My passion is shooting, but I learned in the school of hard knocks. I wish I'd had the opportunity to learn how to shoot correctly when I was younger," says Grant. "Coaching the team has made me practice what I preach and as a result, I'm a better competitor. I get so much satisfaction from taking the 'green' students and guiding them up to the caliber of the skilled team shooters we have today."

"Competing on the team has taught me two skills, patience and focus, that are important outside of sport shooting," says team member Cameron Boyd. "And I'll never forget experiencing the amazing sporting clay course at Providence Hill for the first time."

"The sporting clay program challenged me to step out of my comfort zone," says team member Melissa Cunningham of Pensacola, Florida. "Spending time at Providence Hill has been one of my favorite things about attending MC. Just the opportunity to get outdoors and have some fun enjoying God's beautiful creation, to get away from the stress of

**"A GREAT DEAL OF MY DECISION to attend MC was based on the equestrian team, including the coach, the team members, the cost of the program, the facilities, and the size of the team. I've grown as a rider more than I think I ever have in the past, made incredible friendships, learned important life lessons, and grown in my faith, all as a part of the MC equestrian program."**

*Danielle LeBrecht, MC Freshman  
Chuluota, Florida*



class and studying, has been a huge relief for me. The biggest thing I've learned from being on the sporting clays team is to take that first step out of your comfort zone, even if it's uncomfortable at first. You definitely won't regret it."

#### CASTING A LINE

The MC bass fishing team is one of more than 600 clubs competing in the FLW, the country's largest tournament for collegiate anglers. In just its second year on the water, the MC team fished its way to the FLW regional tournament, reeling in \$1,500 in prize money for MC in the process.

The team practices at the sparkling, 150-acre lake at Providence Hill Farm. The toughest challenge facing the team so far has been the lack of a university-owned boat. Mississippi's professional fishermen have stepped up to help meet that challenge, offering their own boats and lending their expertise by fishing alongside the students during practices.

Webb Collums, professional angler and former Media Bass Circuit Angler of the Year, serves as the team's coach. While winning at tournaments is always a highlight, Collums' greater pleasure comes from the opportunity to teach students a lifelong skill they can share with future generations.

"Twenty, 30, or 50 years from now, we might not remember what we made on a biology test or what we got for Christmas, but you'll rarely find a person that doesn't remember catching that first fish," Collums says. "My hope is that some day these students will teach their own kids the fishing skills and life lessons they've learned from their involvement on the team. The future of any sport is in the youth, and if they're not introduced to it, they'll never know what they're missing."

"Competitive fishing teaches patience, conservation, and how to be good stewards of God's creation," says team angler Jacob Harthcock. "I absolutely love the outdoors, and the fishing team is a way for me to get outside, relax, and just push pause on things. Fishing helps me gain my peace of mind before heading back to the grindstone."

"The fishing team has introduced me to guys and girls from other colleges around the Southeast," says team member Quentin Bremenkamp. "Having an organized fishing team gives us the opportunity to do what we love in a competitive manner, while bringing national recognition to Mississippi College."

"Several things tell me that this program is the right thing for MC and for our students," says Coach Collums. "It's when they compete in their first tournament and you can't wipe the grins off their faces. It's the emails, text messages, and phone calls I get at all hours of the day and night asking about fishing lures or lakes. It's the pictures they post on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram of fish they've caught on their own time. It's the students that have graduated, but still send me pictures of the fish they caught. Those are the moments that mean the most to me."

"My former husband, E.B. Martin, Jr., and I always intended to use this property in a way that demonstrated God's providence and promoted his gifts, but we weren't sure what that might be," Jamie Martin says. "When those three young women showed up and asked us to let MC use the farm, I remember thinking, 'This is it.' I see God's providence in connecting all the dots, in allowing us to have the property and in bringing together all of these people so that Mississippi College can use it for their students. I believe our connection with Mississippi College is one of the reasons we were led to develop Providence Hill Farm."

It's little wonder MC students find such solace in the outdoor sports programs and in the pastoral surroundings of Providence Hill Farm. As the book of Job reminds, "But ask the animals, and they will teach you; or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you; or let the fish in the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this?"

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#### BY THE NUMBERS

*In a typical year, MC's outdoor programs include:*

GIDDY UP: 23 riders ➔ 17 horses  
3,102 bales of hay ➔ 8 large shovels

THE WHOLE SHOOTING MATCH: 16 shooters  
15,000 rounds of ammunition ➔ 15,000 targets

REELING 'EM IN: 10 anglers ➔ 680 miles  
of fishing line ➔ Three fun-filled fish fries



# BEING — the — VILLAGE

DAVETTA COOKE LEE '06



Growing up, Davetta Cooke Lee had three career goals: to be a doctor, a lawyer, and Miss America. In the end, the calling to become a lawyer won out, but not before Lee earned an undergraduate degree in biology from Xavier University and “dabbled” in enough pageants to help pay her way through school.

“When I enrolled in law school, Pat Evans, the dean of admissions, told me she thought I might have been the first person to attend MC Law on a partial pageant scholarship,” Lee says with a smile.

Lee was drawn to a career in law not by dreams of a comfortable lifestyle or becoming a superstar in the courtroom, but by an overwhelming desire to help people. Lee grew up in Texarkana, Texas, a close-knit community in which she played the role of a “village child,” encouraged by her family, her neighbors, and her church community to aspire to great things. Lee’s father was a pastor; her mother was a school counselor who sometimes brought children in need home with her for dinner, then sent them home wearing clothes from her own daughter’s closet. It was an upbringing that inspired Lee to pay it forward.

“I was humbled. I lived a blessed, comfortable life,” Lee says. “I had so many people who poured into my life, who expected great things from me and encouraged me to pursue them. That support made a tremendous difference for me. Now I want to be that village for other people.”

Today, Lee serves as the executive director of the Mississippi Access to Justice Commission, a position that allows her to be that village for low-income families. The commission was created by the Mississippi Supreme Court to expand access to the justice system, particularly for low-

income families who cannot afford to hire attorneys. The commission members are appointed by the Supreme Court and represent not only the legal system, but also the clergy, business community, educators, and all walks of life.

As the commission’s first executive director and only full-time employee, Lee works with legal aid providers across the state, addressing laws, court rules, and policies that limit access to the judicial system for the poor. She researches, develops, and implements new policies; promotes collaboration among multiple agencies serving similar groups of people; and performs outreach and training to Mississippi attorneys to encourage *pro bono* participation. Lee also fields calls from the public, referring people in need to the appropriate sources of help, including the Mississippi Center for Justice, Mission First, and other legal services providers.

“If I could wave a magic wand and instantly change policy for the better in my dream areas, those areas would be mental health and education,” Lee says. “Mental

health issues affect the whole state and are reflected throughout the legal system, especially in the family courts. I’d love to see policy changes that would help with early detection and treatment of mental health issues.

“The second area would be education. As a child, I was taught that getting a good education was the most important thing I could do. Education is just the only way. It’s *the thing* that lifts people out of poverty. Too many children come from a home life with low expectations, and attend a school with low expectations. I’d like to see changes that result in an atmosphere of encouragement and high expectations.”

“DAVETTA IS SERIOUS about any project she takes on. She studies it, she has anxiety about it, and she steps out of her way of seeing things and tries to intuit how others may see it. She is truly adept at reading people. When she develops a plan, she is also always coming up with reasons why something won’t work and then trying to pivot to address those reasons.”

*husband, Jonathan Lee*

“AS A MEMBER OF THE ACCESS TO JUSTICE COMMISSION, I’ve had the opportunity to observe Davetta Lee in her role as its executive director. She’s established impressive relationships with the judiciary, legal service providers, and bar leaders, and she is respected for her efficient organization, her prompt follow up, and her knowledge of the work of other Access to Justice initiatives. Davetta is an important component of access to justice in Mississippi. I’m proud to claim her as an MC Law grad and pleased that she was selected as our Young Alumna of the Year.” — *MC Law Dean Jim Rosenblatt*

Changes in policy come in small steps rather than in dramatic, sweeping victories, but Lee has learned to celebrate each of those small steps as a positive change. For example, the commission helped introduce a system that allows people to generate basic forms and handle simple legal issues, including divorces based on irreconcilable differences, name changes, and other straightforward matters, without hiring an attorney. It might sound like a minor development, but for people who cannot afford legal counsel, it could be life changing.

Lee’s previous positions also stemmed from her desire to help others. She came to the commission from Young Williams PC, where she served as a staff attorney assisting with the privatization of Mississippi Department of Human Services cases involving unpaid child support payments. Prior to joining Young Williams, she worked as a program and policy analyst at Hope Enterprise Corporation/Mississippi Economic Policy Center, where she focused on hurricane recovery and consumer protection policies that impacted low-income families, including policies related to mortgage loans, student loans, and payday lending.

“I’m proud to say my whole career has been about helping people,” Lee says.

The desire to serve is shared by Lee’s husband, Jonathan Lee, and was the catalyst for his decision to run for mayor of Jackson, Mississippi, a move that also put Davetta Lee on the campaign trail.

“When Jonathan originally talked about running, I was reluctant,” Lee says. “We lived a private life. But after listening to his pleading and realizing how important it was to him, I said, ‘Okay. Let’s do it.’”

Once Davetta Lee was in, she was *all* in. She loaded the couple’s three-year-old daughter, Morgan, into a little red wagon and took her door-to-door campaigning for votes. While Jonathan Lee lost the mayoral election by a slim margin, both Jonathan and Davetta say the campaign was

largely a positive experience for them as a couple.

“Davetta was critical to my mayoral campaign, and she was critical to helping me bounce back after we lost the election,” says Jonathan Lee. “Before I ran for mayor, I never really understood how much of a family effort a campaign is. Nowadays, there is no separation between the political candidate and the family. It requires a partner who is willing to go all the way with you, and it can be very, very difficult. I could not have done it without Davetta in lockstep providing support. She gave it 120 percent.”

“The high points were working with families, seeing a new energy and excitement in Jackson, and meeting so many people who believed in Jonathan,” Davetta Lee says. “Losing the election was a disappointment, but you pray without ceasing and get back up and put one foot in front of the other. Jonathan and I are both still active in civic work. He is

“DAVETTA IS VERY territorial about her family. She gives her all for our daughter, Morgan. She has also been known to go way over the top in planning Morgan’s birthday parties.”

*Jonathan Lee*

the same loving husband and father and I am the same doting wife and mother. We accept that sometimes God wants you to have the journey. So many great things came out of running. We sometimes laugh and say, ‘Can you believe everything we went through?’”

The election loss didn’t quench Davetta Lee’s desire to serve. In addition to her professional work, she is a member of the Junior League of Jackson, chairs the community service committee of the Urban League of Greater Jackson Young Professionals, serves on the board of directors of Youth for Christ, and is active in the children’s ministry at Anderson United Methodist Church.

Her drive to be that village for others both professionally and personally has its high points and its low. Lee’s philosophy for dealing with setbacks is found in Jeremiah 29:11, a passage she holds so true that it hangs on the wall in her daughter Morgan’s bedroom. “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

“I have meditated on that scripture a great deal,” Lee says. “God’s plans have always been better than mine. His will is better than anything I can come up with. I’ve always asked God to order my steps, and no matter where those steps have led, the journey has always been beneficial.”



**IT RUNS IN THE FAMILY** Davetta Lee is fascinated by genealogy, and has traced her family tree back to the early 1800s. Along the way, Lee discovered that her passion for education was a family trait. Born in 1867, Lee’s great-grandfather became a traveling teacher and instructed rural black children throughout eastern Texas.



**TWO “CORNYS” MAKE A MATCH** Jonathan and Davetta Lee met on a blind date arranged by a longtime friend of Jonathan’s who shared classes with Davetta at MC Law. \* “When he set us up, I remember asking him, ‘How do you know I’ll like her?’” Jonathan says. “His response was, ‘Oh, I know *you’ll* like *her*. I’m worried about how *she’ll* like *you*.’” \* “I told my friends that Jonathan was really nice, but a little corny,” Davetta says. “They advised me that I, too, was a little corny, so maybe we’d be a good fit.”

\* “I knew that first night that I was going to marry her,” Jonathan says. “I told her this about three weeks into our dating, which probably prolonged our engagement. Without a shadow of a doubt, Davetta is my perfect complement. She’s a lot of fun, and I genuinely *like* her as well as love her. Well, we are married, so let’s say I like her 99.9 percent of the time. Davetta is beautiful inside and out. Marrying her is the best thing I’ve ever done.”



# JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED



WHEN THE MEMBERS OF MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE'S FIRST PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT CLASS graduated in December 2013, no one was more excited for the new PAs than Dr. Rod Cutrer '72.

Dr. Cutrer left his successful, 32-year family medical practice in Hattiesburg to serve as the PA program's medical director, bringing with him more than three decades of hands-on medical experience, a signature sense of humor, and a unique prescription for healing that he didn't learn in medical school.

By the time he was 14 years old, Rod Cutrer knew he wanted to become a doctor. His decision was driven by two of the parables of Jesus, the story of the Good Samaritan and the parable of the talents.

"The idea of finding someone who was sick or hurting, binding their wounds, and then also caring for them afterward appealed to me," Dr. Cutrer says. "The Good Samaritan didn't just tend to his patient's physical needs, he also cared for his patient's *emotional* needs.

"The parable of the talents tells us that if God gives us a talent, we should use it 100 percent. Figuring out what was wrong with a patient and making the right diagnosis was the gift God gave me," Dr. Cutrer continues, then adds with a smile, "If it had been up to me, I would have become a professional athlete."

Following his graduation from Mississippi College, Cutrer's talent led him to the University of Mississippi School of Medicine, and then to practicing family medicine in Petal and in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. As a doctor with the Hattiesburg Clinic, he treated virtually every type of ailment and medical emergency, from serious illnesses to children with bugs stuck in their ears.

Dr. Cutrer modeled his practice after that of the storied "country doctor," making house calls to deliver medicine, checking on his patients outside of office hours, and forming relationships that went beyond simply treating symptoms. His patients benefitted not only from his medical expertise, but also from his unfailing sense of humor and his genuine concern for physical, emotional, and spiritual health. Dr. Cutrer's prescriptions – all written on his official prescrip-

tion pad – often took the form of inspirational Bible verses or recommended activities that would help patients focus on something other than their illnesses. As one often-written prescription read, "Exercise, get outside of yourself, and count your blessings."

In 2009, Mississippi College invited Dr. Cutrer to teach with the university's new PA program. Leaving his family practice of 32 years and the city he and his wife, Carroll, loved was a life-changing move, but one that Dr. Cutrer felt he had been called to make.

"When you're called by God to do something, it takes the pressure off," Dr. Cutrer says. "I know this is what I need to

be about now. I have this knowledge and experience, and every heartbeat I have is to impart that knowledge and experience to my students."

Dr. Cutrer's biggest concern was taking care of his patients, many of whom had been with him all of their lives. He spent six months winding down his practice and finding the right doctors to care for his patients in Hattiesburg.

"Your patients have been so incredibly lucky," a former patient wrote to Dr. Cutrer. "But your students will continue that legacy because you are a natural teacher."

Dr. Cutrer came to MC as an assistant professor, but soon accepted additional responsibilities as the PA program's medical director. An important part of the program is clinical rotations that find the students working in healthcare settings statewide. As medical director, Dr. Cutrer assists in recruiting the physicians and clinics that participate in the rotations.

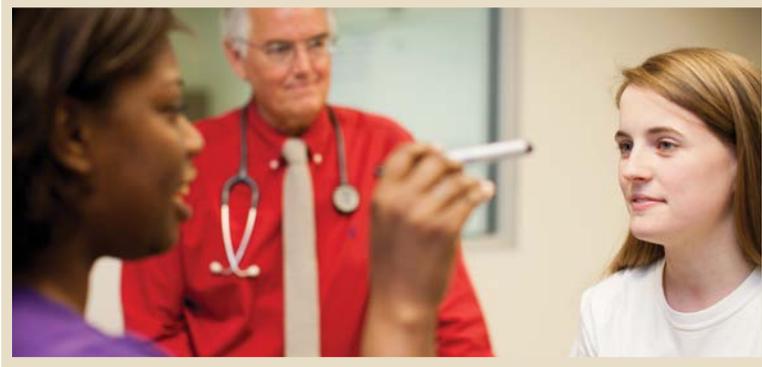
**FOR SALE**  
*722 Bedrooms, Excellent Condition*

**Dr. Rod Cutrer has always enjoyed pulling pranks. As a medical student, he had a large, glow-in-the-dark sign printed that read "For Sale" and placed it in front of the University of Mississippi Medical Center.**

I Will Be  
A Doctor.



"The best doctors have to keep a sense of humor. There is already enough pain and misery in the medical field. Laughter is the hand of God on the shoulder of a troubled world." — DR. ROD CUTRER



**W**hile Dr. Cutrer enjoys his role as “a doctor from Mississippi out on the forefront” of promoting the MC program, what he enjoys most is teaching. Dr. Cutrer brought the same deep caring spiced with humor that made him a well-loved physician into the classroom at MC, where his teaching techniques include counseling students on their lives outside of school *and* dancing for the class to the Bee Gees hit, “Stayin’ Alive.” It’s little wonder Dr. Cutrer’s PA students describe him as anything but textbook.

“I want to be the kind of provider Dr. Cutrer was. He doesn’t approach medicine like many doctors do. Instead, he taught us that medicine is a mix of medical knowledge and truly caring for your patients,” says Stephen English ’13. “Dr. Cutrer exudes the kind of love and compassion that comes from Jesus Christ and directs it toward his patients, his students, his family, and his friends. Dr. Cutrer is an honest, enthusiastic, energetic, funny, wise teacher and doctor, and he’s full of love.”

“Dr. Cutrer has a passion for healing the ‘broken’ whether from a physical, emotional, or spiritual aspect. That’s clear every time he steps into the classroom,” says Luke Brasel ’13. “I was one of the older students in the class and married with children, which made it a lot to manage sometimes. Dr. Cutrer was always there to keep me putting one foot in front of the other.”

“While I was away on clinical rotations, it was not uncommon to receive an email or phone call from Dr. Cutrer asking about what I was learning and offering words of encouragement,” says Hannah Clark ’13. “That support meant so much to me. The title of ‘medical director,’ can sound intimidating, but Dr. Cutrer is a mentor and a friend to every student in the program.”

His PA students honored Dr. Cutrer with the program’s 2013 Didactic Faculty Member of the Year Award, presented to the faculty member who helps the most in student learning, as well as the Spirit of MCPA Faculty Award, presented to the faculty member who most exemplifies the ideals of the physician assistant profession through service and leadership.

“Dr. Cutrer is passionate about medicine, serving others, and helping students succeed,” says Courtney Wright ’13. “He leads his life with a servant’s attitude while continuously striving to be the best husband, father, grandfather, instructor, and physician he can be.”

Speaking to the first class of PA program graduates, Dr. Cutrer offered words of wisdom on building a successful career. “Medicine is not just about curing strep throat. It’s about *caring*. Be there for the least of these. Compassion will drive you to learn and to excel. I realize you need to have a job and an income, but true happiness and joy will come when you realize your life was meant to be given away.”

For as much as he has given his life to his patients and his students, Dr. Cutrer has received much in return. Shortly after he came to MC, Dr. Cutrer suffered a detached retina and lost the sight in his right eye. His efforts to learn the new skills his position required were hampered by his limited vision, and with his 61st birthday approaching, he wondered if it was time to begin slowing down.

“Then I walked into class, and the students surprised me with a birthday card and their rendition of ‘Happy Birthday to You,’” Dr. Cutrer says. “That reminded me that it was never about me. It was always about them, my students. This is where I need to be. Even if my vision leaves completely, I can still teach from my heart and brain. I’ll just ask someone to lead me around.”

Over the years, Dr. Cutrer has received hundreds of cards and letters from grateful patients, and is now adding notes from grateful students to his collection.

“When I get down or I’m searching or a little depressed, I get those cards and letters out and read them. Those notes remind me why I was put on this earth. The most miserable people are those who don’t have something bigger to focus on than themselves.”

A letter from one of Dr. Cutrer’s former patients summarizes his past built on caring for his patients, and looks to the future of the MC PA program under his guidance.

“Thank you for taking care of *all aspects* of our health. Not only are you such a gifted physician, you possess that priceless spirit – Holy Spirit – that permeates everything you do...As much as I will miss having you as our family doctor, I thank our Heavenly Father that you were obedient to His call to teach and train future [physician assistants]. I am certain that countless lives will be changed.”

“It has never been about money or prestige or being a doctor,” Dr. Rod Cutrer says. “It has always been about giving something back, knowing that God asked me to do something on earth, and fulfilling it.”

**“DR. CUTRER HAS A PASSION for healing the ‘broken’ whether from a physical, emotional, or spiritual aspect. That’s clear every time he steps into the classroom.”**

*Luke Brasel ’13*



## DOCTOR'S ORDERS

Dr. Rod Cutrer recently received a letter from a patient he treated for “fatigue,” along with a copy of a prescription he wrote for her in 1992. The former patient reminded Dr. Cutrer that at the time he treated her, she had been struggling with the death of a parent, a new baby, and the incarceration of her older child. The note went on to describe the happy and blessed life the patient was now enjoying as a result of following Dr. Cutrer’s orders. The prescription, which the woman had kept tucked into her Bible for all those years, read simply:

1. *Physical exercise*
2. *Spiritual – Matthew 11: 28, 29, 30, prayer*
3. *Mental – Do things for other people.*  
*There is a light at the end of the tunnel.*



## THE MC PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

A physician assistant is a licensed healthcare professional who practices medicine under the supervision of a physician. A physician assistant diagnoses and treats illnesses and can offer a broad range of healthcare services traditionally provided by doctors. MC’s inaugural PA class had 29 members; there are now 92 students enrolled in the PA program.

“You become a PA because you want to, not because you can’t get into medical school,” says Dr. Rod Cutrer. “It’s a lifestyle choice. PAs have more flexibility and less liability risk than doctors. PA school is like medical school condensed into 30 months, but that doesn’t make it any easier. Our students work very hard and are consummate team players and professionals. The PAs I know are very smart and very humble.”

MC’s physician assistant program benefits not only its students, but also the people of Mississippi. Of the approximately 80,000 PAs practicing nationwide, only 100 are working in Mississippi. Graduates of the MC PA program could significantly augment the state’s physician and PA workforce, particularly in rural areas where access to medical care is sparse.

Becoming a physician assistant is also a wise career choice. *Money Magazine* rates PA as one of America’s top 10 jobs based on demand.



**BEING DRIVEN VS. BEING LED** When he was a young physician, husband, and father, Dr. Rod Cutrer found himself driven to succeed, but with little peace of mind. “I was trying to be the perfect doctor, husband, and father, and I felt I was failing at all of it. One day, I broke down and wept. I prayed to God and said, ‘God, I can’t do this on my own. It’s yours.’ He took it, and it was life changing. I do not have my act together. I am a very flawed human being, but that allows me to feel what other people feel. I’ve never gone back to being that worn out, driven person. I’ve realized perfectionism is not a spiritual quality.”

# WRESTLING WITH + THE CALLING

TEDDY DIBIASE '06 ON THE DARK  
SIDE OF THE ENTERTAINMENT  
INDUSTRY, THE GOD OF SECOND  
CHANCES, AND GETTING BACK IN  
THE RING AFTER TAKING A BUMP





## TED "TEDDY" DIBIASE, JR. SEEMED DESTINED FOR A CAREER AS A PROFESSIONAL WRESTLER.

**T**eddy's grandfather and his grandmother were both pro wrestlers. His father, Ted DiBiase, Sr., followed in their footsteps, achieving worldwide fame as the notorious "Million Dollar Man," a bleached blond, bearded wrestling villain known for his evil laugh and his habit of literally throwing money around. World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE), the world's largest professional wrestling organization, called Ted DiBiase its "most despised villain of the 1980s." But despite his worldwide infamy, to Teddy and his two half-brothers, the Million Dollar Man was simply "Dad."

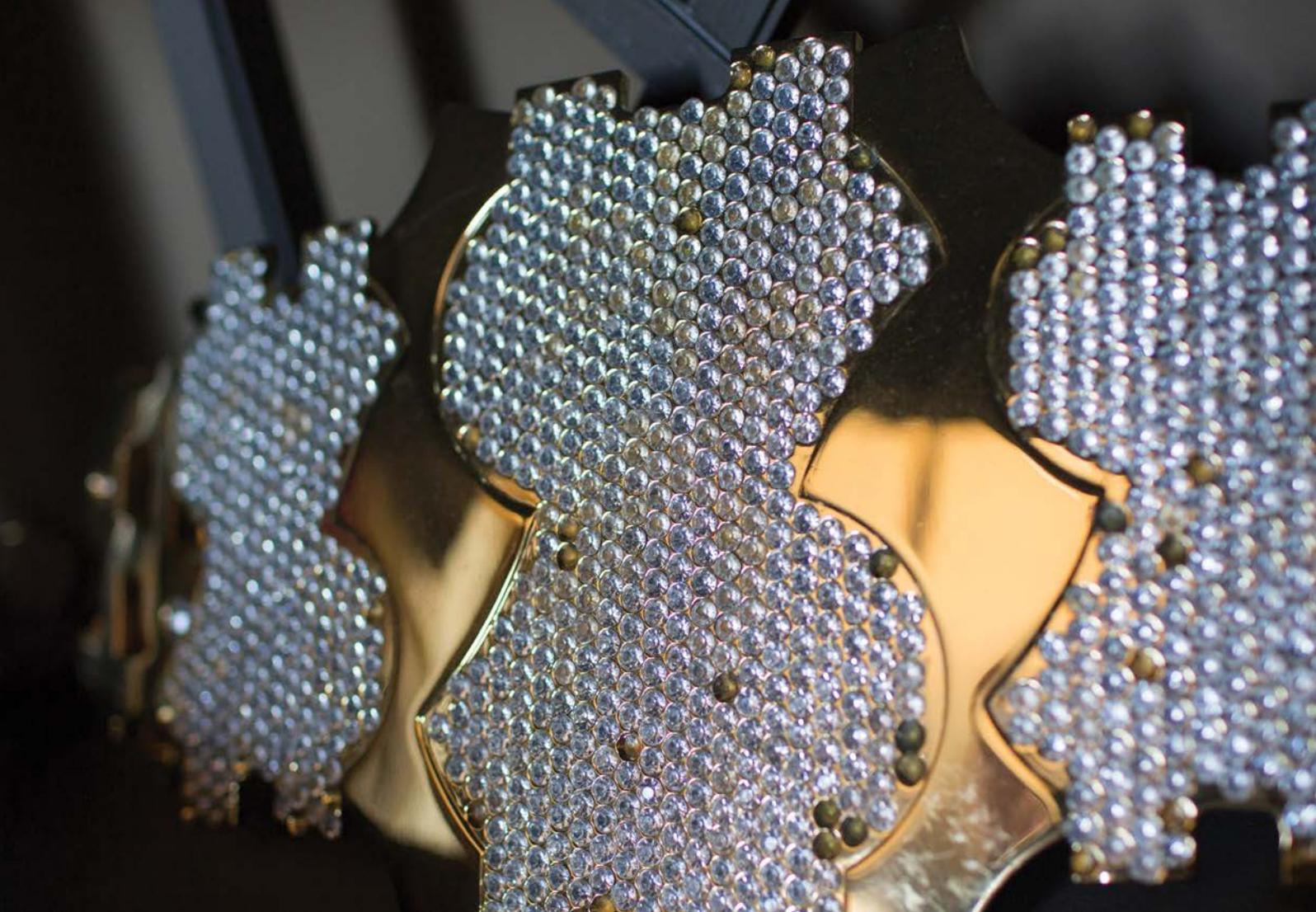
"He did a good job keeping his wrestling life and his home life separate," says Teddy. "My mother kept my brothers and me active in other things and made sure our lives weren't all about wrestling, and when my father came home to Clinton from a tour, he was just Dad. Of course, I *did* always win the playground argument. You know – my dad can beat up your dad."

But while wrestling brought Ted DiBiase, Sr. fame, fortune, and a reputation on the playground, wrestling's sex, drugs, and rock-and-roll on-the-road lifestyle almost cost him his wife and his family. When his wife, Melanie, threatened to end their marriage, Ted made a fresh commitment to Christ that saved their family and eventually led him to become an ordained minister. He went on to found Hearts of David Ministry, an evangelical organization that encourages men and women to become committed followers of Christ. As a result of his wrestling experiences in the ring and on the road, Ted was adamant that his three sons choose a career path that did not lead them into the ring.

But his pride in his father and those childhood trips to the locker room to meet Andre the Giant and Hulk Hogan had already sparked an interest in young Teddy.

"Wrestling was always in the back of my mind, even though I didn't express that to my father," Teddy says. "I knew how much he didn't want me to do it. He was my hero and I didn't want to disappoint him."

Teddy ignored wrestling's siren song for a time, enrolling in Mississippi College, where he played football and soccer and earned a business degree, but he longed for



adventure and excitement, a career outside the ordinary.

“I didn’t see myself in a cubicle, and I wanted God to use me somehow. I thought I might become a missionary, and I began praying that God would send me to the darkest place in the world,” Teddy recalls. “It’s funny, but in answer to that prayer, He sent me to the entertainment industry. God sent me to World Wrestling Entertainment.”

“Teddy came to me and said, ‘Dad, I’ve honored your wishes. Now I want to chase my dream,’” Ted DiBiase, Sr. recalls. “When he told me that his dream was wrestling, my first reaction was shock. Then Teddy said, ‘You are my hero and I’ve always wanted to be like you.’ I realized that sometimes, God lets us go, and I needed to let Teddy go. I knew that if I kept Teddy from having that opportunity, he would have held it against me.”

By that time, the WWE had shut down much of the party culture surrounding wrestling and made the event more of a family sport. Wrestlers had to pass drug tests in order to perform, and were held to a higher standard of behavior outside the ring. With his father’s blessing, Teddy relocated to Missouri to enroll in Harley Race’s Wrestling Academy.

Wrestling academy involved a strenuous workout program that included endless sit-ups, push-ups, and leg lifts. Harley’s taught Teddy how to work a crowd, perform trick moves, and “take a bump,” the wrestling term for falling flat on one’s back without using the hands to break the fall.

Perhaps the most important lesson Teddy learned at Harley’s was how to tolerate pain.

“The wrestling academy weeded out the wannabes,” Teddy says. “You had to be a disciplined athlete, and while wrestling is acting, the pain is very real. Hitting those ropes left me black and blue.”

Teddy worked multiple odd jobs to support himself while he learned, including stocking produce, mowing a golf course, and sweeping a gym floor in exchange for workouts privileges. He also landed a job as a bouncer at a club, but the wrestling-villain-in-training was fired after three days “because I was too nice.”

“All of my friends were getting jobs and settling down, but I was chasing a dream and I was all in,” Teddy says. “God gave me the strength to get through Harley’s. I had some fears and some ‘what ifs,’ but where we are weak, God’s power is made perfect.”

After “graduating” from Harley’s, Teddy wrestled briefly with Japan’s Pro Wrestling NOAH, then landed a contract with wrestling Goliath WWE. In a nod to his father’s persona as the Million Dollar Man, Teddy DiBiase, Jr. stepped into the ring in trunks emblazoned with the word, “Priceless.”

“I started as a villain, the cocky son of the Million Dollar Man,” Teddy says. “It was actually a hard persona for me to portray. I was always trying to pitch ideas that had me turn into a nice guy.”

**“I WAS CHASING A DREAM AND I WAS ALL IN. I HAD SOME FEARS AND SOME ‘WHAT IF’S,’ BUT WHERE WE ARE WEAK, GOD’S POWER IS MADE PERFECT.”**

**TEDDY DIBIASE, JR.**

TEDDY AND KRISTIN DIBIASE





**“I KNEW KRISTIN WAS THE ONE. SHE ENCOURAGED ME TO BE THE MAN SHE FELL IN LOVE WITH. SHE KEPT ME IN CHURCH. I CREDIT A LOT OF MY LIFE TO HER. KRISTIN SAVED ME. SHE REALLY DID.”**

But Teddy’s portrayal of the cocky villain quickly made him famous. His paycheck climbed into the hundreds of thousands. He wrestled on six continents, performing in front of millions of screaming fans. His live appearance at Wrestlemania, the WWE’s annual flagship event, helped attract 74,000 wrestling-enthusiasts. Teddy traveled by private jet and limousine. Action figures and video game characters were created in his image and marketed worldwide. Teddy was even chosen to play the lead role in the made-for-DVD action movie, “The Marine 2.”

“I had what the world thinks is everything, and for awhile, I believed all my own press,” Teddy says. “But gradually, I woke up and realized I wasn’t happy. I was living in Florida, away from my family and the friends who had held me accountable. All of my focus was on the WWE and climbing that ladder. Things that had once affected me and bothered me no longer convicted me. I wasn’t putting on the full armor of God. Instead, I was partying and drinking a lot to block it all out. I was at the peak of my success and all I felt was emptiness.”

In early 2008, Teddy made the decision to drive under the influence of alcohol. He fell asleep behind the wheel on a Florida road, waking up when his air bags deployed to find he had caused a head-on collision with another driver.

“The first thing I saw was the other driver, a man with his head smashed against the windshield,” Teddy says, his voice shaking at the vivid memory. “That was the worst feeling, ever. Thankfully, he was okay. He sued me, but I didn’t care, because he was okay.”

Teddy was charged with DUI, but he saw the entire event not as a punishment, but as a divine wake-up call.



are storytellers. Our job is to make people forget that what they’re watching isn’t real. And it’s all live. If you fall or forget the script, there’s no ‘do over.’ The show must go on. I remember passing out in the ring once and waking up to find a guy fake-punching me. I had no memory at all of the script or what I was supposed to be doing there, but I had to do *something*. So I just rolled out of the ring. As I recall, the crowd loved it.”

### THE WRESTLERS’ GLOSSARY

*Like most sports, pro wrestling has its own jargon.*

**A WRESTLER’S “SHINE”:** the good guy winning

**A WRESTLER’S “HEAT”:** when the villain puts the heat on the good guy

**A WRESTLER’S “HOPE SPOT”:** when the villain is putting on the heat, but the good guy is fighting back; the moments when the good guy has some hope

**“TAKING A BUMP”:** a wrestling move that involves falling flat on your back without using your hands to break your fall

**THE “GO HOME”:** when the good guy rises above, against the odds and wins (or as Teddy DiBiase, infamous wrestling villain, defines it, “The part where I’d get my butt kicked.”)

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“I had been spitting in God’s face,” Teddy says. “I had achieved my dream with God’s help, but I wasn’t living what I had always professed. Then I struggled with the feeling that I had lost my ‘saltiness.’ God wasn’t going to use me the way I had wanted Him to because of the bad choices I’d made and the way I’d been living. But we serve a God of redemption. And the God of second chances – and third chances, and fourth chances – gave me grace.”

**“A PREDETERMINED, MALE SOAP OPERA”** Teddy DiBiase hates to disappoint the fans, but yes, he acknowledges, wrestling is fake. ✚ “People would say, ‘Wow, you have such a great job!’” Teddy says with a smile. “I’d just laugh and say, ‘Really? I put on a Speedo, cover myself in baby oil, and go play fight with a grown man.’ What we do is perform a predetermined, male soap opera. Now, that doesn’t mean it wasn’t fun, and that definitely doesn’t mean it was easy.” ✚ More than just trained athletes in top condition, professional wrestlers are also actors. Teddy honed his craft at Harley Race’s Wrestling Academy, a top training facility that also teaches wrestlers how to work a crowd. ✚ “There is an art to wrestling,” Teddy says. “You have to learn how to build excitement and captivate the crowd, how to make them cheer for you and how to make them hate you. Wrestlers



TEDDY AND TATE DIBIASE

## ONCE AGAIN, TEDDY DIPPED THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD.

He lost that feeling of emptiness, and soon his personal life took a dramatic turn. In October of 2008, he married his high school sweetheart, Kristin Tynes. The two had separated when they left high school for college, but had remained in touch over the years. When Teddy was ready to turn his life around, Kristin was there to help.

“I knew Kristin was the one,” Teddy says. “She encouraged me to be the man she fell in love with. She kept me in church. I credit a lot of my life to her. Kristin saved me. She really did.”

Life as the wife of a pro wrestler was not something to which many of her friends could relate, but Kristin took it in stride.

“When Teddy went on tour in Europe, all my friends asked, ‘Aren’t you going with him?’” Kristin says. “Travel through Europe with 20 wrestlers? No, thank you. And try to imagine your husband going to work every day in a Speedo. I just didn’t let my mind go there.”

Teddy used his second chance to turn his wrestling career into a platform for Christ. With the help of friend and MC alumnus Jordan Ash ’05, ’08, he launched the Ted DiBiase Foundation, a charitable organization that provided VIP wrestling experiences for sick and disabled children, special needs adults, and veterans.

One of Teddy’s greatest memories is of the evening he spent with Lori, a young woman in her 20s with Down



syndrome and a passion for wrestling. Teddy arranged for Lori and her family to be driven by limousine to a WWE event in her hometown of Macon, Georgia. When she arrived at the arena, Teddy and members of his wrestling crew, “the DiBiase Posse,” were waiting to greet her, along with dozens of WWE fans chanting, “Lori! Lori! Lori!” Teddy escorted Lori backstage, where she met and was photographed with other professional wrestlers. When Lori asked, “Can I see the ring?” Teddy took it one step further, having the lighting and sound techs light up the ring and play his signature entrance music while he and Lori raised their linked hands high into the air and “bolted out of the curtain onto the stage, bouncing like it was Wrestlemania.”

“Honestly, with an empty arena, only security guards and a few close friends there to see, that was the best I’d ever felt coming out of that curtain,” Teddy says. “I’d walked through that curtain before into an arena filled with fans from all over the world for Wrestlemania, and it didn’t compare to my entrance that day with Lori.”

On May 15, 2012, Teddy and Kristin welcomed a son, Tate. Life seemed to be back on track and better than ever for Teddy DiBiase. But in 2013, Teddy felt God tugging at him once again. This time, the calling was harder to understand; Teddy felt God was telling him it was time to pursue a different dream, and retire from pro wrestling. While Teddy was weary from the travel and the constant abuse to his body and longed to spend more time with his wife and son, the thought of leaving the only career he’d ever known was a daunting one.

But in August 2013, Teddy DiBiase took a deep breath, hung up his Speedo, and retired from professional wrestling. Kristin, who was filling in occasionally as a nurse but had primarily become a stay-at-home mom, supported her husband in his decision 100 percent, even though she knew they would be stepping out of economic security and into faith.

“It’s not always easy in any job in any field, or for that matter, anywhere God puts you,” says Kristin. “Satan is always trying to pull you down. We learned a lot of lessons



**"I'M GRATEFUL FOR MY TIME AT MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE. I RECEIVED AN EDUCATION THAT WAS SECOND TO NONE AND MORE THAN THAT, I GAINED SPIRITUAL MATURITY. I HAD FRIENDS WHO BASED THEIR CHOICE OF A COLLEGE ON WHERE THEY'D HAVE THE MOST FUN. BUT AT MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE, I GREW THE DESIRE TO PURSUE GOD AND KNOW HIM ON A DEEPER LEVEL."**



**DIBIASE V. DIBIASE** If Ted DiBiase, Sr. and Teddy DiBiase, Jr. stepped into the ring today and age was not a factor, which DiBiase would take the champion's belt? 🗡️ "I would obviously win," Teddy DiBiase says. "My superior athletic skills and good looks far outweigh his Hall of Fame status." 🗡️ "The kid might have an edge on me," Ted, Sr. grudgingly acknowledges. "Even in my best shape, I never looked as good as Teddy did. And unlike my son, I was never a film star."

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**OUCH.** While Teddy DiBiase acknowledges that pro wrestling is scripted, he's also quick to point out that the physical pain involved is very real. During his years as a pro wrestler, Teddy broke his ribs, ankle, multiple toes, pinkie, and arm, as well as suffered a dislocated collarbone, staples to the head, a ruptured disc, fractured knee, and nagging neck injuries, and he's been hit over the head with a chair so many times, "I think I've got some memory loss." 🗡️ Teddy can remember the only injury that kept him from finishing his script through to the end. 🗡️ "I jumped off the top rope and shattered my ankle. I had just two words for my opponent: 'pin me.'"

about God's grace during Teddy's time in wrestling, and we can use those lessons in our next step. We're in a transitional phase, but we're happy in it.

"I see God in the design of our marriage," Kristin continues. "I am a realist. Teddy is a dreamer. I could happily settle for 'ordinary' any day of the week, but *Teddy* is not ordinary. I am part of Teddy now, so I can't settle for ordinary, either."

"Stepping out of the ring was frightening and exciting at the same time," Teddy says. "We had financial security, but I was giving up time I would never get back. Now I'm not getting beat up or jumping off a top rope anymore. I'm home with my wife and my son instead of on the road 290 days a year."

One of the first people DiBiase called with the news that he was stepping out of the ring was his friend and fellow MC alumnus Nick Coughlin '06. Within weeks, he and Coughlin launched a new venture, a consulting and business development group called Dofflin Strategies. The business has garnered some high profile partners and clients and appears to be poised for success.

Since his charitable foundation was based on his persona as a wrestler, DiBiase shuttered the Ted DiBiase Foundation, but he didn't give up his passion for philanthropy. Instead, he launched a new charity, HopeSpot. Named for the wrestling term that refers to the moment of hope when the good guy fights back and just might defeat the villain, the charity will focus on specific "spots" around the world that need an injection of hope. HopeSpot will sell products and sponsor competitions and fund-raisers to fight sex trafficking, support orphaned children, provide clean water, assist in disaster relief, and help the homeless. HopeSpot is still in the development stages, but Teddy plans to use the celebrity connections he made through professional wrestling to launch the organization worldwide.



more – in structures that enhance the wellbeing of the people who live and work in them. "Intrigued by the concept, Teddy contacted fellow MC alumnus Nick Coughlin, and the two formed Dofflin Strategies, a consulting and business development firm that promotes the Delos Living wellness concept. In April, Dofflin Strategies, Delos Living, and real estate developer David Landrum announced that the town of Livingston, Mississippi, currently under construction in Madison County, would be the first completely wellness-certified town in the world. Every public building and every home in the community will be designed with enhancing the wellness of those who work, live, and visit there in mind. "This is a brand new concept and we're on the forefront," DiBiase says. "We're helping to pioneer a new industry and it will start right here, in Mississippi."

"God blessed me with a platform, and I feel a responsibility to that," Teddy says. "The wrestling world is huge, with millions of fans and social media followers. I want this to be a platform God can use to change the world, but if I can help in just a few spots, I'll be happy."

Memories of his darker days in wrestling still bring tears to Teddy's eyes.

"That's a tough time for me to revisit," Teddy says, as he looks at his wife and son. "It's hard to talk about because I realize what I have now. But I don't mind sharing what happened to me because I want people to know you can have the world, money, fame, and still be so unhappy if you don't have a close relationship with Christ."

As for his son, what would Teddy say if little Tate grew up and told him, "I want to be a pro wrestler, just like you?"

"Right now, I'd say no," Teddy says. "But I know that when the time comes for Tate to make a decision about his career, I'll pray that he lets God lead him and hope he makes a wise decision. Tate will make his own choice. My dad didn't really want me to be there, but before I am my dad's son, I am God's son, and so is Tate."

"Of all that Teddy has accomplished, I'm most proud of the decision he made to put God and his family ahead of everything else," Ted DiBiase, Sr. says. "Teddy

has grown into a man whose masculinity is defined by his character and his integrity. He is a caring and giving person. And at his core is what I've tried to instill in all of my sons. At his core is Teddy's relationship with Jesus Christ."

"I stepped out of the ring on faith and trusted that God would provide for my wife and our son," Teddy says. "I was called to leave before I actually did it. When I finally gave it up, God opened the floodgates. He's opened doors left and right. It's really awesome to see, and it's taught me to just let Him be God. He is sovereign. God is doing it all, and I'm just along for the ride."

**"GOD BLESSED ME WITH A PLATFORM, AND I FEEL A RESPONSIBILITY TO THAT. THE WRESTLING WORLD IS HUGE, WITH MILLIONS OF FANS AND SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS. I WANT THIS TO BE A PLATFORM GOD CAN USE TO CHANGE THE WORLD, BUT IF I CAN HELP IN JUST A FEW SPOTS, I'LL BE HAPPY."**  
**TEDDY DIBIASE, JR.**

**A NEW IDEA FOR LIVING WELL** Teddy DiBiase was at a charity event benefitting a children's hospital when he met Peter Scallia. When Scallia bought a signed wrestling belt and gave it to a child suffering from leukemia, DiBiase felt he'd met a kindred spirit. "Scallia was a partner in Delos Living, a New York City-based company that pioneered the concept of wellness certification in building projects. Wellness certification involves including amenities – lighting designed to increase energy levels, air and water purification systems, sound-dampening systems, window shields that block UV rays, and

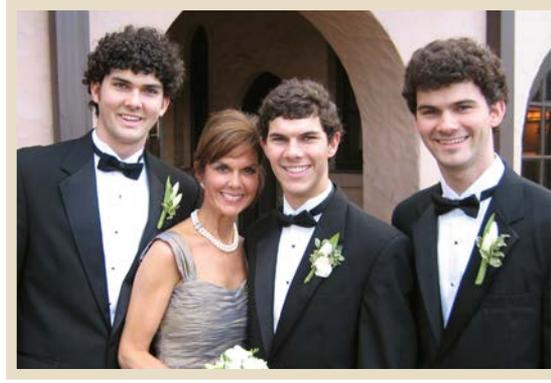


*Finding*  
**TRUTH**  
**IN TRAGEDY**

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KAREN AND ANDY TAGGART LOST A SON AND GAINED A MISSION





## BRAD TAGGART WAS LITERALLY LARGER THAN LIFE.

The handsome 21-year-old stood a lanky six-foot-seven, topped by a thick head of dark, curly hair. But while his stature might have been the first thing people noticed about Brad, his passion for living was what they truly remembered.

An avid hunter, fisherman, archer, and outdoorsman, Brad was an explorer and an adventurer, as well as a gifted entrepreneur with a knack for turning unlikely projects into unexpected profits. Quiet yet confident, Brad was as at home in the classroom as in the wilderness. He was a class favorite and an honors graduate of Madison Central High School and continued his studies at the University of Mississippi and Mississippi College.

The youngest son in a respected Madison, Mississippi, family, Brad was close to his parents, Andy, a prominent attorney and civic leader, and Karen, a surgical assistant, and to his older brothers, Drew and Rob. A humble Christian, devoted friend, and beloved son and brother, Brad Taggart appeared to have it all.

But on July 10, 2012, Brad, whose father would later describe him as “a maddening combination of attitude and winsome boyish joy that charmed everyone around him,” took his own life.

Brad’s shocked, grieving parents had no idea what could have driven their bright, engaging son to such a dark, desperate decision. Then, they found the note. And in Brad’s final words, Karen and Andy Taggart also found a mission to save other young people and a rallying cry against the enemy.

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IN THE SPRING OF 2012, Brad, then a student at the University of Mississippi in Oxford, told his parents he wanted to return home to Madison and enroll in summer courses at Mississippi College.

“When Brad called, he said, ‘I’m a little overwhelmed up here,’” Andy Taggart recalls. “We believe Brad wanted to go to MC because of the Christian influence he knew he would find there. He wanted respite and the sanctuary of home, and he saw MC as a part of that.”

The Taggarts’ oldest son, Drew, and his wife, Kata, were temporarily living with the Taggarts between moves. With Brad now back in his boyhood bedroom, Andy and Karen enjoyed a period of family togetherness they hadn’t experienced since their children were young.

“Despite the horror of what happened later, we look back and see so many gifts from God,” Andy says. “Brad physically wanted to be here with us, in a safe place. God chose to love on us by letting us have Brad for those last weeks. It was a precious, precious gift.”

The night of July 9, Andy was in Chicago on a business trip. Brad and his mother shared dinner and a walk in their wooded neighborhood, and then, Karen Taggart recalls, “I gave Brad a hug and I went to bed. I had to stand on the second stair to hug him, because Brad was so tall.”

It was the last time Karen would see her son alive. She left for work early the next morning, and upon arriving home that afternoon, found her tall, handsome, vibrant son dead. Andy was in a deposition when Karen called with the devastating news. He began the long, terrible journey home, phoning friends in Mississippi and begging them to “take care of my bride until I can get there to take care of her.”

Hours after Brad’s death, Drew Taggart found the note his brother had left in an attempt to console his family and explain his unimaginable action. Handwritten on a sheet of notebook paper, Brad’s words were raw and filled with pain, yet terribly clear and profound. He began his last message to his family with the words, “I hate that I’m putting you through this.” Brad then went on to say:

*“I’ve lost my mind due to drugs. I have no emotions, I can’t be happy ever, and I’m empty inside. Drugs have robbed me of my memory and knowledge that I’ve gained. I have zero reading comprehension skills and my attention span is about 10 seconds. I spend the majority of the day staring off into space. I’ve fallen into a psychosis. My mind has taken over and I can’t control the voices in my head. ... I sleep all day, not necessarily because I’m tired, but I hate being in reality... If it were up to me I would disappear unnoticed... I have no hope.”*

Above: Brad, Karen, Drew and Rob Taggart

Brad went on to name every drug he had taken, a mind-altering laundry list that included weed (marijuana) LSD, mushrooms, MDMA (ecstasy) cocaine, and nitrous oxide. Brad also confessed that he had been selling marijuana to support his habit. No one in the close-knit Taggart family had ever suspected Brad was involved with drugs.

“It had never crossed our minds,” Karen says simply.

“We don’t feel we missed some objective evidence that Brad was using drugs,” Andy says. “The hardest thing is that he didn’t think he could bring this problem to us. Those were the lies of the enemy, Satan, telling Brad, ‘Your dad is too hard’ or ‘Your mother will be crushed.’ Drugs weakened Brad and Satan took advantage of his weakness to tell him lies.”

While the contents of Brad’s suicide note were heart-breaking, its eloquence seemed to contradict Brad’s own words. Brad wrote that drugs had “ruined my mind, my brain, and my life,” but his note was lucid and articulate, without so much as an errant comma or misspelled word. Andy and Karen Taggart would later take comfort in knowing that Brad’s toxicology report came back clean, proof that their son had been trying for some time to turn his life around.

Shortly after Brad’s death, Karen and Andy Taggart released Brad’s suicide note to the media, hoping their son’s final words could help save another young person.

“This note is one child talking to another,” Karen says. “Someone else’s child might not listen to us or to their own parents, but that child will listen to Brad.”

In the months since Brad’s death, the Taggarts have spoken at multiple high schools, colleges, and churches, using Brad’s words to reach hundreds of young people and concerned parents with a message about the dangers of drug use. The Taggarts have received an outpouring of gratitude from individuals and families who have been helped, and perhaps saved, by Brad’s story.

“In the beginning, all I wanted to do was curl up in my closet in the fetal position,” Karen says. “I’m not a speaker, and this was a hard thing to talk about. I can hardly bear to say the word ‘suicide.’ But Brad’s note gives me power. I pray for God to give me the words to touch people. I read Brad’s letter, and then, the heart of a mother takes over. I have a story to tell, it’s real, and I don’t need to embellish it. And if I didn’t take the opportunity to share Brad’s story, I couldn’t live with it.”

While they are speaking out against drug use, Karen and Andy see a much bigger foe at work in Brad’s story than weed or cocaine. In the moving eulogy he delivered at his beloved son’s funeral, Andy pointed to the true cause of Brad’s death.

“[Satan] lied to our boy. He murdered our boy by his own hand. He persuaded him that this was the right and better and easier way, and it was a lie. And it was a murder... The enemy is a living, powerful, spiritual being whose mission is to steal and kill and destroy, and he wants to do it in your family, as he has now done it in mine.”

In the months since the funeral, Andy has never wavered in delivering that message, warning that believers must be ever vigilant against the enemy.

“Satan brings the fight to us every day, and his best tool is death. God has won that battle over death already, but Satan still uses that tool to disable those left behind. He has always been a murderer, always been a liar, is always at war, and always wants more.

“Karen’s motives in sharing Brad’s story are the motives of a mama who can’t bear to have another mama suffer. My motive is spiritual revenge. I am an

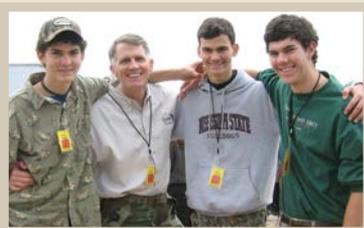
angry daddy,” Andy pauses as tears fill his eyes, “And the only way to reap cosmic revenge is to keep the enemy from dragging another baby with him.”

Satan’s biggest lie, the Taggarts believe, is quoted in Brad’s suicide note.

“The hardest part of Brad’s letter for me is that he wrote, ‘I have no hope,’” Karen says. “We witness our hope in Jesus Christ. I cry because I miss Brad every day. But while Satan took our son’s life, God says he can’t take our souls. Andy

“THE THIEF  
COMES ONLY TO  
STEAL AND KILL  
AND DESTROY; I  
HAVE COME THAT  
THEY MAY HAVE  
LIFE, AND HAVE  
IT TO THE FULL.”

*John 10:10*



**THEIR BROTHER’S KEEPERS** When he was seven years old, Brad Taggart’s older brothers, Drew and Rob, led him to the Lord. Andy Taggart recalls that he and his wife were having dinner with friends when Drew called to share the good news. Andy and Karen were overjoyed, although Andy confesses that his first comment to Drew was, “Wait, what do you mean? *I’m* supposed to do that.”

Above: Brad, Andy, Rob and Drew Taggart



### *Brad's Swing*

THE GRACEFUL WOODEN SWING ON HER HOME'S FRONT PORCH HAS BECOME KAREN TAGGART'S FAVORITE SPOT TO RELAX AND RECHARGE. THE SWING HAS A SPECIAL MEANING FOR KAREN AND ANDY, AS IT WAS THEIR SON'S FINAL GIFT TO THEM.

Weeks before his death, Brad accompanied Karen on a shopping trip to find the perfect front porch swing. But when Karen found a swing she liked, Brad told her not to buy it, promising he would make her one just as beautiful. When Brad died before he could keep that promise, Karen and Andy used the money remaining in his bank account to purchase the swing. The swing overlooks the Taggart's wooded front yard, with a clear view of a tree Brad's friends planted in his memory.

"Brad bought the swing for me, and when I sit in it and read God's word, I feel a connection to Brad," Karen says. "That swing has become a very special spot for me."

Karen has experienced some special moments in that special spot. She was sitting in the swing one day when a young man came to read the electrical meter. Karen, who is normally on the quiet side, felt an urge to speak with him.

"I called out to him and told him I wanted him to read a letter written by my son, who had committed suicide," Karen recalls. "He looked at me with these big eyes and just said, 'Yes ma'am,' took a copy of the letter, and left. I could only imagine what he was thinking. I was outside in the swing one month later, when he came back to read the meter again. This time, he spoke to me. He said, 'I wanted you to know that I gave that letter to my brother. *He* was the one who really needed to read it.'"

**A TRUE SUPERHERO** Andy Taggart was working in Chicago when his wife, Karen, called with the devastating news that their son had taken his own life. As he waited in the Chicago airport for the long, sad flight home, Andy called friends in Mississippi, begging them, “Please take care of my bride until I can get there to take care of her.” Overhearing his pleas and seeing his obvious distress, a woman waiting for the same flight came to Andy’s aid, finding a charger for his phone, bringing him water, and wrapping Andy in a hug when he broke down sobbing, “My boy, my baby boy.” \* “I asked this wonderful woman her name, and she said, ‘I am Jeannie Batman,’” Andy recalls. “Even in my state of grief and shock, I looked at her and said, ‘No one is named Jeannie Batman.’ I was convinced this woman was an angel.” \* During the flight to Jackson, the woman produced her driver’s license, proving to Andy that she was, indeed, Jeannie Batman. As the plane approached Jackson, she told Andy, “I heard you say over and over, ‘Please take care of my bride until I can get there to take care of her.’ Please tell your bride that until you could get there to her, I was here to take care of *you*.”

and I want people to know that we are completely confident that Brad is in Heaven with Jesus. Job 42:5 says, ‘My ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you.’ Brad saw Jesus face to face for the first time on July 10. And for the first time, I see Jesus as a Savior that wants us to have joy at all times and will walk with us through the toughest times. I know, because I’m there.”

“The hardest body blow Satan can deliver doesn’t leave me down on the canvas unless I choose to let it,” Andy adds. “We want to lose the acuteness of the pain of Brad’s loss, but not lose the zeal to get our licks back in. I can’t imagine this being anything less than a lifelong mission. To quote the missionary C.T. Studd, ‘Some want to live within the sound of church or chapel bell. I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell.’”

The hope they have in Jesus Christ, the knowledge that they will see Brad again, and the certainty that God’s eternal truths disprove even the most convincing of Satan’s lies have allowed Karen and Andy Taggart to celebrate their son’s life rather than despair over its tragic and untimely end. Andy reminded those who gathered at Brad’s funeral that while the enemy may whisper doubts, the Lord always speaks the truth.

“We are here to celebrate the joy that Brad brought to all of our lives. And the conviction that even though the enemy has dealt my family and our church family and this community a deathly body blow, and dropped us to our knees, and even knocked us to the canvas, that *we will not*

*stay there*. And that the next blow is the Lord’s, and that the enemy will not have victory in this... We are not down for the count because our champion is stronger than the enemy.”



### SEEING DOUBLE

Andy Taggart was a Mississippi College senior assisting with freshmen orientation when he saw Karen Bronson for the first time. Karen and her identical twin sister, Kim, were among the freshmen arriving on campus that semester. \* “They walked into the B.C. Rogers Student Center, and I was completely smitten,” Andy recalls. “And I didn’t care by which one.” \* The Taggarts recently celebrated their 31st wedding anniversary, prompting Karen to note, “It looks like he picked the right twin.”

**FAITHFUL TO THE BLUE & GOLD** Andy ’79 and Karen ’82 Taggart are proud alumni and strong supporters of Mississippi College. An attorney and founding partner with Taggart, Rimes, & Graham, Andy is a former MC trustee and serves as the master of ceremonies for the annual athletics fundraising dinner. Taggart, Rimes, & Graham handled the appeal that led to NCAA approval of MC’s move to Division II sports. Andy previously practiced with the law firm of Butler Snow, and also served as former Governor Kirk Fordice’s chief of staff. The current chairman of the Greater Jackson Chamber Partnership, Andy is also a popular conservative political commentator and author. \* Karen Taggart is a surgical assistant with the Blackledge Face Center, but considers the most important thing on her resumé the years she spent at home raising the couple’s three sons. Both Andy and Karen are active in MC recruiting efforts; their favorite recruiting success story is their son, Rob ’11, who not only followed his parents to MC, but also lived in his father’s former dorm room. \* “Karen is waiting for the day that I come home and announce that I’ve quit my job to become a professor at MC,” Andy says with a smile. “That’s my lifelong dream.”

# FRIENDSHIP

## *Tradition*

# SCHOLARSHIP

*Dr. Sharon Martin '72, Alumna of the Year*

GIVEN HER 18-YEAR CAREER AS A PSYCHIATRIST, IT'S DIFFICULT TO TELL DR. SHARON MARTIN ANYTHING THAT WILL LEAVE HER SPEECHLESS. THE EXCEPTION? FINDING OUT THAT SHE HAD BEEN CHOSEN AS MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE'S 2013 ALUMNA OF THE YEAR.

"I was totally shocked," Dr. Martin says. "I told [my husband] Bobby to look at the envelope again, that I must have received the letter by mistake. It's rare that I'm speechless, but I was at that moment. I recognize what this award stands for and I am so honored to have received it."

Those who know Dr. Martin, however, were not surprised she was chosen for the honor. Her compassionate work on behalf of the mentally ill and their families, her faithful service to Mississippi College, and her devotion to her family embody the ideals upon which this highest honor is based.

As an admitting psychiatrist with the Mississippi State

Hospital at Whitfield, Dr. Martin has spent nearly two decades treating mentally ill patients who have been deemed a danger to themselves or to others, or who are unable to care for themselves. She has witnessed terrible suffering on the parts of both the patients and their families, and has built her professional life around providing care for those who have nowhere else to turn. Rather than making her jaded or cynical, her work has made Dr. Martin more compassionate.

"When you talk to these people, their stories are compelling," Dr. Martin says. "Some really want help and they don't have anywhere else to get it."





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"THE FRIENDSHIPS BETWEEN STUDENTS AND THEIR TEACHERS ARE ONE OF THE MANY POSITIVE THINGS ABOUT MC. I KNOW THOSE RELATIONSHIPS MEANT SO MUCH TO ME WHEN I WAS A STUDENT THERE, AND OUR SONS CONTINUE TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH FRIENDS THEY MET WHILE AT MC."

*Dr. Sharon Martin*



Dr. Martin and her husband, oncologist Dr. Bobby Graham, met when they shared the same cadaver in an anatomy class at the University of Mississippi School of Medicine. Dr. Graham is an alumnus of Millsaps College, but the couple decided early on not to bring the Backyard Brawl into their *own* backyard. Both are loyal, generous supporters of MC, and regular sponsors of the annual spring scholarship banquet.

“We donate to things we believe in,” Dr. Graham says. “I’m not an alumnus, but like Sharon, I believe in what MC stands for.”

“We feel that helping young people attend MC who otherwise could not is an excellent investment,” Dr. Martin says. “It’s nice to have noted speakers come to MC for the banquet, but knowing that we’re helping someone who might not otherwise have a chance to get a good education attend MC is the real reason we want to be involved.”

Dr. Martin has strong family ties to Mississippi College. Her mother earned bachelor’s, master’s, and specialist’s degrees at MC, and her father graduated from the Jackson School of Law, now MC Law. Dr. Martin and Dr. Graham’s three sons are all MC alumni. Dr. Martin also served as a member of the MC board of trustees.

“If I had to describe MC in three words, I would choose ‘friendship,’ ‘tradition,’ and ‘scholarship,’” Dr. Martin says. “Many friendships begin at MC and continue long after graduation. Those friends include not only peers, but also faculty. The friendships between students and their teachers are one of the many positive things about MC. I know those relationships meant so much to me when I was a student there, and our sons continue to stay in touch with friends they met while at MC.

“There are so many special traditions at MC, like the Follies at Homecoming, the Festival of Lights, and Santa and his elves giving out hot chocolate and cookies before winter exams,” Dr. Martin continues. “It’s reassuring to know that

parts of college life are just going to be there year after year. And finally, MC is all about scholarship. I remember studying and cramming for exams, more than my share of late nights in the lab, and doing extra credit work. MC is challenging academically and I wouldn’t want it any other way.”

Even more than friendships, tradition, and scholarship, it’s MC’s vision as a university committed to the cause of Christ that brings the 2013 Alumna of the Year both pride and a sense of responsibility.

“I am humbled to think that people felt I was deserving of this award. I’ll now work harder than ever to live up to the ideals of this Christian university on a daily basis,” Dr. Martin says. “Mississippi College is obviously doing something right. She continues to grow and thrive. I believe that is because the people there, from the president on down, truly seek God’s guidance for the college and He provides it.”

### SOMETHING IN THE GENES

“It’s understandable that Dr. Sharon Martin and Dr. Bobby Graham are tempted to brag about their three sons, all of who are MC alumni. Jacob Graham ’07 posted the highest score in the nation on the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT), enrolled in the University of Mississippi School of Medicine, and will complete an internal medicine residency in June.

Jacob and his wife, Elise, are the parents of Dr. Martin and Dr. Graham’s first grandchild, Laurel. Aaron Graham ’08 graduated from the Harvard University School of Law. He is an attorney with Bradley Arant Boult and Cummings in Jackson, and beginning this fall, will teach as an adjunct at MC Law. Caleb Graham ’10, a former MC Presidential Scholar, will graduate from the University of Mississippi School of Medicine in May 2014.

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## ALUMNUS *of the* YEAR

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The Alumnus of the Year honors a Mississippi College or Hillman College graduate who has rendered distinguished service to his or her college, church, and community. The award is limited to those who, through a long period of years, have worked with marked intelligence to promote the higher interests of the college, and who have, through their character and deeds, brought honor to Mississippi College by virtue of their alumnus status.

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## REACHING THE PIVOTAL POINT

REBECCA SARA-NELL MCCARTY '04

Rebecca McCarty brings the same drive that made her an MC Presidential Scholarship recipient, president of Nenamoosha social tribe, *summa cum laude* graduate, and member of the Hall of Fame to her current position as corporate communications director at Paul Moak Automotive in Jackson, Mississippi.

McCarty oversees advertising and marketing, special events, and public relations activities for the automotive company. She joined Paul Moak in 2005, after graduating from the University of Mississippi's MBA program with a perfect 4.0 average. McCarty credits her undergraduate years at Mississippi College with helping prepare her not only for graduate school and for her career, but also for life after college and outside of work.

"There's no doubt I received a top-notch education that prepared me to succeed in graduate school as well as in the marketplace. However, the people of Mississippi College are what truly made the difference. From professors and administrators to fellow students, I learned from, worked alongside, and grew up with people who made a difference in my life," McCarty says. "My involvement in extra-curricular activities at MC also prepared me for success after school. Working in the MC Student Activities Office and as a resident advisor in my dorms, serving on the Campus Activities Board, and leading Nenamoosha social tribe

provided me with learning experiences in communication, leadership, and project management.

"The college years are some of the most pivotal years in any student's life," McCarty continues. "MC changed the course of my life – who I know, what I do, and where I live. Most importantly, my experience at MC was a pivotal point in deepening my faith and my personal relationship with Christ."

In addition to her professional work, McCarty is active in church and community service. She is a member of

Grace City Church in Jackson, where she serves as the leader of a women's group that meets for Bible study and service projects, and she also volunteers with the children's ministry. McCarty is a member of the 2013-14 class of Leadership Jackson, serves as the community project co-chair of the Junior League of Jackson, and volunteers with Southern Christian Services for Children and Youth. She continues to serve her alma mater as a member of the board of the Missis-

issippi College Alumni Association.

"When MC comes to mind, I think of sun shining through the trees on the Quad, friendly, smiling faces, and beautiful surroundings," McCarty says. "All of my MC memories, whether happy, funny, nerve-wracking, or sentimental, culminate into one overall feeling. I remember having the ultimate feeling of contentment, knowing without a doubt that I was exactly where God wanted me."

### "CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?"

"When I was in school, everyone still used landlines in our dorm rooms, and voice mail was an effective way to communicate campus events. One of my responsibilities in the Student Activities Office was to record those voice mails. I would record and re-record the messages over and over again because I knew everyone would hear them."

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### YOUNG ALUMNI *of the* YEAR

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This award honors men and women who have rendered distinguished service to their college, church, and community. Mere prominence is not the criterion. The award is limited to those who, through a long period of years, have worked with marked intelligence and success to promote the highest interest of Mississippi College and their home communities.

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## A MAN OF THE PEOPLE

JIMMY MORRISON '64

Certified financial planner, former Jackson public school teacher, successful businessman, and longtime Mississippi College supporter Jimmy Morrison is the recipient of the Order of the Golden Arrow.

Morrison began his professional career teaching at Jackson's Chastain Jr. High School, but returned to his *alma mater* when he was offered a position as an MC admissions counselor. After working on his doctoral degree from the University of Mississippi, Morrison served as director of admissions and financial aid at Belhaven University, but is quick to note, "Even though I worked at another college, MC was always home." Since 1982, Morrison has enjoyed a successful career in the insurance and investments business.

As he approaches the 50th anniversary of his graduation, Morrison looks back on his decision to attend MC as one that changed his life.

"That decision was all about people – the friends who were already attending MC and those who would be going to college there with me," Morrison says. "Those people, the students and professors, were the reason I loved my time on campus. Many of them, including my mentor, Doc Quick, became my lifelong friends, my inspiration, and my life models. They were all persons of great character, dedication, sacrifice, and intellectual honesty."

As an MC student, Morrison served as sophomore and senior class president, the Choctaws baseball team manager, and a Student Government Association senator. Morrison's ties with Mississippi College remain close today. A former president of the MC Alumni Association, he has built an extensive collection of MC memorabilia, including historic editions of the Collegian student newspaper, copies of the Tribesman yearbook, and carefully preserved Student Government Association election flyers.

"It's hard to pick a favorite item, but I'm proud of the baseball cap given to me by Coach Stanley Robinson in 1961, the last year of his career, which had begun in 1920. And I still have the freshman beanie I wore for initiation in the fall of 1960."

Morrison treasures the collection because every item brings back memories of those special people he met through Mississippi College.

"I heard somewhere that, 'You are a summation of the people you have known and the books you have read.' That applies to my thoughts about MC. My attendance and my continued relationship with Mississippi College are pivotal to who I am. The people I met, my love of history, and lifelong learning that was modeled for me by my professors who shaped my worldview, and therefore, my life."

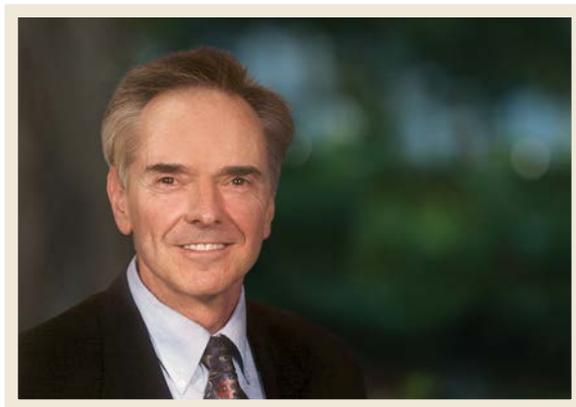
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### THE ORDER *of the* GOLDEN ARROW

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This award honors alumni or friends of the college who have made outstanding achievements in their professions, businesses, or careers. The Order of the Golden Arrow recognizes exceptional performance or leadership beyond the ordinary.

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## A LIFE LESSON IN FAITH AND IDEALS

DR. JOHN WEISZ '67

From the grassy plains of Kenya to the ivy-draped halls of Harvard, Dr. John Weisz has applied the life lessons he learned at Mississippi College to his career as a psychologist.

Following his 1967 graduation from MC, Weisz and his wife, Jenny, served as Peace Corps volunteers in Nairobi, Kenya. Weisz developed and taught courses in psychology at Kenyatta National Hospital, while his wife taught in a residential school for boys. Weisz's experiences at MC helped prepare him for the challenges and rewards of Peace Corps service.

"MC has a longstanding connection to mission outreach in developing countries," Dr. Weisz says. "My education there provided a rich exposure to role models who had devoted their lives to helping others, and the inspiration to make a difference in the world."

Upon returning to the United States, Weisz completed his graduate work in clinical psychology at Yale University. Dr. Weisz enjoyed a distinguished career as a psychology professor at Cornell University, the University of North Carolina, and the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), before joining the Harvard faculty in 2005.

In addition to teaching at Harvard, Dr. Weisz conducts clinical research on mental health issues in children. His many accomplishments as an educator, extensive work in research, and lengthy list of publications in academic jour-

nals have earned him multiple awards and recognition in the field of psychology. Ironically, Weisz came to MC intending to become a minister.

"During my years at MC, it became clear that faith and ideals can be expressed through many different careers, and the courses in psychology and philosophy at MC grew more and more appealing," Dr. Weisz recalls. "I

was especially influenced by professors who expressed their own faith and ideals through inspiring teaching, scholarship, and the mentoring of students."

Weisz attended MC during the 1960s, a time he describes as "watershed years for our nation." His college years spanned the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the violence and struggle of the Civil Rights Movement, and the Vietnam War.

"During this era, MC was a place set apart, where students could advocate for change while taking in the

perspective of wise faculty mentors who were guided by their faith," Dr. Weisz says. "I learned more than I can put into words from those remarkable years on campus during that turbulent era in our nation's history.

"The most important life lesson I took away from Mississippi College was that a person's faith can be expressed through virtually any life path, including the teaching path taken by so many of the MC faculty, whose mentorship enriched the lives of so many students, myself included."

### MAKING A LIST AND CHECKING IT TWICE

"During my college years, my friends laughed at me for keeping little to-do lists on a piece of paper in my shirt pocket, always with a pen handy so I could add to the list. I'm embarrassed to admit that this obsessive-compulsive habit has stayed with me to this day. In the words of singer Paul Simon, I guess I'm 'still crazy after all these years.'"

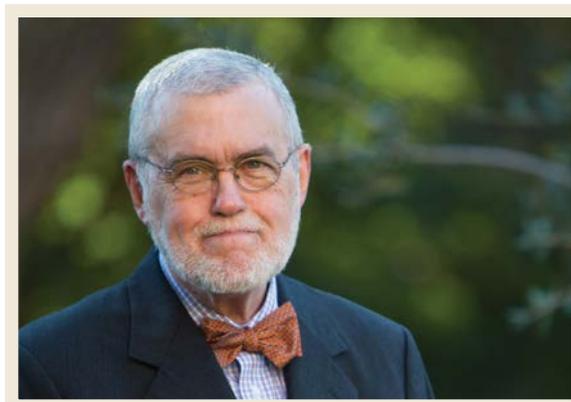
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### THE ORDER *of the* GOLDEN ARROW

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This award honors alumni or friends of the college who have made outstanding achievements in their professions, businesses, or careers. The Order of the Golden Arrow recognizes exceptional performance or leadership beyond the ordinary.

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## MUSIC TO OUR EARS

DR. JAMES SCLATER

A gifted composer and extraordinary professor, Dr. James Sclater's music has moved audiences worldwide and his gift for inspiring young musicians has benefitted generations of Mississippi College students. In recognition of his extraordinary contributions to the music world and to the university, MC presented Dr. Sclater with the Award of Excellence.

Dr. Sclater began playing piano at the age of six, added the clarinet to his repertoire at age 14, and was composing original music by the time he reached high school. Dr. Sclater has composed more than 150 works, which have been performed in the United Kingdom, Europe, Russia, Japan, and throughout the United States, and he adds, "probably in some places I haven't heard about."

His notable works include "Concerto for Orchestra," written for the 80th birthday of Pulitzer Prize-winning author Eudora Welty; "The Christmas Gift," a chamber opera regularly performed by the Children's Musical Theatre in Cherepovets, Russia; and "Lights Upon Silver," a song cycle based upon photographs by Sclater's father and written for the opening of the remodeled recital chamber in MC's Aven Hall.

"I believe that music should be challenging for the performer, should give each listener something of substance upon which to reflect, and should express the complexity of human emotions that give our lives depth and meaning," Dr. Sclater says.

Dr. Sclater has performed his own works for audiences worldwide, and also played the clarinet for 29 years with the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra. He and Angela Wiloughby, chair of the MC Music Department, performed as the duo "Lyricas," playing regionally and in the United Kingdom. Dr. Sclater's many accolades include multiple American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers awards, six composition awards from the Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters, and an Emmy nomination for musical score. He received the 1998 Humanities Professor of the Year Award from Mississippi College, and the annual Sclater Chamber Music Series at MC was named in his honor.

Other than a one-year stint as a music librarian when he was a graduate student at the University of Texas at Austin, Dr. Sclater's only fulltime job was teaching as a professor of music at Mississippi College. For more than 40 years, he

inspired students with his genius and moved them with his humility. Sclater retired from MC in 2010, but continues to compose and perform, most recently as a pianist with the Brick Street Trio.

"My long career in music has taught me several life lessons," Dr. Sclater says. "If you're going into music, have a variety of skills upon which to draw. Try to be a part of your community. Write for people you know, and be your own harshest critic."

### OH, SAY CAN YOU HEAR?

When listening to music purely for pleasure, Dr. James Sclater enjoys jazz piano, bluegrass, Tudor choral music, and new works by contemporary composers. "My favorite song is dependent on what day it is, but I always enjoy hearing the 'Star Spangled Banner' played or sung well. It bothers me greatly when people start yelling before it has concluded."

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### THE AWARD of EXCELLENCE

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This award honors men and women who have rendered distinguished service to Mississippi College. Mere prominence is not the criterion. The award is limited to those who, through a long period of years, have worked with marked intelligence and success to promote the highest interests of Mississippi College.

The Award of Excellence expresses recognition and gratitude to them for their efforts.

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## DEPARTMENTAL DISTINGUISHED AWARDS

*The following alumni have brought exceptional honor to the departments in which they studied.*

### *Art*

STEPHEN DAY COOK '73

A lifelong artist, Stephen Cook is a professor of art at Mississippi College. Cook studied with renowned late artist Marie Hull in the early 1960s prior to earning his bachelor's degree from MC and his master of fine arts at the University of Mississippi, where he was a University Fellow. As an ITT International Fellow, Cook spent a year studying printmaking at the Royal College of Art in London, England. His prints and other artworks are in a number of public and private collections, including the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Cook has lectured before numerous audiences, including the Visual Arts Academy of Cluj, Romania. At MC, he teaches printmaking, painting, and drawing, as well as directing graduate work and serving as art advisor to the *Arrowhead*, Mississippi College's award-winning student publication for creative arts. Cook is listed in "Who's Who in American Art" and "Who's Who in America."

### *Art Young Alumnus*

ROBERT "ROBBY" SAMUEL FOLLOWELL '07

Robby Followell graduated from MC in 2007 with a degree in graphic design. While at MC, Followell was recognized as Mr. Mississippi College and inducted into the MC Hall of Fame. Following his graduation, Followell worked for two years as an MC admissions counselor before opening his own wedding and commercial photography business, followell photography. Just five months after the business opened, followell photography was recognized as Jackson's Best Photographer by WAPT's A-List. Over the past six years, Followell has photographed more than 200 weddings while also serving as the primary photographer for the Mississippi College *Beacon* and MC Law *Amicus* magazines. Followell has also been commissioned for client work in 15 states, as well as for assignments in Africa, Dubai, India, and Peru. He is assisted in the business by his wife, MC alumna Jessica Followell.

### *Biology*

TERREL "TERRY" ALAN DENT '81, '97

Since his MC graduation in 1981, Terry Dent has been teaching science in a variety of school settings. His pupils have included parochial middle school students in Louisiana, public high school students in rural Mississippi and urban Tennessee, American students in South Africa, and African students in America. Along the way, Dent completed a master of combined sciences degree at Mississippi College. In 2002, he returned to MC to teach human anatomy and physiolo-

gy and coordinate labs in the Mississippi College Biology Department. Dent was named Outstanding Faculty Member of the Year by the Student Government Association. Beginning this fall, Professor Dent has been placed in charge of the Office of Student Success, whose responsibility it is to assist students having issues that might hinder their success at Mississippi College.

### *Chemistry and Biochemistry*

DR. KENNETH C. MORTON '69

Dr. Ken Morton holds a bachelor of science in chemistry from MC and a Ph.D. in biochemistry from the University of Texas. He is a professor of chemistry at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tennessee, where he has served as chair of the chemistry department for 18 years and led student mission trips to Haiti. Dr. Morton is an assistant member of the Michigan Cancer Foundation and a member of the by-invitation-only American Association for Cancer Research. He has authored or co-authored numerous books and articles in prestigious professional journals and has directed the research work of many undergraduate students. Dr. Morton is in the process of constructing an ecological house featuring green recycled materials and solar energy components that will serve as a residence for his family and as a model for others.

### *Christian Studies*

DR. WALTER B. SHURDEN '58

Dr. Walter Shurden retired from Mercer University in Macon, Georgia, in 2007. Dr. Shurden earned his graduate degrees from the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and pursued post-doctoral studies at the University of Tennessee and Princeton Theological Seminary. He served at Mercer University for almost 25 years as the Callaway Professor of Christianity in the Roberts Department of Christianity, also serving as chair of the department and as executive director of the Center for Baptist Studies. Prior to joining the Mercer faculty, Dr. Shurden taught at McMaster Divinity College in Ontario, Canada; served as pastor of First Baptist Church in Ruston, Louisiana; served as professor of religion at Carson-Newman College; and served as professor of church history and dean of the School of Theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Dr. Shurden received the Distinguished Faculty Award at both Carson-Newman College and Mercer University. Dr. Shurden has written or edited 17 books and published numerous articles, and serves as chair of the board of *Baptists Today*.

## DR. ROBERT M. SHURDEN '62

Dr. Robert Shurden studied at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, then spent 30 years teaching Biblical studies and Greek in the religious studies departments of several educational institutions, including Carson-Newman College and Mississippi College. As an MC student, he was the recipient of the Miles Dampier Memorial Scholarship, and as an MC instructor, he was named the Civitan Outstanding Teacher of the Year. Dr. Shurden's many awards received at Carson-Newman College include the Excellence in Student Advising Award, Outstanding Professor for Freshman Award, and the Distinguished Faculty Member Award. Today, Carson-Newman College awards an annual scholarship created in his honor, The Robert M. Shurden Outstanding Junior Religion Major Award. In addition to his classroom instruction, Dr. Shurden has contributed articles to a number of books and journals, and has served as interim pastor at some 15 churches.

*Communication*

## RACHEL JUNE CARTER '03

Rachel Carter serves the United States as a foreign affairs officer. Carter began her career in Washington, D.C., working for Congresswoman Kay Granger, and eventually becoming Granger's senior legislative assistant when the Congresswoman became a ranking member of the State/Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee. In this position, Carter worked on national security, foreign affairs, and intelligence authorization and appropriations issues. In 2010, she joined the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of the Chief Financial Officer, where she served as the department's primary point of contact to the Appropriations Committees for accounts totaling nearly \$25 billion, including the National Nuclear Security Administration, environmental cleanup, science, classified programs, and energy transformation programs. In October 2012, Carter joined the State Department's Political-Military Affairs Bureau, where she serves as part of the State and Department of Defense team charged with building the Global Security Contingency Fund, a pooled fund of resources to meet security sector challenges and opportunities around the world.

*English*

## HUBERT L. PREVOST, JR. '69, '73

Hugh Prevost has served at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC) for 28 years, first as director of cooperative education, and currently as director of the office of international programs and the National Student Exchange. In his current position, Prevost has overseen the growth of the program from one or two students each year studying abroad to more than 120 students studying abroad in more than 25 locations. UTC's International Program has grown to include 10 international exchange partners in Israel, Sweden, Czech Republic, Japan, Germany, South Korea, China, Spain, and Mexico. Prevost has served on the board of the Cooperative Center for Study Abroad, the Mid-Continent Consortium for International Education, and on the National Student Exchange Council. In the Chattanooga community, he has been president of the Kiwanis Club and served on the boards of Goodwill, the American Red Cross, and the Nature Center. He attends First Baptist Church-Golden Gateway where he is a deacon, sings in the choir, and is active in FBC's homeless ministry.

## DR. VERBIE L. PREVOST '64, '65

Dr. Verbie Prevost holds a Ph.D. in American literature from the University of Mississippi. She taught at East Central Community College, Mississippi College, and the University of Alabama, and taught overseas in Ireland, England, Czech Republic, and Australia. She has been at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga since 1986, where she is currently the Connor Professor of American Literature. She has also held various administrative positions at UTC, including head of the English Department and director of English graduate studies. She has served as president of the UTC Faculty Senate, chair of the Council of Academic Department Heads, and has served two terms on the board of the University of Tennessee. Dr. Prevost has chaired the Conference on Southern Literature and the Rhodes Scholar Selection Committee for Tennessee, and founded and chaired the Young Southern Student Writers Contest. Prevost's many honors include the Outstanding Teacher in the College of Arts and Sciences award, the Jane Harbaugh Award for Service to UTC, and the Carolyn Thompson and Roger Brown Community Service Award. Hugh and Verbie Prevost met at MC and were married in Provine Chapel in 1974.

*Health Services Administration*

## DR. BRIAN LAMAR RUTLEDGE '00, '04

Dr. Brian Rutledge holds a Ph.D. from the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC), where he serves as chief of staff. Dr. Rutledge plans and directs projects and initiatives at UMMC, and serves as the chief liaison between the medical center and the executive leadership of the University of Mississippi. Prior to assuming his current position, Dr. Rutledge served as UMMC's director of accreditation and assessment. Under his leadership, the School of Medicine achieved the first re-accreditation in its 57-year history with a perfect score. He also served as UMMC's manager of business operations and manager of emergency services, a role that saw him implement Mississippi's first emergency telemedicine system. Dr. Rutledge is the Congressional health policy fellow for Senator Thad Cochran, an adjunct faculty member at Hinds Community College, and an elder at Fondren Presbyterian Church. He is also a certified private pilot.

*History and Political Science*

## STEPHEN C. MCCRANEY, SR. '00, '11

A retired Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Air Force, Stephen McCraney was the commander of the 47th Civil Support Team in Jackson from 2008 to 2011. McCraney currently serves as director of the Mississippi College Department of Public Safety and as an instructor in the administration of justice degree at MC. Former Governor Haley Barbour and Governor Phil Bryant recently presented McCraney with a first responder award in recognition of his dedicated service in the wake of a disastrous tornado in Smithville, Mississippi. The award also recognized McCraney's work as a first responder during the flooding of the Mississippi and Yazoo Rivers in May 2011 and in the weeks following the 2010 BP Deep Water Horizon oil spill. McCraney has also received the Mississippi Magnolia Cross, Mississippi Magnolia Medal, two Meritorious Service Medals, and numerous other citations recognizing his dedication, service, and courage.

*Kinesiology*

DAVID “HAP” HUDSON ’83

As a student athlete at MC, Hap Hudson lettered four years each in football, baseball, and tennis, while also serving as an assistant athletic trainer. He was inducted into the Mississippi College Sports Hall of Fame in 2006. Hudson enjoyed a career in pro baseball that spanned 30 years. He served as the rehabilitation coordinator and as the assistant athletic trainer with the Toronto Blue Jays; as the athletic trainer in the St. Louis Cardinals Minor League system; and as the minor league rehabilitation coordinator for the Philadelphia Phillies. Hudson also served as an athletic trainer in the Venezuela Winter Baseball League, worked with the Dominican Republic Baseball League, and served as a rehabilitation consultant for the Daiwi Hawks Japanese baseball team. In 2013, Hudson was hired as the human performance director for the Madison Healthplex Performance Training Center.

*Mathematics*

WILLIAM BRADLEY JOHNS ’94, ’05, ’10

Brad Johns holds a bachelor’s degree in mathematics, a master’s degree in mathematical education (*cum laude*), and an educational specialist in educational leadership degree (*summa cum laude*) from Mississippi College, and will complete his doctoral degree in educational leadership next spring. He has more than 20 years’ experience as a secondary school math teacher. Johns currently teaches at McLaurin Attendance Center in Star, Mississippi, where he is also the chair of the math department. Johns was named Teacher of the Year at Magee Middle School, and a Star Teacher while serving at Mendenhall High School and at McLaurin Attendance Center. He has served on a number of committees for the Mississippi State Department of Education, including the mathematics framework writing team, mathematics textbook adoption committee, and comprehensive mathematics test committee. Johns has continued to study and teach despite his lifelong battle with cystic fibrosis. Johns was the recipient of the National Heroes of Hope Living with Cystic Fibrosis Award. He was the 2011 recipient of the Boomer Esisaon Cystic Fibrosis academic scholarship, and was a finalist for the 2012 and 2013 Solvay Pharmaceuticals/Abbvie Cystic Fibrosis Scholarship.

*Music*

JOSEPH ALVIN ROBINSON ’74, ’77

BETTY SCHMIDT ROBINSON ’74, ’77

Joseph and Betty Schmidt Robinson have spent almost 40 years in shared ministry since their days as MC students. Following their marriage ceremony in Provine Chapel in 1975 and study at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, they enjoyed a 23-year ministry at Calvary Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Calvary’s church and music ministry enjoyed significant growth during their time there, and through Calvary’s college ministry to the University of Alabama, the Robinsons impacted the lives of countless students as they mentored future ministers and laypersons. In 2004, the Robinsons began a nine-year ministry at Main Street Baptist Church in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, which culminated with Joseph’s retirement in 2012. During their years of ministry, Joseph was active as a participant, soloist, and clinician in Baptist state music events and organizations, while Betty served as organist, pianist, and children’s choir coordinator, and taught both public school music and

private piano lessons. In 2002, Betty was recognized as Music Educator of the Year by the Tuscaloosa Arts Council.

*Music Young Alumnus*

ASHLEY MILLS DELANEY ’03

Ashley Delaney is the associate choral director at Harpool Middle School in Argyle, Texas. She was previously associate choir director with Blalock Middle School. Choirs directed by Delaney have been honored by the Texas Music Educators Association and the American Choir Directors Association. Delaney received the 2012 Award of Teaching Excellence Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD, and was named the 2013 Texas Choral Directors Young Director of Distinction, a prestigious award that recognizes her significant contribution to choral music in the state of Texas.

*Nursing*

TINA GODWIN MAGERS ’82

Tina Magers serves as the nursing professional development and research coordinator with the Education Resource Center at Mississippi Baptist Medical Center in Jackson. She is also currently pursuing a Ph.D. in nursing education and administration at William Carey College in Hattiesburg. Magers has been with Baptist Medical Center since 2001, where she has filled many critical roles in the Education Resource Center and in nursing administration. Prior to joining Baptist, she was an instructor in the Mississippi College School of Nursing. Her experience as a nurse also includes work in home healthcare, neonatal intensive care, pediatric intensive care, and adult surgical intensive care.

*Physics*

RANDY JOE TULLOS ’83

Randy Tullos is a managing partner with Goldrush Holdings, LLC, in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. He directs all day-to-day business functions for the management company, providing strategy, development, and implementation of real estate-focused projects in the non-profit sector. Tullos is an expert in balancing business, technology, and customer needs to help companies improve their performances and their bottom lines. He was previously president of TaxWise, Inc. and SecureTax.com, both based in Rome, Georgia. Under Tullos’s leadership, SecureTax marketed the first Internet application that enabled customers to prepare and electronically file their tax returns. His diverse career history also includes service as a senior research engineer with Southwest Research Institute in San Antonio, Texas, and as a mechanical engineer with the Naval Surface Warfare Center in Dahlgren, Virginia. Tullos is a *summa cum laude* graduate of the Mississippi College School of Physics, and holds a master’s degree in engineering mechanics from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

*Psychology and Counseling*

RONALD WHITTINGTON ’12

GWENDOLYN WHITTINGTON ’10, ’12

Ron Whittington has served as an analyst and consultant for IBM and MCI, as well as having more than 12 years of ministerial leadership experience. Along with his wife, Gwen, Ron is co-founder of Hospitality Outreach Mission & Encouragement (H.O.M.E.) Ministries, Inc., a 501©(3) non-profit, service-oriented organization formed to consider challenging problems

and present solutions from a ministry, missions, and resource perspective. He is currently a participant in the doctor of professional counseling program at Mississippi College and serves as interim senior pastor for Christ Temple Cathedral Church in Jackson, Mississippi.

Gwen Whittington is the co-founder of Hospitality Outreach Mission & Encouragement (H.O.M.E.) Ministries, Inc. Gwen coordinates H.O.M.E. Ministries' Positive Choice Assistance Program, which teaches moral virtues and further character development through storytelling and dramatization. Gwen holds a bachelor's degree in sociology and a master's degree in marriage and family counseling from Mississippi College, and is currently enrolled in MC's doctorate of professional counseling program. She was the 2010 recipient of the Lee K. Darlin Memorial Sociology Award, which is presented to the most outstanding senior majoring in Sociology.

#### *School of Business*

RONNIE SMITH '81

Ronnie Smith is the senior executive vice president for the Mid-America region for Regions Bank and is in charge of their banking operations in Middle and West Tennessee, Texas, North Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Indiana, Kentucky, Illinois, and Iowa. He is also a member of the company's operating committee. Smith has previously served Regions as the regional president of the Southwest region and area president for Mississippi and Louisiana prior to assuming his current role in 2012. Smith earned a bachelor's degree in economics and accounting from Mississippi College, and graduated from the Graduate School of Banking at Louisiana State University. Smith serves on the boards of Baptist Health Systems, Regions Foundation of Tennessee, Higher Education Corporation, and Operation Andrew Group.

#### *School of Business Young Alumnus*

PATRICK NATION '95

Patrick Nation is the senior vice president of sales and marketing for Ergon Asphalt & Emulsions, Inc. He graduated from Mississippi College in 1995 with a bachelor's degree in accounting, and received his MBA the following year. Patrick's career highlights include helping lead his company in an acquisition that doubled its size, and implementing a new mission and vision for the combined organizations. While at MC, Patrick was a member of the college's football and baseball teams. Today, he and his wife Tara, an MC nursing school graduate, spend their free time attending their three children's activities and teaching seventh grade Sunday School at Broadmoor Baptist Church.

#### *Sociology and Social Work*

DR. JANA N. DONAHOE '85

Jana Donahoe is assistant professor of social work at Delta State University (DSU), and also serves as director of social work and a grief specialist with Grace Community Hospice in Cleveland, Mississippi. She is also the principal investigator and researcher with the DSU Virtual Tour Project. Donahoe is licensed at the highest level in social work as a Certified Social Worker by the Mississippi Board of Examiners for Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists. Donahoe is an in-demand conference speaker, most recently appearing with Ruth Graham at the "Barefoot and Breaking Free" Women's Conference. She serves

as a board member and grant consultant with Delta Missions Ministries and is a Sunday School teacher and member of the choir at First Baptist Church of Indianola. She is married to former alumni board president Dr. Eddie Donahoe '85 and is the mother of three children, Trey '13, Megan Kaye '15, and Drew.

#### *Teacher Education/Leadership*

MARILYN H. LOWE '71, '96

Marilyn Lowe is an adjunct instructor in the Mississippi College School of Education. Over her four-decade career in education, Lowe has served as an elementary and pre-school teacher, an early literacy specialist, and a public school district instructional specialist. Lowe has conducted numerous professional development workshops, sharing her vast experience and training in educating and inspiring other teachers. She holds a bachelor's degree from Mississippi College and a master's degree from Jackson State University, and has completed graduate work at the University of Southern Mississippi and Mississippi State University.

#### MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE SCHOOL OF LAW

#### *Lawyer of the Year*

X.M. "MIKE" FRASCOGNA, JR. '72

Mike Frascogna is the senior partner in the Jackson law firm of Frascogna, Courtney. He specializes in international litigation, intellectual property transactions, alternative dispute resolution, and entertainment and sports law. Frascogna is admitted to practice at the U.S. Supreme Court and has also appeared before the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague, Netherlands. Frascogna has served as an adjunct professor at MC Law since 1978, teaching courses in negotiation and entertainment law. He has co-authored a number of nationally acclaimed books on entertainment law. Outside his legal career, Frascogna collaborated with his sons, Mike and Marty, on five books on the unique culture of high school and junior college football in Mississippi. Frascogna has produced two motion pictures based on his books, *Mississippi JUCOs: The Toughest Football League in America* and *Mississippi Gridiron Gold*.

#### *Young Lawyer of the Year*

DAVETTA COOKE LEE '06

Davetta Cooke Lee serves as the executive director of the Mississippi Access to Justice Commission. In this role, Lee works with legal aid providers across the state to reduce barriers to the justice system by addressing laws, court rules, and policies that affect access to the judicial system. Lee was formerly a staff attorney at Young Williams, PC, where she assisted with privatizing cases related to the Department of Human Services. Lee has also served as a program and policy analyst with Hope Enterprise Corporation, where she focused on hurricane recovery and consumer protection policies that impacted low-income families in Mississippi. Lee is the current chair of the diversity committee for the Young Lawyers Division of the Mississippi Bar and co-chair of membership for the Capital Area Bar Association. She also serves as the chair of community service for the Urban League of Greater Jackson Young Professionals and as chair of the Junior League of Jackson's ACT Prep Course, and volunteers with the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project.

# Class Notes

**50s** Dr. William N. Still, Jr. (B.S.Ed. '53) received the Naval Historical Foundation's Commodore Dudley W. Knox Naval History Lifetime Achievement Award. This award honors individuals who have made valuable contributions to naval history through scholarship, mentorship, and leadership in military and maritime historical organizations. Dr. Still, professor emeritus from East Carolina University (ECU), was founder of ECU's maritime history program and has written a number of important works on American naval history focusing on the Civil War and the U.S. Navy on the European station.

Dr. Gordon Kingsley (B.A. '55) is retiring from Harlaxton College, part of the University of Evansville's British campus, serving students studying abroad. He has served at Harlaxton Manor for more than 10 years. Dr. Kingsley previously taught literature and religion at Mississippi College, Tulane University, and the University of Louisville. He taught and served as academic dean at William Jewell College before moving to the United Kingdom.

Dr. Charles Long (B.A. '58) was named head coach of men's soccer at Oklahoma Baptist University.

Edna Crews (B.S.Ed. '59, M.Ed. '64) has been selected for the Copiah-Lincoln Community College Foundation's Hall of Fame.

**60s** Jean Ricks (B.S.Ed. '62) has been selected for the Copiah-Lincoln Community College Foundation's Hall of Fame.

Rev. Dale Oden (B.A. '64, M.A. '75) retired after 37 years at Temple Baptist Church in Ruston, Louisiana.

Bill Dunlap (B.S.Ed. '67) has been selected as Mississippi State University's first artist-in-residence. The program allows for informal interaction between students and the artist to observe his work.

Patricia Munn (B.A. '67) has been named the 2013 Outstanding Educator by the Mississippi Society of Certified Public Accountants. She is an instructor in the School of Accountancy at the University of Southern Mississippi.

Margaret Howington (B.S. '68) has been selected for the Copiah-Lincoln Community College Foundation's Hall of Fame.

Dr. James Sones (B.S. '68) has been appointed professor of medicine, department of internal medicine at the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC). He is also the director of clinical services for the gastroenterology division. Dr. Sones divides his time between UMMC and Gastrointestinal Associates, PA, the clinic he founded in 1981. Gastrointestinal Associates has grown to include 24 physicians, more than 250 employees, and three locations in Jackson, Madison, and Vicksburg.

**70s** Dr. Kenneth Walley (B.S. '70) has been selected for the Copiah-Lincoln Community College Foundation's Hall of Fame.

R. Stephen Renfroe (B.S. '71) has been appointed to the Southern District Public Service Commission by Governor Phil Bryant.

James McHann (B.A. '72) a professor of management, organizational learning, and change at Walsh College, has been selected for a Fulbright Award in India at Berhampur University.

Larry Blalock (B.S. '74, M.Ed. '78, Ed.S. '82) was named the 2011-2012 State of Tennessee Boys' Cross-Country Coach of the Year by TSSAA. He has also been nominated for the Sectional Award in cross-country. This section includes eight states in the Southeast. Blalock is the cross-country head coach at Greenville High School in Greenville, Tennessee.



Dr. Lewis Oswald

Dr. Lewis Oswald (B.M. '75) was selected as a project scholar for the American Music film series at the Quisenberry Library in Clinton. He fielded questions and facilitated discussions based on the six-part series. Dr. Oswald is an award-winning expert on the history of church music.

Ronnie Roberts (B.S.Ed. '75, M.Ed. '76) is the new principal of Pascagoula High School.

Glenn Schmidt (B.S. '76) has been named Coach of the Year for the *Clarion Ledger's* All-State girls basketball team.

Dr. Carolyn Twomey (B.S.N. '77) joined IrriMax Co. as vice president, clinical affairs. She has served as trustee for the AORN Foundation Board and is a member of the Association of Professionals in Infectious Control, Infectious Disease Society of America, and the Society of Clinical Research Associates. She is an associate member of the American College of Surgeons. Twomey has published many articles and speaks at conferences around the world.

**80s** Terry Dent (B.S.Ed. '81, M.C.S. '97) has been named head of the Mississippi College Office of Student Success.

Gary May (B.S.B.A. '81) is the director of finance and administration with MC Law.

Dr. Douglas H. Vinzant, Jr. (B.S. '81) has been named vice president for finance and administration at St. Cloud University.

Dr. Angela "Angie" Willoughby (B.M. '81, M.M. '83) has been named chair of the Mississippi College Music Department.

Dr. Hal Kitchings (B.S. '83) published *Three Mississippi: A Mississippian Burning with a Passion for Reconciliation*, published by CrossBooks.

Michael E. Crandall (M.B.A. '84) has been named senior vice president and commercial relationship manager with Trustmark Bank.

Charles "Chip" Wilbanks (B.S.B.A. '84) was selected for inclusion in the 2014 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America*. He works for Brunini, Grantham, Grower, and Hewes, PLLC.

Wendell Dodd (B.S. '85) is a family service counselor with Gardendale Funeral Home in Gardendale, Alabama.

Dr. Kenneth Weathersby (B.A. '85) is the vice president for convention advancement with the Southern Baptist Convention's executive committee. He is the first African American to hold an executive committee vice presidential position.



Dr. Kenneth Weathersby

Dr. Mark Sandifer (B.S. '86) received his doctor of education with concentration in missions and church planting from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in 2012.

Barbara W. Griffith (B.S.B.A. '88) has been named the director of finance and human resources at The Westminster School at Oak Mountain.

William David Robbins (M.Ed. '89) has been named dean of students and athletic director at Northeast Mississippi Community College. He was previously the men's head basketball coach.



## "OUT OF MANY"

Artist and MC alumnus Christopher Brady '95 unveiled a mixed media work that captures the essence of Mississippi College's venerable history and the spirit of the MC community. An art instructor at East Central Community College, Brady used more than 600 photographs gleaned from *Tribesman* yearbooks and the MC archives in his new work.

Titled "E Pluribus..." or "out of many," the 54-inch by 147-inch work depicts the people, places, and events that have shaped MC history. Wooden blocks form a grid over which the 600 photographs are collaged. Brady then used acrylic paint to create an image of the Quad stretching between MC's oldest

building, Provine Chapel, and its modern icon, Nelson Hall, where "E Pluribus..." is displayed.

"I hope that people will understand how the intricate structure of the piece reflects the complexity of MC's past, present, and future," said Brady, who devoted more than three months to the project. "We have all contributed to the vibrant and dynamic history of Mississippi College, and each individual is a distinct and integral element of the total structure."

# 90s

Richard Strebeck (B.A. '90) is an assistant professor of psychology and counselor education at William Carey University.



Chris Derrick

Chris Derrick (B.A. '91) has been selected by MC Law as the recipient of the Gwen Deakle Scholarship.

Dr. John Dickerson (B.S.B.A. '91) joined the Mississippi State University (MSU) registrar. He was previously vice president of Copiah-Lincoln Community College's Simpson County Center. Dickerson has worked in the office of enrollment services, admissions, and scholarship at MSU as well as serving in the office of admissions at Mississippi College.

Tony Moore (B.M. '91, M.M. '94) has been named director of funeral service education for Northhampton Community College.

Karen Fili (Davis, M.B.A. '93) has been named new site vice president at the Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant for Xcel Energy.

Gene Harry Hill (M.Ed. '93) has been selected as Administrator of the Year for Rankin County Schools. He serves as principal at The Learning Center.

Chad Phillips (B.S. '93, M.S.C. '98) serves as the digital media and communications manager for the Office of Institutional Advancement and the Alumni Affairs Office of Mississippi College.

Louis "Kenny" Bizot (B.S.B.A. '94, M.S.C. '95) was named head coach of men's basketball at Copiah-Lincoln Community College.

Dr. Jonathan Randle (B.A. '94) has been named dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Mississippi College.

Joy Triggs Tyner (M.Ed. '94) has been named Administrator of the Year for Clinton Public School District. She is the principal at Northside Elementary.

Donald "Chad" Chadwick Shealy (B.S.Ed. '95, M.Ed. '05) has been named the superintendent of the Vicksburg Warren School District. He also received the 2013 Mississippi Administrator of the Year award.

Reid Vance (B.S. '95, M.S.C. '05) was awarded the American Southwest Conference Outstanding Media Service Award for

2012. He is in his fourteenth year as the "Voice of the Choctaws," covering all broadcasting for Mississippi College athletics.

William "Trey" Jones (B.S. '95, J.D. '98) was selected by his peers at Brunini, Grantham, Grower and Hewes, PLLC for inclusion in the 2014 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America*.

Mary Ellen Stewart (Reeves, B.S.N. '95) joined the Mississippi College School of Nursing faculty.

William "Chip" Mabry (B.S. '96) is the marketing director for the Portland Center for the Media Arts.

Bradley Rushing (B.S. '96) has been selected by Covington's Who's Who as an Honored Member of the Executive and Professional Registry.

Joseph Sclafani (B.S. '96, J.D. '99) was chosen by his peers at Brunini, Grantham, Grower, and Hewes, PLLC for inclusion in the 2014 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America*.

Amy Wolgamott (B.S. '96, M.S.C. '02) was named Most Distinguished Regional Coordinator at the 2013 Phi Theta Kappa International Convention in San Jose, California.

Robert Andrews (B.S. '99) has been named the head football coach at East Jackson High School in Commerce, Georgia.

Jonathan Blackwell (B.S. '99) joined The Gibbes Company as the senior art director of the communications and advertising team. He has over 15 years of experience in creating brand identities and creative design packaging. He has been honored as Graphic Designer of the Year by the American Advertising Federation of Jackson.

Rebecca Potts (Boone, B.S.N. '99) joined VIP Midsouth in the children's clinic as a nurse practitioner.

Pamela Clevenger (M.C.S. '99) was elected as the national chair of the Two-Year College Chemistry Consortium (2YC3). The 2YC3 is a subgroup of the American Chemical Society and focuses on community college chemistry education. Clevenger joined Itawamba Community College as a chemistry instructor after teaching at Hinds Community College for 16 years.



John Lyons

Paul T. Lee, Jr. (B.A. '99, J.D. '06) has been named by *Portico* magazine as among the 2012 Up and Coming Attorneys in the Jackson area.

John Lyons (B.S. '99, J.D. '13) was selected by Dean Jim Rosenblatt of MC Law for the Dean's LSBA Leadership Award. His award was presented during the annual Law Day ceremony at MC Law.



## 102 CANDLES

*MC Celebrates with Rev. Edwin Hewlett '32*

In 1912, Roald Amundsen announced the discovery of the South Pole, the Titanic set sail on her first and last voyage, and Rev. Edwin Hewlett was born. In 2013, Rev. Hewlett returned to the Mississippi College campus for Homecoming, proudly staking his claim as the oldest alumnus in attendance. He made the 1,186-mile trip from Clarence, New York, to Clinton, Mississippi, in the company of his 71-year-old son, Ed Hewlett, Jr. '64.

Rev. Hewlett's memories of attending MC during the Great Depression include jumping over hurdles as a member of the MC track team and hitchhiking to Jackson to sell ads for the MC yearbook. Following his graduation, Hewlett was ordained as a Baptist minister and preached in Kentucky, Missouri, and New York before retiring at age 88. Rev. Hewlett's love of Mississippi College was hereditary; his son, alumnus Ed Hewlett, Jr., is a former Mr. Mississippi College and served for nine years as the university's dean of men before serving as president of two Baptist colleges in Missouri.

His many friends at Mississippi College congratulate Rev. Hewlett on a life well-lived, and look forward to seeing him on campus in the years to come.

Luvenia Jackson Manning (B.S.N. '99) is an officer-major in the U.S. Air Force Nurse Corp. She received a master's in nursing education and holds a national certification of ambulatory care nursing. She is the director of the health professions education and training course at the Military Education and Training Center in San Antonio. She has been stationed in Anchorage, Afghanistan, Montgomery, and the Republic of Korea.

**00s** James Joseph McNamara IV (J.D. '02, M.B.A. '03) has been named partner with Adams and Reese. He practices in the areas of corporate transactions and commercial litigation, as well as in real estate, bankruptcy, and timber practices. He has been with the firm since 2002 and sits on the Corporations Law Committee of the Mississippi Secretary of State's Committee on Business Reform.

Kathryn "Katy" Thompson (B.S. '02, M.S.C. '05) is the assistant director of the host family program with JH Ranch in Birmingham, Alabama.

Joel Hale (M.B.A. '03) was recognized as an outstanding leader by the Longview Chamber of Commerce. He is senior vice president of Citizens National Bank. Hale is an active volunteer with the Chamber of Commerce, Daybreak Kiwanis, Junior Achievement, Toys for Tots, and serves as a South Ward Elementary mentor and Longview Boys Baseball Association coach.

Landon Howell (B.S. '03, M.S.C. '06) is the head of strategy and content at Fancred, the world's fastest-growing sports social media network. Founded in 2012, Fancred is a social app for smartphones that helps users find and share takes for their favorite teams, players, and leagues. Learn more about Fancred, including how to download it for free, at [Fancred.com](http://Fancred.com).

Sara "Katie" Lawrence (B.S.W. '03, J.D. '08) has been promoted to senior attorney in the Social Security Administration Office of Disability, Adjudication, and Review in Jackson. She joined the agency in 2009 after serving as law clerk to Chief Justice William L. Waller, Jr. of the Mississippi Supreme Court.

Jayne Doolittle (Plunkett, B.M.Ed. '04, M.M. '07) is the general music and show choir teacher at Columbus Middle School.

Lyndsey Hester (B.S.W. '04) joined 200 Million Flowers as an adoption specialist. She is a licensed social worker and previously worked at Pinelake Church in Clinton.

Dr. Benton Kilman (B.S. '04) represented North Mississippi Health Services (NMHS) at the 2012 Malcolm Baldrige Award ceremony. NMHS was one of four U.S. organizations selected

to receive the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, the nation's highest Presidential honor for performance excellence through innovation, improvement and visionary leadership.

William Luke Rhinewalt (B.S. '04) completed his master's of public health with an emphasis in health policy and administration at the University of Southern Mississippi. He serves in Columbus as the administrator of Vineyard Court Rehabilitation and Nursing Center.

John William Wallace (B.S.Ed. '04, M.Ed. '11) is the vice principal for Sumner Hill Junior High School with Clinton Public Schools.

Dr. Hunter Boggs (B.S. '05) has been selected as chief resident for the Department of Radiation Oncology at the University of Maryland Medical Center.

Hannah Wallace (Shanks, B.S. '06) joined Mississippi College as the assistant in the Office of Public Relations.

James Patton (B.S.N. '07) is a graduate of the University of Mississippi Medical Center's master of science in nursing program. He will practice as a family nurse practitioner.

Jon-Michael Trimm (B.S.B.A. '07, M.B.A. '10) has been promoted to branch manager with Trustmark Bank.

Tameka Henderson (M.Ed. '08, Ed.S. '09) received her doctorate in educational leadership. She is the tenth recipient of the doctoral degree from the Mississippi College School of Education.

Matilda Patrick (B.S.B.A. '08) has been named Administrative Professional of the Year by the Flowood Chamber of Commerce.

Brian David Sprayberry (B.S. '08) has been named the assistant director of communications for Belhaven University.



Anna C. Hays

Anna C. Hays (B.S. '09) has been named the senior graphic designer and chief operating officer for The Omega Group Advertising Agency.

Robby Powell (B.S.B.A. '09) has joined TEC as an operating analyst in the revenue assurance department.

**10s** Joseph Kazery (M.S. '10) joined the Mississippi College School of Biological Sciences as an instructor and lab coordinator. He previously taught biology and chemistry at Clinton High School.

Josh McCormick (B.A. '10) is debate coordinator for Afghans for Progressive Thinking, where he initiates debate clubs at universities in Afghanistan.

Justin "Jayme" Mistal (B.S.B.A. '10) has been promoted to senior accountant in the audit division of Haddox, Reid, Burkes, and Calhoun, PLLC.

Daniel Mortimer (B.S. '10) has been named a recruiting liaison at Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi.

Jeremy Rowan (B.S.B.A. '10) joined Miller Transporters, Inc. as a customer representative. He formerly worked at McGuire's Taxidermy in Clinton.

Hope Vandersteen (M.A. '10) has been named the intensive English program coordinator of the Office of Global Education at Mississippi College.

Tyler Wade (B.S.Ed. '10) has been named Clinton Arrow boys head soccer coach.

Joel Michael Fahling (B.S. '11, M.S. '12) has been sworn in as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army. He is a future Army doctor and upon graduation, will be promoted to the rank of captain. He previously worked as a researcher at the University of Mississippi Medical Center.

Hannah Southerland (B.S. '11) has released *Porchin' It* from her new album, *Chasing Thunder*.

Lindsey Vowell (B.S.B.A. '11) joined KPMG as an audit associate. She received her masters of accountancy from Millsaps College.

Laura Huddleston Carter (J.D. '12) joined the staff of Judge T. Kenneth Griffis.

Dan Derrington (M.S. '13) joined East Central Community College as a biology instructor.

## Marriages

Jonathan "Matt" Eichelberger (B.S. '99) and Jennie Southerland Pitts (J.D. '07), July 20, 2013

Chris Moore (B.S. '04, J.D. '07) and Elizabeth Wallace (B.A. '07), July 27, 2013

William Luke Rhinewalt (B.S. '04) and Kimberly Kelly, December 10, 2011

Matthew "Matt" Brooks (B.S. '05) and Denise Easterling, October 24, 2011

Amanda Fortenberry (B.A. '11, M.H.S.A. '12) and James Merrill Cassel II, July 6, 2013

Ashlee Richardson (B.A. '11) and Brian Phillips (B.S. '11), June 1, 2013

Alice McLemore (B.S. '12) and Ian Gauntt (B.S.B.A. '12), January 5, 2013

## Births & Adoptions

William Andrew "Bill" (B.S.B.A. '98) and Anna (Alford, B.S.B.A. '99) Nelson, Iva Grace, January 14, 2013

Lee (M.S.C.P '07) and Jenni (Moyer, B.S.Ed. '99) Smith, Moses Henry Kidane, July 23, 2012. Adopted February 27, 2013. He is welcomed by siblings Ford and Millie.

Angie (B.S. '00, M.S. '02) and Mitch Miller, Mason Daniel Miller, February 19, 2013

Sarah (Shanks, B.A. '01) and David Fedele, Silas James, May 5, 2013. He is welcomed by siblings Phin, Evangelina, and Sicily.

Dr. Cristie (Green, B.S. '03) and Justin (B.S. Ed. '03, M.Ed. '08) Rives, Jordan Blake, July 31, 2012. He is welcomed by grandparents Jay (B.S. '81) and Sandi (Wilbanks, B.S. '81) Rives and great grandparents Charles (B.S. '56) and Nancy (B.S.Ed. '57, M.Ed. '79) Wilbanks and Nancy Rives (B.A. '53).

Donna "Raquel" (Sloan, B.S.B.A. '03) and Jeff Rosamond, Katherine Nele, December 5, 2012

Dr. Hunter (B.S. '05) and Jackie (Weston, B.S. '05) Boggs, Emily Susanna, September 21, 2012

Matthew "Matt" (B.S. '05) and Denise Brooks, Wyatt David, May 9, 2013

Robert (B.A. '06, M.S.S. '08) and Adrienne (Stephenson, B.S.B.A '06, M.B.A. '10) Brown, Emily Nicole, April 25, 2013

Dr. Ryan (B.S. '06, M.S.C. '07) and Lauren Fortenberry, Jansen Clifton, July 30, 2013

Mary Elizabeth (Cody, B.S. '06) and Dr. Kirk (B.S. '08) Monaghan, Grant Cody, March 25, 2013. Grant is welcomed by big brother Bennett.

Grant (B.A. '06) and Angela (Morella, B.A. '06) Nixon, Jude Hampton and Piper Grace, March 28, 2012. They are welcomed by big brother Maksim.

Brooke (Malpass, B.S.B.A. '06) and Chris Sample, Turner Blake, June 26, 2013. He is welcomed by big sister Sydney.

Ryan (B.A. '06, M.S.C. '10) and Meredith (Stevens, B.A. '10, M.S. '10) Capell, Ruthie Claire, July 23, 2013

Jeremy (B.S.B.A. '10) and Sarah Margaret (Branning, B.S.Ed. '10) Rowan, Spears Scott, July 2, 2013. He is welcomed by grandparents Tim (B.A. '83) and Amy (Turner, B.S.B.A. '85) Rowan.

Dr. Morgan (Student Counseling Services) and Ben Bryant, Edward "Teddy" Sims, September 27, 2013

Brittany (Financial Aid Counselor) and Wesley Kinsey, Jedidiah Wesley, February 20, 2013



## HOMECOMING 2014 • OCTOBER 16-18

**CLASS REUNIONS:** Classes celebrating reunions include 1954, 1959, 1964, 1969, 1974, 1979, 1984, 1989, 1994, 1999, 2004, and 2009.

**50-YEAR CLUB REUNION • Honoring the Class of 1964:** The Class of 1964 will celebrate its Golden Anniversary during Homecoming 2014, and the 50-Year Club will welcome new members into the club at that time.

**ADDITIONAL HOMECOMING FESTIVITIES:** A golf tournament, awards brunch, tailgating on the Quad, parade, departmental receptions, and of course, football will round out this fun-filled, nostalgic weekend. If you'd like to help plan a reunion, please contact the Office of Alumni Affairs at 601.925.3252.

## In Memoriam

MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE EXTENDS SINCERE CONDOLENCES TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF THE FOLLOWING ALUMNI, FRIENDS AND FORMER FACULTY/STAFF MEMBERS.

### Alumni

Jean Oldham (Hillman '29, B.A. '31), January 9, 2013  
 Catharine Latimer Monroe (B.A. '30), September 11, 2013  
 John Eley ('34), May 22, 2013  
 Dr. Mack Fuqua (B.A. '36), January 5, 2013  
 Earline Greynolds (Hillman '36), June 2, 2013  
 Eline G. Walton (Hillman '38), January 28, 2013  
 Thomas Brand (B.A. '41), October 21, 2013  
 Dr. R. Furman Kenney (B.A. '41), March 11, 2013  
 Dr. John D. Watts II (B.A. '41), July 21, 2013  
 Elizabeth C. Carter (B.S. '43), November 12, 2012  
 Doris Reedy (Hillman '42, '45), November 29, 2012  
 Erlene Halford (B.S. '46), March 1, 2013  
 Belle Alexander (B.A. '48), April 11, 2013  
 Betty R. Barber (B.A. '48), September 3, 2013  
 Camille Henick (B.A. '48), December 9, 2013  
 Stanley Peckham (B.S. '48), July 11, 2012  
 Dr. James E. Sansing, Jr. (B.S. '48), August 5, 2013  
 Dr. Percy Bennett (B.S. '49), June 24, 2013  
 D. Allen Brabham (B.A. '49), November 26, 2012  
 William Waits (B.A. '49), December 17, 2010  
 Byron Fleet Morris (B.S. '50), May 10, 2013  
 Dr. William "Billy" Potter (B.A. '50), March 24, 2013  
 Marion Sessums (B.A. '50), April 11, 2013  
 Nelwyn Price (B.A. '51), July 6, 2013  
 Dr. Robert Ray (B.S. '51), March 25, 2013  
 John Rogers (B.S. '51), July 4, 2013  
 James Blakeman (B.A. '52), October 4, 2013  
 Isham G. Cooper (B.S. '52), December 6, 2012  
 Rev. Carl A. Hudson (B.S. '52), August 24, 2013  
 James C. Pittman, Jr. (B.A. '52), February 3, 2013  
 David Callahan ('53), January 15, 2011  
 Anne Martin Campbell (B.S. '53), January 18, 2014  
 The Honorable James E. Kemp (L.L.B. '53), April 11, 2013  
 Rev. Wade Allen, Sr. (B.A. '54), September 13, 2013  
 Rev. Von Hinton (B.A. '54), May 13, 2013  
 Robert Jacobs (B.S. '54), June 10, 2013  
 Wilma Y. Ponder (B.S.Ed. '54, M.Ed. '72), October 4, 2011  
 Ralph J. Burghard (B.A. '55), March 17, 2011  
 Guyton Henry (B.S.Ed. '55, M.Ed. '57), August 31, 2013  
 Charles Colbert Linn (B.A. '55), November 1, 2012  
 Rev. Ray H. Batemon (B.A. '56), September 14, 2012  
 Rev. Cornell Daughtry (B.A. '56), February 25, 2013  
 Julius Simmons (B.S. '56), January 29, 2013  
 Harry Stamps (B.S. '56, M.Ed. '58), March 9, 2013  
 Dr. Ernest Johnson (B.S. '57), August 25, 2012  
 Dr. Perry Jones (B.S. '57), March 19, 2013  
 Thomas Edwin Kirk (B.S. '57), November 9, 2012

William Eugene McElwee (B.A. '57), February 26, 2013  
 Fay Pope (B.S. '57), December 26, 2012  
 Rev. Louis Smith (B.A. '57), July 5, 2013  
 Peggy Teel (B.A. '57), May 7, 2013  
 Claude Bailey ('58), January 17, 2013  
 Dr. Thomas Clark (B.A. '58), April 22, 2013  
 James Griffin (B.S.E. '58), June 22, 2013  
 Dr. Herbert Ray Pearce (B.S. '58), September 7, 2011  
 Dr. William "Bill" Stewart (B.A. '59), October 14, 2013  
 Frank Wallace (B.A. '59, M.A. '60), March 3, 2012  
 Peaster Hughes (B.S. '60), June 3, 2013  
 Faye Ross (B.S.Ed. '60), April 10, 2011  
 Harold Walker Sconiers (B.S. '60), April 3, 2012  
 David Thatch (B.S. '60), July 19, 2013  
 Dr. Louis E. Boyd, Jr. (B.S. '61), September 23, 2010  
 Jack Brown (B.A. '61), March 19, 2013  
 Janelle Hart (B.A. '61), March 14, 2013  
 Barbara Sheffield (B.S. '61), February 4, 2013  
 Marvin Elliott (B.S. '62), May 6, 2013  
 George McGehee (B.S. '62), December 27, 2012  
 Robert Anding (M.A. '64), March 17, 2013  
 Peggy Seay Brent (M.Ed. '64), January 12, 2013  
 Carlos Corley (B.S.Ed. '64, M.Ed. '69), January 1, 2013  
 Howard Green, Jr. (B.S. '65), December 1, 2012  
 Sara Bruce (B.S.Ed. '66), January 16, 2013  
 William "Bill" Joseph Raphael, Sr. (M.Ed. '66),  
 August 23, 2013  
 Robert W. Hutcherson, Jr. (B.A. '67), December 26, 2011  
 J.D. Rushing, Jr. (B.A. '67), March 27, 2013  
 Julie Edwina Crisler (B.A. '68), June 13, 2013  
 Leigh Van Hoose, Jr. (B.S. '68), February 10, 2013  
 Barbara Patterson (B.A. '68), November 13, 2012  
 Margaret Rainey (B.S.Ed. '68), December 7, 2012  
 Brittye W. Gill (M.Ed. '69), February 7, 2013  
 Jimmy Kelly (L.L.B. '69), December 9, 2012  
 H. Keith Russell (B.S. '70), January 2, 2013  
 Ann Sheppard (M.Ed. '70), April 18, 2013  
 Cecil Works (B.A. '70), April 6, 2012  
 Martha Aden (B.A. '71), March 15, 2013  
 Lacy Baker (M.Ed. '71), January 3, 2013  
 Irvin Westerfield (B.S. '71), July 8, 2013  
 Grayson Magee (B.S. '72), April 5, 2013  
 Thomas Miller (B.S. '72), June 24, 2013  
 Gary S. Smith (B.M. '72, M.M. '76), April 8, 2013  
 Thomas Wayne Duggan (B.S. '73), February 11, 2013  
 Brig. Gen. Shuford M. "Sam" Hazel, USAF (Ret.)  
 (M.B.A. '73), July 14, 2013  
 Rebecca Nelson (Jordan, B.A. '73), August 15, 2013  
 Leland Dale Newman (B.A. '74), January 9, 2013  
 Mabel McCluer (M.Ed. '75), May 3, 2013  
 Marvin Minor (M.Ed. '76), July 9, 2013  
 Lawrence B. Knight (J.D. '77), March 18, 2013  
 Donna Weber ('77), September 24, 2013  
 Richard Thomas Wisdom (M.B.A. '77), January 29, 2013

Mary Lambert (M.Ed. '78), May 14, 2013  
 Mary Leigh Coleman Causey (B.S.Ed. '79),  
 October 30, 2013  
 Harrel E. Hill, Jr. (B.S. '79), September 12, 2013  
 Alice D. Connelly (J.D. '80), August 18, 2013  
 Denise Detotto (B.A. '80), March 27, 2013  
 Preston Piazza (M.B.A. '81), March 17, 2013  
 Jeffrey Lynn Jordan (B.S. '82, M.C.C. '91, M.Ed. '93),  
 August 15, 2013  
 Dr. Donald W. Strickland (B.S. '82), February 16, 2013  
 Joseph Bishop (B.S. '83), March 24, 2013  
 Stevie Rodgers (B.S. '85), May 25, 2011  
 Elizabeth Amelia Henry (M.Ed. '87), February 22, 2013  
 Patrese Clarkson Stewart (Ed.S. '87), November 26, 2012  
 Samuel K. Farmer (M.C.C. '88), November 6, 2012  
 Keith John Weaver (B.S.B.A. '92), February 8, 2013  
 Joseph Higgins (B.S. '98), September 29, 2013  
 Nikki M. Buckhaultner (B.S.N. '09), June 22, 2013

*The last issue of the Beacon erroneously reported the passing of Nancy E. Harvey '59. We are happy to report that Nancy is alive and well and apologize for the error.*

### Friends

Martha Mitchell Bigelow, former MC instructor, October 8, 2013  
 Dale Victor Brown, retired MC staff member, May 28, 2013  
 Delta Freathy, widow of alumnus and former sociology department professor, Dr. A. E. Freathy (B.A. '53), December 10, 2012  
 Ruby "Louise" Hudson, longtime employee of Mississippi College, December 7, 2012  
 Ann Patterson Loyd, former employee of Mississippi College, November 14, 2012  
 Mozelle H. Mangum, February 26, 2013  
 Charity Mills, widow of the late Rev. Arien Mills (B.A. '47), January 7, 2013  
 Edward Wettach III, husband of MC alumna, Eleanor Hederman Wettach (B.A. '68), September 27, 2013

IF YOU HAVE NEWS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE,  
 please send it to Class Notes, *Beacon* magazine, Box 4027,  
 Clinton, MS 39058, e-mail MC at [pr@mc.edu](mailto:pr@mc.edu), or submit  
 your news online at <http://alumni.mc.edu/classnotes>.  
 Photos submitted should be of professional quality.

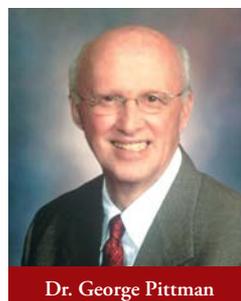
### J.W. Fagan '42 • 1919-2013

J.W. Fagan passed away November 11, 2013, at his home in Laurel.

Mr. Fagan attended Laurel City Schools and Mississippi College, where he excelled in football and track and was elected senior class president. He served as a fighter pilot for the U.S. Navy, Pacific Fleet, during WWII, declining tenure with professional football. Mr. Fagan was co-owner and operator of Laurel Wholesale Grocery for 25 years.

He was a lifelong member of First Baptist Church Laurel, where he served as chairman and superintendent of multiple boards, committees, and foundations. Mr. Fagan served Mississippi College as alumni president and a member of the board of trustees. MC honored him as its 1989 Alumnus of the Year and inducted him into the MC Sports Hall of Fame. His community involvement included service as president of the Laurel School Board, chairman of United Givers Fund, and participation in various other groups and organizations. He was active in Masonic work at the state and national level.

Mr. Fagan was preceded in death by his wife of 64 years, Anita Boteler Fagan, and his son, Gregory Alan Fagan. Mr. Fagan is survived by his son Julian W. Fagan III; two daughters, Virginia Fagan Jones (David) and Joy Fagan Brandon (Gary); 10 grandchildren; and 12 great-grandchildren.



Dr. George Pittman

### Dr. George Pittman '59 1937-2014

Dr. George Pittman died January 1, 2014, after a brief battle with pancreatic cancer.

Dr. Pittman received English degrees from Mississippi College and the University of Mississippi. He taught English at Middle Tennessee State University and taught and chaired the English department at Howard Payne University, where he also served as dean of the School of Arts and Sciences.

In 1977, Dr. Pittman returned to Mississippi College as chair of the English department. During his tenure at MC, he established the annual Shakespeare Festival, now in its 37th year, and was selected as the first resident professor in the London semester program. His students recognized him as the MC Distinguished Professor of the Year, and MC honored him with the Distinguished Alumnus Award.

Dr. Pittman met his wife of 53 years, Alicia, while at Mississippi College. The couple shared passions for travel and service, leading students on trips throughout Europe and teaching English in China. The Pittmans retired to Aledo, Texas, where Dr. Pittman volunteered at First Baptist Aledo, the Parker County Center of Hope, the Doss Heritage and Culture Center, and Refugee Services of Fort Worth.

Dr. Pittman is survived by his wife, Alicia; his son, Greg (Angie); his daughter, Patti Gough (Norman); and four grandchildren.



## PORTRAITS FROM THE HALL OF FAME

The Mississippi College Hall of Fame was established in 1960 to annually honor four senior students for their outstanding leadership ability, scholastic achievement, extracurricular activities participation, contribution to student life, and dedication to serving God and their fellowman.

### THE *Beacon* CATCHES UP WITH MATT MURPHY '00

Matt Murphy has always let his faith guide him. A standout football player at MC, Murphy was also recognized with the Football Outstanding Christian Award and Most Christ-Like Award, and served as president of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

“It was a daily challenge to live a sincere life for Christ at MC,” Murphy says. “Many athletes knew if my faith and life were real or not. The daily challenge at MC was good preparation for living a holy life for Christ in all the world.”

Murphy is now pursuing that holy life for Christ just outside the jungles of the Amazon rain forest. Since November 2013, he and his wife, Bethany '01, and their five (soon to be six) children have been living in Iquitos, Peru, where they will serve for the next year with the missions organization Amazon Xpeditions. Murphy trains indigenous pastors, missionaries, and leaders, who then go into the unreached areas of the Amazon jungles to win disciples for Christ. The work includes teaching night classes on the scriptures, hosting weekly evangelistic outreaches, and operating leadership camps focused on character building and teamwork. The Murphy family is also building their Spanish skills with the help of a tutor who visits three days a week; on a recent trip to the *bodega* (a small store), Murphy communicated his desire for popcorn to the shop owner through hand ges-

tures and verbal “popping” sound effects.

The gateway to the Amazon rain forest, Iquitos is the largest city in the world that is completely inaccessible by road; the only travel into or out of Iquitos is via plane or boat. The move has been both an adjustment and an adventure for the entire family.

“The biggest adjustment has been the overall culture change,” Murphy says. “The language, the food, the lack of Internet service, the heat, and the ‘Amazon time schedule’ have all been a challenge. It’s also been hard being so far away from family and friends that we love so much. In our months of living here, we’ve adjusted, but we still have much to learn.”

The Amazon is a long way from the Mississippi Gulf Coast, where Murphy previously served at the Church of the Good Shepherd working with youth and young families. But from the Gulf Coast to the Amazon, Murphy’s goals have remained the same.

“I hope that my family and I come to know Jesus more and show Him more fully to the people here.”

While the challenges and adjustments have been great, Murphy is quick to say that the rewards and adventures have been greater. There is, however, one challenge he has yet to master.

“At some point, I will go to some remote village down river, and that’s when I will quietly ask God to protect me before I eat what is set before me.”

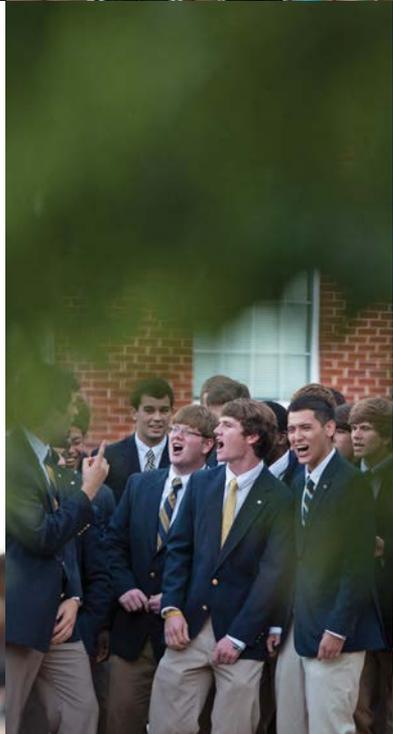
“I HOPE THAT MY FAMILY  
AND I COME TO KNOW  
JESUS MORE AND SHOW  
HIM MORE FULLY TO  
THE PEOPLE HERE.”

### MATT MURPHY • *Hall of Fame '00*

President’s List • Dean’s List • Beta Beta Beta • Alpha Epsilon Delta • Mortar Board Student Recruiter  
Who’s Who in American Colleges and Universities • Varsity Football – All Conference ’98,  
Academic All Conference ’96, ’97, ’98, ’99, Team Captain ’99 • Football Outstanding Christian Award  
Most Christ-Like Award • Fellowship of Christian Athletes President • Baptist Student Union



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