

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE AT MARTIN

# CAMPUS SCENE

ALUMNI MAGAZINE

VOLUME LIX SUMMER/FALL 2015

THE  
KING  
OF  
WRAP

Story on  
page 26





## THE UTM ADVANTAGE

The University of Tennessee at Martin offers many advantages to students as they pursue their college degree. With top-notch faculty, hands-on learning opportunities and recognition as a "Best Southeastern University," UT Martin wants to make it possible for you to live the **total collegiate experience**.

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# the big picture





**LEADING LADY >>>** Hannah Robison, of Paris, was crowned Miss Tennessee 2015 at the Miss Tennessee Scholarship Pageant on June 20 in Jackson. Robison is a senior chemistry major with a minor in psychology. She was one of three UT Martin students to compete in this year's pageant and is the fourth to claim the state title. She finished in the top seven contestants during the 2016 Miss America Pageant on Sept. 13 in Atlantic City, N.J. - *Photo by Megan Smith / The Jackson Sun*

# CAMPUS SCENE

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## FACULTY SPOTLIGHT >>> **Dr. Danny Walker**

*Assistant Professor of Animal Science*

Thirty-two years in veterinary practice will teach you a thing or two. "Don't leave a sedated dog on the table," said Dr. Danny Walker, assistant professor of animal science. "Why do you think I tell my students that? Because I know what can happen when you turn your back."

Walker, a Martin native, graduated from UT Martin with a bachelor's degree in animal science and received his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Auburn University in 1979. Then, after 32 years at a clinic in Jackson, he finally decided to come home to teach in the newly-created veterinary health technology program.

For Walker, teaching isn't just about book smarts and exams; it's about learning to be not only the best professional, but the best person that you can. "I want to be the best mentor that I can for these students. ... I want to be someone they can look up to and respect and hopefully be a positive example in their lives," he said. Teaching is also about hands-on experience – something UT Martin is proud to provide.

"I think it's important when you're dealing with pre-veterinary science or veterinary technology that you get to touch the animals and handle them and watch how they behave," he explained. He remembers traveling to local farms during his college days to work cattle and horses as part of his animal science studies. His own decision to join the veterinary profession was heavily influenced by the faculty of the time and the willingness of local farmers and veterinarians to let students observe and assist in real-world situations.

These experiences have served the department well and helped students find employment in their chosen fields. "These (veterinary technology) students, when they graduate, they have jobs; and let's face it, the idea of going to college is to get a job," said Walker. "One hundred percent of our people are employed and they actually have jobs as they finish. I see that as a positive push for this department."

# SCENE & HEARD

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UT MARTIN STUDENTS VISIT JAPAN, LEARN INNOVATIVE BUSINESS SKILLS  
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TRAVELLING ABROAD – Pictured at the base of Mt. Fuji in Japan are Maryanna McClure, an animal science major from Dyersburg; Caroline Parish, a political science major from Huntingdon; Chase Haynes, a chemistry major from Columbia; and John Sellers, a psychology student from Henderson.

## (noteworthy)>>>



### BARKER ADDRESSES GRADUATES AT SPRING COMMENCEMENT, MAY 2 >>>

**Dr. John Barker ('89)**, chief accountability officer for Chicago Public Schools, served as the keynote speaker at spring commencement exercises, May 2, in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center. Barker, a Humboldt native, graduated summa cum laude from UT Martin in 1989 with a bachelor's degree in history.

He served as student body president during the 1988-89 academic year before graduating and continuing his education at Vanderbilt University, where he earned a master's degree in public policy in 1990 and a doctoral degree in education and human development in 1997. He spent seven years in administrative roles at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson, Miss., before returning to Tennessee in 2002.

He then spent many of the next 11 years working in the Memphis City School System as research evaluator; executive director of the Department of Research, Evaluation, Assessment and Student Information; and chief of staff. In 2013, Barker left Memphis to begin his current position as chief accountability officer with Chicago Public Schools, where he leads the district's efforts in student assessment, teacher/principal evaluation, performance management and data quality. <<<



### JOHN ABEL PROMOTED TO ASSISTANT VICE CHANCELLOR FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS >>>

**John Abel ('99, '02)** was promoted to assistant vice chancellor for student affairs earlier this year. Abel has been responsible for the Boling University Center in some capacity since 1999, serving as the building's operations manager, assistant director and interim director. He managed not only the building's daily operations, but supervised Office of Student Life activities and directly advised the Student Government Association. Abel received both bachelor's and master's degrees in business administration from UT Martin in 1999 and 2002, respectively.

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### ONLINE MBA PROGRAM RANKED TOP-

**20 FOR VETERANS >>>** UT Martin's online MBA program ranked 16th on the 2015 Best Online Programs for Veterans list, published by U.S. News & World Report. This is the third year U.S. News has published veteran-specific rankings and the first in which MBA programs have been categorized separately. Ranked programs must offer predominantly online coursework and be housed at a regionally accredited institution. They must also score well in a variety of other categories, including program reputation, faculty credentials, retention rates and graduate debt loads. "We find the MBA online format works well with the discipline level of veterans," said Dr. Ross Dickens, dean, College of Business and Global Affairs. "Being able to deliver a cost-effective, excellent program allows us to proudly work with those who served our country." The UT Martin MBA program is accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. For more information, contact the College of Business and Global Affairs at 731-881-7208 or by email at bagrad@utm.edu. <<<



### CARLS NAMED TO TENNESSEE GREAT WAR COMMISSION >>>

Governor Bill Haslam named Dr. Alice-Catherine Carls, Tom Elam distinguished professor of history, to the Tennessee Great War Commission earlier this year. Carls, a Jackson resident, is one of nine commissioners who will spend the next three years sharing the stories of more than 130,000 Tennesseans who served in World War I. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Polish studies and a Master of Arts in German studies from the Université de Paris IV – Sorbonne in 1972 and 1973, respectively. She earned a doctoral degree in history of international relations from the Université de Paris I - Sorbonne in 1976. <<<



ON TOP OF THE WORLD – John Sellers, a senior from Henderson, stands on Mt. Fuji during a travel abroad trip to Japan.

**UT MARTIN STUDENTS VISIT JAPAN, LEARN INNOVATIVE BUSINESS SKILLS >>>** Five senior students from UT Martin traveled to Japan, June 26-July 5, as part of an international experience with the Ned Ray McWherter Institute. Summer Bradley, an art education major from Medina; Chase Haynes, a chemistry major from Columbia; Maryanna McClure, an animal science major from Dyersburg; Caroline Parish, a political science major from Huntingdon; and John Sellers, a psychology major from Henderson, participated in the experience.

The institute seeks to foster a spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship among UT Martin students and residents of Northwest Tennessee. Students participate in travel opportunities through the institute to strengthen their ability to adapt to unfamiliar situations and widen their perspective of the global marketplace. This was the group's first international trip, following a domestic experience in New York City in March.

"The overall purpose of the trip was to put us in situations which were unfamiliar and to teach us to overcome such obstacles. Every situation we were placed in was relatable to some type of business-related problem," said Haynes. While on the trip, the

students were "expected to gain knowledge about how other countries, such as Japan, participate in business, how they use innovation in their daily lives and how our cultures differ," said Parish. The students were able to visit significant tourist sites and meet with local business leaders and ambassadors, including Caroline Kennedy, U.S. ambassador to Japan.

"In our briefing with her (Kennedy), we were able to have one-on-one conversations to tell her about the McWherter Institute and what we as individuals are doing to impact the economic growth of West Tennessee," said Parish. "It was an honor to meet someone that represents our country at such a high level," added McClure. "I enjoyed being able to represent the institute and our university to someone that represents such a historic family in our nation."

The group also participated in a city-wide activity in Tokyo designed in part by trip leader **Tom Hyde ('86)**, president of Mr. Japanese Bilingual Recruiters. "We spent 100 hours in program design to expose (the students) to the widest array of circumstances that would challenge them while simultaneously educating, entertaining and instilling confidence in them," said Hyde.

The students were given a list of locations and specific items

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## (noteworthy)>>>

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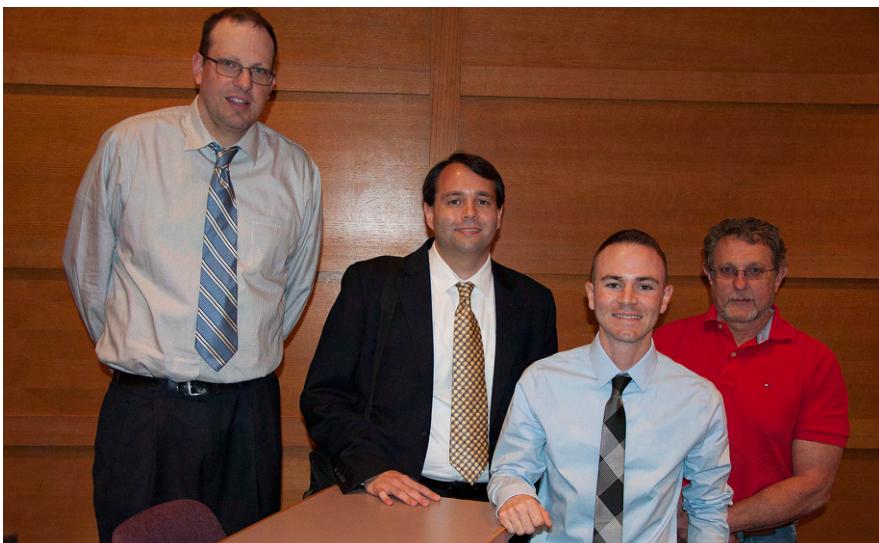
to find and photograph without the use of electronic resources. McClure recalls being surprised by the willingness of the local citizens to help the students on their quest. "There were many bows of respect and everyone was willing to help, even if they didn't speak English. ... Two girls walked us from the train station to our destination, even though it was out of their way," she said. The group also climbed Mt. Fuji and attended a reception for UT Martin alumni living in Japan. Hyde estimates there are close to 2,000 alumni in the country, including those who participated in an international exchange program.

"This experience showed us as innovators that there are different ways to run things; there are different places to station businesses," said Bradley. "The world is much bigger than West Tennessee. We

now have connections halfway across the world."

"International travel forces the curious student to see the world from a different perspective," explained Hyde. "Whether it is from a cultural, political or even religious perspective, the ability to understand differences will enhance global awareness and ultimately lessen international conflict."

Ten UT Martin students are selected each year to participate in the institute, which hopes to incorporate further international travel into the program's curriculum. For more information on how to apply, contact Dr. Bob Smith, interim chancellor and institute director, at 731-881-7500 or by email at [robertsmith@utm.edu](mailto:robertsmith@utm.edu). Information is also available online at <http://www.utm.edu/departments/nrmi/index.php>. <<<



**KELLY MURRAY PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT AWARD >>>** Christopher Mullins ('15), was voted by his classmates to receive the Kelly W. Murray Excellence in Portfolio Management Award for the spring 2015 semester. The award, named for the late son of Dr. Sandra and William Murray, recognizes outstanding effort and dedication managing the UT Martin Tennessee Valley Authority stock portfolio in conjunction with the TVA Investment Challenge. TVA's Investment Challenge is a partnership between TVA and 25 universities in its service territory that provides a real-world learning experience in portfolio management by allowing students to manage actual stock portfolios. Mullins, a Clinton, Ky., resident, earned a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in finance. Pictured (l-r) are Dr. Timothy Perry, assistant professor of finance; Randall Barnes, senior program manager, corporate investments, TVA, Knoxville; Mullins; and William Murray, father of the late Kelly Murray, for whom the award is named. <<<



**A NEW DEAN FOR THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, HEALTH AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES >>>** Cynthia West, professor of social work, accepted a position as dean of the College of Education, Health and Behavioral Sciences this past May. West joined the UT Martin faculty in 1990 and served as chair of the Department of Behavioral Sciences since 2006. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from Stephens College and a Master of Science in social work from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. <<<

## NEW AGRICULTURAL FOCUS OFFERED

**WITHIN MBA PROGRAM >>>** The fall 2015 semester marked the beginning of a new agriculture option through the UT Martin Master of Business Administration program, allowing students to combine the benefits of an MBA with specialized agribusiness coursework.

"[Students] will be getting the best of both worlds. They'll get the traditional MBA training in finance and marketing and that sort of thing, but then they'll also take specialized courses in risk management issues and other topics specialized for agriculture," said Dr. Joey Mehlhorn, Parker Chair of Excellence in Agriculture and professor, Department of Agriculture, Geosciences and Natural Resources.

Students in this concentration take the same core classes as those earning a traditional MBA degree, with the addition of 12 hours of directed coursework designed to focus on the domestic and international agribusiness industry. Those who complete the program will finish with a specialized degree and training in agricultural risk analysis, international trade, commodity features and project management issues in agribusiness.

A master's degree program in agribusiness benefits working professionals in a variety of existing fields, including agricultural lending, crop protection, seed distribution and animal health. Coursework is available in either online or hybrid formats, meaning students may work at their own pace and on their own time.

For more information on the MBA program and the agriculture option, contact Dr. Ashley Kilburn, associate professor of marketing and graduate programs coordinator, College of Business and Global Affairs, at [akilburn@utm.edu](mailto:akilburn@utm.edu) or 731-881-7245. <<<



**DR. ED BOLING REMEMBERED >>>** Dr. Ed Boling, former UT president, passed away June 18 at the age of 93. Boling served as the UT System's 17th president from 1970-1988 and held the longest recent term of service in that office. He was a strong supporter of alumni relationships and was instrumental in the expansion of UT women's athletic programs. The Thompson-Boling Arena in Knoxville and the Boling University Center in Martin are both named in his honor. "The University would not be what it is today without Dr. Boling's leadership, within UT and throughout our state," said UT System President Joe DiPietro. "With his passing we have lost a legendary UT leader." Boling (right) is pictured with Dr. Margaret Perry (left), then UT Martin chancellor, and his wife, Carolyn Boling, at the Boling University Center's dedication ceremony April 28, 1989. <<<



## GARLITZ RECEIVES PHI KAPPA PHI LOVE OF LEARNING AWARD >>>

Dr. Richard Garlitz received a 2015 Love of Learning Award from the National Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society. Garlitz is an associate professor of history and the first UT Martin faculty member on record to receive the award. Love of Learning Awards are given to 80 active society members each spring and fall to help fund post-baccalaureate studies and/or career development. Garlitz plans to use the award to conduct research at the National Archives in College Park, Md., for his upcoming book "A Mission for Development: Utah Universities, the Point Four Program, and U.S.-Iranian Relations." <<<

## (noteworthy)>>>



**STUDENTS WIN BIG** – Pictured are students who attended the awards ceremony: (l-r, front row) Julia Ewoldt, a sophomore from Savannah; Toshya Leonard, a senior from Newbern; Sydney LaFreniere, a senior from Oak Ridge; Tori Seng, a junior from Union City; (back row) Blake Stevens, a graduate from Brighton; Kayla Harmon, a senior from Lewisburg; Dr. Richard Robinson, associate professor of communications and WUTM faculty advisor; and Chuck Hammer, a senior from Martin. All the students are communications majors.

### STUDENTS WIN BIG AT TENNESSEE COLLEGIATE AP AWARDS >>>

Staff members from the UT Martin campus radio station, WUTM 90.3 FM "The Hawk," brought home seven awards from the Tennessee Associated Press Collegiate Journalism Awards Competition, distributed at a ceremony in Nashville this spring.

The awards were presented during the Tennessee Associated Press Broadcasters and Media Editors College Career Day at the First Amendment Center on the Vanderbilt University campus. Students from all college media outlets across the state submitted portfolio collections for consideration in their respective categories.

Sydney LaFreniere, a senior from Oak Ridge, took home first place in the best radio reporter and best radio newscast categories. She was also named "best in show" and won first place overall for the radio division.

Chuck Hammer, a senior from Martin, won first place in the best radio sports reporting category for a collection of submitted stories, including women's soccer, women's basketball and football reports.

Hammer and Quinton Stevens, a senior from Bernie, Mo., won second place in the best radio sports coverage for a broadcast of a home baseball game between UT Martin and Missouri State University.

**Blake Stevens ('15)**, who graduated May 2, placed second

in the best radio reporter category and third in the best radio in-depth/investigative reporting category. In the latter category, Stevens submitted a story covering the impeachment of a student government association executive council member.

"In the profession of journalism, the Associated Press is held up as the gold standard. The students did excellent work this year and were recognized by AP for it," said Dr. Richard Robinson, UT Martin associate professor of communications and faculty adviser for WUTM.

"I believe this indicates that the communications department at UT Martin is teaching our students what they need to know to compete in today's workplace," he added.

These awards come on the heels of WUTM's outstanding performance at both the Southeastern Journalism Conference and the Intercollegiate Broadcasting System Conference.

"WUTM has won numerous awards during the last decade. ... We go head to head with much larger programs and still do very well. The AP's standard of excellence speaks for itself in our profession," said Dr. Robert Nanney, professor and chair, Department of Communications. "I'm proud of the students and of Dr. Robinson for his vision and mentoring them."

For more information, contact Robinson at 731-881-7555 or by email at [<<<](mailto:rrobbins@utm.edu)

**ROTC PROGRAM REMAINS OPEN, ADDS PARTNERSHIP >>>** The UT Martin Reserve Officers' Training Corps, known as Skyhawk Battalion, will remain open, following a notification from the United States Army. The ROTC program was one of 13 student programs notified in fall 2013 of possible closure in 2015.

An ROTC unit was first established at the university in 1952, followed by the start of a four-year ROTC program in 1964. The program has commissioned 671 cadets as second lieutenants in the regular Army, U.S. Army Reserve and Tennessee Army National Guard since its beginnings.

The UT Martin military science program, of which ROTC is a part, includes Bethel University in McKenzie; Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson; and Jackson State Community College, Lane College and Union University in Jackson. A 2015 agreement also adds Murray State University in Murray, Ky., to the program.

The department also welcomed a new professor of military science, Lt. Col. Lowell E. Howard Jr., for the fall 2015 semester.

The UT Office of Government Relations and Advocacy facilitated interactions through the military command structure to appeal the original closure decision. This assistance, combined with the support and encouragement of high-ranking program alumni, played a valuable role in safeguarding the future of the Skyhawk Battalion. Among those were retired Marine Corps Lt. Gen. John Castellaw and retired Army Lt. Gen. Dennis Cavin, both UT Martin graduates.

For more information on the military science program or Skyhawk ROTC Battalion, contact the Department of Military Science and Leadership at [armyrotc@utm.edu](mailto:armyrotc@utm.edu) or by phone at 731-881-7682. <<<



**GRAMMY NOMINATION** – Dr. John Oelrich, director of bands and assistant professor of music, has been nominated for a GRAMMY 2016 Music Educator Award.

**OELRICH IS GRAMMY MUSIC EDUCATOR AWARD QUARTERFINALIST >>>**

Dr. John Oelrich, director of bands and assistant professor of music, has been named a quarterfinalist for the 2016 Music Educator Award, given by the GRAMMY Foundation and The Recording Academy. The third annual award will be presented at the Special Merit and Awards Ceremony and Nominees Reception during GRAMMY week 2016.

The Music Educator Award is given to recognize music educators for their contributions to the musical landscape and is open to current U.S. music teachers from kindergarten through college. Teachers must be nominated in order to apply. A total of 213 music teachers from 914 cities in 42 states have been announced as quarterfinalists from more than 4,500 initial nominations, according to a GRAMMY Foundation press release.

“I love to share in the creation of musical art with my students – both in rehearsals and performances; in the moment, sharing music and emotion openly with each other, human to human,” said Oelrich. “While learning to consistently perform and teach a high level are a significant part of what we do, it’s the people – students and colleagues – that you share those experiences with that are most important. I am proud of and continually inspired by my students and their enthusiasm to enter the field of music education and love to help them along their path toward success.”

Ten finalists will be notified by the end of the year. One winner will receive a \$10,000 honorarium and a \$10,000 grant for his or her school. The winner will also be flown to the GRAMMY Awards’ host city to accept the award and attend the GRAMMYS. The nine other finalists and their schools will each receive \$1,000 honorariums.

“Dr. Oelrich is an outstanding educator who has brought many years of public school teaching experience with him to UT Martin,” said Dr. Jonathan Vest, associate professor, Department of Music. “His recognition by the GRAMMYS indicates his dedication to his students and to the field of music education. We have many superbly qualified educators in the Department of Music and are thrilled that one of our own has been recognized in this way.” <<<

## (noteworthy) >>>



**RECORD SETTING**—Dr. Jason Roberts (right), associate professor of animal science, explains an x-ray to a group of students.

### RECORD NUMBER OF UT MARTIN STUDENTS TO ATTEND VET SCHOOL IN THE FALL >>>

Eighteen students from the University of Tennessee at Martin will attend veterinary school programs beginning this fall. This number breaks the previous record of 10 students, set in 2013.

"The large number of students accepted to veterinary school exemplifies the quality of instruction through experiential learning from our animal and veterinary science faculty," said Dr. Todd Winters, professor and dean, College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences.

Seven students have been accepted into the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Students attending at the flagship campus are Andrew Jordan, of Lewisburg; Brandon Newton, of Greenbrier; Kaylee Penick, of Martin; Zachary Ragland, of Whitehouse; Leslie Serrano, of Drummonds; Kelley Wigington, of Adams; and Jason Wolf, of Sevierville. Four students will attend Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate. Those students are Kathleen Alford, of Dyersburg; Mallory Martin, of Union City; Jamie Franks, of Hohenwald; and Emma Sanders, of Chattanooga.

Lauren Cain, of Thompson's Station, and Katherine Sanders, of Franklin, will both attend Mississippi State University. Laura Croom, of Greenfield, will begin her studies at Auburn University, and Crystal Climer, of Bells, will study at the University of Missouri. Danielle Fuller, of Pocahontas, has accepted a position at Kansas State University. Trey Drinkard, of Old Hickory, and Justin Goodrum, of Hornsby, will both travel to the island nation of St. Christopher and Nevis to attend Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine. Goodrum graduated from UT Martin with a bachelor's degree in 2010.

The UT Martin pre-veterinary curriculum is a concentration under the animal science major, housed in the Department of Agriculture, Geosciences and Natural Resources. For more information on this degree program, contact the department at 731-881-7211.

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### STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT >>>

Courtney Caton, a junior from Huntingdon, travelled to Super Bowl XLIX in Phoenix on Feb. 1, 2015, as part of a special internship program allowing six UT Martin students to gain hands-on sport business experience.

As a result of that experience and her work with the UT Martin Division of University Advancement, Caton was able to meet UT President Joe DiPietro and complete a summer internship with the Office of the President on the Knoxville campus.

"I was exposed to so many people I would never have had the chance to meet otherwise," Caton said. "This opportunity gave me a greater appreciation of UT Martin and the UT System. .... I now personally see the impact private giving makes in the success of the university."

In addition to her summer internship, Caton also competed in the Miss Tennessee Scholarship Pageant on June 20 as Miss Mid-South. Caton is a marketing and management double-major and hopes to become marketing director for a Major League Baseball team. <<<

## (athletics)>>>



**FREIRE NAMED TO NCAA WOMEN'S BASKETBALL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE>>>** UT Martin Athletics Director Julio Freire has been selected as one of 12 members on the NCAA Women's Basketball Oversight Committee. Freire was nominated by Ohio Valley Conference Commissioner Beth DeBauche and was one of more than 400 nominees for a spot on one of seven committees in the NCAA's new governance structure.

The Women's Basketball Oversight Committee ensures that appropriate oversight of women's basketball is maintained, enhances the development and public perception of the sport and makes recommendations related to regular season and postseason women's basketball. The committee prioritizes enhancement of the student-athlete educational experience (academically and athletically) and in doing so, promotes student-athletes' personal growth and leadership development.

The Women's Basketball Oversight Committee supervises qualifications and/or selection procedures for the NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Championship. The committee reviews recommendations from the NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Committee and processes other issues related to the administration of the championship. The committee assumed many of the duties of the former NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Issues Committee and provides direction to the NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Rules Committee regarding playing rules. <<<

### BUTLER JOINS SKYHAWK WOMEN'S BASKETBALL COACHING STAFF >>>

Kevin McMillan, women's basketball coach, announced the addition of former Skyhawk great Heather Butler to the UT Martin women's basketball coaching staff.

Butler begins her collegiate coaching career after being widely renowned as one of the program's all-time greats, pushing the program to four OVC Tournament titles and four consecutive NCAA Tournament appearances. Butler became not only UT Martin's first, but the OVC's first player to make a WNBA roster after signing with the San Antonio Stars.

Butler ranks as the conference's all-time leading scorer with 2,865 career points – ranking 16th in NCAA women's basketball history. She was named the 2014 OVC Player of the Year and was recognized as an All-OVC first team performer all four years from 2010-14. She scored in double figures in 129 consecutive games (every game of her career) ranking as the second-longest streak in NCAA history and fifth overall.

Butler added the distinction of OVC Female Athlete of the Year to her portfolio, along with being a finalist for the 2014 Nancy Lieberman Award and the Senior CLASS Award, as well as a nominee for the Allstate WBCA Good Works team. Additional accolades include being named Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame Amateur Athlete of the Year and Tennessee Sports Writers Association Women's Basketball Player of the Year.

Butler holds UT Martin records for single game points (44, two occasions in 2014); single game field goals attempted (34, 2012); single game three-point field goals made (nine, 2014); single game three-point field goals attempted (16, 2012); single season field goals attempted (704, 2013); single season three-point field goals made (105, 2013); single season three-point field goals attempted (319, 2013); career points (2,865); career field goals made (958); career field goals attempted (2,417); career three-point field goals made (392); and career three-point field goals attempted (1,074).

Butler holds a pair of NCAA records as well for 80 consecutive games with a three-point field goal made and a single season record of 34 consecutive games in 2012-13. She scored at record paces during her career, becoming the NCAA's 21st player with 2,800 points while becoming the first player to reach 2,000 points at UT Martin and fastest to reach the 1,000 point plateau (just 50 games).

Butler earned her bachelor's degree from UT Martin in 2014 with a major in health and human performance. <<<



**Chris Brinkley** has been  
the “**Voice of the Skyhawks**”  
since **2000**.

By Ryne Rickman

**NOT JUST A VOICE BEHIND A MICROPHONE >>>** It was 8:30 p.m. on a sweltering Louisiana evening in March when the University of Tennessee at Martin men's basketball team wrapped up its first postseason victory in 33 years. Word quickly spread that the Skyhawks' next game would be tipping off in a mere 44 hours in South Carolina — a 780-mile road trip. For most, the impending travel schedule for the team and its support staff would cause dread, boredom and a feeling of nausea.

For Chris Brinkley, it's all part of the job. His dream job.

A Martin native, Brinkley is in his 16th season as the "Voice of the Skyhawks" after graduating with a communications degree from UT Martin in 2000. His smooth, signature delivery has been a fixture in West Tennessee households, automobiles and even in the bleachers of UT Martin basketball and football contests since 2000, making him one of the longest tenured radio broadcasters in the Ohio Valley Conference.

It's a pretty impressive accomplishment that blossomed during Brinkley's childhood.

"Actually when I was growing up it was pretty interesting — no one in my family paid attention to sports," said Brinkley, who obtained his master's degree from Murray State in 2012. "For some reason, I was drawn to it. Everything I learned about sports — the rules, terminology and history of the game — I learned from sports broadcasters like Vin Scully and Joe Garagiola in baseball and Marv Albert and Matt Guokas in basketball."

A natural behind the microphone, Brinkley began his radio career at Thunderbolt Broadcasting in 1989. He attributes his success to a key trio of radio personalities who came before him.

"Paul Tinkle, the owner of Thunderbolt Broadcasting, gave me the opportunity to broadcast sports," Brinkley said. "The first game I ever broadcast interestingly enough was at the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center. It was then called the 'Pizza Hut Classic' and we were doing a game with Westview and Middleton. I was 17 years old the first time I had a chance to put on the headset and do a basketball game, thanks to Paul. When I first began calling UT Martin games, I learned a lot from both Bill Haney — the longtime 'Voice of the Skyhawks' — and Tom Britt, who has been a major mentor for me not only in sports broadcasting but in life."

Brinkley, who first became accustomed to the microphone as a public address announcer at the local baseball fields at the age of 12, broadcast his first UT Martin game while filling in for Haney during a men's basketball contest at Evansville in 1999.

Since that moment, Brinkley has had the opportunity to take



Brinkley cuts the net at the Nashville Municipal Auditorium after the Skyhawk women's basketball team won the 2014 OVC Women's Basketball Tournament.

part in more than 2,000 athletic events. In addition to his duties as play-by-play announcer for men's basketball and color commentator for football and women's basketball alongside Britt, he also hosts "Skyhawk Talk" (a weekly coaches radio show from August through March), "Squawk Talk" (a live pregame show during home football games) and is the official emcee for all athletic functions (UT Martin Athletics Hall of Fame induction ceremony, NCAA Tournament selection shows, Ohio Valley Conference Tournament banquets, etc.) at UT Martin.

"To be a good sports broadcaster, you have to have a sound vocabulary and be descriptive," Brinkley said. "You are the eyes for the listener who can't see what you are seeing. To me, each sporting event is like a good fiction novel. There is a narrative and there is a story arc. The story can be the players or the rivalry between the teams or the ebb and flow of the game. You've got to find that narrative and tell it to the listener."

Players and coaches come and go but Brinkley's voice has remained a constant in Skyhawk athletics. Often offering his perspective from the best seat in the house, he attributes UT Martin's recent success to the hard work and dedication of former athletic director Phil Dane and current athletic director Julio Freire.

"Skyhawk athletics has changed a lot since I started — we have improved dramatically," Brinkley said. "Phil passed the baton on to Julio. When I first got here, football was struggling and I remember being excited when we would get a first down because they didn't come very often. Now we compete for championships. I think that men's basketball is as good as we've ever been. Women's basketball

>>> continued on next page

## (athletics)>>

<<< continued from previous page

has been one of the top programs in the nation for the past five years."

When asked which game stands out in his memory, Brinkley doesn't hesitate to identify a marathon contest which took place in his second full season with the Skyhawks.

"It has to be the UT Martin and Eastern Kentucky men's basketball game that went into four overtimes in 2002," Brinkley said. "That was like broadcasting a game-and-a-half. I was with Lee Wilmot, UT Martin's sports information director at the time, and our travel plans were to drive to Richmond, broadcast the game and then come home. After the game, we were both so exhausted that we ended up staying in Richmond that night."

Without a shadow of a doubt, Brinkley has provided a multitude of memorable calls over the radio airwaves over the years at UT Martin. However, it almost didn't come to fruition.

"I auditioned for the public address announcer for the Memphis Grizzlies when they came to Memphis in 2001," Brinkley said. "I was also a finalist for the West Tennessee Diamond Jaxx minor league baseball radio job in Jackson but word got to Phil Dane and Dr. Phil Conn, who was the UT Martin chancellor at the time. We were at an event on campus and Dr. Conn, who always talked to me about radio because he was a former radio deejay himself, asked me if I would consider being the 'Voice of the Skyhawks'. I couldn't turn it down – this is my hometown and I truly love UT Martin."

Brinkley parlayed that opportunity into a highly successful broadcasting career that has led to interviews with dozens of professional athletes/coaches, fellow broadcasters, musicians, governors/elected officials and celebrities. The most memorable face-to-face interview came in 1998 when Brinkley caught up with arguably the greatest basketball player of all-time before an NBA exhibition game featuring the Chicago Bulls and Portland Trail Blazers in Memphis.

"Michael Jordan was at the pinnacle of his career," Brinkley said. "He was getting ready to win his sixth NBA championship, 'Space Jam' had just come out and he was endorsing about 25 different products at the time. It was amazing to stand there and talk to him – I was in awe."

Just in the past two years, Brinkley has branched out and developed his own vocal narration and audio production business at [ChrisBrinkleyProductions.com](http://ChrisBrinkleyProductions.com). Working primarily during the evening and weekends, he has produced voiceover work for more than 120 audiobooks currently available on iTunes, Audible and Amazon while also appearing in a handful of video games, podcasts and

documentaries, including a "D-Day in HD" special that aired on the History Channel in June 2014.

What was once an entertaining trivia game hatched by several long OVC road trips has now turned into Brinkley's latest brainchild: a "Quizzigory" series that includes books, audiobooks and podcasts and puts quiz-type questions in fun, thought-provoking categories. Brinkley describes it as "3-D trivia that is more than just questions and answers."

Brinkley's interest in ventures outside the athletics forum was piqued while he was still a novice in the radio industry.

"I did a syndicated radio show called 'Country Knowledge' under the pseudonym Rex Russell when I was 19 years old," Brinkley said. "I'm most proud of it because it was on 48 stations throughout the southeastern part of the United States. I was so young and naïve and really accomplished that based solely on ambition."

Brinkley also has found a way to give back to his alma mater, and currently serves as an adjunct professor in the UT Martin Department of Communications and the Department of Health and Human Performance.

"The most rewarding part of teaching is interacting with the students," Brinkley said. "I've taught disc golf and a lecture communication class, and although those are two completely different classes, I felt like I learned as much from the students as they learned from me." <<<



Brinkley and Athletic Director Julio Freire prepare for a basketball game in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.



**ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT** – Graduating student-athletes are pictured outside the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center before commencement exercises May 2.

#### **UTM STUDENT-ATHLETES FIND HUGE SUCCESS IN THE**

**CLASSROOM IN 2014-15 >>>** A total of 12 Skyhawk programs exceeded the NCAA grade point average of 3.02 during the 2014-15 academic school year. Individually, 157 student-athletes posted a 3.0 GPA or higher for the entire year.

During the 2015 spring semester, 188 student-athletes posted a 3.0 GPA, an increase from the fall when 186 student-athletes reached that plateau. In the spring, the UT Martin men's basketball team posted their highest team GPA for a semester while excelling

on the court and making an appearance in the semifinals of the CollegeInsider.com Postseason Tournament.

Another standout performance in the classroom was the Skyhawk volleyball team which saw all 14 student-athletes post a 3.0 GPA or higher.

The largest team increase came on the shooting range from the women's rifle program, which saw their team GPA increase nearly 0.3 points under the direction of first-year head coach and UT Martin rifle alum Justin Grinolds. <<<

#### **UT MARTIN ATHLETICS ANNOUNCES 2015 HALL OF FAME**

**CLASS >>>** Four former athletes have been selected to join the exclusive UT Martin Athletics Hall of Fame. Former athletics director Phil Dane (2000-13), soccer player Dani Myrick-Devore (2002-05), golfer Chris Jones (1998-2001) and football player Mike Taylor (1984-87) create the Hall of Fame's Class of 2015, which will be inducted during the 32nd annual Letter Winner's Breakfast on Oct. 10 in conjunction with homecoming festivities.

A Martin native, Dane administered facility upgrades for seven different Skyhawk programs and oversaw 21 Ohio Valley Conference championship teams in his tenure, 15 of which came from 2009-13. Seven different athletic programs captured an OVC championship under Dane, five of which went on to win their first-ever OVC title. UT Martin athletics also produced a new program record for OVC Medal of Honor (4.0 grade point average) and OVC Commissioner's Honor Roll (at least a 3.25 GPA) honorees in three straight years from 2010-13.

Myrick-Devore's presence is still felt throughout the Skyhawk soccer record book, as she is the career leader in points (91), goals (35), assists (21) and game-winning goals (eight). A three-time All-OVC honoree under head coach Nathan Pifer, Myrick-Devore is also

the record holder for points in a single season (39 as a freshman in 2002) and points in a single match (eight in 2002) and was the first player in program history to rack up two career hat tricks (both in 2002). The Midwest City, Okla., native will be the first soccer player inducted into the UT Martin Athletics Hall of Fame.

A four-year letterman under head coach Grover Page, Jones was the first golfer in UT Martin history to earn a spot on both the All-OVC team and OVC All-Tournament squad in the same season, accomplishing that feat as a sophomore in 1999. The Dyersburg native won the New Orleans Classic before finishing in fifth place with a final score of 217 (72-74-71) in the 1999 OVC Championships before leading the Skyhawks with a 74.2 scoring average as a senior in 2000-01.

Taylor was a four-year starter on UT Martin's football offensive line, logging 44 consecutive starts at either the center or guard position. The Jackson native has been ranked as the top football line judge in the Southeastern Conference and has worked numerous postseason assignments, including four SEC Championships, the 2005 National Championship and the 2015 Rose Bowl – the first-ever BCS national semifinal game. <<<

## (athletics)>>>



### CABALLERO COMPETES IN NCAA REGIONALS, IS FIRST SKY-HAWK GOLFER TO WIN OVC MEDALIST HONORS >>>

This past May, UT Martin senior and Ohio Valley Conference medalist Brendon Caballero made history by becoming the first Skyhawk golfer to qualify for the NCAA Regionals since the program transitioned into Division I status in 1992. He won the 2015 OVC individual crown by one stroke after posting a three-round total of 211 (-5) in Muscle Shoals, Ala., on April 23-25. That result capped off a spectacular season for Caballero, who became the first player in Skyhawk history to earn a spot on the 10-man All-OVC team for three consecutive years (2013-2015).

By winning the OVC, Caballero advanced to the NCAA Regionals in Chapel Hill, N.C., on May 14-16. He was one of 45 individuals and 81 teams who competed in six regionals across the country. For the tournament, he compiled eight birdies, 36 pars, six bogeys and four double bogeys, posting a final 54-hole score of 222 (+ 6) to finish seventh out of 10 individuals and 54th overall out of 75 players. <<<

### DOUGLAS NAMED TO CAPITAL ONE ACADEMIC ALL-AMERICAN FIRST TEAM >>>

UT Martin outfielder Taylor Douglas was named to the 2015 Capital One Academic All-America Division I first team, as selected by the College Sports Information Directors of America after a stellar season both on the baseball diamond and in the classroom.

Douglas joined a select list of company after achieving Academic All-American status, becoming the ninth athlete in UT Martin's history as an Ohio Valley Conference member to accomplish the feat while becoming the 13th baseball player in league history to earn first-team honors. He also became the fourth recipient – first baseball player – to be named to the first team in the school's Division I history.

A native of Holladay, Douglas produced a perfect 4.0 grade

### FAUGHT NAMED NRA ALL-AMERICAN IN SMALLBORE, ADVANCES TO NCAA CHAMPIONSHIPS FOR SECOND STRAIGHT YEAR >>>

Dacotah Faught, a junior on the UT Martin rifle team was named an All-American by the National Rifle Association. After yet another record-setting season culminating in her second consecutive NCAA Championships appearance.

Faught finished in 11th place in the smallbore competition at the 2015 NCAA Rifle Championships in Fairbanks, Alaska, earning second-team status in smallbore. This prestigious honor adds to the list of Faught's career accolades, which includes the 2014 OVC Freshman of the Year award, numerous All-OVC team honors and the top scores in UT Martin history in both smallbore (585) and air rifle (597).

An Amenia, N.D., native, Faught fired a 580 at the NCAA Championships in the smallbore competition and finished the season with an average score of 578.7 in the discipline. <<<



point average while majoring in business management. While his academics were on par with the nation's best, his numbers on the diamond were equally as impressive.

The 2015 season saw Douglas lead the Skyhawks in all three Triple Crown categories for the second consecutive year, pacing the squad with a .332 batting average while notching 11 home runs and 47 RBI. His leadership was felt throughout nearly every statistical category, leading the team in games played (52), runs (40), hits (72), doubles (18), triples (2), total bases (127) and stolen bases (11). <<<





**EIGHT SECONDS** – Colt Kitaif participates in the bareback riding event at the 2015 UT Martin Rodeo.

**UT MARTIN WELL-REPRESENTED AT 2015 COLLEGE NATIONAL FINALS RODEO >>>** The UT Martin rodeo teams rounded out their participation in the 2015 College National Finals Rodeo with both teams finishing in the top-20.

The UT Martin men's team finished the CNFR in eighth place out of 53 teams, amassing 450 points. The women's squad tied for 16th out of 35 teams, compiling 120 points.

Clark Adcock finished fifth nationally in tie down roping, earning a final average of 43.6. Adcock also finished fourth in the all-around cowboy competition, piling up 235 points. Dacia Horne finished in 12th place overall in barrel racing, accumulating an average of 66.46.

This national postseason result capped off another highly successful season for UT Martin rodeo in 2015 as the men's team placed in the top-four of all 10 regular season rodeos while the women's team compiled top-five finishes in seven of its eight rodeos. <<<



### SCHROYER NAMED TSWA MEN'S BASKETBALL COACH

**OF THE YEAR >>>** The Tennessee Sports Writers Association recognized UT Martin's Heath Schroyer as its 2015 Men's Basketball Coach of the Year, naming him the top head coach of all colleges and universities in the state of Tennessee.

Schroyer burst onto the scene in his first year at the helm, leading the squad to not only the program's first postseason appearance since the 2008-09 season, but all the way to the Final Four of the CollegeInsider.com Postseason Tournament. A Hugh Durham National Coach of the Year Award finalist, Schroyer engineered one of the best turnarounds in the country in 2014-15, with the Skyhawks posting a 21-13 overall record and a program-record 12 road victories, which was tied for the most in the nation.

Taking over an eight-win program, Schroyer picked up the team's first three postseason wins in Division I history. The 13-win increase was the sixth-largest win improvement in Division I basketball.

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### SKYHAWK EQUESTRIAN TEAM WINS NCEA SPORTSMANSHIP

**AWARD >>>** The UT Martin equestrian team was awarded the 2014-15 National Collegiate Equestrian Association Sportsman Award. The Skyhawks were selected by the NCEA head coaches at the NCEA meetings in Fort Worth, Texas.

This is the first time for UT Martin to receive the NCEA Sportsman Award, which is in its third year.

The Skyhawks demonstrated excellence while participating in the NCEA both on and off the arena. The team logged more than 1,000 hours of community service during the 2014-15 academic year while boasting a 3.15 team GPA for the fall 2014 and spring 2015 semesters. In addition, UT Martin advanced to its ninth consecutive postseason appearance. <<<



## (university advancement)>>>

**PICTURED ABOVE HELPING STUDENTS** – A new scholarship established by UT Martin alum and Obion County native Martha Edinger honors her parents, Carolyn and Kenneth Coleman (center). Jameson Smith (left), a senior agriculture business major from Crockett County, and Zac Morgan (right), a sophomore agriculture business major from Weakley County, are the first to receive the Kenneth and Carolyn Coleman Scholarship.

### **MARTHA EDINGER GIVES BACK TO BENEFIT UT MARTIN AGRICULTURE STUDENTS >>> Martha Edinger ('84)**

remembers the challenges of working her way through UT Martin and law school. The retired attorney and Obion County native now helps ease the financial burden of college for agriculture students who come from family farm backgrounds.

Jameson Smith, senior agriculture business major from Crockett County, and Zac Morgan, sophomore agriculture business major from Weakley County, are the first to receive the Kenneth and Carolyn Coleman Scholarship, which is named for Martha's parents.

Kenneth and Carolyn were raised in Tennessee and Missouri re-

spectively and met near Detroit. He wanted to return to Tennessee and farm, and after losing his job in Michigan, the couple bought a farm in Obion County where they lived, worked and raised four children over 57 years. The home place is bordered by this year's corn crop and includes neatly maintained buildings that house an antique tractor collection, advertising memorabilia, antique toys and other museum-worthy treasures gathered over the years.

Martha attended Obion Central High School, graduated with a history degree from UT Martin and then earned her law degree in 1987 from the University of Tulsa. Now retired from family law practice, Martha's upbringing and path to success inspired her to

help today's UT Martin students. "I got my degree from UTM and promised myself that if I was ever in a position to start a scholarship in my parents' honor, I would do so," she said. She and her husband, Sandy, also started a scholarship in his parents' honor at Stetson University in Florida.

"When I went to school, I worked and paid my way through and took out student loans," she remembered. "I want to help some of these younger people so they don't have to worry so much...about money all the time, because I stayed worried about money a lot when I was in school." She laughs now about the financial challenges she faced in college, but she and her husband are serious about helping students.

Sandy is a retired banker whose father was in the military. The Stetson University scholarship benefits members of the military who want to attend college. "It was really a fulfilling thing for us to do this (set up scholarships) for both schools, so we're pretty happy about it," he said.

Jameson Smith was not raised on a farm but helped a relative farm, which included everything from cutting and hauling hay to tending different row crops. The scholarship comes at an important time for the Crockett County native. "It allows me to continue my education," he said. "Any other student in school, they know the financial load can be hard at times to continue to go through school, just with all the tuition and books and all that, and it just allows me to continue my dream of getting a degree at UT Martin." His career goals include working for a company that allows him to pursue sales or marketing.

Zac Morgan's family owns a farm where they raise a few hogs but mostly grow soybeans, wheat and corn. "Coming from a farm background, I know that some years, especially if you're putting somebody through college, your income isn't necessarily guaranteed, depending on crop prices and whether or not your crop gets damaged in the field, or so many variables going into it," he said. "The fact that somebody wants to give students money who want to pursue a degree ... means a lot to me." Zac is interested in agricultural sales but has also considered becoming an agriculture loan officer at a bank.

Martha and Sandy now split their time between Nashville and Sarasota, Fla., sharing their generosity with two universities to help students like Jameson and Zac concentrate more on college and spend a little less time worrying about paying for a college education. <<<

**UT MARTIN TIES RUN DEEP FOR COLEMAN FAMILY >>>** UT Martin is a familiar educational destination for members of the Kenneth and Carolyn Coleman family. The following list recalls some of these family members. Others not listed began college at UT Martin Branch and later UT Martin but transferred because of marriage, job opportunities and other reasons.

#### Siblings:

- Sheri Coleman ('85) – sister to Martha Edinger and second daughter of Kenneth and Carolyn Coleman

#### Nieces and nephews of Kenneth and Carolyn, some by marriage:

- Dennis Lee Coleman ('71) and his wife, Becky Burdette Coleman ('77)
- Ruth Coleman ('84, MBA '92)
- Mellie Jenkins Coleman earned a secretarial degree 1969-71
- Mary Cunningham Coleman ('77, MS '85, 45+)

#### Great nieces and nephews of Kenneth and Carolyn:

- John Marshall Brasfield ('96)
- Robert Edwin Brasfield ('97)
- Charles Robbins Priest ('91)
- Michael Coleman Priest ('95)
- Cindy Wagster Vincent ('91)
- Laurie Coleman Hahn

#### Great great nieces and nephews of Kenneth and Carolyn:

- Ashton Elizabeth Priest (class of 2018)
- Taylor Marie Brasfield (class of 2018)
- J.C. Hahn (class of 2018)
- Kathryn Hahn (class of 2018)



## (university advancement)>>>



**REDEDICATION CEREMONY FOR HISTORIC PAUL MEEK PAINTING** – A painting of Dr. Paul Meek has returned to its home in the Paul Meek Library after a six-month cleaning. Members of the Meek family unveiled the painting during a rededication ceremony held Aug. 15. Pictured (l to r) are Randy Brundige, mayor of Martin; Meek family members Lisa Roney, granddaughter; Kelly Roney, grandson; Dr. Anne Meek, daughter; John Meek, grandson; and Dr. Robert Smith, UT Martin interim chancellor. Meek held leadership positions at UT Martin as executive officer, dean, UT vice president and chancellor from 1934 to 1967. He died Nov. 2, 1972, at the age of 75.



**SERVICE RECOGNIZED** – Rickey McCurry (right), president and CEO of the UT Foundation, presented Dr. Lynn Alexander (center) with a plaque recognizing her service on the UT Foundation Board of Trustees during its June 12 meeting. Alexander, professor of English and dean of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts, completed her term of service this summer. They are pictured with Bill Blankenship ('55), foundation board member.

**NEW APPOINTMENT >>>** Whitney Metz, a South Carolina native, joined the UT Martin Office of Development as associate director of development this past semester. Metz is responsible for working with alumni and donors to accomplish university goals. She plays a major role in planning of donor recognition ceremonies and other special events to thank university supporters.

Metz comes to UT Martin after five years with the University of South Carolina, working with both the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and the Moore School of Business. She received a Bachelor of Arts in history from Newberry College and a master's degree in higher education business administration from the University of South Carolina. She can be reached by phone at 731-881-7626 or by email at [<<<](mailto:wmetz@utm.edu)

**LEGACY LUNCHEON >>>** There is no greater praise than when alumni return to campus with their families to pass the Skyhawk experience on to the next generation of students. UT Martin hosts a Legacy Luncheon at the start of each fall semester to welcome incoming freshman students who are the children or grandchildren of university alumni. These "legacies" and their families gathered in the Paul Meek Library on Aug. 21 for lunch and remarks by Dr. Robert Smith, UT Martin interim chancellor, and Charley Deal, assistant vice chancellor of alumni relations. Both speakers welcomed alumni home and thanked them for the gift of their students, promising to provide this generation with the same educational and social experiences enjoyed by their parents and grandparents.



**NEW SKYHAWK** – Jacolby Peeler (center) is pictured with her parents Stephanie ('96) and Michael Peeler ('95). Jacolby is a graduate of Montgomery Central High School near Clarksville and is studying Spanish.



**FAMILY TRADITION** – Karl Ullrich II (center), is pictured with his mother Genie Ullrich (left) and his grandmother, Sara Seiber ('69, '72). Karl's father is also an alum ('91) and he is the grandson of the late Stan Seiber, professor emeritus of history, who passed away in February. Karl is a graduate of Union City High School and is studying engineering.



#### **SCHOLARSHIP FUND ESTABLISHED IN MEMORY OF**

**CAROLYN WHITE >>>** The Westview High School class of 1983 has established a scholarship in memory of longtime Weakley County educator Carolyn White. The Carolyn White Scholarship will be awarded to a graduating Westview senior who will attend UT Martin and major in history or political science.

**White ('48, BA UTK '50)** taught history for 28 years and was vice principal during the final seven years of her Westview career.

**Julia Brundige ('76, MS '85)**, one of White's daughters, credits **Alicia Field Pinto ('87)**, a member of the '83 Westview class, for her role in establishing the scholarship.

"I guess the greatest thing she taught me and her classes is that learning can be fun," Brundige said in a statement about her mother. "And the definition of an educated person is one that can look at both sides of an issue and remain calm." She recalled that her mother gave "warts" to students who misbehaved, but she loved her students "warts and all."

Gifts to the scholarship can be made online to UT Martin Advancement Services at [utmforever.com](http://utmforever.com) or by calling 731-881-7620. Pictured (l to r) are above Jalia Brundige, Bonnie Brundige Moore (Brundige's daughter and White's granddaughter) and Alicia Pinto.

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# Bob Smith sees *plenty* of *promise* for UT Martin

by Bud Grimes

Dr. Bob Smith knows how to lead award-winning innovations in enrollment management, improving student retention rates, and strengthening academic quality. He accomplished these things and more during more than nine years as president of Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania. He is using those skills again as UT Martin's interim chancellor after assuming the position June 1. Smith, the former dean of the university's College of Arts and Sciences and co-creator and former executive director of the UT Martin WestStar Leadership Program, was welcomed to the university by UT President Joe DiPietro during a campus and community reception Friday, May 1. He offered his thoughts on returning to Martin and what's ahead for the university in this Campus Scene Q&A.

**Q:** How have you been received by the campus, the community, alumni and friends of the university since becoming interim chancellor?

**A:** The response from the community has been overwhelming and humbling. Certainly one feeling I get is how supportive people are of the university.

**Q:** What appealed to you about taking on this role, and how long do you expect to be here?

**A:** Dr. DiPietro described to me his vision for this role as needing someone who loved the university and had experience addressing certain issues such as enrollment and leadership development. I believed this was a unique opportunity to give back to a place that I did love and where I learned a great deal that might be useful in realizing his vision. He and I have agreed to my being here for something in the neighborhood of one year. Many of the initiatives we will start during this time may not be completed but, hopefully, will be well on their way to reaching success. When he feels that we have momentum around those issues, he will likely start the search for an appointed chancellor.

**Q:** You've been retired for a couple of years since serving as a university president. How are you adjusting to returning to the job's rapid and demanding pace?

**A:** Even in retirement, I'm an active person used to pushing myself to accomplish goals and complete projects. The biggest change, which every retiree understands, is going back to being managed by a calendar rather than being

free to make spontaneous choices in how you spend your day.

**Q:** Where do you see some major opportunities for UT Martin?

**A:** I'm passionate about communicating a vision that excites current and prospective students about the unique value of the UTM education as one that includes an outstanding living-learning experience on our main campus. Our four centers in Jackson, Parsons, Selmer and Ripley, plus programs through UT Online, provide vital outreach and expand learning opportunities in the West Tennessee region and beyond. We truly are a university to serve all of West Tennessee.

**Q:** Where do you see the biggest challenges?

**A:** There are a number of challenges but the one that threads through all of them is a unified commitment to best serve our students. Our vision needs sharper focus where we can align our work rather than having separate silos of operation. The latter is inefficient and competitive rather than integrated and collaborative.

**Q:** Have there been "pleasant surprises" since you've returned?

**A:** Since you phrased it that way, not really surprises. What has been heartwarming is the commitment so many people have to building greatness here. Without that commitment, this would be a difficult job.

**Q:** Have you encountered some things you didn't expect?



**A:** Daily! Although I have had a number of unexpected issues arise, I've been somewhat amazed that they are challenges I've had in other settings. I've found it interesting that our problems are not terribly unique to what many institutions are facing.

**Q:** You've said often that one of your major jobs is to make the UT Martin chancellor's position attractive for top candidates. You know how to identify talent at this level – what's your profile of the "perfect person" as the next UTM chancellor?

**A:** I'm not going to design that profile. What I hope we accomplish this year will be found in that profile. We certainly want somebody who's going to put students first, and as part of that, they're going to put teaching – and this being a teaching-engaged campus – as the number-one priority. There is considerable room in the higher-education landscape for institutions that are committed to undergraduate education. Having a faculty who enjoy teaching freshmen as much as they enjoy teaching seniors is an important goal, and a chancellor who finds ways to support, reward, and nurture that value while we grow the reputation of the institution will be successful. That's the heart of UT Martin.

**Q:** You've already spoken to many audiences since returning. What's your 30-second elevator speech on why a prospective student should attend UT Martin?

**A:** I see a great need to provide a complete education for our students. An education that not only prepares them to be successful in their careers through the teaching and mentoring of talented faculty knowledgeable in their discipline but an education that prepares them to be leaders in their place of work and community, hopefully the region and possibly the nation. The education should include abilities to work in diverse groups, acceptance of civic responsibilities and engagements with civil behavior. We can provide both these types of education through meaningful living-learning environments on our campus. That means strong learning

communities that help a student develop through his or her housing, recreational, club and organizational experiences. These need to be more intentional educational experiences, well integrated into the classroom and laboratory experiences. Everything we do should be assessed in how it positively shapes the overall education of our students.

# THE KING OF WRAP

Photos and Story by Nathan Morgan

On a hot summer afternoon in Martin, professor Dorotha Norton walked out the front doors of Gooch Hall. Though the summer air filled her lungs and made it harder to breath, Norton didn't seem to notice. She took a right at the bottom of the stairs and made a beeline toward the Hall-Moody Administration Building. When she arrived, she opened the door, walked inside and headed straight for the Office of Academic Records. Norton was on a mission. Her student, Jamie Mullican, had just finished recording his final extra-credit cassette tape for her voice and diction class, and she had come to amend his grade. Once inside, Norton requested Mullican's file and changed the grade to reflect his extra credit, giving him an exact 2.0 GPA – just enough to graduate.

"I mean, I'm not gonna lie to you, I had horrible grades," said Mullican. "I was (at UT Martin) for designing. I was focused on having a good time and being an 'art' guy. You know? I was an artsy guy playing basketball and hanging out with a fraternity (Kappa Alpha Order)."

As Norton turned to leave records, feeling comfortable that Mullican would walk the commencement stage, a voice behind the counter said, "He's still not going to graduate." Puzzled, Norton turned around. "He owes \$180 in parking tickets," the voice added. Norton promptly pulled a checkbook from her purse and paid the \$180 herself.

"Then (she) called my mother to tell her that her son was going to walk," explained Mullican. "And then that's when my mom called me and said, 'Your teacher, Mrs. Norton, I just had a long conversation with her, and she just made sure you're gonna graduate. You need to go to the flower shop right now and get her a bouquet of flowers and go hand deliver them and hug that woman.'"

an." Needless to say, he did it. "I gave her a big hug," said Mullican with a laugh.

These days **Mullican (BFA '98)** pays his own parking tickets. His hard work and tireless effort has paid off.

Mullican is an accomplished "wrap artist" in Nashville, but don't let the title fool you. You won't find his work on iTunes.

"We have been chased down by young guys trying to give us demo tapes," explained Mullican. "We'll be at gas stations and guys will come up and be like, 'Hey man, do you guys freestyle?' – it happens all the time." To people like this, Mullican just says, "Dude, check the spelling."

No, you're more likely to see Mullican's work as you drive down the highway. Mullican, known to most as Mully, is the owner of WrapArtist.com and one of the country's leading experts in designing and installing professional bus wraps, which are basically big

vinyl stickers used to cover tour buses and tractor-trailers. The wraps are applied over the bus' original paint to change the appearance for a short time and can be quickly removed afterward, returning the bus to its original condition. This is a desirable service in Music City.

In fact, most of the buses Mullican wraps have been leased by various bands and artists in and around Nashville.

In his years since leaving UT Martin, Mullican has produced more than 1,000 premium wrap designs, and he doesn't show any signs of slowing down. Just this year alone, he has done work for American country music sensations Lady Antebellum, Kenny Chesney, Jake Owen and RaeLynn, the rock band Black Veil Brides and comedian Jim

Gaffigan, to name a few. During this interview,

Mullican was wrapping a tour bus in satin black vinyl with white overlays for the blues-rock band Dorothy.

But through it all, Mullican





remains humble. "Am I the best graphic artist? No. Am I the best wrap guy? No. Am I the best installer? No, not by a long shot. But, one thing I will always do is give 150% on every job. I try to do the best job I possibly can. And when it fails, I take care of it. That, to me, is business in a nutshell," he said.

Mullican came to UT Martin in the fall of 1992 to play basketball under head coach Cal Luther, but left the team his freshman year after a knee injury and the realization that Division I basketball just wasn't for him. "The first couple of years (at UTM) I didn't know what I wanted to do," he admitted.

However, that changed when he discovered graphic art. He liked it so much that he continued to pursue a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, even though UT Martin did not have a graphic design program at the time.

"I didn't want to transfer; I wanted to finish at UT Martin. I had too many friends, fraternity, everything," he said.

Desperate, Mullican approached Dr. Earl Norwood, fine and performing arts director, and received approval for a BFA with an emphasis in graphics. But, as part of the agreement, Mullican would have to take a variety of art classes, including 12 hours with Dr. Carolyn Bynum, professor of dance.

Mullican was reluctant. "I was like, 'I am not going to put on a tutu and get out there and dance.'" And, to his relief, he never had to. Instead, Mullican would draw "whimsical" shapes and then describe how they related to the movements covered in class. Although unconventional, Bynum approved. "She allowed me to capture the essence of dance through illustration," Mullican explained. However, Bynum made it quite clear that Mullican had to show up for class – he could never miss.

After graduating from UT Martin, he spent six months looking for work. Finally, he landed a job with a local FASTSIGNS, a nationwide franchise sign shop specializing in signs and specialty graphics, in Antioch, and spent three years running the company's large format digital printing department. His biggest account at the time was

the Nashville Predators who had just come to Nashville. Mullican credits the quick turnaround time at FASTSIGNS for helping him perfect his skills and recommends that type of work to any beginning graphic artist. "You need to go to a sign shop. You need to go to a fast-paced environment, that makes you think and do your art work faster and faster," he said.

After four years with FASTSIGNS, Mullican heard that another company, Precision Signworks in Nashville, had taken an interest in him. "They were the ones doing all the cool stuff," remembers Mullican. Looking for something more, he began moonlighting for Precision Signworks. This was his first exposure to big fleet accounts, tractor trailers and tour buses. This is where he really got his feet wet. Eventually he was promoted to art director at Precision Signworks. His job was to oversee production, and he had four graphic designers working under him. Eventually though, Mullican says he "topped out." He needed a change.

Mullican, a self-described workaholic, was tired of working hard for someone else. He wanted to set his own schedule, and he wanted to be rewarded for his hard work and dedication. So, in late 2004, he left Precision Signworks and partnered with a friend out of Dallas to start his first business, TrafficGrafix.com.

His partner funded the venture, and Mullican brought his years of knowledge and design skills from the wrap industry. The relationship was perfect. His partner sold the wraps, while Mullican designed them and did all the client interaction. They outsourced the printing and the wrap installation. "We were basically the middlemen," said Mullican. He was finally doing well enough that his wife, Michelle, could quit her job and stay home with their two daughters, Masyn and Aubree. The business was nationwide, and they were picking up clients like Ziggy Marley, son of the legendary Jamaican reggae singer Bob Marley.

Then in 2010, Mullican received an unexpected phone call from his partner who said he was "tired of the rat race and wanted out."

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(above) A member of Mullican's team works diligently to complete a wrap.



STAY OUT OF  
THE NO-ZONEDRIVE TO  
ZERO  
MORTALITIES

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From there they sold the company, and Mullican found himself at a crossroads. "I was 38 years old, and I was like, 'What am I going to do now?'" he remembered. But, never one to give up, Mullican began taking steps towards starting a new business.

Dubbed by his friends in the industry as "The Wrap Artist," Mullican's first step was to purchase the domain name WrapArtist.com. From there, he created the WrapArtist logo. Mullican felt that with the right image, he could easily begin picking up clients. "I'm the epitome — and you can quote me on this, this is my motto — I am the epitome of, 'Fake it till you make it,'" said Mullican. "If you look at my marketing ... you would never know that it's just one guy working from the basement of his house." However, this is only half true.

Although he has no full-time employees, he does get help from a select group of loyal independent contractors who assist him with his wrap installs and, in turn, he provides them all with branded apparel and a good paycheck. He encourages a professional, polished look. "It's all about presentation," he said. He has also, in the last six months, leased a building in an industrial area of Nashville near the Cumberland River to serve as his installation space.

Mullican applies that same level of care to his art. He takes great pride in what he does and never settles. "There's not a bus that doesn't go out of this shop that I don't grab all the guys and I'll be like, 'We can do better than this, and if we can't we need to try. Because this is what we're selling. We're selling an image,'" he said, adding, "I just want things done the right way."

In addition to his meticulous nature, Mullican says what really sets him apart from the competition is his honesty and an ability to treat people how he would want to be treated — skills that go a long way in the wrap industry. He uses the highest quality materials on each job. He knows the wrap process from start to finish, which allows him to give fair and accurate estimates of time and cost, which he says is not always the case at larger wrap companies.

But perhaps his best quality is the ability to communicate, which he credits to his time at UT Martin. "I guess that's what I learned most from UT Martin, is how to communicate," said Mullican as he chuckled. "It's funny ... that was my worst class, but yet my best teacher. The one that took care of me." His communications professor, Dorotha Norton, would be proud.

**(opposite page)** Each wrap project requires a team of experienced contractors dedicated to detail, and Mullican expects the best.

**(right)** Mullican is pictured in his new installation space.



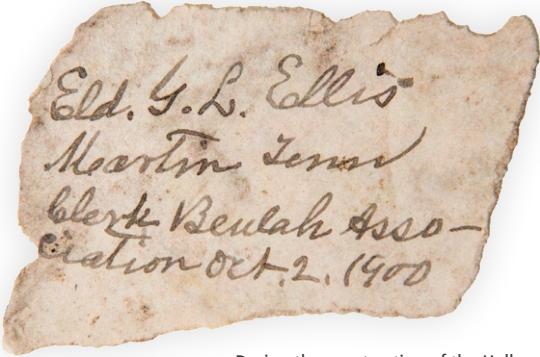
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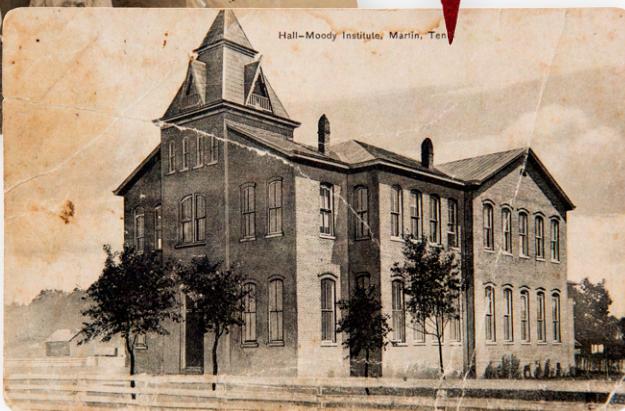


■ A crimson and gold letterman sweater (left) bears the letters "H" and "M" for Hall-Moody. This is one of two sweaters of its kind preserved in UT Martin's collection.

**THIS YEAR** marks the 115th anniversary of the Hall-Moody Institute and the beginning of the University of Tennessee at Martin. To celebrate, we are launching a new feature section for Campus Scene called "From the Archives." Through this section we hope to highlight unique and interesting items from the Alliene and Jimmie S. Corbitt Special Collections. For more information or to make a donation, contact Special Collections and Archives at 731-881-7094 or [speccoll@utm.edu](mailto:speccoll@utm.edu). <<<



■ During the construction of the Hall-Moody Institute, a time capsule was placed in the building's cornerstone. Inside were various items, including a bible, Martin Mail newspaper from Sept. 28, 1900, and a wooden crayon box containing dozens of paper scraps with names of people who were present at the time the capsule was sealed. This scrap (above), dated Oct. 2, 1900, bears the name of Elder G.L. Ellis, of Martin, clerk of the Beulah Association.



■ Photos show the sophomore class of 1919 (top left) and the original Hall-Moody Institute building, which was constructed on a site donated by Ava Gardner Brooks. The institute was named for two locally prominent Baptist ministers, J.N. Hall and J.B. Moody. In 1917 the Hall-Moody Institute's name was changed to the "Hall-Moody Normal School" and teacher training became its major focus.



■ A pennant from the early days of the Hall-Moody Institute (left). One of the few items that survives from the original Hall-Moody Institute building is this newel post (right), which is believed to be from the building's main staircase.





## Farming is a **way of life** for the **Chester family**

by Bud Grimes and photos by Nathan Morgan

**John Chester ('00)** appeared on the cover of the winter 2014-15 edition of Tennessee Home & Farm, an official publication of the Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation. The magazine's winter edition profiled John and the farming tradition that is part of his family heritage. The Athens native owns a farm in Weakley County and also works for a 5,000-acre corn, soybeans and wheat farm owned by **Larry ('60)** and **Keith Fowler ('85)**, who like John, are recognized for their farming commitment and success. John is married to **Mary Margaret Pritchett ('02)**, and they have two children: Mary Anna, 10, and Lake, 7. He provided these edited comments for Campus Scene.

### **What led to your being on the cover of Tennessee Home and Farm magazine?**

About 12 years ago, after graduating from UT Martin, Mary Margaret and I started attending monthly meetings held by Weakley County Young Farmer and Ranchers, which led us to being active in Tennessee Farm Bureau's Young Farmer and Rancher Program, also known as YF&R. YF&R is an organized group of Young farmers and agribusiness men and women that range from the ages of 18-35. The program offers unique opportunities for young farmers to network, assist in policy development and build leadership qualities we can use on our own operations, in our communities and perhaps even at state and national levels.

Over the past 11 years, I have been very active in this program. In 2007, Mary Margaret and I were named Tennessee Farm

Bureau's Excellence in Agriculture Award winners and then in 2008 were named national winners by the American Farm Bureau. In 2010, I was elected to serve as chairman of the Tennessee Farm Bureau YF&R and served a term on the Tennessee Farm Bureau Board of Directors. Afterward, I was appointed to one of eight positions on the American Farm Bureau YF&R National Committee for 2011-13.

Tennessee Home & Farm highlights a farmer in every issue; somehow I was the one fortunate enough to be placed on the cover. I suppose it might have a little something to do with my success as a farmer, but mainly the leadership I have given to the Tennessee Farm Bureau's YF&R program.

### **How did you come to attend UT Martin?**

Believe it or not, I was enrolled at Tennessee Tech and my tuition was paid. Two weeks before starting classes, I told my parents I wanted to visit UTM one more time – just to make sure TTU was the right choice. Fortunately for me, there just happened to be one more UTM orientation on the calendar, and we made the trip. I don't remember much about that trip, other than knowing on the way home I was coming right back. I felt secure at UTM, and the faculty seemed to be genuine and eager to help. Something told me UT Martin was right for me, and indeed it was.

### **Why did you choose farming to make a living?**

I was raised on a dairy near Sweetwater. I suppose when you grow up on a dairy farm, you don't know how to do much else.

But, as a child I loved every minute I could spend on the farm. So many life lessons are taught right on the farm, from seeing a calf born and planting seeds to learning how to save money in the good years to make it through the tough ones. I was confident that, by being a farmer, I could do what I loved along with having my family right beside me.

**What kind of farm do you own?**

I raise 450 acres of row crops, which consists of corn, soybeans and wheat. I also raise beef cattle and hybrid bermuda hay, most of which I sell to customers that have horses.

**What gives you the greatest satisfaction in farming?**

Some of the greatest satisfactions in farming are the simplest. I love planting a seed into the soil, watching it emerge and unfold its first two leaves to begin its life cycle. I also enjoy pulling into the pasture to see a newborn calf standing on four wobbly legs next to its mother. Working closely with nature is exciting for me. It's a great way to raise a family and have passion about what you do on a daily basis.

**What are your biggest challenges?**

As a farmer, I have lots of challenges. Many would say the weather. Others might say disease or high land prices. But for me, farming today, like many other businesses, is about capitalizing on certain opportunities. It's a challenge to know which opportunities deserve a pass and which ones could turn golden. Many times I don't know until after time has passed whether I made the right decision, but I know each challenge represents a perfect opportunity to learn a valuable lesson. As a young producer, often it is difficult to compete with older, stable producers who have been involved in local agriculture for many more years than me. Young farmers, like me, are eager to be progressive and take costly risks. Sometimes it is a struggle to let an opportunity pass by, even knowing I could incorporate it into my farming operation.

**Tell us about your family and what kind of advice you'd give your children if they someday choose this life.**

I hope I can provide Mary Anna and Lake the opportunity to become the next generation to farm if they choose to. As I have mentioned, farming is definitely a family affair, and I thoroughly enjoy having my children with me on the farm. Mary Margaret and I love watching them see how things grow and change on the farm. I will encourage both of them to continue their education through college. I would also remind them that to farm, you must love it. Often we work countless hours without a paycheck, but the satisfaction of doing what you love always outweighs the money you might get in return.

(right) Mary Margaret, John, Lake and Mary Anna Chester raise 450 acres of row crops.





# When cable & country music joined forces, Hal Willis was there

by Bud Grimes and photos by Nathan Morgan

Navigating the highly competitive music industry is nothing new for **Hal Willis** ('75, UTK Law School '78). So it comes as no surprise that this seasoned industry professional might have "the next big thing" to connect fans with their favorite music artists. AmericanMusicChannel.com – an innovative virtual platform for artists and fans – is taking shape, and the West Tennessee native is now using his years of experience to give back to UT Martin. As a board member for the university's Ned Ray McWherter Institute, Willis hopes to pass his industry knowledge on to the next generation of business professionals – and he has plenty to offer.

Raised in Milan, Willis was strong academically, active in sports and counted playing quarterback for legendary Coach John Tucker's first Milan High School football team among his accomplishments. When the time came to choose a college, UT Martin offered the small college town and campus size that he preferred.

Although admittedly a low-key person, Willis was a member of the Pi Kappa Alpha Fraternity, served as treasurer, and learned a lot about business and dealing with people during the construction of a new chapter house. He earned an undergraduate degree in economics, minored in accounting and turned his attention to law school.

Even in his late teens, Willis envisioned becoming a corporate attorney. His father was drafted into the military while in college and never completed his degree, but he encouraged his son to get as much education as possible.

"He just said, 'As long as you want to go to school, I'll pay for it. Keep going to

school as long as you want to,'" Willis recalled. His chosen career path took shape when he was accepted to the UT College of Law, earned his law degree in June of 1978 and then accepted a position with the National Life and Accident Insurance Company in Nashville. His first assignment was to pass the bar exam, which he accomplished in October. His corporate career then began in earnest.

"They (National Life) almost immediately started getting tender offers to buy the company by bigger insurance companies, and they eventually got bought by American General. It was stated up front they didn't want the entertainment properties," he said.

He did not know until later about the company's connections with the Grand Ole Opry and Opryland. Enter the Gaylord Entertainment Company, a spinoff of Oklahoma Publishing, which had bought a Los Angeles production company that owned the Hee Haw show, taped in a studio in the back of the Grand Ole Opry House.

Gaylord bought the entertainment assets from American General, which included WSM-TV in Nashville. The station was sold so the company could start a cable TV network for music called The Nashville Network. Only ABC, CBS and NBC were known as networks at the time, so the idea of a cable network not already available over the air was new.

"I think we (the Nashville Network) were the fifth cable network in existence," Willis said. "My boss was handling all the FCC work necessary to sell the TV station (WSM), which was a full-time job, and he sent me to meet these cable TV guys. Nobody had a clue how big that business

was going to be. I was in my mid-20s and ended up doing all the legal work for TNN."

TNN was launched in 1983 with whatever programming the network could afford to air. "It (TNN) really took off when we took NASCAR away from ESPN," he said. The network had aired motorcycle racing, drag racing and Busch Series racing before airing NASCAR'S Winston Cup Series, where greater profits were possible. "There's a big correlation between that fan base and the country music fan base," he said.

In 1991, TNN bought CMT from a group of investors so country music videos could be added to the station's programming. He closed this deal "with 27 lawyers on the other side," a process that took 10 months.

"The next mission was to launch it (CMT) in Europe, so I went to Europe probably once a month for about four years and set it up over there. Somewhere along the way they said, 'You're running this company. Why don't we just give you the title and turn it over to you?'"

Willis officially became vice president, general manager and primary legal advisor and led CMT for five years. "We were really successful for a few years there after we changed that format," he said. "We led the entire cable industry in the percentage of viewers that were 18-34-year-old females, regularly beating MTV."

Westinghouse was the partner company, which bought CBS and eventually the Gaylord cable networks. Corporate acquisitions and mergers have consequences, and these transactions led to his job being eliminated. "I like to joke – I'm the (only) guy I know that ever got a six-figure

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severance check and a six-figure bonus the same day," he said. "And I decided from there on out I was going to try not to work for anybody else again, because I didn't want that to happen again."

Willis and the music industry have seen and experienced many changes since the time of TNN and CMT. Radio stations once aired songs that promoted record and CD sales primarily at Walmart, a top sales outlet for the music industry; everything changed with the advent of digital music platforms. A year after leaving CMT, Willis started a small company and wrote a business plan with the belief that the entertainment industry had to embrace new technology soon; he also believed technology stocks were about to get hot.

"I knew that the whole record label, radio station, Walmart infrastructure was about to come down. I'd been on the Country Music Association board, and I'd seen what was coming," he said. "Radio

stations were consolidating into corporate conglomerates, and they were all public companies; they couldn't afford for their ratings to drop.

"So they would bring in consultants to tell them what to play, and the playlists got shorter, and they wouldn't take as many chances, and the record labels ... were beginning to have trouble making a profit."

He met with representatives from a defense contracting firm in Connecticut that "had perfected digital video conferencing for the military for security encryption," and their goal was to commercialize this technology. They came to Willis as they tested the technology through an independent telephone company in Middle Tennessee.

Their initial concept was to play music videos in bars and provide the digital TV signal over telephone lines. Willis tweaked the concept and wrote a business plan for what later became AT&T's U-Verse. The group partnered with Georgia Tech and a

telephone company near Atlanta to build a prototype for the first system to ever deliver digital video over telephone lines, and "the stock market loved it to the tune of a 20-fold gain in a matter of months."

Drawing on his experience with CMT in Europe, he was inspired to coin the term "American Music" and proceeded to develop and launch AmericanMusicChannel.com, believed to be the first website to play music videos on the Internet. The site is designed for fans and emerging artists across the music spectrum.

"I built a basic site with all the major – label music video content when the labels stopped requiring license fees and started having everything hosted on their own syndication platforms," he said. "The next phase is to build a social network piece so the new artists can put their material up and tie in their Facebook and YouTube and Twitter feeds into one site." He describes this as "Myspace, YouTube, American Idol



Willis is pictured at a meeting of the Ned Ray McWherter Institute board with members J. Houston Gordon ('68, left) and Tom Hyde ('86).

and LinkedIn for music all rolled into one."

AmericanMusicChannel.com should benefit artists who can't get or don't want a record deal, "because the record labels are taking so much of the money. I'm excited about that." He added, "I built the first phase and just sort of waited until the technology was ready and the right partner came along. You can't force new technology on the consumer. You just have to wait on it to come to you and build a model that doesn't cost too much to maintain so you can sustain it." AmericanMusicChannel.com attracted attention and earned recognition on Nashville Post magazine's "Fast 50" list of emerging companies.

Willis has traveled widely in his career and has met and worked with many top entertainers as well as industry, business and government officials. Now he's sharing his experience and knowledge as a board member for UT Martin's Ned Ray McWherter Institute. His background fits well with the institute's mission to provide students with real-world business exposure while they complete their college degrees.

Ever an aspiring athlete, he earned his Second Degree Black Belt in Wado-Ryu karate a few weeks after his 50th birthday. He also still draws on his experiences playing high school football for the late John Tucker.

"I learned a lot of life skills from sports, and one of the lessons I learned from playing for him is no matter how awful it is, you can live through it, and it'll be over in a little while," he said as he laughed, adding, "The lesson I learned from all that is just perseverance. You don't have to necessarily be smarter than everybody else if you just keep going." <<<

(right) Hal Willis is a legend in the music industry and hopes his new platform, AmericanMusicChannel.com, will provide new opportunities for artists and listeners alike.





# LIVE & LOCAL

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YOUNG ALUMNI MAKE A DIFFERENCE AT WPSD

{story by **ERIN CHESNUT** | photos by **NATHAN MORGAN**}



# BREAKING NEWS!

The first television news broadcasts were seen by tiny audiences in select cities. Today, news anchors and reporters at hundreds of stations tell thousands of viewers the facts about issues affecting them and their neighbors. Multi-media journalists visit dozens of locations each day collecting on-site video footage, interviewing key players and compiling information and evidence on the most pressing issues. It takes many moving pieces to create a newscast – from meteorologists and field reporters to producers, editors and anchors – but at WPSD Local 6 in Paducah, Ky., UT Martin has it covered.

On the days she is producing, Allison Jones begins her work day at midnight. Jones, a 2011 graduate, acts as primary producer for the weekend morning newscasts and assists with shows throughout the week.

Victoria Shaw Smoyer – “Tori Shaw” to her viewers – rolls out of bed at 1 a.m and is on-camera hours later. Shaw, a 2006 UT Martin graduate, is one of several meteorologists at WPSD and spends her early, early mornings studying technical data to create daily and weekly forecasts for the benefit of her audience.

Blake Stevens, one of the newest members of the WPSD team, spends his day in the field making phone calls and traveling between interviews to bring viewers the most up-to-date information on the day’s stories. Stevens accepted a reporter’s position in May 2015, only days after walking the commencement stage.

Jennifer Horbelt (Bonds), a 2007 graduate and one of the most recognizable faces at WPSD, first took her seat behind the big desk in 2009 and has spent almost seven years with the station. As one of two evening anchors, Horbelt informs her viewers on the most pressing issues facing their communities. Five days a week, she clips on her microphone just before 5 p.m. and stares down the cameras for the first of three evening newscasts.

The lights come on, the studio falls silent and the script starts rolling. With the push of a button, WPSD Local 6 is live in four states.

“I’ve been in this business nine years now,” said Horbelt, with some shock. “Nine years... wow.” Horbelt, originally from Houston, Texas, started at WPSD as a reporter in February 2007, shortly before graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in communications from UT Martin. “I did an internship here and then saw there was an opening. I honestly didn’t expect to get the job, but they called me and I said ‘yes’ and here I am.”

Horbelt worked her way up the ladder quickly, starting as a

reporter in 2007 and becoming a fill-in weekend anchor shortly afterward. By October 2009, at the age of 24, she had won a promotion to a full-time slot as evening anchor.

“I feel like a lot of people worry about rejection. I do worry about rejection, but I also accept that the only way to be rejected is to ask,” she said. “You really can’t say you’ve been rejected or you’ve been accepted if you never went for something.” As the position’s “dark-horse” candidate, Horbelt knew she was a long-shot for the anchor job, but told the hiring manager that if he would give her a shot, she would prove that she could do it.

“I was told at one time that I wasn’t going to anchor, that I wasn’t good enough to anchor, that I didn’t have it. And thank goodness that person was wrong and somebody else didn’t believe what the person thought or I wouldn’t be here,” she said. Horbelt spent two years at the evening desk at WPSD before accepting a morning anchor’s position in Colorado Springs, where she reported on the Aurora theatre shootings, interviewed President Obama during his 2012 election campaign and shot promotional videos with Jimmy Fallon during his Tonight Show transition. Two devastating wildfires, however, put her skills to the true test.

Each wildfire required around-the-clock news coverage, which put tremendous pressure on the anchors. “With the Waldo Canyon fire in 2012, we spent two days on the air in 12-hour shifts. I worked midnight to noon, no commercials, no breaks. The Black Forest Fire the next summer was worse. I did nights then – noon to midnight – and by day four I told my husband, ‘I don’t know how I can talk for another 12 hours. I don’t have anything else to say,’” she said. “I never thought I would ever be able to do that, but now ad-libbing is no big deal.”

Paducah eventually called her home, and in 2014 Horbelt returned to the big desk at WPSD as a seasoned evening anchor. “Here there is a lot of weight put on telling people stories. ... A lot of times when you go to a busier market (like Colorado Springs) there’s not time to be creative and focus on the people; there’s only enough time to get it on the air,” she said. “While that, I feel, made me a stronger journalist and made it easier for me to do things quickly, I missed this part of it. I missed really being part of the community.” Horbelt anchors the evening newscasts at five, six and 10, with occasional appearances on the nine o’clock show for WPSD’s digital station.

Shaw’s route to Paducah was a bit longer than the others. “I graduated from a small high school, and I felt that UT Martin was a

**“You really can’t say you’ve been rejected or you’ve been accepted if you never went for something.”**

- Jennifer Horbelt

better fit for me and would help me transition into the college life," she said. Shaw, who grew up in Dyer, discovered the communications major by accident while searching for textbooks in the university bookstore. "When I saw the books needed for the communications major, I thought to myself, 'This is what I'm supposed to do.'

"When I decided I wanted to pursue meteorology, UT Martin didn't have a meteorology program or major. Dr. Richard Robinson (associate professor of communications) and Dr. Mark Simpson (professor of geography) worked together to get me what I needed to apply for meteorology school at Mississippi State University," she said. Shaw earned her Master of Science degree in broadcast meteorology from Mississippi State in 2009 and spent the next year working on a program of her own creation.

"Concert Forecast," created during Shaw's graduate school research, allowed her to track the concert tours of bands and solo artists to create weather forecasts for their venues. Shaw constructed a green-screen studio in the basement of her childhood home and successfully predicted concert weather conditions for 30 musicians, including two overseas groups.

Shaw eventually accepted a position with WCTI-TV NewsChannel 12 in New Bern, N.C., where she spent three years delivering weekend weather forecasts and reporting on local feature stories three times per week. A severe thunderstorm over a Fourth of July holiday weekend felled trees and left homes damaged and homeowners frantic for help.

"I interviewed an elderly couple with a huge tree on their home. They didn't know what to do," said Shaw. "When the story aired, a tree service company in another city came and helped with the tree removal for the entire neighborhood. I was reassured that I am doing what I am supposed to be doing."

At WPSD, Shaw broadcasts for more than five newscasts per week and creates a multimedia story for the biweekly "I Am Local 6" segment. She also visits schools and community groups to talk about meteorology and educate the public about weather patterns.

"I really enjoy going to schools," she said. "They are the best audience because they are honest and ask questions that keep you on your toes." She said many people express an interest in weather, but shy away from the profession because of the required math and science skills. "Don't let that scare you," she said. "I went all the way through, I studied hard, and I had to make myself good at math." Shaw admits she even failed a UT Martin mathematics course before trying a second time.

"With me, there was an adjustment going from the college world into the professional world, because you can't show up for work and be unprepared. ... You have to be sure you know

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your information and your weather story and be ready to go," she said. Meteorologists are unique in the television studio as the only on-air position that does not work from a script or teleprompter. They work instead from the maps and radars shown on the green screens behind them; everything Shaw says comes from her knowledge of the data she's selected.

Jones works behind-the-scenes, but her role as producer is one of the most vital to the successful completion of a newscast. "On days that I produce, mostly Saturday and Sunday mornings, I come in around midnight and start putting the newscast together. I spend the first part of my morning going through the previous night's newscast to see if there's anything that would still be considered relevant today. Then I'll make a list of any national stories on the NBC, CNN or AP wires that I think may fit the show's dynamic," she said.

It is the producer's job not only to select and organize these stories, but also to write them in such a way that they can be easily read from the teleprompter. "A lot of people seem to think that the anchors already know what to say or that they come up with what they say on the air," she said. "They might have input and they may add or change things as needed, but it's really a job in itself to write what they say."

Jones, a Columbia native, began her college journey at Middle Tennessee State University. After two years, she transferred to UT Martin at the suggestion of a close friend and started working with the campus radio station – WUTM 90.3 FM "The Hawk."

"From the time I took my first communications class in high school I knew I wanted to do broadcasting. I originally just enjoyed editing video, but along the way I discovered that I really loved writing as well," she said. "After I got to Martin and started working at WUTM, I realized that I really loved the news." Jones served as news director for the student-run station in the fall of 2011, a position also held by Horbelt and Shaw during their time as students.

Jones first encountered WPSD during her junior year when Horbelt gave a studio tour. Jones later came to the station to help gather polling information during the 2010 election. "That night we got the full behind-the-scenes experience. ... That's when I decided that, in a year when I would be getting ready to graduate, I would apply here."

She joined the WPSD staff in December 2011 as a part-time evening associate producer and found her place as a full-time morning producer after six months. After a brief hiatus, she returned to Paducah in January 2015 and now produces the weekend morning shows and assists with newscasts throughout the week. "I like the fact that every day is different. Your routine may be the same on a day-to-day basis, but no two days are ever really the same," she said.

Even though she isn't on camera herself, Jones has still been able to make a difference in the local community. In February 2015,



unusually heavy snowfall blanketed the region and made roads dangerous and impassable. Jones was in the studio gathering school closing and travel information for the morning newscasts to make sure every household knew the conditions outside. "It took the entire morning team to write, edit, make calls and answer phones to get the latest video, pictures, school closings and road closures on the air," she said.

Stevens is one of the newest members of the WPSD team, but he's not letting that slow him down. As a field reporter, Stevens spends his days chasing down story leads and collecting video footage and audio clips to produce a final package. There is a tremendous amount of legwork behind a story's five minutes of fame, sometimes involving hours of drive time for a single image. "I enjoy knowing that people in the community watch," he said. "It means a lot to know the 8-12 hours that we put into a story has been heard."

Stevens started his college career as sociology major and hoped to become a political or legal analyst. Dr. Richard Robinson, pointed out a flaw in his plan. "He said, 'You're skipping a step here. If you want to go into broadcasting, just go into broadcasting,'" Stevens explained. It was then that he dove headfirst into the Department of Communications and the world of radio and television broadcasting. He became the support and development director, and later the news director, at WUTM 90.3 FM "The Hawk."

He also took on a position as weekend news director for WMUF/WLKZ radio in Paris, before applying for an internship with WPSD during the spring 2015 semester. "My first day (at WPSD) ... I got to go with real reporters and cover real stories and then they would have me actually write," he said. "It was a great experience."

At Horbelt's encouragement, Stevens was able to audition for a full-time reporter's position immediately after graduation. "I consider her (Horbelt) to be my biggest mentor. Even as an intern, she gave me one-on-one time with my writing and my voice," he said. "I'm the new guy in the newsroom, but she has my back. ... I don't know where I'd be without her." Stevens has since been able to interview Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-K.Y.) and state Rep. Andy Holt (R-Tenn.), as well as report on several controversial issues. "One of the biggest things I've learned is that there are two sides to every story," he said.

"Every morning that I come (to work), I don't forget how blessed I am and how lucky I am to have this job," he said. "There are re-

porters here that this is their second or third job... so I'm very lucky to be here. That comes with a price, though. What other people learned seven or eight years ago as they worked their way here – I have a huge learning curve." Stevens hopes to someday be able to mentor another young reporter the way Horbelt has done for him.

"It makes me proud to know that, while UT Martin may not be a giant school... it's not about size, it's about quality," said Horbelt. "There are so many quality people that come out of the school in general, but then out of the communications department." She admits that very few new graduates have what it takes to become a reporter straight off the commencement stage, but she also believes in fighting for those that do. "Don't be afraid to go for it," she advises new graduates. "The worst they can tell you is, 'No, you're not ready.' But if you don't go for it you don't know. And in going for it, they will remember you for that and if it's not the right time, then they will remember you down the line."

Shaw encourages young professionals not to "be afraid to pull up roots and leave. Home is where the heart is, and you can always come back." Jones knows that what you graduate hoping to accomplish is not always where your dreams truly lie, and reminds new grads to "be prepared to pay your dues. ... Try different things – you may find out you enjoy something you never thought you would." Stevens urges those in new jobs not to give up. "Starting out is tough, but everyone has been there," he said. "I'm still there."

WPSD is and has been home to many additional Skyhawks, including Eric Hall, executive producer, and Tiffany Logan, who recently accepted a position as evening anchor and reporter at KGWN CBS 5 in Wyoming. Zach Hatcher, a senior meteorology student from Paris, recently completed a 10-week internship during which he gained real-world experience with the latest forecast software. These young alumni and soon-to-be graduates are paving the way for others to follow and continue to raise the standards in the television industry with their skills, talents and determination to succeed in their chosen fields. They may be young, but they are mighty, and they are live in four states. <<<

(opposite page) Jones is pictured on set.

(above, from left) Stevens and Chad Darnell, assistant chief photographer, discuss filming options on location; Shaw delivers a live forecast; Horbelt delivers a newscast on the main set.

# ALUMNI

## NEWS

### (the real deal)>>>

Twice a year, I write this column called The Real Deal. I am normally in my office looking out across the campus or sometimes I venture into the quad to find solace and inspiration (or an excuse to get out of the office!). This time, I am sitting in Dublin, Ireland, on an alumni trip with alumni from the University of Tennessee! The trip is part of the alumni tours program coordinated by the UT Alumni Association and is one of the many perks you receive as a UT alum.

While on this tour, I was able to connect with Dr. Sam Landrum, a retired surgeon from Arkansas. Sam grew up in Martin, and he attended UTJC and UTMB and before leaving campus in 1953 to continue his education at medical school. Sam and I talked about campus life and how things have changed since his time in Martin. During the trip, I was able to talk with him about campus life today and how we have grown into a powerful regional institution he and other alumni can be proud to call their alma mater. If you are thinking about a trip abroad, visit the alumni website and view our upcoming trips. Many of the tours include educational components and local history discussions, and the tour companies offer the highest level of service possible.

Meanwhile, you can begin your travel plans by visiting UT Martin on Oct. 10 to celebrate homecoming and Captain Skyhawk's birthday. More information can be found on the back cover. This year, we hope to break an attendance record at Quad City, so join us in the quad from 10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. Please note the football game start time is 2:30, allowing us to extend the hours of Quad City by 30 minutes. Live music, great fun, and a whole lot more await you. Hope to see you in Martin!

And as they say in Ireland, "May the road rise up to meet you, may the wind be ever at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face and the rain fall softly on your fields. And until we meet again, may God hold you in the hollow of His hand." Be UTM Proud!

*Charly Deal*  
('92, '96)

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE  
**ALUMNI**  
MARTIN

**SEE MORE ONLINE**

For the most up-to-date information, news and event schedules, check out the alumni website at [www.utmforever.com](http://www.utmforever.com). Now you can stay connected, share news and photos and network all through [utmforever.com](http://utmforever.com).



(spotlight on alums)>>>

# GET INVOLVED!

As an alum of UT Martin, your continued engagement and involvement are critical to our success. Your personal commitment of time, talent and treasure will ensure our future growth and success. Visit our website to discover meaningful ways you can impact your university:

- >Volunteer Opportunities
- >Reunions
- >Alumni Council
- >Development Council
- >Mentoring Program
- >Young Alumni Council
- >Speak Out for UT
- >Alumni in the Classroom

**UTMFOREVER.COM**

In addition to visiting the website, also feel free to write, call or email the UT Martin Alumni Association for more information.

Office of Alumni Relations  
Dunagan Alumni Center  
1900 Alumni Way  
Martin, TN 38238  
(731) 881-7610  
[alumni@utm.edu](mailto:alumni@utm.edu)



**Linda Bond Edwards ('79)** has been selected by the Tallahassee Democrat as one of the "25 Women You Need to Know in 2015." The Florida resident grew up in the Douglas community near Stanton, and studied human resources management at UT Martin. After graduation, she started working at a GTE plant that manufactured camera flashcubes and worked her way through the ranks to corporate headquarters. After more than a decade as a top human resources executive, Edwards quit her job at age 35 and moved to Florida to attend Florida State's College of Law. She is now an employment law attorney with Rumberger Kirk & Caldwell and serves as president of both Tallahassee Women Lawyers and Big Bend Habitat for Humanity. (Source: Tallahassee Democrat)

## (congratulations)>>>



**Jeffrey D. Agee ('83)**, president and CEO of First Citizens Bancshares Inc. of Dyersburg, was appointed to a three-year term on the St. Louis Fed's Community Depository Institutions Advisory Council. The announcement was made in March. The CDIAC meets twice a year to advise St. Louis Fed President James Bullard on regional credit, banking and economic conditions. Council members serve staggered terms and are senior executives of banks, thrift institutions and credit unions from across the St. Louis Fed's Eighth District, which is comprised of the state of Arkansas and parts of Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri and Tennessee. Agee is a past chairman for the Tennessee Bankers Association, where he has also served as a member of the board of directors for TBA's Independent Bankers division and as chairman, president and director for TBA's Young Bankers division. Agee is also a past director of the Tennessee Society of Certified Public Accountants banking division. His full story was featured in the summer/fall 2013 edition of Campus Scene.



### **Scott S. Bethune ('85, right)**

became the 2015 president of the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association during a ceremony held Dec. 12, 2014, preceding the KCMBA's 130th annual meeting. Bethune, a founding member of Davis, Bethune and Jones LLC, has held a number of leadership positions within KCMBA. He concentrates his trial practice in the areas of product liability, personal injury and wrongful death litigation, railroad crossing litigation, professional negligence and mass tort litigation. Bethune received his law degree in 1988 from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. He is pictured with previous KCMBA President Perry Brandt (left).



**Charlie Neese ('92)**, received the UT Martin Department of Communications Distinguished Alumni Award for 2015, as voted by the department faculty. The Fairview native studied communications with a focus in broadcasting during his time at UT Martin and delivered the first weather forecasts heard on campus radio station WUTM 90.3 FM "The Hawk." Neese started his television career with WBBJ-TV in Jackson before eventually finding his current position at NewsChannel 5 in Nashville. Neese also served as keynote speaker at the Department of Communications Awards Banquet on '04 April 9, where he shared advice on how to approach a competitive job market. Pictured with Neese (second from right) following his award presentation are (from left) Dr. Jerald Ogg, provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs; Chuck Neese, father of Charlie Neese; and Dr. Robert Nanney, professor and chair, Department of Communications.

## (spotlight on alums)>>>



### Cathy Whitehead ('10, '13)

has been named a top-nine finalist for the 2015 Tennessee Teacher of the Year Award. The winner of this honor will represent the state in the National Teacher of the Year competition. Whitehead teaches third grade at West Chester Elementary in Chester County, where she received the Teacher of the Year award for the 2014-15 school year. She is also serving a two-year term on Gov. Bill Haslam's inaugural Governor's Teacher Cabinet, which meets quarterly to advise the governor on educational policy and discuss information from the classroom. Whitehead earned a Master of Science degree in curriculum and instruction and a reading specialist endorsement from UT Martin in 2010 and 2013, respectively.

The U.S. Department of State has selected **Lauren Whitaker ('13)** to serve in the English Language Fellow Program, administered by the Center for Intercultural Education and Development at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Whitaker is one of 165 citizens selected for the program and will spend 10 months teaching English in Kazakhstan, a former Soviet republic in central Asia. The English Language Fellow Program sends language professionals around the globe to teach English to speakers of other languages and enact meaningful change in the way English is taught abroad. Whitaker earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from UT Martin in 2013 and a master's degree in linguistic studies from Syracuse University in 2015.



**TENNESSEE CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION BOARD BOASTS SIX ALUMS** – Six UT Martin alumni serve on the Tennessee Cattlemen's Association Board of Directors, including the current president. Pictured at the April 2015 quarterly board meeting are (l-r) **Jay Yeargin ('04)**, Greenfield, executive board member; **Mack Zarecor ('84)**, Newbern, District I vice president; **John Woolfolk ('71)**, Jackson, executive board member; **Wendy Sneed ('01, MBA '06)**, Nashville, ex-officio, Tennessee Department of Agriculture; **Gary Daniel ('75)**, Cypress Inn, TCA president; and **Linda Barnes ('74, MS UTK '76)** Selmer, executive board member.



### SIGMA ALPHA EPSILON BREAKS GROUND FOR NEW CHAPTER HOUSE

– Sigma Alpha Epsilon actives, alumni and supporters gathered March 21 during Founder's Day Weekend to break ground for a new chapter house. Pictured at the event (l-r) are: **Ivan Bradley ('87)**, president, Tennessee Tau Housing Corp.; **Tommy Legins ('90)**, treasurer, Tennessee Tau Fraternal and Educational Association; Hunter Kesse, former chapter president and current treasurer; and Matt Ligon, SAE alum.

## (spotlight on alums) >>>

**FORMER MASCOTS RESPOND TO 'CAPTAIN SKYHAWK CELEBRATES 20TH BIRTHDAY' >>>** The 2015 winter/spring edition of Campus Scene featured a story about the history of UT Martin's mascots and honored Captain Skyhawk's 20th birthday. The story generated responses from several alumni who wore the mascot suits. Responses from former Pacer Pete, Pace-Her Polly and Captain Skyhawk mascots are still welcome during this 20-year celebration of the Skyhawk and can be sent to Bud Grimes at [bgrimes@utm.edu](mailto:bgrimes@utm.edu).

• **Jennifer Fry Yates ('99)** – Yates served as the last Pace-Her Polly in 1994-95. That year, she remembered, no one wore the Pacer Pete uniform. She had Coach Charlie Rayburn in a cheer/tumbling class and was selected to serve during basketball season. She also was the first to wear the Skyhawk costume, which happened during the 1995-1996 school year. ROTC cadets drove her to the center of the football field in a Hummer.

"I remember my times as the mascot fondly," she wrote. "As Captain Skyhawk, I made special appearances at two local kids' birthday parties. My maiden name was Fry, and many of my friends called me Fryhawk in the years that followed me being the Skyhawk mascot."

Jennifer lives in Milan and has a stepson who has completed his freshman year at UT Martin.

• **Tyler Menne ('02)** – Menne was Captain Skyhawk from fall 1996 to spring of 1999 and was the second person to wear the Skyhawk costume. He currently lives in Chattanooga with his wife of three years and owns a landscape company, Appalachian Land Design, Inc. He has been in business for 10 years. Tyler and his wife also have a small vegetable farm from which they sell produce (primarily okra) to the local Harvested Here Food Hub. Learn more at [www.appalachianlanddesign.com](http://www.appalachianlanddesign.com).

• **Dr. Jake Doster ('08)** – Doster was Captain Skyhawk from 2005-2008. He was the first to receive the Bettye Giles Scholarship associated with serving as Captain Skyhawk and in his words, "loved every minute of it!" Jake is a chiropractor in Jackson. <<<



**BRASWELLS MAKE NURSING PROFESSION A FAMILY AFFAIR >>>** Mandy and Anthony Braswell met in the nursing program at UT Martin and both decided to continue their training with a master's degree. But, as nurses, their careers have taken different paths.

Married with two young sons, the Braswells live in Milan. On work days, **Mandy ('06)** travels southwest to her job in Jackson as a certified pediatric nurse practitioner overseeing the Jackson-Madison County School Health Clinic. **Anthony ('06)** travels northwest to Paris, where he works at Henry County Medical Center in nursing informatics. His official title is clinical analyst, but he introduces himself to people as a nurse.

After graduating from UT Martin, they went to Nashville, where Anthony was already working as a surgical nurse in the intensive care unit at Vanderbilt Medical Center. Mandy immediately began her master's degree in nursing at Vanderbilt University while working at St. Thomas in the neurosurgical unit. She finished her MSN in 2007. Anthony thought he wanted to be a nurse anesthetist, but he soon realized surgery was not his thing. Knowing Anthony liked to work on computers, Mandy suggested informatics, which involves the interaction of technology and patients through things like electronic health records. He finished his master's degree in nursing informatics in 2008.

The next year, they moved to Mandy's hometown of Milan, and while neither actually works in the city, they found jobs nearby.

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Mandy's job satisfied her desire to work in a medical field with children. Her patient could be any public school student in the county. "We were only the second county in the state to have a school-based health clinic," she says. "My hope is there will be more of these clinics because I feel like we are able to see children who don't see a pediatrician regularly."

With the increase of technology in the health-care field to meet federal standards and incentives for meaningful use of technology, clearly informatics will continue to be in demand. "As we go further along, those standards will get more strict about what is required," Anthony says. "I think it will continue to expand and, once we are at a final point where all final requirements are in place, someone will be needed to maintain it and make it more efficient." Photo Credit: Adam Brimer, The University of Tennessee / Article Credit: Elizabeth A. Davis, Tennessee Alumnus magazine, spring 2015 edition <<<



**LIFEPOINT HEALTH PROMOTES UT MARTIN ALUMS >>> Pam Belcher ('74) and Reggie Hill ('77, UTK Law '80)** have been promoted to new posts by health-care company LifePoint Health. Belcher was named senior vice president, human resources and talent management, and Hill was appointed senior vice president, chief compliance and policy officer. Announcement of the promotions came in June.

As senior vice president, human resources and talent management, Belcher



is responsible for providing leadership in developing and executing human resources strategy and direction of the organization. She will particularly focus on developing and strengthening the areas of compensation and benefits, employee relations, succession planning and performance management. In her previous role at LifePoint, Belcher served as vice president, organizational development and recruitment for seven years, where she led talent initiatives and recruitment for LifePoint's hospital executives and corporate associ-

ates. Before joining LifePoint in 2006, she served as vice president of consulting and client development for Right Management Consultants in Brentwood.

Belcher holds a bachelor's degree in business administration and a Bachelor of Arts in education from UT Martin and later earned a master's degree in personnel counseling from the University of Mississippi.

As senior vice president, chief compliance and policy officer, Hill will be responsible for managing the company's compliance program, including reviewing and evaluating policy and procedural issues and concerns across the organization. He will also advise and recommend strategies pertaining to highly anticipated health-care policy and reform issues. Additionally, he will help identify potential areas of compliance risk and develop and implement corrective action plans for resolution of issues. Hill has served as chief compliance officer for LifePoint since 2013.

Before joining LifePoint Health, Hill was an attorney at Nashville law firm Waller, Lansden, Dortch & Davis, LLP, where he practiced corporate, health care and mergers and acquisitions law. During his more than 30-year tenure at Waller, he served in a variety of roles, including as associate, partner, co-chairman of the firm and head of the firm's business transactions practice. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from UT Martin and earned his law degree from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

LifePoint Health owns and operates community hospitals, regional health systems, physician practices, outpatient centers and post-acute facilities in 20 states. It is the sole community health-care provider in the majority of the non-urban communities it serves. <<<



# ***Captain's Challenge was a success!***

A big thank you to Bill Blankenship and the leadership team for the tremendous effort and financial support for the first-ever Captain's Challenge in April.

**868 – Total number of donors**

**234 – First time donors**

**\$187 – Average gift amount**

**\$162,327**

**Total amount raised**

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**Captain's Challenge 2016  
will take place April 25-29.**



## (we want to know&gt;&gt;&gt;

Please fill out the information below and mail it to us, or go to [utmforever.com](http://utmforever.com) and let us know what you have been up to or update your address if it has changed.

Full Name (include maiden name, if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Years Attended: \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_ School/College of: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Business Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ Business Name or Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like your Email address published in Campus Scene? Yes  No

Full Name of Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_

Did your spouse attend UT Martin? Yes  No

Years Attended: \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_ School/College of: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ Business Name of Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Names and Ages of Children: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional News (honors, promotions, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

List your current hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you consider taking an active leadership role in UT Martin alumni activities? Yes  No

Would you like this information published in Campus Scene? Yes  No

If you know anyone who may be interested in UT Martin and is a high school junior or senior, please give us his or her name and address.

Enclose a recent color headshot photo, if possible. No low-resolution digital photos, please! Photographs cannot be returned to you. Every effort will be made to use all color headshots submitted. However, space considerations and/or photo quality may prevent us from using submitted photos in some instances. Email photos to [alumni@utm.edu](mailto:alumni@utm.edu).

Fill out, clip and return this form to:  
 UT Alumni Association – Martin Office  
 Dunagan Alumni Center  
 1900 Alumni Way  
 Martin, TN 38238



(above) Students give a variety of reasons why they love UT Martin during "I Heart UTM" week in April.

## (class notes)>>>

### 1972



**Connie Cantrell (’72)**, administrative coordinator, UT Office of Government Relations and Advocacy, was honored for her service during the UT Board of Trustees meeting in June. She has retired following more than 12 years in the office and previously served for 20-plus years as executive assistant to the chancellor at UT Martin. Making the presentation are Dr. Bob Smith (left), UT Martin interim chancellor, and **Anthony Haynes (’88)**, UT vice president for government relations and advocacy.

### 1982



**Connie Maynard (’82)**, of Goodlettsville, won first runner-up in the Ms. Senior Tennessee America Pageant on May 16 in Lebanon. Information submitted

to Campus Scene noted that she was an adult, single-parent, full-time student who lived in University Courts with her three-year-old son and worked part time on campus. After graduation, she worked in school and hospital dietetics. Since her retirement, she has enjoyed a “dream career” as a model and actor.

### 1986

**Dr. Reginald Williams Sr. (’86)** released a book in spring 2015 titled “The 7 Keys to Success: A Comprehensive Guide for

Urban School Development.” He has more than 25 years of experience in education and is currently high school principal for the Memphis Academy of Health Sciences. More about the book is available at [drrwilliams.com](http://drrwilliams.com).

### 1990



**David Moore (’90)** retired as chief of police for the Martin Police Department in March following more than 11 years of service. He is past president of the Tennessee Association of Chiefs of Police and has been as an adjunct instructor in the UT Martin Department of Behavioral Sciences. He also holds a master’s degree in criminal justice from Bethel University. Moore is the new vice president of the V-Academy Division of Savant Learning Systems Inc. in Martin.

### 2010



**Nathan Hammond (’10)** completed his MBA at the University of Arkansas and is completing his Ph.D. in management at Mississippi State University. He received the 2014 Graduate Student Research Award from the Mississippi State College of Business and was recognized during the college’s annual Research Awards Banquet, April 30, in the university’s Hunter Henry Center. In June of 2015, Nathan received one of two research scholarships awarded by the Family Owned Business Institute at the Family Enterprise Research Conference in Burlington, Vt. Hammond is a management lecturer for the College of Business at Mississippi State University.

### 2011



**Chad Holmes (’11)** married **Dr. Katelyn Turner (’11)** on May 30, 2015 in Sandestin, Fla. They were both University Scholars and active in the Greek Life community during their time at UT Martin. Chad served as president of Sigma Chi Fraternity and Katelyn was vice president of Chi Omega and is a former Miss UT Martin. Chad received a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Memphis and is an accountant with Ernest and Young. Katelyn graduated from the University of Pikeville Kentucky College of Osteopathic Medicine in May 2015 and intends to specialize in surgery.

## (in memory)>>>

**Dr. Norman Betz**, of Baton Rouge, La., passed away May 23, 2015 (retired faculty).

**Glen Bremer**, of Cookeville, passed away March 31, 2015 (retired faculty).

**Jonathan Bird**, of Silverthorne, Colo., passed away April 15, 2015.

**Clint Callicott**, of Only, passed away June 3, 2015.

**Betty Cowan**, of Martin, passed away May 17, 2015 (staff).

**Dr. Milton Simmons**, of Martin, passed away June 4, 2015 (retired faculty).

**Tyler Smith**, of Troy, passed away Aug. 8, 2015.

## <<< (one last thought)

### STUDENT SPOTLIGHT >>> John Sellers, Psychology Major, *Henderson*



>>> Before the earthquakes, before the news coverage, before the humanitarian relief... John Sellers was bringing hope to Nepal and the thousands of orphans who call it home. Sellers, a Henderson native and UT Martin psychology major, founded Letters in Motion in September 2014 as a way to encourage college students to make a difference in the lives of the less fortunate. What started as a letter-writing campaign quickly grew into a philanthropic organization, complete with international travel, thousands in monetary donations and several lines of merchandise.

"We started off selling T-shirts as a way of raising money for our first trip; however, that quickly developed into an export business where we can now offer hand-made

Nepali bracelets and scarves, now available in two boutiques," said Sellers.

Letters in Motion began at UT Martin and has expanded to more than 12 universities and five countries. Nine students from UT Martin, Union University and Bethel University traveled to Nepal in June and took more than 3,000 hand-written letters and \$10,000 in donations to the devastated country.

"While in Nepal, our team worked to bring hope to eight orphanages, passing out letters, playing games, singing songs and spending valuable time with the children," said Sellers. "We also built six temporary structures for earthquake victims." He hopes to one day open brick-and-mortar stores, as well as a permanent

branch of Letters in Motion in Nepal to house students participating in relief trips and internships.

"UT Martin has been a great outlet for networking for Letters in Motion. We have been able to form our own student organization on campus and make relationships with so many supportive organizations, clubs and teams," he explained. "We have also been blessed to have supportive professors, faculty and staff who continue to help us with almost anything we need."

John Sellers, and the students who help him, are making a lasting impact in the lives of thousands. Visit [www.lettersinmotion.com](http://www.lettersinmotion.com) or email [lettersinmotioninfo@gmail.com](mailto:lettersinmotioninfo@gmail.com) for more information. <<<

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# 2015

## Homecoming Schedule

### Friday, October 9

- 3:30 p.m. Rope Pull Championships - Pacer Pond
- 7:00 p.m. Pyramid and Pep Rally - Elam Center
- 7:30 p.m. University Choirs Dessert Evening - Fine Arts Building

### Saturday, October 10

- 7:30 a.m. Letter Winner's Breakfast and Hall of Fame Inductions - Student Life Center
- 9:00 a.m. Campus Recreation former student employee reunion - Student Rec Building
- 10:30 a.m. QUAD CITY OPENS
- 11:00 a.m. Football Team's "Hawk Walk" through Quad
- 2:30 p.m. Football game vs. Tennessee State University - Graham Stadium  
Halftime show featuring the UT Martin Marching Band  
Following the ballgame, fans can enjoy a field show performance by the TSU band
- 5:30 p.m. Black Alumni Reception - Graham Stadium
- 7:00 p.m. Young Alumni Reception - Stables in Martin
- 7:00 p.m. NPHC Step Show - Elam Center
- 7:30 p.m. University Choirs Dessert Evening - Fine Arts Building

### Sunday, October 11

- 10:00 a.m. Walk in the Quad
- 10:30 a.m. Homecoming Brunch - University Center