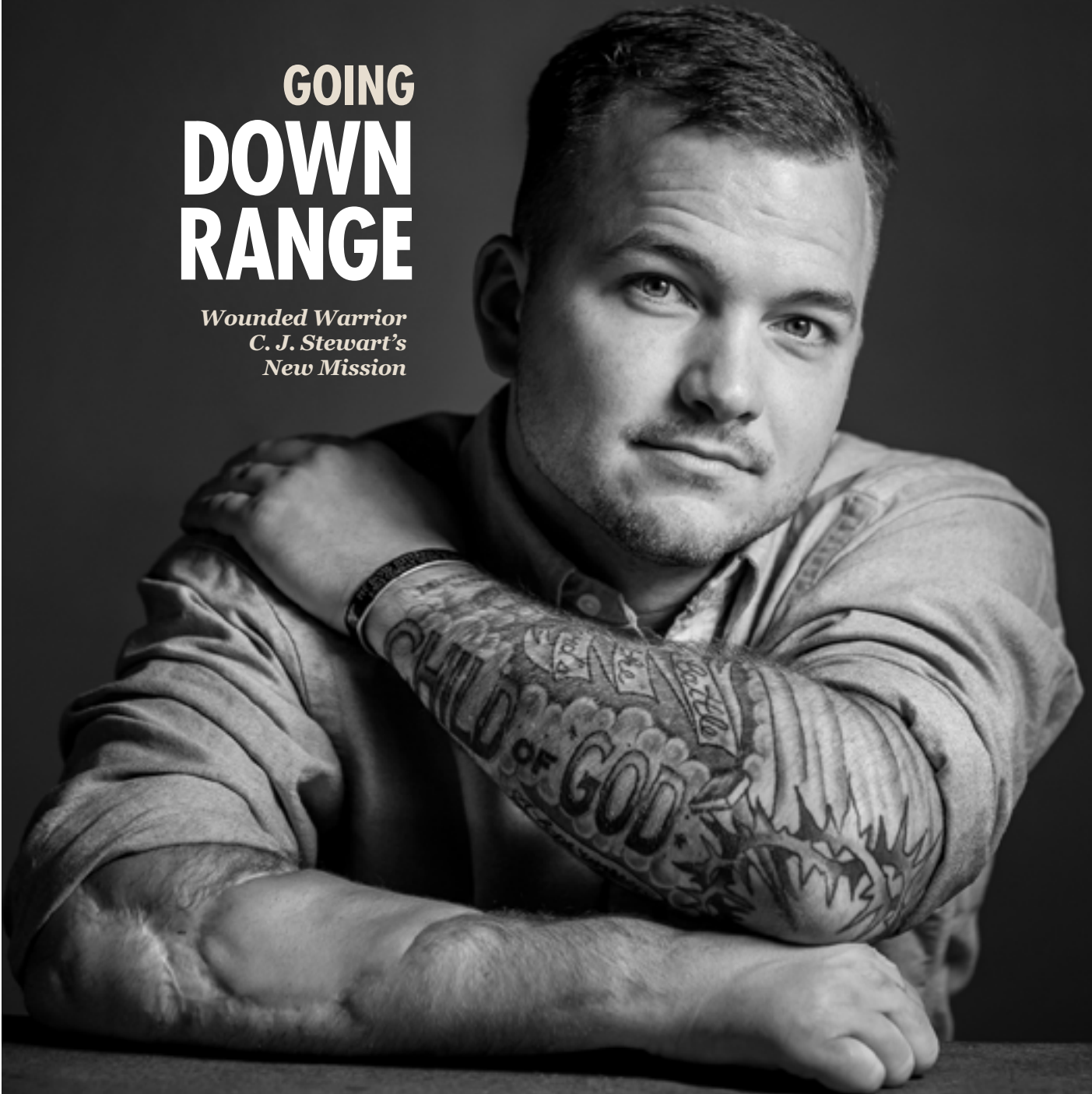


MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE | SUMMER 2016

beacon

GOING DOWN RANGE

*Wounded Warrior
C. J. Stewart's
New Mission*



beacon



FROM THE PRESIDENT

LEE GARDNER ROYCE

I know what it's like to feel a calling in one's heart.

At the age of 17, I felt called to Christian service, but several more years would be required to find the right direction for that calling. I didn't feel called to seminary or to be a full-time missionary. Instead, while working in a direct-mail marketing position, I was drawn to the work of a client involved in Christian ministry. That led me to a position at Belmont University, where I realized my calling was to fulfill a leadership role at a Christian university. A doctoral degree and a few more years of experience later, I became president of Anderson College. Seven years later, I arrived at Mississippi College.

In Psalm 131, David writes of the contentment that came from fulfilling his calling. I understand the heart's calling, but I found it hard to identify with the "contentment" portion of the Psalm. After all, if one is content with the status quo, then activity and progress cease. If I became content in my role as president of MC and passed that contentment on to our staff and faculty, there would be few new programs or initiatives, and the university would falter.

Then I realized that *contentment* is not synonymous with *complacency*. I can be content in my role at MC and in the certainty I have found my calling, while still working to reach new heights within that calling. I can be content in my mission, my sense of place within that mission, and the knowledge that I'm serving God, while still working wholeheartedly to advance the mission of Mississippi College.

As a Christian university, helping others to find and fulfill the callings of their hearts is one of MC's most important goals. It's my hope that, like the students, faculty, and alumni profiled in these pages, future generations of the MC family will find contentment in their own callings, along with the inspiration and faith in God to continually seek new heights.

Lee Royce

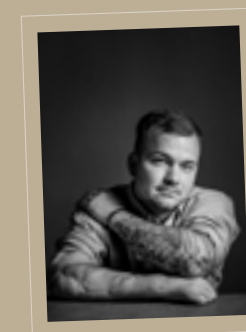
BY THE BEACON'S LIGHT

"My heart is not proud, Lord, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me. But I have calmed and quieted myself...like a weaned child I am content." — Psalm 131:1-2

In Psalm 131, David writes of the peace he found when he followed the path that the Lord had set before him. This is a song not only of humility before God, but also a song of the contentment that came from following the calling placed by God in David's heart.

In this issue of the *Beacon*, you'll meet people who have found that same contentment following God's calling in their own lives. Whether they were led to pioneer new methods for overcoming adversity, counsel those who provide counseling, shape young minds, or grow their communities, they have given themselves wholeheartedly to the task. And while their talents would be valued in virtually any location, these Mississippians have found their hearts' content in service in their home state.

Like David, they have gained the humility and the contentment that comes from fulfilling their unique role in God's plan.



On the Cover: Veteran and Purple Heart recipient C. J. Stewart '14 created Camp Down Range, a military-style adventure camp, to teach people the life skills that will serve them in overcoming adversity. Go Down Range with Stewart on page 28.



COUNSELING
THE
COUNSELORS

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A HEART
FOR
CHILDREN
AND FOR
MOM
AND DAD

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A
WHOLE-
HEARTED
CALLING

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NO
SPEED
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The *Beacon* is available online with videos, on-camera interviews, in-depth details, and more web-exclusive content. Look for the **b** symbol, which indicates an article with online content, then visit www.mc.edu/beacon for the rest of the story.



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HAPPY *190th* BIRTHDAY, MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE

Mississippi College celebrates its 190th birthday in 2016, marking nearly two centuries of Christian education and inspiration while continuing to build on that legacy today.

FOUNDED IN 1826, Mississippi College is the oldest university in Mississippi and the second-oldest Baptist-affiliated university in the United States. MC was founded just nine years after Mississippi became a state. The population of Clinton proper was a mere 200 souls, and the area's longest-term residents were former pioneers who had staked their claims on the untamed land less than three years before the first classes convened. Thanks in large part to the university's presence, what began as a rough-and-ready frontier outpost was soon transformed into a genteel college town.

MC survived the Civil War, the Great Depression, two World Wars, the Civil Rights Movement, and countless other dramatic chapters of American history, emerging from

each test stronger than ever before. In his history of the university, *Mississippi College with Pride*, the late Charles Martin wrote, "In good times, [Mississippi College] flourished. In hard times, it struggled. But always there were people, sometimes in the forefront, sometimes in the background, who believed that for this institution, the best was just barely good enough, and the highest ideals must be upheld, regardless of the circumstances."

That description still rings true today, as MC celebrates 190 successful years and looks forward to the next two centuries of realizing its vision to be recognized as a university known for academic excellence and commitment to the cause of Christ.

MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE

Then and Now

CHARTERED ON JANUARY 24, 1826 as Hampstead Academy, the university was renamed Mississippi College in 1830.

UPON ITS FOUNDING, MC OFFERED basic courses in mathematics, sciences, and classical language. Today, MC offers more than 80 areas of study, including 16 graduate degree programs, a law program, Mississippi's only physician assistant program, and the nation's first doctorate of professional counseling. Recent program additions include graduate degrees in health informatics and graphic design, as well as bachelor's degrees in worship leadership and electrical engineering.

IN THE MID-1800S, ENROLLMENT AT MC was less than 100 students. In the fall of 2015, MC enrollment reached 5,152, including a record 618 freshmen and 483 international students.

IN 1854, MC'S 84 STUDENTS were instructed by four faculty members. Today, the university's student/teacher ratio is 14:1.

THE FIRST MC STUDENTS WERE housed in a single dormitory that accommodated 20, with the overflow "accommodated by private families in the village." In 2015, MC unveiled the University Place Apartments, modern residences on campus that are home to nearly 200 students.

UPON ITS FOUNDING, MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE stood firm in the face of naysayers who argued that a "frontier" school could not possibly offer a national caliber college education. In 2015, Christian Universities Online ranked MC #8 on its list of America's 50 Most Affordable Christian Colleges, and ranked MC's online MBA program the #1 best value among Christian colleges in the United States. *U.S. News & World Report* put MC at #11 in its 2015 rankings of Best Value among the South's Regional Universities and #27 on its list of Best Colleges for Veterans.

IN 1920, MC'S SPORTS TEAMS adopted the nickname "Choctaws." In 2015, the Choctaw table tennis team finished #1 in North America, defeating 11-year champion Texas Wesleyan University.

COMMITMENT TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

Mississippi College became affiliated with the Mississippi Baptist Convention in 1850, some 22 years after its founding. But from its opening day of classes, MC was focused on the cause of Christ. The first rules published by Mississippi College in the 1820s specified, "Every student is expected to attend public worship on the Sabbath...the sanctification of the Lord's Day is indispensable to every student."

MORE THAN 6,000 students from 10 states attended Christian camps and sports camps hosted on the MC campus in 2015.

SOME 450 MC STUDENTS SPENT their 2015 spring break serving others on mission trips.

IN 2014-15, MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE recorded 148 first-time professions of faith. Those accepting Christ included 14 international students, 73 MC students, and 75 young people attending summer camps hosted on campus.





THE WINNING TEAM INCLUDED MC LAW STUDENTS ED WILLIAMS, IRA RUSHING, MATT WALTON, AND CAYLAN DUNNELLS (NOT PICTURED).

a MOOT POINT THAT MATTERS

MC LAW TAKES FIRST AND SECOND PLACE IN NATIONAL ARBITRATION COMPETITION

MC LAW STUDENTS argued their way to victory in the American Bar Association's (ABA) National Arbitration Competition, taking home the first place trophy. Adding to the victory celebration, a second team from MC Law finished in second place. Held in Chicago last January, the competition saw MC Law out-argue 38 competing teams from around the nation before defeating Texas Tech and the University of Missouri in the finals.

The annual ABA Law Student Division Arbitration Competition simulates a realistic arbitration hearing. Competing law student teams prepare and present the arbitration case, including opening statements, witness examinations, exhibit introductions, evidentiary presentations, and sum-

mations. The timely topic of the 2016 competition case was data breach security.

The winning team included MC Law students Caylan Dunnells, Ira Rushing, Matt Walton, and Ed Williams. The MC Law second place team included Taylor Lawrence, Cameron McCormick, Jessica Pulliam, and Ericka King. MC Law graduates Amanda Hill '14 and Kasey Mitchell '15 served as the teams' coaches.

"MC Law students continue to distinguish themselves in moot court arbitration competitions across the country," said MC Law Dean Wendy Scott. "We are preparing students to be among the best advocates in the country. I couldn't be more proud of them."



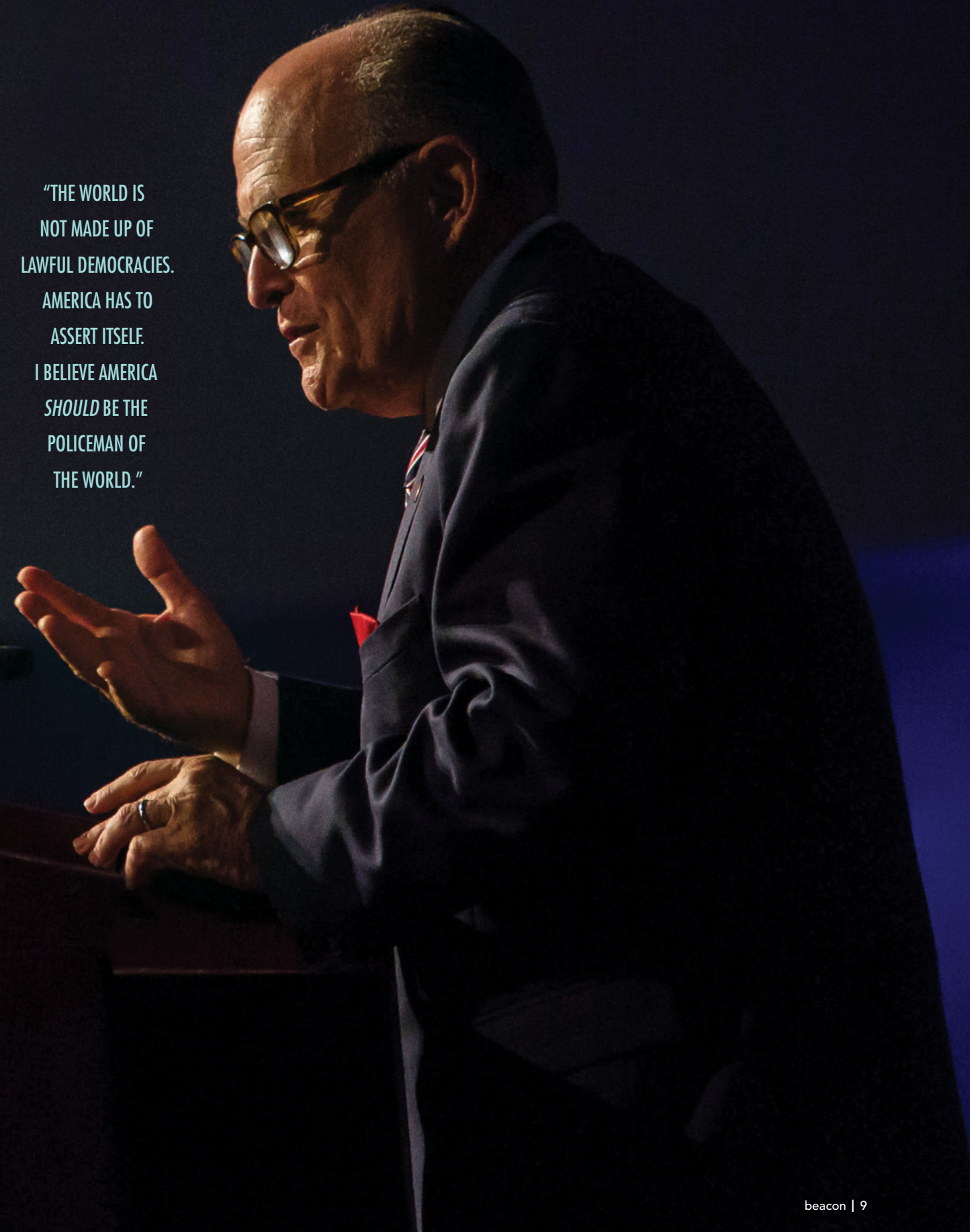
AMERICA'S MAYOR



RUDY GIULIANI

KEYNOTES SCHOLARSHIP DINNER

"THE WORLD IS NOT MADE UP OF LAWFUL DEMOCRACIES. AMERICA HAS TO ASSERT ITSELF. I BELIEVE AMERICA SHOULD BE THE POLICEMAN OF THE WORLD."



Former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani shared his take on everything from the presidential race to global terrorism during Mississippi College's 2016 spring scholarship banquet in March.

Mayor Giuliani addressed 632 guests at Anderson Hall during the event, which raised \$362,042 for student scholarships at MC. Governor Phil Bryant was on hand to introduce Mayor Giuliani, and MC Law Professor Pat Bennett moderated a question and answer session following the keynote speech.

Best known for his courageous leadership in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Mayor Giuliani expressed a bold stance on national security and an aggressive approach to global terrorism, reminding the audience, "The world is not made up of lawful democracies. America has to assert itself. I believe America *should* be the policeman of the

world." Giuliani went on to say that the United States needs to target terrorist groups, including ISIS; slash federal spending and regulations; and improve healthcare and education.

A former presidential candidate, Giuliani told the crowd he was considering supporting Donald Trump in the 2016 election, but added that he thought Ted Cruz and John Kasich would also do a good job. Mayor Giuliani's address also had its humorous moments. When Giuliani's own mobile phone rang during his address, the crowd was treated to the mayor's signature ring tone, "Bad to the Bone."

Prior to his keynote speech, Mayor Giuliani met with MC students to share some words of wisdom on the leadership and vision needed to secure America's future.

"Mayor Giuliani was well-versed on economic issues," said MC student Lacey Monceaux, "I was most impressed with his views on leadership."

.....★★.....
THE 2016 SPRING SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET RAISED \$362,042 FOR SCHOLARSHIPS AT MC. HELD SINCE 2008, MC'S ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP BANQUETS HAVE RAISED MORE THAN \$2.7 MILLION AND HAVE HELPED MORE THAN 500 STUDENTS RECEIVE A MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE EDUCATION. PREVIOUS KEYNOTE SPEAKERS HAVE INCLUDED FORMER U.S. SENATE MAJORITY LEADER BOB DOLE, PUBLISHER STEVE FORBES, FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE, AND FORMER FLORIDA GOVERNOR JEB BUSH.



LOOK FOR TOM A. HAWK ON THE FIELD AND IN THE STANDS AT ROBINSON-HALE STADIUM ON SEPTEMBER 3, WHEN MC KICKS OFF FOOTBALL SEASON AGAINST POINT UNIVERSITY OF WEST POINT, GEORGIA.

Choctaw

SPORTS ROUND-UP

LADY CHOCTAWS SOFTBALL TEAM CAPTURES NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Achieving a school record with 39 victories, the Mississippi College Lady Choctaws captured a national championship to close out a thrilling 2016 season.

The MC triumph happened at the National Christian College Athletic Association World Series in Troutville, Virginia. The Lady Choctaws shut out metro Jackson rival Belhaven University 3-0 to lock up the historic win at the Botetourt Sports Complex.

"I could not be prouder of this team," said head coach Brooke O'Hair. "They gave everything they had all season long and it all came to fruition. This team is really special, and they proved it today."



The Lady Choctaws finished the season with a sterling 39-19 record, including two wins over Belhaven in the NCCAA Mid-East Regional on the Clinton campus in early May.

Senior Carlie Sargent was virtually unstoppable in Virginia as she hurled her 9th career shutout, striking out seven and giving up just four hits. The Oxford, Alabama, native was named the tournament's Most Outstanding Player.

Juniors Megan Everett of Pearland, Texas, and Lauren Mulligan of New Orleans joined Sargent on the All-Tournament Team. Sargent set a school record with 198 strikeouts in 2016.

The final out of the game was a groundout to Mulligan at second base. The new NCCAA champs celebrated in style with a dogpile in the middle of the field. Well done, Lady Choctaws!

LADY CHOCTAWS CROSS-COUNTRY TEAM BREAKS SCHOOL RECORD

Records are made to be broken.

Just ask the Lady Choctaws cross-country team, the group that broke the 2009 MC school record for the 5K with a

team average time of 19:54. The record-breaking finish happened last November at the National Christian College Athletic Association championships in Houghton, New York.

Among the top finishers in the 5K race were Kaleigh Akers, Baylee Webb, and Madeline Sawaya. Akers recorded a time of 19:46 to finish 35th, Webb was 36th, and Sawaya came in 37th. The MC team finished 6th overall in the national meet, which saw 21 teams in competition.

"It was a great way to end the season," said head coach Butch Ard.

TOM A. HAWK SOARS AS AN MC FAN FAVORITE

An instant fan favorite, Tom A. Hawk is the newest MC sports personality making the rounds at football and basketball games and other events on the Mississippi College campus.

Tom A. Hawk made his debut at the Mississippi College vs. Delta State University football game last November, and has been strutting his stuff on the field and posing with Choctaw fans for selfies ever since. The mascot is a colorful complement to the MC Choctaws, the university's official sports team name since the 1920s.

Look for Tom A. Hawk on the field and in the stands at Robinson-Hale Stadium on September 3, when MC kicks off football season against Point University of West Point, Georgia. Given Point University's "Skyhawk" mascot, a hawk vs. hawk match-up is sure to be a game highlight.

2016 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

Mississippi College's 2016 football schedule features six home games, including the first Robinson-Hale Stadium appearance by the University of West Florida, a newcomer to the Gulf South Conference. Choctaws head football coach John Bland refers to the Gulf South Conference as the "SEC of NCAA Division II," and anticipates exciting action on the field this fall.

CHOCTAW HOME GAMES

- Point University: September 3
- West Alabama: September 17
- Cumberland University: September 24
- West Florida: October 8
- Valdosta State: (Homecoming) October 15
- North Alabama: November 12

Another date to mark on the fall calendar is MC's annual showdown with rival Delta State University on September 29. Kicking off on Delta State's Cleveland, Mississippi, campus, the game is tentatively set for live broadcast on ESPN III.



COUNSELING *the* COUNSELORS

THE NATION'S FIRST DOCTOR OF PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING PROGRAM HAS HELPING OTHERS AT ITS HEART

MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE IS HOME TO A ONE-of-a-kind doctoral program that is leading to the development of new specialties in mental health care.

The doctor of professional counseling (DPC) is a clinical doctoral degree for professional counselors and psychotherapists interested in developing their own counseling niches through specialization. The degree program is highly customized, allowing doctoral candidates to choose an area of mental health service in which they are interested – for example, marriage and family counseling, addiction therapy, or treatment of eating disorders – and then craft their degree program around that interest.

Launched in 2012, the Mississippi College DPC is the first program of its kind in the United States. While

advanced degree programs have been available in several mental health disciplines, MC was the first to offer a professional doctorate in counseling, one of the fastest-growing professions in mental health care.

“The profession of counseling needed a doctoral program that would enable the profession to respond to public need by producing better trained clinicians,” says Dr. Stephen Southern, chair of the doctor of professional counseling program, who proposed, developed, and heads the program at MC. “In developing this program at Mississippi College, our goal was to make the program clinically relevant, to give candidates the opportunity to focus on developing new skills that would apply to their counseling practices in the real world.”

“THIS PROGRAM GIVES STUDENTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE A WHOLE NEW FIELD OF THERAPY, TO HELP PEOPLE IN A WAY THEY MAY NEVER HAVE BEEN HELPED OTHERWISE.”
 DR. STEPHEN SOUTHERN

MEETING A HIGH DEMAND

When the doctoral degree program launched in 2012, the plan was to admit 12 candidates. When more than 175 experienced clinicians submitted applications, the inaugural class was expanded to 30. Demand has continued to grow, with applications pouring in from counselors in private practice, as well as counselors working in hospitals, high schools, colleges, institutions, and mental health agencies. The program currently enrolls 90 doctoral candidates.

“There is a tremendous need out there for mental health professionals,” Dr. Southern says. “Some research-based doctoral programs ‘weed out’ some of the students along the way. We want *all* of our candidates to graduate to fill that need, to help as many people who need mental health services as we possibly can.”

Locally, classes are conducted in the Fondren neighborhood of Jackson, in the same building where Mississippi College operates a *pro bono* mental health services clinic. Demand for this one-of-a-kind doctoral program, however, has quickly spread worldwide. MC also offers the program online, including professional counselors living and working throughout the United States, as well as in China, Nicaragua, and Saudi Arabia.

DEVELOPING NEW MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALTIES

One of the most unique aspects of the MC program is that doctoral candidates do not complete a research-oriented thesis. Instead, they prepare and present a Project Demonstrating Excellence (PDE) that explores an area of counseling in which they are interested in specializing, and which has practical applications in the real world of counseling patients. The PDE includes research as a component, but uses that research as a tool to explore and develop new methods of treatment.

“This program makes research relevant for clinicians in practice,” says Dr. Southern. “We all have specific gifts given to us by our Creator. Training people to share those gifts with the community was very important to me personally. Our program draws out the candidates’ unique gifts and encourages them to apply those gifts in service to their patients and their communities. Our candidates’ gifts become their calling.”

“We begin by asking the candidates, ‘What do you want to do?’” Dr. Southern continues. “Do you want to help

people overcome trauma or addiction? Do you want to resolve parenting issues? Where do you want to focus your practice, and what do patients who need help with that issue want?’ The candidates’ answers guide them toward a topic for their Project Demonstrating Excellence. They look at an issue, at how it’s currently being treated, at what’s *not* being addressed, and then they decide how *they* would address it.” That specialized approach is reflected in the diverse topics of the students’ PDEs, which have included body image issues and eating disorders in African American women, using play therapy in couples’ counseling, grief work with children, and treatment programs for military veterans and their families. A former prison warden developed a program to add art and drama therapy for female inmates, while an addictions counselor explored the use of positive psychology – focusing on the positive aspects of the patient’s personality and life – in addiction treatment.

the
**FIRST
DEGREE**
.....
**THE FIRST DOCTORAL
DEGREE IN THE
UNITED STATES
WAS THE DOCTOR
OF PHILOSOPHY,
OR PH.D., AWARDED BY
YALE UNIVERSITY
IN 1861.**

Dr. Dawn Ellison ’12, ’14 was a member of the first doctoral class to graduate, and now teaches in the MC program. For her PDE, Dr. Ellison developed a treatment model for female survivors of sexual assault that combines feminist group therapy sessions with self-defense training. Based on Dr. Ellison’s model, survivors would complete several sessions of therapy and physical self-defense training, then have the opportunity to fight back against a padded attacker while other women cheer them on.

“Because trauma exerts both a physical and a psychological impact on the body, trauma treatment should incorporate a mind-body approach,” Dr. Ellison explains. “This type of therapy is an opportunity for a survivor to regain the sense of empowerment that was taken away by the assault.” Dr. Ellison’s next step is developing a grant proposal that would provide the funding needed to allow her to test the therapy with trauma survivors. As a teacher and recruiter for the MC program, Dr. Ellison guides candidates as passionate about their specialties as she is about her own.

“I am so blessed to be a part of this program,” Dr. Ellison says. “As an instructor, I can help a counselor take an idea and move it to fruition. The students in our program are committed and they’re so passionate. They’ll take what they’re building here out into the community and use it to help so many people.”



TRAINED BY THE MASTERS — Dr. Stephen Southern, professor and chair of the doctor of professional counseling program and director of the doctor of professional counseling program, brings nearly 40 years of clinical and consulting experience. He is the editor of *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*. Dr. Southern trained at the Masters and Johnson Institute founded by William Masters and Virginia Johnson, pioneers in research on human sexual response, and devoted much of his career to helping couples improve their relationships. Dr. Southern also specialized in treating survivors of sexual abuse.



“BECAUSE TRAUMA EXERTS BOTH A PHYSICAL AND A PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT ON THE BODY, TRAUMA TREATMENT SHOULD INCORPORATE A MIND-BODY APPROACH. THIS TYPE OF THERAPY IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A SURVIVOR TO REGAIN THE SENSE OF EMPOWERMENT THAT WAS TAKEN AWAY BY THE ASSAULT.” — DR. DAWN ELLISON ’12, ’14

“This program gives students an opportunity to create a whole new field of therapy, to help people in a way they may never have been helped otherwise,” Dr. Southern says. “To put it in the simplest terms, the Mississippi College doctor of counseling program helps licensed counselors develop new mental health programs that will help people in need.”

Rev. Tommy Myrick is a pastor with Christ United Methodist Church in College Station, Texas, and also serves as a counselor with the Mending Hearts Grief Center, which specializes in helping children grieve the loss of a loved one. He is scheduled to graduate from the doctoral program in December of 2016.

“We started the Mending Hearts Grief Center at the same time I started my PDE research on grief counseling for children,” Rev. Myrick says. “I believe the timing was a God thing. Everything I’ve learned through working on my PDE, I’ve applied in my work with the children in the grief center. I’ve learned that children respond to grief and heal from grief in specific, different ways than adults do, and it’s shaped the way I’ve counseled the children. I’ve also connected with other experts in the field and am part of a team working to develop a treatment manual for other counselors working with grieving children. The doctoral program has been so beneficial to me and to my patients. Without it, I wouldn’t have learned anything close to what I’ve needed to learn to effectively help these kids.”

“My expectations have been exceeded,” says Damien

Thomas, who serves as an assistant professor in the MC department of psychology and operates his own practice, the Resilience Counseling & Recovery Center. “I conduct workshops, seminars, and lectures related to my PDE topic, which focused on substance use disorder. Most importantly, my clients have benefitted greatly, as they have access to services and information that may otherwise have not been identified without this type of specialization.”

Pastor Sergio Rodriguez ’14, the chaplain and director of counseling, pastoral care, and ethics at Laredo Medical Center in Laredo, Texas, earned his doctorate in counseling from MC through the online program.

“Earning my doctorate helped me, but it really helped my patients more,” Pastor Rodriguez says. “I’m able to better identify and treat the cause of my clients’ problems instead of just seeing the effects of the problems. I feel empowered by the program, and I’m grateful for the results I’ve seen in my practice and for my patients.”

“I enrolled in the program because I thought it was the best way for me to improve the way I help my patients,” says Dr. Javier Ley ’15, an addictions counselor with the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation in Minnesota. “That was my goal, and it was definitely met. The program’s emphasis on clinical excellence based on research provides an ethical and professional path to help those most in need. I always felt that the desire to help the underserved was at the heart of the MC doctorate in counseling program.”



THE FONDREN INSTITUTE FOR PSYCHOTHERAPY — Classes for the doctorate in counseling are conducted online and in the 12,000-square-foot offices of the Fondren Institute for Psychotherapy, a mental health clinic in the Fondren community of Jackson, Mississippi. Rather than meeting in classrooms, doctoral candidates meet in a clinical environment similar to the ones in which they will work. Candidates in the doctoral and master’s degree programs in counseling also have the opportunity to serve as interns with the Fondren Institute for Psychotherapy, which provides *pro bono* mental health services to the Fondren community.



A HEART
for
CHILDREN
AND FOR MOM AND DAD

.....
*How Carlyn Hicks '10 is putting
broken families together again*



The American Bar Association honored Carlyn Hicks with its 2015 Young Lawyer Division Child Advocacy Award. This prestigious annual award is presented to one young lawyer nationwide who has demonstrated distinguished service in child advocacy.



EVEN AS A CHILD, CARLYN HICKS HAD A HEART FOR HELPING OTHERS.

“I grew up in an area that started out as a nice place to live, but declined due to crime,” Hicks recalls. “I had classmates who didn’t have a lot. I remember going to elementary school and giving my hair bows to little girls who didn’t have their own.”

Hicks enrolled at MC Law with plans to use her law degree to “become a voice for those who have no voice.” She followed that calling to a fulltime position with the Mission First Legal Aid Office, which provides legal services and spiritual counsel to low-income residents of Hinds, Rankin, and Madison Counties, Mississippi.

“People asked me, ‘Why not do this as volunteer work and get a job where you can make more money?’” Hicks recalls. “But Mission First is where I wanted to be. I am vested in public interest. I can empathize with my clients. The people I serve could have been my neighbors. In fact, some of them *are* my neighbors.”

In 2012, Hicks was given another opportunity to fulfill her goal of serving as a voice for the voiceless. Hicks and Mission First have been at the forefront of the Parent Rep-

resentation Program, a pilot program that provides free legal representation for low-income parents involved in the child welfare system and possibly facing the court-ordered removal of their children.

Mississippi is the only state that does not have a statute providing for the appointment of counsel for parents in danger of losing their children as a result of allegations of abuse or neglect. Because these are civil cases rather than criminal cases, the parents do not have a guaranteed right to counsel.

“You can commit murder and if you’re indigent, you’re guaranteed a court-appointed attorney, but if you’re accused of non-criminal neglect of your child, you’re out of luck,” Hicks explains. “For many parents, this is the first time they’ve ever been involved in the court system. When they get to court, there’s a prosecutor, an attorney representing the child, a social worker and a guardian *ad litem* making recommendations, but the parent has no one in court to represent *them*. These people are scared. They don’t understand the process or the proceedings, which could end with them losing custody of their children.”

“The system can be overwhelming to parents who face the prospect of having their children removed,” agrees Judge Tom

Broome ’96, who presides over Rankin County Youth Court. “They don’t know what their options are, nor do they know where to turn. The agency that investigates the allegations against them, the Department of Human Services (DHS), is the same agency they are required to work with to seek the return of their children. They often don’t understand the various roles of all the parties in their case, and the legal language used is like a foreign language to them.”

Hicks took part in brainstorming sessions with youth court judges, child welfare advocates, and other stakeholders who helped develop a parent representation model for Mississippi. Out of those meetings came four parent representation pilot programs in Adams, Forrest, Harrison, and Rankin Counties. Funding for the pilot programs came from the Seattle-based Casey Family Programs, the nation’s largest private foundation focused on foster care and improving the child welfare system.

The pilot program launched on October 1, 2012, with Hicks designated as the attorney that would represent parents in Rankin County Youth Court. Most cases in Rankin County are poverty-related and some involve parents with chemical dependency issues. Hicks advises parents as to their rights and the steps they must take in order to regain custody of their children, and represents them in all youth court proceedings. But her help doesn’t begin or end in the courtroom.

“I help parents identify resources they need, including mental health services and drug treatment programs, and I’m there to hold their hands,” Hicks says. “I’m someone they can trust who cares about their feelings and wants to



“I HELP PARENTS IDENTIFY RESOURCES THEY NEED, INCLUDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND DRUG TREATMENT PROGRAMS, AND I’M THERE TO HOLD THEIR HANDS. I’M SOMEONE THEY CAN TRUST WHO CARES ABOUT THEIR FEELINGS AND WANTS TO HEAR THEIR SIDE OF THEIR STORY. SOME OF THEM HAVE MADE MISTAKES, AND I’M HERE TO HELP THEM WORK THROUGH THAT. IN THAT ROLE, I HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DO MORE THAN JUST PROVIDE LEGAL ASSISTANCE. I AM A LAWYER, THERAPIST, AND A SPIRITUAL COUNSELOR. I AM LITERALLY A COUNSELOR AT LAW.”

hear their side of their story. Some of them have made mistakes, and I’m here to help them work through that. In that role, I have an opportunity to do more than just provide legal assistance. I am a lawyer, therapist, and a spiritual counselor. I am literally a *counselor* at law.”

Hicks meets her clients during what is likely the most stressful time of their lives, and acknowledges that sometimes, her advice is not always welcomed.

“I have a responsibility to tell these parents what the best course of action is for them,” Hicks says. “And if I don’t think reunification with their children is the best option for those children at the time, I tell them so. Sometimes tough decisions have to be made, and some parents don’t like that. But I remind them to stay focused on their children and their family’s strengths.

“When children are removed, the separation is very hard on the child, too,” Hicks continues. “No matter what’s happened, the child usually wants to be with the parent. A child may not understand that Mom and Dad are struggling with addiction or other issues. All a child sees is Mom and Dad. The best thing I can do for that child is help Mom and Dad become the best parents they can be. If I can help the parent fix whatever went wrong that led to this situation, I’m doing what is best for the child. Child advocacy is family advocacy.”

The plan was to operate the pilot program for one year, then evaluate its benefits to Mississippi families. Nearly four years later, the program has continued in Mississippi, with Hancock County added as a fifth pilot site. Hicks continues to be the sole parent representative in Rankin County, handling around 100 cases per year.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION ON PARENT REPRESENTATION

Since the launch of the Parent Representation Pilot Program, Mississippi has made progress in assisting indigent parents facing the court-ordered removal of their children. During the 2016 session, the Mississippi Legislature passed HB 772, which provides for the discretionary appointment of counsel for indigent parents in youth court and for those facing termination of parental rights proceedings.



“I’VE ALWAYS GOT AN EAR TO ISSUES THAT IMPACT MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES. WHEN YOU MIX ME WITH A COUPLE OF OTHER GOOD-HEARTED FOODIES WHO CAN BUY INTO THAT VISION, THIS IS WHAT ENDS UP HAPPENING.”



THE WAY TO THE HEART IS THROUGH THE STOMACH

CARLYN HICKS IS PASSIONATE ABOUT FOOD, NOT ONLY FOR THE PURE PLEASURE OF SATISFYING HER TASTE BUDS, BUT ALSO FOR THE RELATIONSHIPS A GOOD MEAL CAN FORGE BETWEEN STRANGERS.

“Food is a connector,” Hicks says. “It has the ability to bring a diverse group of people together, no matter their background, ethnicity, race, or religion. Food and fellowship has the power to transcend economic lines and create spaces for friendships we never thought would be possible.”

Hicks shared her passion by creating the viral hashtags #ThinkJXN and #EatJXN, as well as a Facebook group for Jackson-area foodies. Located at [facebook.com/groups/jxnfoodies](https://www.facebook.com/groups/jxnfoodies), the group includes 2,900 members who come together to share their Jackson-area culinary and cultural experiences. People who connect on the Facebook page often opt to go offline and share a group meal together.

“It’s an opportunity for people to eat, socialize, patronize local businesses, and help Jackson’s economic development, all at the same time,” Hicks says.

In addition to enjoying group dinners in Jackson, members of Jackson Foodies plan to come together to serve others through their “Feed JXN” initiative, which focuses on dining events that benefit the city’s homeless population.

“I’ve always got an ear to issues that impact marginalized communities,” Hicks explained in an interview with *The Clarion-Ledger*. “When you mix me with a couple of other good-hearted foodies who can buy into that vision, this is what ends up happening.”

Hicks’ personal favorite dish? The bronzed redfish served up at Lou’s Full Serv. Add sides of buttermilk whipped potatoes and corn-pepper hash and top it all with green onion-crab butter, and it’s a dish that might not be exactly heart healthy, but that’s sure to do the heart some good.

“As a result of this program, I’ve seen parents more confident in their ability to meet their own goals and to satisfy the terms of their service agreement,” Hicks continues. “I’ve seen visitation occur more frequently and reunification happen sooner and more often. Rankin County Youth Court also has a lower number of foster care placements than the state average.”

Hicks’ work with the program has earned national recognition. In 2015, she was honored with the American Bar Association’s Young Lawyer Division Child Advocacy Award. This prestigious annual award is presented to one young lawyer nationwide who has demonstrated distinguished service in child advocacy.

“Family advocacy is necessary to providing children with the supportive, safe environments they deserve,” Hicks says. “This award validated that work in the most meaningful way – by acknowledging how we are empowering parents, protecting children, strengthening families, and nurturing communities in Mississippi.”

The American Bar Association has also asked Hicks to serve on leadership teams working to improve representation for parents in the child welfare system nationwide. She appears in the video “Giving Parents a Voice,” which is used as a national training tool.

In addition to her efforts with parent representation, Hicks serves on the board of the Young Lawyers Division of the Mississippi Bar. Her focus as the chair of the Bar’s homeless youth committee has been helping young people who age out of the foster system with the transition to life on their own. Hicks was also named the inaugural chair of the newest committee of the Mississippi Bar Association, the Child Advocacy and Child Welfare Committee, which will provide a forum for attorneys who practice in various areas of child welfare and juvenile law. And beginning in August of 2016, Hicks will return to her *alma mater* as the clinical director and an adjunct professor in MC Law’s newest clinic, the Child Welfare and Family Justice Clinic.

“Carlyn Hicks’ stellar efforts have helped ensure the safety and well-being of not only the children who find themselves in the courtroom, but for all children in the state of Mississippi,” Judge Broome says. “One of the many reasons I am most impressed with Carlyn is her compassion for all. Carlyn never fails to engage the whole person, no matter who you are or from whence you came. Just as she strives hard for her own family, she works to raise the bar in her community by serving as a role model, mentor, leader, and advocate for all children. Words are inadequate to describe a person such as Carlyn Hicks, who makes the world a better place.”

“Making families stronger than they were before is what’s important to me,” Hicks says. “Time lost with a parent or child can’t be regained. I have a daughter. I get to pick up my little girl and hug her, and I have other mothers and fathers who count on me to help them get back to the place where they can hold their own children. Yes, it can be emotionally draining work, but I can’t let myself burn out as long as there are children and parents longing to be together again.”

CINDY
MELTON
'94, '96
ON WHAT
MAKES
HER
HEART
SKIP
A BEAT
*(literally and
figuratively)*

A WHOLEHEARTED

Calling

“MY HEART IS FULL,” says Dr. Cindy Melton, chair of the Mississippi College Department of Teacher Education and Leadership. “To be a good teacher, your heart has to be filled with passion for your work and for your students, and my heart is *full*.” Given her youthful energy and boundless enthusiasm, it’s easy to understand why Melton is sometimes mistaken for a member of Nenamoosha, the MC social tribe she sponsors, and why in the early days of her career as a junior high school teacher, she was often stopped by other teachers who demanded to see her hall pass. For her students and colleagues, Melton’s passion-filled heart is her signature characteristic. Only the small scar on her chest reveals there once was a time when Melton’s full heart almost stopped beating.



TEACHING FROM THE HEART

As a little girl growing up on her family's farm near Batesville, Mississippi, Cindy Melton knew she was destined to become a teacher.

"Lining up all my stuffed animals and sharing my math and reading lessons with them was a pretty good indicator," Melton says with a smile. "I loved school and I loved learning. When I had used up my allotted daily quota of 'why?' and 'how?' from my exhausted parents, I would sit and read the encyclopedia."

After earning bachelor's and master's degrees in education from MC, Melton followed her calling to the classroom, where she taught at the middle, junior high, and elementary levels at schools in Utica and Clinton, Mississippi.

"The classroom is my mission field and my calling is to connect with students and relate to them," Melton says. "I'm passionate about making connections. Every child has a story, and learning their stories helps a teacher understand why they act in certain ways."

"When I was teaching in elementary and junior high schools, the kids would say, 'Why are you so interested in me?' That was my opening to minister to them and to show them God's love. By loving on the kids and pouring into them, I was giving them a message – I love you, and because I love you, I expect the best from you. Your best behavior, your best effort."

One of Melton's defining moments as a teacher came when she saw her students give it their best in a challenging situation. Melton was teaching an elementary school inclusion class, which included both mainstream students and students with special needs.

"We had a new student join our class, a little girl with Down syndrome and multiple other disabilities. She was developmentally challenged, and she also looked very different than the other children," Melton recalls. "Before she arrived, I told my class, 'We all have different abilities. Some people don't have abilities that you have, and you might not have abilities that some other people have, but we all have to be kind and respectful of one another.' A few days later, the children were out on the playground, and a little boy from another class made a hurtful comment to that little girl. Her whole demeanor shut down. She just sank down on the ground."

"Before I could intervene, the other children in my class locked elbows and formed a circle around that little girl. One of the bigger boys stepped up and said to the boy who had made the remark, 'If you want to say that to her, you have to say it to every one of us, because we are a family. And you can start by saying it to me.'"



TAKING IT IN THE TEETH — When Cindy Melton says she owes her 1,000-watt smile to her high school sweetheart-turned-husband, Derek '94, she isn't just being nice. Cindy's bright smile comes from the extensive dental work she required after Derek knocked out her four front teeth with a hockey stick. "We were playing hockey with friends, and both of us went for the puck. Derek hit me full in the mouth with the stick. Four root canals and a few thousands dollars' worth of porcelain veneers later, I can smile about it."

"That little girl stood up and joined arms with her classmates. And that little boy who had been ugly to her? I think he had to change his pants," Melton says with a laugh. "I was so proud of my students that day. They handled it perfectly, better than I could have. And that little girl was a different child from that day on. *That* is what teaching is really all about."

LESSONS TAKEN TO HEART

Melton taught as an adjunct at Mississippi College before joining the MC faculty fulltime in 2001, just prior to earning her Ph.D. in educational leadership from the University of Mississippi. Today, Melton serves as chair of the Department of Teacher Education and Leadership, a role that finds her teaching and mentoring the next generations of educators.

"Teaching at the college level, you only get an hour and 20 minutes with them, not all day like you do with younger students," Melton says. "But I still try to build those relationships, to pour into those students."

According to her MC students, Melton has been successful. "Dr. Melton encourages and loves every one of her students," says sophomore Paulette Vargas. "She once told my class that teaching is not for everyone, but instead it is a blessing God gives to certain people. She truly holds that blessing and is working wonders every single day."

THE PERFECT TEACHER'S GIFT

Cindy Melton's most memorable gift was a "recycled" t-shirt and a Christmas card addressed to someone else, both presented by one of her sixth grade students. "She looked at me with such pride and said, 'Mrs. Melton, can you *believe* my mom was going to throw these away? I knew they'd be perfect for you!'" Melton recalls. "Did I wear that shirt? *Of course*, I wore that shirt. She was thrilled to see me in it, and it's the thought that counts."



YOU CAN TAKE THE GIRL OFF THE FARM, BUT... Cindy Melton grew up on a family farm, caring for animals and spending time outdoors on the land she describes as "my refuge." Today, Cindy and Derek Melton live on acreage that allows Cindy to relive those days. While the Meltons don't live off the land, Derek and Cindy's children, 12-year-old Cameron and 10-year-old Caeley, raise chickens and earn pocket money by selling the eggs. Her children inherited Cindy's love for animals. In addition to some 20 chickens, the Melton menagerie includes two dogs, three cats, and a goat named Speck.

"After the first month in her class, I knew I was meant to be a teacher," Vargas continues. "Because she believes so much in my future, I'm able to believe in myself. It's the faith Dr. Melton has in me that assures me that someday, I will have the ability to change students' lives, just like she has."

Melton sees part of her role as helping students decide whether or not they truly have the heart to teach.

"Part of the decision to teach is asking, are you ready for this, and how effective will you be in the classroom? We talk about the legal and ethical challenges teachers face today. We talk about the relatively low salary you might earn compared to your friends. Yes, you can definitely have a good life, but it wouldn't be fair of me to paint an unrealistic picture. It's difficult work and it's not lucrative, but you're making an investment in the future that's about more than financial gain. And those students who *are* called to become teachers? They're so happy, so fulfilled. They really are out there changing the world. I love to hear from them after they've been teaching for awhile and they've seen these things on their own. They'll call me and say, 'That thing you told us about in class? I used it!'"

"One lesson Dr. Melton taught us that I have taken to heart is that every student is a treasure from God," says Allie Luckey '13, who is now a kindergarten teacher at Clinton Park Elementary School. "To think I was selected to be that student's teacher is a huge honor. I remind myself often of my goal to be 'the Cindy Melton,' the teacher your students will remember all their lives."

"I had the joy and privilege of having Dr. Melton as my teacher twice," says Sarah Hankins '10, '14, an English and theater teacher at Clinton High School. "The first time was as a fifth grader at Eastside Elementary and then again when I attended MC. As a child, I was an awkward bibliophile who could talk the ear off a wall. Dr. Melton encouraged my love of reading and patiently listened to my ramblings."

When I arrived at MC, one of the first things she said to me was, 'You turned out exactly like I thought you would.' Somehow, Dr. Melton knew that the fifth grade bookworm would one day grow up to pursue a teaching career. Dr. Melton always saw the best in her students, even when we didn't see it in ourselves. I would like to think that I do that for my students now."

AND THE AWARD GOES TO...

Dr. Cindy Melton has been honored for her work in classrooms at every educational level. She received the Metro Jackson Outstanding Teacher Award (1998) for her work with the Hinds County Public School District; was named Teacher of the Year (1998) by the Clinton Public School District; and was honored as the Outstanding Young Professor of the Year (2005) by Mississippi College.



CAELEY,
CINDY,
DEREK, AND
CAMERON
MELTON



“NOW, I LOOK AT MY PACEMAKER AS A WONDERFUL BLESSING. WITHOUT IT, I WOULDN’T BE HERE, AND MY KIDS WOULDN’T BE HERE. IT HASN’T SLOWED ME DOWN. INSTEAD, IT’S ENABLED ME TO DO THINGS I WOULDN’T BE ABLE TO DO OTHERWISE. I CAN RUN, I CAN TEACH, I CAN BE ACTIVE WITH MY FAMILY. I CAN’T GO THROUGH AN AIRPORT METAL DETECTOR, BUT THAT’S A SMALL PRICE TO PAY.”

**A BROKEN HEART MENDED,
AN OPEN HEART SURRENDERED**

“Dr. Melton has a heart of pure gold,” says junior Autumn Augustine. “She looks at her students and treats them with the love of Christ. Every encounter I have with her fills my own heart with joy.”

Of course, Cindy Melton’s heart isn’t really made of gold, but it *will* set off a metal detector. Since childhood Melton suffered from syncope, a condition that sometimes caused her heart to beat too slowly. At times, her heart rate slowed to the point that she passed out and suffered seizures.

Melton has no problem remembering the day her heart finally stopped trying to keep up with her. It was September 11, 2001, and she was making her way to Provine Chapel for a prayer service in the wake of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, D.C.

“I passed out, had a seizure, and ended up in the hospital, where a doctor told me I needed a pacemaker,” Melton says. “My first thought was, ‘A pacemaker? Come on, I’m not 80 years old. I’m not even 30.’ Then they told me I could either get a pacemaker, or I could die. I said, well, let’s put in a pacemaker.”

“Now, I look at my pacemaker as a wonderful blessing. Without it, I wouldn’t be here, and my kids wouldn’t be here. It hasn’t slowed me down. Instead, it’s *enabled* me to do things I wouldn’t be able to do otherwise. I can run, I can teach, I can be active with my family. I can’t go through an airport metal detector, but that’s a small price to pay.”

Given her passion for connecting, it’s not surprising that Melton has used her pacemaker to build deeper relationships with her students.

“My favorite t-shirt says, ‘No scars, no proof,’” Melton says. “Sometimes as an ice-breaker, I’ll ask students to share the stories behind their scars. A student might talk about the skinned knee she got from falling off a bicycle, or she might talk about an emotional scar that runs so much deeper. I tell them not to cover their scars, but to be proud of them. Every scar is a story.”

“Every experience with my health taught me a new lesson about gratitude, grace, and the goodness of God,” Melton continues. “I can see His hand through every single illness, guiding me, protecting me, and blessing me. When I was sick as a little girl, I dreaded hearing my mother say to me yet again, ‘It’s amazing what praising can do, Cindy. Count the things you’re thankful for.’ Of course, Mom was right. Taking the time to thank God literally for every beat of your heart, for every breath you can draw, for your ability to see, walk, talk, think, move, speak...well, it’s difficult to throw a pity party when you begin to name all of God’s gracious blessings.”

“I have to add that everything good in my life stemmed from a decision to give my heart to Christ when I was eight years old. Because of that, I’ve had a wonderful, blessed, fantastic career, a great family life, and a story to share with others. Everything else is the result of that first heart decision.”

RULES FOR TEACHERS – 1915

Today’s education graduates might have resisted their calling to teach had they been bound by the strict rules for teachers of 1915, which included: You will not marry during the term of your contract. • You may not loiter downtown in ice cream parlors. • You may not travel beyond the city limits without the permission of the chairman of the board. • You may not ride in a carriage or automobile with any man unless he is your father or your brother. • You may not dress in bright colors. • You may under no circumstances dye your hair.

GOING DOWN RANGE

★ WOUNDED WARRIOR C. J. STEWART'S NEW MISSION

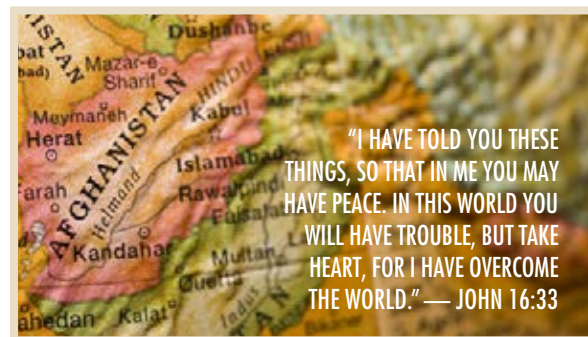


“HUMANS ARE RESILIENT WHEN WE HAVE A COMMUNITY WE BELONG TO AND A MISSION WE BELIEVE IN. YOUR MISSION IS WHAT GIVES YOUR LIFE PURPOSE.”

C. J. STEWART '14

C. J. STEWART ENROLLED IN MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE TO STUDY CRIMINAL JUSTICE WITH THE GOAL OF ATTENDING LAW SCHOOL. BUT BEFORE HE COMPLETED HIS FRESHMAN YEAR, STEWART REALIZED HE WAS MERELY GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS.

“Everything looked good on the outside, but I knew I wasn’t doing what I was supposed to be doing,” Stewart says. “I was living day to day, grade to grade. I had always had a passion for the military. In the eighth grade, we had to write a paper on another era we would like to experience, and I wrote that I should have been born in 1923. Then I would have been 18 years old when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. The coolest thing I could imagine was being a part of D-Day.”



Stewart left MC and enlisted, serving as an Army medic for the 502nd Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division. In May of 2010, he deployed to Afghanistan, where he was stationed at a combat outpost. On June 15th, just 35 days into Stewart’s deployment, the outpost was attacked. Rocket-propelled grenades and machine gun fire erupted all around Stewart and his fellow soldiers. Then a rocket exploded a wall near Stewart’s position.

“The blast was *deafening*,” Stewart recalls. “I didn’t realize I was hurt at first. Then I heard our squad leader yelling, *Doc’s hit!*” I looked down and realized I was covered in my own blood. My arms and legs were pierced with shrapnel. I could see inside my wrist.”

Stewart had sustained life-threatening injuries. His right arm was shredded and he had suffered tremendous blood loss. He was rushed to Kandahar Airfield, where a medical team worked desperately to save his life and his limbs. (“When I woke up, my arm was still there,” Stewart recalls, “which was a real surprise.”) Stewart was kept alive by the medical team in Kandahar and finally stabilized at a hospital in Germany. He was then transported to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Washington, D.C. His life had been spared, but his body was permanently damaged and his military career was over. The adventurous young man who had left for Afghanistan returned to the United States a Purple Heart recipient whose only certainty was a long and difficult recovery.

Stewart spent the next 18 months at Walter Reed, undergoing more than 40 surgeries on his arms and legs, as well as rigorous, painful physical and occupational therapy sessions. His grueling treatment regime was broken by long periods spent in bed, wondering what he would do with his life.

“I had an Army mentor who was killed in Afghanistan, and at first, I thought, ‘God, you got the wrong guy,’” Stewart says. “Then I realized I had a responsibility to his legacy to use my platform in an impactful way. Instead of asking God, ‘Why me?’ I asked God, ‘What do you want me to do with this?’”

Two life-changing events occurred during Stewart’s long recovery. He fell in love with his occupational therapist, Danielle, who is now his wife. And he came up with the idea for a military-style, outdoor camp that would challenge participants through physical activities and leadership training interwoven with a Biblical message. Stewart had been battle-tested, and had overcome the toughest challenge he’d ever faced by clinging to his faith. Now, he would offer others the opportunity to become battle-tested, to overcome their own adversities, and to discover or deepen their own faith.

When he returned to Mississippi from Walter Reed, Stewart founded the nonprofit C. J. Stewart Foundation and Camp Down Range, the military-style facility he had envisioned, on 200 wooded, lake-studded acres outside of Clinton. Camp Down Range takes its name from the military term “down range,” which refers to being deployed overseas, usually into a combat zone.

“Ordinary people go ‘down range’ every day,” Stewart says. “The locker room, the office, the cafeteria, the dorm, the workplace – the challenges of the world are everywhere. We may not be in actual combat, but in today’s society, only the strong survive.”

MANHOOD ACADEMY

The heart of Camp Down Range is Manhood Academy, a summer program for high school and middle school boys that Stewart describes as “the most challenging thing they’ve ever done in their lives.” Twelve young men come to Camp Down Range at a time, spending four days completing grueling, military-style training exercises by day and tent camping by night. Participants push themselves and their teammates to the limit in a program that’s physically challenging, but designed to spur emotional and spiritual growth.

“We limit it to 12 kids we can really pour into instead of trying to serve 100,” Stewart says. “And it’s definitely not summer camp. It’s designed to be challenging.”



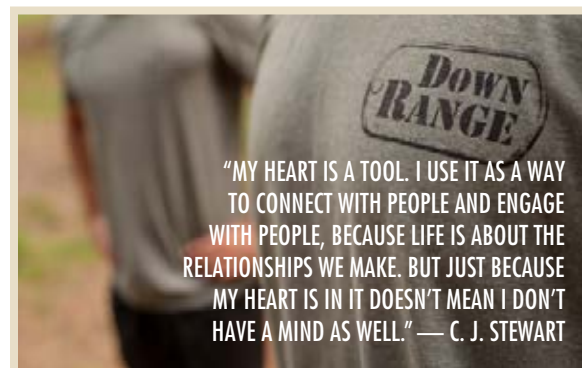
GOING DOWN RANGE — Camp Down Range takes its name from the military term “down range,” which refers to being deployed overseas, usually into a combat zone. “Ordinary people go ‘down range’ every day,” Stewart says. “The locker room, the office, the cafeteria, the dorm, the workplace – the challenges of the world are everywhere. We may not be in actual combat, but in today’s society, only the strong survive.”



"MANHOOD ACADEMY EXHAUSTED ME MENTALLY, PHYSICALLY, AND SPIRITUALLY, TO A POINT WERE I FELT LIKE I HAD NO MORE LEFT IN ME TO TAKE ANOTHER STEP. HOWEVER, IT ALSO MADE ME REALIZE THAT WITH THE HELP OF CHRIST, I HAVE NO LIMITS. IT MADE ME REALIZE THAT I CAN DO SO MUCH MORE THAN WHAT I HAD PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT." — EVAN CARITE, AGE 14

"C. J. STEWART IS A PICTURE OF CHRIST TO ME. HE LOVES EVERYONE UNCONDITIONALLY. HE SPEAKS TRUTH, LIFE, AND LOVE. YOU MAY SEE A GENTLE AND FUN-LOVING EXTERIOR, BUT UNDERNEATH IS THE HEART OF A WARRIOR WHO WANTS EVERYONE TO EXPERIENCE THE LOVE OF JESUS." — SCOTT STEELE, MEMBER OF THE C. J. STEWART FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The 12 participants are divided into two squads of six; the squads then engage in intense competition against each other. Military-style exercises include a trail hike carrying telephone poles; the "confidence climb," which requires the boys to scale a 35-foot-high, ladder-like structure (wearing a safety harness); military-style obstacle courses; and strategic exercises in which opposing squads recreate famous military missions equipped with paint ball guns. The losing squad faces penalties ranging from making lunch for the winning squad to additional physical challenges. This punishing physical regime is combined with military or Biblical stories designed to encourage deeper thinking and instill lifelong lessons.



"MY HEART IS A TOOL. I USE IT AS A WAY TO CONNECT WITH PEOPLE AND ENGAGE WITH PEOPLE, BECAUSE LIFE IS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIPS WE MAKE. BUT JUST BECAUSE MY HEART IS IN IT DOESN'T MEAN I DON'T HAVE A MIND AS WELL." — C. J. STEWART

"The boys remember carrying that telephone pole, and we anchor that to a spiritual experience or truth," Stewart says. "For example, we take a kid who's afraid of heights and get him out of his comfort zone on the confidence climb. Then we talk about David and Goliath and facing your personal giants. These guys' personal giants might take the form of, 'My dad called me a mama's boy,' or 'I don't know my parents,' or 'I don't feel like anyone cares.'"

Evenings are spent in the prayer garden, where the boys and their squad leaders discuss lessons learned over the course of the day, and leaders ask each participant, "What can we be in prayer for you about?"

"My most memorable experience at Camp Down Range was my first round of Manhood Academies last year," says Zach Ashcraft, a senior at Mississippi College who serves as a Camp Down Range squad leader. "I'll never forget sitting with the campers and hearing them open up about their situations at home, the lessons they learned

during camp, and how they planned to change something about themselves when they returned home. What I heard was evidence that our program works. We say that we're about practical life changes, but when I look back at my conversations with these guys, I can really see that we are being used by God to help campers bring about those changes. Nothing can beat that."

Manhood Academy concludes with a closing ceremony to which the campers' parents are invited. Each camper leads his own family in prayer and tells his family members what he's been praying about over the past four days. The young men leave Camp Down Range with a t-shirt proclaiming "I survived Manhood Academy," a stack of military and faith-based books, and a mandate to put the lessons they've learned into practice at home.

"This is not a mountaintop experience or a Kumbaya moment," Stewart says. "It's meant to be super intense, super challenging. Everything we teach is intentional. We make sure you understand that everything you learn here is worthless unless you learn something about yourself to take back with you. Because of the few degrees you were altered by your few days at Camp Down Range, you'll move in a different direction as you continue walking. But it's up to *you* to keep walking."

Manhood Academy serves about 50 young men per summer, including many repeat participants. Stewart recalls a 14-year-old Manhood Academy participant who was a leader in his group at every challenge – until they reached the confidence climb. The boy was afraid of heights, and rather than climb to the level his team needed him to reach in order to win the challenge, he stopped short, saying that he would rather accept the consequence. The consequence Stewart assigned was having the boy's fellow team members run back and forth across a quarter-mile-long levy in the Mississippi heat – carrying the boy. As his teammates struggled in the heat, the boy broke down and cried, protesting, "I wanted to take the consequence. *Me*, not them."

"Think about being a husband or a father and having to watch your wife or your child pay for your mistakes," Stewart told him. "That would be 10 times worse."

The young man went on to complete Manhood Academy, immediately signing up to return the next summer. On his application form, he wrote that he would be coming back for *redemption*.



GO DOWN RANGE — Camp Down Range's Basic Training program is a two-day experience for companies, schools, sports teams, youth groups, and other groups whose members participate in military-themed challenges and outdoor activities in a wilderness setting. Activities challenge male and female participants physically, emotionally, and spiritually. TO ENLIST IN BASIC TRAINING, SPONSOR A YOUNG MAN IN THE MANHOOD ACADEMY, OR DONATE TO THE C. J. STEWART FOUNDATION, VISIT CAMPDOWNRANGE.ORG.



DANIELLE, PAISLEY, AND C. J. STEWART

A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN (BY WAY OF WALTER REED) — C. J. Stewart and his wife, Danielle, met at Walter Reed Military Medical Center, where Danielle was the occupational therapist assigned to C. J.'s case. A former rugby player, Danielle encouraged C. J.'s recovery by appealing to his competitive side. "She'd say, 'Come on, hero, you can do that,'" Stewart recalls. "Our first official date was a one-on-one basketball game. I won." On June 15, 2012, the two-year anniversary of the attack in Afghanistan that almost took his life, C. J. proposed. "That date would be ours now, not just mine anymore," Stewart says. "Asking Danielle to marry me on June 15 was a reminder of how and where we met, and that it was all a part of God's plan."

"CAMP DOWN RANGE IS MY WAY OF STAYING IN THE FIGHT, OF STILL SERVING. THROUGH CAMP DOWN RANGE, I FOUND A WAY TO CONTINUE BEING A WARRIOR." — C. J. STEWART

"We are a narcissistic society," Stewart says. "When you're a part of something other than yourself, that's what life is all about. We're teaching young men to live life in a bigger way – not honed in on my phone, my X-Box, my social media. Society teaches us to be creatures of comfort. We're teaching these young men to serve, to lead, to be courageous."

Garon Tate, the student pastor at Morrison Heights Baptist Church and a member of the C. J. Stewart Foundation's board of directors, has brought several young men to Camp Down Range.



"C. J.'s story is one of perseverance and strength, and for my guys to see that has been profound," Tate says. "He's not just someone they heard about that had a life struggle. My guys have developed a relationship with C. J. and they see his journey first hand. The events we've participated in at Camp Down Range always lead to deeper discussions about their faith, and how to be the man that God intended for them to be. I don't know what it's like to serve in combat, but I can imagine that there are guys that make people around them bolder on the battlefield. C. J. is that here in Mississippi."

"The two biggest things I get out of working at camp are the relationships and the life lessons," Ashcraft says. "I've been blessed to be friends with the Stewarts and the other staff members and learn from them real ways to be a better believer, boyfriend, and man. The second benefit, the life lessons, flows naturally from those relationships and the work environment. I can't ask campers to challenge themselves in certain areas or apply certain things to their lives if I'm not doing the same."

"Standing by one of the lakes at the camp when the foundation had just purchased the property, I heard C. J.

talk about his vision for Camp Down Range. Several of us had trouble picking our jaws up off the ground because we were so in awe of what God was stirring," says board member Scott Steele. "A year later, C. J. forwarded a letter from a mother who said she had lost control of her teenage son. That he was making extremely poor choices and she didn't know where to turn. By the grace of God, he had discovered Camp Down Range. During the Manhood Academy, this young man chose to turn his life around. The mother poured her heart out about the difference in her son just in the space of one week. How he was reading and reciting scripture, telling friends about his lifestyle changes, and about his experiences with a wounded warrior named C. J. Stewart."

"Knowing that one life was changed is one of the most profound experiences I've had with Camp Down Range," Steele continues. "This is just one of dozens of testimonies I've heard during in the camp's short existence. But we may never know this side of eternity the impact Camp Down Range will have across the generations."

A NEW WAY TO BE A WARRIOR

"C. J.'s plan for developing boys into young men of true character and moral conviction and the way he accomplishes that is just astounding," says Mary Ann Kirby, a member of the C. J. Stewart Foundation board. "C. J. is intense, but in a really comfortable way. His grasp of scripture and how it applies to everyday life is remarkable— but he's still cool, you know? To be so young and have such depth – it's God at work, plain and simple. There's just no other way to describe it."

"C. J. Stewart is real, genuine, compassionate, fearless, devoted, committed – I could go on," says Sam Kelly, also a board member. "It's easy to see how he was a leader during his military service."

Despite his life-changing injury and near-death experience, Stewart still looks back on his Army days as among the most fulfilling of his life.

"I loved Afghanistan – the mission, getting geared up, living life every minute. Every great thing is at its greatest when there's a possibility it could be lost, when something really important is at risk. You come back home and you miss that. You have to find something here at home that is that transcendent, that's bigger than you in that same way. Camp Down Range is my way of staying in the fight, of still serving. Through Camp Down Range, I found a way to continue being a warrior."



FAITH, HOPE, AND PAISLEY — C. J. and Danielle Stewart have one daughter on earth and two in Heaven. The couple's first daughter, Faith, was stillborn, and they lost their second daughter, Hope, to miscarriage. "You know, I got blown up in Afghanistan, but even here at home, now, life can still be hard," Stewart says. When their third daughter was born healthy and happy, the Stewarts chose the name Paisley Grace. "Paisley" is Scottish for "church." "That makes me think of William Wallace, the Scottish warrior who inspired 'Braveheart,'" C. J. says with a smile. "She's my little female warrior."

NO **SPEED** LIMIT

LELAND SPEED LAUNCHED HIS FIRST ENTREPRENEURIAL ENTERPRISE AT THE WISE OLD AGE OF FIVE.

The Speed family lived in Jackson, Mississippi's Belhaven neighborhood on a street at the end of the bus line. Noticing that passengers waiting for the bus in the summer heat were drawn to the shade of a nearby sycamore tree, young Leland decided to set up a soft drink stand beneath its branches. The only problem? He didn't know how to make change. * "My father suggested I ask an older boy down the street, Billy Mounger, to help me," Speed recalls. "I went to Billy and made my proposal, and we were in business. I knew I had the right location and it was a good business, even if Billy *did* claim that I drank up all the profits." * Over the next eight decades, Leland Speed's ability to spot a good location and his desire to fulfill a community's need would lead him to a successful career in real estate and a passion for developing and serving the state he loves.

“SO MUCH OF WHO I AM TODAY, I OWE TO LELAND SPEED AND THE LIFE EXAMPLES HE SET FOR NOT ONLY ME, BUT FOR MANY OF OUR STAFFERS. ALL WHO HAVE MET OR HAVE KNOWN LELAND OVER THE YEARS WOULD AGREE THAT YOU CAN’T FIND A BETTER LEADER, TEACHER, AND CHEERLEADER FOR HIS WORK FAMILY.” — Jann Puckett ’69, ’94

A LASTING RELATIONSHIP WITH MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE

In the early 1930s, Leland Speed’s father, also named Leland, was just getting started in the tax-exempt bond business. One of his first clients was Dr. D. M. Nelson, the president of Mississippi College. The two soon became friends.

“My father came to greatly admire the work being done at Mississippi College,” Speed says. “I had a younger brother, James, who died a month before his first birthday in 1935. My parents set up a scholarship at MC in his memory that’s still in place today. That was the beginning of my family’s long relationship with Mississippi College.”

Speed has continued that long relationship; at 42 years, he has served on the Mississippi College Board of Trustees longer than any other member.

“I looked around Mississippi and asked myself, ‘Who are the real people who make this state work?’ I realized so many of them are Mississippi College graduates,” Speed says. “MC turns out solid citizens who contribute to the community. MC is also committed to a Christian mission in a secular world, and I see that role becoming more important by the year. Mississippi College is an engine for good in so many ways in our community, our state, our nation, and our world. When you have the chance to be involved with an organization that’s doing good things successfully, it’s an honor and a privilege.”

A HEAD FOR BUSINESS, A HEART FOR SERVICE

His involvement with Mississippi College is just one of many ways in which Leland Speed has served his community, the state of Mississippi, and his country as a business leader and a community and economic developer.

A graduate of Georgia Tech and Harvard Business School, Speed served in intelligence with the U.S. Air Force Strategic Air Command, which saw him assigned to posts in Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and Newfoundland.

Speed returned to Jackson and began his business career working alongside his father in the bond business. Speed began developing real estate on the side, and in 1978, he went into the real estate investment trust (REIT) business. A REIT is a company that owns or finances income-producing real estate, including hotels, office buildings, and shopping centers. Speed acquired 11 REITs with real estate holdings in 36 states and brought their management functions to Mississippi. The REIT he developed eventually became known as Eastgroup Properties.

“My goal was to assemble a company that would someday reach \$100 million in assets,” Speed recalls. “Today, our assets are at \$3 billion.”

Speed served as the firm’s CEO and president for many years, then as the chair of the Eastgroup board until 2015. He remains an active member of the Eastgroup board of directors. An article in the *Mississippi Business Journal* describing his transition noted that “Eastgroup will designate Speed chairman emeritus, but Speed said he would rather it didn’t. ‘I don’t like that term,’ he said, ‘It means you used to be chairman and you’re not dead yet.’”

Speed is pleased with Eastgroup’s business successes over the past four decades, but he is particularly proud of the company’s low employee turnover rate. Many of the firm’s 69 employees have spent the majority of their careers at Eastgroup.

“What I’ve most enjoyed is bringing a group of people largely from Mississippi together, and letting them see they cannot only compete, but that they can compete effectively on a national basis.”



SPEED CREDITS HIS LONG AND SUCCESSFUL CAREER TO A “STICK WITH IT” ATTITUDE THAT’S ALSO REFLECTED IN HIS PERSONAL LIFE. SPEED AND HIS WIFE, BESSIE, HAVE BEEN MARRIED FOR 53 YEARS.

Jann Puckett ’69, ’94 met Speed when she was still a student at Mississippi College and Speed was her Sunday School teacher. She joined Speed’s firm in its early days and spent 32 years working there, eventually retiring as a vice president.

“Leland became the mentor we all hope for,” Puckett says. “This was the best career path anyone could choose - one led by a Christian, fair-playing man of such character as Leland Speed. Leland leads by example, whether it’s encouraging you to save for your own future or investing in the future of our community. As Eastgroup employees, we saw our president and CEO pouring concrete for a Habitat House, painting at the School for the Blind, planting flowers at city schools, or cleaning brush and hauling off trash from New Stage – all examples of how he taught us to give back.

“Leland is a kind man, a thoughtful man, a generous man, and a gentle leader,” Puckett continues. “Leland thinks everyone on his payroll is his personal responsibility, and that their families are, too. So much of who I am today, I owe to Leland Speed and the life examples he set for not only me, but for many of our staffers. All who have met or have known Leland over the years would agree that you can’t find a better leader, teacher, and cheerleader for his work family.”

In addition to heading Eastgroup, Speed served on the boards of multiple companies and charitable and civic organizations in Mississippi and nationwide.

In 2004, at the request of Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour, Speed accepted a temporary appointment as executive director of the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA), the arm of state government responsible for recruiting new businesses to Mississippi. Speed accepted the position on a volunteer basis, agreeing to serve for two years at an annual salary of \$1.00 per year. He stayed for three years, including service during the difficult time following Hurricane Katrina, and returned to serve again as interim director from 2011 until 2012.

“Leland is a tremendous leader, as he proved in the business world,” says Governor Barbour. “He brought those

same leadership skills to MDA, and he also brought enthusiasm and commitment that served as a model for the staff and for a lot of other people in my administration.”

A MAN AFTER HIS FATHER’S OWN HEART

While many in the MC community mistakenly believe that the Leland Speed Library on campus is named after the younger Leland Speed, it is actually named in memory of his father; the younger Leland Speed and his siblings donated the funds to build the library in their father’s honor. Speed credits the elder Leland Speed’s example of generosity, kindness, and service with inspiring him to serve.

“My father was the most generous person I’ve ever known,” Speed says. “When he died he had virtually no net worth, not because he was a poor business man, but because he had been so generous and had given most of what he had to help others. He set a very high bar.”

Speed points out that his father “never advertised his generosity,” preferring instead to quietly provide help where he saw help was needed.

“After my father died, a relative told me that my father had put him through medical school. I never knew that. That was the kind of person he was.”

The elder Leland Speed also set an example of community leadership, serving as mayor of Jackson for a single term from 1944-1948.

“My father and I would occasionally argue about politics,” Speed says with a smile. “When we disagreed on a point, I’d shrug and say, ‘Whatever you say, One Term.’”

Leland Speed’s current passion and primary service efforts are focused on improving public K-12 education and building a system of charter schools in Mississippi. He remains active with Eastgroup, continues his long-standing service to Mississippi College and the many other organizations he supports, and also enjoys time spent with his family, which includes three sons, three daughters-in-law, and nine grandchildren.

Speed credits his long and successful career to a “stick with it” attitude that’s also reflected in his personal life. Speed and his wife, Bessie, have been married for 53 years. Speed taught Sunday School at Northminster Baptist Church for 48 years, from the first day the church held services until 2015; Bessie has sung in the church choir for all of those years.

“The older I get, the less impressed I am with brains and the more impressed I am with tenacity,” Speed says with a smile. “I don’t have any plans to stop working. I like to work. I enjoy it. And from Genesis to Revelation, I can’t find the word ‘retire’ in there anywhere.”

IT’S ONLY A NUMBER

Work and community service aren’t the only things keeping Leland Speed young. At 83 years old, Speed still does at least 50 push-ups every morning, and 2015 was the first year he can remember that he did not go snow skiing. When a recent vision problem prevented him from driving, he didn’t let it slow him down. Instead, his response was, “Praise be to Uber!”

COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS LEADERSHIP – Leland Speed has donated his resources and leadership skills to a number of civic and charitable organizations, including:

DOWNTOWN JACKSON PARTNERS (inaugural chair)

GOODWILL INDUSTRIES (past chair)

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

JACKSON METRO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (past chair)

JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION (past chair)

MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES (past chair)

MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE FOUNDATION BOARD

MISSISSIPPI MAIN STREET

NORTHMINSTER BAPTIST CHURCH (Sunday School teacher, committee chair)

ST. ANDREW’S EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

UNITED WAY (past chair)

Speed has also served on the boards of directors of 21 companies in businesses specializing in every industry from real estate development to insurance to chemicals.

He holds honorary doctorates from Jackson State University and Mississippi College and is a member of the Mississippi Business Hall of Fame.

WHERE
THERE'S A

Will

THERE'S
A WAY



YOU DON'T HAVE TO MAKE
A HUGE DONATION TO HELP SUPPORT
MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE.

While you might think you don't have enough money to make an impact, that simply isn't true. Your gift, no matter its size, can ensure a future for MC and influence the lives of those who rely on it.

Giving through a bequest in your will or a revocable living trust allows you to support Mississippi College without affecting your current income. By putting aside a percentage of the assets in your will or trust – even as little as one percent – you can leave a legacy at MC while also making sure your family has the security they may need in the future. There are other ways to contribute to our mission without affecting your income. For example, you can include MC as a partial beneficiary on your life insurance policy or retirement plan assets by dividing your assets into percentages. Simply contact your insurance company to ask how you can change beneficiaries of your life insurance policy. In the case of retirement plan assets, ask your retirement plan administrator for a change-of-beneficiary form.

When you create a charitable gift annuity, MC agrees to pay a fixed amount of money to one or two individuals, for their lifetime, in exchange for a gift of cash, marketable

securities, or other assets. The amount of the annuity paid each year will be a fixed dollar amount, calculated as a percentage of your gift. The payment rate for a charitable gift annuity depends upon the beneficiary's age; the older the beneficiary, the greater the payment rate and the greater the annual income.

If you give annually to Mississippi College and want to extend your support for the university, these are smart ways to leave a lasting legacy without affecting your income, and they still allow you the flexibility to change your mind in the event circumstances – or the economy – change. Ask your estate planning attorney about how to set up these gifts, or visit the MC planned giving website at planned-giving.mc.edu

Source: Giving USA 2014: The Annual Report on Philanthropy for the Year 2014

THE EAGER LEGACY SOCIETY honors those who have made a planned gift to Mississippi College, including bequests, living trusts, charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder trusts, lead trusts, or gifts of life insurance. For more information on supporting MC with a planned gift, contact Dr. Bill Townsend, vice president for advancement and legal counsel to the president, at 601.925.3257 or bill.townsend@mc.edu

Class Notes

50s Dr. Don Phillips (B.S. '54, L.L.D. '84) was honored at the dedication of the Donald E. Phillips Hall at the Holmes Community College Grenada campus on November 6, 2015.

Dorothy "Dor" Martin (McKinnie, B.S. '58) has been awarded the FAME Lifetime Achievement Award for her career dedicated to school nutrition. Her textbook *School Food and Nutrition Service Management for the 21st Century, 6th edition* was published in 2014. Martin served as Miss MC in 1958.

60s Donald Pennington (B.S.Ed. '69, M.Ed. '76) was inducted into the Jones County Junior College Sports Hall of Fame.

Dr. Ennis Proctor (B.S.Ed. '64, M.Ed. '68, Ed.S. '79), retired executive director of the Mississippi High School Activities Association, will become only the eighth Mississippian inducted into the National High School Sports Hall of Fame in July.

70s James Cocke (B.M.Ed. '70) joined Bancorp South Mid-Mississippi Division as senior vice president and loan officer.



Sherri Davis

Sherri Davis (B.S.N. '73, M.H.S.A. '02) has joined the management team at Merit Health Madison as clinical director for the medical/surgical unit.

Deborah Bell (B.A. '75) is the interim dean of the University of Mississippi Law School.



Deborah Bell

Tom Gladney (B.S.Ed. '78, M.Ed. '79) was named Athletic Director of the Year by the Mississippi Association of Athletic Administrators. He is in his seventh year as athletic director at Biloxi High School.

80s Carl Menist (B.S.B.A. '81) has been promoted to first vice president in the corporate headquarters of Trustmark Bank. He previously served as senior audit manager.

Dr. Phillip Grady (B.S. '83) earned the doctor of health administration degree from the University of Mississippi Medical Center.

Tony Greer (B.S.B.A. '84) has been selected to the Mississippi Personal Contract Review Board by Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves. He is a certified personal financial examiner and an accredited insurance examiner. He also serves as a Hinds County supervisor.

Mary Price (M.Ed. '84, Ed.S. '85) has been selected as outstanding career/technical instructor by the Copiah Lincoln Community College Alumni Association.

Vicki A. Darnell (B.S.N. '87), president and CEO, Ephraim McDowell Health, received the American Hospital Association Grassroots Champion Award in Louisville, Kentucky. The Grassroots Champion Award is presented to one hospital leader in each state who offers exceptional leadership in generating grassroots and community activity in support of a hospital's mission.

Louis Goodwin (B.S.B.A. '87) is the president of Northeast Georgia Medical Center Gainesville.

Bobbie Ware (B.S.N. '87, M.H.S.A. '06) was named chief operating officer of Baptist Medical Center. She will continue her role as chief nursing officer for Baptist Health Systems. She has served with Baptist since 1993.

Bill Williams (B.A. '88, M.A. '92) has written and published two books – *The Miracle Year* and *Lest We Forget: My Dad, the 379th, and the Story of the 102nd Infantry*.

Jana Bell (B.S. '89) has joined Maris, West & Baker as director of agency marketing. She will be responsible for agency business development and marketing.

Mark Wilson (B.S.B.A. '89) has been named the vice president of finance and chief financial officer for Philabundance, the largest hunger relief organization in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area.

90s Kate Margolis (B.A. '90) has been elected a fellow of the American Bar Foundation. She is an attorney in the Bradley Arant Boult Cummings firm in Jackson.

Karen Flowers (B.S.B.A. '91) is the director of development at Jackson Preparatory School.

Dorothy Simpson (M.H.S. '91) was named the administrative director for Women's Services at Baptist Health Systems. She has been with Baptist for 34 years working as a house supervisor for maternal services, critical care nurse, nurse manager, and clinical director.

Do GOOD Mississippi

LANE BEASLEY '07, '09 founded Do Good Mississippi, a "good news" website, blog, and podcast distributor, for a simple reason – to showcase people and organizations who are doing good in Mississippi.



"EACH STORY WE TELL IS SPECIAL IN ITS OWN WAY. EVERYONE HAS THEIR OWN STORY AS TO WHY A CERTAIN MISSION MATTERS TO THEM. FOR ME, THE MOST INTRIGUING PART OF DO GOOD MISSISSIPPI IS HEARING DIFFERENT PEOPLE DESCRIBE WHAT MOTIVATES THEM TO DO GOOD."

Beasley was inspired to create Do Good Mississippi in part by his experience as the former communications and development director at Mission First, a non-profit ministry in West Jackson, Mississippi. "During my time at Mission First, I built some great friendships with many people on staff with other non-profit organizations," Beasley says. "Unfortunately, there wasn't a good resource where the general public could get information about these incredible organizations that are having a powerful impact in our state. I founded Do Good Mississippi to focus on those people and organizations in a way that compels others to partner with them."

Do Good Mississippi shines a positive spotlight on people and organizations ranging from MC alumni who have started small philanthropic businesses to international charitable organizations changing lives around the world. Do Good Mississippi welcomes suggestions as to individuals and organizations that should be featured in future postings or podcasts.

The organization recently celebrated its first anniversary; in that short year, Do Good Mississippi has added more than 3,000 subscribers to one or more of its social media platforms, e-newsletter recipient lists, or podcast subscriber lists. Do Good Mississippi also maintains a DGMS Directory, which allows the general public to search for organizations doing good in Mississippi, and a "doing good" events calendar.

"People have responded with incredible enthusiasm. I've personally been encouraged by people who are passionate about the work they're doing," Beasley says. "It's easy to complain about the problems facing our state, and unfortunately, we are barraged with negative stories about our state. Do Good Mississippi champions the people and organizations that work tirelessly to combat the challenges we face. Exclusively showcasing the good being done doesn't mean we're being naive about these challenges. Instead, we're creating a community of people who want to take ownership of the problems by becoming a part of the solution."

For a good time, visit DoGoodMississippi.com

Michael Ruffin (B.S.B.A. '92) has been named vice president of network development and contracting for Magnolia Health.

Dr. Joshua Hand (B.S. '94) has joined the Merit Health Primary Care Clinic in Petal, Mississippi. He is board-certified in family medicine and a member of the American Academy of Family Physicians and the Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians.

Evelyn Sue Townsend (M.Ed. '94) has joined the Hinds Community College Board of Trustees. She also serves as Rankin County Schools Superintendent.

Amy Wolgamott (B.S. '96, M.S.C. '02) has been selected to chair the Department of Speech & Theatre at Holmes Community College.

Jon Garrison (B.S. '99) became chief engineer at WRMB 89.3 Moody Radio for the Moody Bible Institute.

Dr. Sherry Pippen (Chance, B.S. '99) was named Alumnae of the Year by Copiah Lincoln Community College.

00s John Howell (B.A. '00, M.S.C.P. '03, J.D. '07) was named a member at Watkins & Eager PLLC.



Justin Rhodes

Justin Rhodes (M.B.A. '01) has been promoted to president of the Medical Foundation of Central Mississippi and vice president of clinical integration for Baptist Health Systems. He served the last five years as director of operations for Baptist Medical Clinic.

Boyd Scoggins (B.S. '01) has been named the vice president for the Alabama chapter of the Employee Assistance Professionals Association.

Amanda Hood (B.A. '02, M.Ed. '09) was selected as the outstanding faculty/staff member for the Copiah Lincoln Community College Natchez campus.

Richard Hardy (B.S.B.A. '03) has achieved the designation of board certified in hearing instrument sciences.

Jason Duren (B.S.B.A. '04) has joined BancorpSouth Mid-Mississippi Division as vice president and loan officer.



Stephen Huwe

Sara Oliver (Crosthwaite, B.S. '04) is a part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's new class of epidemic intelligence service officers. Each year, only 60 officers are selected from the national candidate pool of medical doctors, veterinarians, and Ph.D. recipients.

Stephen Huwe (B.S.B.A. '05) has been promoted to assistant vice president and legal officer at

the corporate headquarters for Trustmark Bank. He previously served as trust risk administrator.

Glenda Silverii (M.A. '05) has been selected as outstanding academic instructor by the Copiah Lincoln Community College Alumni Association.

Emily Sutherland (Taylor, B.A. '05) is the assistant director for the Dixie Regional Library System.

Carrie Jones (B.S.B.A. '06, M.B.A. '13) has been promoted to senior manager at Haddox Reid Eubank Betts PLLC. As an auditor, she specializes in nonprofits, oil and gas, manufacturing, and real estate.

Jeffrey Butler (B.S. '07) is the director of sports performance for the University of Northern Colorado.

Anika Floyd (M.Ed. '08) has been selected as outstanding faculty/staff member for the Simpson County Center of the Copiah Lincoln Community College Alumni Association.

Ellis Screws (M.B.A. '08) has joined the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Vicksburg District as chief of the construction and A&E branch of the contracting division.

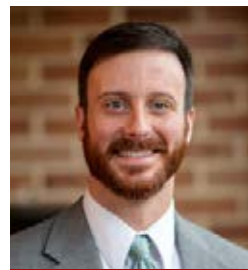
Scottye Adkins (M.M. '09) joined Mineral Area College as a student services representative.

Rebecca Benson (B.A. '09) has joined the Mississippi College staff as director for student engagement.

Blake Pickering (B.S.B.A. '09) was elected to the office of tax assessor and collector in Lincoln County.

10s Davis Watts (B.S.B.A. '09, M.B.A. '10) has been promoted to senior manager at Haddox Reid Eubank Betts PLLC.

Jayne Mistal (B.S.B.A. '10) has been promoted to manager at Haddox Reid Eubank Betts PLLC. He works in the audit division, specializing in oil and gas, nonprofits, and government entities.



David Parker

David Parker (B.S. '10, J.D. '13) received the 2015 Spirit of Main Street Award from the Mississippi Main Street Association.

Anna Patterson (B.S. '10) graduated from the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry. She is practicing with the Hattiesburg Eye Clinic.

Amy Lee (B.S. '11, M.Ed. '15) has joined Central Mississippi Regional Library System as a reference librarian supervisor.

Jodi Maughon (B.S. '11) is the executive director of the Madison County Chamber of Commerce.



Center Stage

with JENNIFER SMITH '03

Jennifer Smith held jobs in social services, sales, and radio before finding her true calling in front of the footlights. Roles at Jackson's New Stage Theatre eventually led Smith to join a touring company performing one of Broadway's most popular hits worldwide.

SMITH APPEARED AS "MRS. POTTS," THE TALKING, SINGING TEAPOT FROM DISNEY'S SMASH HIT, "BEAUTY AND THE BEAST," a role she performed on stages in Asia, Europe, China, Taiwan, Lebanon, Turkey, Romania, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. * "It was amazing to meet the original team who brought Disney's 'Beauty and the Beast' to life," Smith says. "Being a part of something with such history was incredible. My husband was able to visit in Turkey and in Dubai, so having him see the show was special. We were both able to experience new people, places, and cultures by getting out of our comfort zones and agreeing to be a part of the tour." * When the "Beauty and the Beast" tour wrapped, Smith headed for New York, where she is currently auditioning for future roles and taking classes to enhance her craft. Smith credits her diverse university experiences with helping her prepare for life on the international stage. * "During my time at MC, I had opportunities to lead worship and sing. I participated in Follies and rush skits as a Laguna pledge and active, and I had the honor of playing Fantine in the music department's production of 'Les Misérables.' Being a part of the London Semester Program exposed me to the excitement of traveling overseas.

"I WOULD ENCOURAGE ANYONE WHO'S INTERESTED IN THEATRE TO GIVE IT A SHOT. TAKE A VOICE LESSON OR AN ACTING CLASS. GO TO LOCAL AUDITIONS, SEE A SHOW, AND HAVE FUN. BE CURIOUS. YOU NEVER KNOW WHERE LIFE WILL LEAD YOU."

SPORTS HALL OF FAME 2016 INDUCTEES INTO THE MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE SPORTS HALL OF FAME INCLUDE: Willie Thomas '96 – *Basketball* • Jimmy Clarke '82 – *Football and Track* • Laford "Bubba" Hutto '61 – *Baseball* • LaTisha Tyes '96 – *Basketball* • Joseph "Allen" Hickman '88, – *Football* • William "Craig" Kennedy '78 – *Basketball and Football* • Charles "Chuck" Crosby '84 – *Football* • Also joining the elite Sports Hall of Fame squad this spring is the late Tim Watkins. *Watkins was a standout pitcher at Mississippi College from 1983 to 1985 in the Gulf South Conference and was drafted by a pro baseball team.*

Ashley Palmer (Ceranti, B.S. '11, M.S.M. '14) has joined the Hattiesburg Clinic Cardiology as a certified physician assistant.

Jacob Blakeney (M.Ed. '12) was inducted by the Copiah Lincoln Community College Athletic Alumni Association into the 2015 Sports Hall of Fame.

Logan Crosby (B.S.B.A. '12, M.B.A. '15) has joined the audit division of the CPA firm, Haddox Reid Eubank Betts PLLC.

Deniece Ponder (B.S.N. '12, M.H.S.A. '14) has been named administrative director for oncology and neuroscience services at Baptist Health Systems. She has served as home health branch director, pain specialist, neuroscience coordinator and director of women's services in her 22 years with Baptist.

Ashley Rea (Cockerham, B.S. '12) has been named communication manager for the corporate communication department of Sanderson Farms. She serves as editor of the *Sanderson Farms Newsletter* and handles media relations and industry trade associations.

Hallie Darphin (B.S. '13) was named runner-up in the inaugural Council for Christian Colleges & Universities Young Alumni Award. She is the owner of Dot Products, a company that sells eco-friendly school supplies and funds education for children in need.



Lorin McAlpin

Jennifer Jurney (B.S. '13) is the director of physician marketing with Baptist Health Systems.

Lorin McAlpin (B.A. '14) is the graphic designer for the corporate communication department of Sanderson Farms. She serves as the graphic arts editor and photographer for the *Sanderson Farms Newsletter* and is responsible for designing employee communication materials.

Saysha Sebren (B.S. '14) was selected as the 2015 Herb Handley Outstanding New Science Teacher by the Mississippi Science Teacher Association.

Marriages

Carole Jordan and Stuart Tully (B.S. '06), July 6, 2015

Morgan Hobgood (M.S. '12) and Joseph Boswell, Jr., September 26, 2015

Dr. Renee Michelle Powell (M.S. '11) and Dr. Brock Warford, June 6, 2015

Emily Tillman (B.S.B.A. '11) and William Hamilton, August 29, 2015

Rebecca Barker (B.S.N. '13) and Jamison Dodd (B.S. '13), December 12, 2015

Melanie Hurt (B.S.Ed. '13) and Joseph Brashier, June 13, 2015

Allison Gray Boyd (B.A. '14) and Tyler Layton (B.S.B.A. '14), August 1, 2015

Erin Elizabeth Hamilton and Cory Bass (B.S.B.A. '14, M.B.A. '15), December 19, 2015

Births & Adoptions

Dr. Kristen (B.M. '03) and Drew Gunn, Luke Andrew, January 8, 2016

Emily (Taylor, B.A. '05) and Robert Sutherland, Charlsy Jo, April 14, 2015

Bethany (Fortenberry, B.S. '08) and Daniel Cole (B.S. '04), Deacon James, July 28, 2015

Elizabeth (Fox, B.S.Ed. '08, M.Ed. '13) and John Thweatt (B.S. '07), Olivia Rose, December 15, 2015

Jessica (Bunting, B.S.Ed. '09, M.Ed. '12) and Allen McGehee (B.S. '08, M.S. '11), Louella Ann, December 28, 2015

Anna (Beasley, B.S. '11) and Daniel Mortimer (B.S. '10), Charlotte Kay, November 30, 2015

Margie and Jeffrey Baumann, Ticer Karl, August 6, 2015. Margie is an instructor in the Art Department.

Maggie and Lee Parker, Mark Rhodes, August 16, 2015. Maggie is an assistant professor in the Department of Psychology and Counseling.

In Memoriam

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

Alumni

Joseph Hartley ('39), November 18, 2011

Mary Denson (Hillman '42, M.Ed. '73), July 17, 2015

William Hodge (B.S. '43), October 9, 2015

Ingram Foster ('44), July 18, 2015

Dr. Charles Whaley (B.A. '44), November 10, 2014

Rev. James Clayton (B.A. '48), May 25, 2011

James "Mickey" Fleming (B.A. '48), October 29, 2014

Rev. Stanley Smith (B.A. '48), February 9, 2013

Harlan Burke (B.S. '49), August 16, 2013

Thomas Flynt ('49), July 20, 2015

Clifton Mayfield (B.A. '49), October 29, 2015

Dr. Scott McCay (B.S. '50), August 20, 2015

Hellen Morris (B.A. '50), October 3, 2015

Elizabeth Puckett (B.A. '50), January 3, 2016

Dr. James Tulloh (B.S. '50), January 14, 2015

Martha Capron (B.A. '51), April 27, 2014

Betty Danielson (B.S. '51), October 19, 2015

James Mitchell (B.A. '51), May 4, 2015

Mary Patterson McRae (B.S.Ed. '52), January 2, 2016

Rev. J.C. Renfroe (B.A. '53, M.Ed. '71), February 11, 2016

Vesta Price Renfroe (B.A. '52, M.Ed. '71), February 3, 2016

S. Jerome Rogers (B.A. '53, M.Ed. '59), February 2016

Dr. Jerry Robinson (B.A. '54), August 31, 2015

Floyd Williams (B.S.Ed. '54, M.Ed. '56), November 14, 2015

Joseph Keith ('55), October 31, 2015

Dr. Malcom Huckabee (B.A. '56), December 4, 2013

Rev. Caley Nichols (B.A. '56), October 24, 2015

James Perkerson (B.S. '56), July 13, 2014

Robert Scarborough (B.S. '56), January 15, 2015

Lowell Stephens (L.L.B. '56), November 20, 2015

Nelda Sullivan (B.S. '56), July 30, 2015

Dr. Charles E. Farmer, Jr. ('57), January 3, 2016

Talmadge Littlejohn (B.A. '57), October 26, 2015

Wayne Truitt (B.A. '57, M.Ed. '63), November 23, 2015

Jack Burnham (B.M. '58), January 15, 2016

Benjamin Lane (B.S. '59), January 7, 2016

Louis Walsh (M.A. '59), October 31, 2015

Malcolm Culpepper (B.S. '60, M.B.A. '73), August 12, 2015

Robert Sanders (M.Ed. '60), July 2, 2012

John Young (B.M. '60), April 29, 2015

Dr. Charles Felder (M.Ed. '61), September 24, 2015

Thomas Lindley (M.Ed. '61), January 28, 2016

Julia Peacock (B.S. '61), November 7, 2015

Bobby Taylor (B.S. '61), November 22, 2015

Kirby Wooton (B.A. '61), January 27, 2016

Dr. James Street (B.A. '62), November 7, 2015

Dr. Dewey D. Blackledge, Jr. (B.S. '64), September 6, 2015

Robert Haskins (B.S. '64), January 26, 2016

Carolyn Ware (B.A. '64), January 30, 2016

Roy Breeden (B.S. '65), July 24, 2015

Virginia Brown (B.A. '65), September 23, 2012

Karen Compere (B.S.Ed. '65), February 2, 2015

Jane Dykes (B.A. '65), December 29, 2014

Byron Fisher (B.A. '65), August 22, 2014

Dr. Russell Herrington (B.M. '65), June 15, 2015

Sandra Keith (B.A. '65), May 2, 2015

Linda Martin (B.S.Ed. '65), September 13, 2015

Benny Milligan (M.Ed. '65), February 16, 2015

Dudley "Steve" Nichols (B.A. '65, M.A. '70), September 8, 2015

Bonnie Nute (B.S. '65), April 5, 2012

Carolyn Reese (B.S. '65), August 17, 2015

Dr. James Keith (B.A. '66), January 2, 2016

Henry "Mike" McMillan (B.A. '66), November 7, 2015

Frances Boeckman (M.A. '67), August 27, 2015

Montie Davis (B.A. '69), October 14, 2015

Eva Ratcliff McDonald (M.A. '69), February 15, 2016

Rev. Raymond Owens (B.A. '69), September 9, 2015

Sidney Barnett (L.L.B. '70), April 29, 2015

Charles Head (L.L.B. '70), October 30, 2015

W. M. Bowman (M.Ed. '72), November 28, 2015

Gay Coalter (B.S.Ed. '72), January 29, 2016

William Price (B.S.Ed. '72), January 8, 2016

Ricky Wynn (B.S. '73), January 28, 2016

Harry Davis (B.S. '74), August 6, 2015

Edwina Goodman (M.M. '74), November 1, 2015

James Myrick (M.B.A. '74), September 2, 2015

Jerry Skinner (B.S.Ed. '74, M.Ed. '93), February 13, 2016

Jo Eubanks Redmon (B.A. '75), February 1, 2016

Rob Berry (B.S. '75, M.B.A. '76), November 15, 2015

Cynthia Lee Finch (B.S.Ed. '76, M.Ed. '95), July 9, 2015

Bobby LaGrone (M.B.A. '76), July 2, 2015

Paula Myers (M.Ed. '76), January 2016

James Meyers (M.B.A. '77), September 21, 2015

Leon Browning (B.S.B.A. '78, M.B.A. '81), September 4, 2015

Charlotte Ellis Houck (B.S.Ed. '80), December 8, 2015

Jimmy Payne (M.B.A. '81), August 29, 2015

Dr. John Gibson (B.A. '82), August 24, 2015

Bette Thorn (B.S.Ed. '82), November 4, 2012

Molly Laseter (A.G.S. '85, B.G.S. '90), August 12, 2015

Lisa McGee (B.S.Ed. '87), June 17, 2015

Melanie Wright (M.Ed. '90), December 15, 2014

Joanna Harris Price (B.S.Ed. '94), January 31, 2016

Angela Wilson (B.S.Ed. '09, M.Ed. '12), February 2, 2016

Friends

Hazle Anthony, former administrative assistant to Personnel and to the VP for Business Affairs, August 23, 2015

James Glenn, former security officer, January 24, 2016

Richard Ritchie, former LRC production director and instructor of communication, April 24, 2015

Jessie "Joy" Lois Ford Nobles 1927-2016

Jessie "Joy" Lois Ford Nobles passed away peacefully at Hospice Ministries in Ridgeland on January 2, 2016. A native of Lamar County, Mississippi, Nobles attended the University of Mississippi and received a Bachelor of Science degree in pharmacy as one of four women in her class of 1948. She completed CME requirements to keep her pharmacy license active for more than 50 years.

Joy married Lewis Nobles on August 29, 1947, and the couple had two daughters, Sandra and Suzanne. The family moved to Clinton in 1968 when Lewis Nobles became president of Mississippi College. Joy's greatest pleasure was serving as First Lady of Mississippi College, hosting events for the MC community and numerous national guests on campus for more than 25 years. The events she hosted were classic examples of true Southern grace, charm, and hospitality.

Joy was active in First Baptist Church Clinton life, supporting WMU mission education, singing in the choir, and serving on various committees. She was a charter member of the Walter Leake Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), serving as Regent and holding many local and state level offices in DAR. Joy was also a member of Colonial Dames, Clinton Study Club, and Faculty Wives.

Joy was preceded in death by her parents, her sister, her daughter Suzanne, and her husband. She is survived by two brothers; her daughter, Sandra Nobles Nash (Ben); her grandchildren and great grandchildren, several nieces and nephews.

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

| FROM THE TIME CAPSULE |

THE WALLS OF MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE'S NELSON HALL ARE ADORNED WITH PHOTOGRAPHS AND MEMENTOS OF MILESTONES FROM MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE'S STORIED, NEARLY TWO-CENTURY HISTORY. "FROM THE TIME CAPSULE" TAKES A LOOK BACK AT SOME OF THOSE UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS.



AMERICA'S FIRST COEDS

Mississippi College made American history in December 1831, when MC became the first university in the United States to grant a college degree to a woman.

MC'S FIRST GRADUATION exercises were held on December 14-17, 1831, and included extensive "public examinations" during which the faculty, trustees, and anyone in the audience could question the scholars about their fields of study. While a newspaper account of the event praised the performance of the male students, none was judged quite prepared to graduate. That honor was reserved for two bright young women, Alice Robinson and Catherine Hall, who each were awarded a diploma and a personalized gold medallion commemorating their impressive academic achievement.



language courses reserved for men. Notes from those early MC graduations, however, mention that the ladies were commended for their "high scientific achievement." The solitary difference between the women's and the men's program in the 1862 week of examination and commencement was that the young men offered performances in oration while the young ladies gave musical performances, making it clear that early female MC graduates did not pursue the typical "girls' school" studies, but that their curriculum was comparable to that of the male students.

It would be a full decade before another college in America graduated a female student, but over the next four years, at least 20 other women graduated from MC, each proudly claiming her diploma and her medallion. In those days, there were "seminaries" for women, but the curriculum differed from that of college courses for men. "Educated" women were expected to be gracious ladies, dignified hostesses, and socially proper wives and mothers, and the curriculum emphasized social graces and home-making skills rather than the strenuous science, mathematics, and classical

In 1964, 129 years after it was originally presented, the granddaughter of Catherine Shelby, one of those first pioneering college women, donated Shelby's 1835 MC graduation medallion to the university. The university also holds the medallion presented to Mary Mills, who graduated in 1833. These two medallions represent not only the individual accomplishments of Shelby and Mills, but also the groundbreaking attitude of Mississippi College, which paved the way for generations of female university students to come.

FAST FORWARD — THE CURRENT STUDENT POPULATION AT MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE INCLUDES 3,013 FEMALE AND 2,023 MALE STUDENTS.



For more on this story, visit mc.edu/beacon



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