

MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE | FALL 2008

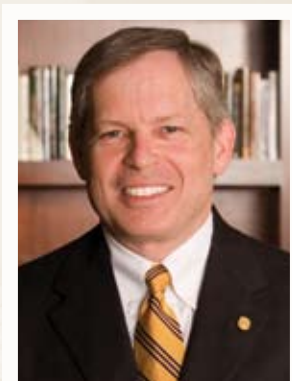
# beacon

## Total Momsense

**ANITA RENFROE  
IS LAUGHING  
HER WAY TO  
THE BIG TIME**



# beacon



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

LEE GARDNER ROYCE

In 2003, a delegation from MC traveled to Washington, D.C., for a meeting with Senator Trent Lott and Yang Jiechi, the Chinese Ambassador to the United States. The meeting would be an important opportunity for us to discuss the International Program at Mississippi College. Our delegation had been meticulous in preparing for the meeting, from rehearsing our talking points to choosing just the right gift to present to the ambassador.

We entered Senator Lott's office and were led to our seats positioned around a grand fireplace. Senator Lott entered and greeted us, then took his seat in the center of the room. After a few moments of polite small talk, he looked at me and asked, "So, where's the ambassador?"

There was a long pause, during which I literally felt the sweat beading up on my forehead. Our MC team had been under the impression that Senator Lott's staff had contacted the ambassador, while Senator Lott's staff had apparently assumed MC was handling those details. Now we were all awaiting the arrival of the ambassador, who, in fact, had never been invited to the party.

The only reply I could come up with was, "Well, we certainly *thought* he would be here."

That experience was one of the most embarrassing moments of my career, yet today, I find it enormously funny. I learned long ago the value of being able to laugh at myself. In a minor way, that story reminds me of the promise found in Psalm 30:5, which reads, "Weeping may last for the night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning."

This issue of the *Beacon* focuses on the power of laughter to heal hurts on earth and on the eternal joy that comes from knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I'm glad that I can now laugh at the story of the missing ambassador and my answer of, "We certainly *thought* he would be here," but my heartfelt joy comes from knowing God's ambassador to the world, Jesus Christ. As believers, we certainly *know* He will be here.

*Lee Royce*

## BY THE BEACON'S LIGHT

"A joyful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones." — Proverbs 17:22

People tend to use the words "happiness" and "joy" interchangeably, but in the context of faith, the terms have very different meanings. "Happiness" is based on circumstance, while "joy" is based on knowing Jesus Christ. We might derive happiness from hobbies, wealth, entertainment, or any number of earthly things, but that emotion is just a pale imitation of the true joy that comes from a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. "Happiness" is fleeting, but "joy" is eternal.

The life of Jeremy Taylor, a 17th century English cleric, illustrates this principle. Taylor was severely persecuted for his faith, his house and property were confiscated, and his family was left desolate. Yet Taylor wrote, "They have not taken away my merry countenance, my cheerful spirit, and good conscience. They have left me with the providence of God and all His promises [and] my hopes of Heaven...and he that hath so many causes of joy should never choose to sit down upon his little handful of thorns."

In the following pages, you'll meet people who have built careers on bringing laughter to others, people who have found happiness in unexpected jobs or relationships, and people who have endured unimaginable loss, yet still live joyful lives. Though their stories are different, all share the common thread of incomparable joy that comes from knowing Jesus Christ and seeking His purpose for their lives.



*On the Cover:* Anita Renfroe '84 has built a career and a ministry on making people laugh. Read the one about the Christian comedian on page 22.



## SUCCESS WITHOUT RESERVATIONS

Rita Jones' journey from law school to the Supreme Court and into Choctaw Indian history

12



## DOUBLE PARKED

MC gets a two-for-one blessing in Ivan and Mary Ann Parke

18



## A BRIDGE TO LONDON

The London Opportunity Scholarship Honors MC Alumnus Adam Ainsworth, 1983 - 2008

30



## GOING DOWN IN HISTORY

Dr. Edward McMillan '50 is the Mississippi College Alumnus of the Year

34



## Departments

Along College Street **3**

Roll Call Just Got a Little Longer  
Why Stop Now?

*MC raises the goal for "Growing the Vision" to \$80 Million*

MC Welcomes Karl Rove

From Choctaw to Cheesehead

Mississippi College Unveils Enhanced Web Site

Nursing School Dean Recognized as a Big *Shot*

MC Summer Camps

Jennings Hall Celebrates a Century

The Mississippi College Singers

Don't Touch That Dial! **10**

*Mornings with Russ & Traci on Star 93.5*

Her People's Princess **16**

*MC Freshman Tia Anderson is the 2008-09 Choctaw Indian Princess*

Alumni Awards **38**

Class Notes **47**

Entering and Departing **54**



## Credits

*Beacon*

Fall 2008

### EDITOR

Tracey M. Harrison '91, '94

### ASSISTANT EDITOR

Andy Kanengiser

### CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Marlo Kirkpatrick

### CLASS NOTES

Tracy May

### DESIGNER

Alecia Porch

### PHOTOGRAPHERS

Robby Followell '07

Michael Gomez

Kellye L. Lewis

Jay Thomas

*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

Copyright 2008



# Roll Call Just Got a Little Longer.

Mississippi College shatters yet another enrollment record.

Mississippi College's enrollment reached just under 4,900 students this fall, shattering previous enrollment records as the Christian university began its 183rd academic year.

MC's latest head count surpassed the previous record of 4,600 students set in the fall of 2007. New academic programs, stepped up recruitment, increased retention, and another strong year attracting students from around the globe were all factors for rising numbers in MC classes.

"The two most obvious reasons for our continued growth were an increase in our freshmen class and continued growth in our graduate programs," President Lee Royce said. "Increased enrollment is a tribute to MC's solid reputation and enhanced marketing efforts, and to an overall program that's strong both academically and spiritually."

Students like Stephen Stetelman of Hattiesburg say they like the close-knit MC community and are telling others about the benefits of an MC education.

"MC has a good atmosphere and the word is getting out," said Stetelman, a junior physics major. "People are telling other people what a great place it is."

MC is experiencing growth despite a tough national economy, due in part to the university's focus on student diversity. In addition to recruiting traditional high school graduates, MC is reaching out to non-traditional students seeking new career options. New programs at the School of Business and the School of Law are designed with working adults in mind, while programs at branch campuses in Madison and Brandon are attracting working professionals to evening classes. MC is also continuing to build on a successful recruiting effort overseas; the fall 2008 enroll-

"MC has a good atmosphere and the word is getting out. People are telling other people what a great place it is."

— MC STUDENT STEPHEN STETELMAN



ment includes some 320 international students from 26 nations, up from just nine international students on the Clinton campus in 2002.

Another plus when it comes to recruiting is MC's excellent national reputation. Mississippi College landed a spot on the inaugural Forbes.com list of "America's Best Colleges." This new listing rates 569 undergraduate institutions, with rankings based on the quality of education offered, achievements by alumni, and the affordability of the institution. Based on those criteria, Forbes.com ranked MC the 129th best college in the United States.

"Our strong national reputation and our increase in enrollment, particularly in a tough economic climate, can be credited to the hard work of our faculty and staff and the outstanding performance of our alumni," President Royce said. "We look forward to sustaining our growth as more and more people discover all that Mississippi College has to offer."



# Why Stop Now?

MC raises the goal for “Growing the Vision” to \$80 Million

Mississippi College’s \$65 million “Growing the Vision” campaign is exceeding all expectations. “Growing the Vision” was launched in October of 2006 as a five-year drive to raise \$65 million for scholarships, academic programs, endowment support, and capital improvements to the MC campus. Less than two years since that kickoff, the campaign has already raised more than \$60 million.

In a show of faith and after prayerful consideration, the MC Board of Trustees has approved raising the campaign goal from \$65 million to \$80 million.

“Despite a challenging economic climate, generous gifts continue to flow to Mississippi College,” says MC President Lee Royce. “This is a tangible testimony to our supporters’ belief in the campaign and in Mississippi College’s vision to be known as a university recognized for academic excellence and commitment to the cause of Christ.”

Projects already completed through “Growing the Vision” include the construction of the spacious Samuel Marshall Gore Galleries, renovations and additions to MC’s Hannah Food Court, Williams Recital Hall, Cross Boardroom, and Dowdle Reception Room, and enhanced campus landscaping. The campaign to revitalize Self Hall, the home of the School of Business, with new technology, new classrooms, and a modern auditorium is also on track; most of the work at Self Hall was completed this fall at a cost of approximately \$1.3 million. Facilities at the Mississippi College School of Law (MCSOL) have also been expanded and renovated. MCSOL’s campaign to raise more than \$6

million for improvements to its downtown Jackson campus reached nearly \$4.2 million this fall.

These are just a few of the tangible enhancements funded through the “Growing the Vision” campaign. Projects still in need of funding include a new, \$3 million global education center that will serve as a hub for some 320 international students from 26 nations, and a \$3 million performing arts theatre.

A key component of “Growing the Vision” is the annual scholarship banquet. The first banquet featuring keynote speaker Bob Dole drew more than 500 MC supporters and raised \$218,000 to benefit scholarships. The second annual scholarship banquet is scheduled for March 30, 2009 and will showcase keynote speaker Karl Rove, former Deputy Chief of Staff to President George W. Bush and political analyst for Fox News, *Newsweek*, and *The Wall Street Journal*.

“Mississippi College stepped out in faith when we launched the ‘Growing the Vision’ campaign, and the response has been overwhelming,” President Lee Royce says. “By raising the campaign goal, we are stepping out in faith again. The progress we’ve made to date is impressive, but based upon the past support of the MC family, I truly believe the best is yet to come.”

For more 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 Welcomes Karl Rove

Karl Rove, former senior advisor and Deputy Chief of Staff to President George W. Bush, will headline Mississippi College’s annual scholarship banquet on March 30, 2009.

Often referred to as “the architect” of President Bush’s two successful bids for the White House, Rove is now a Fox News contributor and *Wall Street Journal* columnist. During his time at the White House, Rove oversaw the Offices of Strategic Initiatives, Political Affairs, Public Liaison, and Intergovernmental Affairs and was Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy.

“President Bush relied on him for many years,” said attorney Andy Taggart, a veteran Republican Party activist and a Mississippi College trustee. “And no matter what side of the political aisle they fall on, many people respect Rove for his skills as a brilliant strategist.”

Coming just two months after the nation’s next president takes the oath of office, Rove’s visit promises to be lively as well as timely. With an intimate knowledge of Washington and a unique perspective stemming from his experience of having worked 15 steps from the Oval Office, Rove will share the latest developments from the Beltway and beyond.

The scholarship banquet is a key component of the university’s “Growing the Vision” campaign to raise support



for scholarships, academic programs, the endowment, and capital improvements to the MC campus. Held last spring, the first scholarship banquet brought former U.S. Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole to the Clinton campus. Dole’s appearance drew more than 500 MC supporters and raised \$218,000 to benefit scholarships. Event planners hope Rove’s appearance will surpass last year’s benchmark. Taggart describes back-to-back visits to campus by Dole and Rove as “quite a 1-2 punch.”

“Karl Rove is one of the most astute political operatives ever to appear on the political scene,” said Ron Howard, vice president for academic affairs and former longtime political science and government professor at Mississippi College. “Few people know American politics, past and present, as well as Rove. He knows how to win campaigns.”

Leaders of the Mississippi College Board of Trustees, including Wayne Parker, CEO of the Jackson-based LifeShare Foundation, and Brookhaven banker Bill Sones ’81, who is serving as Rove’s planning committee chairman, were instrumental in bringing Rove to Clinton.

“We’re excited to have someone of Karl Rove’s stature on campus,” Sones said. “He’s uniquely qualified to explain what’s happening in Washington, and he’ll give us a straight shot no matter who’s in charge.”

“Karl Rove is one of the *most astute* political operatives *ever to appear* on the political scene.” — RON HOWARD, VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

“This is to my *father’s* glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.” — JOHN 15:8



## SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE OFFERS SEVERAL SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH WHICH YOU CAN MEET POLITICAL STRATEGIST KARL ROVE AND HELP SUPPORT THE “GROWING THE VISION” CAMPAIGN. SPONSORSHIPS BEGIN AT \$1,000. INDIVIDUAL TICKETS TO THE SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET ARE \$125 PER PERSON. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT AMY ROWAN AT 601.925.3201 OR ROWAN@MC.EDU.

FROM  
**CHOCTAW to**  
**CHEESEHEAD**

JAKE ALLEN IS  
*giving his all* TO THE  
GREEN BAY PACKERS



JAKE ALLEN HOPES TO MAKE THE MOVE FROM FORMER ALL-AMERICAN RECEIVER AS A MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE CHOCTAW TO NFL STAR WITH THE GREEN BAY PACKERS.

Allen, who snared a touchdown pass for Green Bay in the final preseason game, is a member of the Packers' eight-man practice squad. Choctaw fans and Cheeseheads (the affectionate name for Green Bay fans) predict Allen will soon get the chance to play professional football before millions of NFL viewers.

"I just want to show them what I can do," Allen told *Clarion-Ledger* sports columnist Rick Cleveland in a story appearing days before the former MC star joined the Packers as a rookie free agent last spring.

Allen proved himself over three seasons as a Choctaw, catching a record 152 passes and scoring 26 touchdowns. In 2007, he snatched 61 passes for 1,254 yards as the Choctaws posted an 8-2 record. Allen was recognized as a First-Team All-American by the American Football Coaches

Association and by D3football.com.

In two early preseason games with "The Pack," Allen caught three passes, igniting hope among the MC faithful that Allen could become the first Choctaw to play in the NFL since Fred McAfee of Philadelphia was drafted by the New Orleans Saints 17 years ago. McAfee, a star with then-Division II MC, played 16 pro seasons and now serves as director of player personnel with the Saints.

Allen has returned to the MC campus a few times in recent months to work on his conditioning and water aerobics at the MC Alumni Hall pool, but if his skills, his strength, and his luck hold out, the next place you'll see Jake Allen is on an NFL playing field. And if you want to see him play live in Wisconsin, be sure to get in line early. According to Wikipedia, the current wait for Green Bay season tickets is 35 years – a long time for even the most die-hard Choctaws-turned-Cheeseheads.



**MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE UNVEILS ENHANCED WEB SITE**

The MC Web site has a new look and added features that make it even easier to stay connected to Mississippi College.

**NEW FEATURES AT WWW.MC.EDU INCLUDE:** Improved navigation / Easier access to commonly used pages / News and events updated daily / Engaging feature stories and photos / An MC Journal section with a photo slide show / A fresh new design

VISIT WWW.MC.EDU AND SEE WHAT'S NEW.

**Nursing School Dean Recognized as a Big Shot**

CONGRATULATIONS TO MARY JEAN PADGETT, PH.D., RN, ONE OF MISSISSIPPI'S TOP 50 LEADING BUSINESS WOMEN



*The Mississippi Business Journal* named Mary Jean Padgett, dean of the Mississippi College School of Nursing, one of Mississippi's 50 Leading Business Women for 2008.

Each year, the *Business Journal* selects and profiles 50 dynamic women who are making a difference for their companies and their communities. Padgett and the other award winners were formally honored at an awards luncheon held August 21 at the Eagle Ridge Conference Center on the Hinds Community College campus in Raymond. The previous night, Padgett had the opportunity to meet and mingle with her fellow honorees during a "Girls' Night Out" reception at the Mississippi Governor's Mansion followed by dinner at the Fairview Inn.

"The wide array of talents and professional choices of the women who were selected is outstanding," Padgett, a 1973 MC graduate, said. "I am thrilled to have the opportunity to interact with these women and humbled to be selected as a co-recipient of this award."



*Hello Muddah, Hello Fadduh,  
There's no place that I would rather  
Be at camp than Mississippi College,  
And when I leave I'll have some  
brand new Bible knowledge.*

"OUR CHILDREN LEFT CAMP WITH A NEW EXCITEMENT FOR THE LORD!"

That's how Pam Jones, the children's minister at First Baptist Church in Monroe, Louisiana, summed up her group's week at CentriKid camp at Mississippi College.

"Each day, the children learned how each person has a part of the greatest story ever – God's story," Jones said on July 31, the last day of camp for her group of third through sixth graders.

MC has become the premier national host site for Life-Way Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention's annual summer camps, including Centrifuge, CentriKid, and Super Summer camps. A record 10,245 campers from 14 states visited the MC campus in 2008. The total atten-

dance for church camps stood at 8,828, with an additional 1,417 young people on campus for sports, cheerleading, and other summer activity camps. States represented included Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas.

DECISIONS FOR CHRIST MADE AT MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE'S 2008 SUMMER CAMPS INCLUDED:

- 235 Salvations
- 335 Rededications
- 208 Calls to Ministry
- 141 Other Decisions

**10,245** young people from **14** states attended summer camps on the MC campus in **2008.**



## Jennings Hall Celebrates a Century

It was a year that began with the first-ever New Year's Eve ball drop in Times Square. Teddy Roosevelt occupied the White House, Henry Ford introduced his Model T at a pricey \$850, and oil was discovered in Iran. But for Mississippi College, 1908 is most notable as the year Jennings Hall opened its doors as the university's first dormitory.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, MC students were housed in a few small cottages on campus and in rented rooms in private homes in town. In a 1907 letter to the Baptist Convention, the MC trustees wrote, "The people are more and more reaching the point where they do not wish to take boarders. It seems evident that in the future the college will have to board her own students. This is probably not unfortunate, but it will call for large expenditures."

In response to the need, President William Tyndale Lowrey, who led MC from 1898 until 1911, launched an ambitious fund-raising campaign. Funds for the dormitory project came from several sources, including a substantial gift of \$20,000 donated by the widow and children of the late Capt. Z. D. Jennings of Water Valley, Mississippi. President Lowrey also received pledges from the General Education Board of New York for \$25,000 and \$20,000 from business icon Andrew Carnegie, with the gifts contingent on MC raising \$75,000 from other sources.

The final price tag for Jennings Hall plus an adjoining dining hall was just under \$96,000, or \$5.00 per square foot. The 1908 report to the Convention noted that the building was complete, adding "there is no better arranged or more comfortable dormitory in the South than Jennings Hall."

The new building was indeed a modern marvel. Jennings Hall was heated with steam and every room had its



own electric light. Finishing touches included bathrooms with hot and cold running water and "a separate bed for each boy." The dormitory even offered laundry service, although students were limited to "two suits of underwear."

The total cost for an MC student residing in such unparalleled luxury? A reasonable \$3.00 monthly for room and board and \$5.00 per month for tuition. The 1907 issue of the Mississippi College newspaper heralded the fine new structure, stating, "It is hard to realize how Mississippi College has existed so long and with such success without a building such as Jennings Hall."

Over the next century, the building played many roles. From 1908 until 1945, Jennings served as a men's dormitory. When MC went coed during World War II, the building was given a makeover and in 1945, became the first female residence hall on the Clinton campus, a need it would meet until 1960. Jennings remains a vital part of the MC community today, housing the history, modern languages, and sociology departments.

The many contributions of Jennings Hall and the stories that unfolded within its walls (some true, some embellished over time) were a cornerstone of MC's Homecoming 2008 festivities. While its role has changed through the decades, Jennings Hall has remained a beloved icon and a fixture not only on the MC campus, but also in the hearts of the Mississippi College faithful. For in addition to its once-wondrous electric lights and indoor plumbing, Jennings Hall is home to a century's worth of wonderful memories.

*The 1908 report to the Convention noted that the building was complete, adding "there is no better arranged or more comfortable dormitory in the South than Jennings Hall."*



*the*  
**MISSISSIPPI  
COLLEGE  
SINGERS**  
HITTING HIGH NOTES  
AROUND THE GLOBE

The Mississippi College Singers are globetrotting ambassadors for the Christian university. Several road trips ahead will offer new opportunities for these ambassadors to share their unique sound and spirit with eager audiences at home and around the world.

December 4 – 6, the choir will usher in the holiday season at the 23rd annual Festival of Lights in Provine Chapel on campus. The Festival of Lights will include a diversity of musical selections as some 30 professors join the MC Singers in a service of worship celebrating the birth of Christ.

In March 2009, the Singers will take their vibrant sound to churches and schools in Louisiana and Texas. Long-range plans include a performance at New York's Avery Fisher Hall in January 2010 and a choral exchange program with a South African choir in 2011.

In recent years, MC's premier choral group has traveled to England, Italy, Slovenia, and throughout the United States, performing in venues ranging from country churches to spectacular arts centers and virtually everything in between. An illustrious 2007-2008 season took the MC Singers from the bright lights of New York to the capitals of Europe. Under the leadership of Dr. James Meaders (B.M. '87, M.M. '91), director of choral activities, the group performed in concert at New York's Carnegie Hall, followed by a performance at the Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts during the American Choral Directors Association's prestigious Southern Division convention, which brought together choral directors from 11 states.

In May 2008, 38 MC Singers and six faculty members packed their bags and their passports for a journey to Frankfurt, Leipzig, Prague, and Vienna. A trip highlight was a concert at St. Thomaskirche in Leipzig, the church in which Johann Sebastian Bach served as organist/choirmaster from 1723-1750.

"It doesn't matter if we're in a small church in Anytown, Mississippi, or singing for an audience in one of the great cathedrals of the world," Meaders said. "We attempt to communicate truth and beauty through voices and spirits that acknowledge the creative breath that flows through each of us."

Caleb Graham, a member of the group from Jackson,

describes performing in the Czech Republic, Vienna, and other venues in Europe as "extraordinary."

"Seeing the smiles on people's faces and hearing their generous applause after each performance was a very gratifying experience," Graham said. "In Europe, the MC Singers were goodwill ambassadors for the United States and for Christ."

Music department faculty member Carol Joy Sparkman, the accompanist on their group's concert tours, lights up when talking about the phenomenally talented and spirited group.

"The community they share and their commitment to the art of choral music is evident in each concert the MC Singers present," Sparkman said. "These factors and the opportunity to share their faith through music set them apart from similar groups."

The close bond with students is something that Sparkman, an MC graduate, (B.M.Ed. '81, M.M. '87), will always cherish. "Although all of these opportunities are exciting and memorable, the most rewarding aspect for me is getting to spend time with these extraordinary students and develop relationships that will continue long after graduation."

Meaders will never forget a conversation he had with the group's German guide during the MC Singers' May 2008 journey through Europe. During a bus ride in the Czech Republic heading toward Vienna, the guide, Gabi Olesch, translated the words spoken by German and Czech couriers. They spoke a common language—all praised the MC Singers' extraordinary performances and even more, their extraordinary spirit.

"They spoke of the MC Singers' discipline, cooperation, respectful attitudes, and genuine warmth," Meaders said. "Their music undoubtedly transcended cultural differences."

*"Although all of these opportunities are exciting and memorable, the most rewarding aspect for me is getting to spend time with these extraordinary students and develop relationships that will continue long after graduation."*

CAROL JOY SPARKMAN, ACCOMPANIST

# DON'T TOUCH THAT *Dial!*

MORNINGS WITH RUSS & TRACI ON STAR 93.5

ON A SUNNY DAY IN 1996, THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL WHERE TRACI LEE WAS WORKING AS A TEACHER'S ASSISTANT WAS DISMISSED EARLY DUE TO AN OUTBREAK OF CHICKEN POX. INSTEAD OF GOING HOME, TRACI FOUND HERSELF DRIVING TO SPIRIT 106, A LOCAL CHRISTIAN RADIO STATION.

"I walked in the door and told the first person I saw, 'God told me to come here,'" Traci recalls. "He looked at me and said, 'Maybe you need a bumper sticker.'"

What Traci Lee found instead was a career in radio. When she insisted she was looking for more than a bumper sticker, Traci was hired as Spirit 106's receptionist. The radio station was owned by Russ Robinson, an experienced broadcaster who soon recognized Traci's talent and put her on the air.

"I was so nervous I almost threw up," Traci recalls. "I was doing the traffic report and there was an accident on Roach Street. I blurted out, 'Who names a street *Roach* Street?'"

Today, 12 years and a few jobs in radio between the two of them later, Traci Lee and Russ Robinson are the co-hosts of Russ and Traci in the Morning, Star 93.5 radio's popular morning drive time show.

Owned and operated by Mississippi College, Star 93.5 is Jackson's number one Christian hit radio station. But when they tune in to Star, listeners won't find preaching or praying. Instead they'll hear a mix of jokes and quirky news stories and be treated to a running banter between Russ and Traci that provides the perfect segue from one contemporary Christian song to the next.

"We are definitely a team," Traci says. "Our on-air dialogue is like a volleyball game. You set someone else up to score, then you score, then they score, and on and on.



Russ and I often find we share the same train of thought. And let me tell you, it's a short train."

However, Russ does point to one area in which their partnership has let them down.

"Our biggest disappointment," he says, his eyes downcast, "is that we've never been asked to open for Ballet Magnificat."

"That's because I can't catch Russ when he jumps," Traci says with a sigh.

In addition to their on-air duties, Russ is the station's general manager and a professor of communication at MC; Traci is station manager and program director. Between the two of them, they are responsible for every aspect of running the radio station, from choosing which songs to play to making sure advertising revenues are healthy to supervising the 20 to 25 MC communication students who work at Star. Despite the constant need to multi-task, Russ and Traci never lose sight of their ultimate goal.

"At the end of the day we're supposed to help someone in his or her daily walk, no matter what that is," Traci says.

"The picture of Christian radio 20 years ago was a whole lot of preaching and a little bit of music. Now it's a different world," Russ explains. "Christianity hasn't changed, but the way people approach it has. Star 93.5, including our format and the music we play, is in touch with today's Christian market."

As program director, Traci listens to dozens of demo reels each week, searching for the songs she instinctively knows will strike a chord with Star 93.5 listeners. Star's biggest competition isn't other Christian radio stations, but Top 40 stations. In order to hold its audience, Star has to stay on the cutting edge.



**RUSS ROBINSON BRINGS A LONG HISTORY WITH STAR 93.5. HE WAS THE FIRST DJ IN THE STATION'S HISTORY, HITTING THE AIRWAVES AS AN MC STUDENT SOME 31 YEARS AGO.**

"Every second that Star 93.5 is on the air playing Christian music and broadcasting an inspirational message, we're reinforcing the identity of Mississippi College."

DR. BILLY LYTAL

Former chairman of the MC Communication Department and advisor to Star 93.5



Traci Lee and Russ Robinson co-host Russ and Traci in the Morning on Star 93.5.

## ON-THE-AIR TRAINING

Star 93.5 offers MC students the unique opportunity to learn the radio business at a "real" commercial radio station. There are only a handful of commercial radio stations operated by colleges in the country; training at Star 93.5 gives MC students a definite edge in the job market.

"Our vision is to educate students while entertaining and being a beacon in the marketplace," Russ says. "The biggest challenge is finding the right balance between commercial and educational. The students who work here have to take it seriously and be professional. Most of all, they have to connect with our listeners. I tell them they should be emotionally and physically drained every time they leave the studio."

As a student at MC, Bryant May '06 served as co-host for the afternoon drive show five days a week. Today he's putting what he learned to work as director of worship production at Pinelake Church in Brandon, Mississippi.

"My time at Star taught me about being flexible and working on the fly, yet doing so with excellence," May says. "But the most important lesson I learned was that for many of our listeners, the music we played and the words I spoke over the air may have been the only spiritual influence they experienced every day. It was a humbling thought, but it made me realize the responsibility Star 93.5 has to communicate God's love through music and words."

## WHAT'S ON THEIR IPODS?

RUSS ROBINSON  
JAMS TO:

Casting Crowns  
MercyMe  
Creedence Clearwater Revival  
The Beatles  
The Fifth Dimension  
Three Dog Night

TRACI LEE  
LISTENS TO:

Toby Mac  
Paul Alan  
Group 1 Crew  
Mandisa  
John Mayer  
Michael Bubl 



"The most popular Christian songs right now are the ones that address today's issues and reach our listeners where they are. It's all about being real and dealing with real life," Traci says. "Christians are hurting people, too, and the music we play reflects that. The songs you'll hear on Star deal with everything from abortion to what it means to be a prodigal son. We choose music that asks hard questions and is thought provoking, and then we mix it up with humor."

According to Russ and Traci, there are two types of listeners who don't respond well to the format – those who erroneously think they've tuned into a rock station and can't understand why they're hearing about Jesus, and those who "carry poster board and markers with them in the car at all times in case they run across something they need to protest."

"There are some people who don't think humor has a place in Christianity," Traci says. "But the love of Jesus Christ comes through a laugh or a smile, not a picket. Humor done right is very effective in the human world."

The responses they receive from fans back up that idea. Russ and Traci have received hundreds of calls, notes, and e-mails that share the simple message, "you've encouraged and inspired me." They also welcome e-mails from non-believers who write to say, "I'm not a Christian, but I feel different when I listen to your station." Perhaps the most dramatic feedback they've received came in the form of an e-mail from a former member of the Ku Klux Klan who was inspired to "turn his life of anger and bitterness around" after hearing a song by African American artist Mandisa.

"I want those people who are hurting," Traci says. "I want that wife who doesn't feel pretty. I want the teenagers who are cutting themselves to avoid dealing with emotional pain. I want the rejects. I feel with them. I hurt with them. I love them."

"Our average listener is a 27-year-old married woman with two kids trying to hold it all together. She needs someone to tell her she's not crazy," Traci continues. "We're a friend and a lighthouse for her, someone telling her, 'Honey, it's okay to laugh about it every now and then. Don't take yourself so seriously.' Remember, Christ is perfection, but Christianity is surrender."

“It matters not whether you entered *poor or rich*, minority or majority, urban or rural, *foreign or American*. Some of you may have come from *a long line of attorneys*. Yet a member of your class is the *first female of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians* to be admitted to the state bar.”

CONDOLEZZA RICE

# SUCCESS *without* RESERVATIONS

RITA JONES' JOURNEY FROM LAW  
SCHOOL TO THE SUPREME COURT AND  
INTO CHOCTAW INDIAN HISTORY

During the 2003 graduation ceremony for Mississippi College School of Law, keynote speaker Condoleezza Rice singled a member of the class out for special recognition.

“It matters not whether you entered poor or rich, minority or majority, urban or rural, foreign or American,” Rice said. “Some of you may have come from a long line of attorneys. Yet a member of your class is the first female of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians to be admitted to the state bar.”

“When Ms. Rice delivered that line, I heard my children yell, ‘Way to go, Mom!’” Rita Jones recalls. “As we marched out after the ceremony, a reporter from a local TV station put a microphone in my face and asked me about this historic occasion. My knees buckled and I had to sit down.”

The occasion was historic not only for Rita Jones and her family, but also for Mississippi College School of Law and for the entire Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

When she accepted her diploma, Rita Jones became just the second Choctaw and the first woman in the Mississippi tribe’s history to graduate from law school and the first Choctaw to graduate from a law school in Mississippi.

“I had already finished my classes and passed the bar, but it wasn’t until graduation day that it really hit me,” says the soft-spoken Jones, whose quiet demeanor gives little hint of the steely determination that led her to that graduation ceremony. “I remember thinking that I’d finally done it. I’d reached my goal. As they snapped my picture, I was saying, ‘Thank you, God.’”

Last year, Jones celebrated another landmark achievement when she became the first Choctaw admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court. Rita Jones is a legal profession success story and a role model for her people, but the journey from the reservation to law school to the Supreme Court wasn’t without its share of challenges and sacrifices.





THE FIFTH OF SEVEN CHILDREN IN HER FAMILY, RITA TUBBY WAS BORN ON THE RESERVATION IN CHOCTAW, MISSISSIPPI. When she was five years old her parents divorced, and Rita and her siblings were separated. Rita and her closest brother, Melvin, were sent to an Indian boarding school in Oklahoma, a common practice among tribal members in that day. Rita was an excellent student, so gifted in math that the principal of her high school in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, ordered special materials and had a teacher work with her one-on-one so that she could take trigonometry courses not offered through the regular curriculum.

In her senior year of high school, Rita returned to the reservation. She enrolled in Choctaw Central High School, where she was a majorette, played the flute, marched in the band, and was selected Most Likely to Succeed and Most Intellectual by the student body. Rita had the highest GPA in her class, but because she had attended Choctaw Central for only one year, the school named her "Special Honor Student" rather than valedictorian.

"I felt that if I had had someone to speak on my behalf, I would have been named valedictorian," Jones recalls. "I was presented with a special pin, but I wasn't satisfied. I decided that day that if I could ever be in a position to help people who had no voice, I would do it."

After graduation, Jones joined the Air Force. The same determination to succeed Jones showed throughout high school also marked her military career. During her five-year stint in the Air Force, Jones earned the Good Conduct Ribbon, Air Force Achievement Medal, and Air Force Commendation Medal. She also won a medal for marksmanship – while shooting with her eyes closed.

"I was afraid of guns so I was shooting my M-16 with my eyes shut tight," Jones recalls with a laugh. "The girl next to me was also shooting at my target by mistake. I ended up getting the expert marksmanship medal and she had to repeat the training exercise."

"I intended to stay in the Air Force for at least 20 years and see the world," Jones continues. "However, life happens. I got married and was soon expecting a baby. When I found out I would be going to Korea shortly after my son was born, I left the Air Force after five years of active duty."

Jones and her husband returned to the Choctaw reservation, where she was hired as the secretary for the tribal attorney and later as the secretary for Choctaw Chief Phillip Martin. Over the next several years, Jones had three children, divorced, and relocated to Oxford, where she met her current husband, Thomas Jones. Rita Jones worked at a number of jobs during those years, but the desire to help those without a voice never left her. She began to toy with the idea of applying to Mississippi College School of Law, despite the fact that, "I had always thought law school was for people like the Kennedys – rich people, not poor people like me." It was an idea her brother Melvin, who had been diagnosed with cancer, seized upon.

"Every time I talked to Melvin, his first question was always, 'Did you send in your application?'" Jones recalls. "I told him I was busy but would get around to it. The deadline was May 1, and I mailed my application in April on my way to visit Melvin. As soon as I arrived, I told him the application was in the mail. Melvin died that same night. I'm so glad he knew I had taken the first step toward my dream."

Thomas Jones was interviewing for his own dream job in Memphis, but when Rita was accepted to MCSOL, the couple moved to Ridgeland so that she could pursue her law degree. Thomas eventually accepted a position as senior financial manager for the tribe, commuting from Ridgeland to Choctaw every day while Rita took classes and completed homework assignments.

---

"I had always assumed that I was *honoring my mother and my brother, Melvin, by going to law school. But when I walked across the stage to get my diploma with my heart pounding and tears in my eyes, when I saw Condoleezza Rice smiling at me on the stage and heard my family and Chief Phillip Martin cheering in the audience, I realized that I had done it for me. It had always been my dream to help people, and now I would be able to do just that.*"

---



"I believe God has a plan for everyone and He puts people in your life who can help you fulfill your destiny," Jones says. "Other people have helped me along the way, but I believe God especially brought Tom into my life and I'm thankful for His intervention."

During her final semester of law school, Jones found herself overwhelmed by the pressures of buying a new home, caring for her family, and studying for her law degree. Jones was dealt another crushing blow when her father died just before final exams.

"I called my mother and asked if I could come home," she says. "My mother said, 'Sure, I'll cook dinner for you,' and I said, 'No, Mom, you don't understand. I can't get everything done here. I want to come home for good.' My mother said, 'Find some quiet place and talk to God. Tell Him your troubles and let Him give you a warm hug.'"

"At first, I shrugged off her advice," Rita continues. "But the next night, tired and feeling I had wasted the better part of the day, I remembered my mother's words. So I found a quiet place and prayed to God, asking that His will be done. The next morning, I woke up excited to start the day."

Rita Jones not only completed law school, but also won the Outstanding Graduate Award from the National Association of Women Lawyers, an award presented to a female law school student who has achieved her goals despite difficult odds. Jones finished law school in December of 2002 and participated in the graduation ceremony the following May.

"I had always assumed that I was honoring my mother and my brother, Melvin, by going to law school," Jones says. "But when I walked across the stage to get my diploma with

## BIRDS OF A FEATHER

All five staff attorneys with Choctaw Legal Defense are graduates of Mississippi College School of Law.

my heart pounding and tears in my eyes, when I saw Condoleezza Rice smiling at me on the stage and heard my family and Chief Phillip Martin cheering in the audience, I realized that I had done it for me. It had always been my dream to help people, and now I would be able to do just that."

Today, Rita Jones is the director of Choctaw Legal Defense, the public defense entity that handles civil and criminal cases on the Choctaw reservation. Jones spends her days helping the people of her tribe with everything from adoptions to wills to criminal defense, while supervising the work of five attorneys, multiple contract attorneys, a lay advocate, four paralegals, and a receptionist. Choctaw Legal Defense closes more than 2,000 cases per year.

"Rita has a hard work ethic," says Ashley Lewis, a staff attorney with Choctaw Legal Defense, "but what I admire most about her are her Christian values and her love for her fellow people."

"I am so glad to be in a position to help," Jones says. "Some of the older tribal members may not speak English well or some people may be intimidated trying to explain their situation in a courtroom or to a judge, but they're comfortable talking to me. Sometimes people come to me with problems that aren't related to legal issues at all – maybe it's as basic as an elderly person who doesn't have enough to eat or a woman who's allowing herself to be treated badly because she has no self respect. It all goes back to helping those who have no voice. The greatest blessing I have is when someone comes up to me in the grocery store and says, 'Thank you, Rita.'"

In 2007, Rita Jones marked another milestone in her own career and in the history of her tribe when she became the first Choctaw Indian admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of the United States. After she was sworn in by Chief Justice John Roberts, Jr. in a ceremony in Washington, D.C., Rita Jones strolled the corridors of the U.S. Supreme Court building, viewing painting after painting of historic figures and still not quite believing that she, too, was taking her place in history.



## HER PEOPLE'S

# princess

The Mississippi College student body includes a number of outstanding and accomplished students, but only one real live princess. Tia Anderson, an 18-year-old MC freshman, was chosen to represent her tribe as the 2008-09 Choctaw Indian Princess.

"It's a blessing to be an ambassador for my tribe and represent the people I love," Tia says. "The Choctaws are the only recognized Native American tribe in Mississippi. We have preserved our native language, foods, dances, and sports through many generations. As the Choctaw Indian Princess, it's my job and my joy to invite people to

experience our culture."

Tia was chosen for the honor from a field of 16 young women who competed in the 53rd annual Choctaw Indian Princess pageant last July. Similar to Miss Mississippi, the pageant included talent, interview, and evening wear competitions, but also featured a traditional wear competition in which contestants modeled handmade Choctaw dresses adorned with intricate beadwork. For her talent, Tia delivered a monologue on the importance of preserving her people's traditions, using the colorful dresses and beadwork as an example.

Tia has consistently represented her tribe well. A graduate of Choctaw Central High School, she was Homecoming Queen, vice-president of her senior class, Miss Choctaw Central High School, and a Mississippi Scholar. In 2008, Tia served as a page in the Mississippi House of Representatives and was the recipient of the Youth of the Year Award for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians' Boys and Girls Club. She is active in her church, the Spirit of Life Christian Center.

Tia also participated in a tribal program called Teen Court. Through this program, lesser juvenile offenses that would normally be heard in formal Youth Court are instead heard by a panel of the defendant's peers. Her experience as a Teen Court panelist, combined with a family history of law enforcement service, prompted Tia to study pre-law at Mississippi College.

"I want to become a lawyer so I can work for and with the people of my tribe," Tia says. "Education is very important to me and is something that's emphasized by the entire Choctaw tribe. If you focus on your education and work hard, you can achieve any dream."

As the official ambassador for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Tia has made numerous public appearances alongside Tribal Miko Beasley Denson ("Miko" is the Choctaw word for "chief") at events throughout Mississippi, including the presidential debate in Oxford, and at Native American celebrations nationwide. Tia also enjoys representing the Choctaw people to her new friends on the Mississippi College campus.

"I grew up on the reservation and attended Choctaw tribal schools. Coming to Mississippi College and meeting people from so many different backgrounds has been a great experience for me," Tia says. "I have an opportunity to learn so much from them, and also to teach them about the Choctaw people. I'm building relationships with new friends and with my teachers, and I love everything about MC so far. It's a funny thing, though – until I became a student here, I never knew the MC mascot was a Choctaw."



"As the Choctaw Indian Princess, it's my job and my joy to invite people to experience our culture."

## ON the RESERVATION

The members of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians residing on the reservation in Mississippi are descendants of Choctaws who refused to leave their homeland following the 1830 Treaty of Dancing Rabbit, which ceded the last of Choctaw native lands to the United States. Rather than follow the Trail of Tears west, this small group of proud, determined Native Americans chose to preserve their native culture on their native land.



FROM MC CHOCTAW TO CHOCTAW COUNCIL Cyrus Ben '01 recently completed his first year of service as a member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians' Tribal Council. ✦ The 17-member tribal council is the legislative body of the Choctaws' sovereign government, the equivalent of the U.S. Congress. Ben and his fellow tribal council members are responsible for developing law and policy, overseeing budgets, and serving as their communities' representatives to the Choctaw government. ✦ Council members are elected by their constituents to four-year terms. The owner of two small businesses, Choctaw Office Supply and Choctaw Contracting Solutions, Ben welcomed the opportunity to serve his people. ✦ "I had a desire to use my education

and experience to help further the success of my tribe," Ben says. "One of my favorite aspects of being a council member is interacting on a day-to-day basis with my fellow tribal members, especially our elders and our young people. There is so much to be learned from our elders due to the experiences they have had in the past. By learning from our past, we can better prepare for our future." ✦ As chairperson of the Committee for Economic Development, Ben seeks opportunities for the Choctaws to develop new businesses and form partnerships that will strengthen the tribe economically. He also serves on the Education, Housing, Natural Resources, Insurance and Investments, and Recreation Committees. Ben credits his education at MC with helping prepare him to become one of the Choctaw nation's leaders. ✦ "The education I received and discipline I learned at MC have helped me set priorities and make efficient and effective decisions for my people," Ben says. "Without the knowledge I gained from Mississippi College, I would not be where I am today."

Parke family members Jonathan, Mary Ann, Ivan and Anne Marie pack for a road trip.



MC GETS A TWO-FOR-ONE BLESSING IN IVAN AND MARY ANN PARKE

THE STORY OF HOW IVAN AND MARY ANN PARKE MET PROVES THAT TIMING IS EVERYTHING.

As a college freshman, Ivan Parke traveled 1,100 miles from his home in Florida to attend school at Baylor University.

“I’d been badly spoiled by my mother and if I hadn’t gone away, I’d never have grown up,” he says. “I honestly think the reason God led me to Baylor was because I wouldn’t be able to lug my laundry home from Waco.”

During welcome week activities on the Baylor campus, Parke recalls hearing someone say, “Look around. Your future wife could be here.”

The future Mrs. Parke was indeed on campus that day – but it would be another four years before Ivan would meet her. Mary Ann Jones was an instructor in the math department and Ivan Parke was a psychology major. The classes Mary Ann taught and the classes Ivan attended met on the same floor of the same building at the same time every day. Mary Ann Jones and Ivan Parke passed one another in the hallway hundreds of times, but never exchanged hellos.

In 1986, Mary Ann left Baylor to accept a position at the University of New Orleans. In 1987, Ivan graduated from Baylor and moved to New Orleans to attend Seminary. In a singles’ group at First Baptist Church in New Orleans, the two were finally introduced. They were married

on August 18, 1990.

Fast forward to 2008. Dr. Ivan Parke is now an associate professor in the Mississippi College Department of Christian Studies and Mary Ann Parke is an adjunct professor in the MC math department. The couple may not pass each other in the halls of MC, but they do meet at their Clinton home for lunch every day.

“I tell my students all the time that God has a plan, it’s all about His timing, and it’s always worth the wait,” Dr. Parke says. “In this case, I think God was keeping Mary Ann and me apart until I could grow up.”

Parke’s growing up began in India, where he was born into a Christian family – a rarity in a country where most of the people are Hindu or Buddhist and Christians make up just three percent of the population. Generations earlier, Parke’s paternal great-grandfather had converted to Christianity from Hinduism. His maternal great-grandfather converted to Christianity from Islam, an act that so egregiously offended his parents that they gave him a choice – renounce his newfound faith or drink poison. Parke’s great-grandfather chose the poison, but miraculously, he did not die. Instead, he escaped his parents’ home, fled to America to study the Gospel, and then returned to India as a Christian minister.

Given his family history, it’s little wonder that Ivan Parke grew up to become a preacher. Originally, however, Parke’s plan was not to save hearts in the spiritual sense, but in the literal sense. The Parke family immigrated to America in search of greater economic opportunity when Ivan was just a toddler. His father was a cardiologist, and Ivan grew up planning to follow in his father’s footsteps.

“I wanted to be just like my dad,” Dr. Parke says. “I was in awe of him as a doctor. In elementary school, while other kids were reading comic books, I was reading books on congenital heart disease and dreaming of a father/son cardiology practice.”

But as a ninth grader in 1979, Ivan heard God’s call. A few months after Ivan was saved, the youth of his church were asked to vote for a peer to serve as a youth preacher in the Sunday service. His friends voted Ivan to the job.

“I remember thinking, what an honor, but what am I going to say?” Dr. Parke recalls. “Then the Lord gave me a message – I spoke on the idea of giving who you are to God. After that Sunday, it seemed I was being given more and more opportunities to speak about the Lord. I realized I was being called to become a pastor.”

Dr. Parke is quick to point out that just as God’s timing is perfect, His plan for our lives is perfect as well – even if it takes us awhile to realize it.

*The final line of Dr. Ivan Parke’s bio notes, “Ivan and Mary Ann serve their children, Anne Marie and Jonathan, as chauffeurs.”*

“On the surface, that might sound as though I ‘gave up’ a career in medicine to become a pastor,” Dr. Parke says. “But God knows what we don’t know. That was more than confirmed when I took an advanced biology course at Baylor. We had to perform all kinds of unusual procedures on living animals. In the midst of performing a hysterectomy on a rat, I found that I simply could not cut on that animal. I kept

thinking, ‘What if I cut too deeply? What if I don’t cut deeply enough?’ If I felt that way about operating on a rat, there was no way I could have performed surgery on a human being, and God knew that all along. As for the rat, my lab partner was going to medical school so he tied the rat’s tubes for both of us.”

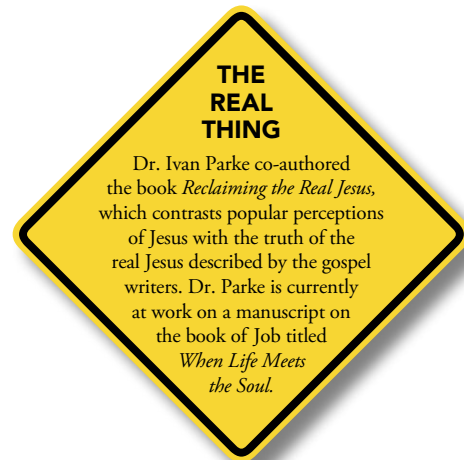
After earning his bachelor’s degree in psychology and his master of divinity and a Ph.D. in Hebrew and the Old Testament from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Dr. Parke served at churches in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi as a pastor and interim pastor with his wife by his side.

“Mary Ann has a servant’s heart. She made me look very good as a pastor,” Dr. Parke says. “When we left one of the churches in which we served, one of the deacons told me he would miss me, good-bye, and by the way, I didn’t have permission to take Mary Ann along with me.”

“I love the local church and being a part of the body. Being a pastor’s wife opened doors to meet people sooner,”



Teaching at MC allows Ivan and Mary Ann to spend more time with each other and with their children, 15-year-old Anne Marie and 13-year-old Jonathan.



13-year-old Jonathan. With extended family in five states, the Parkes have made road trips throughout the South (with more than a few detours through Disney World) and have also participated in mission trips as a family.

“That’s one advantage I’ve discovered in being a professor rather than a preacher,” Dr. Parke says. “I know my kids are participating in church activities and mission projects because they want to and not because their dad’s job makes them feel like they have to.”

But in many ways, leaving the pulpit for the classroom hasn’t been that great of a switch.

“Preaching and teaching are very related,” Dr. Parke says. “My classes are like a little congregation. In fact, sometimes I catch myself preaching to the young people in my classes,” he adds with a sheepish smile.

“I’ve also learned that teaching is not confined to the classroom,” Parke continues. “As their teacher in a Christian college, I have the opportunity to minister to my students. When they knock on my office door, they don’t always want to know about the subject matter we’re covering. They’re looking for wisdom and their questions are as likely to be about God’s will as something on the syllabus. I hope for those opportunities for real learning and life change.”

A veteran teacher of other colleges and universities, Mary Ann Parke also points to the Christian emphasis at MC as setting the university apart.

“I especially enjoy being able to talk freely about Jesus and how He is an integral part of my daily life,” she says. “I’d like to say I don’t ever preach, but my students might disagree. Ivan and I sometimes have the same students in our classes, and all I can think is ‘bless their hearts.’”

“The students are my favorite part of teaching,” Dr. Parke says. “College is a crucial strategic age, when people are on the verge of beginning families and careers. They’re technically adults, but not quite there yet. They’re flexing their free will and experimenting with choices, making good ones and bad ones. What better time to invest in people?”

And invest in people the Parkes have. According to their students, Ivan and Mary Ann Parke are more than just teachers.

“I have many fond memories of Dr. Parke, from his vast intellect to his gangsta rapping a section of Genesis,” says former student Stuart Tully ’06. “I also have very fond memories of his family, who were always involved in activities with the students. Dr. Parke was the faculty sponsor

Mary Ann Parke says. “I also loved serving – although I do recall one church where they never trusted me to help with the Wednesday night suppers beyond cutting the tomatoes.”

In the late 1990s, Ivan Parke had the opportunity to teach for the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary at its extension center in Birmingham, and soon realized God was calling him into a new field.

“I felt drawn to teaching, as though God was opening another door,” he says. “In 1998, a full-time position opened at MC, and here I am. It’s a joy to teach God’s word every day. Honestly, I can’t believe I get paid to do it.”

“I especially enjoy being able to talk freely about Jesus and how He is an integral part of my daily life. I’d like to say I don’t ever preach, but my students might disagree. Ivan and I sometimes have the same students in our classes, and all I can think is ‘bless their hearts.’”

— MARY ANN PARKE —

“Dr. Parke knows what it means to be a teacher,” says former student Michael Wright ’06, who is now an MC graduate student and admissions counselor. “He is a brilliant Biblical scholar but also has the ability to put his lessons on a level that a college student finds interesting. I came into his Old Testament class just wanting to get some core classes out of the way. One week into the class, I went to the registrar’s office and changed my minor to Christian Studies.”

As a pastor, Dr. Parke was on call 24/7. Teaching at MC allows Ivan and Mary Ann to spend more time with each other and with their children, 15-year-old Anne Marie and



DR. IVAN PARKE ORIGINALLY STUDIED HEBREW AS A STUDENT AT NEW ORLEANS BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY. PARKE’S INSTRUCTOR FOR THREE OF HIS OLD TESTAMENT COURSES WAS DR. WAYNE VANHORN.



### IT’S ALL HEBREW TO ME.

“I originally learned Hebrew so I could interpret the Old Testament better and more accurately,” Dr. Wayne VanHorn, dean of the School of Christian Studies and the Arts, says. “Along the way, I learned about Hebrew culture, worldview, festivals, and living. Today, I love to read my Hebrew Bible for the sheer pleasure of its cadence, not to mention the riches embedded in the text.”

Hebrew is the original language of the Old Testament while Greek is the language of the New Testament; both are offered at Mississippi College. Dr. Ivan Parke, Dr. Wayne VanHorn, and Dr. Eddie Mahaffey each teach a four-semester course in Hebrew. With an alphabet and symbols that bear no resemblance to English and text read from right to left on the page, Hebrew can be a challenging language to master. But students who rise to the challenge soon discover the unique joy that comes from reading the Bible in its original language.

“Biblical Hebrew unlocks extra messages from the Old Testament that the English language simply fails to convey,” Richard Pollard ’07 says. “For example, in English the 23rd Psalm reads, ‘Surely goodness and mercy will follow me.’ The verb ‘follow’ seems passive. In Hebrew, the verb actually means ‘pursue.’ In other words, God’s mercy and love will chase us down. There is nothing we can do to escape His love. Those kinds of lessons are what we learn all the time in the study of Biblical Hebrew.”

Dr. Ivan Parke’s fascination with those lessons changed the course of his studies. Parke originally intended to pursue a Ph.D. in Greek and New Testament, but learning Hebrew inspired him to complete his doctoral work in Hebrew and Old Testament instead.

“Learning Hebrew unlocked for me the treasures of the Old Testament and renewed the love I had for the Old Testament stories as a child,” Dr. Parke says. “My knowledge of Hebrew also enabled me to preach and now to teach the Old Testament effectively. Many people are intimidated or confused by the Old Testament. Hebrew has been my tool to stir joy for studying the Old Testament again.”

“The Bible is always a source of joy and happiness when people open it and begin to discover how great God’s love is for His children,” says Stephen Mansell, a senior Christian studies major. “Having a deeper understanding of God’s Word has helped me to be more fervent in my study of it. The more I understand the Bible, the more I want to study it and further discover the truths that lie within it.”

Pictured above: Dr. Wayne VanHorn

for the Shawreth Order of MC. A Shawreth rush party was never truly started until Dr. and Mrs. Parke arrived with their kids.”

In another example of God’s perfect timing, He placed Mary Ann and Ivan Parke into the life of MC graduate student Sonya Chandna just when she needed them the most. Sonya’s mother was a devout Hindu and her father was an atheist. When Sonya was saved at the age of 12, her parents opposed her newfound faith and her home became, in Sonya’s words, a “war zone.” Sonya’s father eventually accepted Christ, but died just two months later of a massive heart attack.

When Ivan Parke met Sonya during her freshman year at MC, he felt God place it upon his heart to become a father figure for her. Dr. Parke invited Sonya home to have dinner with him and Mary Ann and their children. From that first meal five years ago until today, the Parkes have considered Sonya their adopted daughter.

“The Parkes took me in as family,” Sonya says. “I call them ‘Mom’ and ‘Dad,’ and Jonathan and Anne Marie became my little brother and sister. They celebrate birthdays, Thanksgiving, and Christmas with me as though I were their real daughter. I am so grateful for this family who took me under their wing and treat me as their own flesh and blood.”

The Parkes have also become close friends of Sonya’s mother, who frequently invites them to her home for Indian food. Her mother has begun attending a Baptist church and Sonya takes great hope and comfort in knowing that Ivan and Mary Ann Parke are praying for her salvation. Sonya and her boyfriend, William Wells, have begun talking about a future wedding. When that day comes, Sonya will walk down the aisle on the arm of her surrogate father, Ivan Parke.

“The hardest part will be figuring out how to walk her down the aisle *and* give her away *and* perform the wedding ceremony,” Dr. Parke says. “But maybe we can work that out during the pre-marital counseling sessions I’ll be doing with them.”

“This couple has been more than my adopted parents,” Sonya says. “They have been my teachers, my mentors, my accountability, and a crying shoulder for me. They have been my spiritual leaders and the biggest encouragement and influence in my life. I thank God constantly for Ivan and Mary Ann Parke.”

That heartfelt gratitude comes not only from Sonya Chandna, but also from the entire MC community.



Did You  
Hear the  
One About  
the MC  
Alum Who  
Became a

# COMEDIAN?

*anita renfroe '84 is laughing her way to the big time*

ANITA RENFROE HAS A NATIONAL PLATFORM ON “GOOD MORNING AMERICA.” AN AUDIENCE OF MILLIONS IS TUNED IN TO HEAR WHAT SHE HAS TO SAY NEXT. RENFROE’S TOPIC OF CHOICE? THE BIZARRE RITUAL KNOWN AS THE BRIDAL SHOWER.

“So the day finally arrives and you shave your legs and prepare to eat crustless sandwiches and petit fours and make small talk with women you may never see again,” Renfroe says. “And let us not forget the piece de resistance – the bridal shower games. These are the ones that normally leave people in the room wondering, ‘What just happened here?’ Everybody except the hostess, who has lots of fun planning these dumb games – such as make your own wedding dress out of toilet paper.”

As a regular contributor on “Good Morning America” (GMA) Renfroe has waxed comedic on topics ranging from what your purse says about you (“pursonality”) to the five stages of grief following a bad haircut to the horrors of trying on a bathing suit. Following each pre-recorded segment,

Renfroe joins GMA hosts Diane Sawyer and Robin Roberts for an in-studio chat about “what women think but are afraid to say out loud.”

In addition to “Good Morning America,” Renfroe has appeared on national media outlets including “The Dr. Phil Show,” CBS’s “The Early Show,” Fox News Channel’s “Fox & Friends,” and XM Satellite Radio Network’s “Oprah & Friends,” and has performed live in front of more than 400,000 women nationwide as part of the enormously popular Women of Faith, a touring show featuring Christian speakers, singers, and entertainers. Her distinctive brand of “estrogen-flavored humor” is available in a series of books and DVDs. With live standup performances scheduled months in advance and a possible TV sitcom in the works, Renfroe is being hailed as this generation’s Erma Bombeck.

So how did this Mississippi College alumna go from preacher’s wife and stay-at-home mom in Cobb County, Georgia, to celebrated Christian comedian and national TV personality? It seems a funny thing happened on the way to the spotlight.



DEVOUT CHRISTIAN, RENFROE WAS RAISED IN BURNETT, TEXAS, GROWING UP IN A STRICT FAITH CULTURE THAT SHE SAYS, “WASN’T SO FOND OF FUNNY.”

“There was a party going on in my head all the time,” Renfroe says, “but coming from a very legalistic background, I didn’t think it was allowable to let it out. I didn’t realize my sense of humor was appropriate for public consumption until later in life.”

Renfroe’s father abandoned her and her mother when Anita was two years old. Her mother eventually remarried, and Anita’s stepfather, John Pulliam, relocated the family to Brandon, Mississippi. Anita originally enrolled in the University of Southern Mississippi (USM), but a Sunday drive with her mother and stepfather led her to an important meeting and eventually, to Mississippi College. When they took a wrong turn on their way to church, the family got lost. They came upon McLaurin Heights Baptist Church in Pearl and decided to worship there instead. A young Mississippi College student named John Renfroe happened to be singing at the church that day.

“I was fly and foxy, so of course for John, it was love at first sight,” Renfroe says. “He says the angel sang and his heart went all pitty-pat. It took me seven or eight sightings before I decided I was warm for his form.”

At the time of their meeting, Anita was taking a semester off from USM, trying to decide what she wanted to do next.

“I realized that what I wanted to do next was date John, so I enrolled at Mississippi College,” Renfroe says. “I’d like to say academics brought me there, but it was to be near him. Hey, decisions regarding education have been made for lesser reasons.”

Renfroe studied history and political science at MC, thinking she might someday go to law school.

“I loved my professors but to be gut-level honest, my greatest memories of Mississippi College are of the M&M milkshakes at the Wigwam snack bar and of the little ladies who worked at the Wigwam and were all up in your business,” Renfroe says. “That, and of how hard it was to find a parking space.”

During her last year at MC in 1982, Anita and John Renfroe were married (“Since we’re spiritual people,” Renfroe says, “we got married rather than burning in our lust,”) and moved into married student housing. A little over a year later, their first son, Calvin, was born.

“I went back for one more semester so I could graduate,” Renfroe says. “John and I would switch off working about four part-time jobs to make ends meet. We would meet on the MC football field and I’d take off the backpack that Calvin was in and John would strap it on and walk home and I’d walk to class. I can honestly tell people if you want an education bad enough, you will do what has to be done, even handing off your baby on a football field.”

Renfroe graduated from MC but shelved her plans for law school in order to raise her family, which soon grew to include another son, Austin, and a daughter, Elyse, and to support her husband in his career as a minister. Anita played piano at the churches where John served. As word of her musical ability spread, she began playing at women’s church groups, throwing in a few one-liners between songs.

“When you practice your gift – whatever God has hard-wired you to do – with excellence, when you are faithful in the small things, like playing at hundreds of dinners in dark church basements, at some point in His timing, your gift will be on display. There will come a moment of opportunity. At that moment, it becomes a stewardship issue – how will you steward that time? I feel obligated, obligated, to represent well in this moment of opportunity.”



“They started asking me to come back just to do the funny stuff,” Renfroe recalls. “I never once thought, ‘Oh, I’ll be a comedian.’ I already was one and I just didn’t know it. It’s the Forrest Gump way to fall into a career. It’s also proof that God doesn’t always do things through the front door. He sometimes tricks you into doing the things you were supposed to do in the first place.”

Renfroe grew her career as a comedian slowly, spending nearly a decade playing the Christian women’s circuit. All those years of being a stay-at-home mom and a preacher’s wife became her material.

“I believe God redeems every experience in your life. Even the extracurriculars make it into the big pot He stirs up to make something to use in the world,” Renfroe says. “Most of my material came from being a mom, although we do have a family moratorium we call the three-year rule. I’m not allowed to use anything that happened to my children until three years after the event or until they no longer need therapy because of it.”

It seems only fitting that a clip inspired by her “mom-ness” would make Anita Renfroe a star. In a standup routine titled “Total Mommense,” Renfroe condenses everything a mother says in 24 hours into a single, breathless, three-minute song set to the galloping tune of the “William Tell Overture.” The song’s classic lyrics include, “If all your friends jumped off a cliff, would you jump too?” “Stop crying or I’ll give you something *real* to cry about,” and the grand finale chorus of “You don’t need the reason why...because I said so...I said so...I said so...I’m the mom! I’m the mom! I’m the mom! Taa daa!”

Renfroe had performed the routine live to standing ovations on her Christian comedy tour. When her children encouraged her to post something on YouTube last year, she put the video of “Total Mommense” up, thinking, “maybe 500 people might see it.” Instead, the video went viral. Within a few months, the clip logged some 15 million hits as viewers – mostly moms like Renfroe – stumbled across it and forwarded it to their friends.

Then a producer from “Good Morning America” called to request permission to run the clip on the show. The viewer response was so tremendous that GMA invited Renfroe to appear as a guest; after a few more appearances, she was asked to become a regular contributor.

“It’s very surreal to go from watching GMA to being on it,” Renfroe says. “You’re chowing down on a bagel in your robe, sucking down java while you watch TV. That’s one morning. Then the next day somebody goes, ‘Hi Alice, we’d like to push you through the looking glass and put you on

## “I REMEMBER

MY PROFESSORS AT MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE SAYING WE SHOULD IMAGINE JESUS  
SMILING AS HE DELIVERED SCRIPTURE INSTEAD OF SCOWLING.

THE NEW TESTAMENT READS DIFFERENTLY IF YOU LOOK AT IT THAT WAY.”

the other side of this experience.’ The fact that they wanted me on as a regular is *still* blowing my ever-loving mind. That was definitely not on my radar when I was sitting in history class at MC in 1983.”

The “Momsense” video clip and GMA combined to launch Anita Renfroe into a comedic career beyond the world of faith. Thanks to the Internet and national television, audiences who would never have come to a Women of Faith event or for that matter, stepped inside a church, are now intimately acquainted with Anita Renfroe.

“It’s been an interesting proving ground for whether my comedy can stand up to audiences at large,” Renfroe says. “The Christian market is very forgiving, but when your DVD is sold next to Ellen Degeneres or Jeff Foxworthy’s DVD, all of a sudden people are judging your comedy at a different level. Christians clap politely if something is mildly funny – a wider audience might not.”

Renfroe continues to tour with Women of Faith and on her own, playing to thousands of women live each year in addition to the millions she reaches through her GMA segments. At faith-based events, Renfroe speaks plainly about God’s love for broken people and finding peace through His Son, Jesus Christ. At mainstream events and on “Good Morning America,” Renfroe is encouraging and funny without speaking overtly about her faith, but she says that wherever she performs, “God sets up divine appointments through which I can share my faith.”

“Every comedian has a worldview and my comedy reflects mine,” Renfroe says. “I reveal my faith no matter what the venue, whether it’s Madison Square Garden or Women of Faith, ‘Good Morning America’ or church.”

While the jump to a mainstream audience hasn’t changed Anita Renfroe’s comedic style, her identity as a “Christian comedian” does seem to some to be an oxymoron.

“To put ‘Christian’ in front of ‘comedian’ is limiting – people think all you do is talk about Christian subjects,”

Renfroe says. “You wouldn’t think of asking a Christian plumber if he only works on Christian pipes. People also ask me, ‘How can ‘Christian’ and ‘comedy’ possibly go together in the same sentence? How can you be funny and be a Christian?’ It’s an indictment on how we as Christians present ourselves as dour and cheerless to the world – not all of us do that, but a few people can color the way we’re all viewed.

“It reminds me of when Halle Berry won the Oscar and the topic was whether she was an African American actress versus an actress. Won’t it be great when this is no longer an issue? It’s just a matter of fact that there are people who are funny who happen to be Christians, too. I’m not ashamed of my faith, but it will be a great day when nobody is so taken by it they can’t believe it’s true.”

All of Renfroe’s material is still drawn from her real life. Her act revolves around trips to the grocery store, mammograms, and the reality of being a middle-aged woman dealing with the effects of aging and gravity.

“There are no writers who write for me. There is nothing I talk about that hasn’t happened to me personally,” Renfroe says. “Real life is infinite if you look at it in the right way – every experience is material. Every time I get a medical procedure, every time I’m stuck in an airport,

### JUST ANOTHER CHEESY JOB

Before she hit it big as a comedian, Anita Renfroe’s jobs included selling vacuum cleaners, mixing paint, and filling up cheese crocks in a restaurant (a task she says worried her because “it was port wine cheese and I was afraid I may have violated some Baptist principle by abetting in its consumption”).



every time a child has a milestone, all I'm thinking is 'What great material! I can't wait to talk about this on stage.' I'd rather have people laugh because they relate to something I say than because I wrote a clever punch line. It's real and it connects with real people."

Although her children are now adults – Calvin is 24, Austin is 21, and Elyse is 18 – the three-year rule is still in effect.

"Calvin got married in July and it'll be 2011 before I can use anything from the wedding in my act," Renfroe says glumly. Then she adds with a smile, "But *John* is fair game."

While John Renfroe '84 may be the subject of an occasional punch line, he's also a full time part of the act behind the scenes. In 2003, John phased out his pastoral work to become Anita's road manager.

"When you get to sleep with your pastor it's great. I get to sleep with my pastor *and* my road manager," Anita Renfroe says. "Seriously, we have loved this portion of our lives. When John was studying for the ministry, the scope of our lives looked like we would minister on a church staff until Jesus returned or we had fine funerals. That's never changed. The venue in which we serve God is all that's different. Now we serve in arenas with 20,000 women and on GMA instead of in a church, but our mission statement – to glorify God with whatever gifts He gave us – is the same."

John Renfroe doesn't see his role in Anita's career as diminishing the stature of his own.

"One of the pleasures of my life right now is seeing Anita bring the medicine of laughter and the joy of the Lord to literally millions around the world," John Renfroe says. "I have the best seat in the house as I call her shows

BOOKS AND DVDs BY ANITA RENFROE

*Songs in the Key of Solomon; In the Word and in the Mood* (co-authored by John Renfroe)

*If You Can't Lose It, Decorate It*

*If It's Not One Thing It's Your Mother*

*The Purse-Driven Life*

*A Purse-Driven Christmas*

*It's Probably Just My Thyroid* (DVD)

*Total Momsense* (DVD)

from the back of the house. I wouldn't want to be doing anything else.

"I like the humor that reflects our life and that she shares nightly from the stage because I'm an important part of it," John continues. "And I think it's the funniest stuff she does. You just can't make that stuff up."

"We go out and make people laugh and deliver truth together," Anita adds. "We've always been partners in ministry – it's just a matter of who's holding the microphone at what time. Our commitment is to expand God's ministry."

With more GMA segments, a full touring schedule, a book deal from a major publisher, and a potential TV sitcom in the works, Renfroe's own ministry is expanding with no end in sight.

"I believe the world is hungry for clean comedy that comes from a place of hope rather than a place of anger," Renfroe says. "You look at the root of most comedy and it's

**UP FOR DEBATE** Anita Renfroe confesses that she enrolled at MC because her then-boyfriend, now-husband John was a student there. But she does point to a position on the MC debate team as having prepared her for her current career. "I had a speech coach named Orville Hooker who somehow plucked me out for the debate team – I guess my ability to talk was widely known. Of all my experiences at MC, that year on the debate team did more to prepare me for my current career than anything else I learned at Mississippi College. "Every night I have to think on my feet, and the debate team helped give me that unique training. In debate, you stand up and say 'I have three great points,' knowing that you're going to have to think up the third one as you're talking about the first two. In improvisational comedy, you start off down a path and have to wind up in a place where people are laughing. You still have to prove your point in comedy by the fact that people laugh and cheer when you get to the end."

"ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF MY LIFE RIGHT NOW IS SEEING ANITA BRING THE MEDICINE OF LAUGHTER AND THE JOY OF THE LORD TO LITERALLY MILLIONS AROUND THE WORLD. I HAVE THE BEST SEAT IN THE HOUSE AS I CALL HER SHOWS FROM THE BACK OF THE HOUSE. I WOULDN'T WANT TO BE DOING ANYTHING ELSE." — JOHN RENFROE

based in anger. 'My view is righter than yours and I'm going to tell you why and make you laugh while I'm doing it.' My comedy comes from a place of hope. We are all human and flawed and we might as well laugh at ourselves.

"I remember my professors at Mississippi College saying we should imagine Jesus smiling as He delivered scripture instead of scowling," Renfroe adds. "The New Testament reads differently if you look at it that way."

While she's enjoying her time in the spotlight, the best reminder that Anita Renfroe's comedy is a calling from God comes from the average, everyday women who come to her performances.

"At almost every appearance, a woman will come up to me after the show and say, 'I just lost my – fill in the blank – son, daughter, mother, sister, or friend. I didn't want to come to this event, but someone dragged me here and in-

sisted I come,'" Renfroe says. "Then she will say to me, 'I thought I could never laugh again, but listening to you here tonight, I was able to laugh, and because I was able to laugh tonight, even just a little, I know that I'm going to be okay.'

"That's something special. There is healing power in laughter and at the core of that, there is hope. If just for a moment I can help break the surface of their grief and they can see that there is still hope and joy to be found in their future, well, that's something powerful. Laughter says you know the world doesn't rest on your shoulders, and that you believe this life isn't all there is."

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ANITA RENFROE'S COMEDY AND A CALENDAR OF HER UPCOMING PERFORMANCES, VISIT [WWW.ANITARENFROE.COM](http://WWW.ANITARENFROE.COM).



Pictured Above: John and Anita Renfroe; Anita Renfroe with Robin Roberts and Diane Sawyer of "Good Morning America"; Anita and John Renfroe's children: daughter-in-law Lisa, Austin, Elyse, and Calvin





*a*  
BRIDGE  
*to*  
**London**

THE LONDON OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP HONORS MC ALUMNUS ADAM AINSWORTH

— 1983 - 2008 —



*W*hen 24-year-old Adam Ainsworth died of a brain tumor on March 27, 2008, he left behind a community devastated by his loss but inspired by his example. A 2006 graduate of Mississippi College, Adam was described by his former youth minister as “one of those rare young people who really got it. He understood God’s plan and considered himself here to serve and to help others.”

As a student at Mississippi College, Adam was a member of the Shawreth men’s service club and was presented with the club’s Josh Brewer Founder’s Award, which goes to the senior who most exemplifies the tenets of the Shawreth Order: devotion, perseverance, and excellence, and fulfills the Shawreth goal to “live a Biblical, Christ-like lifestyle and set the standard of excellence for men at Mississippi College.”

Adam served on a lay renewal team, visiting dozens of

churches throughout Mississippi and Louisiana and sharing what God had done in his life. He was such a devoted member of Parkway Baptist Church in Clinton that if he failed to show up for Sunday services, one of the ladies of the church would call to check on him. Blessed with a quirky sense of humor, Adam was always ready with a joke when a friend’s day needed brightening.

Adam received his bachelor’s degree in biology research from MC in 2006, and continued graduate studies at Louisiana State University and Mississippi University for Women until his illness made attending classes impossible. Even as he battled the inoperable tumor, Adam’s dry wit, steadfast faith, and kindness to others served as an inspiration to his family and friends and to the doctors and hospital staff who cared for him.

“ADAM DIDN’T SEEK ATTENTION AND SOMETIMES HE DIDN’T GET A LOT OF ATTENTION, BUT HE GOT MINE, AND HE GOT THE ATTENTION OF OTHER MEN SEEKING TO LIVE LIKE CHRIST. ADAM TAUGHT ME ABOUT CARING FOR OTHERS, ABOUT NOT THINKING TOO HIGHLY OF YOURSELF, AND ABOUT BEING THE HANDS AND FEET OF JESUS TO PEOPLE. I AM DIFFERENT AND BETTER FOR HAVING HAD ADAM AS A FRIEND.” — JUSTIN QUALLS

“He told the orderlies who came to clean up his hospital room how much he appreciated them,” his father, Randy Ainsworth, recalls.

In a letter to Adam’s parents and his sister, Rachel, Adam’s Shawreth brother Justin Qualls described his friend as “having left a permanent mark on the world.”

“Adam didn’t seek attention and sometimes he didn’t get a lot of attention, but he got mine, and he got the attention of other men seeking to live like Christ,” Qualls wrote. “Adam taught me about caring for others, about not thinking too highly of yourself, and about being the hands and feet of Jesus to people. I am different and better for having had Adam as a friend.”

“I always figured it was okay to be complacent about reaching out to others simply because there were people like Adam in the world to do it for me,” wrote Joy Hughes, another of Adam’s friends. “But now that he is gone, I know the world will be just a little darker, and I want to do my best to do what Adam would have done.”

In a fitting tribute to the extraordinary young man, Adam’s standing-room-only funeral service was an uplifting celebration of his life and faith. Adam’s former youth minister, Andy Murry, opened the service by asking family and friends in the packed church to, “Give me an A!”

“A!” those gathered shouted.

“Give me a D! Give me another A! Give me an M! What do you have?”

“Adam!”

One of the many people inspired by Adam’s life was Jackie Weston ’05. Jackie and Adam met and became close friends when both participated in the 2004 London Semester Program through Mississippi College. Desiring to cre-

ate a lasting tribute to her friend, Jackie approached Janice and Randy Ainsworth with the idea of creating a scholarship in their son’s memory that would help future MC students participate in the London Semester Program.

“The London Semester was one of the defining periods of my life, not only because of the spectacular sights and the opportunity to learn from some of England’s greatest minds, but because of the people I shared that experience with,” Jackie says. “The program profoundly influenced my life, as I knew it had Adam’s. A scholarship for the London Semester seemed like a wonderful way to honor Adam at MC.”

In the Ainsworths’ opinion, it was the perfect tribute.

“Adam blossomed during that semester in London,” Janice Ainsworth says. “He came back much more independent and confident. It also broadened his vision, and showed him the needs of other people and God’s work in another part of the world. This scholarship sounded like something Adam would have wanted – the chance to give someone else that opportunity.”

Jackie’s idea also relieved the Ainsworths of a burden – deciding what to do with the \$10,000 they had received from Adam’s life insurance policy.

“Randy didn’t even realize we had life insurance on Adam through his work until after Adam’s death,” Janice Ainsworth says. “We were building a new house and we had a daughter in college, but I didn’t want to use that money for those things. Honestly, I didn’t want to use that money for anything. The \$10,000 was a burden to us until we heard Jackie’s idea. Using it as the seed money for the scholarship was the perfect thing to do.”

Randy Ainsworth’s employer, AT&T, matched the



“Establishing this fund will no doubt be a huge challenge, especially considering today’s economic conditions,” says Jackie Weston, who is spearheading the London Opportunity Scholarship campaign. “However, Adam never allowed circumstances to get in the way of his pursuits, and we won’t either. I truly believe God doesn’t continually place something on our hearts without enabling us to follow through.” Contributions must reach \$25,000 in order to endow the scholarship in Adam Ainsworth’s memory.

—————TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE LONDON OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP, SEND YOUR TAX-DEDUCTIBLE GIFT TO: —————  
ADAM AINSWORTH MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP / MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE OFFICE OF ADVANCEMENT / BOX 4005 / CLINTON, MS 39058

donation, and Jackie Weston began working to raise the additional funds needed to endow the London Opportunity Scholarship. She sent a letter to other London Semester alumni describing Adam Ainsworth and the scholarship she hoped to help establish in his honor, writing:

*“I believe all of my fellow London participants would agree that Adam’s role was that of the eternal optimist. He was the one who would, metaphorically speaking, suck every ounce of adventure out of the experience....He was the one who would walk around to check everyone’s morale. If morale was down, he would tell some quirky story or anecdote that would force a smile on the recipient...He was the perfect encourager to our group.”*

*“After an arduous battle with an inoperable brain tumor, Adam left us to embark on the greatest adventure....Once the initial shock subsided, we came to see Adam as a model of living life the way Christ intended: to the fullest....He served those in need, encouraged those who were down, and threw himself wholeheartedly into every aspect of life that he could.”*

Jackie’s words are echoed by others who met Adam Ainsworth through the London Semester Program. Mary Ann and Ivan Parke, both professors at MC, participated in the 2004 London Semester Program along with their children, and remember the kindness Adam demonstrated to their entire family.

“I have several memories of Adam, beginning with one at the Jackson airport when we departed,” Mary Ann Parke says. “Ivan was already in London, and I was struggling with an eight-year-old, a 10-year-old, and six large pieces of luggage. The 30 MC students there all had their own luggage to

deal with, but Adam offered to help me. He had a servant’s heart. He, more than anyone else, looked for the one who was different, hurting, or did not have many friends, and went out of his way to befriend that person.”

The Parke’s children, Anne Marie and Jonathan, remember Adam as the college student who was willing to hang out with them and make them laugh. Adam even arranged an Easter egg hunt in London’s Russell Park just for them.

“I want my children to have that same kind of heart,” Ivan Parke says. “Adam Ainsworths are a rare breed in this world, but what the world desperately needs.”

“One of the forms the London Semester participants filled out asked them to describe themselves,” Dr. Dean Parks, director of the London Semester Program recalls. “The word Adam used was ‘servant.’ Adam lived up to that. He was always the first one there to set up for or clean up after an event, encourage other students having a tough day, and keep everyone’s spirits up. Adam would be so pleased to know that this scholarship will help other students have the same opportunity to study in London and to serve others that he did.”

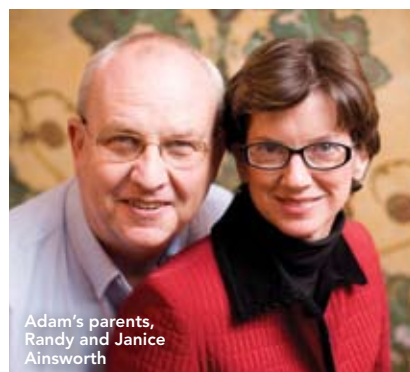
More than just helping to send a student to London, the scholarship will serve as a permanent tribute not only to Adam Ainsworth, but also to the Savior for whom he lived his life. Adam’s unwavering commitment to Christ explains why his youth minister, who opened the funeral service with a shout for Adam, closed it with another responsive cheer.

“Give me a J! Give me an E! Give me an S! Give me a U! Give me another S! What do you have?”

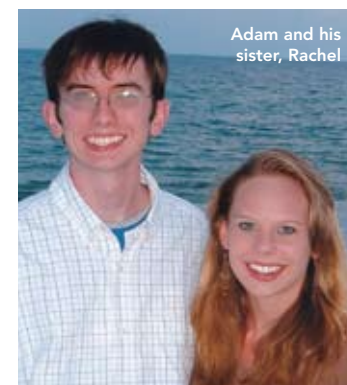
“Jesus!” the family and friends shouted back.

“That’s right,” Andy Murry said. “And if you knew Adam Ainsworth, you knew Jesus.”

**JOY IN THE FACE OF GRIEF** Their strong faith has helped Adam Ainsworth’s family maintain their joy in the face of their deep grief. “I am still amazed by how God provided and helped us get through,” Randy Ainsworth says. “God’s plan is perfect. It doesn’t matter whether I understand it or not.” “God gave me my children – what can I do but give them back to Him?” Janice Ainsworth adds. “It all comes down to leaning on the faith you’ve always said you have.” Adam’s sister, Rachel, says simply, “There is so much ugliness and sin and darkness in the world that God wasn’t going to let Adam stay around it.” Typical of his desire to help others in need, Adam comforted his family until his final hours. In the days leading up to his death, he whispered to his earthly father, “Daddy, you know Heaven is a pretty place.”



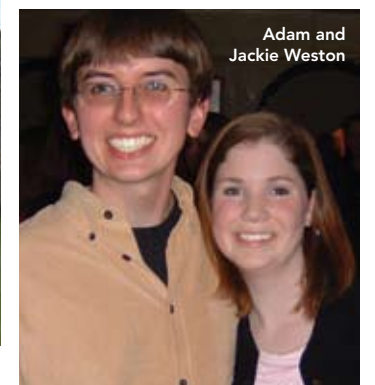
Adam’s parents, Randy and Janice Ainsworth



Adam and his sister, Rachel



Adam Ainsworth at Stonehenge



Adam and Jackie Weston

# GOING DOWN IN HISTORY

DR. EDWARD McMILLAN '50 | MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

“To see a need and meet it brings me the greatest joy,” says Dr. Edward McMillan, affectionately known at MC as “Dr. Mac.”

His knack for finding and meeting needs, combined with a caring nature that’s endeared him to hundreds of MC alumni, faculty, and friends, has earned Dr. McMillan distinction as Mississippi College’s 2008 Alumnus of the Year.

“Dr. McMillan is a gifted professor, a successful administrator, and a Christian leader who left an enduring legacy at Mississippi College,” says MC President Lee Royce. “Most of all, Dr. Mac is a kind, compassionate man who earned the love and trust of virtually every student who studied under him and of the many colleagues he inspired by example. Dr. Mac is one of MC’s most beloved and revered figures. It’s my pleasure to congratulate him on this well-deserved recognition.”

A native of Kosciusko, Ed McMillan came to Mississippi College planning to study pre-law, but his love of history and admiration for his professors at MC inspired him to pursue a career as a history teacher. The most important lessons McMillan learned at Mississippi College, however, were geared not toward the past, but the future.

“At MC, I learned a sense of commitment, loyalty, and diligence, and how important it is to be dependable,” Dr. McMillan says. “You do better in life if you’re dependable and your friends know it.”

Dr. McMillan met his wife, Carnette, at MC. The two

graduated in 1950 and were married in 1951, the same year Dr. McMillan earned his master’s degree from the University of Mississippi. He also earned a Ph.D. from Texas Tech University and completed post-doctoral studies at Colorado State University, but MC would always hold a special place in his heart.

“I enjoyed my work at all of the universities,” Dr. McMillan says, “but one thing I did like about MC was that it was smaller. In graduate school, I knew friends in my own program. At Mississippi College, I worked in the cafeteria and I knew more people and made more friends on campus.”

It was one of those old friends who eventually recruited McMillan back to MC as a history professor. McMillan’s former schoolmate, Charles Martin, went on to become MC’s academic vice president. Martin asked McMillan, who was then teaching at Louisiana College, to consider a position in the MC history department. McMillan happily agreed, returning to the classroom on the other side of the desk in 1973. Dr. McMillan taught multiple history courses, but remembers his freshman and sophomore survey classes as his favorites, largely because they were composed of students from every major offered at Mississippi College.

“There was such a diversity of backgrounds among my students,” Dr. McMillan recalls. “Some of the courses I taught were required, so all of my students weren’t history buffs, but I thoroughly enjoyed building friendships with my students and watching all of them learn.”

## 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.

Pictured Right: Dr. Mac still treasures his MC freshman beanie

“At MC,  
I learned a sense  
of *commitment,*  
*loyalty, and*  
*diligence,* and how  
important it is  
to be dependable.  
*You do better*  
*in life* if you’re  
dependable and  
your friends  
know it.”





LEFT:  
Dr. McMillan  
and grandsons  
Bradley, Jason,  
David, and  
Ryan McMillan  
RIGHT:  
Carnette  
and Edward  
McMillan



Dr. McMillan quickly became a popular professor, capturing the Circle K Teacher of the Year Award for 1973-74. Dr. Matthew Thomas, a former MC student and adjunct professor in the MC kinesiology department, took only one course under Dr. McMillan, but it left a lasting impression.

“Dr. McMillan had an incredible way of connecting with students in the classroom,” Dr. Thomas says. “When I think of the good memories and people of MC, he is one of the two or three people I remember who had a positive influence and impact on my life and the lives of so many other students.”

Dr. McMillan continued to teach while also serving as chairman of the History and Political Department and later as vice president of graduate and special programs, a position he held until his retirement in 1998. In that role, Dr. McMillan not only oversaw the quality of MC’s graduate courses, but also added new programs as needs arose. When Methodist Rehabilitation Center inquired about graduate courses in therapy, Dr. McMillan helped create the master’s in therapy, which evolved into a strong program in healthcare administration. When the Department of Corrections asked about a graduation program in counseling, Dr. McMillan led the effort to create what is now a nationally accredited counseling program. Under his leadership, MC also added the administration of justice major and the paralegal studies program.

One of Dr. McMillan’s most important accomplishments was establishing the Mississippi College London Spring Semester Program. The program allows MC students to spend 13 weeks studying in London, participating in artistic and cultural activities and excursions designed to broaden their view of the world. Dr. McMillan and his wife

designed the program and accompanied the first group of students to London during the inaugural semester in 1989, the first of 17 trips they would make to London leading MC students. For many of those students, it was their first trip outside of Mississippi and a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

“The London program was one of our biggest joys,” Carnette McMillan says. “Some of those students had never even been on an airplane before. To see them discovering the world was amazing. I remember one trip when a student who was a music major and I were walking past a theatre and saw a marquee announcing that Luciano Pavarotti was performing. On the spur of the moment we bought tickets and saw that performance. I knew it was something that neither one of us would ever forget.”

Building on the success of the London Semester Program, Dr. McMillan established the London Spring Break Program in 1990, which gave students an opportunity to spend up to 10 days abroad in various countries and receive academic credit for the experience.

“I was fortunate enough to travel outside the United States on two occasions to England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland with Dr. Mac as leader of the travel tours,” says Jeannie Lane ’81, who studied under Dr. McMillan, then worked as his assistant in the graduate office until his retirement. “These experiences helped give me a greater appreciation for the world and the United States. Had it not been for Dr. McMillan’s keen interest in traveling the world and sharing his experience with others, I never would have ordered my first passport.”

Dr. McMillan and his wife continue to help MC students discover the world through an endowed scholarship they established at the university. The McMillan International Studies Scholarship helps students with expenses related to

**GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES**

Dr. McMillan has reached or surpassed the 50-year mark as a:

- BAPTIST DEACON
- BAPTIST COLLEGE PROFESSOR
- MEMBER OF LIONS CLUB INTERNATIONAL
- HUSBAND

**CLEAR AS A BELL**

In addition to traveling extensively in Europe, Dr. McMillan has visited China, South Korea, and Canada. But perhaps his most memorable travel experience was a 1988 trip to Russia just as the U.S.S.R. was collapsing. McMillan and his group were among the first Americans to set foot in some of the small Russian towns they visited in more than 70 years. The practice of organized religion had not been allowed for decades, and many of the historic churches the group toured had long ago been converted into museums. As they stood in the church courtyard in a small town called Novgorod, the bells of the church began ringing through the cold air. “We realized it was the first time those church bells had rung in seven decades,” Dr. McMillan says. “It was a moving moment not only for the townspeople, but also for us.”

the London Semester and London Spring Break Programs. The McMillans also established a second endowment, the McMillan History Department Endowment, to provide supplemental funds for the department.

“We both believe strongly in MC’s purpose and mission, and wanted to do something to permanently assist the college,” Dr. McMillan says. “In my entire career, I worked at just three institutions, all of them Christian colleges. Along the way, I turned down opportunities to leave denominational education because I realized that not just teaching, but teaching in Christian higher education has been my calling.”

Since his retirement, Dr. McMillan has continued to be active in his community and church. His passion for history has an outlet in his role as the executive secretary of the Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission, which collects and preserves the history of the state’s 2,000 Baptist churches, and as a volunteer for the Clinton Visitors Center, a role that allows him to share the area’s history with travelers along the Natchez Trace Parkway.

While Dr. McMillan has made many contributions to his community, church, and Mississippi College, what his students and colleagues value most is his caring nature.

“My favorite memory of Dr. McMillan has to be the time my fellow members of Shawreth Men’s Club went door-to-door collecting canned goods for Stewpot,” says former student and graduate assistant Robbie Brown ’06. “We came upon Dr. McMillan working in his yard and he invited us in. He and Mrs. McMillan served us snacks while he told us stories about his world travels. As we left, he loaded us up with bags full of cans, more than we received from many other houses combined. It’s the perfect example of what a kind person Dr. McMillan really is.”

Perhaps Dr. McMillan’s biggest fans are his four grandsons. Jason, David, Bradley, and Ryan McMillan are all current students at MC. Dr. McMillan maintains an office on campus and sometimes runs into his grandsons on the Quad, but says he’s more likely to see them “during the ongoing tailgating at our house. It’s not sports-related. They just call at about nine o’clock at night and ask their grandmother if she has anything to eat.”

“Granddad has a passion for MC and everything that goes on here. His love for MC is a major reason that I’m here,” says Jason McMillan, a junior who is following in his grandfather’s footsteps as a history major.

“Having my grandfather related to the college made it a special place for our family,” Ryan McMillan, a freshman at MC, adds. “Still, I didn’t realize the scope of my grandfather’s accomplishments until I experienced the MC life. Once I began my first year of college here, I realized just how many amazing people have attended Mississippi College. Being named Alumnus of the Year is an amazing achievement, an honor given to tremendous people. I am so proud that my grandfather is one of them.”

It’s the rare combination of dedication, knowledge, faith, leadership, and caring that make Dr. Edward McMillan not only a tremendous person, but one for the history books.

**THE McMILLAN FILE**

**CAREER**

- MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE:  
Chairman of Department of History and Political Science  
Vice-President of Graduate and Special Programs  
Circle K Teacher of the Year  
Recipient of the Mississippi College Order of the Golden Arrow
- LOUISIANA COLLEGE:  
Chairman of Department of History and Political Science  
Academic Dean  
Recipient of the Outstanding Teacher Award
- TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY:  
Graduate Assistant
- WAYLAND BAPTIST UNIVERSITY:  
Instructor  
Recipient of the Outstanding Teacher Award

**EDUCATION**

- Mississippi College, B.A. in history and economics, special distinction
- University of Mississippi, M.A. in history
- Texas Tech University, Ph.D. in history and political science
- Colorado State University, post-doctoral study

**CHURCH SERVICE**

- Member of the First Baptist Church of Clinton
- Deacon for more than 50 years, including 33 years at First Baptist Clinton
- Executive Secretary of the Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission

**CIVIC ACTIVITIES**

- Past President, Clinton Chamber of Commerce
- Recognized as Clinton’s Outstanding Citizen, 1987
- Volunteer at the Clinton Visitors Center

**FAMILY**

- Married to Carnette Rackley McMillan ’50 for 57 years.
- Mrs. McMillan served as acquisitions librarian for the Mississippi College School of Law for 17 years.
- Two sons, David McMillan and Dale McMillan, both MC alumni
- Five grandchildren, including MC honor graduate Wendy McMillan and current MC students Jason, David, Bradley, and Ryan McMillan

**HOBBIES**

- Travel / History



## It's How He Played the Game.

ENNIS PROCTOR '64, '68, '79

Ennis Proctor considered a career in law or the ministry, but his desire to work with young people and the high school and college coaches who served as his role models led him into a storied, 44-years-and-counting career as a teacher, coach, and leader in the world of Mississippi and national high school sports.

A native of Florida and former Marine, Proctor found his way to Mississippi College through football. He received a letter from Coach Hartwell McPhail inviting him to try out for the Choctaws. Once Proctor stepped on campus, his decision was made. Following his graduation in 1964, Proctor began his teaching career in Titusville, Florida, as a social studies teacher and coach.

Proctor returned to MC to complete his master's degree and education specialist degree, and launched a successful career that included service as head coach, athletic director, and social studies teacher at Raymond High School; principal at Forest Hill High School and Peeples Junior High School; and head football coach, baseball coach, and assistant principal at Wingfield High School. In 1989, Proctor earned a doctoral degree from Mississippi State University.

Since 1991 Proctor has served as executive director of the Mississippi High School Activities Association (MHSAA), a nonprofit association responsible for academic and athletic competitions for the 569 Mississippi secondary schools in its membership. MHSAA promotes, plans, and directs contests, games, and other interscholastic activities, and encourages scholarship and good sportsmanship among student athletes.

When Proctor joined the organization in 1991, MHSAA was a financially strapped organization with few activities. Under his leadership, MHSAA has become one of the leading high school activities associations in the nation. The greatly expanded competitions of this now financially secure organization include debate, drama, speech, writing, band, and choral, along with 24 athletic championships.

The MHSAA promotes scholarship through its Lindy

Callahan Scholar Athlete Program and its Cellular South Gameplan program, which encourages students to prepare themselves academically for NCAA qualification.

"My relationships with administrators, coaches, staff, and students are the most enjoyable part of the job," Proctor says. "It is so rewarding to see our students grow and develop through their involvement in the wide array of activities we've added during my tenure as executive director."

At its July 2008 meeting in Washington, D.C., the National Federation of State High School Associations' (NFHS) board of directors elected Proctor president-elect for the upcoming year. He is the first representative of MHSAA to hold that position in MHSAA's 86-year history. The NFHS is the national leadership organization for high school sports and activities and includes 51 state associations.

"This honor is directly attributable to so many people who've worked with me during my 18 years as director of MHSAA," Proctor says. "My selection as president-elect demonstrates the high regard the rest of the nation has for the Mississippi High School Activities Association and its accomplishments. When I was selected, Mississippi was honored."

Proctor's many other honors include his selection as captain for the Alabama/Mississippi All-Star Classic in 2007, induction into the Mississippi Coaches' Hall of Fame, and recognition as Coach of the Year in baseball and football. In December of 2008, Dr. Proctor will be inducted into the Alabama/Mississippi All-Star Classic Hall of Fame.

He is a former recipient of the Mississippi College Department of Education Distinguished Alumnus Award and Mississippi State University's Lamar Moody Award, which recognizes leadership in education. In 1998, Dr. Proctor received a proclamation from the Mississippi State Senate for exemplary leadership and outstanding service to the youth of Mississippi.

Dr. Proctor has served as president of both the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame and the South Jackson Rotary Club and is a member of Morrison Heights Baptist Church, where he serves as a deacon. On a national level, Proctor served on and chaired multiple NFHS committees. As a Mississippi College alumni, he has served on the athletic fund-raising committee and on several coach search committees.

"I'm ready to serve MC whenever I'm called on to do so," Proctor says. "At MC, I learned leadership skills and a strong work ethic and the Christian emphasis of the school had a positive impact on my life. MC is larger today with a more diverse student population, but it's still a Christian university dedicated to developing good Christian citizens for the future."

Dr. Proctor has put his considerable experience with Mississippi high school football into two new books. Proctor penned the foreword to the 2007 book *Gridiron Gold: Inspiring Stories of Legendary Mississippi High School Coaches, Guardians of the Greatest Football Talent in America* and the epilogue to 2008's *Y'all vs. Us - Thrilling Tales of Mississippi's*

## 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.

*Hottest High School Football Rivalries*. Both books were authored by MC alum X.M. "Mike" Frascogna, Jr.

Dr. Proctor and his wife of 45 years, Judy, have two children, Kim Morrow and Trey Proctor, who are both Mississippi College alumni. After all those years of coaching hundreds of young people, one of Dr. Proctor's favorite past times is still tossing a ball with his five grandchildren. Proctor also enjoys hearing from the many young people whose lives he has touched.

"Many of my former students have come back to tell me I made a positive difference in their lives," Dr. Proctor says. "I look at my former students who today are doctors, lawyers, ministers, teachers, and good family and community members. They make me very proud, and I just hope I said or did something that contributed to their success."

"When it was announced in Washington, D.C., last summer that I was the president-elect of NFHS, a lady in the audience came up to re-introduce herself to me," Proctor continues. "She was in the first class I taught in Florida in 1964. She told me that she went into teaching because of me, and thanked me for the influence I had had on her life. That's what being an educator is all about."

## From President to Career Woman to (Literal) Running Mate

GAYLE LONG WICKER '72, '74

Gayle Long Wicker spent much of 2008 in the spotlight as the wife of Roger Wicker, Mississippi's ultimately victorious incumbent Republican candidate for U.S. Senate. But Roger Wicker isn't the only member of the family who has won a challenging political race. In 1971, Gayle Long made history when she was elected Mississippi College's first female student body president.

"At the time, I didn't think anything of being a woman running for office," Wicker, 2008 recipient of the Order of the Golden Arrow, recalls. "My parents had always encouraged me to pursue what I felt God was leading me to pursue without any regard to gender. But once I was elected it was big news. After the Jackson newspapers and TV stations called me for interviews, I realized it was a historic event."



For Gayle Long Wicker, her interest in student government would turn out to be a historic event in more ways than one. While representing MC at a Mississippi Youth Congress meeting, she was introduced to the University of Mississippi Associated Student Body President, Roger Wicker. The two continued to cross paths at College Republicans gatherings, and were married in 1975.

Wicker received both her undergraduate and master's degrees from MC, and served her alma mater as an admissions counselor for two years. The Wickers left Mississippi when Roger Wicker was placed on active duty in the Air Force, but wherever they were stationed, Gayle Wicker followed her mother's advice to "bloom where you're planted." Wicker always seemed to find a need she could meet and a career opportunity that seemed made for her, serving in admissions counseling positions at Carson Newman College in Tennessee and at Wayne Community College in North Carolina. Along the way, the Wickers had three children and the family eventually returned to Tupelo, where Gayle was a corporate officer with Long Enterprises and general manager of the Days Inn Hotel.

In 1996, Wicker again made MC history when she was appointed as one of the two first female members of the Mississippi College Board of Trustees.

"I do recall that as being historic," Wicker says, "I was humbled and honored to have been appointed to the board, but even more than that, I was so proud of MC for taking that step."

"Mississippi College faced some significant challenges during my time on the board," Wicker continues. "Our board members were very diverse people from different areas of life, career, and experience, and to watch them pull together with the faculty, staff, and administration in faith in God and commitment to MC was proof to me that MC would not just endure, but would persevere as one of Mississippi's premier universities."

In 2005, Wicker accepted a position as coordinator of student services at the University of Mississippi-Tupelo, a commuter campus serving juniors, seniors, and graduate students. Wicker works to provide services to enhance the primarily non-traditional students' college experience, including staging career fairs and developing programs and organizations geared toward working students and students with families.

Wicker has continued to serve Mississippi College through the years, chairing the Academic Affairs Committee from 2006-07 and hosting events in Tupelo for prospective students. She is a former recipient of the Department of Communication's Distinguished Alumnus Award.

While Wicker is involved in numerous church, community, and civic activities, a cause particularly close to her heart is promoting literacy. As the spouse of a member of Congress, Wicker had the opportunity to film a Public Service Announcement every other year; she used her PSA to encourage parents to read to their children. Wicker has twice served as co-chair of the Reading is Fundamental Gift of Reading Awards Gala in Washington, D.C., and frequently visits classrooms to read to students. Considering her background, it's probably not surprising that her favorite children's books include *House Mouse*, *Senate Mouse* and *Woodrow the White House Mouse*.

In October 2008, Wicker took a leave of absence from the University of Mississippi to hit the campaign trail with her husband.

"Roger and I have supported each other in every endeavor either of us has undertaken, from jobs to family to campaigning," Wicker says. "It's never been a matter of my career taking a backseat to his political involvement. For us, campaigning has always been a team sport and a family affair."

That family includes daughter Margaret McPhillips, press secretary for Senator Thad Cochran, and her husband, Manning; daughter Caroline Sims, who works for Homeland Security, and her husband, Kirk; and the Wickers' son, McDaniel, who is Attorney General of the Associated Student Body and commander of his ROTC unit at the University of Mississippi.

"I've been blessed with a wonderful husband and children," Wicker says, "I've seen them grow up and be spirit-filled Christian men and women involved in their churches and communities. If I had a little influence in that, that is my greatest accomplishment."

From her campaign for MC Student Body President to her current career helping students and her role as a

Senator's wife, Gayle Long Wicker credits Mississippi College with preparing her to seize every opportunity that has come her way.

"MC opened so many doors for me. Having the opportunity to be involved in so many aspects of college life, including student government, plays, a social tribe, and the debate team, helped prepare me for today," Wicker says. "At MC, I learned leadership, adaptability and the importance of friends. I'm proud to see that MC is still a strong, faith-based school that gives students an opportunity to grow and mature. For me, MC was literally a dream come true."



## All in the Family

HEATH HILLMAN '94, '97

"Whether it's the students, faculty, alumni, or staff, MC has always had a family atmosphere," Heath Hillman, MC's 2008 Young Alumnus of the Year, says. "A lot of people I went to school with I consider family, and I know I wouldn't have had that experience if I hadn't gone to Mississippi College."

Hillman's ties to the MC family run deep. As a student, he was president of the Student Government Association and a member of the Hall of Fame. After earning his bachelor's and master's degrees from MC, Hillman joined the university's staff and spent the next five years serving as director of the annual fund (1994-99), director of institutional relations (1995-97), and director of alumni affairs (1997-99). Hillman was responsible for helping alumni stay connected to Mississippi College and for encouraging them to support that connection through involvement on campus, financial gifts, and referring prospective students to MC.

"At a smaller, private institution like MC, you're not graduating 15,000 a year and your alumni base is limited,"

Hillman says. "This means you have to be vigilant about making sure that every alum continues to think of Mississippi College as home."

It was a role in which Hillman shined. Under his leadership as director of alumni affairs, MC alumni chapter meetings increased from an average of three per year to 13 annually. Hillman also demonstrated a gift for fund-raising. During his time as part of a four-member fund-raising team at MC, total giving increased by 61 percent and the number of donors increased by nearly 17 percent. Hillman describes himself as "privileged" to have been a member of the MC fund-raising team that launched the New Dawn Capital Campaign in 1996. The campaign raised more than \$92 million in two years, and gave Hillman the opportunity to work with MC alumni and friends from around the country.

"The most memorable thing about working for MC was the relationships I built and the friends I made nationwide," Hillman recalls. "I also had the opportunity to be part of a fund-raising effort that changed the face of MC. To be in my twenties and participate in strategy meetings and offer my opinion was an incredible experience. The things I learned through that campaign are things I still draw upon today."

In 1999, Hillman left MC to accept a position as divisional resource development director with The Salvation Army in Baltimore, Maryland, where he was responsible for cultivating contributions in Maryland and West Virginia. Calling on the fund-raising experience he gained at MC, Hillman raised more than \$1 million in new gifts in his first three years on the job and was recognized as one of the top fund-raisers in The Salvation Army's 15-state Southern Territory. As if that weren't impressive enough, Hillman did it all while attending law school at night at the University of Maryland.

"Practicing law and fund-raising for a cause you believe in have a lot in common," Hillman says. "Both involve telling a story, and gathering the facts you need to support the end you're trying to accomplish. Both are advocacy roles and both require strong people skills and communication skills. You can lay the facts out there, but the way you communicate makes a difference to a jury just as it does to a prospective donor."

Hillman earned his J.D. in 2002. Today he is a partner in the Hattiesburg law office of Aultman, Tyner where his practice is focused on insurance defense, corporate defense, medical malpractice defense, education law, election law, and wills and estates. Hillman is also an adjunct faculty member at the University of Southern Mississippi (USM), where he teaches education law, and is chairman of the advisory board for the Frances A. Karnes Center for Gifted Studies at USM, a program for identifying and cultivating gifted students in which he was once a student participant. He volunteers with the pre-school department of his church and treasures time spent with his wife, Elgen, also an MC alum, and their daughters, Olivia and Maryn.

Hillman still cherishes his family ties to MC. He's active in the Hattiesburg alumni chapter, lending a hand with alumni meetings and events and "doing the grunt work that I asked other people to do when I was alumni director." Hillman also supports the university by recommending MC to promising high school students in his area.

"One of our critical roles as alumni is to find high school students who would benefit from attending MC and who would in turn benefit MC as students, and connecting those people to the college," Hillman says. "That's how we sustain and provide for the future, and it's just as important as financial support – but don't tell the people in development I said that," he adds with a smile.

For Hillman, his own success is indelibly linked to Mississippi College and its strong sense of family.

"So much of what we learn in college is more emotional than textbook," Hillman says. "MC reinforced what my parents always taught me – that your values, your faith, and your own personal moral compass are just as important as what you learn academically."

"I'm proud to have been associated with so many wonderful people from so many walks of life and to have had the opportunity to do so many different things," Hillman continues. "I couldn't have done that without encouragement from the folks at MC. When I hear the words 'Mississippi College,' the first thing that comes to my mind is 'people.' MC has always been about relationships. Those relationships are the soul of MC."



## The Joy of Sharing

WAYNE PARKER

By the time he was 45 years old, Wayne Parker had built a successful real estate development company, was happily married, and was living a comfortable life. Yet he sensed something was missing.

"I began to wonder what kind of legacy I would leave," Parker recalls. "I had been blessed with a wonderful family and a successful business, but I began to feel that my life wasn't complete. I knew God wanted me to do something with my resources and my time – something that was His will."

That something turned out to be The LifeShare Foundation. Founded in 2000 by Wayne and his wife, Zeita,

### 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.

The LifeShare Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to making a difference in the lives of Mississippi's children and young adults. From providing computers that help disabled children communicate to assisting families struggling with poverty to building new facilities at the Mississippi School for the Blind, LifeShare is changing lives statewide.

One of the Foundation's initiatives is the LifeShare Scholarship, which assists promising high school graduates who want to attend Mississippi College but would not be able to do so without financial aid. The Foundation provides renewable scholarships in varying amounts to eight to 12 Mississippi College students each academic year. A committee screens students and selects outstanding candidates who show promise for leadership and service, as well as a heart for giving to others.

"These are outstanding students and we want to give them this outstanding opportunity," Parker says. "The LifeShare Scholarship is the bridge that brings them to Mississippi College."

An alumnus of the University of Mississippi, the University of Texas, and the University of Mississippi School of Law, Wayne Parker originally became involved with MC when he was asked to join the board of trustees.

"Mississippi College is committed to making a difference in this world, which is what LifeShare is all about," Parker says. "At MC, I saw students and faculty praying and talking about what it is to be a Christian. I was so impressed with that spiritual aspect of life at MC, which is made clear in the dedication and commitment of the faculty, the administration, the security folks, the students – literally everyone you pass on the streets of the MC campus, and I wanted to give that experience to other students." Parker points out that the benefits of a LifeShare Scholarship don't end with its recipients.

"LifeShare serves some children and families with the sole purpose of making that one life better, but when we give a scholarship that allows a student to attend Mississippi College, we know the blessing from that scholarship will be multiplied many times," Parker says. "These young people are our future leaders. I hope they'll remember that someone cared about them and helped them, and that in turn, they'll want to help others. The money makes an impact, but the feeling grows and grows."

In addition to the LifeShare Scholarship he established, Parker is a supporter of other scholarship programs at MC. The LifeShare Foundation was a \$50,000 sponsor of the

first annual scholarship banquet earlier this year, which featured Bob Dole as keynote speaker and raised \$218,000 to fund scholarships. When Lina Song, a 27-year-old MC graduate student from China, was killed in an accident in 2007, Parker attended her memorial service in Provine Chapel. Moved by the emotional tribute to Song, Parker made a \$50,000 donation through LifeShare to help establish a scholarship for international students in her memory.

"There is great personal satisfaction in knowing that an MC graduate will go out into the world with the education and values received in four years at this Christian university," Parker says. "As a businessman for 40 years, I have never made a better investment than helping provide a scholarship for some young person to attend Mississippi College."

Parker's generosity to MC doesn't end with scholarships. During the memorial service for Song, Parker noticed that the sound system in 1860 Provine Chapel was in need of enhancement, and donated another \$30,000 through LifeShare to fund those improvements. LifeShare is also providing funds for an extensive landscaping project at the Mississippi College School of Law campus in downtown Jackson.

In addition to his work through LifeShare, Parker has served in many positions with the American Diabetes Association, the Jackson Kiwanis Club, and the Madison County Economic Development Foundation. He is a member of Northminster Baptist Church and has served on its board of deacons, as well as on the boards of several publicly traded companies. But of all his charitable and civic involvements and despite his impressive business success, Parker says that LifeShare has given him the greatest return on his investment.

"Every day, I think of these students at Mississippi College, and of the children at the Mississippi School for the Blind, and of the other families we've been privileged to serve, and I know that I'm getting more out of this than they are," Parker says. "LifeShare has given me lasting peace and joy, and has been the greatest blessing of my life."

More than just financial support, Parker is now giving others the opportunity to experience that same sense of peace, joy, and blessing that will linger long after the scholarships have served their original purpose.

"What I want to hear back from the scholarship recipients is not only how they've succeeded in their careers, but how they've addressed deep iniquities in the world," Parker says. "At some point, they'll be put in the path of the hurt and pain of others and realize they have the ability to do something about it. The LifeShare Scholarship is a loan, and that's how they can repay it."

## 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.

## DEPARTMENTAL DISTINGUISHED AWARDS

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



BENJAMIN JOHNSTON



DR. LEWIS METTS



DR. BILL CAUSEY

### Art

#### BENJAMIN KYZAR "KY" JOHNSTON '98

Ky Johnston is assistant professor of art at Delta State University. Prior to joining the Delta State faculty, he taught art at Jackson Preparatory School, Hinds Community College, and Belhaven College, and also served as a graduate instructor while earning his M.F.A. in ceramics at the University of Mississippi. Johnston's studio work focuses on utilitarian stoneware and porcelain; he also produces paintings and relief prints. His work has been exhibited in galleries throughout Mississippi and Tennessee. Johnston is the recipient of the Pattilo Foundation Art Award and the James Ettel Endowed Sculpture Award and a member of the Craftsmen's Guild of Mississippi.

### Biology

#### DR. BARBARA PROCTOR '77

After graduating from Mississippi College with a major in biology and a minor in chemistry, Barbara Proctor attended medical school at the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMC) and earned her M.D. in 1981. Following the completion of her residency at UMC in 1985, she joined Sturgis, Samson & Henderson Pathology Group, in Flowood, Mississippi. In 1992, Dr. Proctor became a partner of the Sturgis, Samson, & Proctor Pathology Group, which was acquired by Ameripath in 1997. As an Ameripath pathologist, Dr. Proctor is the laboratory medicine director at Central Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson. Dr. Proctor is a generous supporter of the MC Department of Biological Sciences. In 2001, she donated funds for the renovation and furnishing of the biology conference room in honor of Dr. and Mrs. Prentiss Cox in recognition of their years of service and dedication to Mississippi College. In her leisure time, Dr. Proctor enjoys reading, traveling, and showing her Pomeranians.

### Chemistry

#### DR. LEWIS METTS '64

Lewis L. Metts, Ph.D., is a visionary leader who has demonstrated extraordinary creativity in research and development, manufacturing, and management, and has built an outstanding reputation and record of achievement throughout North America and the United Kingdom. Dr. Metts is president, chief executive officer, chairman of the board,

and co founder of Taxolog, Inc., a company that works to develop new drugs for the treatment of cancer and other diseases. Dr. Metts is also a member of the board of directors of MDS Research Foundation, a nonprofit group focused on research contributing to the treatment of disease, and Syncure, Inc., a research foundation. Dr. Metts has over 33 years of combined experience in management and chemistry, with over 14 years experience in pharmaceuticals. He received a bachelor of science in chemistry from Mississippi College and a Ph.D. in organic chemistry from Florida State University, and completed advanced management courses at the prestigious INSEAD business school in Fontainebleau, France. After earning his doctorate, Dr. Metts was a department manager and group manager at Parke Davis Company, where he supervised 125 employees engaged in developing specialty chemical products. In 1983, he joined Whatman, Inc., and rose from vice president of operations to global chief executive to president. In 1997, Dr. Metts co-founded Taxolog, Inc. and became the first director of the MDS Research Foundation.

### Christian Studies

#### DR. BILL CAUSEY '52

Dr. Bill Causey earned his B.A. in sociology from MC and his M.Div. from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. His Doctor of Divinity was conferred by MC in 1968. While still a seminary student, Causey was pastor at Hopewell Baptist Church in Salvisa, Kentucky. He also served as assistant pastor and later as pastor at Parkway Baptist Church in Jackson, and as pastor at Poplar Springs Drive Baptist Church in Meridian, Mississippi. Dr. Causey's extensive denominational work includes service as the president of the Mississippi Baptist State Convention; a trustee of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kentucky and Mississippi Baptist Medical Center in Jackson; executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board; and interim director of Baptist Children's Village. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary named Dr. Causey Distinguished Alumnus in 1996. He is a member of the Mississippi College Sports Hall of Fame, as well as a former recipient of the Order of the Golden Arrow and a former winner of the Distinguished Alumnus Award presented by the MC Department of Sociology.



MARY CATHERINE GENTRY



ANN SPEYER



DOT NIXON



RUSSELL KYZAR



MELINDA KYZAR

*Communication*

MARY CATHERINE GENTRY '51, '69

Mary Catherine Gentry earned her bachelor of arts in speech and her master of education from Mississippi College, and went on to serve her *alma mater* as an assistant professor in the Department of Communication for 25 years. She was named 1993-94 Distinguished Professor of the Year. Following her retirement from MC in 1994, Gentry continued to teach part time at MC, Hinds Community College, and Belhaven College for the next five years. She currently teaches oral communications as a volunteer in the Christian Women's Job Corps at Calvary Baptist Church in Jackson. Gentry has judged speaking events and conducted communication workshops for a number of student organizations, local industries, and MC alumni and staff. She has also directed dramas for civic and social clubs and churches; created skits, plays, and choral readings for church and school groups; and created and presents a program called "Elvis and Me" for church groups and other organizations. Mary Catherine is married to the Rev. Charles Gentry. Five of the Gentrys' six children are also MC alumni.

*Computer Science/Physics*

ANN SPEYER '83

As chief information officer for the Smithsonian Institution, Ann Tyson Speyer is the senior executive responsible for identifying ways to leverage information technology and enhance the ways in which the Smithsonian shares knowledge with students, educators, scientists, scholars, and the general public. Speyer focuses on using the Internet and digitization technologies to provide unprecedented access to the Smithsonian collections to individuals where they live, study, and work. Since joining the Smithsonian in August 2005, she has been instrumental in bringing wireless Internet access to the museums and gardens on the National Mall and addressing the infrastructure required to preserve the Institution's digital assets. Prior to joining the Smithsonian, Speyer served as the director of business technology optimization for the Program Support Center at the Department of Health and Human Services in Rockville, Maryland; as vice president for development and operations at Gelco Information Network in Reston, Virginia; and as director of PeopleSoft Consulting at PeopleSoft, Inc. She has also held positions in the information technology industry with Litton/PRC, Andersen Consulting, KPMG Peat Marwick, and General Dynamics.

*Kinesiology*

DOT NIXON '68

Dot Nixon has dedicated her career to helping young people, working with children in educational settings in Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia. She recently retired after serving for 12 years as a counselor at Baptist Children's Village, where she worked with parents, children, and the court system in an effort to reunite families. Even after her retirement, Nixon continues to be a positive influence on young people, serving part time as an intake officer for the DeSoto County Youth Court. Over the years, she has also taught children to swim, drive, and play sports, "all the while attempting to help them see that their ultimate father is God." In the early 1970s, Nixon helped break ground for female athletes at Mississippi College. As an undergraduate student in the Department of Physical Education in the mid-1960s, Nixon played on MC's "extramural" teams in an era when there were no athletic scholarships for women. When Nixon returned to MC as a graduate assistant in 1970, she helped establish the foundation for the university's present day women's sports program, which was among the first of its kind in Mississippi. Nixon recalls it as an exciting time, although she did "get in trouble with the Dean of Women on more than one occasion because I truly did not understand why I had to wear a raincoat over my shorts to walk to the tennis courts and the boys didn't."

*Music*

RUSSELL '76 AND MELINDA KYZAR '76

For the past two decades, Russell and Melinda Kyzar have served as missionaries with International Mission Board, fulfilling a number of roles in church planting and music ministries. Their work has taken them to mission fields in Costa Rica, post-communist Russia, and most recently to communist Cuba. As members of the Caribbean Itinerant Team from 2005-2007, Russell served as a strategic liaison with the Eastern Baptist Convention of Cuba, assisting with training in evangelism, discipleship, church planting, and leadership training. Melinda worked with Cuban nationals in worship leadership training and wrote a book in Spanish instructing accompanists for house churches on how to play the keyboard. During the Kyzars' service in Russia, Russell served as mission strategy coordinator, supervising personnel in the field and developing church planting strategies for Siberia and Far Eastern Russia, while Melinda served as entry orientation coordinator for new missionaries and helped with music in a new church plant. In Costa Rica, Russell served as a professor at Costa Rica Baptist Seminary and director of Sacred Music School in



ANDY ALBRITTON



DARLENE LINDSEY



BEN WALKER



MIKE JONES

*School of Business*

BEN WALKER '69

Following his 1969 graduation from MC, Ben Walker embarked on a successful, decade-long sales career with IBM. Drawing on his experience from IBM, in 1980 he and a business partner formed Unitech, an office equipment dealer. After selling Unitech (which now does business as Ikon), Walker developed what has now become a portfolio of successful business endeavors, including commercial and residential development in the Jackson Metro Area. Examples of his residential projects in the Clinton area include Bentwood, Bellewood, and Viewpointe subdivisions. In addition to his real estate interests, Walker founded Multicom, an information and communication transfer company, and also formed a business raising and breeding quarter horses. His track record in the business world makes Ben Walker an exceptional example of entrepreneurial success for current MC business students. He is a member of the Mississippi College Foundation Board.

*Teacher Education/Leadership*

MIKE JONES '75

Mike Jones is entering his ninth year as Mississippi College's athletic director, returning to his role as full time AD after stepping down as head coach of the men's basketball program last summer. During a 20-year coaching career that includes 16 years at MC, Jones posted a career record of 436-130. After a four-year hiatus from coaching, he returned to the bench the last two seasons to lead the Choctaws to a 36-11 overall record and an American Southwest Conference (ASC) Championship. His 2006 team went 27-3 on their way to a third consecutive Sweet 16 appearance. When he retired from coaching this summer, Jones was ranked #2 in the nation among active Division III coaches in winning percentage. In his eight years as athletic director, Jones has helped build one of the top athletics departments in the conference. Under his leadership, the department raised more than \$1 million dollars for the addition of an artificial playing surface to the football field, a new soccer facility, renovations to the Golden Dome, a new basketball playing surface, and a new track facility. Jones has also helped raise over \$130,000 each of the last three years through the annual Wild Game Dinner and Trustmark Classic golf tournament. Before joining MC, Jones coached at Copiah-Lincoln Junior College and the University of Southern Mississippi.

San José and Melinda focused on music leadership training. Since November 2007, the Kyzars have worked as regional personalizers for Central and Eastern Europe, living in the United States and mobilizing and recruiting volunteers and new personnel to serve in Central and Eastern Europe.

*Music/Young Alumnus Award*

ANDY ALBRITTON '99

Andy Albritton is director of church choral publications in the Van Nuys, California, location of Alfred Publishing Company, a music-publishing firm with offices worldwide. An active composer/arranger and church musician, Albritton also serves as worship director at Holy Trinity Church in Ladera Ranch, California. Albritton's published choral anthems include "Behold the Lamb," "Indescribable," "Walkin' in the Light," and "Worship the King, Our God." His published collections include "A Carol Fantasia (Celebrating the Christmas Story)," "An Evening in December (A Christmas Musical)," and Living Praise (The Most Complete Resource for Blended Worship and Contemporary Praise)." Albritton was previously church choral editor with Alfred Publishing, and has also served as director of music or director of worship with churches in Bismarck, North Dakota, and San Clemente and Cypress, California. He has served as a conductor for special events nationwide, including MusiCalifornia, the National Association of Pastoral Musicians Convention, and the Fellowship of American Baptist Musicians Convention. A cum laude graduate of MC, Albritton earned his master's degree in choral music from the University of Southern California.

*Nursing*

DARLENE KILGORE FORD LINDSEY, '73

Darlene Lindsey earned her bachelor's degree in nursing from Mississippi College and her master's degree in nursing from the University of Mississippi. A certified nurse educator, she has worked as an instructor in the nursing program at Southwest Mississippi Community College in Summit since 1993. Prior to joining the faculty at Southwest, Lindsey was a nursing instructor at Holmes Community College and staff development coordinator for the education department at Mercy Regional Medical Center in Vicksburg. In 2004, Governor Haley Barbour appointed Lindsey to the Mississippi Board of Nursing, which protects the public through the licensure and regulation of nursing statewide. Lindsey also served on the City of McComb Mayor's Committee on Smoking Ban in Restaurants and is a member of the McComb Public Schools Health and Wellness Committee.





JOHN ENGLAND



CHRISTOPHER DANIEL



MARLENA PICKERING

*Mississippi College School of Law  
Lawyer of the Year*

JOHN ENGLAND '91

A partner with Butler, Snow, O'Mara, Stevens & Cannada, PLLC, John England is a member of the firm's public law and finance group. He is a member of the National Association of Bond Lawyers and is active in the Mississippi Bar, where he serves on the board of directors for the Young Lawyers Division. As a CPA, England is a member of the Mississippi Society of Certified Public Accountants. He also serves on the board of trustees of Jackson Academy. England has been listed in *The Best Lawyers in America; Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyer for Business; and Mid-South Super Lawyers*. He was recognized in *The American Lawyer*, the nation's leading legal monthly magazine, as a "Dealmaker of the Year" for his work in accelerating issuance of bonds to finance the reconstruction of the Mississippi Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina. England received his B.A. in accountancy from the University of Mississippi and worked as an accountant before enrolling in law school. He earned his J.D. with distinction from MCSOL and his LL.M. in taxation from the University of Florida. England is currently chairing the MCSOL Annual Giving Campaign for the third consecutive year and also serves as an MCSOL adjunct professor.

*Mississippi College School of Law  
Young Lawyer of the Year*

CHRISTOPHER DANIEL '02

Christopher Daniel is a partner/shareholder in the law firm of Deaton & Daniel, P.A. Daniel also serves his country as a training and security officer & counter-terrorism analyst with the U.S. Navy Reserve and is a decorated veteran of Operations Enduring Freedom, Noble Eagle, and Iraqi Freedom. He is a member of the Hinds County Bar Association, Rankin County Bar Association, American Bar Association, Jackson Young Lawyers Association, Mississippi Defense Lawyers Association, American Association for Justice, and many other professional organizations. His civic involvement includes service as Mississippi State

Ombudsman Director, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve; volunteer work with Community Place, a non-profit nursing home; and serving as a camp sponsor for Kids Across America, an urban youth program. Daniel is Young Alumni Chairman for the MCSOL Annual Giving Campaign, serves as a volunteer with Mission First and the Adoption Project, and is a guest lecturer for diverse events and organizations, including programs at Mississippi College School of Law. As an MCSOL student, he was president of the Student Bar Association, Honor Court Justice, and a member of the Moot Court Board. Daniel is a cum laude graduate of Louisiana Tech University. He is a member of Galloway Untied Methodist Church. His practice areas include insurance defense and general civil litigation.

MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE SCHOOL OF LAW  
BLACK LAW STUDENT ASSOCIATION'S  
*Young Lawyer of the Year*  
MARLENA PICKERING '07

A magna cum laude graduate of Mississippi College School of Law, Marlena Pickering is an attorney with Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell, and Berkowitz, PC, in Jackson, Mississippi, where she focuses her practice on commercial litigation. Pickering is also a magna cum laude graduate of Jackson State University, where she majored in political science. Following her 2002 graduation from Jackson State, Pickering became a teacher with Jackson Public Schools. After teaching for one year, she accepted an internship with the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C., under Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao. While enrolled in law school, Pickering was an active member of the Mississippi College *Law Review*, Mississippi College Moot Court Board, and the Black Law Student Association. Today, Pickering volunteers as a coach for the Mississippi College School of Law's moot court program. In 2008, she coached her team to a third place finish at the Southern Region Black Law Student Association Frederick Douglass Moot Court Competition and a sixth place finish in the National Black Student Association Frederick Douglass Moot Court Competition.

# Class Notes

**40s** R. Furman Kenney, Sr. (B.A.'41), World War II veteran, retired pastor, and former executive director of a Baptist retirement facility, has added another chapter to his inspiring life. He has written and published an autobiography describing his college days entitled *People Like M'Self*. His second book, a novel entitled *Lady of Steel*, is due out this year.

**50s** Rev. Jodie E. Jackson (B.A. '54) assumed the pastorate of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Salisbury, Missouri.

Stanley Stamps (B.A. '54) has written *Following the Vision, A History of Baptists in Honduras*, published by CrossHouse Publications of Garland, Texas. The book presents a brief overview of the secular history of Honduras and of the development of missionary work there. Stamps and his wife, Glenna, retired after 35 years as missionaries in Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Honduras and now live in Hillsboro, Texas.

Judge Henry Lackey (B.S. '56), Circuit Judge of Calhoun City, received the 2008 Chief Justice Award. Judge Lackey has been a distinguished member of the legal profession for 42 years. He currently serves on the Commission on Judicial Performance and is a former Mississippi College trustee.

Randall A. Boone (B.S.Ed. '57) has been inducted to the Jones County Junior College (JCJC) Sports Hall of Fame. Averaging 24 points per game for the 1951-52 and 1952-53 JCJC Bobcats team, he was selected as an All-State performer. Additionally, Boone was inducted into the Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges Sports Hall of Fame last spring. After graduating from Mississippi College, Boone began a successful career in the insurance business.

**60s** Dr. James T. McRaney (B.S.Ed. '61, B.M. '61) is celebrating his 50th year as a conductor, including 46 years in choral music and edu-

cation in Georgia. The adjunct professor of music education at Reinhardt College earned both of his bachelor's degrees at MC, his master's degree at George Peabody College for Teachers, and a doctorate in education at the University of Georgia. He was chosen as the 1983 Georgia Teacher of the Year, and previously sang with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Chorus and Chamber Chorus under the late Robert Shaw. McRaney founded Chorale II, a community-based chorale ensemble formed in early 2006 to promote choral music through lifelong learning experiences for adults using a variety of choral activities and music repertoire.

Morris Richards (B.S.Ed. '62, M.Ed. '66) is the new principal for Mount Salus Christian School in Clinton. Richards comes to the elementary campus with more than 40 years' experience in public and private education. He has served as an administrator at the elementary, secondary, and district levels. Richards is a life member of the Mississippi Congress of Parents and Teachers.

Dan Champion (B.A. '63) presented the prayer lunch sermon for the Baptist College of Health Sciences held in January. His message was a reflection of his 40 years in higher education and an expression of gratitude to the late Dr. Hollis Todd ('40), who is credited with launching the Department of Communication at MC.

Eugene "Gene" Tullos (B.S.Ed. '64) has been inducted into the Jones County Junior College (JCJC) Sports Hall of Fame. He played on the 1960-61 and 1961-62 JCJC Bobcats basketball team that won the South Division Tournament in 1961 and the South Division regular season title in 1962. While attending JCJC, Tullos was elected "Mr. Jones County Junior College," was named "Mr. Basketball," and received the Sportsmanship Award. After graduating from Mississippi College, where he started both seasons for the Choctaws, Tullos went on to the University of Mississippi School of Law, graduating in 1966. He practices law in Raleigh.

## 50-YEAR CLUB

**FIRST ROW:** Becky Chancellor Bourdene, Anne McGaugh Compere, Nancy Wright Futral, Martha Puckett, Gladys Saavedra Mussiett, Peggy Wilkinson Ward / **SECOND ROW:** Etoyle Meadows Sermons, Libby Smith Patterson, Patti Guyton Nuernberger, Connie Smith McCaa, Rosamond Parker Rankin, Peggy Carley, Jeanette Moak Lummus, Sarah S. Wilkinson, Dot McKinnie Martin, "Tubby" Blough Pickering / **THIRD ROW:** Danny Faye Jones Sullivan, Carole Stout Thompson, Gayle Thornton Smith, Yvonne Chewning Watson, Peggy Thompson Huggins, Sue Clark Frothingham, Eugenia Polk Bouchillon, Miriam Owens, Helen Myers, Joanie Wallace Bridges, Wally Jacobson, Charles "Puddin" Davis / **FOURTH ROW:** Jim Travis, Bill Clarke, Paul Oliver, Billy Thompson, Gil Barrow, James McLemore, Hazel Milner, Martha N. Cotten, Betty Legg / **BACK ROW:** Steve Bullard, Gerald Buckley, Jimmy Watson, Don Quinn, Joe Ashley, Eldridge E. Fleming, Bob Payne, Royce Culpepper, Bill Crosby, Hubert Staley, John Legg, Charles "Red" Bright



Noel Polk (B.A. '65) is professor of English at Mississippi State University and editor of the Mississippi Quarterly. From 1981 to 2006, he edited the Library of America's complete edition of William Faulkner's novels. He is the author of *Outside the Southern Myth; Children of the Dark House: Text and Context in Faulkner*; and *Eudora Welty: A Bibliography of Her Work*.



Dr. John Weisz

Dr. John Weisz (B.A. '67) has been appointed professor of psychology in the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University. He will hold this position while continuing to serve as president and CEO of the Judge Baker Children's Center, an affiliate of Harvard Medical School, where he is also a professor.



Daniel Hood

Daniel (B.A. '67) and Claudia Hood (B.S. '67) have accepted the call to serve as missionaries through the International Mission Board. Their appointment service was held on September 10 at First Baptist Church, Jonesboro, Georgia.

**70s** Dr. Larry Lee Lewis (B.S. '71) has been promoted to associate professor of chemistry and granted tenure with Millsaps College. He received his doctorate from the University of Southern Mississippi.



Claudia Hood

Rob Baggett (B.M. '73) is the author of a new book, *Character Connections*, which portrays a need to teach democratic values in a free society and presents a method for developing schools of character.

Rob is a National Board Certified school counselor in Blythewood, South Carolina, and also serves as part-time minister of music at Greenlawn Baptist Church, Columbia, South Carolina.

Janet (Pittman, B.S.N. '75) Odom Forren and Cecil Drain have authored the book, *Perianesthesia Nursing: A Critical Care Approach*. The book was published in January 2008 by Elsevier.

Dr. J. Randall O'Brien (B.S. '75) has been named Carson-Newman College's 22nd president. Dr. O'Brien previously served as the executive vice president and provost, professor

of religion, and visiting law professor at Baylor University. He is a graduate of Yale Divinity School and New Orleans Theological Seminary. He has completed additional studies at Harvard and Oxford Universities. Dr. O'Brien is a licensed and ordained Baptist minister and has served since January 2007 as interim pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in San Antonio, Texas.

Davis A. Richards (M.B.A. '75, M.H.A. '78) was promoted to vice president of physician relations for the Mississippi Hospital Association Mississippi Division and oversees physician relations and activities for nine Health Management Association (HMA) hospitals in Mississippi. He most recently served as chief executive officer of River Oaks in Flowood, an HMA facility.

Nancy G. Flemmons (B.S.Ed. '76, M.S.S. '79) was named STAR Teacher for the fourth time in her career. She also was recognized as Teacher of the Year for the second time at Hillcrest Christian School in Jackson.



Gregg Harper

Gregg Harper (B.S. '78) was elected Mississippi's Third District Republican Congressman on November 4. Gregg succeeds outgoing Congressman Chip Pickering. He is a graduate of the University of Mississippi School of Law. During his 27 years in practice, he has served as a prosecutor for Brandon, Mississippi, and Richland, Mississippi, and as a board attorney for the Baptist Children's Village.

He and his wife, Sidney ('79), are active members of Crossgates Baptist Church in Brandon.

Ann Marie Copland (B.A. '78) joined Mississippi Public Broadcasting as deputy executive director for education. She is working to establish key partnerships in the state and across the nation to create new children's programs and educational opportunities for Mississippi. Since 1978, she had served as a member of Senator Thad Cochran's staff as senior executive and legislative assistant. Most recently, her efforts were dedicated to federal assistance for Hurricane Katrina recovery for schools and historic preservation. She and her husband, Marty Farmer, have two sons, Guy Henry and Stuart.

Paul Carrubba (J.D. '79) was elected to partnership in the firm of Adams & Reese. He is a member of the banking and finance team in the Jackson office. Carrubba received his bachelor's degree in banking and finance from the University of Southern Mississippi and his law degree from Mississippi College.

Thomas Alexander (B.S.B.A. '80) was elected as a fellow with the Mississippi Bar Foundation. He is general counsel for AT&T Mississippi, where he manages all of the legal affairs for the

## MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR NOMINATION FORM

The Alumnus of the Year Distinguished Service Award honors Mississippi College men and women who have rendered distinguished service to their college, church, and community. The award is limited to those who work with marked intelligence and success to promote the highest interests of Mississippi College and their home communities. The deadline for nominations for the 2009 award is February 1, 2009. Presentation of this award will take place in the fall of 2009 at Homecoming.

### NOMINEE INFORMATION:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 MC Degrees, Major, Class Year \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other Degrees \_\_\_\_\_

### NOMINATED BY:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Company/College/Department \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

Please attach a maximum one-page biographical summary of the nominee's accomplishments and an explanation of why this nominee would be the ideal recipient for this award. (The information is copied for the Selection Committee so the amount of information received must be limited.) Please include the following information in your biographical summary: Volunteer activities and community service performed • Honors and awards received • Current involvement with Mississippi College

PLEASE MAIL YOUR NOMINATION(S) TO: MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE ALUMNI • BOX 4027 • CLINTON, MS 39058

company. Alexander received his law degree from the University of Mississippi.

**80s** Cecilia B. Derrington (B.S.B.A. '80, M.B.A. '83) was named executive director for the Pontotoc County Chamber of Commerce. Since 2006, Derrington has been employed as manager of industrial and community relations at Peavey Electronics Corporation in Meridian, Mississippi. Prior to joining Peavey, she served as tourism director for Meridian/Lauderdale County.

Charles Selmon (B.S. '81, M.C.P. '93), Warren County District 3 Supervisor, has been elected president of the Mississippi Association of Supervisors Minority Caucus. The four-term supervisor representing central Vicksburg on the county board was also elected by fellow members to serve as third vice president. Selmon previously was a counselor and social worker in the Vicksburg Warren School District and taught at Hinds Community College and Alcorn State University.

Scott Shaw (B.A. '83) became one of less than three dozen people in the world to hold designations as both a Certified Technology Specialist for Integrated A/V Systems Installations and a Certified Technology Specialist for Integrated A/V Systems Design. Scott is employed by AVI-SPL, the

nation's largest audiovisual systems integrator. He and his wife, Eileen, live in Roswell, Georgia, and are active members at Northside United Methodist Church in Atlanta.



Paula Shelton

Paula Shelton (B.S. '88) was promoted to director of the newly formed Learning and Development Department for the accounting and business firm of HORNE, LLP. Shelton will be responsible for firm-wide continuing education. The MC psychology graduate received her Certified Professional Training certification through the University of Southern Mississippi and the American Society for Training and Development in 2003.

Donald Chenevert, Jr. (B.A. '89), Elizabeth Boyd Chenevert (B.S. '89), and their four children relocated from Singapore to Bangalore, India in June. Don had served as Caterpillar's senior corporate counsel in Singapore since 2004. Caterpillar recently appointed Don to manage its growing legal department in India.



**WEAR YOUR  
HEART ON YOUR  
SLEEVE.**

**(OR ON YOUR HEAD.)**

Show your school pride with apparel bearing  
the Mississippi College logo.  
Available online at [www.mc.edu/bookstore](http://www.mc.edu/bookstore)

## UPCOMING ALUMNI EVENTS

### WILD GAME DINNER December 9, 2008

Mississippi State University Head Football Coach Sylvester Croom will be the keynote speaker at MC's annual Wild Game Dinner. Croom led the Bulldogs to eight wins last season and was voted the 2007 Southeastern Conference Coach of the Year. Join us for this much-anticipated annual event benefitting athletic programs on the Clinton campus. The Wild Game Dinner is December 9, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. in the B.C. Rogers Student Center. For details, call 601.925.3234 or 601.925.3341.

### MIKE JONES' BASKETBALL COURT DEDICATION January 10, 2009

Mississippi College coaching legend Mike Jones will be in the spotlight at courtside in the Choctaws' Gold Dome on Saturday January 10, 2009. A special ceremony will be held to name the basketball floor after Jones, the MC athletic director, Hall of Fame basketball coach, and mentor to countless student athletes. The Choctaws basketball teams will play at home starting at 1 p.m., giving fans the opportunity to see some hoops and to applaud Jones for his many achievements at his *alma mater*. For details, call 601.925.3341.

### CAREER DAY February 24, 2009

The MC Office of Career Services is looking for alumni who have found their dream jobs. These alums are invited to visit the Clinton campus and share their experiences with current Mississippi College students as presenters during MC's annual Career Day on February 24, 2009. If you'd like to come back to campus as a presenter, contact Karen Lindsey-Lloyd at 601.925.3901 or career-services@mc.edu

### SPRING SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET WITH KARL ROVE March 30, 2009

MC's second annual Spring Scholarship Banquet will feature keynote speaker Karl Rove, former Deputy Chief of Staff to President George W. Bush and political analyst for Fox News, *Newsweek*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. Coming just two months after the nation's next president takes the oath of office, Rove's visit to MC promises to be not only a timely, but lively event. Tickets are \$125 per person. Sponsorship opportunities, some of which include a private reception with

Karl Rove, are also available. For more information, contact Amy Rowan at 601.925.3201 or rowan@mc.edu

### 50-YEAR CLUB REUNION WEEKEND HONORING THE CLASS OF 1959 April 23-24, 2009

In April of each year, the 50-Year Club welcomes the latest 50-Year Reunion class into their esteemed club. The celebration begins with a Thursday night reception for the Class of 1959 and concludes with a Friday night welcome-to-the-club banquet. The weekend schedule typically includes a Friday morning breakfast and class photo and a Friday luncheon and induction ceremony. For details, contact Ross Aven at 601.925.3228 or aven@mc.edu

### SPORTS HALL OF FAME BANQUET April 25, 2009

The "M" Club plays a vital role in nominating and voting for members of the Sports Hall of Fame, as well as planning the annual Sports Hall of Fame Banquet. To find out how you can be involved, visit [www.gochoctaws.com](http://www.gochoctaws.com)

### SPRING ATHLETIC GOLF TOURNAMENT May 22, 2009

The Mississippi College Trustmark Classic Golf Tournament is a major fund-raiser for MC's growing athletic department. The annual tournament at Patrick Farms offers the friends of Mississippi College athletics the opportunity to support our 400 dedicated student-athletes and coaches while enjoying a fine golf outing. Proceeds from the tournament are used for critical needs ranging from equipment purchases to facilities enhancements. For more information, contact Mike Jones at 601.925.3819 or Jones01@mc.edu

### ALUMNI GATHERINGS Spring 2009

President Lee Royce and representatives of the alumni office will be traveling to the following locations this spring:

Magee, Oxford, and Southaven, Mississippi  
Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas  
Florence, Montgomery, and Huntsville, Alabama

If you are interested in connecting with alumni in your area or in having an alumni event, please contact the alumni office at 601.925.3252.



Sylvester Croom



Mike Jones' Basketball Court



Spring Golf Tournament

**90s** Dr. James "Jay" Cook, Jr. (B.S.B.A. '91) is the new pastor of at First Baptist Church Pascagoula, Mississippi.

Bonnie Hughes McCann (B.S.B.A. '92) was the grand prize winner in The Artful Home's 2008 Portfolio Competition, a public online voting competition that pits emerging artists against more established artists. Her winning digital photograph, "Lone Boat," was chosen from more than 550 images entered by artists from throughout the United States and Canada. Since going digital in 2005, she has been capturing attention and awards in Hawaii and the online world. A resident of Hawaii, Bonnie home schools her three children when she's not pursuing her photography.

Dr. Steven Marshall Gore (B.A. '91, B.S. '95), a fourth generation MC alum, is presently serving as an Air Force physician and the chief of cardiology at Eglin Air Force Base in Fort Walton Beach, Florida. He recently returned from a six-month deployment in Germany and the Middle East where he served as team leader for a critical care air transport team. He is married to Angela Smith Gore (B.S. '97, B.S.N. '00).

Kiley Ham (B.S. '93) was named marketing director for each of JBHM Architects' five offices. Kiley holds more than 15 years experience in business and marketing.

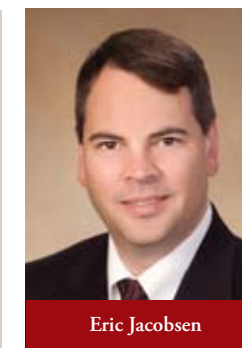
Bert Montgomery (M.A. '93) has moved to Starkville to serve as pastor of University Baptist Church, which meets in the Methodist student center on the campus of Mississippi State University. Montgomery had been serving churches in Kentucky since 2002. He has a book soon to be published by Smyth & Helwys Publishing entitled *Elvis, Willie, Jesus & Me*.



Philip Copeland

Philip Copeland (M.M. '93) is the new music director of the Birmingham Concert Choral. Copeland has directed choirs at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) for seven years, where he also teaches classes in music education. Recently he led singers in Mozart's "Solemn Vespers" at Carnegie Hall in New York. Under his direction, the UAB Concert Choral won the Heinrich Schutz Perpetual Trophy for a performance at the Fleischman International Choral Competition in Ireland. Copeland holds a doctorate degree from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, as well as a degree from the University of Mississippi.

Glenn S. Swartzfager (J.D. '93) has been appointed by the Mississippi Supreme Court as director of the Office of Capital Post-Conviction Counsel for a four-year term. The position was created by the 2000 Legislature to provide representation to indigent death row inmates in post-conviction proceedings. Swartzfager practiced law in his hometown of Laurel for five years after receiving his law degree. He has previously served as Youth Court public defender for Jones County, a staff attorney for the Mississippi Supreme Court, and a special assistant attorney general, and has worked in private practice as a senior associate for the Jackson law firm of former Governor William Waller. Additionally, Swartzfager has taught trial and appellate advocacy as an adjunct professor at the MC School of Law since 2003.



Eric Jacobsen

Eric Jacobsen (B.S. '94, M.S. '01) has been promoted to manager of Systems Integration with Cellular South. He joined the company in 2005 and previously held the positions of systems analyst and business analyst.

Lynda Keyes Naramore (B.S.Ed. '95, M.Ed. '02) has been selected as Richland Upper Elementary School's 2007 Teacher of the Year. In 2007, Lynda received National Board Certification in Middle Childhood, Generalist. She has also been named library/media specialist for Gary Road Elementary.

Amy Wolgamott (B.S. '96, M.S.C. '02) has been selected to serve as interim coordinator of Phi Theta Kappa's Mississippi/Louisiana Region. Amy is a full-time speech instructor and an advisor of the Nu Upsilon Chapter at Meridian Community College. She is working on her doctorate degree in community college leadership.



Kelly Waldrop

Kelly Waldrop (B.S.B.A. '98) was promoted to staff accountant with Hawthorn Pharmaceuticals, Inc. She lives in Madison, Mississippi, with her husband, Jeff, and children, Maddie and Libby.

Josh Brooks (B.S.C.S. '99) is MC's new assistant men's basketball coach. Brooks spent four years in the program as a player and student assistant coach during the 1995-1999 seasons. For the last four years, Brooks led the Hernando High School basketball team to a 75-41 overall record, including a 49-18 run the last two years. Josh is married to Doris Marie McDade Brooks ('01).

**00s** David Eldridge (B.A. '01) is the new pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Tupelo, Mississippi.

Brian Blackwell (B.S. '01) has joined *The Missourian* as business writer. After receiving his bachelor's degree from MC, Blackwell went to work for a weekly Baptist newspaper in Louisiana. He received his master's degree in journalism from the University of Nebraska. He and his wife, Ashley, live in Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

Susan Pearson Sweat (B.A. '01) received a master's degree in liberal studies/public policy from Georgetown University. Susan is the legislative director for U.S. Sen. Roger Wicker, R-Miss., working in his Washington, D.C., office. She is also the reigning Mrs. District of Columbia and finished in the top 15 at the Mrs. America Pageant.

Rebecca Bozarth (B.S. '01) has been hired as head web and graphic designer of the Church Planting Division of the North American Mission Board in Atlanta, Georgia.

John E. Pearce, Jr. (B.S.B.A. '02) has been named director of university budgets for the Institutions of Higher Learning. He will be responsible for overseeing the system's budget and will serve as liaison to the universities' budget directors. He previously worked with the PEER Committee in the Legislature. Pearce received his master's degree in business administration from the University of Southern Mississippi.

Ben L. Spears (M.Ed. '02) has been appointed assistant principal of Pontotoc High School (PHS). A PHS graduate, Spears is returning home to Batesville with his wife, Lucy, and daughter, Ava, to assume the position after a decade of teaching. He holds a bachelor's degree from Mississippi State University and a specialist degree from Jackson State University.

Shawn Michael Harris (B.S.B.A. '06) has been promoted to corporate communications officer at Trustmark National Bank in Jackson. Harris joined Trustmark's management development associate program after graduating summa cum laude with a bachelor's degree in marketing. He serves on the board of directors for the Mississippi DECA Foundation and is a member of the Metro Jackson Young Up & Coming Professionals. Harris is married to the former Amanda Kendrick (B.S.B.A. '06).



Shawn Michael Harris

Lindsey Oswald (B.A. '06) has been selected to clerk for Judge Leslie H. Southwick of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals and is expected to begin next August.

Eric B. Graham (J.D. '06) has been named director of government relations with Cellular South. Graham is responsible for Cellular South's overall strategic government relations to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in reaching regulatory and legislative policy and goals. Prior to joining Cellular South, Graham was an attorney with Brunini, Grantham, Grower and Hewes. Graham earned both an undergraduate degree in political science and graduate degree in public policy and administration from Mississippi State University.



Missy May Odom

Missy May Odom (B.S. '07) has been promoted to assistant director of marketing at Crossgates River Oaks Hospital in Brandon, Mississippi. She was previously a volunteer and community relations coordinator for the hospital.

Xi "Michelle" Du (M.B.A. '07) has joined the firm of Collins & Corbin as staff accountant.

Kimberly Houston (B.S.B.A. '07) has accepted the position as accountant for the Mississippi Public Utilities staff in Jackson.

Katy Kash (B.S. '08) has been hired as Sodexo district marketing manager for Alabama and Georgia.

Kash manages eleven accounts and is based out of Georgia College and State University in Milledgeville, Georgia.



## MULTI-TALENTED MARTY FRASCOGNA

Marty Frascogna '05 is still a student at Mississippi College School of Law, but he's already hard at work at a career as a record company executive and author.

Frascogna earned his master's degree in international communication at MC while working at a gospel music record label, where he made connections with musicians including The Williams Brothers, a well-know gospel quartet. Following his graduation from MC, Frascogna enrolled in DePaul University's School for New Learning, a program designed for adults who want to integrate several fields into a cohesive program of study. While still in school, he received an invitation to tour in Sweden with The Williams Brothers and Swedish pop singer, Carola.

"I quickly realized my passion was international music," Frascogna says. "I concluded that I wanted to work with or own an international record label."

Upon his return, Frascogna teamed with representatives from Sweden's largest tour/production company, Reliable Productions, to create RedJet Records. RedJet focuses on helping European artists gain exposure in the United States and introducing American acts in Europe. In June, two of RedJet's artists performed at a tribute to Mississippi Grammy Award winners, an event that Frascogna helped produce. Frascogna and his Swedish partners are also writing a book on music globalization. In recognition of his work with RedJet, DePaul University named Frascogna to its Top 14 Under 40 list.

As if running RedJet and wrapping up law school weren't enough, Frascogna teamed with his father, X.M. Frascogna, Jr. (J.D. '72, M.B.A. '76, M.S.S. '82), and brother, Mike Frascogna III (J.D. '04), to author the book *Y'all vs. Us - Thrilling Tales of Mississippi's Hottest High School Football Rivalries*. The book follows the Frascognas' highly successful 2007 book, *Gridiron Gold: Inspiring Stories of Legendary Mississippi High School Coaches, Guardians of the Greatest Football Talent in America*. *Y'all vs. Us* and *Gridiron Gold* are available in bookstores or online at [www.yallvsus.com](http://www.yallvsus.com).

Upon graduating from MCSOL, Frascogna plans to put his J.D. to work representing RedJet and its international artists. But for the meantime, it's back to work as usual.

## Marriages

Dorothy "Dotty" Jean Roukey (M.S.C. '00) and Christopher Collins, April 4, 2008

Daniel Wade Watson (B.S. '03) and Melinda Michelle Hoover (B.S.Ed. '07), December 15, 2007

Rebecca McGee (B.S. '04) and Rob Jolly, May 17, 2008

## Births & Adoptions

Samuel Dale, Jr. (B.S.B.A. '86) and Kathryn (Mann, B.A. '86) Anderson, Collette Mary Claire, July 3, 2008.

Dr. James "Jay" (B.S.B.A. '91) and Kristi (Webb, B.S. '98) Cook, Amelia Rose, November 24, 2006; welcomed by big brother Jameson.

Darryl (B.S. '91, M.S.S. '93) and Kim Longabaugh, Garet Holt, June 18, 2008. Darryl is head coach for MC women's soccer.

Julie Dawkins (B.S.N. '94) and Russ Wardlaw, Mary Evins, February 4, 2008.

Dr. Benjamin R. (M.A. '95) and Dr. Carly Womack Wynne, Lily, July 13, 2008.

Rana (Ragland, B.S. '95, M.Ed. '02) and Tim Bryant, Isabella Claire, March 27, 2008; welcomed by big brother Joe and big sister Anna Blair.

Amy (Massey, B.A. '99) and Jason Melvin, Katelynn, April 2, 2008; welcomed by big sister Kiley.

Andy (B.S.B.A. '99) and Katie (Hayes, B.A. '01) Kennedy, Claire Hayes, July 7, 2008; welcomed by three-year-old big sister Maggie.

April (Moss, B.S. '00) and Jamey Castle, Emma Layne, February 14, 2007.

Dorothy "Dotty" Jean (Roukey, M.S.C. '00) and Christopher Collins, Sadie Mae, August 14, 2008.

Jared (B.S.B.A. '01) and Jayme Yates (B.S.B.A. '02), Landrum Elizabeth, April 9, 2008.

Kevin (B.S. '03, M.S. '05) and Jennifer (Burnham, B.S. '03) Rutledge, Jenna Claire, August 6, 2008; welcomed by big brother Cole.

Gabe (B.S. '04) and Erin (VanHorn, B.S.Ed. '04) Coker, Kathryn Leigh, July 9, 2008.

Jacob (B.S. '07) and Beth Kirchner, Isabella, August 6, 2008. Beth is an MC resident director.

Jason (B.S.B.A. '07) and Emily Childress, Morgan Alyse, May 28, 2008; welcomed by big brother Grayson (4).

David (J.D. '08) and Bethany (Williamson, B.S.N. '04) Walker, William "Pace", August 1, 2008. Pace is the grandson of Betty Williamson, executive assistant to MC's vice president of Christian development.

## In Memoriam

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

Willard Farve Bond, Jr. (B.A. '31) May 25, 2008

Dr. Eugene Boyd Golding (B.A. '37) August 27, 2008

Shirley Faucette (Hillman '41, B.A. '43) March 21, 2008

Jean Furr Tolbert (B.A. '47) April 17, 2008

Thad Homer Davis ('49) March 24, 2008

Charles Walton Eudy, Jr. (B.A. '52) July 7, 2008

Dr. Charles Houston "Catfish" Allen (B.S. '52) June 15, 2008

Albert R. Adams, Sr. ('52) April 5, 2005

Opal Jean Brown Peden (B.S.Ed. '53, M.Ed. '59) July 9, 2008

Thomas P. Waits (B.S. '56) February 20, 2008

Captain Donald R. Thompson (B.S. '59) March 1, 2008

Glenda Bailey Stevens (B.S. '60) November 4, 2007

Dr. Elwyn N. Wilkinson, Jr. (B.S. '61) June 2, 2008

Julianne "Judy" Hall Lewis Brown (B.A. '64) May 10, 2008

Mary Louise "Lou" Way Perritt (B.S.Ed. '65, M.Ed. '86) March 28, 2008

Nancy Hopperton Terebesy (B.A. '68) November 25, 2007

Mary Woods McDowall (M.Ed. '71) October 25, 2008

Cecil L. Harper (B.M. '76) May 16, 2008

Dr. Stephen A. Burney (B.S.B.A. '82) May 10, 2008

Simeon Nix (B.M. '83) August 17, 2008

Rebecca Stephenson Jacks (B.S. '83, M.Ed. '95) May 31, 2008

Rev. Robert Eugene Barr (B.A. '84) June 3, 2008

Don D. Payne (B.A. '91) November 2007

## Friends

Rev. W. Carlie Hill, Sr., former evangelism consultant with the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and bus pastor for Parkway Baptist Church, Clinton, January 17, 2008

Bill Elkins, husband of Shea Elkins, executive assistant in MC's School of Business, September 25, 2008

Anita Fagan, wife of former MC trustee, J. W. Fagan, September 1, 2008

## Faculty & Staff

Hilda Harper, retiree and former resident director, May 15, 2008

A gift in memory or honor of an individual may be made through the Mississippi College Annual Fund. For more information, contact Barbara King at 601.925.3968, [Brown16@mc.edu](mailto:Brown16@mc.edu), or by mail at Office of Advancement, Box 4005, Clinton, MS 39058.



Dr. Landrum Leavell

## Dr. Landrum Leavell 1926 - 2008

Dr. Landrum P. Leavell II, President Emeritus at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, died September 26, 2008. Dr. Leavell was one of the most influential Southern Baptist leaders of his generation. His record of service includes pastoring five churches, holding many positions

with the Southern Baptist Convention and Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, and serving on the board of trustees of Mississippi College.

IF YOU HAVE NEWS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE, please send it to Class Notes, *Beacon* magazine, Box 4003, Clinton, MS 39058 or e-mail to [public-relations@mc.edu](mailto:public-relations@mc.edu). Please provide your class year(s), degree(s) and phone number for verification with each note. Photos submitted should be of professional quality.

# ENTERING *and* DEPARTING

AN ALUMNUS RETURNING TO CAMPUS AS A STAFF MEMBER AND A RETIRING PROFESSOR REFLECT UPON THE WORDS ADORNING THE GATES TO THE MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE CAMPUS:

Enter here to increase in stature, knowledge, and wisdom ✦ Depart to share your culture with all mankind

## ENTERING

It has been my great fortune to be associated with Mississippi College since the fall of 1975, when my father helped me carry my things up the stairs to the second floor of Chrestman Hall. Just a few weeks ago, I passed through those sacred gates to the campus yet again, this time returning to serve my alma mater alongside a great team of faculty, staff, and administrators called to the educational task.



Bill Townsend and Buddy Wagner

Like many teenagers, I wrestled with choosing a college and I vividly remember the decisive conversation that pushed me to MC. It was a respected teacher, friend, and Mississippi College alum whose wise words ultimately swayed me to MC. With his arms extended in front of him and his palms turned heavenward, he lifted his arms and said, “Bill, Mississippi College will do this for you. It will lift you up.” I knew nothing of the lofty ideals, like increasing in knowledge, wisdom, and stature, but I clearly understood his simple gesture and words of encouragement.

The significance of that decision evaded my 17-year-old mind, but as I look back across the years, my associations with Mississippi College have been transformational – just as the inscribed words above the gates suggest. I received a first-rate education at MC and was inspired by faculty and staff to embrace higher education as a career. I am grateful for the opportunity to re-enter through the gates of MC, this time a little better educated, a little wiser, and with stature altered by time.

Our task at MC is noble and enriching. It is my prayer that I can contribute to the transformation of young minds and lives much like those who inspired me so deeply. *Soli Deo Gloria!*

*Dr. Bill Townsend '79, '90 earned his B.A. and J.D. from Mississippi College and Mississippi College School of Law, and also holds an M.Div. and Ph.D. MC's vice president of advancement and legal counsel to the president, Bill prefers his new office in Nelson Hall to his former dorm room in Chrestman.*

## DEPARTING

Mississippi College has certainly helped me increase in knowledge. As director of the Counseling Center and a teacher in the master's program in counseling, I've learned many new skills, ranging from innovative methods of counseling to hypnosis. But for me, the directive on the gates to “increase in stature, knowledge, and wisdom” and to “share [my] culture with all mankind” is all about building relationships.

Students in the classroom and in the counseling office have provided many opportunities for me to increase in wisdom. These students taught me that when it comes to counseling, relationships are as important as technical skills. There were several times when I was brilliant as far as using skills, but failed to be effective because I didn't invest myself in building a relationship. The opposite is also true. I once worked with a young man who was severely depressed; he began apologizing to me for being a failure and not getting any better. I told him that we were a team and if failure occurred, it would be *we* who failed, not just him. That day, he began to improve.

MC also gave me opportunities to share my culture with others. In 1999, I spent six weeks in China teaching English. I must confess that I went to China with an air of superiority. After all, I was going to teach *them* about superior American ways. I came home humbled by their hospitality and kindness. Since then, I have traveled to Macedonia on mission trips, teaching English, putting in a water system, and building a library. The people I worked with had very few resources, but were happier than most Americans because they spent their time in relationships rather than seeking wealth. By sharing my faith and culture with others, I have learned far more than I have taught.

I thank God for the opportunity to study at MC and then return to teach and counsel students. My life has been enriched immensely by the relationships I've formed both within and outside the gates.

*Dr. Buddy Wagner '69 is retiring as the director of the MC Counseling and Testing Center and practicum instructor. In addition to a bachelor's degree from MC, he holds an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Mississippi. As an MC student, Buddy was a cross-country star. He continues to run today, although he sometimes wishes he could rely on self-hypnosis to complete the final mile.*



MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE SEEKS  
TO BE KNOWN AS A UNIVERSITY  
RECOGNIZED FOR ACADEMIC  
EXCELLENCE AND COMMITMENT  
TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST.



**Mississippi  
College**  
A CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

BOX 4003 / CLINTON, MS 39058

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Jackson, MS  
Permit #134

