

MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE | FALL 2010

# beacon

## Weathering the Storms of Life

**BARBIE BASSETT ON  
KEEPING FAITH IN  
THE FORECAST**





FROM THE PRESIDENT  
LEE GARDNER ROYCE

As the president of Mississippi College, I have played a role in making several decisions that could be characterized as leaps of faith. Launching the “Growing the Vision” campaign and then increasing its goal from \$65 million to \$80 million, developing a program to recruit international students in the wake of 9/11, and beginning the Accelerated Degree Program for non-traditional students are just a few examples.

We tend to think of faith as taking a leap into darkness, something we do with no idea whether or not we’ll be successful. But looking at the leaps MC has taken – and at some leaps from my own life – I’ve come to realize that a leap of faith isn’t always a leap into darkness. Quite often, it’s a leap into varying degrees of light.

For example, even though we had no guarantees, those of us responsible for making the decisions about Mississippi College mentioned above had access to information that led us to believe we would be successful. The same is true of decisions rooted in personal faith. Some decisions may seem like stepping into a bright, relatively sure light, while others feel more like taking a plunge into a dim gray space where the footing will be uncertain when we land.

While the Bible tells us in Hebrews 11:1 that faith is “being certain of things we do not see,” the Bible itself provides us with the information we need to take that leap. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible tells a unified story of faith tested, challenged, and rewarded, and provides us with the instruction we need to rely on that same faith in our own lives today.

In the following pages, you’ll meet people who have taken leaps into bright light, dim light, and every shade of gray in between. I hope this issue of the *Beacon* will encourage you in your daily walk of faith and inspire you to take those leaps of faith that are nothing less than life-changing.

*Lee Royce*

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## BY THE BEACON’S LIGHT

*Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. — Hebrews 11:1*

In his letter to the Hebrews, Paul explained that faith is not merely believing that God exists, but is trusting in Him to guide us and care for us, no matter what our earthly senses tell us about our circumstances or the situations we face. To live with that deep level of trust is to live by faith.

In the following pages, you’ll meet people whose faith has been tested and refined by life’s blessings and by life’s tragedies, and others whose faith shapes not only their own lives, but also the lives of everyone with whom they come into contact. What all have in common is their trust in God to guide and care for them, and their commitment to living by that faith.



*On the Cover:* According to WLBT-TV Chief Meteorologist Barbie Bassett '93, “Faith is carrying an umbrella, even when there’s no rain in the forecast.” For a behind-the-camera look at how Bassett’s faith sees her through life’s storms, see page 24.



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How James and Vivian Henley’s leaps of faith led to multiple careers, a beautiful family, a brand new church, and a purpose-filled life together



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The *Beacon* is now 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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*Beacon* magazine is published by the Office of Public Relations, Mississippi College, Box 4003, Clinton, MS 39058. Distributed free of charge to alumni and friends of the University.

Postmaster and others, please send change of address notification to: Office of Alumni Affairs, Box 4027, Clinton, MS 39058

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"Our solid academic programs combined with our Christian environment and growing scholarships are strong selling points to MC students."

PRESIDENT LEE ROYCE

# Fall Enrollment Tops 5,000

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE HISTORY, enrollment topped the 5,000 mark. The Christian university began its 185th academic year this fall with a total of 5,008 students taking classes, up by 121 students from a year ago. That total includes students at the main campus in Clinton, MC Law in downtown Jackson, and the new Flood Center in Rankin County.

"This is a wonderful milestone for Mississippi College," said President Lee Royce. "Our solid academic programs combined with our Christian environment and growing scholarships are strong selling points to MC students."

MC enrollment has climbed steadily, growing from 3,227 students when Dr. Royce arrived as the school's leader eight years ago to 4,887 students last fall to the current 5,000-plus.

"The growth in enrollment is the result of the hard work of everyone at MC," Jim Turcotte, vice president for enrollment management and student affairs, said. "We are focused on the mission of academic excellence and commitment to the cause of Christ, and clearly, that's a message students find appealing."

The record-shattering enrollment numbers came out just days after Mississippi College received a high ranking in the new *U.S. News & World Report* survey of the nation's colleges. MC was ranked ninth among Southern regional universities in the "Best Colleges, Best Values" category.

### ROLL CALL

MC IS HOME TO: 3,148 undergraduates  
1,310 graduate students • 550 law students



**THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS**  
**CELEBRATES 25 SHIMMERING,**  
**SPARKLING YEARS**

**“The Festival of Lights kicks off my Christmas season every year. It’s special to be part of a tradition with so many who have attended MC.”**

*AUDRA RIGGS, President of the MC Singers*

DECEMBER 2 – 4, 2010, MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE’S Festival of Lights will mark its 25th anniversary in grand style at Provine Chapel.

In celebration of the Christmas season, the MC Singers plus faculty and staff will be joined in song by members of the choral group’s alumni from the past quarter-century. This year’s performances will also include a special tribute to the festival’s founder, Dr. James Richard Joiner, with a commissioned work by heralded composer David Brunner.

Choral group director James Meaders was a student in the choir in the first Festival of Lights production 25 years ago.

“The Festival of Lights began quite humbly in the Jennings Hall Courtyard on a chilly night in December, 1986,” Meaders recalls. “The choir sang from the balconies and

maybe 100 people were in attendance.”

More than 1,200 people now attend the Festival of Lights. The tradition grew under Joiner’s leadership, moving to Provine Chapel in the late 1980s and adding a second performance. With the move to Provine came the addition of the candlelight processional, “Of the Father’s Love Begotten.” Under Meaders’ direction since 1998, the format of the Festival of Lights has been adapted to reflect the famed Service of Lessons and Carols at King’s College in Cambridge, England.

“The Festival of Lights kicks off my Christmas season every year,” says MC senior Audra Riggs, president of the MC Singers. “It’s special to be part of a tradition with so many who have attended MC.”

LET NO TONGUE ON EARTH BE SILENT, EVERY VOICE IN CONCERT SING. – “OF THE FATHER’S LOVE BEGOTTEN”

THE JAMES S. SCLATER CHAMBER SERIES

The inaugural season of the James S. Sclater Chamber Series honors a longtime Mississippi College professor and award-winning composer who has mentored hundreds of aspiring musicians.

A renowned composer, Sclater retired last spring after four decades of service to the MC School of Music. Dr. Sclater’s performance history includes membership in the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra, the chamber duo LYRICAS, and the Fondren Presbyterian Church choir. Sclater has written more than 125 original works; his music has been performed throughout the United States, Europe, and Russia. He has been honored with annual ASCAP awards recognizing excellence in composition since 1991.

The James S. Sclater Chamber Series began in August and will continue through the spring of 2011. Designed for the intimate space of the Jean Pittman Williams Recital Hall, the series features local artists, as well as performers of international renown.



JANUARY 21, 2011

Franz Schubert, *Piano Quintet in A Major, D. 667 “Trout”*

MARCH 3, 2011

The Swingle Singers

The five-time Grammy-winning Swingle Singers are an international *a cappella* phenomenon. Their repertoire includes classical, jazz, Latin, pop, and rock music, all accompanied by their own vocal rhythm section. The Swingle Singers have released more than 50 recordings and have performed across the United Kingdom, America, Asia, and virtually every country in Europe.

APRIL 8, 2011

W. Amadeus Mozart, *Wind Octet in E-flat Major, K. 375*

THE JAMES S. SCLATER CHAMBER SERIES

For ticket information, please call 601.925.3440 or visit [www.music.mc.edu](http://www.music.mc.edu).



VISITS TO THE LELAND SPEED LIBRARY ARE UP 43 PERCENT OVER LAST YEAR, THANKS IN PART TO RENOVATIONS MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE "GROWING THE VISION" CAMPAIGN.



## Growing the Vision Nears \$80 Million Goal

Now in its final year, Mississippi College's "Growing the Vision" campaign to support scholarships, academic programs, fund capital improvements, and grow the MC endowment is less than \$4 million away from its \$80 million goal.

"We are encouraged by the generous support we've received and the progress we've made thus far, but we will need the participation of other alumni and friends to reach our \$80 million goal by Homecoming 2011," says Dr. Don Phillips '54, who chairs the campaign's steering committee. "As we move into the final months of the cam-

paign, it's critical that support for 'Growing the Vision' remain strong."

### FROM \$65 MILLION TO \$80 MILLION

What began as a \$65 million campaign announced during Homecoming 2006 has since exceeded all expectations. The MC community so generously supported the campaign that in 2008, despite a challenging economy, President Lee Royce and the university's board of trustees raised the "Growing the Vision" goal to \$80 million.

### NAMING OPPORTUNITIES

Naming opportunities connected to several projects are still available for individual and corporate donors. Some of these opportunities include enhancements at the School of Business, the Mississippi College School of Law, and at new facilities currently under construction for the physician assistant program. For information on supporting MC or help in planning your gift to the "Growing the Vision" campaign, please contact Dr. Bill Townsend at 601.925.3257 or bill.townsend@mc.edu.

"MC has loyal alumni and friends. It's that simple," says Leland Speed, "Growing the Vision" campaign chair. "As a Christian university, Mississippi College plays an important role in our society. This campaign is the best vehicle to strengthen MC, whether it's in academics, athletics, buildings, or the endowment."

### VISIONS REALIZED

"Growing the Vision" has already led to the completion of significant capital projects at MC, including renovations at the food court at the B.C. Rogers Student Center, enhancements at the Alumni Conference Center, and the renovation of the recital hall in Aven Hall, just to name a few. "Growing the Vision" has also funded improvements at Robinson-Hale Stadium and A.E. Wood Coliseum.

The campaign provided a renovated auditorium, modernized classrooms, and state-of-the-art equipment for Self Hall, the home of the MC School of Business, as well as a makeover for the Leland Speed Library that included upgraded seating areas, small group study rooms, and a new coffee shop. "Growing the Vision" also funded improvements to the downtown Jackson campus of the Mississippi College School of Law.

### FIVE WHO DARE

To keep awareness and enthusiasm for "Growing the Vision" high, one generous Mississippi College alumnus has announced a challenge dubbed "Five Who Dare." This alumnus, who prefers to remain anonymous, will make a pledge or planned gift of \$500,000 if at least five other key MC supporters pledge the same amount.

### VISIONS YET TO BE FULFILLED

In the years since launching "Growing the Vision," Mississippi College has experienced increases in enrollment and launched new programs, resulting in new items added to the list of enhancements to be funded through the campaign.

The university has expanded its boundaries with the purchase of the old Clinton Junior High School property fronting Clinton Parkway and College Street in downtown Clinton. Purchased for \$3,501,000, the property now known as the "East Campus" will provide much-needed room for MC to physically expand. Potential uses for the

“We’re gratified by the splendid levels of support we’ve seen over the past four years. This reflects enormous faith in Mississippi College on the part of so many of our alumni and friends.”

DR. LEE ROYCE

property include new classrooms, a theatre, and a more spacious home for the Department of Communication.

“Growing the Vision” also contributed to facilities under construction for MC’s new physician assistant program, the only one of its kind in Mississippi.

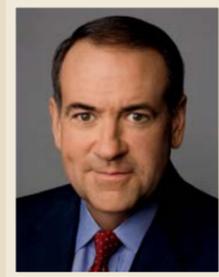
“We are building a state of the art learning and assessment facility where we’ll be able to record simulated patient encounters, podcast lectures, and demonstrate technical procedures,” says Dr. Bob Philpot, executive director of the physician assistant program, which will enroll its first students in 2011. “These facilities include opportunities for donors at all levels, including exam rooms, a conference room, audiovisual control room, and faculty offices, all waiting to be named after individual or corporate donors.”

“Growing the Vision” will also provide enhancements to Cockcroft Hall, home of the School of Nursing and Department of Kinesiology. Plans include new classrooms, offices, and spaces in which students can practice their hands-on nursing skills.

“We’re gratified by the splendid levels of support we’ve seen over the past four years. This reflects enormous faith in Mississippi College on the part of so many of our alumni and friends,” says MC President Dr. Lee Royce. “The campaign was launched with John 15:8 on the hearts of its supporters. That scripture reads, ‘This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.’ Today, we are asking our faithful MC alumni and friends to keep pressing ahead and to keep in mind that when we reach our goal next fall, God will receive all of the glory.”

“GROWING THE VISION” NAMED PROJECTS TO DATE

- Alumni Conference Center
- Cross Boardroom
- Dowdle Reception Room
- Ed Trehern Auditorium and Lecture Hall
- Jean Pittman Williams Recital Hall
- J. L. Holloway Business & Technology Center
- Ray and Betty Hannah Food Court
- Robert P. Longabaugh Soccer Field
- Robinson-Hale Stadium and Dr. James E. Parkman Track
- Sam Anderson Hall
- Samuel Marshall Gore Art Galleries
- Watson Cross Country Course



MC Welcomes former Governor Mike Huckabee

Former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee will headline Mississippi College’s spring scholarship banquet on March 28, 2011.

Huckabee, who hosts a popular talk show on the Fox News Channel, served as governor of Arkansas from 1996-2007 and finished second behind Senator John McCain in his quest for the Republican Party’s presidential nomination in 2008. Viewers of his TV show, *Huckabee*, enjoy watching the former governor interview newsmakers and sometimes play guitar with musicians and bands appearing on the program. Huckabee is also heard daily on the *Huckabee Report*, his nationally syndicated radio show.

A former Baptist pastor and denominational leader, Huckabee was the youngest president in the history of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. In demand as a speaker nationwide, Huckabee is the author of seven books, including his most recent, *A Simple Christmas*.

“We consider Gov. Huckabee, who attended Baptist colleges at the undergraduate and graduate level and served as president of the Arkansas Baptist Convention, to be fully supportive of institutions like ours,” MC President Lee Royce said. “We look forward to his remarks about America’s political scene and other timely topics.”

The annual spring scholarship banquet is a vital component of the \$80 million “Growing the Vision” campaign. Gov. Huckabee is the latest in a strong lineup of banquet speakers. Last year’s banquet featuring businessman Steve Forbes raised a record \$312,500 for scholarships at MC.

SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Mississippi College offers several sponsorship opportunities through which you can meet former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee and help support the “Growing the Vision” campaign. Sponsorships begin at \$1,000. Individual tickets to the scholarship banquet are \$150. For more information, please contact Amy Rowan at 601.925.3257 or rowan@mc.edu.



PRE-SEASON HOOPLA FOR THE LADY CHOCTAWS

The American Southwest Conference pre-season poll released October 19th picks the MC Lady Choctaws basketball team to finish second in the ASC East Division. The Lady Choctaws posted a 19-7 record last season, including a 14-6 mark in the ASC. Will the Lady Choctaws live up to the hype? Come to A.E. Wood Coliseum to find out.

SPIKE!

Lady Choctaws volleyball Coach Peter Cosmiano posted his 200th career victory with a tournament win in September. In 2009, Cosmiano coached the Lady Choctaws to their first-ever appearance in the ASC tournament, where they finished third in the ASC East. The Lady Choctaws were still on the court when Coach Cosmiano left early during a tournament in Georgia this fall, but he had a good excuse. His wife was giving birth to the couple’s second child.

NOW ON MAPQUEST

A street on the MC campus has been christened Dick Hitt Drive in honor of the outstanding MC athlete, legendary coach, and top-notch sports administrator. Hitt was a four-sport letterman at MC in the 1920s who went on to coach at his *alma mater*, as well as at Mississippi State University, the University of Wyoming, the University of Arkansas, and the

University of Tennessee. Hitt also served as manager of Mississippi Veterans Memorial Stadium from 1961 until 1974. The MC graduate passed away in 1986 at the age of 80.

Dick Hitt Drive intersects with Capitol Street in front of the university’s A.E. Wood Coliseum. MC leaders joined Hitt’s family and friends to dedicate the street on September 11th.

DOUBLE TROUBLE

Whether he’s kicking for the Choctaw soccer team or the football team, sophomore Chris Campbell is a winner either way. A midfielder in his second season with the men’s soccer team, Campbell has also put his feet to good use as the kicker for the Choctaws football squad, nailing two field goals by mid-season.

PLAY BALL!

Mississippi College’s Lady Choctaws softball team is looking forward to a strong 2011 season after earning a trip to post-season regional NCAA play last spring. The Choctaws wrapped up the 2010 regular season with a 29-11 mark and a fourth place finish in the American Southwest Conference East Division. The MC squad is coached by former Mississippi State player Brooke O’Hair, now in her fifth season as head coach for the Lady Choctaws. With expectations high, fans are ready to shout, “Play ball!”

LEFT AND RIGHT: Chris Campbell kicks for the Choctaw football and soccer teams. CENTER: Jennifer Jones led the 2010 Lady Choctaws with a .417 batting average and set a new record for stolen bases.



# SPOTLIGHT FACULTY

DR. JOHN HUNT USES A CORK AND A CLEAR PVC PIPE TO DEMONSTRATE THE PROCESS OF COMBUSTION.

## WINTER READING LIST

Hot off the presses are a number of books by Mississippi College professors on a variety of topics, from historical accounts to contemporary issues.

*Race, Ethnicity & Disability: Veterans & Benefits in Post-Civil War America*  
by Larry Logue

Growing up in Pennsylvania, Larry Logue once helped lead the Harrisburg Bicycle Club around the Gettysburg battlefield near the site of President Lincoln's famed Gettysburg address. Decades later as a Mississippi College professor, Logue penned a book examining pensions for thousands of Civil War veterans. Logue teamed with Syracuse University professor Peter Blanck to write *Race, Ethnicity &*

*Disability: Veterans & Benefits in Post-Civil War America.* They studied data from more than 40,000 Union soldiers. Published in April 2010 by Cambridge University Press, "our book finds that pension administrators treated black and foreign-born veterans differently from native-born whites," Logue said.

*The Cult of Imperial Honor in British India*  
by Steven Patterson

History professor Steven Patterson explores the British Raj, the period of British Colonial rule in South Asia between 1858 and 1947, in his new book, *The Cult of Imperial Honor in British India.*

"As a code, 'honor' condoned and sanctioned imperial violence and attempted to make imperial rule virtuous," Dr.



Patterson said. "Honor therefore disguised the brute force of the British Raj."

A 1990 Mississippi College graduate, Patterson received his doctorate at the University of Memphis. He taught European history for six years at Lambuth University, where he was named the Tennessee school's outstanding educator in 2008.

*Tough Talk for Tough Times: Real Conversations for Real People About Money and Finance*  
by Nancy Anderson

Readers of Nancy Anderson's new book will find answers to help them cope with America's recession. *Tough Talk for Tough Times: Real Conversations for Real People About Money and Finance* was published in December 2009 by Quail Ridge Press of Brandon. In it, the MC business professor and small-business owner provides sound money management advice. You can also catch Anderson giving sage advice to listeners statewide every Tuesday morning on "Money Talks," the Mississippi Public Broadcasting radio show. The Mississippi College graduate is also a regular guest on Thursdays on WLBT's "Midday Mississippi" program.

## JUST CALL HIM "MR. PRESIDENT"

Mississippi College School of Education Dean Don Locke will be installed as the 60th president of the 45,000-member American Counseling Association (ACA) in July 2011. The ACA is the national organization for professional counselors. As its president-elect, the MC alumnus is traveling to meetings this fall in California, Florida, Massachusetts, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Virginia. Dr. Locke is also on top of key issues in Washington, including deep budget cuts reducing the number of counselors in schools and mental health centers nationwide.

"The members have placed a lot of confidence in this for-

mer school counselor from Mississippi," Locke says. "I also hope to put in plugs for Mississippi and Mississippi College in all my travels."

## EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Psychology Department Chairman Stephen Southern edits not one, but two prestigious national journals on the Mississippi College campus. *The Family Journal* features authors from Spain, Malaysia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, and other areas worldwide. Recent articles spotlighted topics including problem gambling and its impact on families and home-based therapy for children in low-income families. Dr. Southern also serves as editor of *The Journal of Addictions and Offender Counseling*, which last year published a special issue on spirituality. Dr. Southern is president of the International Association of Marriage and Family Counselors (IAMFC). *The Family Journal* is a publication of the IAMFC.

## ON THE HUNT FOR NEW WAYS TO LEARN

Professor John D. Hunt was one of 20 educators nationwide and the only educator from Mississippi chosen for the Face the Nation program promoted by President Obama and the National Science Teachers Association. Professor Hunt traveled to Washington, D.C. to demonstrate his techniques for making learning science fun at the National Mall on October 24.

"Over the past nine years, Professor Hunt has worked with more than 18,000 students in grades three through eight and taught physics concepts to over 3,000 parents," says Ruth Rudd, president of the Association of Presidential Awardees for Science Teaching, the group that selected Hunt to participate in the program. "The work John has been doing is just the type of activity that President Obama wanted to demonstrate for families on this day."

ABOVE, TOP ROW: Larry Logue, Steven Patterson, Nancy Anderson / BOTTOM ROW: Don Locke, Stephen Southern, John D. Hunt



SLOWING THE  
**SPREAD**  
OF CANCER

GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH IS UNDERWAY AT MC



MAYBE IT WAS YOUR FATHER, YOUR SISTER, OR YOUR BEST FRIEND.

MAYBE IT WAS YOUR SPOUSE OR YOUR CHILD.

MAYBE IT WAS YOU.

# W

Whether it's through a distant acquaintance, a beloved family member, or a first-hand battle, almost every human being has been touched by cancer.

Dr. Elizabeth "Liz" Brandon, a biology professor at Mississippi College, is working to change that. Assisted by MC students, Dr. Brandon is conducting a long-term research project that studies the connection between obesity and increased risk of deadly melanoma.

"I was intrigued by this project from a scientific perspective, but also because my grandfather died of cancer when I was a child," Dr. Brandon says. "He had pancreatic cancer, but looking back, we think it might have been triggered by a melanoma. We all have a connection to cancer."

Dr. Brandon began working on the melanoma/obesity research project during a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, and brought the project with her when she joined the MC faculty in 2008. Dr. Brandon has invested nearly five years studying the link between fat cells, hormones, and melanoma.

"We normally think of melanoma as a cancer related to sun exposure, but research has shown a link between melanoma and leptin, a hormone produced by fat cells," Dr. Brandon explains. "The amount of leptin the body produces is directly related to the amount of body fat a person

has – as a person's fat mass expands with weight gain, that person produces more leptin. The hormone, in turn, causes the melanoma tumors to get larger."

The goal of Dr. Brandon's research is to determine why leptin and other hormones associated with obesity cause the melanoma cells to grow, and whether those hormones also make the cancer cells more resistant to chemotherapy drugs. Finally, the study looks at whether or not obesity-related hormones play a role in melanoma's ability to metastasize, or spread to other parts of the body.

Dr. Brandon's objective is not only to find the link between leptin and other obesity-related hormones and melanoma, but also to find a way to break it. Severing the connection between the hormones and the cancer could mean slowing the growth of the tumors, lowering the cancer's resistance to chemotherapy, and preventing the melanoma from metastasizing.

"In melanoma cases, it's usually not the primary skin tumor that kills the patient. That tumor can be excised, but by the time it's detected, the cancer has often already spread to other organs, like the lungs, the liver, or the pancreas. At that point, the prognosis is usually poor," Dr. Brandon says. "If we can find a way to block or slow down these three processes in the cancer cells – proliferation, survivability, and metastasis – we give clinicians the chance to beat back the melanoma."

Dr. Brandon is assisted in her work by Mississippi College biology and chemistry students, who gain real world experience in a well-equipped research lab and have the opportunity to participate in groundbreaking cancer research before they ever graduate. Eight students, including six undergraduate and two graduate students, are currently working alongside Dr. Brandon on the melanoma project.

"This is my first semester of experience in doing laboratory research, and it's definitely stimulated my interest in the use of research to solve practical problems in medicine," says MC senior biology major Alex Mann. "I'm currently applying to medical school, and I plan on seeking more research opportunities with my professors as a med student."



"Dr. Brandon is a very passionate teacher and a great mentor. She encourages her students to think outside the box to find solutions to problems we encounter in the lab, and allows us to be independent thinkers. We learn when our experiments work and we also learn when they fail. The fun, creative environment, plus Dr. Brandon's passion for research and teaching, make working in her lab extremely enjoyable." — ELIZABETH BUI '09, RESEARCH ASSISTANT / (Pictured: Dr. Liz Brandon)



**BUYING AND SELLING**  
DR. LIZ BRANDON PURCHASES THE MELANOMA CELLS NEEDED FOR HER RESEARCH FROM THE AMERICAN TISSUE CULTURE CONNECTION, A BUSINESS THAT SELLS VIRTUALLY EVERY TYPE OF KNOWN CANCER CELLS TO INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN MEDICAL RESEARCH.

Like Dr. Brandon, Elizabeth Bui has been intimately touched by cancer; her father died of the disease. Bui graduated from MC in 2009 with a master's degree in medical sciences and will enter the University of Mississippi School of Medicine in 2011; she is considering specializing in oncology, the treatment of cancer. Bui assisted with the melanoma research project as an MC student, and now works part time in the lab supervising the current student research assistants.

"As an undergraduate, I took many courses in microbiology and tumor biology. Like most students, I learned the theories, but I rarely had opportunities to apply those theories," Bui says. "When I had the chance to work with Dr. Brandon on hands-on research, I didn't hesitate. I discovered that medical research is like a good mystery or puzzle. I like research for the challenges and the vastness of it – the results you find allow you to connect many dots. Research stretches your brain to a level you didn't think you could achieve."

The research study is now in what Dr. Brandon refers to as "Phase 1," which involves growing the melanoma cells in petri dishes and combining them with leptin and other hormones to see how those hormones influence the cancer cells' ability to grow and metastasize. By the summer of 2011, the project could move into Phase 2, an animal study using mice; Phase 2 will be conducted in collaboration with the University of Mississippi Medical Center and will continue to involve MC students as research assistants.

With few institutions or organizations studying the relationship between melanoma and obesity, the possibility is high that the research project at Mississippi College could be one of the first to uncover critical information about the link. Recognizing the importance of the work, the National Institutes for Health recently awarded Dr. Brandon and Mississippi College a \$100,000 INBRE (Idea Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence) grant. Renewable annually for up to three years, the initial grant paid for supplies and

equipment, and will also provide the funding necessary for Dr. Brandon and her MC student research team to work on the project during the summer of 2011. The INBRE grant program funds projects that increase undergraduate involvement in biomedical research – a mission that's close to Dr. Brandon's heart.

"It's important for students to realize how much fun it is to explore," Dr. Brandon says. "People sometimes envision a research scientist as a person working all alone in a quiet lab, but in reality, research is very social. We cannot practice science in isolation. For a project to succeed, we have to collaborate and share our ideas and our findings. A research project creates a community of common goals, draws on everyone's strengths, and makes us all better scientists and better thinkers. With so much to learn and so much to gain, it's never too soon for a student to become involved in research."



**RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MELANOMA/OBESITY RESEARCH PROJECT AT MC, THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES FOR HEALTH AWARDED DR. LIZ BRANDON AND MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE A \$100,000 IDEA NETWORKS OF BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH EXCELLENCE GRANT TO HELP FUND THE PROJECT.**

**b** For more on this story, visit [www.mc.edu/beacon](http://www.mc.edu/beacon).



# MAKING *a* FRESH *Start*



## How James and Vivian Henley's leaps of faith led to multiple careers, a beautiful family, a brand new church, and a purpose-filled life together

WHEN JAMES AND VIVIAN HENLEY MET AND MARRIED IN 1988, both were certified public accountants with what looked like predictable career paths ahead. James and Vivian were believers, but neither imagined that God would call them to a ministry that would change an entire community.

A graduate of Millsaps College, James Henley was working in the U.S. Trustees Office as a bankruptcy analyst when he felt the call to enroll in law school.

"I had a wife, kids, and a mortgage," James Henley recalls. "I had never even thought about becoming an attorney. All I knew was that I was being called by God to go to law school."

James Henley enrolled in Mississippi College School of Law, graduating in 1994 and practicing with Butler, Snow, O'Mara, Stevens & Cannada, PLLC in Jackson before opening a private practice in bankruptcy law. Vivian Henley, an accounting graduate of Delta State University, had already earned her M.B.A. from Mississippi College at night while working full-time at BellSouth. Three years after James graduated from law school, Vivian left BellSouth and enrolled at MC Law, earning her own J.D. in 2000. Both Henleys were outstanding law students; James and Vivian both made *Law Review* and James finished second in his class. In the years following their graduations, James went to work as a Chapter 13 Bankruptcy Trustee and Vivian practiced with the law firm of Bradley Arant Boulton Cummings LLP.

In 2001, just as the Henleys were settling into their new careers as attorneys, James Henley heard the voice of God calling him to take another, even more unexpected leap of faith.

"I realized I was being led to the ministry," James Henley says. "I had felt a stirring for a couple of years and I'd been ignoring it, telling God, 'You must be talking to someone else.' But that pull toward ministry kept getting stronger, and finally, I prayed to God, 'If this is what You want, You need to make it clear to me.' A couple of days later, I was leaving choir practice at church and a girl in the choir told all of us to stop moving. She said, 'God just told me He is calling someone in this room to ministry.' It couldn't get much clearer than that."

James Henley answered the call on December 28, 2001, and began studying at Wesley Biblical Seminary in Jackson

and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. The last Sunday in February of 2002, Rev. James Henley preached his first sermon as an associate minister at Stronger Hope Baptist Church.

Vivian Henley was supportive, but cautious.

"When he first told me he'd been called, I said, 'Okay,' but honestly, I hoped it was a passing fancy," Vivian Henley says. "I didn't want to change my life. I thought if he wanted to stay at church all day, that was fine, but I wasn't going to stay there with him."

In January of 2004, God once again asked James Henley to step out in faith, this time by starting a new church. After discussing it with his wife and his pastor, Rev. Henley made the leap. He began organizing Fresh Start Christian Church in June of 2004. In November of that year, with a wholeheartedly supportive Vivian by his side, Rev. Henley preached his first sermon as Fresh Start's pastor to a group of 15 friends and family members in the den of the Henleys' home.

Fresh Start continued to meet at the Henleys' house for one month; the church's first baptism took place in the family's backyard swimming pool. As the fledgling church's membership grew, Rev. Henley began looking for additional space. Fresh Start moved into 600 square feet in an office building in late 2004, then

into a freestanding building the church purchased on Manhattan Drive in North Jackson in 2005. In 2007, Fresh Start moved into its current location in the spacious former YMCA building, also on Manhattan Drive in North Jackson. Each time the church needed to expand, Rev. Henley confined the search to the Northside Drive area, the neighborhood where he felt God intended the church to operate.

In Fresh Start's early days, others were not so easily convinced that God would have chosen that particular neighborhood. When Rev. Henley contacted Dorothy Thompson, a local realtor, for assistance in finding the first church building, Thompson's suggestion was that he look elsewhere.

"I tried to discourage him from buying in that area because I knew the neighborhood was in transition and I didn't think it was a sound investment," Thompson recalls. "But James was adamant. He just kept saying, 'God wants us to be there.'"

When she couldn't talk him out of it, Thompson sold James Henley the church's first building on Manhattan

*"The pull to ministry kept getting stronger, and finally, I prayed to God, 'If this is what You want, You need to make it clear to me.'"*

JAMES HENLEY

Drive. Rev. Henley invited Thompson to attend a worship service in the new building, and she agreed, bringing along her teenaged son, Matthew. When they left the service that day, Matthew told his mother that he wanted to go back.

“We kept visiting, and eventually, we became members,” Thompson says. “Before too long, Fresh Start had become so much a part of that community that we became a part of the community, too. I ended up relocating my business into that neighborhood, and then I bought a house and moved there. When my older son was looking for a place of his own, I found him a condo in that neighborhood – the same neighborhood that I advised James Henley not to buy property in. Now I tell people that neighborhood is definitely in transition. It’s in transition for the better.”

Fresh Start Christian Church has become a center of help, hope, and support in the community. The church runs an Angel Food program that allows families in need to buy groceries at lower prices. Fresh Start stages neighborhood health fairs and conducts seminars on how to manage finances and work toward home ownership – seminars that draw upon Rev. and Mrs. Henley’s experiences as accountants and attorneys. The Henleys and Fresh Start members see the additional space the former YMCA location offers as an opportunity to develop even more programs, activities, and services for the community.

“The more we give, the more we are blessed in that neighborhood,” Dorothy Thompson says. “God put us there

to help the community and the community has helped us. Through Fresh Start, I am giving back. I am spending my time doing what God wants me to do.”

Since moving into their new facility, Fresh Start has added a second service, a necessary step to accommodate the church’s growing membership and frequent visitors. Fresh Start members represent a mix of ages, races, and income levels, and include traditional families, families led by single mothers, and hundreds of children and teenagers from the neighborhood surrounding the church. The active youth ministry includes a monthly teen night and a parents’ night out with activities for younger children.

“When we first started Fresh Start, I’d open the doors and yell, ‘We’ve got free food!’ I was doing everything but grabbing kids off the street to get them in here,” Rev. Henley recalls. “We’d tell them to take as much pizza as they wanted, and for some of the

kids, that was a very big thing. We used something as simple as a pizza to show them that God’s love is abundant.”

During those first few months, Rev. Henley was happy when five or 10 children showed up for pizza. Today, as many as 200 children and teenagers show up for parents’ night out and teen night, many of whom go on to introduce their parents to Fresh Start.

“It’s a lot easier to start a person off right than it is to reclaim them,” Vivian Henley says, “and as we’ve seen time and time again, you can reach a family through the children.

#### WHAT’S IN A NAME?

The name “Fresh Start” comes from 2 Corinthians 5:17, which reads, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come.” Or as Rev. James Henley puts it, “A fresh start is available every day to anyone who comes to God and asks for it.”



### A MATCH MADE IN Heaven

Ask James Henley how long he and his wife, Vivian, have been married and he will answer not only that it’s been 22 years, but also exactly how many months, weeks, days, hours, and minutes. It sounds like a storybook romance, but both Henleys acknowledge that it was not a case of love at first sight. ✪ James and Vivian met on a blind lunch date arranged by a mutual friend. When asked how that first date went, both Henleys respond in unison, “We did not like each other.” But a funny thing happened when James dropped Vivian off at her office after lunch. ✪ “I had a male friend who was waiting in the lobby for me to drive him to the airport,” Vivian says. “When James and I walked in, he yelled out, ‘Vivian! Where have you been?’ James thought he was my boyfriend and he left before I could explain. Well, then I had to call James again because I didn’t want him to think I was a player.” ✪ On their second date to the movies, the couple hit it off; James and Vivian were married just three months later. Ironically, the film they saw on that second date was *Fatal Attraction*.

The parent is thinking, ‘I’ve got to go to work, I’ve got to do laundry, I don’t have any time,’ but the child is saying, ‘I want to go back there ‘cause they gave me potato chips after Sunday school.’”

Kenosha Williams is one of the many parents who found Fresh Start through her child. Williams and her then nine-year-old daughter, Monica, and eight-month-old twins Josiah and Jolisa, lived across the street from Fresh Start. When Monica asked to attend parents’ night out, Williams

attended a service to “check out the church.” What Williams found was a welcoming, family-like atmosphere and sermons that made a difference in her daily life. That inspection visit was four years ago; Williams and her family have been involved with Fresh Start ever since.

“Fresh Start has had a tremendous impact on our family,” Williams says. “Before, I would get off work, pick up the kids, go home, and we’d all watch TV. Now, there is always something going on at the church for us. My kids are involved in all kinds of youth programs and activities and I’m involved in the women’s ministry and outreach in the neighborhood. We’re not just sitting at home anymore. We’re part of a family, a community, and we’re all growing so much.”

While the church has come a long way since the first year, when, as Vivian puts it, “we were amazed just by the idea that someone besides us might show up,” Rev. Henley does not keep a formal count of his members.

“That’s a game the enemy plays,” Rev. Henley says. “How many people do you have? Oh, that’s not enough, or that’s too many. If you have five, 50, 500, or 5,000 and you’re pastoring them, then you’re doing your job and doing what you’re called to do.”

Fresh Start has a small paid staff (“and they are paid a *pittance*,” Rev. Henley says with a smile), but volunteers run most of the programs. Leading them is Vivian Henley; the wife who once didn’t want her life to change, serves as the church administrator, church secretary, and minister of music.

“The whole thing has been gradual, but we’ve both been fully involved since the beginning,” Vivian Henley says, adding with a smile, “When your spouse has a calling from God, you can’t just let him fall on his face.”

“James and Vivian complement each other beautifully,” says Fresh Start member Denny Teague. “Vivian does so much behind the scenes that allows James to tend to the flock, and they are both so responsive if you have needs or questions. You can’t help but love them.”

In addition to their ministry, the Henleys have continued to work as attorneys. James still practices as a Chapter 13 Bankruptcy Trustee, operating an office with a staff of 12. Vivian is legal counsel for BankPlus, and both are hands-on parents.

“You have more time in the day than you realize,” Rev. Henley says. “I used to watch every football game on TV. It didn’t matter who was playing, I was watching. Then I realized we have time to do what God calls us to do. It’s just a matter of what we’re willing to give up to do it. And I don’t know of anything else I’d rather be doing.”

While others marvel at the leaps of faith that took them from accounting to the law to the ministry, the Henleys focus instead on the little steps of faith they take every day.

“Every time the church doors open, that’s a leap of faith,” Vivian Henley says. “I think we all tend to think of faith as what gets us through the big things, but just look at all the challenges each of us faces on a regular basis. Yes, faith is for the big things, but faith is also what gets us through everyday life.”

### THE FAITH OF A CHILD

James and Vivian Henley have three children, Jordan, a biology major at Tougaloo College; Sydney Alexis, a junior at the Mississippi School for the Arts; and Joel, a freshman at Callaway High School. James Henley also has an older daughter, Aftan, who is a pharmacy student at the University of Mississippi. When Sydney Alexis was born, the Henleys thought their family was complete, but their daughters had another idea.

“Jordan told us that she had prayed for a little brother,” Rev. Henley recalls. “We told her, ‘No,’ and she said, ‘But God told me *yes*.’ We said, ‘Jordan, we don’t know what you *think* God told you, but you aren’t getting a brother.’”

During that time, James Henley handled the legal paperwork for a couple that had adopted a baby through Bethany Christian Services. A few weeks later, the couple called James and Vivian to ask for their help. The adoption agency had a baby boy in need of a family, and they hoped James and Vivian might know a family interested in adoption. A representative from Bethany Christian Services followed up with the Henleys a few times, still hoping they might know someone interested in adopting.

“And then, she sent us his photo,” Vivian Henley recalls. “We took one look and said, ‘Oh, that’s our baby.’”

The Henleys adopted baby Joel when he was three months and 10 days old. Before they brought the baby home, they sat down with their daughters to tell them they would soon be sisters.

“When we told the girls they were going to have a brother,” Rev. Henley says, “Jordan said, ‘Well, sure we are. God told *us* that three months ago.’”

 For more on this story, visit [www.mc.edu/beacon](http://www.mc.edu/beacon).

# FINDING THE HARMONY

JAMIE MEADERS COMBINES FAITH AND INCLUSIVENESS TO MAKE BEAUTIFUL MUSIC AT MC

DR. JAMIE MEADERS JUGGLES A FULL SCHEDULE AS chairman of the Mississippi College Department of Music, director of MC choral activities, and the minister of music at Northside Baptist Church. While he's skilled at all three roles, what Dr. Meaders enjoys the most is teaching.

In a casual conversation he's friendly and low key, but put Jamie Meaders in front of his student choirs or one-on-one with a young singer or aspiring conductor, and his passion shines through in every note.

"He can make a choral rehearsal a time of enlightened discovery, not only for the revelation inherent in the music, but also for each individual's personal fulfillment through it," says Nell Adams, associate professor of music, who taught Meaders when he was a student at MC and now works with him as a colleague. "Jamie makes you want to *sing*."

While his rapport with his students and colleagues is obvious, what many don't know is that the unique bond Dr. Meaders has forged with those around him has its roots in a painful tragedy – an event that colors every relationship he forms and has forever honed Jamie Meaders' Christian faith.

Jamie Meaders sang his first solo – a prompted-by-his-mother performance of "What Child Is This?" – in Hickory Baptist Church in tiny Hickory, Mississippi, at the age of six. He confesses to being "scared to death" at the time, but over the next few years, it became obvious that Meaders' vocal talent and his passion for music were both larger than his stage fright. By the time he was in tenth grade, Meaders knew he wanted to be a musician.

Meaders received a bachelor's degree in music from Mississippi College in 1987 and a master's degree in music from MC in 1991. He and his young family then moved to Louisville, Kentucky, where Meaders completed his doctorate in musical arts at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Dr. Meaders served as a full-time minister of music at churches in Vicksburg and Chattanooga, Tennessee, before returning to MC in 1998, where he served as head of the graduate conducting area, voice teacher, and director of two of the MC choral ensembles. When his friend and mentor Dr. Richard Joiner left MC in 2002, Meaders succeeded him as chair of the music department and director of choral activities.

"I knew when I was student here at MC, if ever given the opportunity, I wanted to teach in this music department," Meaders says.

Today Meaders does much more than teach. As the department chair, his administrative duties include everything from the bottom line necessity of developing the budget to the high note of publicizing performances by the MC choirs. The MC Singers, the university's premier choral group, performs some 25 concerts a year under Meaders' direction, and Fridays usually find Meaders meeting with high school music teachers and their students to promote the excellent opportunities available at MC.

"My administrative duties are all about building a program here for my colleagues and our students that allows them to fulfill their callings," Meaders says. "And from a personal perspective, fulfilling those duties allows me to do what I love, which is teach."

On a typical day, Meaders teaches four to six voice lessons and a class in conducting, and runs at least one choral rehearsal. But for Meaders, "teaching" means more than just leading a class or a rehearsal. "Teaching" means creating an environment in which students of diverse backgrounds find common ground, and in which every student knows that someone cares not only about his or her musical success, but also about that student as an individual.

"As a teacher, Jamie communicates more than music theory or vocal technique," says pianist Carol Joy Sparkman, who accompanied Meaders when he was a student and now regards him as an admired colleague and friend. "Students are able to relate to Jamie as a person, and find identity in the community that he has created in the department."

Meaders' caring approach to his students can be traced back to a tragedy that occurred when he was just 19 years old, an event he describes as "the most pivotal experience of my life."

Meaders and his wife and brother-in-law were driving through their small hometown of Hickory, Mississippi, when a 10-year-old boy riding on a motorized scooter ran a stop sign and slammed into the side of the truck.

The boy was Steven Meaders, Jamie Meaders' nephew.

The son of an older brother Jamie idolized, Steven had grown up next door to Jamie. Jamie had gladly served as Steven's babysitter, taken his young nephew to Boy Scout meetings, and shared his own love of baseball with Steven.

"He was like my little brother," Jamie Meaders says, the memories still bringing tears.

"I am extremely tied to the land and home places of my family. When I need renewal and rest, I return to those places. I find a connection there to those who have gone before me, many of whom I never knew. Those pieces of property are sacred places to me. Walking on that property is truly a spiritual experience."

“It’s hard to put into words how faith and music are being molded daily in the lives of Dr. Meaders’ students. Singing notes and rhythms is just that, but ‘making music’ is to translate the message to the performer and listener. There wouldn’t be such a devotion to the significance of the text and music without belief behind that which is sung. As musicians, we have the opportunity to challenge and yet embrace faith through music.” — SARAH BETH PRITCHARD, MC GRADUATE SINGER AND MEMBER OF THE MC SINGERS



In the split second before the collision, Jamie recognized Steven and screamed out his name. He was the first person to reach his nephew, kneeling by Steven in the street, then following the ambulance to the hospital, all the while praying for a miracle that did not happen. His beloved nephew was gone.

“My faith changed that day to an adult faith,” Meaders says. “I had been naïve. Because I was a Christian, I felt that what I asked for would happen, that I was somehow favored, that bad things didn’t happen to good people.”

In the years following Steven’s death, Meaders gradually realized that the loss of his beloved nephew had altered not only his faith, but also his perception of other people.

“Adult faith can be liberating in a way. You begin to see people differently,” Meaders says. “I realized that Christians are no more or less important than any other person. That belief heavily impacts the way I do my work here with my students. My choir has been described as unique and as having a very distinctive sound. I think that comes from finding commonality in a group of people who are diverse in every way.

“Steven was just the sweetest kid, made in the image of God. All you had to do was look at him and you’d know that was the truth,” Meaders says. “When I began teaching, I realized I was seeing glimpses of Steven in my students. That makes me very aware and conscious of the need to treat my students tenderly.”

Jay Carr has experienced Meaders’ compassion first hand. Carr enrolled in MC in 2004 as a gifted music student, but an addiction to drugs and alcohol derailed his education and his career plans.

“Jamie was probably very frustrated with me,” Carr says. “I was throwing away opportunities and turning my back on everything positive. That’s what addicts do. Jamie was invested in me and fought to keep me going, but I wasn’t in a frame of mind to see it.”

In 2006, Carr left MC and checked into rehab as an inpatient. He followed his time there with a year spent working and staying clean. Meaders kept in touch during that year, encouraging Carr in his struggle to reclaim his life. When Carr returned to MC in 2007, Meaders welcomed him back. But his encouragement for Carr didn’t stop there.

“Before I went to rehab, I had been training as a singer, but I had smoked and drank and not taken care of my voice. I thought that dream was over,” Carr says. “When I came back, I told Jamie, ‘It’s too late for that. I think I should just forget singing and focus on conducting.’ Jamie’s reply was, ‘That’s nonsense. You can conduct anytime in your life. Now is the time for you to pursue a performance career.’ Jamie never let me get away with saying, ‘I’ve blown all my chances. I can’t do this.’ It sounds cliché, but Jamie Meaders believed in me when I didn’t believe in myself.”



**I’D LIKE TO TEACH THE WORLD TO SING** Dr. Jamie Meaders has led the MC Singers on three international performing tours, visiting England, Italy, Slovenia, Austria, Germany, and the Czech Republic, and will lead them on a fourth tour to South Africa in May of 2011. A great deal of the music the Singers perform originated in Europe; the opportunity to perform these pieces in their birthplace has proved an unforgettable experience. Meaders’ favorite tour highlights include performing at an evening Whitsuntide service in St. Thomaskirche in Leipzig, where J. S. Bach was organist and choirmaster in the mid 18th century; walking the former battlefields of Germany where his father served in World War II; and traveling with the choir on a bus through Austria belting out the lyrics from — what else? — *The Sound of Music*.



### STAYING IN TUNE

Dr. Jamie Meaders describes one of his biggest challenges as striking a balance between work and family. Meaders credits his wife, Lesa, an administrator at Baptist Adult Day Health Services, with making that possible.

“Lesa has always taken up the slack when it comes to managing the household and making sure our children were at the right place at the right time,” says Meaders.

The Meaders have three children: Andrew, a graduate of the University of Mississippi who teaches algebra at Canton High School; Leah, a Spanish major at Mississippi College; and Brantley, a sophomore at Clinton High School.

“A father could not be prouder of his children than I am. Each is uniquely gifted, and I love them beyond words,” says Meaders.

An avid outdoorsman, Dr. Meaders enjoys training and spending time with his hunting Labradors (including the latest, Bailee), designing landscapes, tossing the baseball with his youngest son, and sitting in the deer stand on a crisp Mississippi morning.

### TRADING THE BAT FOR THE BATON

A natural athlete, Dr. Jamie Meaders was all-conference in football as a high school quarterback and all-conference, all-district in baseball his junior and senior seasons. There was a time when Meaders thought he might become a professional baseball player, but at a summer youth conference when he was 16 years old, he heard and answered God’s call to become a church musician. While Meaders has long since traded his baseball bat for a conductor’s baton, he is still proud to have been a part of two high school state championship baseball teams. “That remains a very important memory for me,” Dr. Meaders says with a smile. “Probably because the older I get, the harder it seems to believe it happened.”

With Meaders’ encouragement, Carr graduated from MC in 2010. He is now a graduate student at the Brooklyn Conservatory in New York, studying for a performance career in opera.

“If Dr. Meaders had not encouraged me, I absolutely *would not* be here today,” Carr says. “That’s what stands out not only about Dr. Meaders, but the entire music department faculty. They never turned away from me when I had problems, and when I came back, they never made me feel ashamed or as though they were looking down on me. They were nothing but supportive. I give a lot of praise and gratitude to that faculty. I might not make it in a performance career, but because of them, I’m here trying.”

Meaders shines as a teacher, but his leadership skills aren’t limited to his students.

“Jamie approaches his role as chairman of the music department not as our ‘boss,’ but as someone who is there to help us succeed,” Nell Adams says. “Jamie is one of those rare people who make your life better because you know him. Any group Jamie Meaders leads is better for his contribution.”

When asked what he would like for his legacy at Mississippi College to be, Meaders’ focus falls on the colleagues and students he serves.

“The music department here is made up of people devoted to their craft, to MC, and to our students. As far as having been the department chair, I hope that I can leave a legacy of having afforded the faculty the opportunity to live out their calling in this place,” Meaders says. “For our students, I would hope that they would leave Mississippi College with their faith enlarged and their minds opened. I hope I’ve helped show them that true Christian faith is more inclusive than exclusive.”

### A PRAYER FOR PEACE THAT BROUGHT DOWN THE HOUSE

Dr. Jamie Meaders has had the opportunity to conduct at New York’s famed Carnegie Hall on three separate occasions. The most memorable was in January of 2010, when the MC Singers, joined by five high school choirs and a full orchestra, performed a piece called “Memorial” by composer René Clausen. Inspired by the events of 9/11, “Memorial” is an extended prayer for peace that includes lyrics in English, Hebrew, Arabic, and Latin — the languages of the world’s major religions.

“To perform that piece in that city was an unforgettable experience,” Meaders says. “Normally, I don’t have an emotional reaction to a performance I’m conducting. I’m too busy concentrating on what I need to do next. But during that performance, I was able to stay in the moment. I was making an effort to be consciously aware, thinking to myself, ‘I want to remember every second of this.’”

At the performance’s conclusion, the 2,000 audience members rose to their feet and gave Meaders and the other musicians a standing ovation. Meaders’ wife, Lesa, was in the audience. An emotional couple from New York sitting beside her said, “Please tell your husband thank you for this.”

 For more on this story, visit [www.mc.edu/beacon](http://www.mc.edu/beacon).



"THERE'S NO SENSE IN GOING OUT  
AND TRYING TO BE SOMEONE I'M NOT.  
NOT BEING TRUE TO YOURSELF IS A  
BIG JOY THIEF." — BARBIE BASSETT



CHANCE  
RAIN WETTER BETTER FAIR  
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29 30 31  
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# WEATHERING *the* STORMS OF LIFE

BARBIE BASSETT '93 ON KEEPING FAITH IN THE FORECAST

According to WLBT-TV Chief Meteorologist Barbie Bassett, "Faith is carrying an umbrella, even when there's no rain in the forecast." For most people, rain is a metaphor for dark times, a period they hope passes quickly so the sun will come out again. But raised on a farm near Marks, Mississippi, Barbie Wiggs Bassett knows that rain can be a good thing.

No matter what the weather, Bassett tends to look toward the bright side. Part of that outlook comes from her naturally sunny nature, but the biggest part of that positive spirit comes from Bassett's Christian faith. Into every life some rain must fall, and through her walk with Christ, Barbie Bassett has learned to seek the blessings in the storm.



**"BARBIE HAS ONE OF THE MOST CONSISTENTLY POSITIVE ATTITUDES I'VE EVER SEEN. I DON'T THINK YOU GET THAT VERY OFTEN WITHOUT BEING LED BY A HIGHER POWER."**

— WLBT NEWS DIRECTOR DENNIS SMITH

**G**

rowing up in a farming community, Barbie Bassett was always keenly aware of the weather and its impact. Weather and crops went hand-in-hand; for a

farming family, just one season of too much rain or too little rain could be life-changing. But young Barbie's fascination with the weather went beyond its impact on the cotton fields surrounding her home. Some of Bassett's earliest childhood memories are of afternoons spent lying in the grass and staring up at the clouds, wondering not only which animal shapes they would form next, but also what had formed the clouds themselves. When people asked what she wanted to be when she grew up, Bassett's answer was always the same; "I want to forecast the weather on TV."

"But when people looked at me, they didn't see the type of person they thought would be on television," Bassett recalls. "After all, how many women have you seen doing weather who are overweight, wear glasses, and have braces on their teeth?"

As a child, Bassett endured cruel teasing about her weight. Other children called her "Fatty Barbie" or "Chubby Cheeks." Bassett's mother stressed that appearances were not what mattered, telling Bassett, "It doesn't matter what's on the outside. You let God work on the inside, and He'll take care of the outside."

As she grew, Bassett shed the extra weight, the glasses, and the braces, but not her dream of becoming a weather forecaster. She graduated from Mississippi College in 1993 with a degree in mass communications, then enrolled in the master's degree program in meteorology at Mississippi State University (MSU).

"Meteorology rocked my world," Bassett admits. "It was calculus and physics based and my specialty was writing and speaking. Most of my classmates were men with undergraduate degrees in math or physics. Thermodynamic meteorology almost killed me. But just when I'd wonder if I was wasting my time, I'd think, 'Why would I have felt this tug on my heart to do this if it weren't in God's will for my life?'"

While Bassett felt every struggle, those around her saw a natural.

"Barbie was one of the first women in our program and she did really well," says Dr. Charles Wax, professor of geography and state climatologist at MSU. "She had the stuff. The first time I saw her on tape, I knew she'd be a star."

Wax's assessment proved accurate. Prior to her graduation from MSU, Bassett was hired as a weekend meteorologist at a television station in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Her last months of graduate school were spent juggling a job, her studies, and a growing romance with a young paramedic named Will Bassett. The two maintained a long distance relationship between Jackson, Mississippi, and Chattanooga for over a year before deciding to marry and settle in Mississippi.

## A PORT IN SOMEONE ELSE'S STORM

On a dreary day in November, WLBT Chief Meteorologist Barbie Bassett received a call from a viewer who explained that her brother was a big fan.

"He suffered a stroke earlier this year, and he would love to meet you," the woman said. "It would just make his day if you could come by the rehab hospital and see him."

Bassett agreed, but her day, already filled with work, home schooling her small children, and an endless list of errands, seemed to grow more frantic with every passing hour. Rushed, harried, and with her gas tank on empty both literally and figuratively, Bassett arrived at what she thought was the rehab center, only to realize she was in the wrong location.

*I just need to go back home*, Bassett recalls thinking. *After all, it really won't matter if I don't show up to see this guy. I'm not in the mood.* But feeling a nudge from what she was sure was the Holy Spirit, Bassett instead got back into her car and drove to the correct address. When she stepped off of the elevator, the man's sister was waiting.

"We're so glad you're here!" she said. "We didn't tell him you were coming, just in case you didn't show up." They walked past the rows of chairs in the waiting room to the spot where a man sat in a wheelchair facing the window.

"Robert, look who's here!" the man's sister said as she turned his chair to face Bassett. "It's Barbie Bassett, from WLBT! She came just to see *you*."

"Robert had suffered a stroke. He was on a breathing tube and feeding tube and was completely paralyzed," Bassett recalls. "The only movement I could see was his eyes. Then I noticed his index finger lift slightly. 'He's trying to shake your hand,' his sister explained. So I picked up his hand and put my hand inside his. There, in front of the window, I had a one-sided conversation with 45-year-old Robert. I told him about the weather outside, I told him about my children, and my co-workers at WLBT."

"Robert just lights up when you come on TV every night," his sister told Bassett. "His wife left him after he had the stroke and is with another man now. All he has are his daughter and a few of us family members who come to see him."

When it was time for Bassett to leave, she patted Robert's hands one more time as tears streamed down his cheeks.

"When I left home that day, I didn't know why the Holy Spirit was nudging me to go forward or why Satan was trying his hardest to make my life too full to do this," Bassett says. "But when I left the rehab hospital, I knew why. God wanted to show me a world outside of myself. How easy it is to forget the Roberts of this world – to get so caught up in our own lives and our own hectic schedules, obligations, and sorrows. We may forget the hurts others have, but God never does."

As Barbie and Will exchanged vows in a quiet country church on May 25, 1996, a thunderstorm rolled through, knocking out the electricity. While most brides would have viewed the wedding day storm as a disaster, Barbie Wiggs Bassett simply marveled at the beauty of saying her vows by candlelight.

### STORMS RAGING, STORMS STILLED

The newlyweds settled in Madison, Mississippi, where Bassett soon found part-time work as the morning meteorologist at WAPT-TV, eventually moving into a full-time meteorology position at WLBT-TV.

In November of 2001, Bassett and her husband were visiting her family in Marks when a tornado roared through their Madison subdivision. They rushed home to find their windows blown out, their roof shifted, and virtually every inch of their home covered in shattered glass. They were lucky. Many of the homes in their subdivision had been completely destroyed, and two of their neighbors had been killed. The tornado forever changed the way Bassett looked at the weather.



**METEOROLOGY IS A FIELD LARGELY DOMINATED BY MEN. LESS THAN 20 PERCENT OF THE 545 MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN METEOROLOGICAL SOCIETY ARE WOMEN (2005).**

"Before the tornado hit our neighborhood, I saw severe weather as challenging, exciting, awesome," Bassett says. "Now when I see it coming, I know what those people are going through. I know what it's like to feel frightened and lost. It's not fun or invigorating. It's terrifying. I hope people can see the difference in me on the air."

In 2003, the Bassett family grew to include daughter Grace. That same year, WLBT promoted Bassett to chief meteorologist. Life for Barbie Bassett had never been sunnier.

But then, a dark storm came, ripping through Bassett's happy life just as the tornado had torn through her neighborhood. In November of 2004, Bassett's second pregnancy ended in a miscarriage. As she left the hospital, she heard someone whisper, "There's Barbie Bassett." For the first time, Bassett's celebrity seemed a burden; her private anguish was suddenly very public. The weeks immediately following the loss of her baby daughter were among the darkest of Bassett's life; she acknowledges that at times she felt suicidal.

Bassett had previously announced her pregnancy on air. When she returned to WLBT obviously no longer pregnant, she explained to viewers that she had lost her expected baby, and asked them for their prayers. Bassett was flooded with



“BARBIE EXEMPLIFIES THAT IT’S NOT WHAT YOU GO THROUGH, IT’S HOW YOU GO THROUGH IT. I AM BLESSED TO CALL HER A FRIEND.” — MAGGIE WADE DIXON, WLBT NEWS ANCHOR



## JACKSON’S BIGGEST BABY SHOWER

When Hurricane Katrina struck in 2005, Bassett’s husband, Will, a paramedic supervisor, was one of the first responders sent to the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Barbie Bassett, then five months pregnant, covered the weather around the clock from WLBT.

“I was telling everyone to leave and Will was going the wrong way,” Bassett recalls. “I was watching the news footage for any sign of an ambulance, any location where he might be working.”

Once she knew her husband was safe, Bassett turned her attention to another group she saw in the news footage. Hundreds of pregnant women had evacuated to Jackson and were taking refuge in crowded hotels and shelters.

“We served 88 grateful women that day, but I gained more than they did. Katrina taught me that in doing for others, I can find my own heart’s desire.”

“I was pregnant and uncomfortable and inconvenienced because we didn’t have electricity for a few days, but I knew how to reach my doctor and which hospital I would go to and that I had a home where I’d be bringing my baby,” Bassett says. “These women had lost everything. They had no idea where their doctors were or where they might have their babies, or where they would take those babies after they delivered.”

Barbie Bassett filled that need. Bassett used her media presence to plan and organize what became known as Jackson’s Biggest Baby Shower. Bassett made an on-air plea for donations of diapers, blankets, clothing, formula, baby furniture – anything a mother-to-be or a newborn could possibly need. She organized doctors and hospitals who provided information on labor and delivery services, and brought it all together for one day at the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum in Jackson.

“We served 88 grateful women that day, but I gained more than they did,” Bassett says. “Katrina taught me that in doing for others, I can find my own heart’s desire.”

calls and e-mails from viewers who let her know they were asking God to comfort her. Those prayers were an important part of her healing, along with the words of comfort God pointed out to her in Ephesians 3:17-19, which reads, “that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all of the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.”

“I realized that my baby daughter knew exactly how wide and deep and high the love of Christ was,” Bassett says, “because she was in Heaven with Him.”

### RESPONDING IN THE SPIRIT

In December of 2005, the Bassetts welcomed a son, William Christian. In 2008, he was joined by a sister, Lillian Faith. Given her busy career, people are often surprised to learn that Bassett home schools her three children. Bassett is quick to explain she home schools not *despite* of her schedule, but *because* of it.

“If I sent them to school, I’d wake them up in the morning and drop them off, then just as they would be coming home at 3:00, I would be leaving to begin my workday at WLBT,” Bassett explains. “I couldn’t see how I’d nurture my children and lead them spiritually if I only saw them for two hours a day. Why have them if I’m not going to raise them?”

“I admire Barbie most for her ability to be an outstanding mom,” says Bassett’s co-worker, WLBT Reporter Stephanie Bell Flynt. “She is so grounded in her faith and her entire family reaps the benefits. In spite of her busy work schedule, she makes certain that her husband and children are her priority. Barbie demands that her children behave to her expectations, and they do with a great deal of security and happiness. Even though I am older than Barbie, and certainly wiser – ha, ha – her example of dealing with her children has reassured me of my role in leading my own children.”

But even as her career and family have blossomed, Bassett is far from immune to life’s little storms. In an unpleasant reminder of the bullying she endured as a child, Bassett frequently finds herself facing criticism from viewers, a situation common to those who work in television. Bassett receives e-mails and voice mail messages criticizing everything from her hairstyle to her clothes, from her weight to the size of her ears. She has even been accused of “being too happy and smiling too much.”

### GOING TO GREAT LENGTHS

Barbie Bassett has been a local spokesperson for the Pantene Beautiful Lengths hair donation program three times, growing her hair as long as she can and then cutting it and donating it to the program, which creates wigs for chemotherapy patients. Thanks to Bassett’s on-air promotion of the program, more than 900 people in the Jackson area donated hair to the program at one time, a feat that earned them a listing in the *Guinness Book of World Records* for most hair donated to a charity in a 24-hour period.

BARBIE AND WILL WITH  
THEIR CHILDREN, GRACE,  
WILL AND LILLIAN



"In this business, we get more criticism than the average person, and I think Barbie gets even more mean e-mails than the rest of us," says Bassett's friend and co-worker, WLBT News Anchor Maggie Wade Dixon. "It's hurtful, but the God in Barbie won't allow her to be mean to others in response. It takes faith not to grow bitter or to lash out or dwell on it. But instead of looking at it as an attack, Barbie sees it as an opportunity to minister."

Bassett responds to each and every call or e-mail, usually saying something along the lines of, "I'm sorry you were disappointed. I hope you'll keep watching," and adding a message of encouragement for the person who has just criticized her.

"How I respond shows more about Christ than it does about me," Bassett says. "If I respond in the flesh, Satan has the victory. If I respond in the Spirit, Jesus has the victory every time. Oh, it's tempting to respond in the flesh, but I have to remember that Satan has just used someone to try and break my spirit. And if I'm tempted to say something negative in response, I have to stop and ask myself, 'How is Satan trying to use *me* to break someone else's spirit?'"

For every negative comment, Bassett receives a dozen positive messages from viewers who see her as a trusted friend. Bassett's co-workers are frequently asked, "Is Barbie Bassett really that sweet?" According to the people who know her the best, the answer is yes.

"Barbie has one of the most consistently positive attitudes I've ever seen," says WLBT News Director Dennis

### THE NAME SAYS IT ALL

Barbie and Will Bassett named all three of their children after favorite hymns. "Grace" was inspired by "Amazing Grace," Will "Christian" by "I'll Tell the World I'm a Christian," and Lillian "Faith" by "Have Faith in God."

"Naming my children after hymns tells you just how Baptist I am," Bassett laughs.

Perhaps someday her children will come to understand the deeper meaning behind their own names. For now, however, all Grace, Will Christian, and Lilly Faith want to know is, "Mama, why does everyone know *your* name?"

Smith. "I don't think you get that very often without being led by a higher power."

"I believe that the best TV personalities are the same in person as they are on TV," says WLBT General Manager Dan Modisett. "Barbie genuinely cares about people and goes out of her way to help any way she can. And I am amazed at her work ethic and energy. She squeezes more out of a day than anyone I know."

That would seem to be an understatement. In addition to her roles as meteorologist, teacher, wife, and mother, Bassett writes a twice-weekly blog. She's been known to visit



### CALL LETTERS: WLBT/MC

Watching a newscast on WLBT is a bit like attending a Mississippi College reunion. General Manager Dan Modisett, News Director Dennis Smith, and news reporters and anchors Howard Ballou, Maggie Wade Dixon, Cheryl Lasseter, and Walt Grayson all graduated from or took classes at Mississippi College.

"We have found that MC graduates are high quality people with strong ethics and morals," Modisett says. "Academics are important, but integrity is critical to WLBT. I believe that MC graduates fit well in our culture and hopefully they are attracted to careers at WLBT."

"It's a great station professionally, and at the same time there's a real sense of family at WLBT," Wade Dixon says. "That reminds me of MC – I've found the same sense of family and of people who are vested in my success in both places."

When Barbie Bassett suffered a miscarriage, she asked WLBT viewers to pray for her. Bassett credits Modisett for creating an atmosphere at WLBT in which employees are not only allowed, but are also encouraged to share their faith – an unusual position in an era of "political correctness."

"Barbie's faith is a part of what defines her. Not everyone that watches or works at WLBT is a Christian, but most everyone admires Barbie's commitment to Christ," Modisett says. "We occasionally get a complaint, but that comes with the territory. We know that viewers have other choices to get their news, but that is a risk we are willing to take."

"I am who I am, and my faith is part of that. One of the best parts of working in Mississippi is knowing we can reference prayer and faith here where maybe that would be frowned upon in another market," Wade Dixon says. "It's nice that WLBT supports that expression of faith, and that makes it easier," Wade Dixon continues, adding with a laugh, "But whether or not she had the station's support wouldn't have stopped Barbie. She is who she is."

Above: MC Alumni, Dan Modisett, Walt Grayson, Dennis Smith, Cheryl Lasseter and Barbie Bassett

fans in the hospital, sweeping into the room to ask, "Who needs some sunshine?" and praying with the patients and their families. Bassett speaks at churches and civic gatherings, sharing her faith and describing how God has seen her through her personal and professional storms.

In 2010, Bassett released her first book, a memoir titled *Forecasts and Faith: Five Keys to Weathering the Storms of Life*. The book is a frank account of her childhood experiences with bullying, professional challenges and disappointments, the miscarriage that left her so depressed, and the little storms she weathers every day. *Forecasts and Faith* is a deeply personal book, but by sharing the stories of her own dark days, Bassett hopes to encourage readers through their storms.

"If I think it will help someone, then I will share it. That's my barometer. No pun intended," Bassett says. "I think people are hungry for authenticity, realness, and transparency in the Christian walk. The more I share, the more it might help."

Judging from reader response, Bassett is right.

"I've been very discouraged and down over the last year, not knowing what God has planned for me. It seems that my dreams have fallen apart and God has been so silent," one reader wrote to Bassett. "Then I read a little bit of your book this morning. What a blessing it was to me! With each page, God was speaking and I wanted to keep listening. I am so grateful that He has used you to touch so many lives, including mine."

"Thank you for sharing your faith with others," another e-mail to Bassett read. "There is a special place in Heaven for Barbie Bassett."

"We love you, admire you, and want to encourage you. Keep it up, girl," yet another reader shared. "Thanks for your testimony, your commitment to Christ, your boldness to share that publicly, and for the fruit of the Holy Spirit evident in your life."

Inspired by the response to *Forecasts and Faith*, Bassett is currently at work on a second book, a volume of devotionals tentatively titled *Amazing Graces for Daily Living*.

"Barbie is not afraid to discuss real life issues," Stephanie Bell Flynt says. "She's shared life experiences that many women fret, grieve, and feel guilty about. She's let women know these types of feelings don't mean you have fallen from God's grace, but that His grace is there to help you."

"God often works the best through our storms," Bassett says. "It's not always fun and it doesn't always seem fair, but it is always God. God never wastes a hurt. If we let Him work through them, He gets the glory, and God will not allow anything to happen that does not give Him glory in the end. I wanted people to see storms not as a punishment, but as a preparation for the ministry He has given to all of us. Our greatest potential for ministry comes from our greatest storms."

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT  
BARBIE BASSETT AND CONNECT  
TO HER TWICE-WEEKLY BLOG, VISIT  
[WWW.BARBIEBASSETT.COM](http://WWW.BARBIEBASSETT.COM).

For more on this story, visit [www.mc.edu/beacon](http://www.mc.edu/beacon).

A  
HIGH

*Notes*

*for*  
MISSISSIPPI  
COLLEGE



*Jean Pittman Williams '55*

CELEBRATES HER  
LOVE OF MUSIC  
AND FAMILY WITH  
A GIFT TO MC.

Jean Pittman Williams can barely remember a time when she didn't play the piano. Williams grew up in a close-knit family that included three brothers. Until her younger sister was born when Jean was a senior in high school, she was the only girl in the family. While her brothers played rough-and-tumble sports after school, Jean practiced her scales and fell in love with music.

When Jean and her brothers enrolled at Mississippi College in the early 1950s, there was no doubt she would pursue music as a major. Looking back today, Williams is deeply appreciative of the sacrifice her parents made to provide their children with an MC education.

"For five years, they had four of us at Mississippi College," Williams says. "I'm amazed that my mother and father were able to do it."

Williams' kind nature and natural leadership skills soon earned the respect and admiration of her MC classmates. She was elected class favorite, homecoming queen, and Miss MC. Social tribes were introduced during her first year on campus; Williams was a charter member of the Kissimmee tribe and went on to become the tribe's president.

Jean Pittman Williams graduated in 1955 with a degree in music education with special distinction and began a career as a music teacher. In 1956, she married her high school sweetheart, James Kelley Williams. Over the next several years, the couple lived in Mississippi, Oklahoma, Florida, and Massachusetts while James Kelley Williams served in the Air Force, completed his graduate degree, and assumed various positions in the chemical industry. Jean

Williams spent those years teaching.

"I taught music in four states," Williams says, "and because of the excellent education I received at MC, I knew I could hold my own teaching music anywhere in the country."

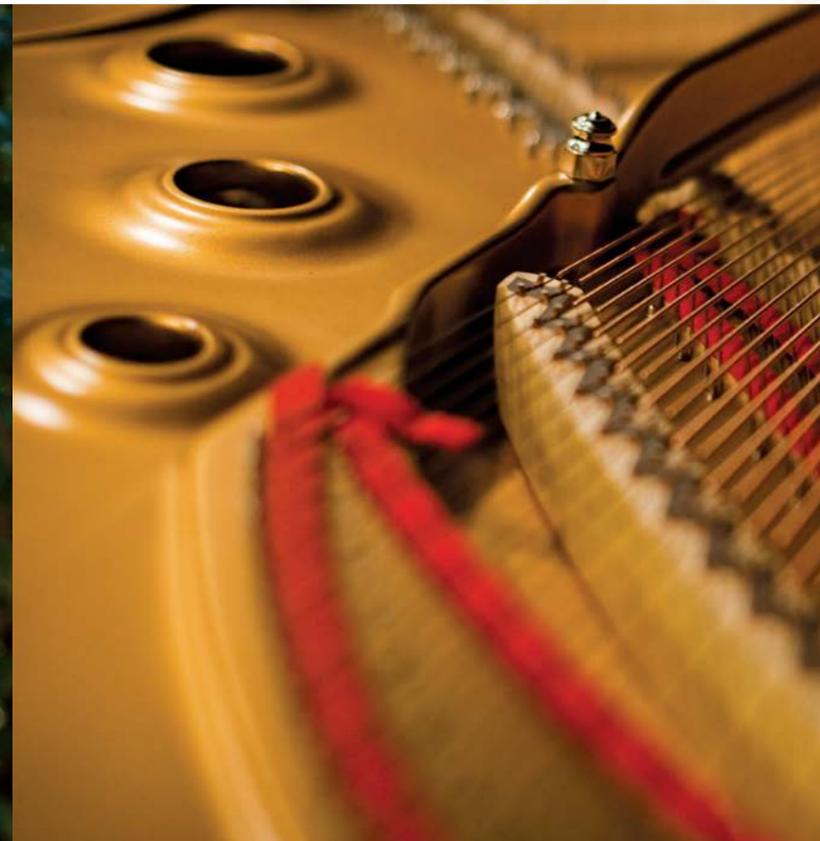
The Williams eventually moved back to Mississippi, where they raised three sons, Kelley, Jr., George, and Cliff, and Jean Williams reconnected with old friends from MC.

"The two things I value the most about MC are the education I received and the relationships I formed there," Williams says. "I had wonderful, caring professors and my peers were all bright, outstanding people. I'm still in touch with many of the friends I made at MC more than 50 years ago."

Susie Jordan met Jean Pittman Williams when both were in high school. The two were roommates at Mississippi College, where they engaged in such daring high jinks as snatching the beanies off the heads of Millsaps freshmen. Jordan and Williams were both candidates for Miss MC; Williams won by 50 votes, but the competition couldn't dampen the friendship between the two women. Jordan and Williams are still close friends today, some 55 years since the two graduated.

“MY PRAYER IS THAT the students who come and go through this recital hall will leave with a deeper love of God and a great appreciation for Mississippi College, and will go into the world to pass on to the next generation a love of music.”

— JEAN PITTMAN WILLIAMS



NAME THAT TUNE

Over seven decades of playing the piano for friends, in church, and as a music student and teacher, Jean Pittman Williams confesses there have been a few times when she’s lost her place while playing and had to ad lib. But according to Williams, there has only been one occasion in all those years when she went completely blank at the keyboard. “It was during my senior recital as a student at Mississippi College,” Williams recalls with a laugh.

“Jean is absolutely genuine. I know I could pick up the phone and call her at any time. She is always accessible, and she’s always Jean,” Jordan says. “Jean is low key, but she is aggressively creative and involved with so many causes that are dear to her. She’s not the type to just sit around and drink coffee.”

Williams’ many activities today include volunteering with the Magnolia Speech School, Eudora Welty Foundation, and Mississippi Symphony Orchestra, singing in the church choir, and spending time with her family, which has grown to include four grandchildren. Williams has also logged a decade of service during multiple terms on the board of trustees of Mississippi College.

“It’s been so exciting to be involved with MC again,” Williams says. “We’ve had some ups and downs over the

years, but there have been far more ‘ups’ than ‘downs.’ Seeing the progress Mississippi College has made, especially in the last decade, has been wonderful. I’m proud of the direction MC is going.”

During a visit to the MC campus as a trustee, Williams saw a pressing need for improvements to the aging MC recital hall. Seeing it as an opportunity to express her love of music and to “repay my parents and MC for all they did for me,” Williams and her husband made a generous gift to the university to fund the renovation. Unveiled on October 3, 2006, the completely refurbished, upgraded, and enhanced facility was christened the Jean Pittman Williams Recital Hall.

“The renovation completely changed the realm of possibility for us,” says Dr. Jamie Meaders, chair of the MC Music Department. “The space before the renovation had no raised, comfortable seating, so there were no sight lines

to the stage. There was no stage lighting, so any attempt at a production was limited from the outset, and there was no sound system, so the production of a musical was impossible. In a word, it was embarrassing to host guests and prospective students in our primary performance venue. Since the renovation, however, we proudly display the space and utilize its beautiful, intimate setting as often as possible.”

“I’m very proud of the recital hall,” Williams says. “I think the music department is so important. That’s where we train future church musicians, and music in general touches so many lives – not only the lives of those who create it, but also of those who hear it.”

At the dedication of the renovated recital hall that now bears her name, Williams once again recognized her parents’ gift of a Mississippi College education.

“I honor my parents, Reather and Calhoun Pittman, with the gift of this renovation of the recital hall,” Williams said. “In the early 1950s, they sacrificed greatly to give my three brothers and me a Mississippi College education. Because of their sacrifice for me, I simply can’t *not* be involved in music education and the passing on of the love of music.

“My prayer is that the students who come and go through this recital hall will leave with a deeper love of God and a great appreciation for Mississippi College, and will go into the world to pass on to the next generation a love of music.”



THE RENOVATION OF THE Jean Pittman Williams Recital Hall is just one of many improvements on the MC campus made as a part of the “Growing the Vision” campaign. Launched in 2006, “Growing the Vision” is a drive to raise \$80 million for scholarships, academic programs, the MC endowment, and capital improvements. The campaign will conclude in October of 2011.

ROSE-COLORED GLASSES

Her Christian faith has been an important part of her life since Jean Pittman Williams was a child.

“I think faith is life,” Williams says. “Having faith is an ongoing process that we continue all through our lives. As Christians, we know that everything is not always going to turn out as we want it to. But I know that I will never be alone. God will be there to see me through. My sons used to tease me about going through life wearing rose-colored glasses. I always replied, ‘Well, I’d rather wear rose-colored glasses than dark ones.’”

One of Jean Pittman Williams’ favorite quotations on faith is by poet and educator Patrick Overton, who wrote:

*When you come to the edge of all the light you know and are about to drop off into the darkness of the unknown, faith is knowing one of two things will happen: there will be something solid to stand on, or you will be taught to fly.*

# A Life Well Lived

REV. WILLIAM PRESTON "BILL" SMITH III ☞ 1935 – 2010

MARY ELLIS SMITH WAS PACKING FOR A FAMILY VACATION TO the beaches of South Carolina last June when her husband, Bill, came into the bedroom.

"He had the mail in his hand, and he was shaking this letter and saying, 'I can't believe this. I just can't believe this,'" Mary Ellis recalls. "I thought it was a bill. Then he handed it to me to read, and I saw that it was a letter from Dr. Lee Royce letting Bill know that he'd been chosen as Mississippi College's Alumnus of the Year.

"It meant the world to Bill, but I think it was an even prouder moment for me," Mary Ellis Smith continues. "I knew that other people had seen the kind of person Bill was. I had always known I could depend on him, and it was wonderful to have other people recognize that about him, too."

Just one week after reading that letter, Rev. William "Bill" Smith was called Home, passing away of an apparent heart attack while swimming in the warm waters off the South Carolina coast.

In recognition of his service to MC and his unwavering commitment to his family and his faith, Mississippi College is proud to honor the late Rev. William Smith III as the Alumnus of the Year.

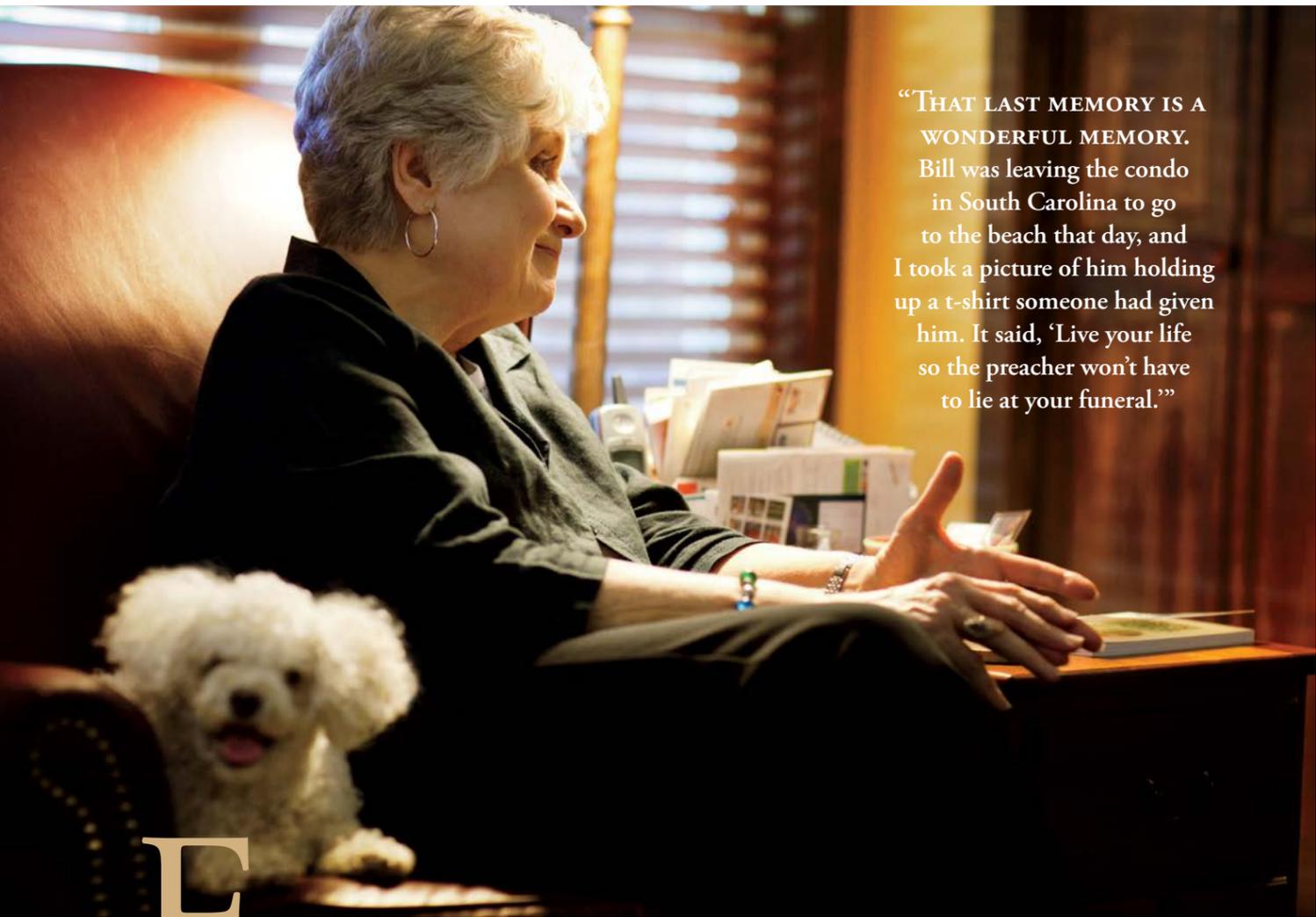
BILL SMITH MET MARY ELLIS PERKINS WHEN BOTH WERE students at Mississippi College in the 1950s. Bill spotted Mary Ellis at a fair promoting organizations on campus and was immediately enchanted; he followed Mary Ellis' long blond ponytail through the crowded fair and asked her out on a date. For the rest of their time at MC, Bill and Mary Ellis were inseparable, enjoying afternoons at the Jackson Zoo and concerts and ballgames together. Bill and Mary Ellis graduated from MC and were married in 1959. The two embarked together on a life spent in service, Bill as a Baptist preacher and Mary Ellis as a pastor's wife and teacher.

"For me, the high points of our working life were always when Bill was elected to a place of service," Mary Ellis Smith says. "The way that he approached those roles with all his heart made me so proud. I saw my role as a support position, and I was so pleased to be in that role."

A graduate of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Rev. Smith served as pastor at churches in Yalobusha, Clay, Lee, and Madison counties, Mississippi, then served for 20 years as Lee County Baptist Associational director of missions. While a pastor, Rev. Smith also served as a member of the executive committee of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, a family life consultant for the church training department, and a trustee and chairman of the board for Mississippi Baptist Seminary.

As director of missions, Rev. Smith began a multi-family housing mission, clothing closet, and food bank in Tupelo, Mississippi. He started a monthly worship service for vendors at the Tupelo Flea Market, and every summer he assembled and led a construction crew to assist a church in a building project in conjunction with the North American Mission Board.





“THAT LAST MEMORY IS A WONDERFUL MEMORY. Bill was leaving the condo in South Carolina to go to the beach that day, and I took a picture of him holding up a t-shirt someone had given him. It said, ‘Live your life so the preacher won’t have to lie at your funeral.’”

Following his retirement, he continued to preach at the monthly flea market vendor services, worked with the benevolence program at Calvary Baptist Church, and delivered free books to nursing homes as part of the Ebenezer Foundation. Rev. Smith also continued to serve in missions work, including North American mission projects and traveling to Honduras and Venezuela to serve with international mission projects.

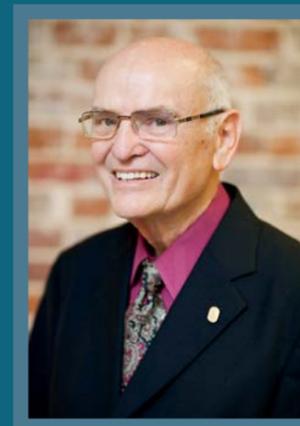
Always active in his community, Rev. Smith was past president of the Greater Tupelo Ministerial Association, a member of the advisory committee for the department of pastoral care of the North Mississippi Medical Center, and chaplain and past president of the Tupelo Civitan Club.

No matter how demanding his schedule, Rev. Smith never failed to make his family a priority. He and his wife had two children, Paul and Catherine, both of whom are MC graduates. In recent years, their close-knit family grew to include grandchildren and step-grandchildren, all of whom who cherished their time with their beloved “Pop.”

“When our children were small, Bill read to them, endured football games and recitals, and took them along when he visited shut-ins,” Mary Ellis recalls. “When they got older and had families of their own, we were all still very close. When our children called just to chat, they’d talk to me, but if they had a problem or an issue they were facing, it was always, ‘Is Daddy there?’ Our grandchildren adored

### ALUMNUS of the YEAR

The Alumnus of the Year Award 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.



### CARRYING ON REV. SMITH’S LEGACY

William Smith’s Alumnus of the Year Award was accepted by his 10-year-old granddaughter, Mary Preston Evers. Mary Preston was very close to her grandfather, whom she affectionately called “Pop;” drawings and photos of the two together cover the walls of the late Bill Smith’s study.

Mary Preston was swimming in the waters off the South Carolina coast with her beloved grandfather when he died. She struggled to pull her grandfather to shore, but the strong current threatened to wash them both out to sea. Mary Preston later told her grandmother, Mary Ellis Smith, “Jesus sent a holy wave to bring us back to shore.” Days after his death, Mary Preston told her grandmother, “I miss Pop and I am so sad, but I’m not going to cry anymore because I know he’s in Heaven.”

Perhaps the best testimony to the life Rev. William Smith led can be found in the bravery and faith of his beloved granddaughter.

Bill and he was very close to them.”

Mary Ellis describes her husband as a man of unwavering faith with a good sense of humor, a remarkable sense of purpose, and an untiring dedication to whatever task he chose to accept.

“Bill was also slow to make a commitment, because if he promised to do something, he wanted to be sure he could follow through,” Mary Ellis Smith says. “Anything Bill undertook, he gave 110 percent.”

That included Rev. Smith’s many commitments to Mississippi College. Rev. Smith is a former president of the MC Alumni Association and was an active member of the board of trustees.

“Bill was enormously faithful to Mississippi College,” says MC President Dr. Lee Royce. “He truly lived out his commitment to the university and gave it his all. Bill traveled from Tupelo to Clinton frequently to attend meetings and events of all kinds, often at some expense and always making a sacrifice of his time. He was also so faithful in his duties as a trustee. I might know trustees who have been equally faithful, but I know of none who have been more faithful than Bill Smith.”

Upon Rev. Smith’s passing, Mary Ellis Smith received hundreds of notes, cards, and letters, many from people she had never met who wished to tell her what her husband had meant to them. One note that particularly touched her referred to Rev. Smith as “no respecter of persons,” a description that Mary Ellis Smith says was accurate.

“Some people are easier to like than others, but Bill saw everyone the same way,” Mary Ellis Smith says. “He always saw the good in people.”

Mary Ellis Smith is still grieving for her husband, but she has many memories to cherish and takes comfort in the faith she and Rev. Smith shared during their more than half-century marriage.

“My circumstances are so much better than some others I know of who have lost their spouses,” says Mary Ellis Smith, who now wears her late husband’s wedding ring as well as her own. “I have family close by, a wonderful church family and pastor, and of course, I have my faith. I know that our God is all sufficient.”

Mary Ellis Smith’s last memory of her beloved husband is at once funny and touching, and seems to sum up Rev. William Smith’s life.

“That last memory is a wonderful memory,” Mary Ellis Smith says. “Bill was leaving the condo in South Carolina to go to the beach that day, and I took a picture of him holding up a t-shirt someone had given him. It said, ‘Live your life so the preacher won’t have to lie at your funeral.’”

### FAMILY TIES

Family was of vital importance to Rev. William Smith. The people he loved most were his wife of 51 years, Mary Ellis; his children Paul Smith ’92 and Catherine Smith Cagle ’95; his grandchildren, Mary Preston Evers and Isabella Scotlynd Smith; and his step-grandchildren, Xavier Taylor, Matthew Cagle, Katie Cagle, and Sara Jo Cagle.

“If I could say one thing to Bill today before I see him again in Heaven, it would be, ‘Thank you for your patience and your unwavering love, not only for me, but for our whole family,’” Mary Ellis Smith says. Then, smiling through her tears she adds, “And I would probably ask him, ‘Have you learned to sing yet?’”



## Son of a Son of a Preacher Man

DR. JAMES ROBERT "ROB" FUTRAL '93

The son and grandson of Baptist ministers, Dr. Rob Futral followed in their footsteps when he accepted God's call to ministry as a sophomore in high school. Today Futral is the pastor at Broadmoor Baptist Church in Madison, Mississippi.

"Growing up, I never felt any pressure to go into the ministry or to act a certain way because I was the preacher's son," Dr. Futral says. "But because my father was a minister, I did get to meet a lot of missionaries, spiritual leaders, and visionary people. My father also took me along when he visited at nursing homes and hospitals. At the time, I just thought, 'that was cool,' or 'that was a good thing to do,' but now looking back, I realize it was on-the-job training. I didn't see it that way, but God did."

In December of his freshman year at Mississippi College, Futral was invited to preach at Horseshoe Baptist Church, a tiny church in a cotton field in what Futral describes as the "suburbs" of Tchula, Mississippi. When he concluded his sermon, one of the 40 church members asked him, "Boy, can you come back next week?" Futral answered yes, and at 19 years old, Rob Futral became the pastor of his first church.

### YOUNG ALUMNUS *of the YEAR*

This award honors Mississippi College 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.

### LOVE AT FIRST (AND SECOND) SIGHT

Rob Futral and his wife, Kimandria, met in Sunday school at Broadmoor when Futral was in the ninth grade. The two dated in high school, broke up when they went to separate colleges and as Rob Futral puts it, "I lost my brain," then reconnected when they served as bridesmaid and groomsman in Futral's sister's wedding. They were married following their college graduations. Rob and Kimandria have three children, Trea, Ridge, and Rivers.

He preached at Horseshoe throughout his MC career, studying in Clinton during the week and spending his weekends, Wednesday nights, and summers in Tchula.

"I received a diploma from Mississippi College and an education from Horseshoe Baptist Church," Dr. Futral recalls. "My experience in that little church really grounded me. I would leave class and go visit a man named Bailey McBride who was dying of cancer. He was dying, and I was his 19-year-old pastor. His was the first funeral I ever preached.

"The people in Horseshoe treated me like a family member," Futral continues. "They met every girl I dated while I was in college. Some of those people are members of Broadmoor today."

Following his graduation from MC and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Dr. Futral served in churches in Mississippi and Louisiana. Then he received a call from a church in Madison, Mississippi, looking for a senior pastor. It was Broadmoor Baptist Church, the same church where his father, Dr. Jim Futral, had once served as pastor for more than a dozen years.

"I have a great admiration for my father, but I'm not my dad, and I didn't want to live in his shadow," Dr. Futral says. "My father and I didn't talk a lot of 'ministry shop,' but I did often ask him to pray for me. I told him I had been approached about leading a church and asked him to pray for me about the decision. He said, 'Is it a church in Mississippi?' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'Well, can you tell me which church? I might know something about it.' I said, 'Well, you probably do, because it's Broadmoor.' He said, 'Oh,' and hung up.

"A little while later he called me back," Dr. Futral continues, "My father said, 'I knew nothing about this, but if you're not the right one, it's someone like you. They aren't calling you to be me. They are calling *you*.'"

### FAMILY TRADITION

Rob Futral's grandfather, Guy Clemens Futral, was working in a dry cleaning establishment in Greenwood, Mississippi, when he was led to Christ and called into the ministry. Guy was the first person in his immediate family to become a Christian. He had five sons, four of whom went into the ministry.

Dr. Futral accepted that calling, assuming the role of senior pastor at Broadmoor in 2003. Under his leadership, Broadmoor's membership has more than doubled; 80 percent of the current members have joined since Rob Futral was named senior pastor.

"At Broadmoor, I've had the privilege of working with a group of gifted people and seeing the impact a local church can have on the community, the state, and the world," Dr. Futral says. "I'm so grateful to be serving here in Mississippi. My family moved a lot when I was growing up, and I've always thought of myself as an explorer. Now, I'm a settler with an explorer's spirit."

Lee and Mary Miller have been members at Broadmoor since 1985, attending the church under the leadership of both Jim Futral and Rob Futral. Long before he became the Millers' pastor, Rob Futral was their children's babysitter.

"Rob has had a great, outgoing personality all of his life," Mary Miller says. "We met him when he was a teenager and he is the same now as he was then – joyful and full of humor, a vessel of God's grace. He was always our children's favorite babysitter because he'd get down on the floor and play with them."

According to Lee Miller, that ability to relate to others is one of the gifts that makes Rob Futral an outstanding pastor.

"One of Rob's main strengths is his relational ability. He relates very well to people from the pulpit, but he is absolutely best one-on-one," Lee Miller says. "He cares so much about every person. You'd think in a church of 4,000 people he might say 'well, can't care for all of them,' but he does."

One of those 4,000 is Broadmoor's former pastor, Dr. Jim Futral.

"Rob's preaching skills and leadership style are far beyond anything that I ever possessed or knew anything about. So often I sit in the service and as God is speaking directly to my heart through Rob, I am thinking, 'Who is this and where did he come from?'" says Dr. Jim Futral, now executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. "Preaching is a call that comes from God and a gift that is given by God. When I hear him speak, it is a God experience and I fully recognize that I had little if anything to do with making that happen.

"It would be impossible for me to pick out one thing and say this is the thing that makes me the most proud of Rob," Dr. Jim Futral continues. "Rob Futral is my son, my pastor, and my friend. I suppose if I had to say one thing it would be the blessing and the privilege that I have as his father to say as the Father said about His Son, Jesus, 'This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.'"



## Staying After School

DR. LARRY DRAWDY '63, '65

Dr. Larry Drawdy is interim deputy superintendent at the Mississippi Department of Education in the office of school improvement, oversight, and recovery, where he works to turn around failing schools. Dr. Drawdy came out of retirement to assume the position, and so far the results have been impressive. He began working with a list of 52 failing schools, and over the past year, has whittled that number down to 29.

It's little wonder that the Department of Education called on Larry Drawdy when they needed expert help. Dr. Drawdy brings a 40-year track record of success in Mississippi education and a solid work ethic engrained by his parents and reinforced during his years at Mississippi College.

Drawdy arrived in Clinton in 1959 from his home in Florida with plenty of drive but very little money. He worked his way through college working odd jobs, from dis-

### ASKING TO GO TO THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

As a high school student, Larry Drawdy once missed school for a doctor's appointment, but still showed up for football practice. Displeased with young Larry's sense of priorities, the principal turned his punishment over to the one person on campus more intimidating than himself – Drawdy's football coach. "Oh, how I wished it had been the principal instead," Dr. Drawdy recalls with a laugh.

tributing clean linens to his dorm mates to serving as floor manager in the residence hall.

“My father and MC both emphasized the importance of a strong work ethic,” Dr. Drawdy says. “I learned that nothing worthwhile is just given to you. Instead, you have to earn it.”

Dr. Drawdy applied the work ethic that helped him earn bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Mississippi College and a doctorate from Mississippi State University to a four-decade career that included service as superintendent of education with the Picayune, Meridian, and Biloxi school systems. His career highlights include leading the Biloxi Public Schools to a Level 5 accreditation rating, the highest level awarded by the state at that time. During Dr. Drawdy’s tenure, Biloxi passed a \$29.5 million bond issue – the first bond issue passed for capital improvements in Biloxi in nearly 40 years – that resulted in the construction of three new elementary schools and a new high school and extensive enhancements to five other schools in the district, all between 1999 and 2004.

Dr. Drawdy also implemented a “cameras in the classroom” program in Biloxi, installing security cameras in the classrooms, hallways, and on the school grounds to an extent that had never been done by any school district in America. The innovative program not only enhanced safety and cut down on discipline issues, but also earned the Biloxi School District front-page coverage in *USA Today* for its ingenuity in launching the program.

“Perhaps my proudest moment was seeing the Biloxi School District reach Level 5 accreditation, something that many people said would never happen,” Dr. Drawdy says. “Biloxi is a very diverse, cosmopolitan part of Mississippi. Nineteen different languages were spoken within our school district. People just didn’t think we could come together to realize that kind of rating. Our student achievement was exemplary. Those students come back to visit today and it’s wonderful to see how they’ve succeeded in life and in their careers.”

Dr. Drawdy has received many awards recognizing his outstanding leadership and dedication, including the Mississippi Superintendent of the Year Award, Outstanding Educators Award, Outstanding Citizen of Jackson County Award, and Distinguished Alumnus Award from the Department of Teacher Education at Mississippi College.

He has been an active professional and civic leader, serving as chairman of the Mississippi Accreditation Commission, president of the Council of Public Schools, and on

### CALM IN THE STORM

While Dr. Larry Drawdy was superintendent of education for the Biloxi Public School District in 1999, Biloxi passed a bond issue that led to the construction of three new elementary schools and a new high school and funded renovations to five other schools. The paint was barely dry on many of those schools when they were swept away by Hurricane Katrina. Biloxi High School, however, not only withstood the storm, but also served as a shelter for Gulf Coastal residents displaced by the hurricane. One of those residents was Dr. Larry Drawdy. “I had been heavily involved in building that school,” Dr. Drawdy says. “I knew what it was constructed to withstand and I knew it was a place where I’d be safe.”

the boards of the Gulf Coast Education Initiative Consortium, Biloxi Bay Chamber of Commerce, Biloxi Chamber of Commerce, Biloxi Regional Medical Center, Girl Scouts of the Gulf Pines Council, United Way, Gulf Coast Symphony Orchestra, and Mississippi College Alumni Association. Dr. Drawdy is a member and former chairman of deacons at First Baptist Church in Biloxi. He also served his country in the United States Marine Corps.

While Dr. Drawdy attributes much of his professional success to the lessons he learned at Mississippi College, his favorite memories of his college years are of the relationships he formed at MC, many of which remain a large part of his life today. At Mississippi College, Drawdy met and fell in love with his wife of 46 years, Kathleen, who also earned her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from MC. Dr. Drawdy and his former college roommate and 2008 Order of the Golden Arrow recipient, Dr. Ennis Proctor, are still best friends. And Dr. Drawdy credits Doc Quick, then MC’s director of student activities and dean of men, with helping him become the first member of his family to graduate from college.

“If it had not been for Doc Quick, I wouldn’t have been able to finish,” Dr. Drawdy says. “He helped me find jobs that allowed me to work my way through school. During all my years at MC, the Lord and Doc Quick took care of me. After I graduated, Doc Quick came to my wedding, he came to visit me when I was sick, and he’s helped me during some trying times in my career. I’m proud to be one of Doc’s boys. He is the best. *The best.*”



## Cooking with Gas

MACK MURRIEL

For decades, Wednesdays at noon meant a line forming and mouths watering in the MC cafeteria as students, faculty, and staff waited for a plate of Head Chef Mack Murriel’s perfectly seasoned fried chicken. But it’s not Murriel’s recipes, but his work ethic that earned him the 2010 Award of Excellence. By the time Mack Murriel retired last May, he had logged 50 years working in the Mississippi College cafeteria.

“Out of all the people I know, no one deserves this recognition more than Mac,” says Doc Quick ’55, MC’s former vice president of student services and alumni relations. “I don’t know if he missed a day of work in all those 50 years.”

Murriel came to work at MC in 1960 as an 18-year-old dishwasher. Over the next five decades, he was promoted to line server, storeroom employee, cook, and eventually to head chef.

“Cooking was never a hobby or something I grew up dreaming I’d do,” Murriel says. “Being a chef was a job I grew into, with a lot of my training on the job.”

When he originally began working at MC, Murriel

estimates he served 300 breakfasts and 550 lunches each day. By the time he retired in 2010, he was serving 600 breakfasts and 1,400 lunches per day, even more on Wednesdays when his famous fried chicken was on the menu. Year after year, Murriel arrived at work in the dark at 5:00 a.m. to open the kitchen, never failing to have breakfast ready when the first sleepy-eyed students hit the cafeteria. He recalls driving to campus in the rain, sleet, and snow, and on at least one occasion when the electricity went out, Murriel cooked on the gas stove by flashlight.

“Mr. Mack didn’t talk a lot, but he would do anything for you,” says Dasie Harrell, who worked with Murriel in the MC cafeteria for 37 years. “He made my Thanksgiving dressing for me every year. A lot of people here miss him, and I’m one of them. I miss his good fried chicken, too.”

“Mack was always quiet and gentle. I never saw him mad,” says Dorothy Davis, who worked alongside Murriel for 39 years. “And he was such a hard worker. If he was sick or tired, we never knew it.”

Murriel rarely missed a day of work. Virgie Murriel, his wife of 46 years, recalls a time when Murriel spent 18 days in the hospital with pneumonia.

“As soon as Mack could get out of bed, he headed off to work,” Virgie Murriel says. “I told him he was still sick, that MC could very well go on without him for a few days, but he wouldn’t listen to me. As soon as he got there, the manager sent him back home to rest. I said, ‘At least the manager has more sense than you do.’”

The youngest of 10 children, Mack Murriel began working odd jobs to help his family when he was just seven years old. When his parents became ill, Murriel quit high school to help take care of them. For many of his years at MC, Murriel worked two jobs, leaving his early shift in the cafeteria to head to a second job as the custodian at Mt. Salus Christian School.

Murriel passed his work ethic and his strong belief in

### MACK MURRIEL’S MENU

Even after 50 years in the kitchen, Murriel still enjoys some of his own cooking. His favorite dishes include roast beef and chicken potpie, and yes, even Mack Murriel himself admits that his fried chicken is hard to beat.

### THE ORDER of the GOLDEN ARROW

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.

### THE AWARD of EXCELLENCE

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.

the value of a good education on to his and Virgie's sons, Mark and Troy. Mark Murriel's first job was working in the MC concession stand at sporting events when he was just 13 years old. Mark graduated from MC in 1997 and is a nurse with Central Mississippi Medical Center. His younger brother, Troy, graduated from Hinds Community College and is a mental health technician at the Mississippi State Hospital at Whitfield.

"When I think of my father, the word that comes to my mind is 'sacrifice,'" Mark Murriel says. "Despite working two jobs and having things he probably wanted to do for himself, he was never too busy to pick me up and run me around to soccer practice or karate class. He's been working and sacrificing for other people all of his life.

"My father is not a perfect man, but he is a *man*," Mark Murriel continues. "I look in my community where I grew up, and I see lots of young men whose fathers just left them. I can remember my father telling me, 'You stay in school. You see those guys just standing on that corner? They're still going to be standing on that corner when you're grown.' I was so blessed to have a father who struggled and made sacrifices to help me."

"My father set an example for us of loyalty and respect, and the importance of keeping going despite your bad days," Troy Murriel says. "You might think your work is overlooked or that only God sees it. It's nice to see my father honored by the university, to know that someone respected his loyalty and hard work and paused to say, 'thank you.'"

Since his retirement, Mack Murriel has shared the cooking duties at home with his wife, but he still fries up his famous chicken at Northside Baptist Church, where he prepares the Wednesday night meals. When he looks back over his half-century career at MC, Mack Murriel's favorite memory is not of people lining up to enjoy his cooking, but of knowing that his hard work was appreciated.

"I remember once back in 1960, about six months after I started working at Mississippi College, I had a flat tire on the way in and I was late for work," Murriel says. "When I got there, the manager asked me what happened and I told him about the flat. He said, 'I knew something must have happened because you would never be late for work.' That touched me because I'd only been there a short time, but I knew Mississippi College trusted me to do a good job."

### JUST HER CUP OF TEA

While some pieces have been lost or broken over the years, Virgie Murriel still has one cup from a set of dishes she and Mack received from Mississippi College as a wedding present 46 years ago.



## Departmental Distinguished Awards

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

### Art

MARY LANE REED '89, '91

After receiving her bachelor's and master's degrees in art from Mississippi College, Mary Lane Reed served the MC Art Department as departmental secretary and later as adjunct faculty until 2002. For the past 10 years, Reed has pursued a fulltime career as a portrait artist. She is nationally represented by Portraits, Inc. of New York City and Birmingham, Alabama, and Portraits South of Raleigh, North Carolina, and has been commissioned to create portraits for clients across the country. Her work, both portrait and non-portrait, is included in private and public collections throughout the South. Three of Reed's four children are also MC alumni.

### Biology

DR. R. SCOTT GATEWOOD '80

Dr. R. Scott Gatewood is professor of endodontics and the chair of the Department of Endodontics at the University of Mississippi School of Dentistry. A *summa cum laude* graduate of the UMC School of Dentistry, Dr. Gatewood also holds a specialty certification in endodontics (the treatment

of the roots of the teeth) from Louisiana State University School of Dentistry. He has been published in several dental journals, including many overseas publications, and has served as a lecturer for dental schools and at professional gatherings nationwide. Dr. Gatewood serves his country as a colonel in the Mississippi Army National Guard.

### Chemistry

DR. RANDALL EASTERLING '73

Dr. Randy Easterling had already earned a master's degree in counseling from the University of Southern Mississippi and was working on a Ph.D. in counseling when he decided to enroll in medical school instead. He graduated from the University of Mississippi School of Medicine and launched a career in family medicine. Today he is in private practice with The Street Clinic in Vicksburg, Mississippi, and serves as medical director for Marian Hill Chemical Dependency Unit. He has also treated patients as an emergency room physician at hospitals in Mississippi and Alabama. Dr. Easterling's colleagues have elected him to leadership roles in various professional organizations, including the presidency of the 3,650-member Mississippi State Medical Association.

### Christian Studies

DR. KENNETH B. WEATHERSBY '85

Dr. Kenneth Weathersby is the vice president of the Church Planting Group of the North American Mission Board (NAMB), Southern Baptist Convention. Dr. Weathersby works with state and association partners to mentor leaders, provide resources, and equip Southern Baptists in their missionary task of sowing the Gospel among all peoples and planting New Testament churches for every person in every place. Dr. Weathersby's previous roles at NAMB include service as vice president of the Evangelization Group, church planter, and missionary. He has also served as state evangelism director at the Tennessee Baptist Convention and a professor at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and was the founding pastor of the Douglas Avenue Baptist Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

### Communication

ELIZABETH ROOKS BARBER '90

A certified wildlife biologist and conservation planner, Elizabeth Barber is president and managing partner of Barber & Mann, Inc., an environmental consulting and land planning firm. Her clients include Ducks Unlimited, the National Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, the Mississippi Forestry Commission, the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, and the Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks, as well as private landowners. Her work centers on wetlands and wildlife habitat protection and conservation grant programs. Barber was formerly executive

director of the Mississippi Wildlife Federation and director of the American Lung Association of Mississippi. Barber holds an undergraduate degree in forestry and wildlife from Mississippi State University.

### English

SUSAN HINTON LASSITER '75, '89

Susan Lassiter, assistant professor of English at Mississippi College, worked for McRae's Department Stores for 10 years as the corporate fashion coordinator and later as a corporate buyer. Since she began teaching at Mississippi College in 1989, she has been active in a long list of student and faculty organizations and committees, serving as Kissimmee sponsor for 15 years and as ODK faculty advisor/secretary since 1993. She is the Mississippi College Faculty Council president for 2010-2011. Lassiter has participated in a wide variety of community and church organizations and service activities in Clinton, most notably in the planning, building, and opening of the award-winning Quisenberry Library in spring 2010, serving as chair of the Clinton Library Advisory Board and chair of the New Library Task Force Committee. She also worked to establish the Clinton Library Foundation Fund.

### History and Political Science

JAMES CLIFTON "CLIFF" JOHNSON II '89

Cliff Johnson is a shareholder and founding partner with the law firm of Pigott Reeves Johnson, P.A. in Jackson. His legal career includes service as the Fulbright Professor of Law in Lund, Sweden; assistant U.S. attorney with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Mississippi; associate with Butler, Snow, O'Mara, Stevens & Cannada in Jackson; and law clerk to the Honorable William H. Barbour, Jr., chief judge, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi. Following his graduation with high honors and special distinction from MC, Johnson earned his law degree from Columbia University School of Law in New York. He serves as an adjunct professor at MC Law and is a noted speaker on issues related to criminal and civil fraud actions. Johnson is an active volunteer in his profession, community, and church.

### Kinesiology

THOMAS GLENN GLADNEY '78

Coach Tom Gladney is the athletic director for Biloxi Public Schools. Gladney is a former Mississippi College head baseball coach, serving as the Choctaws head coach for 15 years and also teaching health classes in the physical education department. His coaching experience also includes positions as assistant football and assistant baseball coach at MC, and as head baseball coach, assistant principal, and assistant athletic director at Midway High School in Waco, Texas. Gladney has also served as a high school associate



scout with the Kansas City Royals and Boston Red Sox, and is currently serving his second year as a high school associate scout with the Colorado Rockies.

#### *Master of Health Services Administration*

MENDAL G. KEMP '88

Mendal Kemp is the director of the Center for Rural Health, Mississippi Hospital Association, where he is responsible for planning, leadership, operations, marketing, and grant writing for small, rural hospitals in Mississippi. Kemp also serves as director of the Delta Rural Health Network, a group purchasing organization, and manages the Delta Health Alliance Hospital Improvements grant. Kemp was formerly vice president of programs and operations and director of development and governmental operations for Millcreek Management Corporation/Youth and Family Centered Services, where he was responsible for the operation of five residential programs, two day treatment programs, and three schools providing long-term care for emotionally disturbed or developmentally delayed children in Mississippi and Arkansas.

#### *Modern Languages*

ANITA KOLB BROOKS '81 AND CLAY BROOKS '82

Anita and Clay Brooks have lived in China for the past 13 years, where they are performing humanitarian work. The Brooks previously lived and worked in Russia and Mexico. Anita and Clay met at Mississippi College and enjoy telling others they fell in love while studying the romance languages. Anita majored in Spanish and French; Clay studied Spanish, French and German, and spent a year as an exchange student at the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany. Anita and Clay were married in 1981 and have five children, three living in the United States and two in China.

#### *Music*

DONNA WILLIAMS MCCOMMON '75, '81

Donna McCommon retired as director of fine arts for Pearl Public Schools and director of choral activities at Pearl High School after a 35-year teaching career, 23 years of which included directing junior and senior high choirs. Her choirs and ensembles have been recognized with numerous awards and have performed throughout the United States and Europe. McCommon was named Teacher of the Year for Pearl High School and the Pearl Public School District and was recognized as Mississippi's and National Section III Outstanding Music Educator by the Mississippi High School Activities Association and the National Federation Interscholastic Music Association. McCommon was selected to represent Mississippi as a "choral director of note" in the national magazine *The Choral Director*.

#### *Music Distinguished Young Alumnus*

CARRIE STEVENS OWENS '99

Carrie Owens has been a teacher of choral music at Olde Towne Middle School in Ridgeland, Mississippi, since 1999. Since joining the faculty, she has received multiple awards, including the 2010 Olde Towne Middle School Teacher of the Year Award and the 2002 Outstanding Young Music Educator Award presented by the Mississippi Music Educators Association. Under Owens' direction, Olde Towne choirs have consistently received superior ratings at the District IV Junior High Choral Festival and Mississippi Junior High State Choral Festival. Owens has been a guest clinician at many festivals and a presenter at professional development gatherings, including the Mississippi Music Educators Association Convention. She is past president of the Junior High Choral Division. Owens has mentored student teachers from Mississippi College since 2002.

#### *Nursing*

HENRY "LEE" LEROY DAWKINS III '96

Lee Dawkins is an acute care nurse practitioner at Southwest Mississippi Regional Medical Center in McComb, Mississippi. He has also provided care as a pediatric emergency department nurse and a charge nurse at the University of Mississippi Medical Center and as an emergency department staff nurse at Rankin Medical Center and at King's Daughters Medical Center in Brookhaven, Mississippi. Dawkins has helped prepare others for careers in nursing as a member of the clinical faculty at the Mississippi College School of Nursing and as a guest lecturer at the MC School of Nursing and the University of Mississippi School of Nursing. He has also served as medical coordinator for the Cato Volunteer Fire Department.

#### *Physics*

DR. JOSEPH H. HAMILTON, JR. '54

Dr. Joseph Hamilton is the Landon C. Garland Distinguished Professor of Physics at Vanderbilt University. Dr. Hamilton has published more than 950 papers and articles on nuclear physics worldwide, as well as additional articles on general scientific topics and teaching physics. He is the co-author of 14 research books, an undergraduate physics textbook, and *How Things Work*, a book for middle and high school students released by *National Geographic*. Dr. Hamilton has delivered nearly 500 lectures and talks and has been featured at research seminars at universities and international research conferences worldwide. He has served as a visiting professor or adjunct professor at universities in Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany, China, and France. Dr. Hamilton has directed the postdoctoral training of more than 100 Ph.D. candidates, and for more than 20 years has given lectures at K-12 schools designed to interest young people in science.



#### *Psychology*

BRIAN KEITH ERVIN '94, '97

Brian Ervin offers individual and family counseling and therapy through his practice, The Therapy Center in Brandon, Mississippi. Noted for his work with victims of child abuse, he was previously the program director at Rankin Children's Advocacy Center in Brandon, a position that saw him conduct more than 1,100 interviews and testify more than 100 times in circuit, chancery, youth, and justice courts in Mississippi and Tennessee. Dr. Ervin has also served as a therapist with the Mississippi Children's Advocacy Center, CARES Behavioral Health Systems/The ARK, and the Chemical Dependency Treatment Center. He is a member of the board of directors of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children and the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists.

#### *School of Business*

MICHAEL KEITH BRITT '80

Mike Britt is president of Accident Fund Insurance Company of America. Headquartered in Lansing, Michigan, and operating in 43 states and the District of Columbia, Accident Fund is one of the largest writers of workers compensation insurance in the United States. Formerly Accident Fund's executive vice president and chief operating officer, Britt has more than 25 years of experience in the insurance industry, including service as president of Citizens Insurance, also headquartered in Michigan. Britt also serves on the boards of several community organizations and volunteers with his church.

#### *Sociology and Social Work*

DR. MARKELLA BRELAND RUTHERFORD '95

Dr. Markella "Kelly" Rutherford is an assistant professor of sociology at Wellesley College in Wellesley, Massachusetts, where she teaches courses on sociological theory, cultural sociology, and social inequality. Kelly completed her Ph.D. in sociology at the University of Virginia in May 2004. Her research interests include parenting and childhood, consumer culture, birth experiences, and rites of passage. Dr. Rutherford has been published in *Qualitative Sociology* and *Sociological Forum*, as well as in edited volumes. Dr. Rutherford's current book manuscript, tentatively titled *House Rules: Freedom and Boundaries in Popular Parenting Advice*, explores historical changes in parenting as reflected by childrearing advice in popular magazines.

#### *Teacher Education/Leadership*

DR. DEWEY D. BLACKLEDGE, JR. '64

Dr. Dewey Blackledge's career in education spans 45 years, including 33 years in K-12 schools and 12 years in higher education at the University of Southern Mississippi

(USM). He is currently an educational consultant with the North Carolina-based Centers for Quality Teaching and Learning. Over his long career, Dr. Blackledge has served as a teacher, coach, principal, adult education coordinator, and project grants director. Career highlights include designing and supervising construction of the \$1.4 million Laurel Watkins Vocational Center; establishing a year-round literacy program for welfare recipients; organizing the first statewide education conference pertaining to at-risk youth; and establishing the South Central Mississippi Consortium for Educational Excellence and Development, which has provided services for more than 21,500 educators in Mississippi.

#### MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE SCHOOL OF LAW

#### *Lawyer of the Year*

THE HONORABLE SHARION AYCOCK '80

Sharion Aycock was sworn in as Mississippi's first female United States District Court judge in October of 2007. Aycock was nominated for the seat by President George W. Bush and unanimously confirmed by the U.S. Senate. Her legal career includes time in private practice, as well as service as the Itawamba County prosecuting attorney and circuit court judge for the First Circuit Court District of Mississippi. Judge Aycock has been an active member in the Mississippi Bar Association, serving as first judicial district president and secretary, as well as the first woman president of the Mississippi Bar Foundation. Judge Aycock's gubernatorial appointments include membership on the boards of the Mississippi Home Corporation and Mississippi State Personnel Board and on the Governor's Commission on Youth and Children.

#### *Young Lawyer of the Year*

AMANDA GREEN ALEXANDER '04

Amanda Green Alexander is a shareholder of Alexander & Watson, P.A. in Jackson, Mississippi, and serves as adjunct professor at Jackson State University, where she teaches classes in health law and ethics. Her professional career includes service as deputy city attorney for the City of Jackson and as law clerk for Chief Judge Leslie King of the State of Mississippi Court of Appeals. She is a former legislative assistant intern for the U.S. House of Representatives and a former judicial intern with the Mississippi Supreme Court. Alexander is past president of the Mississippi Women Lawyers' Association and was recently elected to serve on the board of directors of the National Conference of Women Bar Associations. Alexander is the first Mississippian to serve on that board.



## STUDENTS ON A MISSION

### PAUL CALCOTE, CLASS OF 2012

Paul Calcote was spending quiet time with God in his dorm room when a friend asked to join him in Bible study and prayer. That simple devotion time grew into Lighthouse Ministries, an on-campus, student-led ministry focused on helping college students build a personal relationship with God through Bible study, prayer, and worship.

### HUNTER CLARK, CLASS OF 2011

Hunter Clark has participated in mission trips to Honduras, Africa, the island of Grenada, and multiple locations within the United States. Hunter doesn't have any trips planned for the near future, but if God opens a door, it wouldn't take him too long to pack.

### RANDALL MILLER, CLASS OF 2011

Over the course of his college career, Randall Miller has

ministered to the homeless, encouraged cerebral palsy patients, served in a soup kitchen in New York City, made two mission trips to Mexico, and served as a youth pastor in two churches near his hometown of Roseland, Louisiana. Randall is currently putting his leadership skills to work as both the MC student body president and the president of the Mississippi College Bass Fishing Club.

### ANGELA BRIGGS, CLASS OF 2011

As a youth leader at Solid Rock International Ministries, Angela Briggs teaches and organizes service projects for the youth and helps church leaders build and grow the ministry for young people. In her spare time, Angela serves as co-chair of service projects for the Student Nurses Association, part of a daily devotional team for first semester nursing students, a resident advisor for her dormitory floor, and a summer camp counselor for the YMCA.

▶▶ GIFTS TO MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE HELP STUDENTS LIKE THESE PURSUE GOD'S CALLING IN their own lives and touch the lives of others. To make a gift to Mississippi College, visit [www.mc.edu/giving](http://www.mc.edu/giving) or contact Dr. Bill Townsend at 601.925.3257 or [bill.townsend@mc.edu](mailto:bill.townsend@mc.edu).

# Class Notes

**40s** Rev. Truett Shelton Smith (B.A. '49) accepted Christ as a child in Friendship Baptist Church, Brookhaven, and immediately felt the call to full-time ministry. He never remembers a time when he didn't know he was going to be a preacher. After graduating from Mississippi College and from seminary, Rev. Truett began planting churches throughout Florida. After 30+ years in the pulpit presiding over small and unknown church plants, he became the director of missions for the Peace River Baptist Association in Florida, where for 15+ years he helped the next generation of pastors plant several more churches. After his retirement he took on interim roles, playing turnaround specialist for small congregations that had lost all hope. Rev. Truett recently celebrated his 85th birthday and remains an optimistic, high-spirited, totally sold out warrior for Christ.

**50s** Betty Oswald (B.A. '50) completed *Thought You Should Know Revisited*, the fourth edition of her book on the history of Pascagoula, Mississippi. Proceeds from the book will go to the Jackson County Historical and Genealogical Society.

**60s** Deanne Harmon ('61), of Pensacola, Florida, was honored as a 50-year member of the Music Teachers National Association at the 2010 conference. Harmon is an active member of the Pensacola Music Teachers Association, holding various offices through the years. She's also a member of the Pensacola Music Study Club and the Pensacola Symphony Guild. Harmon has been a church organist for 18 years. She also hosted "Pelican Shack" for 11 years, a classical music radio program for children on WVWF Public Radio in Pensacola.

Russ Williams (B.S. '64), CDR USN, has retired from the pulp and paper industry. He and his wife, Sharon, live in Danville, Virginia.



J. Larry Lee

J. Larry Lee (B.S. '65), professor at MC Law, has been named a Mississippi Bar Foundation fellow. Lee received a master's of law in taxation from New York University. He previously worked in the private sector and with the Internal Revenue Service.

John A. Cooper (B.A. '68) has retired from vocational ministry. He and his wife, Alice Ann (B.A. '66), live in the Gardendale, Alabama, area.

Lynda Smith (B.S.Ed. '69) retired in May with 36 years of teaching experience. After receiving her bachelor's degree at MC, Smith went on to earn a master's degree in elementary education at the University of South Alabama and a master's +45 certification from Cumberland University. She and her husband, Gary, have two grown children, a son-in-law, two grandchildren, and two miniature schnauzers.

**70s** Owen Lusk ('71) was installed as the 2010-11 governor for Rotary District 6150. Lusk has been a Rotarian for more than 35 years, holding various positions and receiving many awards for service. He has been an active member in the Paragould, Arkansas, community for the past 14 years.

Delon Thompson (B.M.Ed. '75, M.M. '77) is artistic director of the Mississippi Boychoir, a diverse group of talented young men ages six to 18. Thompson trained at the Metropolitan Opera Studios in New York and has taught theatre arts at Power Academic and Performing Arts Complex in Jackson. He has performed leading roles in opera and musical theatre productions and received several awards for teaching.

Dr. Jan Odom-Forren (Pittman, B.S.N. '75) graduated in 2009 with a Ph.D. in nursing from the University of Kentucky, Lexington where she is now assistant professor. She has worked in the perianesthesia area for more than 25 years as a staff nurse, nurse manager, clinical specialist, and director of perioperative services. Odom-Forren is co-editor of the *Journal of PeriAnesthesia Nurses*.

Dr. John E. Walls, Jr. (M.Ed. '76) retired as deputy superintendent of the Vicksburg-Warren School District after a career of more than 40 years in public education.

Dr. Ava Mitchell (Williams, B.S.N. '77) received her doctor of nursing practice degree from Samford University's Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing in Birmingham, Alabama, in May. Mitchell earned her master's degree in nursing from Samford in 1999.

Rita Easterling (B.S.Ed. '78, M.Ed. '88) has been inducted into the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame as part of the class of 2011. Easterling was an All-American basketball player at Mississippi College. She represented USA in numerous international competitions, was a former Women's Basketball League MVP, and was selected by ESPN as one of the Top 25 Women's College Basketball Players of the Pre-NCAA era.

L. Ray Humphreys (M.H.A. '78), president and CEO of Anderson Regional Medical Center in Meridian, has been

appointed chair of the 2010-11 Mississippi Hospital Association Board of Governors. He has held positions as CEO of Delta Regional Medical Center in Greenville and CEO and COO of Wesley Medical Center in Hattiesburg. In addition, he served on the board of directors of the Delta Economic Center and is a past member of the Delta Revitalization Task Force and the Governor's Medicaid Advisory Committee. Humphreys was named Healthcare Executive of the Year in 2004.

**80s** Dr. Douglas H. Vinzant, Jr. (B.S. '81) has been named vice president for administration at the University of Wyoming. Vinzant served as senior associate vice president for planning and administration at the University of Illinois (Urbana) since 2007. He has 23 years' experience in higher education with financial and infrastructure management and strategic planning.

Dr. Robin Jumper (B.A. '82), dean of faculty at the Baptist College of Florida (BCF) in Graceville, currently serves as chair of the theology division and professor of evangelism and missions. He received his master's degree and doctorate from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Jumper has been a member of the BCF staff for 15 years.

Jena McNeece (B.S.B.A. '83) obtained her real estate license and a position at Godfrey & Ivy Realty, Inc. in Clinton. She is a member of the National Association of Realtors and a graduate of the Mississippi Realtor Institute.

Dr. Mark Long (B.A. '85), interim pastor of Eastside Baptist Church and assistant professor of New Testament at Baptist College of Florida, has been elected as one of the city commissioners of Graceville, Florida. Long holds a master's and doctorate degree in religion from New Orleans Baptist Seminary. He and his family have lived in Graceville since 2002.



Gregory OD Smith

Gregory OD Smith (M.B.A. '86) has been named president and chief executive officer for LES and its URENCO USA uranium enrichment facility near Eunice, New Mexico. Smith joined the independent international energy and technology group based out of the United Kingdom in 2007 and served as its chief operating officer and chief nuclear officer. Before joining URENCO, Smith held positions as senior vice president of Ontario Power Generation Inc., senior vice president of Darlington Nuclear, and several other executive positions in the U.S. nuclear industry.

Karei McDonald, Jr. (B.S.B.A. '89), an investigative special agent with the Mississippi Office of the State Auditor, was a recipient of the "Top Cop" award in May. The Top Cop program is in its fifth year of recognizing top law enforcement agents in Mississippi. McDonald graduated from the Law Enforcement Officer's Training Academy. He has earned certifications as a Certified Fraud Examiner, Certified Fraud Specialist, Certified Law Enforcement Firearms Instructor, and Minimum Standards Certified Law Enforcement Officer in the state of Mississippi.



## HOW QUICKLY THE TIME PASSES

VAN "DOC" QUICK '55 HAS SPENT THE LAST FIVE decades in service to his *alma mater*, joining the MC staff in 1960 as director of student activities and going on to serve as dean of men, director of admissions, and vice president for student services and alumni relations. Since his retirement in 1999, Quick has continued to serve MC as a volunteer and a mentor to generations of former students and colleagues.

Mississippi College recognized Quick's loyalty and selfless service last fall with the naming of the Van "Doc" Quick Staff Award, which will be presented annually to an outstanding MC staff member. The award existed previously, but there has been no name attached to the honor until now. When told the award would bear his name, Quick was nearly speechless.

"I was surprised," Quick said. "It really is a great honor. MC has been a huge part of my life and has been so good to me. It seems I can't stay away from the college. If MC invites me to come to campus or to an event, they know I'll be there."

Doc Quick is a loyal fan at MC athletic events and a familiar face at Homecoming programs, alumni meetings, and Southern Baptist Convention gatherings. MC blue and gold runs in the family. Quick's wife, Shelly, is a 1965 MC graduate and the couple's twin daughters, Karon and Sharon, are alumni. The Quicks also have one grandchild who is an MC graduate and another who is a student.

In yet another display of his dedication to MC, Quick has run the clock at Choctaw home basketball games for an amazing 50 years. Quick estimates he's been behind the clock at between 500 and 550 basketball games, missing as few as 12 games over the past five decades.

"I've been accused of running it too slow when MC is behind and running it too fast when MC is ahead," Quick says with a smile. "But perhaps the most memorable experience I've had was at a game against Southeast Louisiana played in the old Alumni Hall. Some of our students disagreed with several of the official's calls. They hid in the bushes outside after the game and when he walked out, they snatched his toupee right off of his head. MC had to buy him a new one."

After all of his years of service, members of the MC community are happy to see Doc Quick honored.

"Nothing is more fitting than honoring a man who has given his entire life to Mississippi College," said MC Education Professor Gerald Hasselman. "Doc Quick is not just somebody you know. He's a friend."

Keith May (B.S. '89) recently returned home as headmaster and head football coach at Mt. Salus Christian School in Clinton. The MC psychology major has served the past three years as headmaster at Calvary Christian School in Meridian. He and his wife, Bethany (Pickett, B.S.N. '98), have three children.

**90s** Dominic Green (B.S. '91, M.S.S. '93) was promoted to regional scout after serving as an area scout for the Kansas City Chiefs a year ago. Prior to joining Kansas City, he spent three years as a scout with Tampa Bay.

Dr. James Price (M.Ed. '92) retired as superintendent of the Vicksburg-Warren School District, a position he served in since July 2003. With the exceptions of serving as an interim principal at Oakley Training School and as an adjunct professor at Alcorn State University, Mississippi State University, and Mississippi College, Dr. Price's entire career in education has been in Vicksburg and Warren County.

James Crain (B.M. '93) is head basketball coach for boys at Simpson Academy in Magee, Mississippi. For the past six years, Crain has led the basketball program at Hillcrest Christian School in Jackson. The Simpson county native also coached at Mendenhall High School for 27 years. He has been recognized as one of the most successful basketball coaches in Mississippi high school history with a compiled record of 753 wins and 245 losses, coaching five state championship teams and three state runner-up teams.

Adam Kilgore (B.S.B.A. '93, J.D. '99) was named to the *Mississippi Business Journal's* 2010 "Top 40 Under 40." Kilgore serves as general counsel for the Mississippi Bar Association.

Donnie Chambliss III (B.S.B.A. '94), longtime homebuilder, has joined Bob Leigh and Associates as a realtor in Southaven. Chambliss serves on the board of directors for the Southaven Chamber of Commerce and the House of Grace. He remains active in the Home Builders Association of North Mississippi, serving as past president. Chambliss holds a master's degree in educational leadership from Dallas Theological Seminary.

Brad Johns (B.S. '94, M.S. '04, Ed.S. '09), chair of the math department at McLaurin High School in Rankin County, received a \$1,000 graduate scholarship from the Mississippi Professional Educators (MPE). The scholarship is awarded to up to five members who wish to pursue graduate-level studies at a Mississippi college or university.



**IN HIS ELEMENT** MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE GRADUATE DR. JOE HAMILTON '54 is credited with playing a pivotal role in the recent discovery of element 117, the fifth new element discovered and added to the periodic table during the past decade.

A distinguished Vanderbilt University physicist, Dr. Hamilton was part of an international scientific team that discovered the super-heavy element. Scientists from the Research Institute for Advanced Reactors in Russia collaborated with colleagues from Vanderbilt University, the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, and Oak Ridge National Laboratory to discover element 117. The discovery of the new element sheds light on the basic organization of matter.

Dr. Hamilton, who received his master's and doctorate degrees at the University of Indiana, is the Landon C. Garland Distinguished Professor of Physics at Vanderbilt. He is the 2010 Distinguished Alumnus from the MC Department of Physics. — Photo courtesy of Vanderbilt University, John Russell

**00s** Dr. Stephanie L. Coker (B.A. '00) has been named director of the French Language Program at the University of Kentucky. As a lecturer of French, she teaches in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Cultures.

Dr. Evan Lenow (B.A. '00) received a Ph.D. in Christian ethics from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in May. Lenow serves as the director of the Riley Center and as an adjunct professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. He and his wife, Melanie (Massad, B.A. '01), live in Crowley, Texas with their three children.

Kris Pickle (B.S.B.A. '00) is the new offensive coordinator coach at Northeast Jones High School in Laurel, Mississippi.

Cody Zumbro (B.S. '01, M.Ed. '08) is the new head baseball coach at Vicksburg High School. Zumbro will also teach in the school's science department.

Cara Hyatt (B.S. '02) has been hired as an assistant coach for the University of Southern Mississippi's Lady Eagle basketball program. She spent the last three years coaching, recruiting, and scouting at Jones County Junior College. Hyatt was also head coach at Northeast Jones High School and served as an assistant coach and recruiting coordinator at Mississippi College. Hyatt earned a master's degree in business management from Colorado Technical University.

Lauren Lee Ryan (B.S. '02, B.S.N. '04) is a clinical care coordinator at the University Medical Center in Jackson.

John Swanson (B.A. '02) graduated from The Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park, New York. He is associated with the Danny Meyer restaurant group at Maialino. He and his wife, Lacey (Lee, B.S. '06), a retail manager with Ann Taylor Loft on Madison Avenue, live in New York City.

Clint Wilkerson (B.S. '02, M.S.S. '09) was selected as the American Baseball Coaches Association's Region 6 High School Coach of the Year. Region 6 includes the states of Mississippi, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Tennessee. The head baseball coach at St. Aloysius in Vicksburg, Wilkerson has guided his baseball team to two class 1A Mississippi state championships.

Larry Armstrong (M.Ed. '03) has been named principal of Siwell Middle School. Armstrong was a science teacher in the international baccalaureate program at Northwest Jackson Middle School before becoming assistant principal at Siwell in 2003. He is currently working on a doctorate degree in educational leadership at Jackson State University.

Kevin Rutledge (B.S. '03, M.S. '05) has joined the firm of Butler, Snow, O'Mara, Stevens & Cannada as director of information technology. His professional training and certifications include a wide variety of platforms, networks, applications, and programs.

John Michael Wilson (B.S. '03) was promoted to assistant vice president of mortgage lending at BankPlus in Clinton.

Bethany Bordeaux (B.S. '04) earned a master's degree in health education from Mississippi University for Women in May. Bordeaux is a freelance violinist living in Nashville.

Josh Carlisle (B.S.B.A. '04), a certified public accountant, has been promoted to manager in the audit division at Haddox Reid Burkes & Calhoun.

Gabe Fertitta (B.A. '04) has been named the Itawamba Community College Indians football team's offensive coordinator, as well as the quarterbacks/receivers coach. A New Orleans native, Fertitta played wide receiver and ran track for four seasons at Mississippi College. Previously, Fertitta coached at Catholic High School in Baton Rouge for three years.

Brandi Gatewood (B.S. '04, M.S.S. '05, J.D. '09) is a law clerk working for Justice James W. Kitchens of Crystal Springs.

Mitchell Shears (Ed.S. '04), principal of Bates Elementary School in Jackson, has been named the district's administrator of the year and the Second Congressional District Winner. Shears provided instrumental leadership at Clausell Elementary, which resulted in the school moving from a Level 2 to a Level 4 school. The school has remained a high performing school under the state's new accountability model. Shears is currently pursuing a doctorate degree at Mississippi College.

Ashley Baize (B.S. '05) received her master's degree in social work from Florida State University. Baize is employed with the Department of Veterans Affairs as a licensed social worker providing social work intervention to combat veterans returning from Iraq.

Lance Lawley (M.Ed. '05) has been promoted to head baseball coach at McGill-Toolen in Alabama. Lawley coached softball for one season at McGill in the spring of 2008. He then spent one season at Daphne Middle School and one season at Gardendale High in suburban Birmingham. He spent two years as a graduate assistant football coach at Mississippi College.

William McInnis (M.H.S.A. '05) has been hired as a practice administrator with the senior executive management team of Community Health Center La Clinica in Washington State. McInnis will oversee the multi-clinic operations management, as well as the customer relations and satisfaction for all of the health center service locations. He previously worked in operations and business management with Federally Qualified Health Centers.

Jennifer L. Replogle (B.A. '05) received a master of divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary in May. She lives in Madisonville, Louisiana.

Lydia "Danielle" Winningham (B.A. '05) has been named the new head of the East Mississippi Business Development Corporation's (EMBDC) Chamber of Commerce. Winningham has been with the EMBDC since 2007 and has served as marketing and public relations director for the local economic development agency.

Danielle Frerer (B.M.Ed. '06), choir and dance teacher at Tupelo Middle School, performed at Carnegie Hall over the summer as an angel in the New York premier of Whitacre's opera, "Paradise Lost: Shadows and Wings."

Stuart Tully (B.S. '06) received his master of arts in history from Louisiana State University (LSU) in 2009. He is now working on his doctorate from LSU.

Lindsey Wiseman (B.S.B.A. '06) was featured in the *Mississippi Business Journal's* "Keeping Our Eye On" column. Wiseman received her J.D. from the University of Mississippi where she met her husband, Starkville mayor Parker Wiseman. Wiseman is an active member of the Greater Starkville Development Partnership, Starkville Young Professionals, and the Mississippi Bar Association. She is an associate with Brunini, Grantham, Grower, and Hewes, PLLC.

Nicolas Haigler (J.D. '07) won Leadership Columbia's Glenn Jacobus Award. The award goes to the class member who consistently exhibits outstanding leadership throughout the year. Haigler is an attorney with Sowell Gray Stepp & Laffitte, LLC in Columbia, South Carolina. He serves on the board of directors for the Carolina Carillon Holiday Parade and volunteers his legal services with Hannah House, a faith-based transitional housing facility serving women and their children from Columbia and the surrounding communities.

Terrance McEwen (M.Ed. '07, Ed.S. '09) has been named assistant principal at Hardy Middle School. McEwen has taught at Peoples Middle School since 2005.

Doug Muenzenmay (M.B.A. '07) has joined Medley & Brown as a client advisor and partner. He has 19 years' experience in managing mutual funds and portfolio management for individuals, institutions, and endowments. Muenzenmay is an adjunct professor at Mississippi College.

Josh Childers (B.S. '08), has been named the Rocky Bayou Christian Knights head football coach. Childers coached the defensive secondary for the Knights last year.

Chinelo Evans (Ed.S. '09) has been named principal of Northwest Middle School in Jackson. She has served as a consultant for the Mississippi Department of Education, preparing districts for revised state curricula, and has par-

ticipated in professional development for leaders of International Baccalaureate schools.

Rebecca Harmon (B.A. '09) was recognized by the commander of Ft. Huachuca in Arizona for work done for the HUMINT building. She has been recognized by the commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Huntsville for her furniture program work in 2009. Harmon was presented a certificate and commander coin with each recognition.

Tonya Lavergne Leach (B.S.B.A. '09) has been promoted to loan officer at Community Bank. She joined the bank in 2003 and has more than 16 years of banking experience.

**10s** Jennifer Hooks (B.S. '10) has been hired as production editor in Student Ministry Publishing at LifeWay.

Justin Mistal (B.S.B.A. '10) has joined Haddox Reid Burkes' audit division.

Laura Murphy's (B.A. '10) pistachio raspberry thumbprint cookie recipe made her a grand prize winner in a contest sponsored by General Mills and Betty Crocker. The \$1,000 award will help Laura pursue her post-college dream of completing culinary training and opening her own catering business.

Clint Myers (B.S. '10) was awarded a prestigious Chinese government scholarship that will allow him to obtain a master's degree in biology at Huazhong Normal University in China. The scholarship pays for tuition, books, room and board, and a monthly allowance. The Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China created the Chinese Study Abroad Program for students in other nations who attend cooperative universities.

Emily Younger (B.S.N. '10), former shooting guard for the MC Lady Choctaws, journeyed to India to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. She was one of an eight-member team from Christlife Church of the Highlands in Ridgeland.



## SEE YOUR NAME IN PRINT.

CALL 866.884.2770

IF YOU ARE A MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE ALUMNUS, MC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION WANTS YOUR LATEST CONTACT INFORMATION.

Your information will appear in a new MC alumni print directory scheduled to be published in August 2011. The new directory will help you find fellow alumni and help them find you, no matter where in the world life has taken you.

The MC Alumni Association is accepting updates for the publication through a toll-free phone number. Alumni should call Publishing Concepts, the company producing the directory on behalf of MC, at 866.884.2770 to make a directory update. Alumni have until February 28, 2011 to submit information changes. Watch your mail and e-mail for reminders and more information about the directory coming soon.

When it's completed next year, alumni will have the opportunity to purchase a printed or CD version of the directory for \$89.95 plus \$9.95 shipping and handling, or the print directory *and* the CD-ROM for \$129.95 plus \$15.95 shipping and handling.

To submit your updated information, call 866.884.2770.

## Marriages

Anne Martin (Armstrong, B.S. '53) and Terry Campbell (B.S. '54), September 5, 2010

JeanAnn Bull (B.A. '00) and Jason D. Reeves, March 6, 2010

Sarah Braddock (B.A. '02) and Jerry Howard, August 8, 2009

Lauren Lee (B.S. '02, B.S.N. '05) and Brant Ryan, August 8, 2009

Bethany Daniel (B.S. '04) and Keith Edward Bordeaux, January 23, 2010

Bethany Joe Gatewood (B.A.'04, M.A. '08) and Jonathan Scott Sigrest, May 29, 2010

Ashley Fogg (B.S. '05) and Capt. Jonathan Baize, January 30, 2010

Christina Renee Deshotels (B.S. '07) and Benjamin Selby Leonard (B.S. '07), April 10, 2010

Carrie Elizabeth Costen Ingram and Douglas Pearce McLaulin III (B.S.B.A. '07), June 12, 2010

Stacie Renee Stokley (B.S. '07) and Joshua Elliott Maze, April 17, 2010

Megan Storm (M.S. '08) and Daniel Guaqueta, January 30, 2010

Lauren Kay Mitchell (B.S. '08) and David Robert Sansing, May 22, 2010

Lauren Marie Rogers (B.S. '10) and James "Philip" Knight, July 24, 2010

Ashley Dru Anderson (B.A. '10) and Jess Randall Dilley (B.A. '09), July 31, 2010

Rachel Allyn Hudson (B.S.N. '10) and David Loren Green (B.S. '10), June 19, 2010

Wayne (B.A. '59) and Florence (B.A. '60) Frederick celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary, August 15, 2010

## Births & Adoptions

Michael (B.A. '87) and Krista Mann, Elizabeth Grace, May 13, 2010

Benjamin Cecil (B.S.B.A. '93) and ReDana Laird (Miles, B.S. '94), Benjamin Joseph, May 25, 2010

Valery (White, B.S.B.A. '94) and Stefan Ward, Carley Elizabeth, September 21, 2009. Carley joins big sisters Audrey Kate and Lauren Ward.

William "Bill" Madison (B.S. '98) and Shay Farmer, Reynolds MacIntosh, April 23, 2010. He is welcomed by big brothers William Stratton and Jacob Emerson.

Chad (J.D. '98) and Jeannie Shook, Laura Grace, April 23, 2010

Scott (B.S. '99) and Jamie (Boteler, B.S. '99, M.B.A. '06) Higdon, Karlie Brooke, March 15, 2010. Karlie is welcomed by big sister Sydney (3).

Angie (Hale, B.S. '00, M.S. '02) and Mitch Miller, Marshall Thomas, August 5, 2009

Kim (Yarbrough, B.S.B.A. '00) and Dr. Fleetwood Loustalot, Fleetwood Vincent IV, April 7, 2010. Fleetwood is welcomed by big sister Logan Gail.

Dianne (Lee, B.M.Ed. '01, J.D. '06) and Jason Roberts (B.S.B.A. '01), Courtney Denise, April 23, 2010. Courtney is welcomed by big sister, Callee Dianne.

Jerry and Sarah (Braddock, B.A. '02) Howard, Jack, May 28, 2010

Tim (B.A. '02, M.A. '06) and Ashley Krason (M.S. '07), Isaac James, July 8, 2010

Zachary (J.D. '04) and Jessica Vaughn (B.S. '02, J.D. '05), Katherine Elizabeth, April 7, 2010. She joins big brother, Jackson.

## In Memoriam

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

### Alumni

C.T. Wallace (B.A. '33), May 21, 2010

Mildred Carter (Hillman '36), September 6, 2009

Dr. Willis B. Glover (B.A. '38), September 14, 2009

Roland D. Marble (B.A. '46), July 12, 2010

Ethelyn E. Barrow (B.A. '48), May 14, 2010

Nell Dundas (B.A. '48), August 17, 2010

Dr. Everett V. Reneer (B.A. '48), May 15, 2007

Herschel Saucier (B.A. '48), December 29, 2009

Betty Watson (B.A. '49), August 8, 2010

Stanley Fulton (B.S.Ed. '50), July 28, 2010

Rev. J.C. Graves, Jr. (B.A. '50), May 3, 2010

Sam Monroe (B.A. '50), August 4, 2010

Ann Lipsey Kane (B.A. '51), March 18, 2010

Jane McMullen (B.S. '51), June 13, 2010

James Wilson (B.A. '51), August 12, 2010

Betty R. Nester (B.A. '52), May 6, 2010

Sue Allen (B.S.Ed. '54), February 1, 2010

James M. Cox III (B.S.Ed. '54, M.Ed. '59), August 14, 2010

Claude Allen Holland (B.S. '55), April 18, 2010

Dr. Ralph C. Atkinson, Jr. (B.A. '56), March 29, 2010

Rev. Edward Lee Griffin (B.A. '56), July 25, 2010

Walter Burrell (B.A. '57), April 24, 2010

Charles D. Burke (B.S. '57), March 18, 2010

Shirley Carner (B.S.Ed. '57), July 17, 2010

Peggy Price Ford (M.Ed. '57), April 23, 2010

Virgil McBride (B.A. '57), December 4, 2009

Rev. Felix Snipes (B.A. '57), June 17, 2010

Bonnie Jane Nunnery White (B.A. '57), March 27, 2010

Wilson H. Brent (B.S. '58), June 8, 2010

Helen Kellum (B.A. '58), April 2, 2010

Dr. Alton Perry (B.S. '58), May 28, 2010

Chris Rooke, Jr. (B.A. '58), June 4, 2010

Dr. Edgar Wallace Wood (B.S. '58), November 24, 2008

Jose Orraca ('59), September 14, 2009

Rev. William "Bill" P. Smith III (B.A. '59), June 10, 2010

Marilyn B. Green (B.S.Ed. '60), October 29, 2009

Dr. Andrew D. Lester (B.A. '61), June 10, 2010

Dr. Billy D. Lytal (B.A. '61), September 21, 2010

Gary H. Bassett, Sr. (B.S. '62), April 5, 2010

Neal Fowler (B.S. '64), July 29, 2010

Margaret Hunt Richardson (M.Ed. '65), March 24, 2010

Patricia Stewart Strum (B.S. '65), April 1, 2010

Linda Brock Moore (B.S.Ed. '66, M.Ed. '68), March 25, 2010

Wayne W. Jamison (B.S.Ed. '67), April 1, 2010

Claud Allen Ezell (M.Ed. '70), March 28, 2010

Madge Martin (B.S. '70), July 10, 2010

### Friends

Jimmy Munn, father of Brenda Holloway (Munn, B.A. '76, M.Ed. '80), secretary, Baptist Student Union, March 17, 2010

Charlena Lewis, mother of Elnora Lewis, secretary, School of Graduate Studies, May 6, 2010

Bonnie L. Cole, June 30, 2010

Mrs. Cole is the aunt of MC Board of Trustee member Frank Gunn (B.A. '57, D.D. '76). In 2009, Mrs. Cole established an endowed scholarship at MC to help pay the costs of MC students in the ministry or who are pursuing studies in nursing or medicine.



Dr. Billy Lytal

### Dr. Billy Lytal '61 1939 – 2010

Dr. Billy Lytal, former longtime chairman of Mississippi College's Communication Department and a mentor to generations of MC students, passed away in September after a courageous battle with leukemia.

A 1961 MC graduate, Dr. Lytal worked for 35 years at his *alma mater*, including two decades as director of the Learning Resources Center from its incep-

tion on the Clinton campus. Dr. Lytal was hired in 1965 to teach theatre and mass media. He became head of the Learning Resources Center in 1981 and two years later was named chairman of the Communication Department, where he served for 15 years.

Dr. Lytal was instrumental in the growth of STAR 93.5, the MC radio station. He also served as London Professor of Residence for the 1994 and 2000 terms. In 2008, Dr. Lytal was named a Lifetime Member of the Mississippi Association of Broadcasters. Dedicated to his students, Dr. Lytal was an inspiration to young graduates early in their broadcasting careers.

"Dr. Lytal saw the potential and took delight in all of his students," said Barbie Bassett '93, WLBT-TV chief meteorologist. "His wisdom was always timely and his quick wit softened the challenges he gave us. I could always count on Dr. Lytal to be my toughest coach and my biggest fan."

A Mississippi College communication professor and veteran radio announcer, Russ Brashear first met Dr. Lytal when he was an MC freshman in 1972 and his parents were living more than 1,000 miles away in Ohio.

"He practically raised me with my parents living so far away," Brashear said. "Whatever success I had in radio, it all goes back to him."

"Dr. Lytal was the primary force behind the success of the communication undergraduate program," said Cliff Fortenberry, professor and chair of the Department of Communication. "He created the atmosphere in which the public relations program grew, and long before it was popular to do so, encouraged the growth of public relations as a major emphasis."

Dr. Lytal's many activities included completing a UCLA Directors Guild of America Hollywood Internship; directing a national award-winning PBS series; producing the Baptist World Alliance Program International, which filmed in Russia, the British Isles, Central American, and other countries; and making several volunteer mission trips to Alaska.

Dr. Lytal was dedicated to his family, including his wife, Linda Eldridge Lytal, an MC graduate who served in the MC psychology and counseling department; his daughters, Tara Lytal and Heather Lytal Broadwater, who are also MC alumni; and his three grandchildren.

An active member of St. Johns United Methodist Church, Dr. Lytal was also a talented carpenter, gardener, potter, and sportsman. He enjoyed cooking for family and friends, was an avid traveler, enjoyed the theatre, and never missed a grandchild's ball game.

The family requests memorials be made to the Mississippi College Dr. Bill Lytal Scholarship Fund or St. John's United Methodist Church in Clinton.

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.



## 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 Walter Price '69, '72

Walter Price worked as a high school teacher and coach, an admissions counselor at MC, and a regional coordinator with the Mississippi State Board of Health before heading to Hollywood in 1974 to pursue a career as an actor.

"Have you ever seen the movies *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* or *The Sting*?" Price asks, then adds with a smile, "Well, I wasn't in either one of those."

But a funny thing happened in Hollywood. Price went there to fulfill his childhood dream of becoming a movie star, but instead found himself called to the ministry.

"It was a gradual process God used in my life," Price recalls. "I had grown up in the church, but it was while I was in Hollywood, working in local theatre and landing bit parts in TV shows, that I came to have a real hunger for the word of God and truly came to know the Lord."

Following his graduation from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Price served at churches in Mississippi and Georgia before returning to California in 1984 as pastor at Fellowship in the Pass Church in Beaumont, a position he still holds today. Price has noticed some differences in the way "church" is perceived in California as opposed to Mississippi.

"In the Deep South, 'church' is a cultural thing. Sometimes people attend church because it's good for business or

the socially acceptable thing to do," Price says. "In California, things are black and white. It's refreshing, and can be easier to talk to people who have no thought of God than to people who pretend they do."

Price is the current president of the California Southern Baptist Convention and chairman of the board of trustees of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. His other leadership roles have included multiple positions on the California Southern Baptist Convention's executive board, as well as service as president of the California Southern Baptist Pastors Conference and a member of the board of trustees of California Baptist University. He is the author of two books, *God Focus* and *The Simple Truth of Grace*, and writes a blog titled "It's That Simple." Price and his wife of 31 years, Janet Jones Price, have five adult children.

After making his home in the Golden State for more than a quarter century, Price considers himself a Californian. The Tupelo native does, however, acknowledge a few things he misses about Mississippi.

"I miss the people, including the many friends I made at Mississippi College. I haven't seen some of those friends in more than 30 years, but I know if I picked up the phone and called today, it would be just like old times," Price says. "After that, I'd have to say that what I miss the most is grits. And I don't think I'll ever get used to a church potluck that features Mexican food instead of fried chicken."

WALTER PRICE • *Hall of Fame '69*

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In addition to a bachelor's degree in music and a master's degree in education from Mississippi College, Walter Price holds a master of divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, a doctor of ministry from Luther Rice Seminary, and a doctor of divinity from California Baptist University.



For more on this story, visit [www.mc.edu/beacon](http://www.mc.edu/beacon).

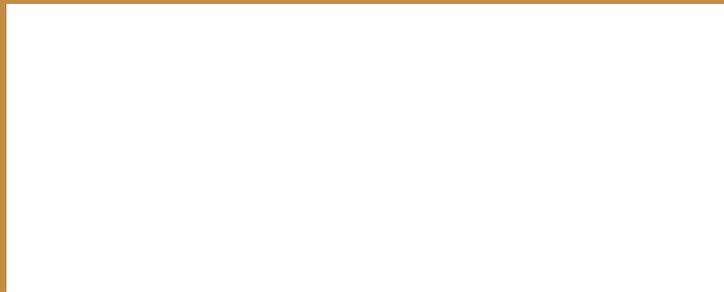




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