

TRUE BLUE REVIEW

20 20



MIDDLE
TENNESSEE

STATE UNIVERSITY

I AM *true* **BLUE**

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The top news stories of 2020 at MTSU describe a year of innovation and perseverance.

- Persevering through COVID-19, including November graduation in Floyd Stadium
- Opening new multimillion-dollar Academic Classroom Building
- Partnering on statewide Data Science initiative, with new degree
- Collaborating with Tennessee Air National Guard on research
- Honoring the late Charlie Daniels, veterans advocate and longtime friend of MTSU

For the second consecutive year, MTSU was the only locally governed institution in Tennessee to be included in Princeton Review's national Best Colleges list, an honor afforded to only 13% of the nation's higher education entities.

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As soon as the coronavirus pandemic pushed spring classes online, MTSU began planning for students' return. In the fall, thousands of students were back on campus—wearing masks and attending classes in rooms modified to ensure social distancing.



MTSU introduced a bachelor's degree in Data Science, as well as a graduate certificate geared toward working professionals in the emerging field, as part of a statewide initiative announced in February in partnership with the Nashville Technology Council.



MTSU and the 118th Wing of the Tennessee Air National Guard signed an agreement in November to collaborate on research in several areas, notably on unmanned aircraft systems operations and computer science.



Grammy Trip

MTSU students and faculty traveled to Los Angeles for Grammy weekend, going behind the scenes with recording industry leaders and honoring nine alumni nominated for Grammy Awards.

The event also celebrated alumna Beverly Keel's appointment as dean of the College of Media and Entertainment.



MLK Celebration

State Rep. Harold Love Jr. of Nashville urged community over chaos in the keynote address at the University's 2020 candlelight vigil in honor of slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.



FEBRUARY



True Blue Generosity

The 72-hour True Blue Give donor drive Feb. 12–14 was a smashing success,

raising more than \$450,000 for scholarships, student emergency funds, academics, and athletics. The initial goal was \$375,000.



Insurance Degree Ranks No. 1

Insurance industry professionals ranked MTSU's Insurance

program the best in the nation, according to a survey by global ratings agency A.M. Best.



MTSU Trailblazers

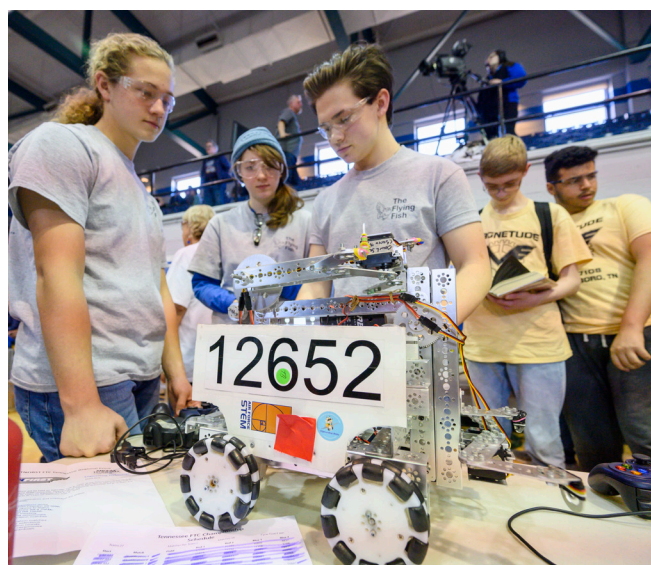
Eight Black student-athletes who came to MTSU during an era defined by segregation and unequal rights were honored Feb. 6 as "True Blue Pioneers."

"It has shown me what perseverance and determination will do for you. The harder it is, the better it is for you."

– Mary "Beanie" Secret

Robotics Challenge

Nearly 30 teams from across Tennessee gathered at MTSU to design, build, program, and operate robots in head-to-head competition Feb. 8. The Tennessee Robotics Club of Murfreesboro won the TNFIRST First Tech Challenge to advance to the world championships. MTSU also hosted the Regional Science Olympiad and Invention Convention in February.



MARCH

The General's Fund

The Nashville Predators teamed with MTSU to raise money and awareness for student veterans in need of support. The newly created General's Fund, announced March 2, will support the Charlie and Hazel Daniels Veterans and Military Family Center at MTSU.



Great Debate

The MTSU debate team won its last tournament of the 2019–20 season, at Arkansas Tech University, and finished second in the nation as a squad in the International Public Debate Association.



Pitching In

After deadly storms hit the area, MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee declared March 9 a "True Blue Day of Service" and encouraged employees to use the day off to volunteer with tornado recovery efforts.

"We are fortunate that our campus was spared, but I know we have many students, faculty and staff from the affected areas."

– MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee



APRIL



Milk Donation

The MTSU Creamery donated its famous chocolate milk April 1 to help a Murfreesboro City Schools CHOW Bus that was running low. CHOW (for Combatting Hunger on Wheels) started as a summer program, but it began offering breakfasts and lunches for students after schools closed because of the pandemic.

Still the One

MTSU's Department of Recording Industry is on Billboard's annual list of America's top music business schools for a seventh year, touted once again for its longevity and its renown for producing ready-to-work music industry pros.



Greek Fundraiser

MTSU Fraternity and Sorority Life brought in \$3,163 in online donations for the Student Food Pantry, which provides nonperishable food items for students in need.



Virtual Graduation

The spring Class of 2020 graduated from home offices, kitchen tables, and living rooms across the country on May 9 instead of Murphy Center. During MTSU's first virtual graduation, streamed to mark a long-awaited day of celebration after a pandemic-truncated semester, President Sidney A. McPhee praised the 2,519 graduates for their "True Blue" perseverance.



Media Honors

MTSU media students garnered national, state, and regional honors for their multimedia reporting, including an astounding 28 awards that comprise a national Society of Professional Journalists' college award and 14 first-place wins and three Best of Shows in the Tennessee Associated Press Broadcasters and Media Editors College Contest.

JUNE

1 for All

The Free Speech Center at MTSU lined up a few

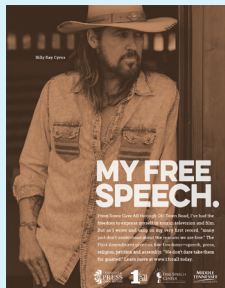
Nashville stars to tell Americans about their First Amendment rights. Music artists Loretta Lynn and Darius Rucker, Olympic skater Scott Hamilton, and author Ann Patchett are among those helping with the 1 for All Campaign for the First Amendment.



FREE SPEECH CENTER

at Middle Tennessee State University

1for all



'Music Is Healing'

MTSU's WMOT-FM Roots Radio 89.5 joined a coordinated nationwide remembrance of slain Minnesota resident George Floyd by playing the Sam Cooke classic "A Change is Gonna Come" on June 9. Floyd died while being restrained by police in Minneapolis.



TENNESSEE GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS



Virtual Governor's School

The Governor's School for the Arts, normally held at MTSU in June, became a virtual experience. Using Zoom, high school juniors and seniors from across Tennessee shared theater monologues, dance rehearsals, instrumental and vocal exercises, filmmaking projects, and sketching, painting and sculpting processes, all online and from their homes.

Changes at Bookstore

MTSU Phillips Bookstore, now operated by Barnes & Noble College, reopened June 16. "We want to be a good campus partner," said manager Natalie Karousatos, an MTSU alumnus. "We want to be our students' choice for books and technology."



New Vice Provost



MTSU alumnus Robert Summers is the University's new vice provost for international affairs. Summers, who assumed the

post July 1, wants to increase the number of international students on campus.

"We will be reconceptualizing some of our agreements to encompass more of an exchange component," Summers said. One possibility: swapping the usual tuition for the host institution's tuition so students don't necessarily pay more.

Summers also wants to reexamine MTSU's study-abroad courses to make sure they are pertinent to students' career goals.



A Legend Lost

Country music legend and longtime MTSU supporter Charlie Daniels died July 6. Daniels was a passionate advocate for military veterans, and the University's veterans center bears his name.



International Accolade

The Casualty Actuarial Society named MTSU's Actuarial Science program as one of four recipients of its international 2020 CAS University Award Program, noting the innovative and exemplary ways students are prepared for careers in the property and casualty insurance industry.

AUGUST



True Blue TV

MTSU's public access TV channel is rebranded as True Blue TV and adds more campus events to its schedule. The channel, which airs on Comcast Xfinity channels 9 and 1096 in Murfreesboro, was launched in 1999 as a television lesson delivery system for primary and secondary schools across Tennessee.

Back on Campus

With health protocols in place, students began moving into dormitories Aug. 19 and preparing to start a new semester on campus. To mitigate the spread of COVID-19, MTSU reopened residence halls with one student per room and required masks and social distancing.



Faculty Honor

Mary Farone, a microbiologist who began her MTSU career as an adjunct in 1996, was the 2020 recipient of the MTSU Foundation's Career Achievement

Award. Farone was recognized Aug. 20 at the university's Fall Faculty Meeting for her teaching, research, and service to students.

Virtual Convocation

A Michigan pediatrician who investigated the Flint water crisis spoke to new MTSU students in a virtual Convocation on Aug. 22. Mona Hanna-Attisha, whose research led to a \$600 million settlement for those harmed by lead in Flint's water supply, told students they "have amazing power" to create change in the world.



Lunar Rover Award

MTSU's lunar rover Team No. 2 earned NASA's top engineering achievement prize—the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics Neil Armstrong Best Design Award—in the university division. The award recognizes the team whose rover has the best ability to take on the punishing elements in the NASA Human Explorer Rover Challenge course.



Hood 911 Center

Rutherford County renamed its 911 administration and training center in honor of John D. Hood, an MTSU alumnus and current director of government and community affairs for the University. Hood is the center's longest-standing board member and treasurer. Signage with the new name was unveiled Sept. 11.



(Photo by Ashley McDonald, Rutherford County Mayor's Office)



Rock the Vote

MTSU student/alumni band Shelter Cove joined bands from other Nashville-area universities Sept. 22 for a nationwide National Voter Registration Day virtual event to get Americans registered and ready to vote in the Nov. 3 elections.

K-9 Anniversary

Bobby, a 2-year-old German shepherd and Belgian Malinois mix, celebrated a year of service as a K-9 officer for the MTSU Police Department. Bobby's handler is patrol specialist Zachery Brooker.



Modified Shakespeare

MTSU Theatre staged a pandemic-era production of "Romeo and Juliet," with actors in masks and the audience seated 6 feet apart—or watching online. The diverse cast bent gender and societal tropes in the 423-year-old tale, all while working under strict guidelines for masking, distancing, sanitation, and testing, both backstage and onstage.



OCTOBER

"Bridging the Gap"

MTSU announced Oct. 1 that it will reinstate unused academic scholarships awarded for fall 2020 to new freshmen and transfer students who paused their educations because of the pandemic or chose another school and are reconsidering their choices.



Homecoming 2020

The weather was perfect, but because of COVID-19, a lot was different about MTSU Homecoming. Tailgating was not allowed, and the pregame parade featured shoebox floats showcased virtually. A crowd of 6,500 at Floyd Stadium had to sit socially distanced and wear face coverings.



Quest 2025

On Oct. 21 President Sidney A. McPhee and Provost Mark Byrnes (pictured) launched Quest 2025, an ambitious set of goals and initiatives for the next five years, as the University renewed its nationally acclaimed efforts to retain and graduate its students.

NOVEMBER

Charitable Giving

MTSU employees pledged a record \$136,558.81 in the 2020 Charitable Giving Campaign, which supports a host of area nonprofit organizations. The Jones College of Business won the Provost Cup for the eighth year in a row.



A Growing Frontier

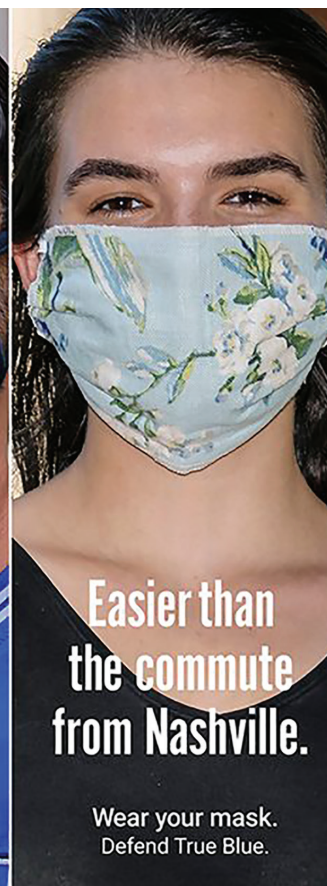
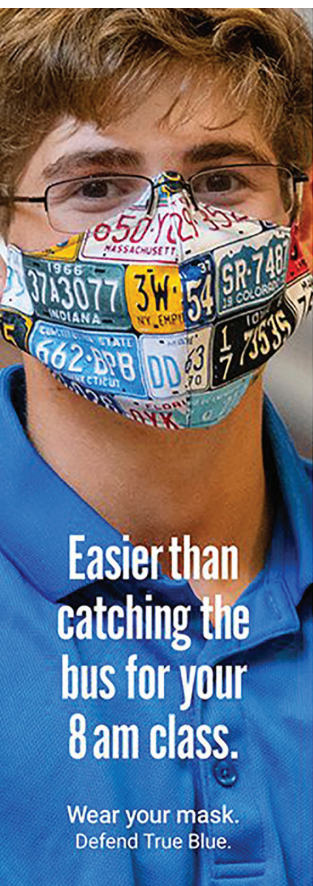


MTSU hired a chief online learning officer, Trey Martindale, to focus on maximizing a growing area of instruction for Blue Raiders near and far. Martindale will lead MTSU Online and work to develop additional online programs for the University.

MTSU Online

Mask Defenders

A group of students in the School of Journalism and Strategic Media got creative with a series of posters promoting masks. Each poster had a photo of a student wearing a mask and a message such as "Easier than budgeting your Flexbucks" or "Easier than the commute from Nashville," plus the campaign slogan, "Wear your mask. Defend True Blue."



DECEMBER

Possible New Degree

MTSU's Board of Trustees on Dec. 8 endorsed the creation of a Physician Assistant master's degree, which could be offered as soon as summer 2022.

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission approved the degree. The program is seeking accreditation this fall.



17th MTSU General

An MTSU ROTC alumnus has become the U.S. Army Reserve's first cyber officer to be promoted to brigadier general. Robert Powell Jr., who graduated with a bachelor's degree in International Relations in 1991, was promoted from colonel to the one-star rank of brigadier general during a ceremony Dec. 15 at Fort Gordon, Georgia. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. David Gasperson)



Vaccinated

About 15 MTSU Health Services staff members were among the first people to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in Rutherford County. Dozens of area health care workers and first responders received the first round of the Moderna vaccine Dec. 23.



First Winter Session

MTSU introduced a Winter Session for students Dec. 21–Jan. 21, with online instruction in such courses as Sport Psychology, The Judicial Process, History of Country Music, and Principles of Marketing.

Ready, Set, Action!

MTSU's Tennessee Miller Coliseum was the set for country music legend Reba McEntire and rising artist Cody Johnson's new music video that debuted in early December for their single "Dear Rodeo." MTSU alumni and students helped produce the video.

