CREATING CROSSTOWN
ALUMNI JOIN FORCES TO RAISE URBAN VILLAGE
Crosstown Concourse recently won a major design award – the grand prize in the Congress for the New Urbanism’s annual charter awards, which recognize exemplary projects that help revitalize and create coherent cities, neighborhoods, and metropolitan regions. That honor follows the building’s recognition as Project of the Year in the Memphis Business Journal’s Building Memphis awards. A host of Owls – McLean Wilson ’96, Gil Uhlhorn ’93, Brett Grinder ’91, and many more – were involved in restoring the shuttered Sears distribution center to its former glory. Now enjoying its second life as a vibrant urban village, Crosstown Concourse celebrates its one-year anniversary this August. See story on page 6.
No-Phone Zone

Last winter Gene Dattel ’62 joined me for breakfast in the Dining Hall. An author – his latest book is Reckoning with Race: America’s Failure (Encounter Books, 2017) – and cultural historian, Dattel is a keen observer of human behavior. In the Dining Hall, he zeroed in on what our students were doing, or more specifically, what they were not doing. They were not engrossed in mobile phones. Gene had recently been to the campus of a well-known New England boarding school where he had been struck by the number of students fixated on their phones in a commons area. The behavior of our students stood in marked contrast to that scene.

Glancing around the big hall in the morning light, I realized he was right. I saw boys at tables talking with one another and studying in groups or on their own. A number of laptops were up and running, but by the intensity of the boys using them, I could tell they were studying and not streaming ESPN’s SportsCenter.

This summer while visiting the University of Virginia’s Newcomb Hall, the bustling student union on that campus, I was surprised by the low noise level. Although it was lunchtime, the hall was quite subdued. As students sat at tables eating, many were also deep in smartphone mode, earbuds firmly in place. Even students sitting in groups were completely focused on their handheld screens, participating in little, if any, conversation.

Gene’s observation and my experience at University of Virginia hammered home that our mobile-phone policy – prohibiting use during the school day – is a good one. We reap many benefits from smartphone technology, but we know too well the downside. A phone puts distractions galore within reach of a young person’s hip pocket. With the devices put away, students relate to one another and to their teachers and coaches.

There are many value-added pieces to an MUS education. One that I believe has taken on higher worth in this current day and age is the importance of meaningful conversation – and the associations that grow through such interaction. In speaking to alumni, I often hear how relationships formed during their MUS days have transcended time and distance. The school has always been structured to foster the formation of these bonds. Classes are small, and lessons involve healthy discussion. Our teachers have offices where students can visit, ask questions, follow up on a class discussion, or bring up an entirely new topic. Extracurriculars – working together in athletics, the arts, club activities, and service projects – strengthen the connections.

The benefits of open, well-practiced lines of communication cannot be underestimated. In January I attended the inauguration of Rhodes College President Marjorie Hass. During the reception, a professor at the college mentioned to me that the MUS students he had taught as freshman were not hesitant to speak up in class or come by his office for questions. He was quite struck by how our graduates seemed comfortable interacting with adults. Some of his other students, he noted, often stayed silent in class and would not venture to his office until their sophomore year or later.

This exchange was a wonderful reinforcement of my belief that our college-preparatory mission goes beyond our stated curriculum. The nature of our pedagogy and the ease of interaction it fosters make for superb college preparation. The advantages of an MUS education during the years just beyond graduation are many, but this is one I like to point out because conversation is, in my opinion, becoming a lost art. Our graduates know how to converse and are comfortable speaking with people in authority. These skills pay off in the short-run in an undergraduate classroom but also come into play in a job interview and a workplace environment. While they are students at 6191 Park Avenue, our boys get a head start honing their ability to interact.

The observation of cultural historian Gene Dattel helped highlight for me an aspect of MUS culture that is truly making a difference in the lives of our boys. In curtailing mobile-phone use at school, we are operating counter-culturally to the world beyond the fence that rings our campus.

That is just fine with me.
FEATURED THIS ISSUE

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ON THE COVER
Opening on August 27, 1927, in what was then suburban Memphis, Sears Crosstown quickly became a booming retail and mail-order center. But over time, changing demographics and dwindling orders precipitated a decline, ultimately causing Sears to close the center in 1993.

Fortunately for Memphis, Brett Grinder ’91, McLean Wilson ’96, Gil Uhlhorn ’93, and a host of other community-minded Owls were up to the challenge of transforming the derelict complex into the lively Crosstown Concourse city center. Photo by Alan Howell

Contributors
Daniel Black ’18, freshman at Mississippi State University
Christopher Blank, news director at WKNO-FM in Memphis and freelance arts writer
Greg Cravens, illustrator based in Memphis
Alexander Goodwin ’18, Communications Office intern and freshman at Lipscomb University
Alan Howell, freelance photographer based in Memphis
Jackson Howell ’18, freshman at William & Mary
Kathy Daniel Patterson, freelance photographer based in Memphis
Gaye Swan, freelance writer based in Memphis
Norman Thompson, MUS instructor in English

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Founders Keepers

Jimmy Ogle '70 can still fit in his letter jacket – if he doesn’t snap it across the middle. To prove the point, he tried on the treasured relic in the art studio, where Chair of the Arts Department Grant Burke has been photographing memorabilia for a new book on the history of MUS. (See photo page 46.) Along with his Buzzard pin, game recordings, and memories too numerous to recount here, Jimmy also brought the basketball practice jersey from the days his 135-pound self was playing for the varsity team. Shelby County Historian, Memphis tour guide, and onetime Peabody Hotel duckmaster, among other roles, Jimmy is a walking encyclopedia on the history of Memphis – and his time at MUS.

Ogle’s classmate David Morris '70 also let us photograph some of his memorabilia, including his original Buzzard illustration – “I did design it, after all” – and his senior-year chapel seat. A retired dentist, David has more-than-restored that seat and two others that adorn his man cave, painting the armrests blue and adding a red U on the side.

For every Owl, “MUS history” is the span of time he was sitting in his chapel seat, filling his tray in the Dining Hall, playing on the fields, courts, or theater stage. This reality has been driven home to writer and filmmaker Robert Gordon '79 as he has conducted research and written articles for the MUS history book. (Read about Robert’s recent Emmy win and his new book on the Memphis music scene, page 12.)

For Jackson Howell '18, MUS history began at Commencement 2012, which the then-incoming seventh grader attended with his parents, Cathy and Mark Howell. “We wanted him to be very appreciative of the tradition and heritage he is about to become a part of,” his father said at the time.

Graduating this May, the co-editor of The Owl’s Hoot and member of the Knowledge Bowl team accepted awards that suggest he might have taken his father’s wish to heart. Jackson’s name is now engraved for posterity on the H. Jerry Peters History Award, the Leigh W. MacQueen Dean’s Cup for Academic Excellence, and the Ross McCain Lynn Award for citizenship, leadership, service, and character. Before heading to William & Mary this fall, he wrote an article for us about Instructor in History Jonathan Large, chosen by the Class of 2018 to receive the John M. Nail Outstanding Teaching Award. (See page 24.)

His classmate Daniel Black '18 – who distinguished himself as the manager of the varsity baseball team, supreme Twitter reporter, and the guy with a hysterical impression of Baseball Coach John Jarnagin – wrote the graduation story. (See page 14.) Daniel, who heads to Mississippi State University in August, predicted the effect MUS will have on the graduates’ history:

“The superb instruction from the finest teachers in Memphis, if not all of Tennessee, will guide us and make us well-prepared for our respective colleges. However, MUS did not just prepare us academically. The relationships we forged the past six years will remain with us for our lifetimes. It may sound cliché, but for me, it’s true.”

This issue also includes a story about Owls who have been making history by resurrecting a Memphis landmark, the mammoth former Sears distribution center. (See page 6.) From envisioning the Crosstown Concourse “vertical village,” to acquiring and financing the property, to transforming the shell of a building, to moving in as tenants, alumni have made their mark on the 20th century icon now flourishing in the 21st.

Coach Jerry Peters, an unforgettable school icon who influenced students and athletes for 52 years, passed away May 14, and his fans gathered in Ross Lynn Arena for one last cheer. (See page 34.) A week later we lost an icon of Clack Dining Hall, dietitian from 1969 to 1986 Nell Lenti. (See page 33.) Steve Schoettle ’73 posted this tribute online: “She ran the Dining Hall with an iron fist, but with an aura of sweetness. I truly felt that she cared deeply for each and every one of us but wasn’t going to let us step out of line! ... Rest in peace, Mrs. Lenti, job well done.”

Whatever memories color your history of MUS, we hope you will find stories of interest among these pages. And if you have a special anecdote or article of memorabilia that might resurrect memories for your fellow Owls, please email me (include a photo of any item, if you can).

Together, your stories – and those almost-fitting letter jackets – form a patchwork history of Memphis University School. And beginning this fall, we have a special reason to reflect on that patchwork, as we celebrate the 125th anniversary of the school’s founding.

Go, Owls! For another 125 years.
Owls play vital roles in the transformation of Crosstown Concourse

On a crisp spring evening in the heart of the city, colorful balloons float against the darkening sky as a restaurant in the West Atrium of Crosstown Concourse thanks its supporters with a party. A couple with a baby in a stroller wander by, taking in the scene with a smile. At happy hour with live music at another eatery, a group of young professionals laugh and chat as they sip their drinks. During any given week, visitors and residents of Crosstown Concourse – celebrating its one-year anniversary in August – may enjoy interactive cooking classes, talks from regional artists, exercise areas, prayer services, music, and spoken-word performances. The bustle of community harkens to the days when this area of Memphis was thriving – and stands in stark contrast to a more recent era.

In its heyday Crosstown’s Sears, Roebuck & Co. catalog order plant and retail store stood as a shining example of modern industry, as over 1,000 employees fulfilled an average of 45,000 orders from catalog customers daily during the 1920s, ‘30s, and ‘40s. As the years went by – and times changed – the hum of industry at the sprawling complex slowed. The retail store closed in 1983, the distribution center in 1993. The vast building stood vacant. A second chance for vitality and usefulness would require extraordinary vision, effort, and collaboration – an effort that involved many MUS alumni in vital roles. McLean Wilson ’96, principal with Kemmons Wilson Inc., led the development team along with University of Memphis art history professor and Crosstown Arts co-founder Todd Richardson.

“Collaboration was the key. All of our partners were committed to fill any holes of expertise and knowledge and to put in the time, energy, and effort we needed,” Wilson says. “The partnerships were all Memphis-based, so my idea of ‘by Memphis, for...”

The grand Sears, Roebuck & Co. retail center opened in 1927 to great fanfare, welcoming almost 30,000 shoppers on its first day of business.
The formerly vacant building’s neglected hallways, shown at the top of the opposite page, stand in sharp contrast to today’s gleaming, restored Crosstown Concourse, where project collaborators Brett Grinder ’91, Mclean Wilson ’96, and Gil Uhlhorn ’93 stop for a photo on the seventh floor of the Central Atrium.
Memphis’ evolved wonderfully. To put it simply, but for all the members of the development team, the project would not have happened.”

Among those collaborators was Bass, Berry & Sims attorney Gil Uhlhorn ’93, who became involved when Andy Cates ’89 asked for his help with the acquisition of the Sears property in 2007. Darrell Cobbins ’91 was also invaluable in the early stages of the process, both in helping acquire parcels and in talking about the project to residents and business owners in the Crosstown community. As the project progressed, Uhlhorn and others at Bass, Berry & Sims, including Philip Lewis II ’98 and Scott McLeod ’05, assisted the development team led by Wilson and Richardson on all phases of the Crosstown Concourse redevelopment. Other alums providing sound input throughout the process from the ownership side were Staley Cates ’82, Dallas Geer ’95, and Andy McCarroll ’86.

“It is impossible to overstate the Herculean task that was the redevelopment of the Sears building into Crosstown Concourse,” Uhlhorn says. “To take an abandoned 1.5 million-square-foot facility in a low-income neighborhood of Memphis and transform it into a vertical urban village with hundreds of workers, shoppers, diners, artists, and residents interacting on multiple levels every day is simply amazing.”
CHECKING EGOS
AT THE DOOR
Since 2010, Todd Richardson and Staley Cates had been discussing possibilities for the massive property. Wilson came on board in 2011.

“As the conversation progressed, Todd began to realize he needed an equal counterpart,” Wilson says, “someone who could not only dream with him but also knew how to get a real estate deal done. We started off dreaming together, working out financing on the backs of envelopes and realizing together that this could be real.”

Transforming the area into a healthy, vibrant neighborhood was always the goal; the concept of the vertical village and moving beyond a traditional mixed-use development crystallized as the plans progressed. With their vision taking shape, Wilson and Richardson began putting together a development team with a strong commitment to productive change for the city. Each team member, Wilson says, was faithful to the process and open to input and ideas.

“Egos were checked at the door,” he says. “We all knew that the project was not about us – it was about the redemption of a building and the revitalization of the surrounding community.”

Grinder, Taber & Grinder was selected as the primary general contractor responsible for turning the vision into reality, from the preliminary cost estimation to organizing all subcontractors and performing the construction to schedule.

Brett Grinder ’91 says his company wanted to be a part of the project for all the reasons that the project was ultimately successful: “It was a great vision but more importantly had a great team of people who had no interest in bureaucracy or gamesmanship. Everyone had the singular focus and attitude of getting this project done for the community in the most efficient way possible.”

The team also included Clyde Patton ’86 of Patton & Taylor Enterprises, who handled the multifamily residential construction.

“Everyone involved on a professional level was definitely at the top of their respective field. From the standpoint of a general contractor, this made our job much easier,” Patton says.

The typical way to approach a development of this scope is to attract one big anchor or loss leader and fit the rest into generic spaces. The concept of a vertical village enabled developers to recruit tenants in a different way. Early in the process the team chose art, education, and health care as the focus, and they recruited eight founding tenants to lease about 500,000 square feet of space. Commitment by these tenants – leaders in the three areas of focus – allowed an innovative approach and design with intention.

Wilson, Richardson, and the development team analyzed how other Sears centers across the country had been repurposed, incorporating loft apartments, hotel and event space, offices, and in Seattle, the Starbucks headquarters.

“We wanted it to be special,” Wilson says. “Other Sears facilities had been redeveloped with success, but we had grander expectations, physically and programmatically, of what we wanted to create – a neighborhood inside a building development, created, financed, and built by Memphis and for Memphis. It was a nontraditional approach, but it worked very well for us.” Those involved in the process came to define the building as a vertical urban village grounded in health, wellness, arts, and education with an appropriate mix of office, residential, and retail.

Location was another key factor in the project. Bordered by Poplar Avenue and North Parkway and bisected by Cleveland Avenue, the Crosstown neighborhood is the link between Downtown, Midtown, and the Medical District. Considering the investments the city and major hospitals had...
already made in the neighboring districts, using the building for arts, education, and health care made sense.

A LEAP OF FAITH

The early commitment of Church Health, with its mission to provide health care to the traditionally underserved, was crucial, Wilson says. After two and a half years of conversations with Wilson and Richardson, founder and CEO Scott Morris decided to consolidate 14 Church Health locations into one at Crosstown Concourse. Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare and St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital followed and spurred similar health care entities to sign leases. Adding Crosstown High School and satellite locations of Christian Brothers University, Rhodes College, and other educational institutions fit with the idea of lifelong learning for both the residents of Crosstown Concourse as well as the surrounding community.

“[Crosstown] Arts ties all of that together with local and visiting artists working in the building and mixing with students, those working in the health care field, and residents,” Grinder says.

In addition to recruiting tenants, Wilson and Richardson had the responsibility of putting together a complex financing package involving 32 sources of funding, selecting architects and contractors, and managing the design process.

It was not a “done deal” for a long time, Wilson says. “A project of this magnitude has anywhere from 0-50 percent chance of success throughout most of the development stage until financing occurs.”

Uhlhorn admits to moments over the course of the 10-year development stage when he thought the whole thing might fall apart, recalling a Christmas Eve that fell days before closing. The team was dealing with the last major crisis from the banks that could cause the deal to break, and they had to resolve it before the end of 2014.

“About a dozen people had a text chain trying to solve this last major problem,” he says. “As I was sitting in church, my wife gently scolded me for texting, especially during the service. I told her it was important because the lead bank’s lawyer was texting me – and pointed five rows up to the lawyer who had just sent the text sitting in church, too.”

The project has come a long way since that Christmas Eve. Rising above the renovated 1,900-space parking garage, the 10 floors and 1.1 million square feet of Crosstown Concourse are now over 96 percent leased. Photographs along the interior hallways – featuring abandoned, derelict rooms juxtaposed with shots of construction workers bringing the building back to life – reveal just how much effort was needed to revitalize the massive space.

The ground floor is mostly retail, with a number of stores flanking the light-filled West Atrium. In the soaring Central Atrium, enticing aromas from its coffee bar and restaurants beckon residents and visitors. In the East Atrium a large red S-shaped staircase, in homage to Sears, leads to the second floor, which features two open art galleries and space for special events.

Gourmet grocery store The Curb Market, owned by Peter Schutt ’68, and Juice Bar, owned by Scott Tashie ’04, are on the first floor. Industrial gas distributor nexAir, with President Bill Proctor ’82 at the helm, moved its headquarters to the first and second floor on the far west side. Memphis Teacher Residency, founded by David Montague ’82, now calls the third floor of Crosstown home. The second through sixth floors are office space, with areas on the fourth and fifth dedicated to Crosstown High School. The 265 residential apartments – named Parcels at Concourse in reference to the bygone packages shipped out daily to Sears catalog customers – are located on floors 7 through 10.

“Some of the other Sears renovations have been single-purpose, which are much easier to construct and less costly to develop because you can stack bathrooms, electrical rooms, and plumbing. But you get a relatively boring community without all the opportunity for learning new things that you see at Crosstown,” Grinder says.
Developers intentionally created ample space in common areas for residents, neighbors, and customers to meet, collaborate, and create relationships.

VIEW FROM THE VILLAGE

The Crosstown team designed the building so that residents, employees, students, and visitors pass through divergent spaces as they come and go, naturally creating opportunities for chance encounters and meaningful contacts.

“Our desire was to innovate a new way for people to meet and develop relationships,” Wilson says.

Both Grinder and Patton observe that the rejuvenation of Crosstown has brought vitality to the surrounding neighborhood, an area that had been overlooked for years. Developers and community stakeholders are beginning to invest in the area, as evidenced by new businesses, including Crosstown Brewery just west of the Concourse.

Residential development is picking up, as well as commercial renovation of the older retail buildings along Cleveland and Watkins.

Wilson is excited to see the neighborhood begin to bloom anew. “Success for us will be 10 years from now, when we have a thriving building within a thriving community,” he says.

Uhlhorn calls the 10-year goal a “mantra” for Richardson and Wilson, but he believes the current level of activity and energy is already a huge marker of success.

“Todd Richardson and McLean Wilson were extraordinary in their sheer determination and creativity to drive this project to success,” Uhlhorn says. “Even without taking into account the complexity of the financial structure, simply completing the renovation and filling the space with tenants and activities took extraordinary work and creativity.”

Transformed from a vacant shell into a growing urban village, Crosstown Concourse stands not only as a testament to the persistence of Richardson and Wilson but also their ability to recruit collaborators who shared their vision.

Before the development opened last summer, Grinder sent MUS Today a photo of an unexpected visitor to the construction site—an owl perched on the railing of an upper floor. “Good omen for the building opening that the first resident is an owl,” he wrote.

If the first year of Crosstown Concourse is any measure, Grinder’s interpretation was on the mark.

Gaye Swan is a freelance writer based in Memphis.

Building and historic photos courtesy of Crosstown Concourse
Robert Gordon’s award-winning documentary about the 1968 Buckley-Vidal debates wins acclaim for its facts … and its foreshadowing

The lament can be heard on both sides of the aisle: Political discourse ain’t what it used to be. Sound bites now substitute for persuasive arguments. Ideological foes no longer meet in public forums; they volley via tweet.

“I haven’t heard anyone quote Greek philosophers lately,” says Robert Gordon ’79, who insists that he’s no expert on contemporary politics.

But his 2015 documentary, Best of Enemies: Buckley Vs. Vidal from Magnolia Pictures, did manage to draw some remarkable comparisons between our present era of perpetual high dudgeon and a televised political scuffle 50 years ago this August.

The film was critically acclaimed at its release, but the following year’s fire-and-brimstone presidential race elevated its relevance among campaign watchers. Long after Gordon collected his festival prizes, the movie’s broadcast premiere on PBS placed it in the running for an Emmy Award.

Last October Gordon won the 38th Annual News and Documentary Emmy Award for Outstanding Historical Documentary. The trophy, which does not fit on any shelf in his home, might be described in presidential terms as “bigly.”

“More than anything it was an affirmation from our peers,” says Gordon, whose shelf space is already packed thanks to an illustrious career writing books about Memphis music history. For someone who regularly pens essays on Elvis and hangs out with musical performer and actor Tav Falco, Gordon’s film had been an unusual detour into politics, but one he thought would make a slam-dunk pitch to producers.

“It took four years to get the funding for the movie, even though I thought it was a totally mainstream, commercial idea,” Gordon says.

With the help of financial backers such as Clif Phillips ’77, who served as executive producer, and artists such as composer Jonathan Kirkscey ’93, Gordon teamed up with co-director and Oscar-winner Morgan Neville (20 Feet from Stardom) to make the documentary.

Other Memphis talent included cinematographer and former MUS classmate David Leonard, editor and associate producer Eileen Meyer, consulting producer Tom Graves, and animator Tom Foster.

The genesis of what Gordon describes as a “boxing match” film came from a 2009 chance encounter with archival television footage.

Conservative icon William F. Buckley, Jr. and leftist author Gore Vidal had been philosophical opposites. But in August of 1968, the titanic minds engaged in a series of heated debates to coincide with the Republican and Democratic National Conventions. Their primetime showdown in 10 rounds was broadcast on ABC to a national audience, with a network ratings boost in mind.

“With all that great footage, the drama was easy,” Gordon says. “There was going to be a pummeling and some knockouts. The real puzzle was how to intercut the context and the history.”

In 1968 alone the high-casualty Tet Offensive in Vietnam had energized the peace movement. Cities burned in April following Martin Luther King, Jr’s assassination in Memphis. The killing of Democratic frontrunner Robert Kennedy left the party scrambling for a charismatic and viable alternative. (We can skip Elvis’ leather-clad comeback in December as a last-minute, if not essential, 1968 entry.)

If America was a mad mess of protest, pain, and punditry, the Buckley-Vidal debate series was a sideshow of the times: Aristocratic intellectuals slugging each other with oversized vocabulary words and escalating personal insults. A New York Times article on the documentary dubbed the debates “Crossfire with a script by Noël Coward.”

Accused of being a “crypto-Nazi” during a now-legendary exchange, Buckley famously gritted his teeth, assailed Vidal’s sexual orientation, then concluded: “I’ll sock you in the goddamn face, and you’ll stay plastered.”

In his Emmy acceptance speech, Gordon referenced the coarsening of the rhetoric that pervaded the Trump-Clinton campaign.

“We made a film about a flash point in the culture wars with the hopes that showing it 50 years later would bring some kind of civility back to what has become uncivil discourse,” Gordon said, adding, “Thanks for the award, but sorry we didn’t have the intended effect.”

As the 50th anniversary of the Buckley-Vidal debates approaches, Gordon believes that civil discussions are happening more
within the world’s loose-knit fraternity of writer-critics, a typical getting-to-know-you story is how, through a combination of luck and talent, we came to inhabit these careers.

I’m so glad that Robert Gordon ’79, the authority on Memphis music whose books have been invaluable reference material for my own reporting, opens his latest book, Memphis Rent Party, with some autobiography.

In some ways, Gordon cuts an all-too-familiar figure in that elite coterie (familiar to me, at least: white, educated, middle class, well-connected). But as a self-described “seeker,” he provides good justification for why he’s the right man for the job. This compact collection of articles, interviews, profiles and liner notes, all with Memphis music connections, represents the best technical aspects of music writing without any snooty pretense.

Gordon has always aspired to be a trustworthy narrator. He reflects thoughtfully upon a teenage visit to the home of Memphis bluesman Furry Lewis in the 1970s. “I was keenly aware of the distance between his home and my comfortable suburban life,” Gordon writes. Later, these differences became an awakening: “Furry not only made me question my assumptions, he made me aware of the privilege that produced them.”

In a Q&A interview with blues icon Bobby “Blue” Bland for Rolling Stone, Gordon’s lack of assumptions elicits some terrific and surprising answers.

Q: “Would you rather play to an audience that’s dancing or listening?”

A: “Listening, man! Because I have something to say. Dancing, that’s for people spinning records.”

There’s another genre of personal anecdote music writers like to share, and that’s the one in which a writer finally faces a surly, if not openly hostile subject—and still manages to be fair, if not entirely flattering.

Into that category (albeit Gordon never takes it personally) is a terrific 2005 Playboy profile on notorious curmudgeon Jerry Lee Lewis. I’ll admit: I nearly dropped the book when I read that “The Killer” actually let Gordon ride with him on his tour bus. For a music writer, this is a classic Daniel in the Lion’s Den story. As Gordon himself points out: “Jerry Lee came to see all journalists as murderous, a stance that he maintains to this day.”

Great access doesn’t always mean acceptance. In fact, access is usually just a form of probation until the article comes out and an artist judges whether the treatment was fair or foul.

It’s a testament to Gordon’s work ethic that so many musicians have trusted him with so many stories.

“To me, Memphis is a verb,” Gordon writes. “To seek and embrace what is different.” Looking at his subjects through the lens of his own difference, Gordon is, in many ways, a quintessential Memphis writer.

than the mainstream media lets on. Many podcasts, he says, give rational political context to current events, albeit with a much smaller audience.

“You’re not bound by the 30-second sound bite,” he says. “It allows for a deeper discussion on a remarkable number of issues.”

As for his Emmy Award, Gordon says the honor didn’t come with a flood of new movie deals.

“People think you’re too expensive or too busy,” Gordon laughs. “I was really hoping I could go out there with some of my more fringy ideas, and the doors would open. That’s not how it works.”

Since Best of Enemies, Gordon published another book, Memphis Rent Party (see review at right), and has lately been working on short films about Dockery Farms, the Mississippi cotton plantation widely regarded as the cradle of blues music. He is also penning a new history of MUS, expected to publish late in 2019.

For composer Kirkscey, Best of Enemies and its honors have transformed his career. “That was my big break,” he says. “Before ‘Best of Enemies’ I was mostly doing local film projects here in Memphis. The movie helped me get an agent in Hollywood.”

Kirkscey’s score is propulsive and intense, with a cadence reminiscent of minimalist Philip Glass. A classical cellist for the Memphis Symphony Orchestra and a multi-instrumentalist who dabbles in all forms of music, Kirkscey is a stylistic chameleon.

Kirkscey also composed, performed, and recorded the soundtrack to Morgan Neville’s recent film, Won’t You Be My Neighbor, the highly acclaimed Mr. Rogers documentary that came out in June.

If Best of Enemies didn’t fix the problem of civility in current political discourse, it did, at least, give one local musician a major gig—a future chapter, perhaps, in the history of Memphis music for Gordon to chronicle.
Fond Farewell
The Class of 2018 prepares for a new chapter

BY DANIEL BLACK ’18

Class of 2018 accepted to 142 four-year colleges and universities in 34 states as well as the District of Columbia
Yet another memorable year in the annals of Memphis University School concluded on May 20, as the Class of 2018 bid farewell to MUS with its graduation ceremony.

Along with my fellow soon-to-be graduates, I strode down the aisle of Second Presbyterian Church to “Pomp and Circumstance,” led by Class President Daniel Shumake.

We were here at last.

After the traditional opening hymn, “Rise Up, O Men of God,” Student Council Chaplain Wyatt Berry recited his opening invocation.

Salutatorian Jeremy Jacobs spoke about the uncertainty of today’s world and the worries he felt before the start of his MUS career four years ago, sharing his fear that he “couldn’t possibly measure up to his own hopes and dreams.” However, his family and members of the MUS community gave him the security and certainty that carried him through his years as an Owl.

“It’s due to them, my family, those teachers, and everyone else I didn’t have time to thank that I can fight off the demons that danced on my vocal cords and stand up before you to say: My name is Jeremy Abraham Jacobs, and I am graduating today with 104 of the best.”

Jacobs encouraged his classmates to follow their passions and not be afraid to stand out. He concluded by reassuring his fellow graduates that “we don’t have time to be scared, and we don’t have reason to be, either.”

Beg To Differ, led by director Matt Tutor ’91, performed a rendition of “Precious Lord, Take My Hand,” before Chang Yu’s valedictory address.

Yu opened with recollections of Lower School: “Whether we were hanging out with Mr. [David] Gagliano or watching Mrs. [Sally] Askew transform our barely intelligible essays into literary works in after-school help sessions, we were constantly nurtured by the caring wisdom of our teachers.” Entering high school brought new trials, Yu said, but lessons learned earlier – “Be a gentleman and a scholar” – helped them hold on.

Reflecting on their time at MUS, Yu thanked the faculty for “becoming the divine winds and voices that encouraged us forward. We will miss discussing the miracle of life over milkshakes with Coach T [Bill Taylor], being enlightened by Mr. [Jonathan] Large’s lectures while walking down the hall, and deepening our com-
prehension of physics with Mr. [Wayne] Mullins’ handy outlines.”

He thanked Headmaster Pete Sanders for his first year of leadership and for safeguarding the traditions that MUS holds dear, and referenced Homer’s Odyssey in a final charge to his classmates.

“I hope we have left behind a legacy of success and inspiration so that the next generation, the sons of our Odysseuses, will continue to find the good, the true, and the beautiful through MUS,” Yu said. “I hope that all of you remember where you came from and pass down the torch of truth and honor to the next generation.”

Next came the presentation of diplomas and awards – capped off with thunderous applause from the audience – and the announcement of the John M. Nail Outstanding Teaching Award, which Class President Shumake presented to Ross McCain Lynn Instructor in History Jonathan Large (see story page 24).

After closing remarks from Mr. Sanders, the students and faculty joined together to sing the school hymn before Honor Council President Josiah Crutchfield gave a concluding benediction.

The ceremony was closed with the passing of the banner from Shumake to John Mann, president of the Class of 2019, with the graduates filing out of the sanctuary behind them.

Outside the front entrance, we, the Class of 2018, converged one last time and threw our caps in the air, officially concluding our years of hard work and service as MUS students.

I suspect it’s a moment we will never forget.

As a member of this class, I am certain that the time we have put in will pay off for all of us. The work was strenuous, overwhelming at times, but if the success of our predecessors is any indication, it will be worthwhile in the long run. MUS is an extremely special place. The superb instruc-
Ross McCain Lynn Instructor in History
Jonathan Large delivered this prayer during Baccalaureate service for the MUS and Hutchison Classes of 2018 at Second Presbyterian Church on May 20. “Its sources are prayers that I love from the Book of Common Prayer, passages from the Bible, the thoughts of Walker Percy, and even a lyric from a Grateful Dead song,” Large said.

Almighty God,

Whose son, Jesus Christ, in His earthly life shared our toil and hallowed our labor;

Be present with the MUS Class of 2018 as they leave us to continue to grow in mind, body, and spirit in college;

Deliver them in their studies and occupations from the service of self alone, that they may do the work You give them to do in truth, in beauty, and for the common good in the spirit of Him who came among us as One who serves, Your son, Jesus Christ, our Lord;

Help them to use the liberty they will have in college in accordance with Your will, that they may be a blessing in the lives of those around them and that they may walk in love as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice unto You;

Make them always thankful for Your loving Providence and faithful stewards of Your good gifts;

Bless them as pilgrims and wayfarers in their journey through life that their search for meaning and transcendence will find its ultimate fulfillment in You;

Look with compassion upon them as they experience the trials and temptations, the joys and sorrows of daily life, and help them to remember that You are the Creator and Preserver of all life, the Author of salvation and the Giver of all grace, the ready source of help at all times;

Thank You for giving us as a faculty the blessing of working and communing with them over the past six years, and help them to remember always that we love them but that You love them the best;

These things we ask through Jesus Christ, Your son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end, Amen.

Baccalaureate Prayer
Commencement Awards and Honors

VALEDICTORIAN AWARD
Chang Yu
This award is presented to the senior with the highest average over eight semesters of work at MUS.

SALUTATORIAN AWARD
Jeremy Jacobs
This award is presented to the senior with the second highest average over eight semesters of work at MUS.

FACULTY CUP FOR GENERAL EXCELLENCE
Bobby Wade
The Faculty Cup for General Excellence is the highest honor given to a member of the graduating class. With outstanding leadership and strength of character, the recipient of the Faculty Cup has earned the highest respect of his peers and teachers for the generous contributions of his time, talent, and energy to the school and its ideals.

LEIGH W. MACQUEEN DEAN’S CUP FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
Jackson Howell
Named in 1998 in honor of the first academic dean of MUS, Leigh Windsor MacQueen, this award was originally donated by Mr. and Mrs. MacQueen in 1967. The award is given to a senior who, based on his academic record and his performance on both a written and an oral examination, has demonstrated a high level of academic achievement along with a marked depth of intellectual maturity and curiosity and who, in the minds of the examining committee, has indicated sound intellectual attainment.

ROSS MCCAIN LYNN AWARD
Charlie Evans, Jackson Howell, Barry Klug, Chang Yu
The Ross McCain Lynn Award is given in memory of Col. Ross M. Lynn, the school’s headmaster from 1955 to 1978. This award recognizes distinction in the areas of school citizenship, leadership, service and character.

D. EUGENE THORN AWARD
Josiah Crutchfield, Jeremy Jacobs, William Miller, Jackson Moody, Mason Williams
The D. Eugene Thorn Award is given in memory of D. Eugene Thorn, the school’s headmaster from 1978 to 1992. This award is presented to those members of the senior class who best demonstrate the dignity, integrity, humility, and sincerity that characterized Mr. Thorn’s years as coach, teacher, and headmaster at Memphis University School.

SCOTT MILLER REMBERT SENIOR SERVICE AWARD
Alexander Goodwin
This award, established by family and friends, is made in memory of Scott Miller Rembert, Class of 1970. It goes to the senior who has shown the most unselfish service to the school.

MARK COOPER POWELL MEMORIAL AWARD
Matthew Strock, Mylan Taylor, AJ Varner
The Mark Cooper Powell Memorial Award is given in memory of Mark Cooper Powell, Class of 1980, by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Edward L. Powell, to the graduates who, through persistence and courage during their careers at MUS, have shown the greatest development of character and scholarship.
Senior Awards

RUSSELL JOHNSON  
CREATIVE WRITING AWARD  
Graham Boswell

ENGLISH AWARD  
Charlie Evans

WILLIAM D. JEMISON III AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN DRAMATICS  
Sam Payne

BRESCIA AWARD FOR UNSELFISH SERVICE IN DRAMATICS  
Eli Gruen

CHORAL MUSIC AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE  
Stan Smythe

ART AWARD  
Matthew Strock

FRENCH AWARD  
Ryan Gorman and Stan Smythe

WAYNE E. DUFF LATIN AWARD  
Chang Yu

SPANISH AWARD  
Jeremy Jacobs

H. JERRY PETERS HISTORY AWARD  
Jackson Howell

CHRISTA GREEN WARNER MATHEMATICS AWARD  
Jackson Moody and Chang Yu

MARGARET OWEN CATMUR SCIENCE AWARD  
Chang Yu

RELIGION AWARD  
Rick Reinhard

DISTINGUISHED COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD  
Nick Rezaee

DEWITT M. SHY, JR. MOCK TRIAL AWARD  
William Miller

LEE MURRAY SPIRIT AWARD  
Daniel Black

AL WRIGHT CHRISTIAN CHARACTER AWARD  
Charlie Evans

PAUL TROWBRIDGE GILLESPIE SCHOLAR ATHLETE  
Bobby Wade

JAMES R. HAYGOOD III BEST ALL-AROUND ATHLETE  
Buchanan Dunavant

All-Sports Banquet award winners Daniel Black, Charlie Evans, Bobby Wade, and Buchanan Dunavant
Seniors gathered for the traditional college T-shirt photo in Thomas Amphitheater.

Class of 2018 Matriculations

Ryan Aghabeg, Auburn University
Tavion Alexander, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Zaid Alyousef, The University of Memphis
Tate Bailey, Belmont University
Bennett Borusse, Centre College
Wyatt Berry, Delta State University
Mack Bethell, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Daniel Black, Mississippi State University
John Bolton, Hinds Community College
Graham Boswell, Washington University in St. Louis
Richard Bragorgos, University of Mississippi
Joe Carter, University of South Carolina
Cam Clayton, Mississippi State University
Josiah Crutchfield, The University of Memphis
William Delinger, University of Colorado at Boulder
Bough Doster, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Buchanan Donovan, The Ohio State University
Harry Dunavant, Auburn University
Smith Duncan, Rhodes College
Jack Eason, University of Arkansas
Charlie Evans, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Tide Faley, University of Kentucky
Benton Ferebee, Brandeis University
Sean Fitzharry, University of Mississippi
Matt Fogelman, Tulane University
Benjamin Freeman, Davidson College
Alexander Goodwin, Lipscomb University
Ryan Gorman, Case Western Reserve University
Bentley Greenfield, Louisiana State University
Miller Grissinger, University of Mississippi
Eli Gruen, University of Southern California
Carlo Guinocor, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Austin Hamilton, University of Arkansas
Osama Hampton, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Brandon Honey, University of Mississippi
Jordan Hays, University of Mississippi
Edward Henley, University of Arkansas
Conner Hobbs, Southwest Tennessee Community College
Jesse Homan, Sewanee: The University of the South
Noah Hooper, University of Tennessee
Anderson Horton, University of Alabama at Birmingham
Okir Hosad, American University
Jackson Howell, William & Mary
Will Huffman, Auburn University
Alex Humphreys, Clemson University
Jeremy Jacobs, Duke University
Michael Jennings, University of Mississippi
David Jones, Rhodes College
Marshall Jones, University of Georgia
Liam Kaltenborn, University of Southern California
John Keegan, University of Arkansas
Brad Kerkhoff, Loyola University New Orleans
Chris Kerkhoff, DePaul University
Barry Klug, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
McCall Knowlton, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Foster Ligon, Auburn University
Aidan Lonerger, University of Wisconsin, Madison
John McBride, University of Mississippi
Thompson McDonald, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Bo McCaw, University of Mississippi
Hastings McEwan, University of Mississippi
Aedan McKay, University of Tennessee, Chattanooga
Witt Miesse, Marymount Manhattan College
William Miller, University of Georgia
Jackson Moody, Georgia Institute of Technology
Jimmy Morrow, University of Mississippi
Will Murrah, University of South Carolina
Macon Orr, University of Denver
Mathon Parker, University of Colorado at Boulder
Sam Payne, Drury University
Tyler Rakers, Tulane University
Peter Raves, University of Mississippi
Rick Reinhard, Washington University in St. Louis
Nick Rezaee, University of California, Santa Cruz
Charlie Rhodes, University of Denver
Erik Richardson, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Mac Robinson, The University of Alabama
Ryan Seamons, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Daniel Shumake, Mercer University
Javan Smith, Virginia Tech
Stan Smythe, Seattle University
London Springfield, Christian Brothers University
Jon Staffel, University of Denver
Hayden Stark, University of Tennessee, Chattanooga
Zachary Street, University of Tennessee, Chattanooga
Matthew Strick, Berry College
John Ross Swaim, University of Mississippi
Chandler Tabor, Middle Tennessee State University
Mylan Taylor, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Matthew Temple, University of Virginia
Trey Thomas, University of Mississippi
AJ Varner, The University of Texas, Austin
Nalin Verma, Indiana University at Bloomington
Leon Vo, Colby College
Bobby Wade, Duke University
Jason Wang, Pennsylvania State University
Bays Webb, University of Mississippi
Jacob Webb, Georgia Institute of Technology
Will West, Mississippi State University
Jake Wilbourn, University of South Carolina
Rucker Wilkinson, Sewanee: The University of the South
Jonathan Williams, Vanderbilt University
Mason Williams, University of South Carolina
Cameron Wyatt, University of Kentucky
Chang Yu, Harvard University
Continuing an Owl Tradition
Luncheon honors senior legacies, fathers, and grandfathers

Not pictured: Mark Fogelman '88 and son, Matt '18; Alex Humphreys '18 and brother Herbo Humphreys '02; Ned Laughlin '60 and grandson Michael Jennings '18; Rick Moore '63 and grandson Richard Bragorgos '18; and Bert Robinson '68
Fudge Earns Distinguished Teaching Award

BY ALEXANDER GOODWIN ’18

It was the opening night of *Damn Yankees* last spring, my first foray into technical theater, and Technical Director of Theater Robert Fudge had gathered the run crew and tech personnel in the hallway outside the chapel for a pep talk and the sacred pre-show rituals (which cannot be revealed here, but if you know, you know). Before we returned to our posts, he left us with this charge: “Our job is to make sure people don’t realize we’re doing our job.”

He was telling us to do our tasks so seamlessly that the audience would not be aware we were there until we took our bows with the cast. This standard of discreet professionalism is one that Mr. Fudge lives out not only behind the curtain, but also in the classroom and in the community. He was recognized for his high standards and commitment to excellence in an all-school chapel this spring when he was named the recipient of the 2018 Distinguished Teaching Award.

A student could go through all six years at MUS without ever taking one of Mr. Fudge’s classes (I would advise against it), but it is impossible to miss the results of his hard work. He has spent countless afternoons, evenings, and weekends building sets, repairing platforms, hanging lights, and painting walls, whether with the stage crew, a skeleton team, or alone. He has a tireless dedication to producing professional-quality theater programs, and he encourages that commitment in his students and stage crews. He is always looking for ways to improve the production quality of whatever is onstage in Hyde Chapel. Whether switching to a different sound board, controlling the lighting with a software program, or finding a way to successfully record a live performance, Mr. Fudge goes above and beyond to make the show better.

He carries this attitude and contributes his skills to activities outside of school, as well. For three years, he has served as the technical director of TEDxMemphis, the local conference started by Patton Orr ’16 and Luke Jensen ’07 in 2015. In addition to his official role as technical director, he oversees backstage student volunteers and teaches them how to put on a world-class conference.

Mr. Fudge is also an invaluable source of technical expertise for the local theater community. He has partnered with Rhodes College’s theater department on productions; collaborated with artists from the University of Memphis, Theatre Memphis, and Chatterbox Audio Theater; and worked with Voices of the South on their acclaimed production of *Elephant’s Graveyard*. In the summer he
switches gears and serves as director of conservation programs for Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico (encouraging student participation in such endeavors in his chapel presentations during the year).

I had the good fortune of having Mr. Fudge as a teacher for Theater Production and his 3D-Printing quarter course. Every class period was enjoyable, in large part because of his eagerness to see us master the skills he taught us. As long as life and limb are not at stake, he is willing to let his students make a few small mistakes in the pursuit of success, and he calmly instructs on how to improve technique. Whether a student is trying to master a power drill or deciding how to put a platform on wheels, he is supportive and patient. He prefers a hands-off approach unless it is absolutely necessary to intervene and encourages students to think through technical problems by themselves before seeking help. Though this method sometimes left me frustrated, he encouraged me to persevere, and using lessons he had taught earlier, I ended up with successful results.

While knowing when to use screws, glue, or staples is important, the knowledge that Mr. Fudge imparts is more than purely technical. His lessons on the basics of scenic construction are often accompanied by a summary of the iterative design process or an overview of relevant architectural history. He values student opinions, involves them in the design process, and uses their suggestions to improve the functional and aesthetic aspects of set pieces. Instilling both technical and design knowledge, he encourages independence in completing projects. In fact, he facilitates many independent-study opportunities for students to expand their knowledge.

Mr. Fudge’s impact on my life has been immeasurable. Not only did he introduce me to the world of theater – where I have met some of my best friends – and teach me incredibly valuable skills, but he also showed me how rewarding working with my hands and completing complex projects can be.

My classmates also attest to his talent and passion. Matthew Strock ’18 said Mr. Fudge strengthened his love for theater in general and served as an excellent mentor in stage crew, theater production, and stage management. Eli Gruen ’18 said he believes his teaching prepared him for both college and future career opportunities. “Mr. Fudge believes in the student,” Gruen said. “By treating the theater shop as a professional environment, students learn both leadership and occupational skills.”

Mr. Fudge is an incredibly effective teacher, a talented technician, and a shining example of the quick intellect and strong character that MUS demands of all within its walls. Mr. Fudge, take your bow. I hope your closing night in Hyde Chapel is far, far away.

The Distinguished Teaching Award is a permanent endowment fund established in 1990 through a generous bequest by John Murry Springfield. Springfield joined the faculty in 1958 and served as an instructor in English and mathematics until 1971. From 1971 until his death in August 1989, Springfield served as principal of the Hull Lower School. The monetary award is given annually to a faculty member who demonstrates excellence in both the classroom and in extracurricular activities.
Jonathan Large is hard to miss. It is simply impossible for a student to graduate from MUS without having encountered him at one time or another. Whether taking one of his classes, participating in a civic service project, trying out for the trap team, or merely hearing his booming laughter reverberate around the west hallway, students inevitably find themselves under his guidance. He is involved with so many programs and projects around the school and throughout the Memphis area that I often wonder whether he has secretly mastered time travel or completely given up on the luxury of sleep. Having made such a significant impact upon the school and upon the lives of the students of the Class of 2018, it is unsurprising that Mr. Large was selected by the class to receive the coveted John M. Nail Outstanding Teaching Award.

To say his teaching stands out is an understatement. There are no PowerPoint presentations and very few handouts in one of Mr. Large’s history classes. All you need is a pencil, a blank sheet of paper, and a hand quick enough to keep up with his lecture. But the lack of visual aids never seems to impair the vivid imagery that Mr. Large speaks into existence with his Gibbonsque prose. And he is always willing to supplement his lectures with discussion outside of the classroom. Every Upper School student knows that, in between classes, Mr. Large’s office is transformed into an agora in miniature, with debates fiercely waged on topics such as politics, literature, art, and philosophy.

But Mr. Large’s contributions to MUS do not end with academics. In addition to teaching, he assists the Knowledge Bowl team and, along with Mr. Hamilton Eggers ’94, coaches the trapshooting team. Both these teams have been very successful over the past few years, in no small part due to Mr. Large’s guidance and mentorship. He is also famous for his homeroom’s dominance during the Can Drive: He and his groups have had a stranglehold on the first-place position in the annual charity event for years. By the end of the collection period, Mr. Large’s area more resembles a Campbell’s Soup warehouse than a classroom.

An avid student of the American Civil War in general and Robert E. Lee in particular, Mr. Large often tells his students what Lee told one of his pupils during his tenure at what is now Washington and Lee University: “We have but one rule here, and that is that every student must be a gentleman.” Mr. Large has taken this wisdom to heart, encouraging his students to become gentlemen by being one himself. His involvement with the Can Drive is only one example of his leadership in the Civic Service Organization. He helped guide the tutoring program at Balmoral Elementary School Tuesdays and Thursdays after school. And there is rarely a weekend that doesn’t see Mr. Large helping work a CSO project. Along with Mr. Eddie Batey, Mr. Large has helped develop the CSO and encourage more student participation in giving back to the Memphis community.
I remember an afternoon a few years ago when I saw Mr. Large surrounded by brown paper bags and an assortment of toiletries and snacks: toothbrushes, toothpaste, wet wipes, peanut butter crackers, etc. When I asked him what he was doing with all those supplies, he told me that he was making “Beatitude bags.” For years Mr. Large has made these care packages that he distributes to anyone in desperate need he sees while driving around the city. He does this without advertisement, without seeking recognition, because he believes it is the right thing to do. This is typical of Mr. Large: unselfishly doing the right thing simply because it’s right.

I have had the pleasure of having many interactions with Mr. Large during my time at MUS. It was in his sophomore AP United States History class that I first discovered my passion for history. This began a process of self-discovery that has led me to pursue history in college. He has been an unparalleled source of wisdom, knowledge, and joy in my life; I don’t have enough space here to document all the lessons he has taught me in history, literature, politics, religion, philosophy, and art. It was from him that I first heard those transcendentals of truth, beauty, and goodness. Mr. Large’s endless search for these ideals has informed how he lives his life. And, in large part because of him, I have begun my journey to find my own truth, beauty, and goodness.

I am not alone in how much I owe Mr. Large. The fact that he received a majority of the votes from the graduating class for the Nail Award shows the influence he has had on the lives of my fellow classmates. Nearly all of us have been in one of the various classes or programs in which he unselfishly participates. All of us know that he is not only a good teacher but also, more importantly, a good person. As our class spreads out all over the country in what amounts to a collegiate diaspora, every one of us will carry our own memories of Mr. Large along with the knowledge and wisdom he has given us.

He will be impossible not to miss.

Nominations for the John M. Nail Outstanding Teaching Award are made each year by a selection committee of student leaders from the senior class, and the recipient of the Outstanding Teaching Award is determined by a majority vote of the class. The recipient receives a handsome salary stipend, and money is made available for professional development and departmental resources.
Beth Hunt Receives Hale Award for Outstanding Service

Director of Advancement Perry Dement was compelled to tell a little white lie in May to keep Controller Beth Hunt from finding out she had been selected as this year’s recipient of the Jean Barbee Hale Award for Outstanding Service. As the controller, Hunt is responsible for preparing the check that is presented to the recipient at the end-of-year faculty luncheon. So shortly before the award was to be announced, Dement came to her with the story that Headmaster Pete Sanders had decided to postpone the award until later in the year so he would have more time to get to know potential recipients.

“I believe I responded, ‘Well, he’s the boss, so he can do what he wants!’” Hunt says, laughing. “I fell for it hook, line, and sinker.”

Hunt’s look of surprise at the presentation was worth the subterfuge.

Given each year to a member of the MUS family who has exhibited outstanding loyalty, responsibility, dedication, and commitment to excellence in service to the school, the Hale Award went to a worthy recipient. A CPA, Hunt worked in public accounting and with RFS Hotel Investors before pausing her career to raise her children, Trip McLaren, age 26, and Class of 2015 alumni A.J. and Will Hunt. She joined the staff of MUS in 2009 and quickly assumed many responsibilities, handling accounting, financial reconciliations, cash management, budgets, bond issue reporting, and financial reports to all required local, state, and federal agencies.

“Beth loves it when everything is balanced and in order,” Director of Business Operations Rankin Fowlkes says. “If the credits and debits are not equal, her world is out of sorts. Her work is essential to the operation of the Business Office.”

Hunt also manages payroll (perhaps the most important part of her job, says Fowlkes), and oversees human resources, handling benefits, retirement plans, employee files, and insurance communications.

While her colleagues know she is hardworking and dedicated, not everyone knows she is also an accomplished cook, talented knitter, and huge baseball fan (her current favorite team being the Birmingham-Southern Panthers, which son A.J. serves as catcher).

In announcing the award, Headmaster Sanders garnered laughs in sharing the difficulty of keeping the honor a secret from Hunt, who had reminded him weeks earlier that he needed to go ahead and select a recipient so she could prepare the check. “I’m pretty sure she was shaking her head, thinking, ‘new guy,’ when we told her we were postponing,” Sanders said. “We have a note on her plaque that says, ‘Congratulations on winning this award. Please see yourself to receive your check.’”

Ben Hale endowed the Jean Barbee Hale Award for Outstanding Service in honor of his wife upon her retirement in 1998. She was a valued member of the staff for 24 years. The Hales’ three sons attended MUS: Scott ’78, Dennis ’80, and Steve ’84.
Terry Balton Retires, Named Faculty Emerita

After 18 years of teaching Owls the intricacies of computer technology and digital design and with a string of award-winning yearbooks to her credit, Instructor in Fine Arts and Technology Terry Balton, who retired in May, leaves a legacy of creativity and graphic arts leadership. After graduating from Germantown High School and then-Memphis State University with a bachelor’s degree in communications and fine arts, Balton began a career in advertising at Walker & Associates. But teaching called to her, and she ended up leaving the ad business, returning to the University of Memphis for her master’s degree in education and starting a new career at Christ Methodist Day School in 1988. Twelve years later she became an Owl.

Her friend and colleague Clay Smythe ’85 paid tribute to her deft graphic skills and leadership at a year-end chapel, describing her as the “Lower School Computer Lab czar.” Balton taught seventh-grade computer classes and provided technology training for Upper and Lower School students as well as for faculty and staff. In 2003 she became sponsor of The Owl yearbook, and in 2004 she initiated the inaugural Digital Design class as an Upper School Fine Arts elective.

Smythe shared thoughts about Balton from Evan Mah ’09, who described her as a guiding force and mentor for a seventh grader dreaming of becoming the yearbook editor. “The skills I learned under her watch – InDesign, Photoshop, leadership, crisis management – are the reasons why becoming editor of my college paper was so easy and why becoming editor for a city magazine with a staff twice my age was not only possible but natural,” Mah said. “I think of Mrs. Balton as a lasting influence in the life and career I lead today.”

Balton retires to spend more time with her grandchildren, but she and her husband, Scott, will stay busy as owners of Balton Sign Company, the oldest continually operating family sign business in the country. A founding member and former treasurer for the Memphis Association of Independent Schools – Technology Education Consortium and former Girl Scout Leader, Balton will likely also stay busy doing volunteer design projects for local nonprofit events. But her time at MUS is something she will not forget. “This year’s seniors were born the year I started at MUS,” Balton said. “Watching the boys grow into men is just amazing, and my colleagues are astonishing. It has been an honor to be a part of this school.”

In his chapel tribute, Smythe praised Balton’s enthusiasm and willingness to collaborate. “We conspired time and again on numerous projects: Nuclear Coach Tyler at sunset, celebratory Lower School T-shirts, the Coach Peters 1,000-wins logo (complete with glasses). We crafted every Owl Camp T-shirt design, photoshopped archived material ripped from the public domain, ... In short, you were too often my partner in crime when I needed a caper, and I love you for it.”

Describing Balton as “an oasis of refreshing sanity” in the hullabaloo of Lower School, Smythe thanked Balton for her calming presence and ever-present smile. “We will all deeply miss your problem-solving steady hands, your community-affirming nature, and your deep kindness,” he said. “You love to laugh, and that’s an essential trait when working amidst the middle school years fraught with the volatile, inconsistent, often mind-numbing foolhardiness of a day-in-the-life with prepubescent man-children. Think of it as the end to yet another fine yearbook edition under your care, turning the page to a new chapter in all of our lives along life’s meandering journey.”

In recognition of Balton’s 18 years of service, the administration conferred upon her the title Faculty Emerita.
Admissions Office Bids Farewell to Director

In her nine years as director of admissions, Peggy Williamson rolled out the red carpet for hundreds of prospective students and their families. With a welcoming smile and thoughtful care, Williamson did an admirable job building new classes of Owls. At a year-end retirement chapel and party in May, colleagues paid tribute to her work.

Williamson received a bachelor’s degree in English from Rhodes College, a master’s in counseling from the University of Memphis, and a post-master’s certificate in family therapy from the University of Pennsylvania and Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic. With previous experience as the Middle School head at St. Mary’s Episcopal School, as a family counselor at Charter Lakeside Hospital, and as director of the Campus Elementary Laboratory School at University of Memphis, Williamson was well suited to lead the school’s Admissions Office, which she joined in 2009. Her responsibilities included recruiting and welcoming new families as well as coordinating the Student Ambassador program.

Active in the community, Williamson also lent her expertise to the boards of Grace-St. Luke’s Episcopal School, Promise Academy Charter School, and Idlewild Presbyterian Church Day Care Center. She was a founding member and first chairman of the Midtown Security Committee and served as junior warden of the vestry and a pastoral care team member at Grace-St. Luke’s Episcopal Church.

At the year-end chapel service honoring the school’s retirees, Assistant Director of Admissions Buck Towner ’07 spoke about Williamson’s integrity and legacy, reminding the students in the audience that she was responsible for overseeing admission for each of them.

“You were not just a folder or a number,” Towner said. “She wanted to get to know every one of you. With extra-large Post-it notes, permanent markers, and an incredible attitude, she led the Admissions Committee with amazing passion. What was so impressive to me was that she treated everyone so fairly. She stuck true to the process and represented MUS with great humility.”

Towner shared comments from Williamson’s friend and colleague Liz Copeland, director of communications, who said that Williamson personifies the characteristics of the Community Creed. “Honest and truthful in all her relationships, she treats everyone she meets with utmost respect,” Copeland said. “She has a servant’s heart, and I saw that in how she lovingly cared for her mother in the final years of her life, visiting her every day and making sure she had the best care. I also saw her deep compassion in action supporting Linhao Zheng ’17 and his family as he underwent treatments for leukemia. She has taken many people under her wing over the years – MUS families, colleagues, friends.”

A prodigious note-writer, Williamson firmly believed in the importance of the personal touch in connecting with prospective families, Towner said. She put the boys’ interests and needs first, always acting with professionalism, discretion, and care in matters related to students’ well-being and success.

He shared thoughts about Williamson from Headmaster Emeritus Ellis Haguewood, who described her as tireless...
but unassuming, and committed to excellence and the mission of MUS. "Her work was never about her, but always about what was best for the school and its welfare," he said. "Her communication skills – especially written – were vivid evidence of a finely-tuned sensibility and sensitivity to the needs of others, and her handwritten notes of encouragement and gratitude built up the legions of people to whom she wrote. She is a great lady, and the school will miss her dearly."

Towner, who succeeds Williamson as director of admissions, said he could not have asked for a better mentor. "I told Peggy that she is one of the best coaches I ever had. She always encouraged me to take the next step, even when I didn’t believe I was capable. Boys, when it all comes down to it, you are the reason that we are at MUS, and Peggy remembered that every day."

Williamson expressed her gratitude to the administration, faculty, and staff; to the school’s student ambassadors for their work with prospective families; and to all the students. "I give thanks for you all who help make MUS what it is, and I have fond memories of when each of you first came here to the Admissions Office," she said. "I thank our MUS Board of Trustees, parents, and alumni for continuing to support and believe in what this great school stands for. I will always remember two things about MUS – each of you who make this the exceptional community that it is and the fact that MUS is a community based on truth and honor. May it always be so."

In her retirement Williamson is looking forward to traveling with her husband of 49 years, Jim Williamson, a professor of architecture at the University of Memphis. First stop, the North Carolina mountains, where Jim is concentrating on his watercolor painting as he gets started on a year-long sabbatical. Second stop in the spring, Umbria, Italy, where Jim will continue his sabbatical painting project. Peggy, true to form, will be prepared. She is already studying Italian and looks forward to improving her language skills there.

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Where Tradition Surrounds U

For more than 100 years, Memphis University School has educated young men to become the future leaders of our community, our nation, and the world.

Our legacy of scholarship and leadership is perpetuated by caring individuals who name the school as a beneficiary in their estate plans.

There are generations of students yet to enroll, all deserving the best education possible in order to become future leaders.

Leave your legacy of scholarship and leadership.

For more information and estate planning tools, visit plannedgiving.musowls.org.
RAY NAMED ASSISTANT HEADMASTER

Headmaster Pete Sanders announced in May that Upper School Principal Barry Ray adds a new role as assistant headmaster in August. He will work closely with the headmaster on a variety of responsibilities, including school policy, planning, calendars, and day-to-day operations. Ray earned his bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of the South and came to MUS in 1978 as a Lower School social studies teacher and coach. In 1987 he earned his master’s degree in education administration from the University of Memphis. At various times he coached football, wrestling, track, and baseball, and for nearly two decades, he has provided radio color commentary during Owl football games.

He joined the administration in 1990 as Lower School principal, and in 1996 he became Upper School principal. In addition, he has kept his hand in the classroom, teaching American history. In 2016 Ray earned the Jean Barbee Hale Award for Outstanding Service.

“With his proven record of leadership in both the Lower School and Upper School and his deep institutional knowledge, Barry Ray is the perfect person to serve as assistant headmaster,” Sanders said. “He brings vast experience, integrity, and an undeniable sense of fair play to this important role – in addition to his unwavering dedication to MUS and its mission.”

LOWER SCHOOL LEADERSHIP CHANGE

In May, Clay Smythe ’85, principal of Hull Lower School from 2005 to 2018, announced that he was returning to the classroom to teach religion at MUS and work with the Civic Service Organization.

“The faculty is the lifeblood of the school, and during this season of my life, I am jealous to return among them where I began my MUS career, teaching the students and encouraging them to develop into well-rounded young men of strong moral character as they grow in wisdom and stature,” Smythe said. “Their energy and enthusiasm encourage me greatly, and I’m excited for the challenge.”

Loyal Murphy ’86 succeeds Smythe as interim Lower School principal, as the school begins the process for identifying a permanent replacement.

Headmaster Sanders thanked Smythe for his service. Under his leadership the Lower School experienced many creative initiatives and the establishment of traditions such as the Springfield Scholars, Order of the Owl, BuzzARDS intramural basketball, Drum Corps, ASAP after-school program, and the creation of the official school ties.

“Mr. Smythe’s efforts on behalf of the boys in the Lower School are greatly appreciated, and I look forward to his continued presence as a valued member of the Upper School faculty in the Religion Department,” Sanders said.

Smythe first joined the religion faculty in 2001, serving as department chair until assuming the role of Lower School principal. He holds a B.A. from the University of Tennessee, an M.A. from Covenant Theological Seminary, and an M.Ed. from Columbia University Teachers College. He and his wife, Gracey, have three sons, Stan ’18, James ’20, and Leo, age 8.

Murphy began his new duties July 1. He holds a B.S. in civil engineering from Rice University and has been a member of the faculty since 1990. He has taught mathematics in both the Upper and Lower Schools and served in myriad roles, including assistant Upper School principal in charge of discipline, chair of the graduation committee, and member of the Emergency Management Committee. Prior to this appointment he taught AP Calculus AB, Algebra II, and Accelerated Algebra I and served as a Lower School advisor. From 2008 until this year he held the Anne and Glenn A. Crosby Chair of Christian Ethics, established by Nancy and Glenn Crosby to recognize an outstanding educator who is an exemplar of Christian ethics in the classroom and in daily life. He received the Distinguished Teaching Award in 2000 and the John M. Nail Outstanding Teaching Award in 2002 and 2013. He has participated in a variety of professional development activities, including an independent school scheduling workshop and four International Boys’ School Coalition conferences.

He and his wife, Lisa, are the parents of Patrick ’16.

“With his perspective as an alumnus, parent, teacher, and administrator, Mr. Murphy will bring to the Lower School a deep knowledge of MUS and a dedication to enriching the educational experience of our seventh and eighth grade boys as they prepare for the Upper School,” Sanders said.

TOWNER HEADS ADMISSIONS TEAM

Buck Towner ’07 began his new role as head of the Admissions Office at the end of May upon the retirement of Admissions Director Peggy Williamson. (See story on page 28.) Joining the Admissions team in 2014, he served as assistant director, welcoming families with his down-to-earth warmth and honesty.

“Buck brings a wealth of knowledge about the school that he loves and the community that has always been home,” Headmaster Sanders said. “With his experience of MUS as a student, alumnus, staff member, and coach, he quickly connects with both prospective and current students and their families.”

A graduate of the Haslam College of Business at the University of Tennessee with a degree in economics, Towner spent three years in real estate management before joining the Admissions team. An Owl lacrosse player, he coached the sport at Webb School of Knoxville during college.
Beginning in 2013 he served as defensive coordinator of the MUS varsity lacrosse team and head coach and managing director of the Buzzards Lacrosse youth program. He was named 2018 Tennessee Scholastic Lacrosse Association Assistant Coach of the Year. Towner also has been chaplain for the varsity football team since 2015.

He is married to Katherine Allen Towner, a speech pathologist at Le Bonheur Children’s Hospital. They are expecting a daughter in September.

**BAILEY NAMED ASSISTANT DIRECTOR**

Emily Bailey joined the Admissions Office as assistant director in July. Bailey graduated from Southern Methodist University with a B.A. in advertising in 2000 and has 16 years of experience in human resources and information management at Deloitte. In her human resources work, she was responsible for welcoming, onboarding, and training new employees, which included travel to company offices throughout the Southeast. More recently, she served as a lead business data analyst for Deloitte locations in Atlanta, Dallas, and Memphis.

“She has a passion for working with people and a great energy that will help all MUS visitors feel right at home,” Director of Admissions Buck Towner ’07 said in announcing her appointment. “There is no doubt that the professional and leadership skills she developed throughout her career will allow her to make an immediate and valuable contribution to our admissions efforts.”

A Houston native, Bailey is married to Ted Bailey, Jr. ’96; they have two children, Ellie, 10, and Will, 7.

**COLLEGE COUNSELING EXPANDS**

In July we welcomed Stacy Elliott as associate director of College Counseling. This new position broadens the College Counseling team; Elliott joins Director of College Counseling Zach Hansen, Associate Director of College Counseling Steven Johanson, and Administrative Assistant Kim Justis Eikner.

Elliott came to Memphis with her family from Highland Park, TX, when she was a teen. After graduating from Briarcrest Christian School, she earned a B.A. in applied music and voice from Baylor University in 2002; she then went to Boston College and received an M.A. in higher education administration in 2004. She has 13 years of experience working in college admissions at colleges and secondary schools, including Olin College of Engineering; Rhodes College; Christ Presbyterian Academy in Nashville; Davidson Day School in Davidson, NC; and Trinity School of Durham and Chapel Hill in Durham, NC. With her expertise in guiding families through admissions on both sides of the process, Elliott will be a valuable addition to the team.

She and her husband, John, are the parents of 3-year-old twins, Walter and Darby.

**COUNSELING CENTER WELCOMES BATEY**

Director of Memphis Leaders Eddie Batey, who has served as advisor to the Civic Service Organization for six years, returns to his former position as counselor in the fall. With the departure of counselor Anne Burruss, who relocated to Birmingham over the summer with her family, Batey joins Joe Abrahams ’96 (director) and Amy Poag on the counseling team. He graduated from Rhodes College with degrees in psychology and biology and studied at University of Tennessee Medical School before joining the MUS faculty in 1982. He earned his master’s in counseling from the University of Memphis while teaching science and coaching three sports. In 1984 he was promoted to director of counseling, a position he held for 17 years. He also taught psychology and coached the cross-country team to two state championships in 1991 and 1992. In 1989 he received the John M. Nail Outstanding Teaching Award, and in 2014 he received the Jean Barbee Hale Award for Outstanding Service. Batey and his wife, Honour, have a son, Xander ’09.

**MATH DEPARTMENT ADDITIONS**

Heather Davis joins the faculty as an Upper School math instructor. She began her mathematics teaching career at Briarcrest Christian School in 1990, where she taught courses from eighth-grade mathematics to honors trigonometry. She was there for three years before moving to Connecticut, where she continued teaching math for three years in the West Hartford Public Schools. Upon returning to Memphis she rejoined her former colleagues at Briarcrest, where she taught eighth grade and high school math courses for the past 20 years.

Davis graduated summa cum laude from the University of Memphis in 1989 with a Bachelor of Science in mathematics and a minor in
English. She completed her M.A. in teaching: curriculum and instruction at Memphis the following year.

Heather lives in Collierville with her two rescue dogs (Fred, the basset hound, and Sally, the golden retriever mix), and in her free time she loves to sing and play the piano.

CAROLINE HOLLIS

MUS welcomed Caroline Hollis to the faculty in January as Lower School Math Lab instructor, taking over for Scottie Cain, who moved out of the area. Beginning in the 2018-19 school year, Hollis will be a full-time member of the Math Department, splitting her time between the Lower School Math Lab and two Upper School Algebra II classes. She has been a tutor at 901 Prep in Cordova for the past several years, teaching middle-school through college-level math and ACT preparation. From 2003-2014 she taught at Evangelical Christian School, serving as Math Department chair her last four years. She taught sixth-grade math for two years, then moved to high school, teaching courses from geometry and algebra through AP Calculus AB and dual college enrollment classes. A graduate of Briarcrest Christian School, she earned a B.S. in mathematics with a minor in secondary education and an M.Ed. from Union University. She and her husband, Matt, have a 3-year-old son, Emerson.

MUSIC INSTRUCTION EXPANDS

Chris Carter, who joined the Arts Department last fall as a part-time music instructor, becomes full time this year in an expanded role. He will teach Production and Engineering, Studio Band, Jazz Band, and Music Appreciation. An accomplished professional pianist and organist, Carter has played and recorded with award-winning artists and has garnered awards in his own right as a music producer and engineer. He studied at the University of Memphis and with classical and jazz musicians. The minister of music at Prince of Peace Baptist Church, he is also owner and chief engineer/producer at The Rock Studios in Eads. Chris and his wife, Shameka, have two children, Bella, 6, and Coby, 2.

NEW TECHNOLOGY INSTRUCTOR

Raina Burditt joins us in August as our new instructor in technology. She replaces Terry Balton, who retired after 18 years at MUS. (See story on page 27.)

Burditt graduated from Rhodes College in 2003 with a B.A. in English literature and received her master’s in English literature from the University of Memphis in 2007. She completed a master’s degree in instructional design and technology in 2016. She comes to MUS from St. George’s Independent School, where she was the critical thinking, innovation, and communication teacher and where she also taught seventh-grade English for 10 years. Raina was the school’s Tennessee Association of Independent Schools (TAIS) liaison and led and mentored colleagues in technology integration in the middle and upper schools.

She lives in East Memphis with her husband, Jimmy, and their 4-year-old daughter, Claire.

JONES NAMED CROSBY CHAIR OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Dr. Jonathan M. Jones is the new Anne and Glenn A. Crosby Chair of Christian Ethics. Loyal W. Murphy IV ’86 had previously held the chair, until he accepted the role of interim Lower School principal in May. Jones, who chairs the Department of History and Social Studies, teaches U.S. and European history and AP Art History.

“Dr. Jones is a worthy recipient of this honor,” Headmaster Pete Sanders said. “A superb classroom teacher, he makes his subject matter interesting and compelling for his students. An advisor to the Honor Council, he is looked upon as one who is broad-minded, fair, and wise. Outside MUS he is an active member of Idlewild Presbyterian Church, where he has served as deacon and Sunday school teacher.”

A graduate of The Baylor School in Chattanooga, Jones earned a bachelor’s degree in history at Millsaps College and a doctorate in American history at the University of Memphis. He served as an instructor in U.S. history and world civilizations there during and after completion of his doctoral program. Before coming to MUS, he was a member of the adjunct faculty at the University of Memphis, teaching online classes in U.S. history and in family caregiving. After nine years in the field of senior home health, he returned to the classroom. Last year he completed the Leadership Institute program led by Dr. Barry Gilmore, Hutchison’s Upper School head.

He and his wife, JoAnn, a nursing student, have two boys, Paul ’21 and Andrew, an eighth grader at Grace-St. Luke’s Episcopal School.

Nancy and Glenn Crosby, parents of four MUS alumni, Glenn ’77, Mark ’79, Scott ’82, and Andrew ’89, established the Chair of Christian Ethics in 1987 to honor Crosby’s parents. The Crosby Chair recognizes an outstanding educator, in an academic discipline selected by the headmaster, who is an exemplar of Christian ethics in the classroom and in daily life, promoting the mission of MUS to develop “well-rounded young men of strong moral character, consistent with the school’s Christian tradition.”
AKIN RETURNS TO LEAD WRITING CENTER

Nat Akin, who taught English at MUS from 2003-12, is rejoining the English Department to create and direct the MUS Writing Center.

A freelance book editor, Akin spent five years as creator and director of story booth, a space offering free creative writing workshops and literary programming, for Crosstown Arts. He earned a bachelor’s in English and history at the University of Tennessee and a master’s in English and creative writing at the University of Mississippi. A published writer of literary fiction, Akin is one of 36 National Endowment for the Arts Fellows in Literature for 2018. He lives in Midtown with his wife, Molly, and their children, Hall, 12, and Ruthie, 10.

THE OWL LOWER SCHOOL READER DEBUTS

The Owl Lower School Reader anthology is being used in English classes this year, thanks to the efforts of Dr. Eric Dalle ’93, with help from his friends in the English Department, plus assists from our librarians and the Communications Office. This volume serves as a companion to The Owl Anthology of American Literature, used by sophomores. Dalle also edited this three-volume set, published in 2015.

In his eloquent preface, Dalle described his own compelling encounters with literature when he was a Lower School student here, and he writes: “May The Owl Lower School Reader induct our students into the wonderful world of the pleasures of thought. Let it lead our students on their own pilgrimage.”

SIMI HEADS MAIS-TEC

Director of Technology John Simi was elected this spring to serve as president of the Memphis Association of Independent Schools-Technology Education Consortium for the 2018-19 school year.

IN MEMORIAM

Nell Jean Lenti, 1930-2018

It has been said that the way to a man’s heart is through his stomach. With her outstanding fried chicken, yeast rolls, noodle goo, and other famed dishes of old, Nell Lenti, school dietician from 1969-1986, undoubtedly fed both body and soul at MUS. Lenti passed away May 21, but memories of the legendary lady and her rule of the Dining Hall will live on.

From a glass-enclosed office jokingly referred to as Nell’s Topless Lounge, she was able to keep a sharp eye out for misbehavior in the line. Tapping the rail with your fork was strictly forbidden, and she was quick to reprimand both student and teacher alike.

It was a different time: Service was fast, but there were no options on the menu – her 500-plus daily diners all received the same meal on a pre-prepared tray.

In addition to her expertise in school culinary matters, Lenti happened to be an outstanding amateur golfer, which might have explained her keen belief in sticking to the rules. While her uncompromising management of the lunch line gave her a somewhat fearsome reputation, a feature article in The Owl 1986 reported, “Faculty members who know her concur that despite her strictness, Mrs. Lenti is really a nice lady.”

Steve Schoettle ’73 posted this tribute on the Memorial Park online guest book: “She ran the Dining Hall with an iron fist, but with an aura of sweetness. I truly felt that she cared deeply for each and every one of us, but wasn’t going to let us step out of line! All of her students will always remember her. Rest in peace, Mrs. Lenti, job well done.”

Born April 26, 1930, in Brownsville, TN, Lenti was preceded in death by her husband, Peter Stephen Lenti. She is survived by daughters Sandee Harlow and Kim Hemphill and son, Steve Hemphill; five granddaughters; and five great-grandchildren.
Coach Jerry Peters was the ideal teacher and coach in an independent school for boys – tough but fair in the classroom, demanding on the playing fields, and unyielding in his efforts to make boys “do things right.” He did things right for 52 years at 6191 Park Avenue, and he demonstrated with his own life what he sought to inculcate in his students and players: punctuality, attention to details, responsibility, preparation, unselfishness, focus, perseverance, discipline, organization.

Most of those five decades he was a full-time teacher who defined by example the proper balance that should exist between academics and athletics. Coach Peters supported the entire mission of the school: “college preparation, academic excellence, cultivation of service and leadership, and the development of well-rounded young men of strong moral character.” He is one of a handful of people who came to define “the MUS experience,” the ineffable spirit and ethos that permeates this school – one of a handful in the pantheon of great leaders in the history of this school.

Friedrich Nietzsche, in his Natural History of Morals, wrote, “The essential thing in heaven and earth is that there should be a long obedience in the same direction; there thereby results, and has always resulted in the long run, something which has made life worth living.” A long-time friend said that Jerry told him in his sophomore year of college, “I’m going to be a teacher and basketball coach at a prep school.” He did, and he stayed, turning down offers from colleges. His life was a long obedience in the same direction, resulting in a life worth living.

Jerry Peters was, as Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar says of himself, “as constant as the Northern Star of whose true-fix’d and resting quality there is no fellow in the firmament.” But always a constancy to purpose, the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

He always enjoyed the utmost respect and admiration of his colleagues on the faculty and his fellow coaches in the community and across the state because in all he did, he defined excellence, sportsmanship, and honor. Throughout the years, he built a tradition of excellence in every area of the school for which he had responsibility, but he was always the consummate team player himself. The school was always first. He saw the big picture.

We all know that as he was packing for the 2007 state basketball tournament, he suffered a stroke and, as a result, missed the only three games in his MUS basketball coaching career as the team went on to win the state championship without him. When asked if the players were motivated to win it for him, Coach Peters replied, “They won it for the school.”

When Coach Matt Bakke was asked whether the boys won it for their head coach, he wisely said, “No, they won it because of him.”

I’ll never forget our students chanting at the final buzzer, “Jerry Peters, clap, clap, clap-clap-clap.”

When I talked with Jerry about whether he wanted to return to MUS after his health problem to resume the helm of the varsity basketball team for the next season, I asked him, “Coach, how important is the 1,000-wins mark to you?” His answer was typical: “I think it’s important for the school.”

When Jerry and Ruth lost their home to a fire a few years ago, alumni inquired with questions about how they could help. They contributed money to a special fund, they took meals, and they sent words of encouragement and love.

Last year former players and alumni made it possible to dedicate the basketball court here in Ross Lynn Arena to Jerry and Ruth.

The depth of love for him was manifest in the outpouring of financial commitments to name the court and to endow a fund that will make it possible in the future for sons of faculty to attend MUS.

I believe that no one, past or present, has had a greater impact on the hearts, minds, and character of more alumni than Coach Peters.

I’ve always been impressed by the length of his career at MUS and by the depth of excellence in all he did, but to give you an idea of the breadth of his work at MUS, consider these facts: At various times here, he taught Seventh-Grade Mathematics, Physical Education, U.S. Government and History, World
Area Studies, Russian History, Russian Government, and Advanced Placement Comparative Government, among other courses.

As an assistant principal for 14 years, he produced the master schedule of classes, counseled students, created individual student schedules, and oversaw the disciplinary efforts of the Upper School. He was the best interrogator MUS has ever had.

Over the years in the athletic arena, he coached Lower School football and basketball his first few years, founded and then served as head coach of the track and cross-country teams for nearly two decades, served briefly as athletic director, and of course, coached varsity basketball from 1964 to 2012, his teams achieving a remarkable 1,001 wins. His basketball teams were known for their 1-3-1 zone defense, described in the 1973 yearbook "as coordinated as a machine but as adaptable as an organism."

General Douglas MacArthur once wrote, "On these fields of friendly strife are sown the seeds that on other fields, and other days, will bear the fruits of victory." Many of you in this room understand those words because of lessons learned, victories won, and virtues taught and annealed in the forge of Todd-Snowden Gymnasium or Ross Lynn Arena or the track and hills surrounding Hull-Dobbs Athletic Field under the unrelenting hand of Jerry Peters. He taught the virtues of fundamental skills, hard work, planning, accountability, and sacrifice for the team.

To paraphrase the words of Psalm 66: "For you, Coach, tested us, you refined us like silver, you laid burdens on our backs, we went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance."

He was not just interested in his own teams. He provided opportunities for all Memphis and Shelby County schools to participate and compete in first-class events. He created the Summer Basketball Classic (now called the Jerry Peters Summer Classic) and brought public and private schools, city and county schools, together for three days on four basketball courts (don’t forget the old Lower School Gym). He founded and directed the East Memphis Classic Track Meet, the Memphis Classic Cross-Country Meet, and the Ross Lynn Basketball Tournament. He was the permanent chairman of the Tennessee Prep Schools Basketball Tournament and the East Memphis Basketball Tournament.

During his career he garnered all of the prestigious awards available to teachers at MUS: the Distinguished Teaching Award, the John M. Nail Outstanding Teaching Award, the Jean Barbee Hale Award for Outstanding Service. He was the first to hold the A. Robert Boelte, Jr. Chair of Excellence in Teaching.

Outside the school, he was recognized with the Hubert Smothers Award for Distinguished Teaching from the Tennessee Association of Independent Schools. He was inducted into the TSSAA Hall of Fame, the Rhodes College Hall of Fame, and the Memphis Amateur Sports Hall of Fame.

David Willson ’99, head coach now at Emory & Henry College, said that he took his young son to meet Coach Peters year before last. "As I was standing to leave," David said, "he grabbed my arm and uttered the words, ‘Never forget, you are a builder of men.’" A builder of men – no phrase better captures the life and career of Jerry Peters.

No one encouraged and supported me more over the years I’ve been at MUS than Jerry Peters. No one gave me more opportunities to learn, to serve, and to lead. He has been a mentor, a friend, and an example of integrity to me.

The apostle Peter wrote, “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.” Jerry used his gift all his life to serve others. And we are the beneficiaries of that gift.

Col. [Ross] Lynn, a former headmaster of MUS, put this bit of verse in each graduate’s diploma folder:

You have been given a bag of tools,
A formless rock and a book of rules,
And each must make, ere life has flown,
A stumbling-block or a stepping-stone.
Jerry has graduated. His life was a stepping stone. He lives on in each step we take.
With a 10-5 victory over Chattanooga’s McCallie in the Varsity Division I state-championship game, the Owls continued as the premier lacrosse program in the state, claiming their seventh state title in the last eight years and 14th overall.

This year’s team finished with a 14-4 record, winning nine of 10 home games. Leading the Owls were seniors Cam Clayton, Josiah Crutchfield, Buchanan Dunavant, Bentley Greenfield, Austin Hamilton, Brandon Haney, Jordan Hays, Anderson Horton, Foster Ligon, Daniel Shumake, Bobby Wade, Jake Wilbourn, and Rucker Wilkinson, who ended their careers with three-straight state titles and sustained the excellence of the program on the field.

Tough games against some of the best teams in the South, as well as two contests against Northern teams, prepared the Owls well for the postseason. Soundly defeating Montgomery Bell Academy, 14-8, in the semifinals, the Owls jumped out to a 3-0 lead against McCallie in the finals and never trailed. Shumake scored three goals and added two assists, while Wilkinson added two goals and one assist. Additionally, Ben Cox ’19 scored once and assisted on goals twice, and JoJo Fogarty ’19 had one goal and one assist. Other Owls to score included Crutchfield, Ben DiMento ’20, and Wade. Goalie Wilbourn earned Defensive Most Valuable Player, and Shumake was tabbed Offensive Most Valuable Player.

Several Owls received postseason honors. Dunavant, Shumake, and Wade were US Lacrosse All-Americans. First-Team All-League recipients included DiMento, Dunavant, Shumake, Wade, and Wilbourn. Anders Croone ’19, Crutchfield, Fogarty, Hamilton, and Billy Weiss ’19 took places on the All-League Second Team.

Along with assistants Ron Ansley ’97, Chris Colbeck, and Buck Towner ’07, Coach Elliott Dent was pleased with the progress of this team.

“It’s always our goal to peak at the end of the season, and this team accomplished that goal,” Dent said. “I was pleased with, and thoroughly enjoyed, our performance in the championship game. We definitely played our best lacrosse at the end of the year.”
Latin Owls Win Title XI

Bubones took first place overall for the 11th consecutive year at the 62nd Annual Tennessee Junior Classical League State Convention this April, thanks to a strong showing in individual awards, first-place finishes in Intermediate and Novice Certamen, and a second-place award in Advanced Certamen.

Competing among some 600 participants from 38 schools across the state at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, MUS students took five of the six top individual award placements. Their successful performance included several Best in Show Awards as well as a win in the chariot race. A total of 42 Upper and Lower School students took part in the two-day competition, earning an overall winning score of 1,423 points.

“When you’ve won a competition like this for 10 years in a row, it would be very easy to become complacent,” Latin Instructor Ryan Sellers said. “However, these students maintained their level of focus and motivation, and they were determined to bring home our 11th consecutive victory. We are very proud of their hard work and perennial commitment to excellence.”

In June MUS hosted 32 local and out-of-town teams for West Tennessee’s premier summer high school basketball attraction, the 19th annual Jerry Peters Memphis Summer Classic.

Held in conjunction with the Memphis and Shelby County Officials Association training camp, the three-day event featured 89 games at two sites, MUS and Hutchison. Teams participating included area public schools Bartlett, Booker T. Washington, Craigmont, East, Germantown, Houston, Kingsbury, Kirby, Melrose, Power Center Academy, Southwind, and White Station; area independent schools Briarcrest, Christian Brothers, First Assembly Christian School, Harding Academy, Lausanne, MUS, and St. Benedict; West Tennessee schools Brighton, Covington, Fayette-Ware, and Union City; Nashville-area teams Brentwood Academy, Centennial, Hillsboro, Hume-Fogg, Montgomery Bell Academy, and Murfreesboro Riverdale; and out-of-state teams Center Hill (MS), Northpoint (MS), and Waynesville (MO).

The Owls gained valuable experience, winning six of their seven games. Defeating Booker T. Washington, Brighton, Centennial, Hume-Fogg, Kirby, and Melrose, MUS played well, and the coaching staff was pleased with the effort and improvement.

Directed by MUS Head Coach Matt Bakke, the Classic continues to spotlight great high school basketball the way late head basketball Coach Jerry Peters envisioned when he founded the event 19 years ago.

“This year’s Classic was outstanding,” Bakke said. “The competition was especially good as 64 percent of the game scores (57 of 89) were separated by 10 points or fewer and 40 percent of the game scores (36 of 89) were separated by five points or fewer. Only two teams went undefeated during their scheduled games. The players really played hard, and I loved watching the coaches work with their teams.

“The Owls improved as the summer went along, culminating with the Classic. I look forward to the upcoming season and getting to work with these guys again.”
Your gifts in memory of loved ones or in honor of special friends directly enable young men at MUS to receive the best education available. Memorials to Memphis University School support the Annual Fund program. Families of those whose memories are honored will be notified by an appropriate card with an acknowledgment to the donor. We gratefully acknowledge the following gifts to the school:

**In Memory Of**

**LADY MARGARET CRADDOCK**  
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Mr. Buckner P. Wellford ’74

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Worthington Brown was a star running back (and remains the senior with the longest punt return for a touchdown at 85 yards) on the undefeated MUS football team of 1957. He graduated from Washington & Lee University, served two years in the Army, and returned to Memphis. After stints in the commercial mortgage and luxury tile businesses, he moved to Chicago and ended up at the Board of Trade. There he enjoyed 35 years of success and now celebrates his bachelorhood, splitting his time between Memphis and a home in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico.

Lynne and Henry Turley established the Lynne and Henry Turley Memphis Center at Rhodes College. The Turley Memphis Center will focus on urban education, the arts and social change, neighborhood and community development, and youth empowerment and justice in our community.

Alex Wellford reports: A number of classmates do regular exercise in addition to playing tennis or golf. Franklin Alley has been prompted by a Parkinson’s diagnosis to exercise several times a week. Franklin and Jeannie have seven grandchildren in Nashville and in Houston. Following a hip replacement, Jimmy Allen works with a trainer, delighted to be getting back in shape to play golf. He is still active with Supply Technologies, calling on businesses in various states in the South. Mitch Legler continues practicing business law in Jacksonville, FL, “about three-fourths time.” After years dealing with insurance products for retirement, Robert Oates for the last year has been helping clients recover overpayment of taxes to the IRS. Scott Ledbetter was honored with the Hall of Fame Award by the Memphis Area Association of Realtors Commercial Council at its annual Pinnacle Awards in April. Kay and George Owen spent two weeks in Sicily in May, relaxing and enjoying wonderful views of the Ionian Sea. Pete Pace and his wife, Witt, visit his stepmother, Rosemary, in Memphis periodically and spend several months each year in Naples, FL. One daughter is an interior designer, another a landscape architect, and the third is a sales representative for a drug company. C.D. Smith is newly retired for the third and, most likely, final time. He is splitting time between Charleston, SC, and Linville, NC, playing golf and learning Italian, which he will put to use during trips to Florence, Italy, where Sally is vice chair of an art school board. He enjoys life with four healthy children, their three great spouses, and 10 wonderful grandchildren (nine of whom are girls).

Scott May reports: Now that more and more of us are thinking of retirement, we are traveling more and staying gone longer. Carol and Jim Barton are back at their Montana home for the summer. Snow and Henry Morgan have also departed the heat of Memphis for the cooler climate at their log home near Ennis, MT. Tammy and John Bell are headed to Idaho and Montana. They have a really nice, big camper and travel from river to river for trout fishing and hiking. Barbara and Pitt Hyde are taking a break
from their never-ending charity work to spend some quality time at their Aspen home. Kitty and Bert Palmer are taking numerous trips to the Arkansas Ozarks where they fool the rainbow and brown trout of the Norfork, White, and Little Red Rivers to jump into their custom trout boat.

Louie Spencer reports that he is in and out of his house in Sun Valley, ID. That is, other than during the two three-month periods he spends in France each year: Paris for food, opera, concerts, and, well, just Paris; Saint-Rémy-de-Provence and the southwest of France for biking and eating. This year Louie added Peru for what he says may have been his last high-altitude trek, but he has said that for three years. He managed to get to 16,100 feet on his own two feet. He is looking forward to some “at home” time in Sun Valley this summer.

It is good to keep busy. Your class agent is still going to the office, but not as much as before. I am the country farmer on my 1980 Ford tractor at my place near Rossville, TN, and I spent two weeks in July at our summer place in Monteagle, where I had the pleasure of entertaining my three granddaughters (Wesley, age 9; Brooks, age 11; Ella, age 11). Like last summer, they tried to kill Grandy with daily hiking and biking adventures.

April to get away from juniper pollen here in Santa Fe. It’s a great time to travel in the Mediterranean area, flying in and out of Athens, and taking the overnight ferry to and from Crete. Crete is beautiful in the spring, all green around the mountains. It’s considered the cradle of European civilization. The museums are chock-a-block with stunning art and craft work. Like so many parts of the Mediterranean, Crete was conquered and overrun by practically everyone, and they all left their architecture and cuisine. Did I say that Greek cuisine is to die for? After Crete, we drove around the Peloponnese ... also replete with ancient sites and charming coastal towns, more fabulous food, and, of course, the engaging Greek people. Finally, we went to Attica (Delphi, especially) and Athens; altogether a wonderful journey. And just for grins, we spent 10 days in California, visiting the giant sequoias and Yosemite, then up the coast to Point Reyes and Berkeley. Beverley finished her magnum opus, Early Churches of Mexico (UNM Press), a product of many years visiting all the 16th-century churches in colonial Mexico. Her ongoing focus is landscaping our house. We enjoy having our grandsons (4+ and 8+) only a couple of blocks away.

Jerry Bradfield reports: My wife, Kathy, and I got a chance four years ago to see the beautiful home that Philip’s wife, Beverley, designed for them overlooking Santa Fe. It is spectacular! Pete Shearon, still working full time at the University of Memphis, says his daughter Laura was appointed by Florida Gov. Rick Scott to a county judge position. There are two years left on the term, so she’ll have to run for re-election in 2020, but as an incumbent (good situation to be in). Pete’s other daughter, Elizabeth, graduated cum laude from Rhodes last year where she served as president of her sorority, Tri Delta, and worked in the Development Office. She just finished her first year at Tulane Law School, where she had six articles published in the sports law newsletter. She’s applying to be junior editor next year. Pete is trying to get back on track academically, toward one to two more degrees. This makes my four semesters of Advanced French ‘Senior Citizen Auditing’ classes at UM seem paltry by comparison! Apparently, Dan Copp and Stewart Austin have been taking classes also, but in different subjects. Stewart also swims regularly at the pool there.

Dan sent me this update on our classmates: “Pete continues his life-long dedication to running, which allows him to maintain his high school weight and physique. Jamie Hall continues to assist friends with their engineering challenges. Gary Ford lives the life of a mountain man just west of Chattanooga where he’s been known to commune with bears. Donna and I will be traveled to Santa Fe for a week-long family reunion, with plans to visit with Tom Shearon ’65 and Philip Crump.”

Jim Garner is still at his business, Garner Financial, in Dallas. I’m on the mailing list for his “By the Numbers” monthly newsletter about interesting U.S. financial events.

Nat Ellis emailed Lee McCormick about a historic photo The Commercial Appeal recently published of Second Presbyterian Church Pastor A.W. Dick, who oversaw the founding of Presbyterian Day School. According to Lee, several of our ’62 classmates were originally at the Pentecost-Garrison School, which closed, sending them to PDS: “We started first grade at Pentecost-Garrison in 1950-1951, the last year for that school. Freddie Smith and I were the only ones to go from first grade to graduation at MUS [together].”
Jamie’s wife, Canon, reminded me of our visit last October to Memphis Escape Rooms for Dan’s birthday. It was a fun evening followed by dinner together at the Belmont Grill (see photo above). I encourage everyone to text their cell number to my cell number at (901) 210-7115 for easier communication. I rarely use email anymore but text daily to most of my friends and family.

Chuck Smith says that several classmates have now turned their considerable talents from for-profit ventures to the non-profit world. He is on the board of Ducks Unlimited and serves as secretary. Henry Doggrell has served on the boards of Memphis College of Art as well as the Brooks Museum of Art and most recently was board chair for The Nature Conservancy of Tennessee. Also involved in conservation, Kent Wunderlich is a board member and treasurer for Shelby Farms Park Conservancy. Kent has graciously offered park tours for anyone interested and shares his number: (901) 759-2150.

Johnny Adams is on the boards of the Coastal Conservation League and GrowFood Carolina, both based in Charleston, SC. Frank Jemison is currently involved with Hospitality Hub, a downtown ministry, as well as Agape and the Neighborhood Christian Center.

Johnny Adams quit hard work in May as he retired from being a director of Tractor Supply. He previously retired from the WD-40 Co. and Repco (Australia/New Zealand) boards. He and Scott split their time between Pawleys Island, SC, and Telluride, CO, with many visits to Memphis hanging out with kids and grandkids. Two of their daughters, Palmer and Alexandra, live in Memphis and both married MUS grads – Richard Burt ’99 and Collins Roll ’03. Tucker lives in Knoxville with her daughter and husband. Johnny said, “I still enjoy skiing, fishing, hiking, golfing, and traveling almost anywhere. I would like to duck hunt more often, but Chuck never invites me. Kent does!”

Beverly and Henry Doggrell recently sold their house of 31 years in Central Gardens and moved to the Tennessee Brewery, a major Downtown renovation project guided by Billy Orgel ’81 (see page 47). Henry said, “We live in an apartment at the top in the old part with brick walls, 21-foot ceilings on the main floor, and 360-degree views of Memphis, including a panoramic view of the Mississippi River. We are still adjusting to urban living but are finding it really enjoyable. I’m still vice president and chief legal officer with GTx, a small biotech headquartered in Memphis, located in offices overlooking AutoZone Park and a short distance to the new living quarters. I turn 70 next month and hope to be as retired as Chuck soon.”

‘66

The Class of 1968 celebrates its 50th reunion at Homecoming September 28. We look forward to seeing this group back on campus. The following updates are courtesy of Terry Wilson’s Stay in Touch effort.

David Cunningham reports: I recently had dinner with Carol and Henry Myar in Washington and some time ago had dinner with Russell and Cary Whitehead. I saw them along with Janie and Bruce Hopkins at Bruce’s son’s wedding Memorial Day weekend. I also saw Chuck Smith ’66, my old MUS tennis teammate, and Casey Bowlin ’65. Great fun! It’s hard to believe I left Memphis 44 years ago when Ames Yeates and I moved to Hilton Head Island where we lived in a great condo on the golf course and worked until he went back to architecture school. I had begun to date a woman from Washington who was living in Atlanta. With some prodding, I gave up my promising career as a house painter and relocated to Washington, DC, where I have been ever since.

I have been fortunate to stay reasonably healthy and have tried to keep a sense of humor, which gets harder every year living in Washington. I have two wonderful daughters, Maisie and Lolly. Maisie lives in Los Angeles and works for LA Capital; she and her husband, Andy, are awaiting the birth of their first child. She went to Episcopal High School where she was a classmate of Bond Hopkins ’01, Bruce and Janie’s eldest. Lolly is five years younger and lives nearby in Washington with her husband, Peter, and their infant daughter, Louise.

I was in Memphis at New Year’s for my niece’s wedding and had good visits with Bruce and with Bill Patterson. It was great to see Bill again, whom I traveled to Europe with in the summer of ’73. Cleo Stevenson, the nationally recognized guitarist for The Strangers, was also on that memorable trip. I still play a fair amount of tennis and occasionally some pretty bad golf. I am forever grateful to Col. [Ross] Lynn who used to grab me out of last-period typing class our senior year to hit tennis balls. I am afraid Miss Mary Nell Easum, our typing
teacher, had the last laugh as my typing skills are woefully inadequate.

I still go to Cape Cod and plan to work out of my home office there for most of the summer. Bruce has visited, as have Ames and, many years ago, Lance Minor ‘67. I hope any of our classmates heading to New England will get in touch. After 41 years of managing other people’s money, I am forever grateful to Leigh MacQueen who taught me that history often repeats itself. Mr. MacQueen, Mr. [John Murry] Springfield, Coach [Gene] Thorn, and Archie McLaren all tried to teach us a lot, and I think of them much more often than any college professors. Archie, who passed away a few months ago, coached Fred Groskind, Holmes Pettey ’69, Joel Bailey ’69, Webster McDonald ’69, Paul McClure ’69, me, and others to the state championship. He was a great guy, a remarkable tennis player and coach, and a wonderful drama teacher who taught me a love for theater.

I look forward to seeing many of our classmates at the reunion and introducing my wife of 14 years, Mary Creed Owens Cunningham, to everyone.

Robert Davis reports: I’ve attended every reunion since the 25th, so you know something of what’s been going on with me since the early ’90s. I was still in Birmingham then. But sometime before the 25th reunion in ’93, I had moved to Little Rock with my job. Four years later I was in Nashville and stayed until ’01 when the company came calling again and wanted me to move back to Birmingham. This was a blessing because both of my children were here. My son, Robert IV, whom we call Bebo, is autistic. We got him into a program when he was 12 that has proven to be a blessing with God’s personal signature on it. He’s now 40 and in the adult program. I cherish every moment with him and thank God that He gave him to me. My daughter, Lucy, lives up in north Kentucky near Cincinnati with her hubby and her son, Michael, my grandson. I hit a rough patch in my life after my first divorce in ’83—a downward spiral that I finally started to come out of in about ’88. There was a time when everything I had to my name would, and did, fit into the back of a 1980 Chevy Citation. If it hadn’t been for some good friends who owned the gym I first went to, I would have been homeless. The gym has been a huge part of my life since the early ’80s when those friends allowed me to come work out for free. As long as the good Lord gives me the ability to walk into a gym, there’s always something I can find to do! I’ve had my ups and downs as we all have, but I can honestly say that I’m more content now than I have been at any time in my life. I still work for the same company I’ve been with for 27 years. I’m financially and emotionally secure, and I have everything I could ever want or need. I look forward to the big FIVE-O reunion!

Dan Fisher reports: After Virginia, I went to med school in Memphis. Four years later, I headed to Dallas (Parkland Hospital) to do a residency in general surgery, followed by a vascular surgical fellowship at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. I returned to Dallas and joined the faculty of Southwestern Medical School, then moved to Chattanooga to take a job with University Surgical Associates. At that time, I was the No. 6 man in a small group that was getting bigger every year. Now, we have 37 surgeons and perform almost all the surgery for Chattanooga and the surrounding 100-mile radius.

Cleo Stevenson’s daughter is one of my medical students. I’m asked frequently how long I plan to do surgery. I’m trying hard to get to 70. Once I give it up, I can’t get my skill set back, and it fades rapidly. Before leaving Dallas, I married Julie from Chicago. Daniel III was born just before we left. Two years later, Morgan was born, but she died five days later from streptococcal neonatal sepsis. Katie was born the next year. Daniel lives in San Diego and is an investment banker for Oxford Finance. Katie lives in New York and sells high-end jewelry for Temple St. Clair. Julie and I divorced several years ago but remain good friends. I get back to Memphis infrequently, usually to shoot doves and ducks. Life has been kind to me. You may remember that I was sent off to the Webb School in Bell Buckle for the ninth and 10th grades. I am so thankful I came back to MUS for my last two years of high school. Cary Whitehead and John Remmers ’69 got together the old football team of 1967 for recognition last September. It was fun to see people that I rarely see. I have great memories of MUS.
’69

A biography of the life of late musician Chris Bell, Rich Tupica’s There Was a Light: The Cosmic History of Big Star Founder Chris Bell, is scheduled to be released in August (hozacrecords.com/chris-bell/).

Bill Love reports: I’m still in Jacksonville, FL, and recently celebrated my 38th anniversary with my wife, Karen. I’m still in love with her and with Jesus, having a blast in these retirement years while working out and rock-wall climbing every week. I take classes each semester at the University of North Florida and get to hang out with students and professors at Starbucks. I continue to find meaning and purpose in my life even though I still don’t have it all together. Looking forward to the upcoming 50th reunion!

Wylie McLallen is working on another book that the Sunbury Press, which published his Tigers by the River, will publish. It is about the Chicago Renaissance of letters that happened before World War I and ushered in the Modernist Period in American literature.

’70

Frank Crumbaugh retired after 30 years in parish ministry in the Episcopal Church. He and his wife, the Reverend Gretchen D. Zimmerman, moved to Church Hill, MD.

Wakefield Gordon reports that he is in retirement from the airline but occasionally enters the gig economy (that’s right - look it up), flying for a corporation in a Citation 3. Uber next? “Ha ha,” he says. Wake says his family is going strong: “Kip ’01 has two boys, Preston is now with Kemmons Wilson Insurance, and Kat still makes the best baked goods in the country at Muddy’s. Recently, a group of Buzzards got together at the Dirty Crow and enjoyed some of the best chicken wings in town. Walker Milnor retired and moved to a condo at Central and Highland. Mac Caradine was in town to catch a flight to Utah to do some trout fishing. Warren Ayres is still building and remodeling houses. It was kind of weird to look at those guys and realize we are (mostly) all retired.” The R word is popping up everywhere.

’72

Texas attorney Henry Jones III, pictured here with Academic Dean Flip Eikner ’77, dropped by during a visit home.

’73

The Class of 1973 respectfully remembers classmate Edward Atkinson, a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and friend. Sharon and Wise Jones welcomed a new grandson to the family, Wise Whitfield Thomas, born to daughter Russell and son-in-law Rand Thomas. Not sure the world is ready for another Wise! Sharon and Wise celebrated their 41st wedding anniversary this June by offering each other a new roof, new AC unit, and another year of tuitions to children. They look forward to seeing everyone at our 45th reunion in September.

Baker Donelson shareholder Buck Lewis was included in the Memphis Business Journal’s annual “Best of the Bar” awards recognizing the top legal minds in Memphis and the Mid-South. He and his wife, Malinda, celebrated their 20th wedding anniversary this summer with a trip to Glacier National Park.

Bob Loeb is busy renovating the City of Memphis landscape, and he took a brief respite in Greece this summer with family and friends.

From “Delta” Joe Sanders: I went down to the crossroads searching for Robert Johnson. The odyssey was filled with new tunes and old habits ... beer, blues, and barbecue. Fortunately, our fellow classmate Dr. Jim Varner got on the road to redemption.

Steve Schoettle reports: “All good up here in the hills – in semi-retirement, no longer in active surgical practice, although I still do surgeries here and there for friends and long-time patients. They convinced me to stay on at Ozark Health Medical Center in Clinton as the chief medical officer. Easy work, manageable schedule. Looking forward to being at the reunion in September. Wondering if we should recreate the Boom Box Foursome for the golf outing. Will certainly miss Ed.”

Elmer Stout has a 7-month-old granddaughter, Evelyn Moore Stout, who lives with her parents, William and Ashley Stout, in Kansas City.

’79

Henry Caldwell is a financial advisor with Pinnacle Financial Partners in Roanoke, VA.
In October bestselling author Hampton Sides will publish *On Desperate Ground: The Marines at the Reservoir, the Korean War’s Greatest Battle* (Penguin Random House, 2018) about the extraordinary feats of heroism by Marines during the greatest battle of the Korean War. Memphis alumni can catch him at his book signing at Novel on October 8 at 6 p.m.

Jeff Harris, Philip Cox, and Philip Freeburg were sighted in the paddock during a spring trip to Churchill Downs.

Tennessee Brewery developers Billy Orgel, Jay Lindy ’80, and Adam Slovis planned to break ground this summer on the mixed-use project’s final phase, the Tap Room (121 apartments and 1,600 square feet of commercial space). This puts Orgel and partners almost at the finish line in transforming the historic landmark building. Orgel’s Tower Ventures moved in to new offices in the building this summer. Word has it that Orgel has been sighted zipping all over downtown on the city’s new Bird scooters.

Robert Shy has returned to Memphis from Nashville and lives in Chickasaw Gardens. His daughter Charlotte just started physician’s assistant school at Trevecca Nazarene University in Nashville.

Kelly Truitt, senior vice president at CBRE, was named one of the city’s Top 25 Producing Brokers by the Memphis Area Association of Realtors Commercial Council at its annual Pinnacle Awards in April.

Explore Bike Share launched in May in Memphis, completing an idea that Doug Carpenter and his communications firm DCA helped bring to life – an affordable, equitable bike-sharing system for the community.

Michael Howard was promoted to lieutenant colonel in June. He serves as wing chaplain for the 52nd Fighter Wing at Spangdahlem Air Base in Germany.

Shangri-La Records, founded by Sherman Willmott and now owned by Jared McStay, celebrates 30 years in Memphis. “We’re kind of celebrating all year,” McStay said.

After 23 years with a Monroe, LA, law firm, Hal Moffett made a change in February, becoming a partner in the Breazeale, Sachse & Wilson law firm. “I live in New Orleans and work in both our New Orleans and Monroe offices. When anyone makes it to NOLA, I would love to catch up!”

Joel Morrow sold the digital marketing agency he founded, Digital Fusion.

Trip Robertson is vice president of development for Carolina Youth Development Center in Charleston, SC. The agency works with abused children and is the descendant of the nation’s oldest municipal orphanage.

Jon Neal reports: I started an organization in 2015 called Courage Thru Cancer after a scare with one of my twin sons and a close friend’s Stage 4 triumph over Hodgkin’s Lymphoma (couragethrcancer.com). This year we will host our fourth event at Minglewood Hall, trying to double last year’s haul of $50,000 for St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital. In 2019 we’ll be involved in a new 5K run at the Levitt Shell, a reception recognizing the top six oncologists in the city, and the new Celebrity Pro-Am with the FedEx St. Jude Classic next summer. Email me at jon_neal@msn.com to get involved.

From Chris Joe: I spent a couple of weeks in June in San Diego and Orange County, CA, on a patent infringement lawsuit; the jury deliberated for an hour and a half (including over lunch) and gave us a complete victory. Unfortunately, I didn’t have time to go to Disneyland even though my hotel was...
two blocks away. OC has some damn good Vietnamese food, though. B.J. ’93 got married in Portland last year; he still lives in San Francisco doing the e-commerce thing.

Post Malone, Beck, and more will highlight the second annual Mempho Music Festival on Oct 6-7 at Shelby Farms Park. The event was founded last fall by Diego Winegardner. Tickets on sale now at memphofest.com.

A new seven-days-a-week news outlet called The Daily Memphian will debut this fall, with many of the biggest names in Memphis journalism and a unique nonprofit funding model. The outlet’s goal is to become the city’s definitive news source with reporting by and for Memphis. Andy Cates is the president and chairman of the board of Memphis Fourth Estate Inc., the nonprofit that will fund the new effort. He refers to the money from donors as “philanthropic venture capital” and said the effort has raised $6.5 million thus far. Cates is joined on the board by fellow alumni Robert Davis ’82, president/CEO of Everwell digital media company, and Edward Felsenthal ’84, editor-in-chief of Time magazine.

Many 1989 alumni are continuing the Owl tradition by sending their sons to MUS: Paul Barcroft (Mac, rising 7th grader), Ceylon Blackwell (Jack, rising 8th), Horace Carter (Gus, rising 11th), Andy Cates (Stephen, rising 10th), Jason Fair (Judson, rising 10th), Miles Fortas (Jack, rising 8th), Peter Monaghan (Tom, rising 11th), Sam Nickey (Henry, rising 10th, and Brown, rising 8th), and Kyle Smith (Edward, rising 11th).

In April Darrin Gulla recognized the career of late Faculty Emeritus Terry Shelton before the members of his Freemasons lodge. Minutes from the meeting will enter into the Special Collections Research Center at the University of Kentucky Library.

Thomas Johnson holds nine of 13 possible U.S. records in the 40-49 age category in distances ranging from 1,000 meters to a full marathon on the Concept2 ski-ergometer, or SkiErg, which mimics cross-country skiing. In 2013 he won the World Sprint Championships as the fastest skierger in the world with a time of 3:05.4 for 1,000 meters. “As the sport becomes more common, some really good athletes are starting to put up some really fast times, and unfortunately, I’m just getting older and slower,” Johnson said. “I’m going to try to hang on to my records as long as I can!”

The Edge district in Downtown Memphis is getting a vintage car museum courtesy of Richard Vining. The non-profit museum will open at 645 Marshall Avenue in the former Cherokee Motors building, which previously housed St. Blues Guitar Workshop.

Tech mogul and branding expert Oliver Luckett has turned his attention to sustainably sourced seafood with the launch of Niceland Seafood in June. With what he calls “Sea-to-Pan” traceability, Niceland will allow consumers to follow a time-lined journey of their fish from the exact spot in the North Atlantic Ocean where it was caught all the way to the restaurant or grocery store in the U.S. where it is purchased.

After years of public service as head of the Downtown Memphis Commission, Paul Morris has taken the helm of his family’s business, Jack Morris Auto Glass. If you need a new windshield, Paul says to give him a call. He’s also just celebrated his 10-year wedding anniversary with Mary, who is a law professor at the University of Memphis. Their two children, 8 and 4, attend Grace-St. Luke’s Episcopal School. Paul maintains his civic engagement serving on the boards of Regional One Health and the Community Alliance for the Homeless.

Few melodies are as well-known among Americans born between the late ’60s and early 2000s as the theme song to Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood. So Memphis composer Jonathan Kirkscey was thrilled when Oscar-winning filmmaker
Morgan Neville asked him to write the soundtrack to his documentary on the life and legacy of Fred Rogers, *Won’t You Be My Neighbor?*, now in theaters. (Read more on page 13.)

Drew Martin joined the University of Texas as the new executive senior associate athletics director for external affairs.

Sam Rembert reports: After 7.5 months, 107 shooting days, 10 episodes, at least a month of prep, programming, and rehearsal for one single episode, and 116 hours in the last eight days, it’s a wrap on “The Haunting of Hill House” [new Netflix series]. To say that this was the most amazing experience yet in my career would be an understatement. The amount of collaboration, planning, teamwork, and creativity used to bring this show together was incredible. There were times when my heart was about to pound out of my chest from nervousness, times when I wanted to break down, and times when I couldn’t wipe the smile off my face.

’94

Jay Sansing ’94, Cory Prewitt ’96, and Andrew Phillips were spotted on stage at Railgarten performing in their band, The Showboats.

’96

Cameron Mann reports: I am a board member of the Levitt Shell, still running Young Avenue Sound, and an occasional performer in the *Thunder from Down Under* revue at Fitz Casino & Hotel in Tunica.

’98

Kevin Bohannon graduated from Arkansas State University with a master’s degree in nurse anesthesia, earning the title of CRNA, and will work for East Memphis Anesthesia Service through St. Francis Hospital. He and his wife, Kimberly, welcomed their third child, Anderson Rose, in March.

’99

Austin Bryan is living in Atlanta with his wife, Dorsey, and their two girls, Ellie, 5, and Charlotte, 3. He recently wrapped up a 12-year run in the ad world and is now leading marketing at Mile Auto, an insurtech startup based out of Georgia Tech.

Richard Burt was promoted to vice president of business development and new product development with Closure Systems International, a division of GEC Packaging headquartered in Memphis.

Nic Chimenti and his wife, Hannah, are celebrating their second wedding anniversary running trails along the Gulf of Maine and enjoying their new home base in York Beach.

IN MEMORY

John Krenkel Lawo, Jr. ’59
August 9, 2018

Mark William Weston ’72
June 10, 2018

James Edward Barton ’78
June 20, 2018

Thomas Edward Razzouk ’00
March 28, 2018
Will Levy expands Oak Hall to Nashville with a 12,000 square foot men’s and women’s clothing store – official grand opening September 2018.

Kellar McCloy has taken a new job at a medical tech startup in Seattle called 98point6 and is currently working on getting licensed in all 50 states so that he can see patients throughout the U.S. and eventually internationally as well. 98point6 is not active in Tennessee yet but is coming soon, so keep your eyes peeled for the greatest telemedicine this country has to offer.

Bert Stemmler continues to dominate in New York City. He and his wife, Liz, and their 2-year old daughter, Izzy, welcomed the newest member of the family, June, in February. He was recently promoted to counsel at the law firm Purrington Moody Weil LLP.

Great news for Evan Linder: In June 2019, The Kennedy Center will produce the first large-scale production of his play, Byhalia, MS, which explores a couple in the midst of turmoil and a town with a racially charged past. Tickets will go on sale in November.

Robbie Caldwell’s firstborn son, West William Caldwell, is now 4 and second child, Levi Edward Caldwell, is about to turn 1. He lives in Denver, CO, and works at the Sawaya Law Firm.

Paul McClure received his doctorate in sociology from Baylor University. His dissertation, “Modding My Religion: Exploring the Effects of Digital Technology on Religion and Spirituality,” assesses the relationship between faith and tech, particularly the internet and social media. Pictured here at his graduation in May with his wife, Kate, he has accepted a position as assistant professor of sociology at Lynchburg College starting this fall.

Elliot Embry, vice president at NAI Saig Co., was named one of the city’s Top 25 Producing Brokers by the Memphis Area Association of Realtors Commercial Council at its annual Pinnacle Awards in April.

Memphis with his wife, Kori, who accepted the head pastor position at First Presbyterian Church Downtown. Ben is excited to introduce his wife, an Ohio native, to barbecue, blues, and everything else that is Memphis.

Sarah and David Thompson hosted and Ryan Prewitt ’94 served as one of the chefs at the Grand Artisans’ Dinner in May at the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art.

Elliot Embry, vice president at NAI Saig Co., was named one of the city’s Top 25 Producing Brokers by the Memphis Area Association of Realtors Commercial Council at its annual Pinnacle Awards in April.

Members of the Class of 2011 gathered in May at the University Club for Ben Roberts’ wedding. Pictured from left are Tony Bui, Peter Gill (exchange student our senior year), Roberts, Billy Simco, and Russell Scott.
Stewart Gray graduated from the University of Virginia’s Darden School of Business. Wyatt Harris is in Atlanta getting a Ph.D. in theology at Emory University. Philip May lives in Nashville where he is a loan partner with First Community Mortgage. Jeffrey Webb graduated from the University of California-Berkeley’s Haas School of Business.

Sam Harris is in Nashville trying to break in to the music engineering business. Louis Jackson finished his Doctor of Pharmacy degree at the University of Tennessee College of Pharmacy in May and is now in Whippany, NJ, doing a postdoctoral fellowship with Bayer Pharmaceuticals and Rutgers University.

Ryan Saharovich graduated from Emory University School of Law and is now an associate with Burch, Porter & Johnson. Rocky Stone is an associate with Ziegler Healthcare Investment Banking, living in Nashville.

Colin Thomas recently accomplished his goal to run an ultramarathon trail race. After traversing 112,000 steps over the very hilly trail in 18:56, he conquered the 56-mile course and looks forward to doing another one or maybe serving as a station/course volunteer.

Michael Wilder received a degree in gunsmithing from the Colorado School of Trades in Denver in November. He has opened Wilder Gunsmithing in Midtown.

Owl football standout Alex Dale, a former safety for MTSU, has joined the Austin Peay football program as a graduate assistant.

Ben Still has joined The Barnett Group, an employee benefits and financial services firm, as a financial adviser.

Max Weiss was admitted to the Ph.D. program at the University of Chicago in molecular biology.

Harrison Williams scored 7,925 points to become Stanford’s first conference decathlon champion since 1994 during the 2018 Pac-12 Track & Field Championships. bit.ly/HarrisonChamp
Witt Hawkins and Tal Keel, classmates since junior kindergarten, graduated from Washington and Lee University in May.

Samuel Ostrow was recognized for research this spring by The University of Alabama's Randall Outstanding Undergraduate Research Award Program. The title of his project is “Open Seats in U.S. House Elections, 1996-2016.”

Walker Sims was interviewed by the Navy Sports Magazine Show about tennis at the U.S. Naval Academy. At about 7:30 minutes in, he discusses his foundation at MUS and mentions fellow MUS alumni Nourse Fox ’13 and Daniel Camuti ’13. bit.ly/SimsInterview

Ole Miss kicker Gary Wunderlich earned membership into the National Football Foundation’s Hampshire Honor Society in April.

Lewis Hergenrader was a supply chain intern at AutoZone over the summer. He is pursuing a degree in logistics, materials, and supply chain management at Auburn University’s Raymond J. Harbert College of Business.

Texas A&M senior Carlton Orange was one of 10 students selected to participate in the college’s Corporate Finance Program, attending a weeklong bootcamp with finance leaders from companies including Dell, General Motors, and HEB. He is interning this summer at Shelter Growth Capital Partners in Stamford, CT.

At Belmont University’s College of Sciences and Mathematics 2018 Awards Day this spring, Eason Taylor received the Dr. Norma Baker Gabhart Award for academic excellence in psychology. He is also the recipient of a spring undergraduate research grant of $1,500 to conduct research this summer.

Preston White was selected in the 24th round of the Major League Baseball draft by the San Francisco Giants. White topped out at 97 mph this year as a junior pitcher at The Master’s University.
University of Richmond rising junior Nathan Dinh and three collaborators published a paper in June on gold nanoparticle degradation and reformation in ceramic glazes.

Alex Mansour is a rising junior in the A.B. Freeman School of Business at Tulane University majoring in finance and management. He is a wealth management intern at First Tennessee Bank this summer.

Saatvik Mohan, a student at Vanderbilt University, traveled to Oldenburg, Germany, this summer to conduct research in smart energy and power grids through a National Science Foundation grant.

Trammel Robinson was featured on ESPN this spring for an incredible goal, taking a pass from his Lynchburg College teammate through both his legs and the goalies’ legs for the score. bit.ly/TrammelScores

Christian Berry, below, was awarded the Princeton Start-Up Immersion Program 10-week summer internship for students interested in gaining first-hand knowledge of the world of emerging businesses. The program selects and places students in high-impact, paid internships at early-stage startups in New York City.

Matthew Horton and Osman Blackett, below, visited campus while on summer break. Horton attends Morehouse College in Atlanta, and Blackett attends Southwestern University in Georgetown, TX.

Marcus Gronauer interned in DC this summer on “The Tony Kornheiser Show,” a daily talk show on sports, politics, entertainment, and more. Visit tonykornheisershow.com/ and search for the “Sandsie Loves Sports” podcast to hear Marcus mentioned several times, the first time at about 1 minute in.

Alex Robinson continues to succeed in swimming, including international open water competition. He recently placed first overall in the El Cruce 10K Global Swim Series Championship in Cancun, Mexico.

In its "Shouts from the Stands" series, SwimSwam.com posted a piece written by Benton Ferebee for his sportswriting class at MUS about his swim coach, Gil Stovall, whom he credits as being one of his main reasons for deciding to swim in college (he will attend Brandeis University). There are also references to MUS Coach Bryan Parker and Pace Clark ’13: swimswam.com/shouts-from-the-stands-i-wanna-go-fast/

John Albritton ’85 to Fontaine Brown on March 24, 2018
Brian Kelsey ’96 to Amanda Bunning on January 13, 2018
Alexander Folk ’07 to Sophia Runer on June 2, 2018
Philip May ’07 to Lauren Phipps on May 19, 2018
Collin Fountain ’08 to Bailey Bethell on June 16, 2018
Vance Montgomery ’08 to Christie Long on May 19, 2018
Grant Hopkins ’09 to Carter Craddock on May 26, 2018
Stephond Allmond ’10 to Alexandria Matthews on February 14, 2018
Bryan Crenshaw ’10 to Grace Pittard on April 14, 2018
Emmett Montgomery ’10 to Abby Harrison on September 3, 2017
Jake Rudolph ’10 to Michon Moline on May 12, 2018
John Dicken ’11 to Rebecca Maury on May 12, 2018
Rob Dickinson ’11 to AB Stone on June 9, 2018
Ben Roberts ’11 to Shelby Janeski on May 12, 2018
Send news to your class representative listed below or to Ann Laughlin at ann.laughlin@musowls.org.

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59 To be named.............................................
60 Metcalf Crump ...................................metcrump@crumpfirm.com
61 Alex Wellford ...........................................awelford@farris-law.com
62 Scott May ..................sfmay@bellsouth.net
63 Jerry Bradfield ..................jbradfi293@aol.com
64 Doug Ferris ..................dferriss@fffuelcells.com
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15 Mathon Parker .............................................mathonparker99@gmail.com
15 Daniel Shumake ...........................................f Brief @21@gmail.com
September 28–29

Homecoming and Reunion Activities

Friday, September 28

8 a.m.  Alumni Golf Scramble, Germantown Country Club
        Email ann.laughlin@musowls.org to reserve your foursome.

9:30 a.m. Homecoming Pep Rally in Hyde Chapel
          School tours to follow if there is interest.

4-5:30 p.m. Golden Owls Reception at the
            Headmaster’s House, 2015 Massey Road
            For any alumnus who is celebrating or has celebrated his 50th MUS reunion

5-7 p.m.   Homecoming Dinner in the MUS Dining Hall
            Reunion classes (years ending in 3 or 8) and their families will be guests of the school.

7 p.m.    MUS vs. St. Benedict at Auburndale
           on Hull-Dobbs Athletic Field

Saturday, September 29

50th Reunion Luncheon at MUS for the Class of 1968
Class Parties (years ending in 3 or 8)

Additional reunion information can be found at musowls.org under Alumni.
Leaders Building Leaders

The Leaders Building Leaders reception for Emerging Leaders in the Thorn Society offered young alumni networking opportunities with influential community leaders who are also alumni or friends of the community. Held every two years, this year’s event took place at The Bluff on the Highland Strip in Memphis.
Nashville Alumni Party

Nashville-area alumni enjoyed catching up at a reception in May at the home of Margie and Jackson Moore ’93.

Junior Mock Interviews

Every February, with the help of a willing band of alumni volunteers, the College Counseling Office organizes mock interviews to give juniors practice interviewing for college.
School’s Out for Summer ... Reading
by Norman Thompson

The final bell of the school year has rung: “Ring, ring, goes the bell.” Before each student stretches the summer “like a land of dreams, So various, so beautiful, so new,” as the poet Arnold observed. Each is thinking (to continue Chuck Berry’s iconic rock ‘n’ roll high school anthem “School Days”) “You finally lay your burden down Close up your books, get out of your seat Down the halls and into the street,” where many will remain oblivious to conscious cerebration until early August, when the bane of their existence, the specter of summer reading tests, will rise like the Ghost of Summer Past.

My unscientific polling of students over many years suggests the various methods by which some hope to cope with the inevitability of these tests administered during the first week of class in the fall semester and the looming prospect of having as many as six (!) points shaved from their first-quarter English average should they fail all three of these tests. These students (who already consider the teacher’s grading system a sufficient depilatory) seek stratagems by which they may achieve the following goals: (1) put off assigned reading for as long as possible and (2) allow them to lose as few points as possible.

The possibility of gaining three points on the quarter for passing all the tests does not figure into the schemes of these system-manipulating slackers. How to achieve these goals has varied over the years.

The self-esteem movement of recent decades, the idea that everyone is special so everyone must have a special learning style, has led some students to conceive of themselves as auditory learners rather than visual learners (i.e., readers), so they have bought audio recordings of books. But finding time to listen attentively to the darn things has proved an insurmountable obstacle, and even when listened to, these aural substitutions for actually immersing...
oneself in a text seldom have produced the desired results, for as one study among many points out, "people have different abilities, not styles." ["The Myth of ‘Learning Styles’" *The Atlantic*, April 11, 2018]

Occasionally students seek to avoid summer reading by viewing a movie with the same title as the assigned novel, but they discover to their chagrin that the film version is almost always materially different from the text version. The student who substitutes the 1998 film version of Great Expectations (not a summer reading selection, but the principle is the same) for the Dickens novel will score very poorly on any test or quiz. The film even changes most of the characters’ names. Several questions on the summer reading Frankenstein quiz would irrefutably expose the viewer of Boris Karloff, pursued by pitchfork-and-torch-laden villagers, from the reader of Mary Shelley’s more cerebral novel (which, by the way, is now available on Audiobooks).

To the uncaged teenager planning to estivate in unfettered bliss, whose idea of a happy day is one spent several city blocks from an unabridged novel, the graphic novel version of the assigned text sometimes seems like a viable option. But graphic novels, though very popular now, are nothing new. Once long ago my Shakespeare elective was deep into the study of Macbeth, its language, themes, and imagery. The discussion had just reached the point where the blood-splattered ghost of Banquo entered with “twenty trench’d gashes on his head,” when I looked up to espay a student unabashedly propping a graphic (in every sense of the word) copy of the play on his desk, the cover and almost every page dripping with gore. It was what used to be called a “bodice-ripper.” When confronted, the young Shakespearian protested that his copy presented “Shakespeare’s words in a more exciting way.” I pointed out that while a few, a very few, of Shakespeare’s words indeed adorned scenes of unspeakable violence and subtle but unmistakable sex, his text included almost none of the patterns of imagery, figurative language, stirring rhetoric, and timeless themes that are the foci of the study of Shakespeare. The young man chose not to dispute my blustering reservations about his choice of editions, but he did point out that he had read the whole play during his free period.

Countless incidents remind me not only of the difficulty that some students experience in reading but also of their consequent reluctance to strive to overcome what must seem like towering barriers, Himalayan in height. I am reminded of a student coming to my office once upon a time seeking help in his initial encounter with the works of Shakespeare. Had he been Sherlock Holmes, he would have considered Julius Caesar a three-pipe problem. At the time we were using the Folger edition in which the text of the play was printed on the right-hand page (in the trade we call this the “recto”) and the textual notes on the left-hand page (the “verso”). He obviously had not resorted to Cliffs Notes or any other aid, as he told me that he would read a page and think that he understood the dialogue, even enjoying it. Then he would turn the page and be completely at sea, as the words seemed to him randomly selected, unconnected to the flow of the narrative. Scrutinizing his face closely, I could see that he was not pulling my leg but was genuinely perplexed. When showed that the left-hand page contained notes explaining the right-hand page containing the actual text of the play, his furrowed brow smoothed, he smiled an exultant smile, and all was right with the world. Still, he and students like him understandably do not look forward to summer reading.

But, alas, the education establishment is complicit in what they deem making difficult material more accessible to the young scholar but what other more skeptical observers see as “dumbing down.” Not long ago (MUS Today, Summer 2017) I referred to four Shakespeare plays preposterously rendered in text-messaging lingo, the gift of alumnus Witt Fesmire ’16. The implied purpose of these slender volumes (YOLO Juliet, Macbeth#killingit, srslyHamlet, and Midsummer Night #nofilter) is to inform and entertain a youthful audience unused to meditating on the printed word, this despite the inscription on the verso of the title page of Macbeth#killingit: “For all the slackers being quizzed on this play tomorrow, good luck.” The inscription is followed by the icon of a four-leaf clover. I am not alone in harboring the opinion that such efforts are merely ludicrous and ineffectual attempts to reach tech-savvy modern youth. A more recent alumnus, Jackson Howell ’18, sent me an article published in the Daily Telegraph (UK) that reports an increasing number of teachers are using icons, cartoon faces, and emojis in a quixotic attempt to help electronic media-enthralled students connect with English literature. One instructor at Avonbourne College in Bournemouth said that “everyone in her department uses emojis, and they have helped her students to engage with Shakespeare.” She did not offer an opinion as to whether Shakespeare would have been flattered or appalled if told of this instructional methodology. Another English language “teacher trainer” describes emojis as “the modern equivalent of hieroglyphics,” as if this were a good thing rather than a regression to primitivism.

Wiser voices, though, have sounded the alarm. One head of a prestigious school in London has written, “As educators, we have not a single minute to waste teaching trivia, such as emojis.” Another educator has warned that moving in the direction of cartoon and picture language “inevitably will affect literacy,” for students “will always follow the path of least resistance.” The New York Times summed up the emoji phenomenon epitomized in The Emoji Movie as “panderingly, trendily, idiotic.”

So, as another summer reading season is upon us, we beat on, boats against the current, in the hope that a few, a happy few, young readers will enjoy the books they have chosen, will actually read them and not some vapid substitution for them, and will benefit from the wisdom that they may contain; that a few will employ some of the critical principles that they have been taught in class, allowing them to evaluate the books in which they have invested a bit of their youth; that a few will allow themselves to be wafted imaginatively lands away, to realize that there really is no frigate like a book. My hope for them is, at the very least, that a three-point bonus awaits them at the end of their summer voyage. 😊

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The lacrosse sideline and the team’s assistant coach Ron Ansley ’97 watch intently as the Owls battle the boys from Mary Institute and Saint Louis Country Day School (MICDS) on a bitterly cold Saturday in early April. From left are Sellers Shy ’19, Alden Southerland ’19, Bobby Wade ’18, Austin Hamilton ’18, Ansley, Anderson Horton ’18, and Josiah Crutchfield ’18. Under the guidance of Ansley, fellow assistant coaches Buck Towner ’07 and Chris Colbeck, and Head Coach Elliott Dent, the team won this game – one of their best performances all season, according to Towner. They went on to dominate the Tennessee Scholastic Lacrosse Association state championship game as well, claiming an incredible 14th state title, their seventh in the last eight years. See story on page 36.

Photo by Alan Howell
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Happy Quasquicentennial! Founded in 1893, MUS marks its 125th anniversary this year, and the campus has been decorated to celebrate.