

MU *today*

M A G A Z I N E
Summer 2024



Loyalty

THROUGH TALENT:

Commitments of Past and Present Create
the Bright Future for Methodist University

*(The second of a three-part series
showcasing MU Loyalty through
Time, Talent, and Treasure)*



INSIDE ➤ Event Highlights and “Save the Dates” • MU Profiles • Class Notes & More!

COMMENCEMENT 2024

MAY 11, THE CROWN COLISEUM



Snapshots



Methodist University, family, and friends congratulated nearly 1,000 who earned their bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees



"All of the connections you have made throughout the years have the opportunity to grow even more because of what you've accomplished. You are in a special category now. You are alumni of MU."

– Fayetteville community leader Johnny Wilson '99
to our newest graduates at Commencement 2024



Student Stories & More

(learn about some of our newest MU alumni)

CALEB RYAN '24



TAJZE JOHNSON '24D



JESSICA DRAKE '24



LOGAN HILTON '24



400 graduates (both in person and online students)
in the 2023-24 academic year. Way to go Monarchs!



A Message from Our President



Stanley T. Wearden, Ph.D.
President of Methodist University

Dear Methodist University Alumni, Students, and Friends,

As I've previously mentioned in this magazine – and during many other opportunities in which I've been asked to speak on and off campus – Commencement is my favorite event of the entire school year.

What a privilege it is for me to be on stage as our graduates are hooded by their sponsors – a wonderful and unique tradition at MU – to shake their hands, and to closely observe as family and friends celebrate the significant achievements of our newest alumni.

Such was the case in May when MU held Commencement 2024 at The Crown Coliseum. During two ceremonies, I shared with our graduates receiving bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees that they are now members of an elite group – the alumni of this great University. I shared with them what so many of you know so well, that “this is your University today, and it will always be your University. This is a great institution, and as we all work to make it even better, we will need your help.”

That necessary help can take so many different forms, as we all have different skills and levels of good fortune to share. We are seeing prime examples of that in our alumni magazine, as we continue our three-part series focused on MU Loyalty through Time, Talent, and Treasure.

In this Summer 2024 issue of MU Today, we share some examples of members of our MU community who have utilized their varying *Talents* to help advance our University (see page 18). They are among the thousands of lifetime Monarchs who understand the importance of their sharing gifts (be that through time, talent, or treasure) to keep MU advancing.

The cover story about MU's unmatched Loyalty certainly isn't the only place in the magazine that you'll find samples of the abundant talents, gifts, and remarkable accomplishments of MU students, alumni, faculty, staff, and friends.

In fact, if this magazine were another 100 pages it still wouldn't hold a high percentage of the inspirational stories that I hear daily on campus, or at our Regional Alumni Events (see page 24), at community events like our Founders Council Golf Pro-Am & Tennis Social (page 15), or during perhaps my second favorite time of the year, Homecoming (page 25).

I would be remiss when talking about talent if I didn't take a moment to share – on behalf of an entire Monarch Nation of fans – how proud we are of our nationally renowned and respected golf programs. This year, the men's team won its record 14th NCAA DIII title, and the women's team (who have won more than 20 national crowns) once again finished in the Top 15 in the entire country (see *their stories and more on athletics on page 8*). Also, hats off to Head Men's Golf Coach Steve Conley for earning his ninth National Coach of the Year Award.

I know you will enjoy features about our amazing alumni, students, departments, donors, and more, on the following pages. It's limitless talent on display for sure.

Thank you for all that you continue to do to support this great University and congratulations to our newest alumni. Please stay in touch and please continue to share your talents, your joys, your successes, and gifts. I look forward to seeing you, my fellow “Lifelong Monarchs,” very soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stanley T. Wearden'.

Stanley T. Wearden, Ph.D.

“

This is your University today, and it will always be your University. This is a great institution, and as we all work to make it even better, we will need your help.”

”



18

COVER STORY

In this second of a three-part series, MU Today offers a few examples of those (such as Dr. Loleta Foster, above) who have shown their valuable MU Loyalty through “talent.” In the fall issue, we’ll focus on Loyalty through “treasure.”

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MU
today
M A G A Z I N E

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MU Today Magazine is published for friends and alumni of Methodist University by the Alumni and Marketing & Communications offices. To be added to our mailing list, call 910.630.7200 or email alumnioffice@methodist.edu.

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MONARCH

Minutes

MU News, Notes, and More



Summit Held at MU Helps High School Students Reach Peak Performance

Methodist University welcomed more than 100 local high school students in April for a day of inspiration, empowerment, and education. The Fayetteville Youth Summit encouraged sophomore, junior, and senior high school students from the greater Fayetteville region to consider their future and begin shaping their careers. The event featured engaging guest speakers, interactive sessions, and opportunities for students to connect with MU faculty and staff. The Fayetteville Youth Summit was hosted through a partnership with MU and the Tulsa Initiative.

MU Presents Sullivan Awards to Holmes and Wilson '99

In June, during a Board of Trustees meeting on campus, Methodist University honored two community members for their exceptional service to the greater Fayetteville area.

MU presented the Mary Mildred Sullivan and Algernon Sydney Sullivan Awards to Mary Holmes and Johnny Wilson '99 (pictured at right with President Stanley T. Wearden) – a recognition of their noble character and service.

Holmes, a president and CEO of the Cumberland Community Foundation (CCF) for 27 years, is known as an excellent leader with a remarkable ability to organize.

During Holmes' tenure, CCF has awarded nearly \$5 million in gifts to Methodist University.

Wilson serves as the president and CEO of Fayetteville Urban Ministry, a local non-profit that serves thousands of neighbors in need. He also proudly served on Methodist University's Booster Club and Founders Council.



Nursing Hosts Anniversary Celebration Open House

Dozens of members of the MU and local community attended the Nursing program's 10th Anniversary Celebration Open House in April at the Robert J. Chaffin Building – commemorating the first cohort of MU Nursing students who graduated from the program. Since 2014, the MU Nursing program has graduated 230-plus students who have found successful careers at various high-level, local hospitals including Cape Fear Valley Health, Duke Health, UNC Health, and more.

Global Leader Sodexo is Here to Serve

MU has signed a 10-year partnership with Sodexo, a global leader in integrated foodservice and facilities management, to bring several exciting changes to Green & Gold Dining Hall and the rest of campus starting this fall. Updates include a full-service Chick-fil-A location, a “We Proudly Serve Starbucks” location, and “Just Baked” technology that will provide convenient and fresh options. Learn more at methodist.edu/dining-services.



Smooth Move from A to B

MU recently signed an updated MOU with Central Carolina Community College and continues to partner with several community colleges to make the transition from an associate degree to a bachelor's degree easy. MU offers the “A to B” transfer scholarship – methodist.edu/transfer/AtoB – that covers full tuition in conjunction with the Federal Pell Grant and the North



Carolina Need-Based Grant for students who graduate from one of our partner colleges and enrolls in an MU campus degree program.

Student Projects Aimed at Impacting the World

Projects for Peace – an initiative that provides funding to student-led projects – awarded two separate \$10,000 grants to Methodist University senior Hannah Mulbah (Biology with a minor in Chemistry) and Zakia Najafizada '24 (Computer Information Technology with a concentration in Interactive Multimedia Application Development). Mulbah's project brings first aid training to her home country, Liberia, and Najafizada's project enhances “Amoozesh” – an app created by Najafizada dedicated to teaching English to women in Afghanistan.

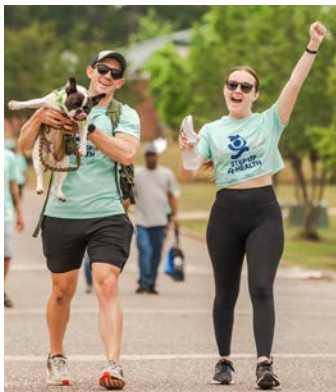


Students Showcased in Sensational Symposium

For a 13th year, MU's Center for Research and Creativity (CRC) presented a week-long series of events in April known as CRC Symposium Week – providing students an opportunity to showcase their research and creativity in various disciplines of study. In addition to Symposium Day, the event included a Nursing Research and Community Symposium, TEDx presentations on “Diversity and Inclusion” from faculty and staff, a CIRCUIT session exploring the varied depictions of Jesus on the cross, the Dr. Sue L. Kimball Writing Competition readings, Phi Kappa Phi Induction Ceremony, the 10th annual Cape Fear New Music Festival, Occupational Therapy Symposium and Pinning Ceremony, and the annual B.F. Stone Lyceum.



MONARCH *Minutes* (cont.)



Taking Steps for Wellness

MU hosted the Cape Fear Valley Health Foundation's Step Up 4 Health and Wellness Expo – welcoming hundreds of members of the community to our sprawling 600-acre campus. The event featured a 4K and one-mile race/walk, and a variety of family-friendly activities that raised donations for health services that directly impact the lives of patients in the community, including the Friends of Cancer Center, Children's Services, and Heart Care.

Flickr Fun

Scroll through the albums on MU's Flickr page ([flickr.com/kingmonarch/albums](https://www.flickr.com/photos/kingmonarch/)) to find familiar faces in MU spaces.



New Partnership Brings Financial Resource to MU's Military Community

MU recently signed a partnership with GoVA – an online resource focused on increasing the wellness of the U.S. military community – that will provide at least 35 one-year scholarships for free membership to GoVA's online financial education and wellness platform, "The Edge". The scholarships are available to Methodist University ROTC cadets, active-duty military, and veteran students. *Read more about MU Military & Veteran Services on page 10.*



Pictured outside MU's Military & Veteran Center are (L-R): Rocio Serna '18 (Coordinator, Military & Veteran Services), Theodore Esparza (Director of CRA Partnerships, GoVA), Capt. Justin Rodewald (Assistant Professor of Military Science), Dr. Suzanne Blum Malley (Provost), and Randy Smith '05 (Director, Military & Veteran Services).

Did You Know?

This is the 200th anniversary of Marquis de La Fayette's "Grand Tour" of the United States and MU is in the only city named for him that he actually visited? Check out the Lafayette collection next time you visit MU's Davis Memorial Library.



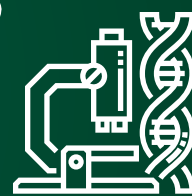
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Feature Stories Every Week at [Methodist.edu/news](https://www.methodist.edu/news)



MAKAI'S MIRACLES:

MU Biology Major Turns Hurdles into Superpowers

By: Christian Naranjo

Junior Makai Richardson has dealt with unique challenges ever since he was born, but you would never know it based on the bright smile and magnetic personality he brings to every room.

"I call him my miracle baby," said Richardson's mother, Martinique McLaughlin. "He was born a month early at 6 pounds, 5 ounces and never spent a day in the NICU."

Richardson spent the majority of his life in the Fort Liberty area of Fayetteville. When he was 7 years old, he was diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and Asperger's syndrome, which is a form of autism spectrum disorder that can often influence the way a person socializes and communicates.

However, McLaughlin decided to tell her young son only about his ADHD diagnosis, a decision Richardson is grateful for.

"At the time, she only told me about my ADHD. I didn't find out about my Asperger's [syndrome] until I was 14," Richardson said. "But it makes sense. It's the placebo effect. I wasn't necessarily aware of it, so I didn't experience all of the symptoms until I grew older. When I started feeling a certain way, she told me why."

Richardson said having both disorders impacted his life in multiple ways, from nervous ticks to becoming more introverted to unintentionally mocking people.

"I always had to know why something wasn't or why something was," he said.

Pursuing Personal Positives

But Richardson found a way to turn the disorders into positives, channeling his desire for knowledge into an interest in a variety of hobbies including soccer, video games, anime, and superheroes – especially Spider-Man and Deadpool. In middle and high school, Richardson even played the trombone and drums before finding his groove with mallet instruments in the marching band.

Richardson would tell you he is most passionate about biology and, more specifically, zoology. It's one of the reasons he decided to begin his journey at Methodist

University in 2022, while also pointing to MU being named by Niche College Rankings as the most diverse university in North Carolina in 2021-22 and 2022-23.

"Makai wanted to choose a place that would fit him," said McLaughlin. "We're a multicultural family and he wanted to go somewhere where there was diversity."

Through two years, Richardson continues to improve – learning the important lessons in life as he pursues a bachelor's degree in Biology with a Music minor.

"I learned that being an adult can be hard," Richardson added. "You have to lock in and avoid procrastination. I've been able to slowly master it during my time here."

Home Away from Home at MU

He credits the faculty and staff at MU for a smooth transition, including Nan Fiebig (Director, Housing & Residence Life) and Dr. Larry Sugisaki (Assistant Professor of Composition & Rhetoric).

"Dr. Sugisaki shared with me his own experience with mental disorders and now he's a professor," Richardson said. "He taught me if he can do it, I can do it."

He's also found his footing on campus, making friends, often playing piano in the Berns Student Center, and attending various events (including his favorite – the dodgeball tournament). Richardson is on track to graduate in 2026 and hopes to find a career as a zoologist afterwards.

Richardson also maintains a close relationship with his mother, who is thankful her son chose to attend MU.

"It feels like home," she said. "I'm happy with what he's learning and I'm happy with his advisors. Everybody has been super helpful to him, and no one has ever labeled him. It's been amazing."

Richardson agrees, saying his time at Methodist University has given him the ability to unlock his potential.

"I'm very proud of myself and what I'm accomplishing, but also grateful for my time at Methodist University," Richardson said. "It's helped me get out of my shell more and become the person I want to be." ■





HITTING THE HIGHLIGHTS



The 2024 National Champion Monarchs pose together at the course soon after winning the title (L-R): Caleb Ryan '25; Aiden Spampinato '25; Cameron Cappuzzo '24; Head Coach Steve Conley; Cooper Hrabak '24; and Chase Walts '25.

MU Men's Golf Wins 14th National Title

It would be easy to say that “luck was on their side in Las Vegas,” but anybody who knows anything about the Methodist University men's golf program understands its unmatched results in 2024 had nothing to do with luck.

Winning its record 14th NCAA Division III national championship, with a dramatic “walk-off” putt on the final hole to win by one stroke, MU secured its place atop the DIII collegiate golf world in style.

With the closest opponent tying the overall team score with only one shot remaining in the tournament, MU's **Cooper Hrabak '24** knocked down a 20-foot putt to give MU the victory (*watch the title-winning putt on video via the QR code on this page*).

Individually, Hrabak finished second overall in the tournament, was named First Team All-American, and was joined on the All-American teams list by teammates **Cameron Cappuzzo '24** (first team), **Caleb Ryan '25** (first team), **Chase Walts '25** (first

team), **Aiden Spampinato '25** (second team), and **David D'Agostino '25** (honorable mention).

Hrabak is the fourth MU golfer to be named a First Team All-American four times. He joins Monarch legends **Rob Pilewski '92**, **Chad Collins '01**, and **Adam Horton '05**.

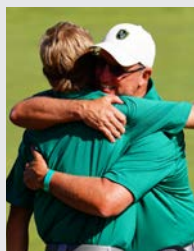
Lord of the (Championship) Rings

Steve Conley, who took over the MU program in 1987, was named DIII National Coach of the Year for the ninth time.

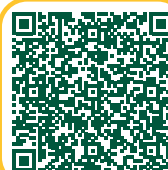
This is the second time in the past three seasons Conley has won the national award, and he was named the USA South Conference

Coach of the Year for the 26th time.

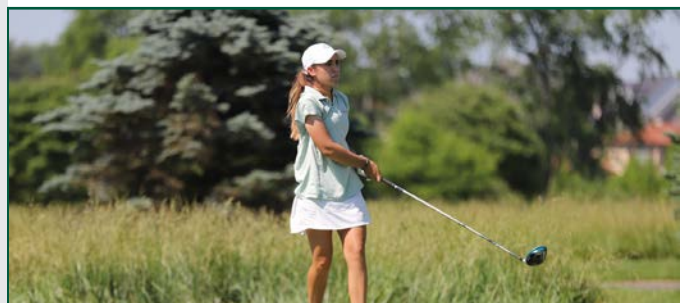
Conley has coached 10 individual national champions, more than 60 All-Americans and nearly two dozen Scholar All-Americans.



Stroke of Genius!



Scan the QR Code to view the history-making putt.



Monarchs Earn Top-15 Finish at NCAA DIII Golf Championships

Led by junior **Emily Gresham '25** (above), who finished 13th overall, MU finished 15th at the NCAA DIII Women's Golf National Tournament held in May in Nicholasville, Ky.

For her efforts this season, Gresham was named to the NCAA Division III All-Region 2/Southeast Team, and was one of three Monarchs who earned top-five finishes when the team won the USA South Championship by more than 30 strokes. Gresham and **Natalie Brosig '25** tied for second, and **Jenna Rutledge '26** was fifth in that event.

Another reminder that MU student-athletes succeed on and off the playing fields, women's golfer **Emily Skowronski '24** was named the 2024 Lucius Stacy Weaver Award winner, given annually to one student based on exceptional scholarship, character, leadership, Christian ideals, contributions, and service.

MU ATHLETICS *WHERE MONARCHS RULE*

Women's Lacrosse Continues to Shine



When they set the all-time school record in victories one year, there's seldom a team in any league that can come back the very next year and set the standard again... not to mention doing so with a new coach.

That, however, is exactly what the Methodist University women's lacrosse team did in 2023-24. The Monarchs, coming off a record-breaking 12-win season, went an impressive 15-3 and came within one game of winning their first USA South Tournament title.

In the process, MU had eight athletes make an all-conference team – **Kennedy Martin '25** (first team), **Brooke Murrell '26** (first team), **Ashley Fuentes '25** (first team), **Mikayla Ramos '24** (second team), **Tia Marlinghaus '24** (second team), **Payton Jones '25** (third team), **Kayla Nee '24** (third team), and **Meagan Cox '24** (third team).

Martin became the first player in history to repeat as the league's defensive player of the year. Nee finished with 200 career assists, becoming only the 14th player in NCAA DIII history to accomplish the feat and the only player ever to do so for the Monarchs or the USA South.

In her first season with the Monarchs, head coach **Kirsten McKay** was named conference coach of the year after leading her team (which at one point had a 13-game winning streak) to its first regular-season title since 2004.

By The Numbers

45 Head Baseball Coach **Tom Austin** just finished his 45th season at MU!



To stay up with the latest features, news, schedules and more from the MU Monarchs, visit our website at mumonarchs.com. Check in often to catch our latest live-streamed events. You can also catch us on our social media. [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Instagram](#) [@mumonarchs](#)

News and Notes

■ MU sophomore long jumper **Brandi Gardner '26** (below) was named to the NCAA DIII Outdoor Track & Field All-Region team for the third time in her career. Gardner won the USA South Outdoor championship with a jump of 5.60M. She set a personal best of 5.62 in 2024.



■ Methodist University won the USA South Men's Presidents Cup for the second year in a row, and the Monarchs took second place in competition for the women's cup. The cup is awarded to the league's top athletic programs based on conference finishes for teams in each sport.

■ USA South institutions collected \$6,889 during this year's "Pennies for a Purpose" competition and, with a total of \$3,104 raised, Methodist University is the Pennies for a Purpose champion for the first time. MU's local organizations for donations were The Kay Yow Foundation and Cape Fear Valley Health Foundation – Friends of the Cancer Center.

Scholar-Athletes

Methodist University Student-Athletes who earned a perfect 4.0 GPA in the 2023-24 academic year.

Cody Berry (baseball)

Natalie Brosig (women's golf)

Kelsey Burge (women's soccer)

Kiley Hicks (women's basketball)

Savannah Hovander (volleyball)

Emily Hoyt (women's soccer)

Rachel Lawson (softball)

Peter Malia (men's golf)

Tristen Melvin (baseball)

Brooke Murrell (women's lacrosse)

Kaylyn Nuckols (softball)

Eli Osborne (men's basketball)

Jenna Rutledge (women's golf)

Tanner Simpson (baseball)

Bailey Snow (softball)

Maggie Williams (women's golf)

MU Continues to Advance Services for Military & Veteran Students



The new Military & Veteran Center on the MU campus is a great place for study, conversation, and relaxation.

By: Michael Molter '94

Methodist University has always been proud of its commitment to serving the military community. But that commitment has strengthened over the past few years. MU President Stanley T. Wearden announced at his inauguration that enhancing services for military students would be one of his administration's goals.

A new Transfer Services department has enabled active-duty soldiers, veterans, spouses, and dependents to transfer more credits into MU by revising policies to accept more credit from prior institutions, as well as converting military service to academic credit. The addition of 100% online degree programs at both undergraduate and graduate levels has presented new opportunities for veterans and many others to begin or continue their higher education.

Most recently, a new department has been formed – Military & Veteran Services – that brings services for active-duty, veterans, and military dependents under one umbrella for the first time.

MU has a thriving population of 263 veteran students who coordinate with Director Randy Smith '05, who has been at MU for nearly 20 years. He assists veteran students with applying for admission and financial aid, class registration, and certifying them for Veterans Education Benefits. All academic programs at MU are eligible for these benefits, but it takes a skilled advisor to work with veteran students, as only the courses required for their major can be approved for benefits.

Joining Smith in the department as coordinator of Military & Veteran Services is Rocio Serna '18, most recently a professional academic advisor in the One Stop, an on-campus hub that provides all students with academic support, and academic and career advising. Both Smith and Serna are U.S. Army veterans.

"We have combined certifying official services and overall military outreach and programs in the department," said Serna. "We have a 'USO' like environment, and the new location makes it easier for student veterans to have a place that they can go to during the day for studying or just relaxing."

In addition to the veterans benefits for academic study, veteran students are able to enjoy a few additional perks, including free access to select Google Certificate programs; a student organization, Student Veterans of America (SVA); an honor society for veterans and family members, Chi Delta Chi (XΔX); and a Student Veterans Center, which has recently moved from North Hall to the lower level of Berns Student Center and been refurbished courtesy of a gift from the H.M. & Pearl Kyle Foundation (*see more detail about the gift at right*).

At the Center, student veterans can study, get support from their peers, or relax between classes in a location convenient to the Green & Gold Dining Hall and other student services.

Another new benefit, announced in June, is MU's partnership with GoVA to bring 35 free memberships to their online financial education and wellness platform.



Methodist University was named a “Best for Vets” school in the fall of 2023, and in March was again recognized as a gold-ranked, Military Friendly® university.

This is available to Methodist University ROTC cadets, active-duty, and veteran students.

For Military & Veteran Services (and all Monarchs) the week of Veterans Day becomes “Veterans Week” at MU, as events honoring veterans fill the campus calendar. These events range from the annual wreath-laying ceremony at the war memorial beneath the flagpole outside Horner Administration Building to a CIRCUIT chapel service that salutes veteran students for their contributions to campus and country.

“At MU, we are proud of all veterans who have served our country, and these events not only encourage the MU campus to honor and remember our heroes, but also help our veterans feel valued and appreciated,” Smith said.

Although the University is closed on Veterans Day, a “Step-Up Challenge” has become a new tradition, raising awareness about the problem of veteran suicide. The event is a 1,000-stairstep challenge known as the “Chad 1000x Workout” in honor of Navy Seal Chad Wilkinson, who took his life in 2018. The next Step-Up Challenge will be Nov. 11, 2024.

“We strive to provide an environment where we can step up to pay respect to our military and raise awareness in hopes of preventing future veteran suicides,” said event coordinator Dr. Amanda Ransom, assistant professor of Physical Therapy.

In March, MU achieved the prestigious “Gold” status as a Military Friendly® School for 2024-25, in recognition of its effort to enhance policies and degree programs that meet the needs of military students and their families. Each fall, MU can be found on “Military Times” Best for Vets list, highlighting its excellence in serving veteran students. Schools must document and report services, special rules, accommodations, financial incentives offered to students with military ties, and other aspects of veteran culture on campus to be so honored. ■



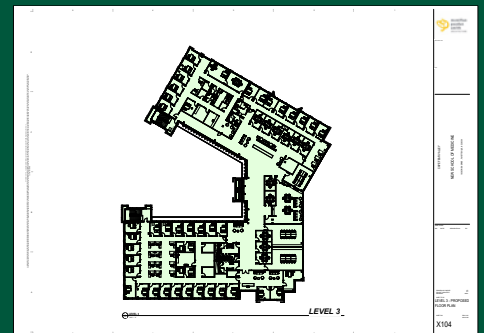
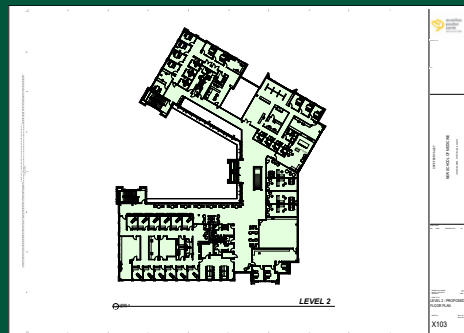
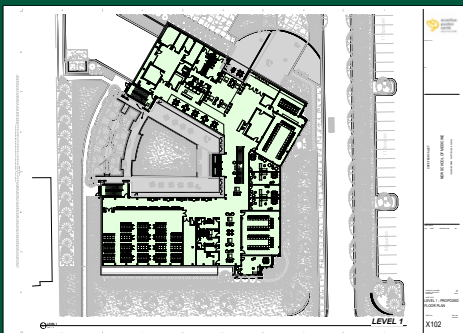
A Foundational Difference

In February 2022, the H.M. and Pearl Kyle Foundation established the Ingram Cannon Parmley Annual Scholarship at Methodist University, honoring the former faculty member and Dean of Men in the 1960s. Parmley held a Master of Divinity from Duke Divinity School and Ph.D. from North Carolina State University. The scholarship is open to any full-time undergraduate sophomore, junior, or senior with a cumulative 2.5 GPA or better. One of the Foundation’s trustees, James H. Kyle III, lives in Fayetteville with his wife,

Edwina, and he communicated to the Foundation’s board that Methodist University was “doing important work for our veterans,” according to a December 2022 letter from the Foundation to MU President Stanley T. Wearden. That letter was sent with a \$15,000 gift from the Foundation to Methodist University, earmarked specifically for purchasing new furniture and furnishings for the Student Veteran Center. The Foundation is based in Florence, South Carolina, and donates primarily to church-related organizations and hospices.

DRAWING ATTENTION

As positive progress continues on many fronts – including these latest renderings – the “talk of the town” in Fayetteville and throughout the region is the new Methodist University Cape Fear Valley Health School of Medicine.

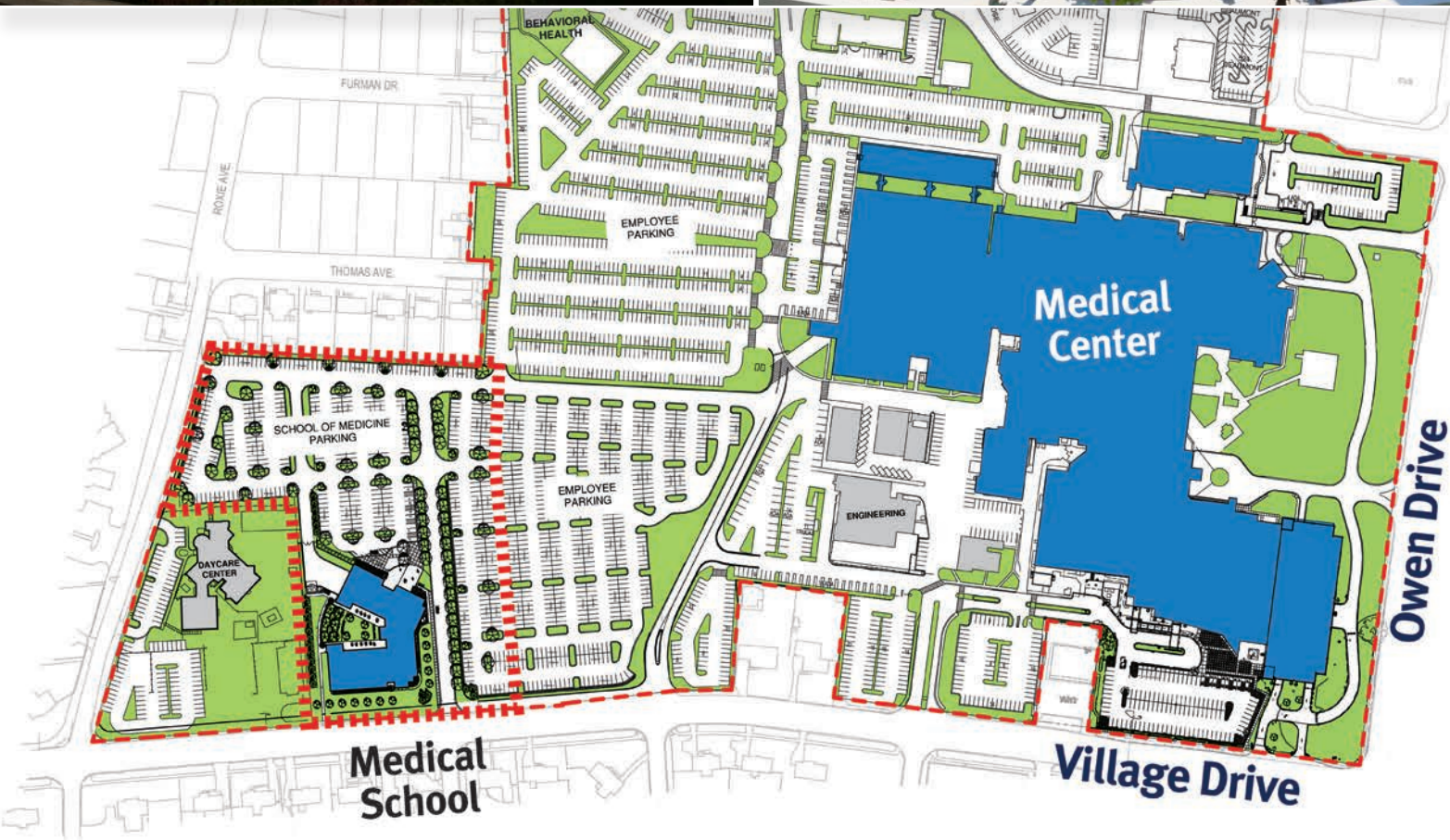




Parking Lot Entrance



Courtyard



The Methodist University Cape Fear Valley Health School of Medicine is expected to break ground on a \$60-plus-million facility this fall with the goal of starting classes in 2026, pending approval by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. The five-story facility will be located on the Cape Fear Valley Health Medical Center campus and feature learning centers, modern classrooms, a student lounge, virtual anatomy lab, patient lab, and more. ■



*White-Coat Patch for the
School of Medicine*



Sanford & Cumberland Thanks for the Memories

| "You were my home away from home." |

| "I kissed my future spouse for the first time on a bench outside your doorway."

| "My hall was king and everybody knew it." |

"I learned how to do laundry, how to get along with people waaaay different than me, stayed up late, studied hard, and created memories I'll never forget within your walls."

For all of those cherished times, and so many more from thousands of alumni of Methodist University through the years, we say "Thank You" Cumberland and Sanford Residence Halls. Soon to be gone, but never to be forgotten.

As the University we love so much continues its mission and strategies for excellence in the future, the time to bring down Cumberland and Sanford approaches (with plans for demolition in the 2024-25 academic year). The transition to alternate housing models and plans for potential new facilities is already underway. For now, though, we take a moment to reflect on two buildings that have meant so much to so many Monarchs for six decades.

In June of 1964, Methodist College had been open for four years and was celebrating its first graduating class. By fall 1965, Monarchs were celebrating the completion of four residence halls (Cumberland, Sanford, Garber, and Weaver) to replace the temporary dorms. And the rest, as they say, is history. ■

1. Sanford and Cumberland Residence Halls as they stand in the summer of 2024.
2. If these walls could talk (Monarch men gathered in a Sanford hallway in 2004).
- 3-4. Sanford and Cumberland (respectively) during the 1963-64 school year.
5. "What did you do this summer?" Move-In Day at Cumberland Hall in 1993.
6. Posters and other personal touches are crucial (Sanford room in 1983).
7. Decking the halls for Homecoming (hate to be a Falcon) in 1968.

Please take a moment and share your favorite memories of Cumberland and Sanford Halls. Simply submit via the form that's available at methodist.edu/cumberland-sanford, and we'll post highlights from those and more on that page, via social media, and in our alumni newsletter.

Save The Date

FOUNDERS COUNCIL
GOLF PRO-AM TOURNAMENT & TENNIS SOCIAL

WEDNESDAY
NOVEMBER 6, 2024

Supporting Students Through the **MU Loyalty Fund**



Downback Golf Course
Methodist University campus



Gene Clayton Tennis Center
Methodist University campus



Register Now!

910.630.7200 | events@methodist.edu

Contact us for more information and
sponsorship opportunities or scan the QR code!



Franklin S. Clark III, MD

Experience and Wisdom for Shaping Health Care

By: Wendy Hustwit

Like his father and grandfather, Franklin S. Clark III, MD has worked for decades at the forefront of economic and social enterprise in Cumberland County. As a founding board member and chair of the Methodist University Cape Fear Valley Health School of Medicine, Inc., he continues shaping the future of health care for millions of residents in Southeastern North Carolina.

Clark's grandfather, Franklin St. Clair Clark, was a chemical engineer who moved from New York to Fayetteville to work in pine stores. He became president of the Georgia Pine Turpentine, Co. and was a cofounder of the Pine Institute of America, a multi-state reforestation organization in the Southeastern U.S. He also served on the board for one of Fayetteville's first public schools, the Donaldson Military School.

Clark's father, Franklin S. Clark Jr., was a prominent Fayetteville attorney and a co-founder of Methodist University in 1956. Clark Jr. served as the first president of the Fayetteville College Foundation, raising funds and statewide support to establish the institution.

As a thoracic surgeon, Franklin Clark III spent his medical career with a keen eye on conditions impacting patients' hearts, lungs, esophagi, and tracheas. Clark was well known as a talented surgeon. With compassion and technical expertise, he guided thousands of patients and their families through treatment decisions, procedures, and recovery.

However, his capacity to treat patients was too often limited by a systemic issue beyond his control as a surgeon. The region's shortage of hospital beds too often delayed important and lifesaving care for local patients.

This is why, in 1981, Clark joined a group of physicians to establish the Fayetteville Ambulatory Surgery Center – the first freestanding outpatient surgery center on the East Coast of the U.S. This new model of outpatient care met patients' planned surgical needs (e.g., cataract surgery, hernia repair, tonsillectomies, etc.) and freed up hospital beds for intensive and acute care medical procedures.

Even with the surgery center's successful integration into the health care ecosystem, Clark still recognized obstacles preventing his patients from getting needed care. He left medical practice in 1989 to help change the system. For the next two decades, Clark and his business partners established multiple private ventures offering health care services we now take for granted.

Cumberland County residents will likely know the facilities

Clark and his associates have built, including Fayetteville's Village Green Rehabilitation & Health Care Center, the Carolina Inn assisted living facility, and the Carolina Highlands independent living condominiums. They also founded a business for medical diagnostic services and lithotripsy (a

noninvasive procedure for breaking up kidney and gall stones).

In conversation, Clark is modest about his entrepreneurial achievements; even rueful that he never took a business class ("It probably would have helped me!" he chuckles). Nevertheless, Clark has a unique ability to understand the many parts of complex systems – in medicine and in the community. While he certainly heard the cheers as a basketball star at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, it is without much fanfare

The medical school is a great next step for health care in the entire region. Care will be better and more available to more people.

– Franklin S. Clark III, MD

that Clark chooses to run his businesses as he works to connect residents to the resources that can improve their lives.

Clark's support of Methodist University first began in 1966 when he and his siblings established the Franklin S. Clark annual scholarship in honor of their late father. He has regularly contributed to the MU Loyalty Fund for scholarships and to campus capital projects. He was a guest-lecturer for MU nursing classes on thoracic care and most recently was the keynote speaker at the 2024 Methodist University Graduate Commencement Ceremony (*pictured at left*), where he was awarded the honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters degree in recognition of his many contributions to the wellbeing of his community.

Clark's record of support spans the Fayetteville's ServiceSource Foundation, the Friendship House, Cumberland Community Foundation board, the chamber of commerce, the home builders' association board, the Care Clinic, Sandhills Area Land Trust, Fayetteville Animal Protection Society, Cape Fear Botanical Gardens, and Cape Fear Valley Health Foundation, among others.

With his achievements in business and medicine, Clark could comfortably retire to the mountains or to the beach, but his constant love for his hometown keeps him close and engaged in community health concerns.

"I've always thought that Methodist University is doing a great job with the Physician Assistant, Physical Therapy, and Occupational Therapy programs," Clark said. "The medical school is a great next step for health care in the entire region. Care will be

better and more available to more people."

The new school of medicine is already benefitting from Clark's generosity, vision, and determination. He is joined on the medical school's board by other visionaries, including Brett Johnson, Lucy Jones, Alicia Marks Flowers, Gen. Dan McNeill (Ret.), Tammy Thurman, Walter Tippet, Cape Fear Valley Health CEO Mike Nagowski, and MU President Stanley T. Wearden.

"Dr. Clark's knowledge of the health care industry and his entrepreneurial experience in the region are invaluable gifts to Methodist University," Wearden said. "His wisdom and commitment to this community are unsurpassed. He is a highly successful man in multiple endeavors who made the decision to work and live in his hometown in an effort to make Fayetteville and Cumberland County a better and healthier place.

"Dr. Clark is a genuinely humble and self-effacing man who has spent his adult lifetime working quietly, behind the scenes on transformative initiatives that are leaving this community forever changed for the better." ■



Dr. Clark (left), here with former MU Board of Trustees Chair Mac Healy, has been a longtime supporter of MU, its mission, and programs.

Save the Date

PRESIDENT'S SOCIETY RECEPTION

November 14, 2024



Methodist University President's Society members are esteemed individuals who share a deep commitment and loyalty to the institution. They contribute sizeable gifts that sustain specialized programs and experiences for MU students.

Thanks to our President's Society members, Monarch students gain knowledge to tackle complex issues; they learn from unique experiences in research, service, travel, and leadership.

Please consider joining the President's Society. Members of the President's Society will be invited to our annual reception November 14.

Join the President's Society today with a gift of \$1,000 or more, paid in full or installments between July 1 and June 30. You may make your gift at donate.methodist.edu or by calling 910.630.7200.

Loyalty THROUGH TALENT:

Commitments of Past and Present Create
the Bright Future for Methodist University

(Part Two of a Three-Part Series) By: Christian Naranjo

Methodist University boasts a rich history of preparing students for a lifetime of meaning and purpose. MU alumni have gone on to become doctors, lawyers, educators, psychiatrists, first responders, social workers, business executives, and much more. Most of all, MU alumni are champions of change – making their community better through intellectual values and ethical principles such as truth, virtue, justice, and love.

None of the success would be possible, however, without one key ingredient – LOYALTY.

For nearly 70 years, members of the community – on campus and off – have put their faith in MU, creating a legacy of success for the students who walk onto the beautiful 617-acre campus or enter online programs from wherever they may be.

But *loyalty* is more than conviction; it leads to action. *Loyalty* can be displayed in many ways including through time, talent, and treasure. This three-part series highlights some difference makers of MU's past and present who have devoted themselves to the institution. This edition showcases three shining examples of difference makers who have shown *loyalty* to Methodist University through "Talent."

From a long-time MU Board of Trustees member in Dr. Loleta Foster to educator and community pillar Dr. Sid Gautam to a successful mentor in Sara Dickson '09, it becomes clear that loyalty can come from many different places. All you need is a willingness to utilize your talent to make Methodist University an even greater institution.



As you explore the stories of Foster, Gautam, and Dickson, ask yourself:
"How can I be loyal to Methodist University through my talents?"
To get started, visit methodist.edu/loyalty or scan this QR code.



A portrait of Dr. Loleta Foster, an elderly Black woman with short, curly grey hair, wearing black-rimmed glasses and a green and white patterned sweater. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green.

Dr. Loleta Foster

A Longtime Community Member Who Builds Key Relationships

When Dr. Loleta Foster first moved to Fayetteville in 1973, she saw the potential in then-named Methodist College.

“It was this little school on the other side of the city,” Foster recalled. “It seemed like it was out in the middle of nowhere because there were hardly any buildings or restaurants along Ramsey Street. But I saw the promise and wanted to make a difference.”

Foster, a trusted psychologist in the Fayetteville area, moved away in 1979 and returned in 1982 – ready to make a difference. While she has served on a variety of community boards during her time in Fayetteville, she first joined Methodist College’s visitor board in 1991. Ultimately, it led to her appointment on the Board of Trustees in 1993 – a position she proudly served for 30 years. She remains in great service to the University as a Trustee Emeritus.

One of Foster’s most fond memories on the board was her involvement in the unanimous name change of Methodist College to Methodist University in 2006.

“I still remember that meeting to this very day. It started a new history at Methodist University,” she recalled.

As a trustee, Foster spent time on the academic affairs committee and the student affairs committee – overseeing the progress done in both areas over the years.

“I had a chance to work with and be a voice for faculty,” said Foster. “But I’m most proud of the growth of the health sciences programs. We went from not having much to now having Physician Assistant Studies, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and the incoming medical school. Also, the significant rise of the PGA Golf Management program.”

On top of her service on the MU Board of Trustees, Foster also established an endowed scholarship and is a financial sponsor of the University’s General Shelton Leadership Camp. All of it is a testament to her *loyalty* to MU– utilizing her talents as a relationship builder.

“Everything in life is about relationships,” Foster said. “My work as a psychologist has encouraged me to try to strengthen communication and team building. If we can continue to get people to work together, we can continue to make a difference at Methodist University.”

Whether you are a student, faculty member, alumna/ alumnus, or you see the potential in Methodist University like Foster did, now is the perfect time to become *loyal*.

“We often don’t realize how sharing our talents can make a difference in people’s lives,” Foster said. “I was able to help and there are so many other opportunities to create change because there are so many needs. MU has taught me that if you give people the opportunity, they can make a difference.”

A portrait of Dr. Sid Gautam, an older man with glasses, smiling. He is wearing a blue and white striped collared shirt under a grey sweater. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light grey.

Dr. Sid Gautam

A Professor, Leader, and Transformative Difference-Maker

If you take a moment to reflect on the Fayetteville community since the 1960s, it is difficult to find someone with more impact than the late Dr. Sudhaker “Sid” Gautam.

A native of India, Gautam made his way to Fayetteville to begin a career as an economics professor at then Methodist College in 1968. Five years later, Gautam founded the school’s Center for Entrepreneurship (CFE) to assist entrepreneurs in converting their dreams into realities. Under his leadership, the CFE hosted high-profile symposiums and intimate seminars for professionals and students alike – focusing on topics that impact local businesses such as the stock market, forecasting, energy conservation, and major corporations.

In addition to his work at Methodist University, Gautam served on the board of Cape Fear Valley Medical Center, founded the organization now known as the Cape Fear River Assembly, and he organized the annual event that has turned into the International Folk Festival in Fayetteville.

When Gautam retired from Methodist University in 2012, he reflected fondly on his time at MU while keeping an eye on the future:

“I still remember 44 years ago when I came to this town with only one suitcase, and Methodist College looked like a corn field. We have really come a long way. It’s such a lovely, wonderful institution. I can’t thank MU enough to give me the opportunity to really plan, promote, and execute everything. I’ll always remember the students, too. How many people are lucky in this world to have that opportunity? The best days of Methodist University are still ahead.”

Gautam’s impact continues throughout Methodist University to this day as more than 70 students have graduated with either a major or minor in Entrepreneurship from MU in the last decade. Through his loyalty and service to MU, he was able to leave an undeniable legacy.

For Gautam’s daughter, Pat Sharma, his unique talent of connecting with each and every person was the ultimate difference maker for MU and the greater Fayetteville community.

“It’s like what Maya Angelou once said, ‘People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.’ That’s what it was like for him,” she said. “He just loved being around people and he had this quality that allowed him to talk to teenagers and 80-year-olds at the same time. When I hear from his past students, they would always say that he made them feel good about themselves.”

Gautam’s life is an example of how much someone can accomplish if they are willing to share their talents.

“He was a big believer of people needing to be involved in their community, no matter what you can contribute, big or small,” Sharma said. “He certainly exhibited that in his life through everything he was involved in, and it was important to him.”

Photo Credit: Raul R. Rubiera/The Fayetteville Observer

Sara Dickson '09

A Successful Student, Alumna, and Mentor to MU Graduates

Growing up in Providence, Rhode Island, Sara Dickson '09 thought her plan was set. She was going to graduate high school and go on to play college basketball.

"In my senior year, I tore my ACL, which turned out to be a blessing in disguise," Dickson said. "I didn't get into the school I thought I was getting into. But then, I learned about Methodist University and the PGA Golf Management program."

As a multi-sport athlete, Dickson was recruited to the women's golf team and quickly decided to enroll at MU in 2005. She excelled both in and out of the classroom. As a student-athlete, Dickson helped the program win two NCAA Division III National Championships while being named 2008-09 College Sports Communicators Second Team Academic All-America. She then graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration with a concentration in PGA Golf Management in 2009.

Since graduation, Dickson has found success in the golf industry, holding various club professional positions in Chicago, Florida, and New England while earning seven awards from the Golf Digest and PGA, including most recently the 2021 Golf Digest's Best Teachers in Your State Award for Florida.

Dickson is now the director of golf at Wilderness Country Club in Naples, Florida, where she leads the golf department and golf operations.

"Without Methodist University, there's no way I would have felt comfortable entering the workforce," Dickson said. "I would have never broadened my horizons if it weren't for MU. By the time you graduate from the program, you're ready to be an assistant golf professional."

In her current role, Dickson has found a way to be *loyal* to MU by applying her connections within the golf industry. In 2020, while following the Methodist University PGA Golf Management social media, Dickson pinpointed two upcoming graduates who would be a perfect fit at the country club she directs: Nicole Triano '20 and Zane Brownrigg '21.

"When I had an opportunity to hire them, I reached out to the program and now they both work here," she said.

Triano works as an assistant golf professional while Brownrigg was recently promoted to head professional.

"They're absolute rockstars. They went through the same training and same program I went through, and we have a common bond because of that. Methodist University is a natural place to start because I know the quality of the program," Dickson added.

Dickson hopes her personal story encourages other members of the MU community to use their talents as an opportunity to show their *loyalty* and make a difference.

"Keep in touch with Methodist University and follow who's graduating. If you have a chance to hire alumni, great," she said. "You can also reach out and talk to a class in your respective field. There are lots of ways to get involved with current students or alumni." ■

The next issue of MU Today will feature Part 3 of our three-part series on MU *Loyalty: Time, Talent, and Treasure*.





Legacy and Leadership:

Born to be a Monarch, Lipscomb '05 Carries on Both Family and MU Traditions of Excellence

By: Christian Naranjo

Leslie Dunn Lipscomb '05 embodies the essence of being a “lifelong Monarch” as her passion for Methodist University is evident through her everyday life.

The Charlotte-born alumna (*pictured above with her native Queen City in the background*) has been in a proud Monarch family from the beginning as her parents, the late Robert “Bob” Dunn '70 and Camille Dunn '70, both graduated from then Methodist College.

“From the time I was probably 3 years old, I was going to Methodist College’s Homecoming, and we would see all of my mom’s friends that she went to school with,” recalled Lipscomb. “I remember getting all dressed up for the dances, watching the Homecoming King be crowned, and then watching the football game. For me, Methodist was very comfortable and second nature. It was pretty special.”

As fate would have it, when it was her turn for college, Lipscomb chose MU – pointing to the familiarity, the proximity to family, and the diversity of degrees offered as key reasons for her selection.

Lipscomb fit right in from the start – spending her time outside of the class as a member of the dance team, a resident assistant for Pearce Hall, and an active participant with the school’s Students in Free Enterprise.

But most of all, Lipscomb realized her potential in academics while double majoring (Business Administration and Marketing).

“My professors were incredible, especially Dr. Jeff Zimmerman and Sherri Schmidt,” Lipscomb said. “They taught me all of the little things that matter like not putting your high school email address on your resume. They provided very foundational, fundamental type of coaching that I needed to be successful later in my career.”

Lipscomb even put her business chops to the test while in school – starting her own apartment-cleaning business that was able to hire her roommates at the time.



All of us grew up there, and (MU) was our launch pad before becoming the people we are today.

– Leslie Dunn Lipscomb '05





Methodist University was, is, and always will be a “family affair” for Leslie Dunn Lipscomb ’05, whose parents and sister (bottom left at Leslie’s graduation) are alumni of the school. She keeps the “family” theme going strong today with husband and son (right) and with her involvement in regional events and more with her fellow MU friends.

“The grace, love, care, and affection I received from my professors led me into the world of working and set me up to give the same level of service to people I work with now,” Lipscomb added.

After graduation, Lipscomb has found great success in various roles and opportunities in the business world. Starting as a sales associate for Financial Independence Group in 2006, Lipscomb has climbed the ladder and now leads as a senior vice president for a family-owned financial institution based in the town of Cornelius just north of Charlotte. Recently, Lipscomb became one of 15 co-authors for the bestselling book “Financial Trendsetters”.

In the midst of her busy schedule, Lipscomb finds time to give back to Methodist University. During MU’s most recent capital campaign, Lipscomb volunteered for feasibility interviews and now helps steward an endowed scholarship that her father started in honor of the late Dr. Sid Gautam (*see the cover story featuring Gautam starting on page 18*).

Also, Lipscomb and her sister – Dianne Dunn Jones ’01, another proud alumna of Methodist University – have been active participants of the Charlotte alumni chapter and continue to support annual regional events (*see some regional event highlights and schedule on page 24*).

“Methodist University is extremely special to me,” said Lipscomb. “Having that connection with my mom, dad, and sister really means a lot. All of us grew up there, and that was our launch pad before becoming the people we are today. Methodist University had an impact on the people that raised me so that’s pretty special.”

Lipscomb now lives a 30-minute drive north of Charlotte in Huntersville with her husband, David, and their son, Brewer, while maintaining a close relationship with her sister who is currently finding success in the world of commercial real estate.

“My sister, Dianne, is that person I call when I’m not feeling good about something. She lifts me up and tells me I can do anything,” said Lipscomb. “After my dad passed in 2015, we created a rule that whenever we want to tell him something, we call one another. It’s a neat connection the two of us have.”

“I’m super thankful for my experience at Methodist University,” Lipscomb added. “The self-discipline I learned guided me into the working world and helped me understand that I can handle multiple irons in the fire. But I’m also thankful for all of the lifelong friendships I made at Methodist University that are still alive and well today.” ■

Bringing MU to You



Join us as we continue to bring together alumni, parents, and friends of Methodist University to celebrate our shared connections.

These events are perfect for expanding social and professional networks, staying updated on campus news, and showcasing pride in our alma mater. Reflect on memories from Charlotte, Raleigh, Norfolk, D.C., and Fayetteville, and mark your calendars for the future 2024-25 events!

For more information about these events – or to host one in your area – please contact Taylor Murphy, Director of Alumni Relations, at 910.630.7485, 800.488.7110 (ext. 7485), or alumnioffice@methodist.edu.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wilmington, N.C. Sept. 24

Pinehurst, N.C. Oct. 29

Greensboro, N.C. Nov. 21

New York, N.Y. Dec. 5

PGA Show, Orlando, Fla. Jan. 22

Charlotte, N.C. Feb. 25

Raleigh, N.C. March 18

Richmond, Va. April 3

Washington, D.C. May 15

Fayetteville, N.C. June 12

CHARLOTTE, N.C.



RALEIGH, N.C.



NORFOLK, Va.



WASHINGTON, D.C.



FAYETTEVILLE, N.C.



2 0 2 4

HOMEcomings EVENTS

SCHEDULE

OCTOBER

**18
FRI**

Welcome Reception
5 p.m., Location TBD

Athletics Hall of Fame
6:30 p.m., Matthews Ministry Center

Homecoming Bonfire
8 p.m., Gravel Lot Behind Riddle Center

**19
SAT**

Alumni Association Meeting
8 a.m., Alumni Dining Room

Alumni Awards Ceremony
10 a.m., Alumni Dining Room

Candlelight Memorial Service
11:30 a.m., Matthews Chapel

Alumni Tailgate
Noon–2 p.m., Alumni Headquarters

50+ Reunion Event
12:30 p.m., Alumni Dining Room

Women's Soccer vs. Mary Baldwin
1 p.m., Duggins Soccer Stadium

Football vs. Southern Virginia
3 p.m., Monarch Stadium

**View additional information,
updates, and register now at
methodist.edu/homecoming**





Sue (Hatch) Smith '72 earned the Clinton-Sampson (N.C.) Chamber of Commerce's Entrepreneurial Success Award. She and her friend, Lesa Moore, opened Tickled Pink Consignment Shop in 2009. She consistently participates in downtown activities and actively attends Chamber networking events and the Business-to-Business roundtable meetings

hosted by the Chamber of Commerce and Small Business Center.



Steve Driggers '76, Dave Foster '76, and Charles Koonce (pictured with Bill McMillan) have been selected for several years to call the Shrine Bowl in Spartanburg, S.C. This is an annual event highlighting 44 high school seniors from North and South Carolina.

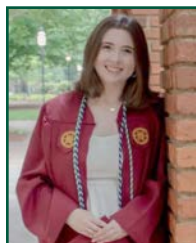
David Culbreth '87 would like to share that his son, Daniel Maxwell Culbreth, was appointed by the President of the United States to the United States Military Academy at West Point as part of the Class of 2028. Maxwell plans to follow in his father's footsteps as an Army armor officer. David is currently a senior budget analyst for the U.S. Army Civil Service.



Trent Gregory '89 won the Golfweek Senior National at Grandover Resort in Greensboro, N.C. He also won the Estero Senior Amateur in May before continuing on in the senior amateur circuit – a world he's just figuring out now that he's two years into his post-work life.



Dr. Pearllette J. Ramos '89 was featured on the podcast, "Guiding Growth: Conversations with Community Leaders" from the Gilbert (Ariz.) Chamber of Commerce. Pearllette Ramos is a lawyer, transformational leader, social justice advocate, and entrepreneur with more than 25 years experience in activism, change and strategic management, and DEI consultation.



Cindee (Hurt) Campbell '92 is proud to share that her daughter, Alexandra (pictured), graduated cum laude from Elon University and will be an intern with Intervarsity Christian Fellowship/USA.



Bryan Wright '94 was promoted to East Division manager for Union Home Mortgage. He has been in the mortgage business since 1989 and joined UHM in 2012. Bryan has been an integral factor driving the company's growth, beginning as a top originator, and moving into leadership roles in North Carolina, and regionally on the East Coast.



Catherine Brickhill '95 was selected as a finalist for teacher of the year among Tennessee Charter Schools. Catherine credits her success to influential mentors from Methodist University, including **Dr. Janet White, Dr. Gillie Bernstead,** and the late **Dr. Tryon Lancaster.**



John Germano '95 was named the Shore Conference's (N.J.) Ocean County Athletic Director of the Year. During the past year, John has been part of the Shore Conference executive committee and was chair of the rules and constitution committee, as well as tournament director for girl's golf. He has spent 27 years at Barnegat High School as

an educator and administrator and became its athletic director 20 years ago.



Paul Jackson '03 was included in Insurance Business America's (IBA) annual list of the top specialist wholesale insurance brokers in the U.S. for 2024. As an executive vice president at RT Specialty – Chicago, and part of the McCann/Jackson Casualty Team – Paul specializes in high hazard, distressed, and difficult-to-place risks, where he focuses

on creating innovative insurance solutions.

CLASS NOTES

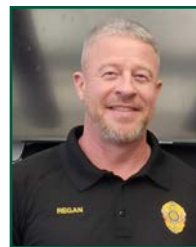


LTC Curtis Strong '03 retired from the United States Army after 20 years of honorable service. He was a Medical Service Corps Officer who specialized in medical logistics. He served as high as the Department of the Army staff at the Pentagon as a program manager.



Kathy Jones, PA-C '09M was named the 2024 Cape Fear Valley Health Advanced Practice Provider of the Year. She was honored for her compassion and care for her patients in the Hematology and Oncology departments. Kathy is described as someone who never forgets a name or a face and works tirelessly to learn everything she can to provide the best care for her patients.

Sonia (Shamdasani) Bahroo, PA-C '04M was awarded America's Top PA in 2023. She is one of 16 PAs in the country to be awarded this honor. Sonia is currently practicing endocrinology at Capital Diabetes & Endocrine Associates in Camp Springs, Md.



Brian Regan '11M was named chief of police in Siler City, N.C. Regan previously spent more than 25 years with North Carolina State Highway Patrol. Most recently he worked for High Point University Campus Police & Security as the captain of Field Operations & Professional Standards.

Dr. Erin (Patenaude) McKinley '04, PhD, RD, LDN, CLC, MCHES, FAND, has been promoted to associate professor with tenure in the School of Nutrition and Food Sciences at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge.



Robert Hawkins '07 was inducted into the SouthWest Edgecombe (N.C.) High School Hall of Fame. Bobby played basketball his last two years at SWE but baseball for all four years and spent three years on varsity under hall-of-fame head coach Bruce Rhodes as a pitcher/infielder. He helped the Cougars reach the NCHSAA playoffs three times, including the 2-A quarterfinals in 2001.



Josh Speight '11 played in his third PGA Championship. His top-eight finish in the 2024 PGA Professional Championship earned him a berth in the PGA Championship and spot on the Corebridge Financial Team. He is the director of instruction at The Club at Viniterra (Va.).



Amanda (Collins) McGarry, PA-C '07M joined the FirstHealth Cancer Center Radiation Oncology team. McGarry brings more than 16 years of patient care experience to her role at the center. Prior to joining the cancer care team, she served as a physician assistant with Pinehurst Medical Clinic in gastroenterology for 11 years.



Mark Sullivan '12M was announced as the new department head for Criminal Justice and Forensic Science Technologies and Public Safety Administration at Wake Tech. Mark, who brings decades of experience as a law enforcement officer and instructor to the role, will manage departmental resources and faculty.



Sara Dickson '09, PGA director of golf at Wilderness Country Club in Naples, Fla., was awarded the 2023 South Florida PGA Bill Strausbaugh Award. The Bill Strausbaugh award recognizes the professional whose overall commitment is to promoting the game, the Association and fellow PGA Professionals.



Wyatt Worthington '12 competed in his fourth PGA Championship following a top-16 finish in the 2024 PGA Professional Championship. He is a PGA golf manufacturer sales representative at Eastside Golf.

CLASS NOTES & ENGAGEMENTS



Tia Porterfield '14 was selected to write an article for the May 2024 issue of “NBCC Visions”, the official newsletter of the National Board for Certified Counselors. The article titled, “Working with Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families” details Tia’s passion and clinical expertise in the counseling field when helping military-

connected clients navigate the unique stressors that come along with military culture.



Bryan Bing '15 enters his first season as the assistant defensive line coach for the Chicago Bears. Prior to arriving in Chicago, Bing served as a defensive assistant with the Colts in 2023 as part of the Tony Dungy Diversity Coaching Fellows program.



Cheri Todd Molter '17 was featured in the March 2024 issue of “Women’s View Magazine”. Cheri is a research historian and content development specialist for the North Carolina Center on the Civil War, Emancipation, and Reconstruction in Fayetteville, N.C.



Larkin Gross '19 made his second start in the PGA Championship after finishing in the top eight in the 2024 PGA Professional Championship. Larkin is a PGA assistant golf professional at Westwood Country Club in Virginia.



Gillian Niesel '21 graduated from Marquette University Law School in May of 2024. Gillian is working as a compliance associate for Jump Trade.



Virginia Felton '22 graduated from Western Carolina University in May of 2024 with her Master of Education in Higher Education Student Affairs. Virginia has accepted a position as the assistant director of leadership and fraternity & sorority life at the College of Charleston.

ENGAGEMENTS

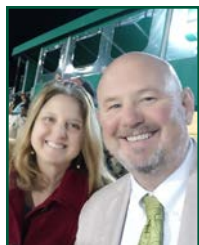


Collin Hinnant '22 proposed to **Kadie Snipes '21** on May 18, 2024. Collin and Kadie met at Methodist University in the fall of 2019 and started dating in March of 2020. Kadie is now the director of athletic communications at High Point University and Collin is scheduled to graduate from the Methodist University Physician Assistant Program in December.

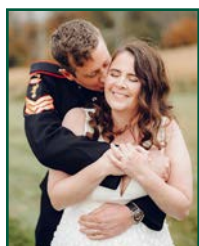


Claire Cummings '23 got engaged to Colton Davis on Oct. 21, 2023. The couple plans to be married on Aug. 17, 2024. Claire is a physical and health education teacher for Lee County (N.C.) Schools and Colton is a fireman for the Fayetteville Fire Department.

WEDDINGS



Brandon Spiece '01 and Lori Grady were married on Aug. 12, 2023. Brandon is a school administrator for Pamlico County (N.C.) High School, and Lori is a real estate appraiser.



Danielle Reid '14 married Robert Beckett Oct. 20, 2023. The couple married in Banner Elk, N.C. and lives in Salisbury, England. Danielle is a hand therapist for Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust and Robert is in the British Army. Former Methodist University athletic trainers, **Ginna Lewis** and **Jennifer Cuchna '12M**, along with soccer teammate

Sara Altman '12 attended the wedding.



Miranda Conaway '16 married Stephen Worsley on May 25, 2024. Miranda is currently a senior community manager for Greystar Management and Stephen is a mortgage loan officer for Wells Fargo.

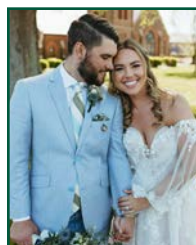


Sarah Ewin '19 married Christian Cosden on Dec. 2, 2023. Sarah is a NICU RN for Piedmont Fayette, and Christian is a lineman for Pike Electric. Sarah's sister, **Emily Ewin '17**, was her maid of honor. **Samantha Izzo '19**, **Hannah Sellers '19**, and **Ashton Walker '19** were in the bridal party.



Bailey Helms '20, '22M married **Joe Moore '21** on Mar. 23, 2024. **Brook (Such) Smith '19, '22M**, **Oliva Hudson '20**, **Kadie Snipes '21**, **Walker Bailey '21**, **Wesley Manus '21**, and **Zander McCall '21** were in the wedding party. Bailey is a physician assistant in the emergency medicine department of Apollo MD and Joe is a golf professional at

Myer's Park Country Club.



Joshua Ryan '20 and his high school sweetheart, Sophia Osborne, were married by his grandfather **Rev. Mike Safley '72** on April 13, 2024. **Patrick Bucolo '05**, **Christopher Ryan '15**, **Caleb Ryan '24**, **R. Tyler Beaman '18, '20M**, **Trevor Hendricks '18, '20M**, **Jacob Dempster '19**, and **Will May '19** were in the wedding party. Joshua

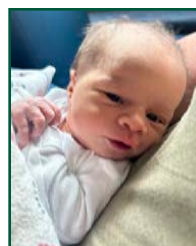
is a graphic designer with Johnnie-O and Sophia is a human resources generalist for Buhler, Inc.



Gciniwe Simelane '24 and **Loyiso Matiwane '24** were married on May 4, 2024. **Lungelo Ndzimandze '24** and **Kampadilemba Onadja '24** were in the wedding party.

Gciniwe is a graphic designer for New Target, Inc. and Loyiso is an area manager for Amazon.

BIRTHS



Aryn Hicks '11 and Johnathan Evans welcomed Josiah to the world on May 9, 2024. Josiah weighed 7 pounds, 3 ounces and measured 20 inches long. Aryn is an EHS/asset protection manager for Advance Auto Parts.



Brittany (St. Jacques) Abraham '12 and Jubin Abraham welcomed their daughter Adalyn on May 10, 2024. Adalyn weighed 7 pounds, 5 ounces and measured 18.5 inches. Brittany is the director of network efficiency at Community Medial Group.



Hillary (Petruska) Frisby '13, '15M and her husband, Alec, welcomed their son Bronx Maddox on Dec. 16, 2023. Bronx was born 7 pounds, 7 ounces and 21 inches long. Hillary is a senior assistant vice president for Wells Fargo.

BIRTHS (CONT.)



Whitney (Walker) LeBel '13 and her husband, Dylan, welcomed their son Weston on Jan. 25, 2024. Weston was born 7 pounds, 2 ounces, and measured 20.5 inches long. Whitney is an account executive for The Knot Worldwide.



Morgan (Prince) Gilbert '17 and her husband, Christopher, welcomed their second child, Savannah, on Jan. 26, 2024. Savannah weighed 7 pounds, 2 ounces and measured 21 inches long.



Cierra Murphy-Higgs '14 and her husband, Alonza, welcomed their second daughter, Ella, on Jan. 13, 2024. Cierra is a lactation consultant for North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University.



Gabrielle Quiles '17 and Ronnie Maynor welcomed their son, Luca, on Mar. 25, 2024. Luca weighed 8 pounds, 2.5 ounces and measured 21.26 inches long. Gabrielle is a bartender manager at Izzy's Sports Bar.



Krista Zentner '15 and **Dr. Steven Downs** welcomed their son, Jasper, on May 6, 2024. Jasper was born 6 pounds, 10 ounces and measured 21 inches long. Krista is a detective for Fayetteville Police Department and Steve is an associate professor and director of forensic science at MU.



Jordan (Litchfield) Trull '18 and her husband, Ethan, welcomed boy and girl twins on July 31, 2023. Luke and Lakelynn were born 5 pounds, 12 ounces and 4 pounds, 11 ounces.

Nick Baggett '16 and his wife, Brittany, welcomed their daughter on June 4, 2024. Lyla was born 8 pounds, 4 ounces and measured 20 inches long. Nick is a stormwater inspections supervisor for the City of Fayetteville.



Rose (Hernandez) and Jackson Collier '17 had their second child, Jasper, Dec. 26, 2023. Jasper was born 6 pounds, 12 ounces and measured 21 inches long. Jackson is the head golf professional at Chockoyotte Country Club.

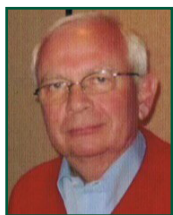
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methodist.edu/alumni/class-notes



ALUMNI



Thomas "Tom" Hurt Repass '68, 79, of Jonesborough, Tenn., passed away May 31, 2024. A graduate of Methodist University with a degree in Business Administration, he served as a Medic in the Army Reserves and founded Corporate Systems Administration, Inc., a pioneering firm in self-funded health benefits. Tom was an active community member, supporting numerous causes including Niswonger Children's Hospital and St. Jude Children's Hospital.



Charles Abernathy Teachey '69, 76, of Cape Carteret, N.C., passed away on March 15, 2024. Charles was a dedicated educator and proud veteran of the U.S. Army. After graduating from Methodist, he went on to earn his masters from Vanderbilt University in 1972. For 35 years, he passionately taught history at Swansboro (N.C.) High School and played a pivotal role in establishing its cross-country program, which he continued to coach alongside his wife, Susan.



Susan Caldwell Hall '72, 74, of St. Pauls, N.C., passed away on Apr. 8, 2024. Susan dedicated 30 years to the Public Schools of Robeson County as an administrator before retiring, leaving behind a legacy of compassion and dedication to education.



Gerald Emery Hobbs '72, 74, of Bunnlevel, N.C., passed away May 22, 2024. He was a lifelong farmer and self-employed accountant for 45 years. Gerald bought his first feeder calves at 12 years old and raised cattle most of his life. He was a dedicated member of Friendship Baptist Church, where he first met his wife, Cathy, and served as a deacon there for over 40 years.

Wayne Thomas "Tommy" Smith '72, 73, of Raleigh, N.C., passed away Feb. 27, 2024. Born in Roanoke Rapids, N.C., in Sept. of 1950, Tommy graduated from Rocky Mount Senior High School before earning his bachelor's degree from Methodist. Known as the owner of Bob Melton's Barbeque, Tommy had a passion for outdoor activities, refereeing high school and college soccer, and cherished his love for beach music.



William "Bill" Erwin Sherman, Jr. '74, 83, of Cedartown, Ga. passed away Jan. 13, 2024. Bill enlisted in the U.S. Army shortly after high school, completing his college degree during his service. His distinguished 20-year military career included five tours in Vietnam with the elite MACV-SOG unit, earning him numerous accolades such as the Bronze Star Medal and Meritorious Service Medal.

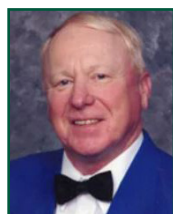
Robert Fred Hughes '76, 70, of Elizabethtown, N.C. passed away Feb. 5, 2024. Robert received a bachelor's degree in art from Methodist. He is survived by his brother, **John Hughes '71**.



Thomas Leon Basile '88, 60, of Staten Island, N.Y., passed away on Mar. 11, 2024. A proud Army Veteran of the 82nd Airborne, Tom dedicated his life to serving others. He pursued his calling through substantial rescue mission work at the New York City Rescue Mission and The Bowery Mission, where he served as director. Tom's passion for helping people extended to disaster relief efforts, where he became known as the "Disaster Pastor," coordinating volunteer groups and forging ties with churches.

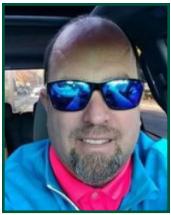


Terry Don Preiss '88, 83, of Cary, N.C., passed away April 22, 2024. Born in Milwaukee, Wis., Terry dedicated his life to service, both to his country and his community. He utilized his education to establish a successful security systems business in Fayetteville. Terry's devotion to his family and faith was evident in every aspect of his life, from his active church participation to his unwavering support and love for his family. He is survived by his wife, Margie, President Emeritus **Dr. M. Elton Hendricks'** sister-in-law. He was predeceased by his daughter, **Ginger Preiss '96**.



Michael "Mike" Henry Johnson '90, 76, of Cisco, Texas passed away April 16, 2024. Mike enlisted in the U.S. Army and retired in 1988 with over 20 years of decorated service. He continued serving his country by working for the Forestry Service until 2004. A 30-year member of Phoenix Lodge 8, Mike was a proud Master Mason and Shriner, known for his persona "Henry the Hobo" in the Sudan Clown Unit, bringing smiles to children's faces and raising money for Shriner's Hospitals.

IN MEMORY (CONT.)



Chad Charles Maes '91, 55, of Cudjoe Key, Fla., passed away May 16, 2024. A graduate of Methodist University's PGA Golf Management program, Chad dedicated his entire career to being a golf professional. His passion for golf defined his adult life, and he loved teaching the game, organizing tournaments, and working on the course. Chad's commitment to sharing his love for golf touched many lives.



Carolle (Guignard) Price '01, 69, of Hope Mills, N.C., passed away April 26, 2024. Carolle received a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Methodist and previously worked for the Police and Public Safety office.



Emily Christine Steinhoff '03, 44, of Garner, N.C., passed away Mar. 18, 2024. Emily was not only an Army veteran but also an attorney and registered nurse. She was a proud alumna of Methodist University, UNC Law, and Duke School of Nursing. Emily's passion for the arts shone brightly through her roles as a writer, actor, and singer, as well as her involvement in stage management for various productions. Her love for fundraising and dedication to the arts community earned her the title of RLT Diva 2020.



Jerry Lewis Avery '05, 71, of Hope Mills, N.C., passed away Feb. 24, 2024. He was a retired Sergeant First Class United States Army.

FORMER STUDENTS



John Howard Calloway '98, 78, of Fayetteville, N.C., passed away April 19, 2024. After serving eight years in the United States Army, he pursued higher education at Fayetteville Technical Community College and then Methodist University. John dedicated many years to serving as a union representative at Goodyear Tires and as a trustee at Rock Springs AME Zion Church. John was also an avid volunteer for the VA in Fayetteville and as a bible study facilitator through the Prison Ministry at the local jail.



Melva Lillian (Hudson) Lopez, 101, of Fayetteville, N.C., passed away April 24, 2024. Known for her incredible talent as an artist, Melva's passion for her craft took her across the East Coast, showcasing her work at arts and crafts shows. She also dedicated her summers to missionary work alongside her husband, ministering to Indigenous communities in the Northwest Territory of Canada.



Sarah Craig Reynolds '80, 64, of Bethel, Del., passed away April 18, 2024. After graduating high school in 1976, she attended Methodist University. Sarah later earned an associate degree in human services from Delaware Technical and Community College in 1991. In 2017, Sarah completed Theological Education for Ministry from Sewanee: University of the South.

RETIRED FACULTY/STAFF



Willis M. "Bill" Watt, 73, of Junction City, Kan., passed away on April 6, 2024. Bill served in the United States Army as a nuclear weapons specialist before pursuing dual degrees at Manhattan Bible College and Kansas State University. Throughout his career as an educator and administrator, including at Methodist University, he also served as a pastor in various churches. Bill's passion for academia, coaching debate teams, and his love for Kansas State University, theatre, poetry, racquetball, and NASCAR racing defined his vibrant life. He is survived by his loving wife, **Katherine Young Watt**.



Then & Now

In previous decades, students would make a point to attend career fairs hosted by Career Services in Berns Student Center. Now, students participate in “Spring Connections Day” at Nimocks Fitness Center, an annual career fair event. This year, “Spring Connections Day” brought more than 40 businesses to share information and opportunities with our students.



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