

CLA

Fall 2018 ■ vol. 7, no. 1

College of Liberal Arts

EXPLORE/ENGAGE/ENRICH/EARN



LOCAL TO GLOBAL

Six Liberal Arts researchers
are changing the conversation

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College of Liberal Arts

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Fall 2018 ■ vol. 7, no. 1

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Kara Hooper

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Darrell Callis Burks

University Photographers ■

Andy Heidt, J. Intintoli, Eric Sutton

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Drew Ruble, Carol Stuart

Contributing Writers ■

Priya Ananth, Mark Byrnes, Rachel Donegan,
Gina Logue, Dawn McCormack, Karen Petersen,
H. Stephen Smith

University President ■

Sidney A. McPhee

University Provost ■

Mark Byrnes

Vice President for Marketing and Communications ■

Andrew Oppmann

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Address changes should be sent to Advancement Services,
1301 East Main Street, MTSU Box 109, Murfreesboro, TN 37132;
alumni@mtsu.edu. Other correspondence should be sent to
Connie Huddleston, MTSU Box 97, 1301 E. Main St., Murfreesboro, TN
37132; Connie.Huddleston@mtsu.edu.

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Dean's Letter



Connecting the classroom and the community

mtsu.edu/liberalarts

The life of an academic begins in a classroom. A teacher or faculty member passionate about a subject draws us in and nurtures in us a desire to continue studying long after that class has ended. In turn, we embark on a journey of first seeking and then creating knowledge. In the pages that follow, you will find a sampling of faculty research from the humanities and social sciences. Faculty research informs teaching and helps students understand that our disciplines are living; that the past, rather than being a static point, impacts the present and tells us a lot about our future. Faculty research also improves lives, bringing to light the strengths and weaknesses of our political system, preserving the legacy of those who came before us, and helping our contemporaries shape society. And faculty research inspires students to see education as a process that never ends. We do not stop learning when we receive our degree; we continue to refine our understanding of the subject we love through research.

Your support of the College of Liberal Arts facilitates the research and creative activities you will read about in this issue. For example, the Dean's Excellence Fund provides assistance to faculty engaged in research and teaching innovation (see pages 8–19 and 24–25). The CLA Education Abroad Fund supports students as they expand their learning beyond the traditional classroom setting (see pages 20–22), and your support for your home department facilitates a variety of activities, including the Celebration of Writing (see page 23). You can read more about our giving options and priorities at mtsu.edu/liberalarts/giving.php.

I hope you enjoy reading about some of the great work happening in your college and that you are inspired to continue learning. As always, I welcome your feedback and suggestions about the CLA Magazine and your involvement as an alum. You can contact us at cla@mtsu.edu with comments or to arrange a visit. ■

Karen Petersen, Dean
Karen.Petersen@mtsu.edu

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EXPLORE/ENGAGE/ENRICH/EARN

New Hires

Welcome to our new director and
chair in the College of Liberal Arts
this fall



Erica Cirilla-McCarthy
Director, Writing Center

Erica Cirilla-McCarthy most recently taught writing and rhetoric courses for the Program in Writing and Rhetoric at Stanford

University, where she also

served as assistant director of the Hume Center for Writing and Speaking. Her administrative and teaching philosophies, shaped by her experience as a first-generation student, are grounded in a practice of inclusion, and she invites all writers to make the MTSU University Writing Center part of their campus life. Her scholarship has been published in *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal*; the *Journal of Global Literacies, Technologies, and Emerging Pedagogies*; and other edited collections. Cirilla-McCarthy earned her Ph.D. in Rhetoric, Composition, and the teaching of English from the University of Arizona. She also serves as a faculty member in the Department of English.




Stephen Severn
Chair, Department
of English

Steve Severn comes to MTSU from West Texas A&M University in Canyon, Texas, where he served as director of the Office of

Writing Programs before serving for the past five years as department head of English, Philosophy and Modern Languages. He earned his Ph.D. in English, with a specialization in Victorian and Modern fiction, from the University of Maryland. A self-described “academic oddball,” Severn actually began his professional life as an engineer. He attended the University of Pennsylvania on a Navy ROTC scholarship and served for five years as a U.S. Navy officer after earning a Bachelor of Science and Engineering in Systems Science and Engineering. Severn also enjoys playing guitar badly; collecting CDs; working out; making practical use of over 10 years of bartending experience; and—above all else—spending time with wife Susan, son Will, and their black lab, Clyde. ■

INVEST TO



According to Steve Jobs, “The reason that Apple is able to create products like the iPad is because we’ve always tried to be at the intersection of technology and the liberal arts.”

As the national dialogue on higher education has shifted toward the need to prepare students for the workforce, traditional liberal arts disciplines have often been cited as luxuries we can no longer afford. In reality, however, employers say they are looking for employees who can think creatively, communicate effectively, work well with other people, and adapt readily—just the skills fostered by a liberal arts education. Studies show that not only do liberal arts graduates find jobs, their lifetime earnings compare favorably with most other majors.

The economy of tomorrow will be characterized by rapid change, which will leave behind those workers not equipped to respond. Increasingly, jobs that used to require skilled humans will be automated, leading to economic dislocation in industries previously immune to such events, such as the service economy and white-collar industries. So-called “robot-proof jobs” are those that require soft skills and critical thinking. They are the jobs that require training in the liberal arts. Many of the “safe” professions, from aviation to lab technician, are based on specific skills that can be replicated by machines. Continuing to focus on such skills-based training rather than training people to be nimble intellectually is not a good investment in the long term for the state of Tennessee. In fact, it is the modern equivalent of training for the manufacturing job and is ripe for economic dislocation.

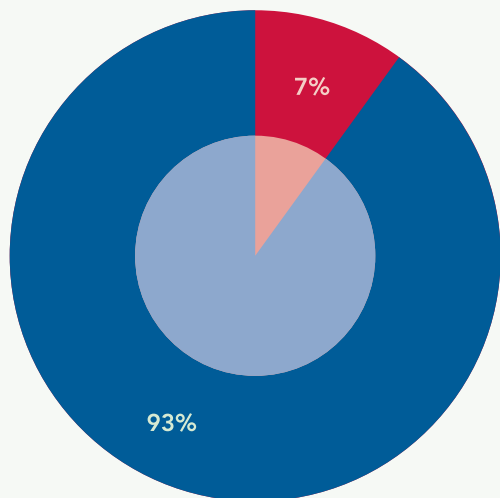
In addition to prioritizing a broad, liberal arts education, the state of Tennessee must invest in higher education to ensure that all qualified and motivated students have the opportunity to thrive in higher education. Liberal arts graduates are the most likely to have experienced higher education in a way that leads to high levels of engagement at work. We need entrepreneurs in the state to take full advantage of the economy of the future and make Tennessee a leader in economic activity.

Tennessee can lead the nation in educational innovation by pairing an investment in the liberal arts with the Drive to 55 and other initiatives so that Tennesseans can pursue the type of educational experience most likely to pay future dividends for the state and its citizens. ■

ADAPT

By Mark Byrnes, Dawn McCormack, Karen Petersen, and H. Stephen Smith
Excerpts from *The Liberal Arts: Providing a Flexible Workforce for Tennessee, 2018*

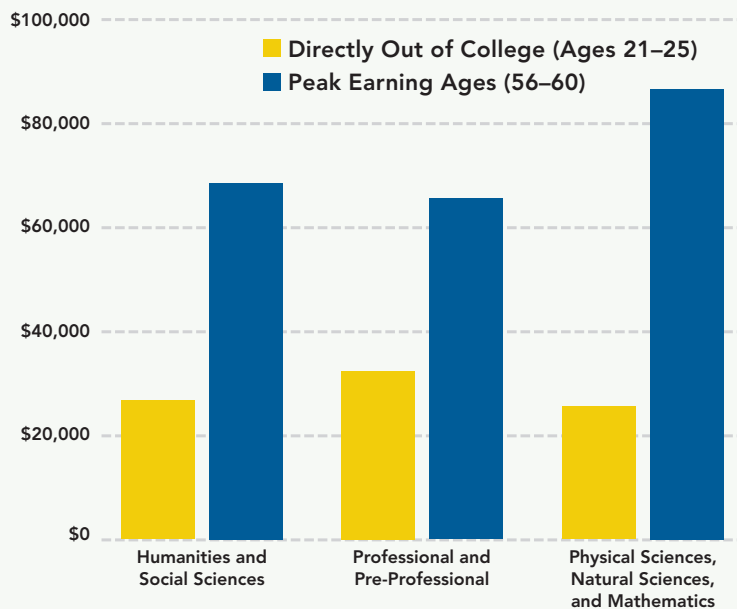
**Liberal arts
lead the
way into
Tennessee's
future**



"93% of employers agree that candidates' demonstrated capacity to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems is more important than their undergraduate major."

—Association of American Colleges and Universities

Liberal Arts and Sciences Majors Close Earnings Gaps with Professional Majors



Source: Association of American Colleges and Universities

"Studying philosophy taught me two things . . . I learned how to write really clearly. I learned how to follow an argument all the way down, which is invaluable in running meetings."

—Stewart Butterfield, co-founder and CEO of Slack, who has bachelor's and master's in Philosophy

Proportions of employers rating each skill/knowledge area as very important for recent college graduates to have*



*8, 9, 10 ratings on zero-to-10, 10=very important

Source: Center on Education and the Workforce



MAKING CONNECTIONS

By Gina Logue

Liberal Arts researchers link the past, people, and places to the present, society, and world

The College of Liberal Arts encompasses tremendously varied disciplines, types of research, and ways of understanding and making a mark on the world. The connection between these six researchers is found in their far-reaching impact.

The word “connections” prompts us to envision a résumé full of references, all sorts of influence-peddling, or even something as mundane as plugging a cell phone charger into the wall.

Connections between research and society are sometimes more difficult to see until a government agency, a nonprofit think tank, or an institution of higher learning releases new information that affects our lives.

Indeed, research in the humanities not only makes connections between college and community. It connects past and present, home and abroad, individual and group. In some cases, it can even bring us closer to our own identities.

Just as a sense of place is crucial to Southern literature, historical research is crucial to explaining who we are. Carroll Van West, an MTSU History professor, can testify to that—not only from his research, but also from his connections with the people who live in hamlets from one end of the state to the other.

“What drives me and a lot of my research is the interest in local history when I go to these places,” West said.

The director of the Center for Historic Preservation knows that community landmarks such as schools, churches, and cemeteries bring people together with a sense of pride and purpose. They remember where they experienced their first kiss, their first movie, their final goodbye to a friend.

Whether they realize it or not, it’s all evidence of where history hits home. It’s not always about wars, legislation, or lengthy speeches on the Senate floor.

“Historical research is crucial to explaining who we are.”

—Carroll Van West

A portrait of Carroll Van West, a man with a mustache and glasses, wearing a grey fedora, a blue shirt, a red and blue striped tie, and a blue plaid blazer. He is smiling and leaning on a stone wall. In the background, there is a grassy area and a concrete structure.

Carroll Van West

History Professor Carroll Van West's contributions to the historical record were legion long before he became Tennessee state historian in 2013. His study of how capitalism transformed rural Montana in the 19th century is an authoritative source on the subject. His history of Tennessee family farms, which started in 1987, eventually became a book, a traveling exhibit, and a program of MTSU's Center for Historic Preservation. This Tennessee Century Farms program continues to document farms that have remained in the same family for 100 years or more.

A major contributor to the *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, West broadened the scope of Tennessee history with his work to make diversity, race, change, place, faith, and continuity bigger themes in the discipline. From that development, West has extended his outreach to interpretations of the South in general through partnerships with the Alabama Historical Commission and other groups that resulted in two National Register Multiple Property nominations.

An ongoing partnership spearheaded by West is a detailed field study of the Trail of Tears in collaboration with the National Park Service and Cherokee Nation. Yet another ongoing field investigation chronicles existing historic properties along the trail. Amy Kostine, a former graduate student who began work on this project at MTSU, is now project coordinator for the Trail of Tears and the Santa Fe Trail in Missouri.

West earned his bachelor's degree from MTSU, master's from the University of Tennessee, and doctorate from the College of William and Mary.

Roots of problems today

Of course, what U.S. senators do is important, too, and is part of what connects us to our common heritage. Kent Syler, former aide to U.S. Rep. Bart Gordon, found that out in researching letters written to the office of the late U.S. Sen. Albert Gore.

Syler, professor of practice in the Department of Political Science and International Relations and the Gore Center, pored over the Carthage native's legacy in the MTSU center that bears his name. Syler discovered rancor over race relations that mirror those of the present day. The 1968 assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis sparked a flood of constituent mail to both Gore and U.S. Rep. Richard Fulton.

"The most letters and petitions came from people who were upset with President Lyndon Johnson for declaring a national day of mourning and that flags be flown at half-staff for Rev. King," Syler said. "They felt that he didn't deserve that, that he created havoc in the cities with his demonstrations. He (King) was being blamed, really, for all the violence in the cities and the civil disobedience."

When Syler's students read these letters, the millennials who have witnessed the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement were thunderstruck.

"These aren't issues that we're dealing with for the first time," Syler said. "It gives us good historic foundation on a lot of different problems the country faces, a lot of different conflicts."

Disenfranchisement from democracy

Racism is a political issue that has clouded U.S. elections in many ways over the years. Pippa Holloway, a History professor and incoming president of MTSU's Faculty Senate, is intrigued by what the disenfranchisement of current and former prisoners says about our democracy.

Holloway said she became interested in the subject in 2006 while she was registering public housing residents to become voters. A line on the registration form asking if the individual had ever been convicted of a felony became a sticking point.

Her research led her to find that Tennessee has one of the most complicated schemes for regaining one's right to vote in the nation. Today, most former offenders can avoid a court petition, but they must have paid all their court fines and fees and be current on child support payments. Given employers' reluctance to hire convicted felons, this creates a substantial Catch-22.

"The financial burden on ex-offenders in Tennessee is significant and quite unique," Holloway said. "There's only a handful of other states that do this."

Evidence uncovered and analyzed by Holloway shows that, historically, complex laws preventing citizens with prison records from voting were thinly disguised attempts to keep African-Americans out of the polling places.

"My research on the 1870s and 1880s really proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that these laws did racist work," Holloway said. "They were expanded in the 1870s and 1880s in order to prevent African-Americans from voting . . . and these laws are still doing that work today in many ways."

"Millennials who have witnessed the . . . Black Lives Matter movement were thunderstruck."

—Kent Syler

Kent Syler

A history of hands-on experience in the political arena makes Kent Syler, MTSU Political Science professor of practice, valuable in the classroom and the media. He drove a campaign sound truck in 1978 and worked in numerous campaigns.

The former student government president earned both bachelor's and master's degrees from MTSU. He managed U.S. Rep. Bart Gordon's initial campaign for Congress in 1984 and the 1994 and 1996 reelection campaigns. From 1985 until Gordon's retirement in 2011, Syler served as the congressman's Tennessee chief of staff.

With Gordon, Syler designed and taught a course at the Paris Institute of Political Studies to enlighten European students about the basics of American government and politics.

From 1990 to 1991, as the Cold War came to an end and the Soviet Union began to dissolve, Syler assisted the Task Force for Parliamentary Assistance for Eastern Europe in developing parliamentary institutions in emerging democracies. He trained candidates for the Civic Forum pro-democracy group in Czechoslovakia and also helped the Romanian government reform its adoption system.

When reporters need analysis on local, state, or national races, they turn to Syler. He is committed to Nashville's WSMV for television coverage, but has been interviewed by the *Nashville Ledger*, Associated Press, *The Tennessean*, and others. *The New York Times* published a story about his students' examination of constituent letters to U.S. Sen. Albert Gore.

Between his punditry and his pedagogy, Syler finds time to serve as chair of the Murfreesboro Greenways Committee and is a past president of the Murfreesboro Rotary Club.



Comparing countries' corruption

Since free and fair elections are international issues, MTSU's Stephen Morris finds a surprising connection between the United States and our neighbor across the Rio Grande.

"Public opinion about corruption in Mexico is almost on par with public opinion about corruption in the United States, suggesting that there are certain similarities that are worthy of comparison," said Morris, a Political Science and International Relations professor.

For more than 30 years, Morris has studied political corruption in Mexico. He finds that the public in both Mexico and the U.S. deem political parties to be their countries' most corrupt institutions. The perceptions differ only slightly down the list. Congress is considered to be the second-most corrupt institution in the U.S. while, in Mexico, the legislature ranks third behind the police.

Along with more than 100 academics and civic leaders, including James Chaney of the MTSU Department of Global Studies and Human Geography, Morris signed a letter calling on the U.S. Congress to stay out of the Mexican elections this summer. It's a move that resonated with American political observers.

"If we don't want Russia to interfere in our elections, we certainly would not have any moral high ground if we were to interfere in the elections of other countries, which we tend to do quite often," Morris said.

To help document the voting process in the Mexican election, Morris headed south to be an impartial observer under the auspices of the nonprofit organization Global Exchange with some funding from MTSU.

Sharing research internationally

American researchers' international contacts are beginning to grow more important as relations with other countries shift due to changing American policies. Andrei Korobkov explores migration among the former republics of the Soviet Union, which Korobkov calls one of three major migration systems in the world. The U.S. is not the only country that is reeling over immigration policy.

"We see, for example, a quick rise of political populism in major European countries, but also in Russia as a reaction to the inflow of migrants," said Korobkov, a professor of Russian Studies.

This populism, which also emerged in the 2016 American presidential election, prompts Korobkov to see continued unpredictability under Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump.

"The electorates of Putin and Trump have a lot of similarity among themselves," Korobkov said.

Moreover, the friction over Russian influence on the 2016 American election, as asserted by 17 U.S. intelligence entities, could yet make it extremely difficult for researchers in both countries to share more important knowledge.

"The amount of joint projects between American and Russian academics is sharply declining," Korobkov said. "The ability to travel to do the research is also declining."

Tennessee has one of the most complicated schemes for regaining one's right to vote.

—Pippa Holloway



Pippa Holloway

History Professor Pippa Holloway, the president of the MTSU Faculty Senate, is working on two major projects simultaneously, but that's not unusual for such a prolific researcher. At the moment, her efforts are "They Are All She Had: Formerly Incarcerated Women and the Right to Vote" and "Subjected to Still Greater Punishment: Testimonial Incapacity as a Collateral Consequence of Criminal Conviction in the South."

Holloway also has published articles on prostitution and public policy, race and partisanship in disenfranchisement laws, and what it means to be gay in the rural South.

Her awards include a Sexuality Research Postdoctoral Fellowship from the Social Science Research Council, the Willie Lee Rose Prize from the Southern Association for Women Historians, and the Soros Justice Fellowship from the Open Society Institute's U.S. Justice Fund.

Holloway has delivered professional presentations at the University of California–Berkeley, University of Florida, University of Richmond, Vanderbilt University, and Stony Brook University and for the Southern Historical Association and the American Historical Association.

She has taught classes in post-Civil War U.S. history, Southern history, the history of sexuality and LGBT history, 19th century history, and historical research methods.

Holloway earned her bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina, master's from the University of North Carolina–Greensboro, and doctorate from Ohio State University.

Preserving and reviving community

Kevin Smith, an MTSU Anthropology professor, understands all too well the heartache of information lost as 21st-century “progress” marches over our legacies. Smith, with help from the Dorothy Cate and Bill Frist Foundation, is working to preserve what is left of Native American settlements in the Old Town area of Franklin, Tennessee, through non-invasive documentations of museum collections.

“There were about 40 major towns, which would be similar to county seats in a modern sense, located on the Cumberland River and its tributaries, including the Harpeth River, which runs by Franklin,” Smith said.

These towns were in existence between 1000 C.E. and 1450 C.E., Smith said, but so much evidence of them was lost to the construction of skyscrapers and interstate highways.

“We’ve already lost over half of the towns that existed at 1250 C.E., with almost nothing known about them,” Smith said. “Some of these places were occupied for five centuries—far longer than Nashville’s been occupied.”

At the root of it all, of course, are students. Smith said too many universities offer no anthropology field experience for undergraduates, but MTSU does. Volunteers can sign up to work in the field on Saturdays, and retirees and amateur archaeologists take part.

“One of the things that I’ve always done is require the students to interact with the public,” Smith said. “So our excavations are open to the public and the students take turns giving tours.”

To connect people with parts of their lost legacies, Smith suggests the establishment of informational signs at places where modernity has replaced community. The value of such work is not only educational. Heritage tourism, the appeal of historical sites to the public, can be a boon to local and state economies.

Economic benefits from the past

Van West, who also is the Tennessee state historian, sees this in several Center for Historic Preservation projects. The center’s specialists connect property owners and local groups with funding agencies to create their own historic projects. Forming partnerships with organizations, the center empowers local governments and nonprofits to set up tours and exhibits.

“The more distinct and strong your community is, the more attractive you are to those from outside,” West said. “They can go anywhere, but why not go to some place that really has a strong sense of pride in themselves as shown through their understanding of their own history.”

Smith claims that most of what constitutes Tennessee’s tourism industry can be traced back to mineral spring resorts, which collectively became the third-largest industry in the state in 1900. People flocked to some 80 resorts from across the state and from other states to escape summertime heat and insects, staying for as long as a month to six weeks.

“Public opinion about corruption in Mexico is almost on par with . . . [that] in the United States.”

—Stephen Morris

Stephen Morris

MTSU's Stephen Morris started researching Mexican corruption some 30 years ago and produced one of the earliest works on the subject. He deepened his exploration through presentations at various Mexican universities, participation in symposia on corruption and transparency sponsored by the Mexico City and national governments, and collaboration with Vanderbilt's Latin American Public Opinion Project on Mexico.

Morris, a professor in Political Science and International Relations, has served as a reviewer on works and theses, published articles in both English and Spanish in Mexico, and participated in radio and television interviews. In 2012, Morris and MTSU colleague Andrei Korobkov brought experts from Mexico, Russia, and the U.S. together for a one-day symposium in conjunction with Vanderbilt.

With the level of violence and homicide in Mexico reaching all-time highs last year, Morris notes that at least 82 candidates and office-holders have been killed since September 2017, causing fear and reluctance to participate in the democratic process to rise.

"I have long admired my colleagues in Mexico who speak truth to power, who fight against odds, at risk of violence and death threats, strive to uncover and denounce corruption and the abuse of authority, and who struggle to make the Mexican government accountable to the people," Morris said.

He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from Georgia State University and his doctorate from the University of Arizona.



While air conditioning and bug repellent have altered the landscape a bit, today's music industry in Tennessee remains a byproduct of this phenomenon.

"The growth of the music industry is at least strongly supported by the mineral spring industry because all of these resorts were paying local bands to play every week," Smith said. "That's really what gave them enough money to keep them going the rest of the year."

The U.S. is not the only country . . . reeling over immigration policy.

—Andrei Korobkov

New and old knowledge

As the music industry keeps Tennessee in the national spotlight, so the data collected by MTSU researchers keeps Tennessee in general and the University as a whole in the national and international spotlight by providing the kind of trustworthy, fact-based, peer-reviewed information that can improve people's lives. The higher the profile, the more likely that research grants, donations, scholarships, and prestige will follow.

"It brings some practical policy conclusions and recommendations that you give to the government, among others," Korobkov said. "It creates networks others can follow, and it generates, among other things, new knowledge."

In some cases, "new knowledge" is "old news" to disadvantaged and overlooked segments of society. Syler found that out by examining letters to Gore, who served in Congress during 1939–71. Advocates for a limited federal government were making almost the same points about desegregation of public facilities then that are being made today about national health insurance.

"If you took out 'so-called Civil Rights Act' and put in 'so-called Affordable Care Act,' the small government letters were the same," Syler said.

University research can provide those marginalized Americans with evidence they can use to make the case for a different way to think about democracy. The Sentencing Project, a nonprofit prison reform group, states that Florida has the largest number of disenfranchised citizens in the nation. More than 1.5 million Floridians have lost the right to vote. Holloway wonders if restoring voting rights for convicted felons would change the culture.

"What would it look like if incarcerated people saw themselves as members of our (body) politic, and what would they do upon release?" Holloway said. "If society tells you (that) you don't matter, are you more likely to reoffend?"

Regardless of what successfully reintegrating convicted felons into society as participants in civil processes could mean for the crime rate, which without any other reason should be enough incentive to make these changes, there are other significant potential repercussions as well. It might result in changes in political strategy and even the redrawing of political districts. The number of potential voters in a given area could dramatically shift, demanding attention to underserved areas.

"In this last election in Virginia, there's good evidence that ex-felons who got their voting rights restored helped tip the balance in a number of the legislative races," Holloway said.

A portrait of Andrei Korobkov, a man with grey hair, a beard, and glasses, wearing a blue and white striped shirt and large black headphones. He is sitting at a desk with his hands clasped.

Andrei Korobkov

Catching MTSU Professor Andrei Korobkov between excursions abroad can be challenging. A specialist in migration patterns among former Soviet republics that have formed their own nations, Korobkov is in demand as a speaker at international conferences and as a commentator for radio, television, and online.

From 2012 to the present, his invited and featured talks have included such prestigious locales as New York's Harriman Institute, the Wilson Center in Washington, D.C., Irkutsk State University in Siberia, the Greek island of Rhodes, the University of Oxford in England, the Kennan Institute in Berlin, and the International Studies Annual Convention in San Francisco, among other educational gatherings.

During his attendance at the National Research University Higher School of Economics International Academic Conference on Economic and Social Development in Moscow this past April, Korobkov raised MTSU's global profile with interviews on four separate BBC programs, four different programs on the American government's Radio Liberty, and eight other interviews on various Russian TV and radio stations.

Korobkov, who heads up MTSU's Russian Studies interdisciplinary minor, earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from Moscow State University and doctorates from the Russian Academy of Sciences and the University of Alabama. His additional areas of expertise include nationalism, state- and nation-building, economic reform and issues of regional economic development, energy policy, social stratification, and employment policy.

Informing and improving lives

The role of university research in educating and informing citizens can give them the tools they need to alter the balance of power worldwide. Morris said academics and nonprofit think tanks are popping up all over Mexico to try to unravel its labyrinthine election system, the nexus between narco-traffickers and politicians and the potentially dangerous ramifications of defying the power elite. "The only option is, really, greater involvement of the people through civil society organizations, by strengthening transparency so that the public has more information about what the government is doing."

Connections abound, even in our fractious, segmented world. All the more reason to maximize those connections, to touch people where they live, to enhance their understanding of who they are and who came before them, to improve the economy with fresh ideas instead of lamenting obsolete concepts, and to infuse future generations with faith in existing institutions and the knowledge and courage to create new ones.

"We live in trying times, realizing that America means many different things to many different people, but that we can unify at crucial times in our history," West said.

"That's important to know, too." ■

Tennessee's tourism industry can be traced back to mineral spring resorts.

—Kevin Smith

SAVING "OLD TOWN"

Coming in the January 2019 *MTSU Magazine*

Protecting what most of us can't see—clues that a great civilization that MTSU anthropologist Kevin Smith knows thrived there long ago—is where Dr. Bill and Tracy Frist come into a fascinating story about property along the Harpeth River in Williamson County, Tennessee. Dr. Frist, a heart and lung transplant surgeon and former U.S. Senate majority leader, and his wife, who is one-quarter Native American, purchased the land in 2015 with the aim of preserving the site called "Old Town." The Frists asked Smith to lead the scientific research component of the preservation effort of the property, which contains the remains of a people whose nomadic forbearers arrived in the region some 12,000 years ago. "Academic institutions like MTSU are at the front of discovery and play a vital role in uncovering that untold history for scholars, archaeologists, historians, anthropologists, and schoolchildren for generations to come," Frist said.

Kevin Smith

Anthropology Professor Kevin Smith specializes in the archaeology of the southeastern United States with special interests in prehistoric chiefdoms in Middle Tennessee from about 900 to 1500 C.E. His expertise also covers the Tennessee frontier during 1780–1820 and African-American lifeways from slavery through Reconstruction.

Smith's current research projects include various slave housing projects and miscellaneous pending field projects from frontier forts to Middle Woodland mounds. From 2005 to 2015, he worked on the Castalian Springs Mounds Archaeological Project.

Last summer, Smith held a reunion of African-American descendants of slaves once owned by Frank Rogan, son of Irish émigré Hugh Rogan and one of the largest slave-owning plantation owners in middle Tennessee. Some 150 descendants toured the Sumner County site where their ancestors were baptized Roman Catholic, the Rogans' faith. The documentation of those baptisms facilitated the discovery of about 3,000 names of the slaves' descendants.

"I've been able to figure out pretty confidently which one of the cabin sites that we excavated with MTSU students between 1996 and 2001 at Bledsoe's Fort was Hugh Rogan's cabin," Smith said.

Smith began teaching at MTSU as an adjunct professor in 1988 and has been a full-time faculty member since 1994. He earned his bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees from Vanderbilt University.



By Priya Ananth,
Associate Professor of
World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

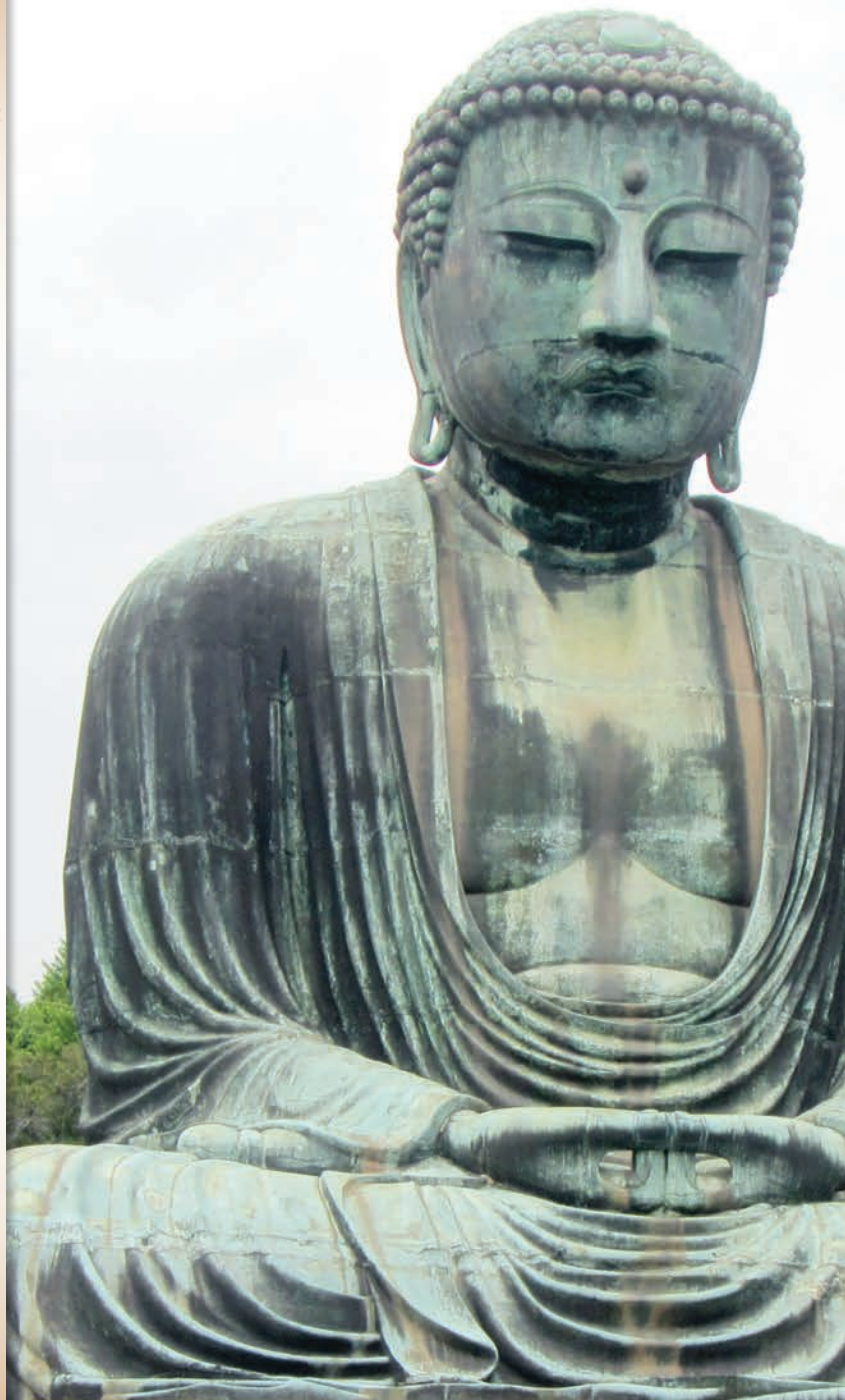


LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Professor reflects on watching students grow during immersive experience in Japan

On an early morning during Maymester last year, 14 students participating in the MTSU in Japan faculty-led Signature summer study abroad program gathered at Nashville International Airport. We had been preparing for this moment for several months, and finally the departure day had arrived. The students in this group were quite diverse, not only with respect to their academic majors, but also in terms of travel experience. There were some who had traveled abroad a few times and some who were boarding their first international flight. Some had taken Japanese language and culture courses at MTSU, while some had not. Despite the differences, their common goal was to spend four weeks in Japan, studying, living, and enjoying every bit of the country they had only dreamed about.

For eight months prior to the trip, I worked closely with our host school in Japan, Reitaku University. They provided us with classroom and campus facilities and also assisted us with arranging several on-campus activities. This partnership





became indispensable in the day-to-day execution of the program schedule.

The academic course, JAPN 3900: Japan Study Abroad, was developed with the objective of providing participants multiple opportunities to explore and experience diverse aspects of traditional as well as modern Japan. The course objective focused on students gaining a firsthand understanding of the historical background, cultural values, and thoughts unique to Japanese people and their society through the medium of written text and direct interactions with people and places in Japan. Our host university, located in the Tokyo suburb of Kashiwa City, offered the perfect location to experience both traditional and modern culture. The day-to-day program schedule was carefully designed to create a balance between in-class teaching and outdoor excursions, as well as between on-site assignments and free time.

Outdoor excursion activities complemented the in-class lectures and student presentations. During the week that we discussed Japanese traditional sports, for example, we went and watched a sumo wrestling match. One of the Reitaku employees gave us a tutorial about the background and rules, helping us understand and enjoy various parts of the competition. A day trip to Kamakura, a city that was the power center of the shoguns (military generals) during 1185–1333 and was famous for its Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, gave students insight into the relationship between political power and religious beliefs during that time. Whether it was visiting the Edo-Tokyo historical museum in Tokyo or entering the great Buddha statue at the Kotoku-in temple in Kamakura, all these experiences made history come alive for the students who had only previously read about them. Performing Zen meditation at the local Buddhist temple, followed by a calligraphy session involving the tracing of Buddhist hymns on rice paper in traditional inkstone, was an excellent lesson on how Buddhist monks sharpened their concentration skills by dispelling distracting thoughts using calligraphy.

Students learned about the rich cuisine culture of Japan through several hands-on workshops, such as making soy sauce, creating an original cup of ramen noodles, and performing the traditional Japanese tea ceremony. A visit to the local elementary school provided a lesson about teaching and learning styles unique to Japanese public school systems. Students also experienced traditional leisure activities, such as karaoke, kabuki theater performance, and an overnight trip to a hot spring resort set amidst the mountains as a way to destress and relax, in an authentic Japanese way.

The most unique and valuable part of the program, I believe, was the frequent opportunity for our students to have multiple cross-cultural interactions with Reitaku University students. We incorporated guest lectures and joint classes, where our MTSU students engaged in lively discussions and made lasting friendships with the Japanese students. Our group was invited to their English language table sessions on campus, and our students enjoyed the fun activities and the company. Several Reitaku students also volunteered to accompany us on our weekend shopping or sightseeing expeditions.



As part of their final assessment, students wrote reflections about their experiences in Japan. Almost everyone wrote about the learning that had taken place in their daily lives, over the weekends, and outside of the classroom. For four weeks students were expected to follow a lifestyle that was very different from what they were accustomed. For example, there were very strict rules about disposing trash only after separating them out into specific categories such as flammable, plastic, aluminum, bottles, glass, lithium ion batteries, and so forth. Our students came to realize how useful this system was and how simple it actually was to follow. They learned how to navigate through the complex train and subway systems using Japanese apps and Google tools, so they could move around independently even with limited knowledge of the Japanese language. They also experienced the importance of functioning in groups, whether for a class project or a weekend outing. Group or team mentality is an integral part of Japanese social and cultural norms. Other things, such as spending a few minutes on meditation every day, walking around more, or replacing sugary drinks with green tea, were some simple lifestyle changes that they wrote about in their reflections.

As I read through these final project reports, not only was there a clear indication that academic learning had taken place, but also that these students had really identified and connected with various aspects of the Japanese culture. In a few short weeks, it became evident that these students had grown both academically and personally, which was gratifying to witness. Being able to observe the true value and impact that this program held for these students gives me an overwhelming sense of hope that our True Blue students have real potential to build bridges between and foster closer relationships with other nations. ■

More than Words on a Page

Interactive writing celebration allows students to illustrate their inventiveness

by Rachel Donegan,
Doctoral Candidate in the
College of Liberal Arts

On April 20, MTSU's second annual Celebration of Student Writing took place at the Miller Educational Center. The event, sponsored by the General Education English Office, highlighted student writing at MTSU in all of its forms—personal, creative, and academic—to the wider MTSU campus community. Throughout the three-hour event, the Miller Education Center atrium was abuzz with talk about all things writing-related, as attendees browsed through two floors of inventive and impressive student poster presentations. The presentations in the atrium spanned from first-year writing courses, to sophomore level literature surveys, to senior-level advanced composition and rhetoric courses. The topics of these presentations ranged from the importance of teaching financial literacy to social media perceptions of body positivity and everything else in between.

Creating such an event has been not only a labor of love for the General Education English Office, but also a chance for instructors and administrators to showcase the wonderful quality of student work to greater audiences, all while dispelling a few misconceptions about student writing in the process. "As instructors, we're very familiar with how amazing the research our students develop in our course is, but they don't always have the opportunity to share that work," said Kate Pantelides, co-director of General Education English.

However, participating in the Celebration of Student Writing also helps instructors expand students' conception of what writing is and what it can do. "The Celebration of Student Writing is an opportunity for students to share their writing beyond the classroom with people who aren't doing the same things they're doing, who aren't evaluating their work, so that they have a more authentic experience sharing their work with an actual audience," said Julie Myatt, co-director of General Education English. "We find that that changes the relationship that students have to the writing they create, because they understand it as being purposeful and more than a mere assignment."

Through presenting at the Celebration of Student Writing, students could remix the written projects from their writing courses, translating their carefully selected research and refined arguments into eye-catching, engaging presentations. Several students used these presentations as an opportunity to gain valuable feedback on their projects and in-progress research. Many were interactive poster presentations, while other students crafted dynamic components incorporating participation from attendees. The students in



Pantelides' Feminist Rhetorics class created a quilt together over the course of the semester; they had art supplies on hand so attendees could craft and contribute a square of their own. By the end of the event, their quilt had grown and expanded to include the contributions of a wider audience, a form of progress that in many ways represented the ever-broadening, inclusive nature of their subject matter.

The Celebration of Student Writing is about so much more than just academic writing, and the event invited students and guests to experience the magic and beauty of writing. In addition to the fantastic array of poster presentations, the celebration also hosted several poetry readings from Gaylord Brewer's poetry writing course and even a dramatic play reading from Claudia Barnett's playwriting class. These readings, including ones from this year's Homer Pittard Creative Writing Award winners, provided a fascinating dimension to the overall event and a way for attendees to enjoy the wonders of language firsthand.

In addition to these creative performances, numerous MTSU-affiliated creative writing groups advertised opportunities for interested students to get involved in diverse writing offerings outside of the classroom. These included:

- **MTSU Write**, a writing mentorship program sponsored through MTSU's English Department
- **Department Sandbox**, a creative group for students to write and create anything from short stories to video games
- **The Lavinia Project**, a creative writing group for survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence. ■

VIVA LAS VEGAS



A one-of-a-kind course offered at MTSU allows students to not just peek behind the curtains, but get an immersive backstage look at the one of the largest entertainment producers in the world. During a May 21–26 field study trip to Las Vegas, 11 students spanning multiple departments and colleges saw performances of Cirque du Soleil shows, experienced backstage tours, and attended guest lectures and networking events.

Titled Design and Technology of Cirque du Soleil, the course and trip are organized by Darren E. Levin, assistant professor of Theatre, and professors emeriti Virginia Donnell (Theatre) and Christian Haseleu (Recording Industry), through a partnership with Cirque du Soleil and the company's Kim Scott and Barbara Roth.

"As a theatrical technician still pursuing my education and laying the groundwork for my career, this class has been one of the best learning and networking experiences of my college experience," said Matthew Phillips, a double-major in Theatre and in Video and Film Production. "It also showed me the extent of what is possible in live



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entertainment through collaboration, ingenuity, pure grit, and drive. Everyone that we met was so personable, knowledgeable, and passionate about their respective areas."

Tour activities included:

- Performances of *Michael Jackson ONE* at Mandalay Bay; *KÀ* at MGM Grand; *Mystère* at Treasure Island; *The Beatles LOVE* at The Mirage; and *O* at Bellagio
- Backstage tours of *Michael Jackson ONE* (hosted by John Kessler, show audio engineer and MTSU alum); *KÀ* (hosted by Scott, company manager; Geoffrey Devenney, operations production manager; and heads of department); *Mystère* (hosted by production management and department heads); and *The Beatles LOVE* (hosted by Paul Reams, operations production manager, and department heads)
- Guest lectures with Scott (KÀ); Roth (corporate sales manager, Cirque du Soleil Resident Shows Division); and MTSU alum Janette Harrington (former department head of wigs/makeup for *Banana Shpeel*)
- Additional shows and attractions selected by students

"I hope with everything to be a part of the Cirque family one day," said Elijah Whitney, a Recording Industry major and Theatre minor, "and because of this trip I actually can see that as being a possibility!"

Student Cassidy Johnson learned about technology, performance, business, and the industry in general, calling the special topics course "one of the most worthwhile classes I have taken during my college career."

"No matter what area of focus you have, you will leave with a new love and appreciation for Cirque and live production as a whole," added Erin Moore, majoring in Video and Film Production and minoring in Theatre.

Top left: Paul Reams, operations production manager, answers questions during The Beatles LOVE backstage tour at The Mirage.

Top right: Students and faculty took a backstage tour at Michael Jackson ONE, led by MTSU Recording Industry alumnus John Kessler.

Middle: A Q&A and backstage tour were provided by Geoffrey Devenney, operations production manager, and department heads of KÀ at the MGM Grand.

Bottom: Students at The Beatles LOVE at The Mirage



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So, you think you can

DANCE?





The first class of majors pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Dance at a public university in Tennessee began studying at MTSU last fall.

The new degree in the College of Liberal Arts' Department of Theatre and Dance was one of the final actions by the Tennessee Board of Regents before relinquishing governance of MTSU to its own Board of Trustees in 2017. Dance has been offered as a minor at MTSU since the program was established in 2000 within the then-Department of Speech and Theatre.

Students must audition to be admitted to the new bachelor's degree program. One degree track focuses on performance and choreography, the other on pedagogy and practice.

Dance majors also benefit from working in MTSU Dance Theatre, a preprofessional undergraduate dance company that performs each semester in Tucker Theatre on campus. ■

Allison Cowan



Allison Cowan, a 2012 Instrumental Music Education graduate, was chosen in 2017 as among “50 Directors Who Make A Difference” by *School Band and Orchestra Magazine*. Before MTSU, she was on a violin performance track and on tour with a DePauw University ensemble in Europe when she decided “I don’t want to do this anymore.” Cowan left school, became a legal assistant, then ran her own corporation, and later worked as a licensed private investigator with Kroll.

She continued to teach music privately and in 2000 served as Tennessee Renaissance Festival music director. When telling her former high school band director she needed trumpet players, he replied “I need a color guard instructor” and roped Cowan back into the marching band world. She realized “this is what I’m supposed to be doing.” With a 6-month-old, Cowan enrolled at MTSU, inherited a small

music studio the next year, built up to 40 private students, and began an orchestra in Smyrna. “I just started over,” she said. Cowan worked with the Central Magnet School program while at MTSU, which led to two Williamson County Schools part-time jobs and ultimately her current Centennial High School position.

Cowan says MTSU Music professors genuinely care, want students to succeed, and are coming from top schools. “You’re getting some of the best of the best in the country and at a reasonable cost,” she said. Liberal Arts courses gave her a broader view of the world and the ability to communicate more effectively, which is essential in any field. “You can’t truly understand some of the music we are playing in our orchestra rehearsals without understanding the history of the time and place it was composed.” ■

Wayne Haun

Wayne Haun, a 1994 MTSU Music Education graduate, has been an integral part of the Nashville music scene for over two decades as a songwriter, orchestrator, arranger, and producer. This 31-time Gospel Music Association Dove Award winner and three-time BMI Music Award winner received three Grammy nominations this past year for work with top Southern gospel artists Karen Peck and New River, The Collingsworth Family, and Joseph Habedank. Haun also hosts Singing News Radio's *Southern Gospel Today*.

"I came here as this little lump of clay, and then just year by year the University molded me into a real person," Haun said about MTSU. "Not only did MTSU teach me music. It taught me art, and it taught me everything from geology to political science. It taught me how to treat people, how to treat students, how to treat authority,

your neighbor, that sort of thing. I learned a lot about life here, and for the better."

Outside of the School of Music, one of Haun's favorite classes was an English course taught by Margaret Ordoubadian. "I loved her class so much that I actually postponed a music course so that I could take my second semester of English with her," he said. "She introduced me to some of the greatest authors and poets, including Maya Angelou. She taught me not just to read books. She taught me how to experience them." Haun credits his time at MTSU for developing an ability to be open to people from all backgrounds, to listen, and to respect their opinions. As a result, his dealings with people in the music business were greatly enhanced. "It encouraged me to dare to see someone else's point of view." ■

Justin Nelson



Justin Nelson, a Memphis native and MTSU Vocal/General Music Education graduate, has been living in New York City to show off his dancing, singing, and acting talents. He recently performed as the Mayor of Emerald City with a national tour of *The Wizard of Oz* and is pursuing a career in musical theater, film, television, and modeling. Nelson signed with a talent agency in New York for theater and hopes to join its commercial and TV/film listing in Los Angeles.

His love of performing began early. Nelson joined the show choir at Colonial Middle School, and that's when he says he "found it." He continued with choirs at Overton High School and was involved in music at Greater New Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church. In 2004, Nelson performed in the children's ensemble of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* at the Orpheum, an experience that clinched it for him.

He aspired to become a high school choral conductor and eventually open a performing arts academy. Once he began his studies at MTSU, however, Nelson was drawn toward musical theater again, performed in a couple of musicals, and found it "very rewarding and satisfying." So, for now, Nelson is continuing with his performing career, and the performing arts academy is having to wait.

Nelson credits his MTSU experience with helping him become more well-rounded, with a greater ability and willingness to see things from many different viewpoints. "You can make a liberal arts education what you want," he said. "With a liberal arts education, you have a solid academic and intellectual foundation upon which to build. . . . I was able to branch out into several areas of interest and explore other options." ■

Matthew Hibdon

MTSU alumnus and McMinnville native Matthew Hibdon visited the campus while still in middle school to participate in the National History Day Contest. Because that experience was so positive, he decided he wanted to attend MTSU someday and help with “History Day.” In 2012, Hibdon earned a History degree with a Leadership Studies minor. He then completed his master’s degree at MTSU in Administration and Supervision and worked as a College of Liberal Arts academic advisor. Hibdon, who received a 2017 award from the National Academic Advising Association, now has moved on to working as Executive Assistant to Warren County Executive Jimmy Haley.

Hibdon credits his studies at MTSU for helping him take criticism better, “grow from that criticism,” and understand the value of context. Adding the proper context to questions

in the work environment, and in life generally, can be very useful, if not crucial, in making the best decisions possible when faced with challenges, he said.

Hibdon is a strong advocate for study abroad and participated twice while an MTSU student. The first took place in London over a winter break, led by Richard Hansen (Theatre), and was his first trip outside the country. He became determined to study abroad again and traveled to Europe with a group led by Derek Frisby (History), following the path taken by the 506th Parachute Regiment, Easy Company, after their D-Day landing. “Study abroad is one of the best things that any student can do,” Hibdon said. “You can read about historical events and learn much from that reading, but when you’re actually at the location of the event, you feel it with your soul.” ■

EXPLORING NATURE THROUGH ART

Anfinson produces animated work from historic site residency research

Erin Anfinson, a Department of Art and Design associate professor, was awarded an artist residency last year at Herbert Hoover National Historic Site in West Branch, Iowa. Her five-week stay was supported by the National Park Service's Artist-In-Residence program and a summer stipend from the MTSU Faculty Research and Creative Activity Committee. The park, located in rural eastern Iowa, is the birthplace of President Hoover and also the site of a 81-acre reconstructed tallgrass prairie. Having grown up in Iowa, Anfinson was inspired to apply for the residency because it offered an opportunity to learn more about the tall-grass prairie that once covered the majority of her home state.

Her studio practice typically revolves around the creation of 2D encaustic collages (beeswax-based paint) and animated short films. Anfinson's creative work is often influenced by an interest in science, nature, memory, and narratives of ecosystems in flux. During the residency, she immersed herself in the environment for up to six hours each day, observing and collecting photographs, video, audio, and drawings of the plants, birds, and insects that inhabit the prairie at the park. Anfinson also met regularly with the park staff and regional park biologist to learn more about the challenges of maintaining the native tallgrass prairie plants in an area normally developed for agriculture and congested with invasive plant species. In addition to collecting research materials, she also gave a public artist lecture and conducted a stop-motion animation workshop at the park visitor center.

At the end of the residency, Anfinson returned to her studio in Murfreesboro to begin work on a new 3-minute animation about her experience at the park. The research materials she collected were used as inspiration for the short film that explores her sense of wonder, appreciation, and concern for the range of biodiversity that depend on these rapidly disappearing ecosystems. The film, *In the Tallgrass*, was completed last October and has since been screened in several national group exhibitions and a solo exhibition at Jacksonville State University in Alabama. It was also an official selection for the internationally juried Nature Track Film Festival that took place in Los Olivos, California in March and will become part of the National Park Service's art collection. ■





MTSU interns join political process on the hill

The Tennessee Legislative Internship Program has been operating since the 1970s. Each fall semester, there is a competitive application and interview process to select nine to 12 spring interns from MTSU. The program is open to all juniors, seniors, and graduate students (who meet the GPA requirement), regardless of major. More Political Science students participate than any other single major, but often Journalism, Public Relations, History, and Criminal Justice Administration majors take part. Students have even participated from the natural sciences, business, Geography, English, and Agriscience.

Each year, students work full time at the General Assembly for the entire legislative session. Most are assigned to an individual member's office; some are assigned as staff to a permanent committee. They earn both a weekly salary and academic credits. Students complete Political Science coursework associated with their internship—regular journaling, developing a networking contact list, adding work samples to their ePortfolio, and a reflective paper at the end.

“Our students gain practical work experience, develop professional skills, network, and learn to apply theories and concepts from their program of study,” said MTSU’s campus liaison, David Carleton, who is interim chair of Global Studies and Human Geography. “It is also valuable to the University; our interns represent the University to a broad audience and demonstrate the skills and knowledge gained across a wide range of MTSU programs.”

The on-site supervision is handled by the legislative members and assistants in the offices where the interns are assigned by Christie Behnke, director of the Tennessee Legislative Internship Program. ■

This year’s legislative delegation is photographed (above) at the annual luncheon held for the MTSU interns, the members they work for, and MTSU alumni working on Capitol Hill.

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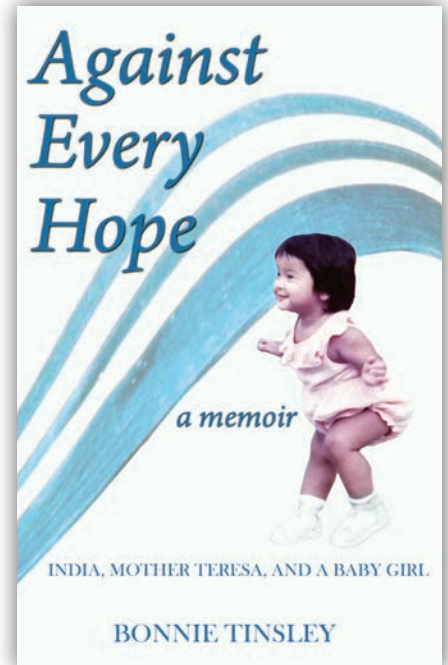
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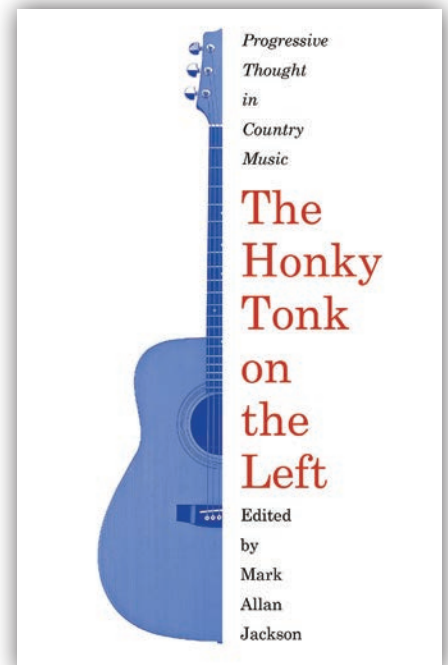
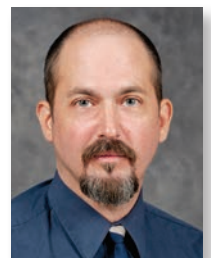
Artwork by MTSU student Jacob Yandle

Faculty News

World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures adjunct professor and author **Bonnie Tinsley** unveils *Against Every Hope: India, Mother Teresa, and a Baby Girl*, a stirring memoir which follows a Midwest couple's quest to adopt a baby girl from Mother Teresa's orphanage in India during the turbulent reign of Indira Gandhi. Tinsley will speak, read selections, and sign copies of her book Oct. 12 at the Southern Festival of Books in Nashville.



Mark Allen Jackson, associate professor of English, edited a new collection of essays entitled *The Honky Tonk on the Left: Progressive Thought in Country Music*, as well as penned a chapter in the book. Bringing together a wide spectrum of cultural critics, *The Honky Tonk on the Left* takes on this conservative stereotype and reveals how progressive thought has permeated country music from its beginnings to the present day. The original essays analyze how diverse performers have taken on such issues as government policies, gender roles, civil rights, prison reform, and labor unrest. Taking notice of the wrongs in their eras, these musicians worked to address them in song and action, often with strong support from fans.



FULBRIGHT

Leia Green, a Foreign Languages major, is one of the latest MTSU students to earn **Fulbright Fellowships** to teach or conduct research abroad.

Green is teaching in Argentina this year. She is an aerial silks dancer and yoga instructor who plans to attend graduate school to teach second language acquisition.

Another finalist, **Hermion Phuntling**, an MTSU senior majoring in **Global Studies and Human Geography**, also earned a Fulbright to teach in Thailand. He decided, however, to perform health care work with the Peace Corps in the African country of Benin during the next two years.



Phuntling, who graduates in August, was born in India and immigrated to the United States from Burma. After serving in the Peace Corps, he plans to enter the health care field.

At MTSU, Phuntling has been involved for four years with the Student Government Association and during his senior year, served as a senator and vice president of marketing.

"I thought I would cast a wide net to see all the possibilities (out there)," he said. "I realized (for now) the Peace Corps would help me more."

Phuntling leaves for Africa in mid-September. He said he will reapply for a Fulbright research fellowship after his Peace Corps commitment ends.

The U.S. State Department sponsors the Fulbright program to increase mutual understanding between people in the United States and other countries by placing U.S. students in other nations to teach or conduct research for eight to 10 months.

MTSU is placing more emphasis on study abroad opportunities, in part because the experience often prepares students for future fellowship opportunities.

Bonnie Walker and **Ethan McHugh** are among more than 500 students at



U.S. colleges and universities who received 2017 Critical Language Scholarships (CLS) from the U.S. Department of State.

The CLS program aims "to expand the number of Americans studying and mastering 14 critical-need foreign languages," according to the department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, which administers the program.

Walker graduated magna cum laude from MTSU in May 2017 with a bachelor's degree in International Relations and a minor in Arabic, then departed June 14 for a two-month stay in the former Soviet republic of Azerbaijan to study the Turkish language.

"During my sophomore year of college, I spent 10 months in Turkey teaching," Walker said. "I developed many close friendships with my neighbors and truly enjoyed my time there. The people are so incredibly welcoming, hospitable, and friendly."

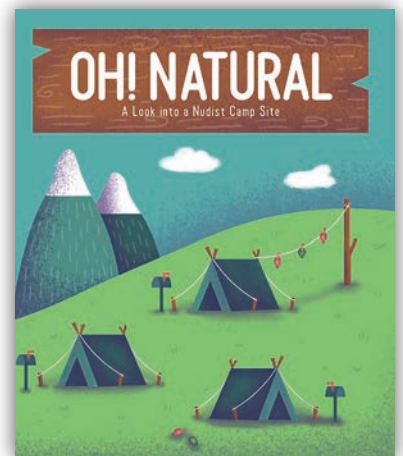
McHugh, who graduated with a double major in Philosophy and Religious Studies, visited Oman to study Arabic for two months.

"I initially began studying Arabic because I wanted to go to graduate school to study religion, and I wanted to have the option of studying religion in the Middle East," McHugh said.

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MTSU Graphic Design students took home top spots at the Addy Awards for design in American advertising, which took place this June in Chicago. **Rickie Le** won a National Student Gold Addy and a Judge's Choice award for his book design "Oh! Natural." **Veronika Gajdosova** won a National Student Silver Addy for her Spacefold Co/Op Annual Report design.



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Sense of Duty

MTSU forensic experts, led by Anthropology professor Hugh Berryman, are spearheading efforts to identify and bring home the remains of Mexican-American War soldiers with Tennessee ties. The thought of abandoning our war dead on foreign soil is shocking to Americans, whose military credo is "Leave no man behind." The military is still actively recovering casualties from 20th-century conflicts around the world. At the time these soldiers described above fell—on Sept. 21, 1846, in the Mexican-American War—the U.S. government had few resources for retrieving its fallen heroes.

mtsunews.com/research-2018-a-sense-of-duty



Getting It Right

Elizabeth Catte, a doctoral graduate of MTSU's Public History program and former instructor in the Department of History, is the author of *What You Are Getting Wrong About Appalachia*. She contends in her book that J.D. Vance's bestseller depicts people who live in the region around the Appalachian Mountains as "a mournful and dysfunctional 'other' who represent the darkest failures of the American Dream while seeking to proscribe how we—the presumed audience of indifferent elites—should feel about their collective fate."

mtsunews.com/catte-on-the-record-april2018



Blazing a Trail

Kaye Jernigan, assistant chief of the Murfreesboro Fire Rescue Department, became the first woman in Tennessee history to receive the Fire Officer IV certification March 2 at the Tennessee Fire Service and Codes Enforcement Academy in Bell Buckle. Her accomplishment came in the state's inaugural Fire Officer IV (FOIV) certification class. Students who earn the certification have the necessary requirements needed to serve in a fire department's senior-level positions such as a supervisor or a chief.

mtsunews.com/jernigan-on-the-record-march2018



Striking a Chord

MTSU alumnus Dave Sartor, an accomplished composer/conductor and an MTSU adjunct professor, walked into the summer of 2017 with the world premiere of his "The Saints of Sewanee" in July at the Sewanee Summer Music Festival. The performance was conducted by Eric Bubacz and performed by Sewanee Festival Brass. Sartor followed that up in October 2017 when his "Reveries for String Orchestra" was performed by Orchestra Unlimited in Houston at the Midtown Arts and Theater Center under music director Kirk Smith.

mtsunews.com/alumnus-sartor-musical-success



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9 to 5 the Musical
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Fall Dance Concert
Nov. 29–Dec. 1, 2018

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