

MU *today*

M A G A Z I N E

Spring 2026

make something

COLLEGE OF ARTS, HUMANITIES & SCIENCES

Third of a four-part series highlighting the
Colleges of Methodist University

*Thank
You*

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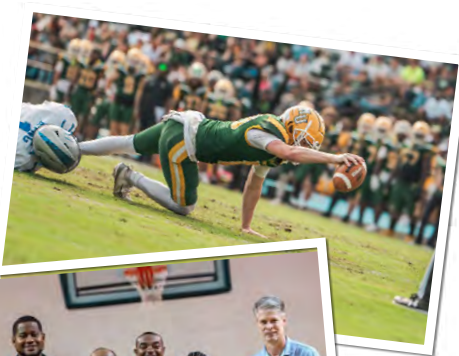
Forever Monarchs Forever Monarchs Forever Monarchs



From (L-R): Webster, Williams, Smith, Maurer, Glies, Jackie Lewis (Hill's brother), Percherke.

2025 Athletics Hall of Fame Inductees:

- Baseball – Dan Glies '03
- Cheerleading – Rickey Hill '90 (posthumously)
- Women's Soccer – Jennifer Maurer '96
- Men's Golf – Jim Percherke '90
- Women's Golf – Stacey Smith '00
- Football – Randal "Chuck" Webster '97
- Women's Basketball – Triba Williams '00



Homecoming 2025 at Methodist University was a week-long celebration of what it means to be a "Forever Monarch", reflecting the homecoming theme. This year's new events and traditions brought students, alumni, and the rest of the MU community together for a lineup of festive events.

"Homecoming is such a big weekend for reconnecting with familiar faces," said Catherine Okafor, director of Alumni Relations. "This was my first MU

Monarchs

Forever Monarchs Forever Monarchs Forever Monarchs Forever Monarchs

Homecoming, so it was all very exciting: welcoming alumni back to campus, all the events, and everyone's school pride."

The week kicked off with a Pep Rally, gearing up Monarchs for a busy Homecoming week and weekend. The annual Campus Bonfire brought out food trucks, music, and big appetites, while Fraternity & Sorority Life events and athletic showcases set the tone for a campus buzzing with energy ahead of Saturday's football game.

MU Volleyball honored its seniors with a Senior Night matchup, and seven new members were inducted into the Monarchs Hall of Fame at the Athletics Awards Ceremony, celebrating years of achievement and dedication to the green and gold.

Alumni were greeted with a Welcome Reception on Friday and the popular Alumni Awards Ceremony was on Saturday. In addition, on-campus alumni softball and basketball games brought the competitive spirit from diamond to court; there were dozens of Monarch reunions, including one for those graduating 50 or more years ago; and there was a Candlelight Memorial remembering alumni and friends who have passed since Homecoming 2024.

Homecoming tailgate fun filled the air Saturday with music, grilling, and laughter as Monarchs reunited. All attention then turned to the field as the Monarch football team celebrated its seniors just before kickoff. ■



From (L-R): Arnold, Awong-Cole, Champion, Clark, Dresser, Inczauskis

Alumni Association Award Winners:

Distinguished Alumni Award
Darl Champion Jr. '04

Distinguished Young Alumni Award
Vincent Awong-Cole '17

Alumni Service Award
Kim Dresser '05

Outstanding Faculty Award
Samantha Inczauskis '08M

Outstanding Staff Award
Shauna Arnold

Philanthropist Award
Dr. Franklin S. Clark III



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

A Message from Our President

Dear Methodist University Alumni, Students, Faculty, Staff, and Friends,

As we moved our way through the Spring 2026 semester here at Methodist University, the cool (and at times, downright cold this year!) weather moved aside, and our students were in full gear heading toward the end of the semester, end of athletic seasons, and for our seniors, a time to celebrate accomplishments with family and friends at Commencement 2026.

Adding to the excitement on our campus, and throughout Fayetteville, Cumberland County, and all of Southeastern North Carolina, is the upcoming opening of the new Methodist University Cape Fear Valley Health School of Medicine. Upon our accreditation approval in October, we immediately began recruiting our first cohort of students, who will begin classes this summer. You can read more about that in Monarch Minutes (pages 4-5) along with other MU highlighted features there.

“Our students are the beneficiaries of your substantial contributions and belief in what we’re doing now and our strategies for the future.”

Also in this issue of MU Today, it’s our great honor to showcase and thank the amazing Monarchs and friends who support this University through their generous gifts (pages 10-31). Our students are the beneficiaries of your substantial contributions and belief in what we’re doing now and our strategies for the future.

That focus on the future and our strategic initiatives remain ever-critical as, you likely are aware, I announced I would be retiring as president in late June of next year. I wanted to give our Board of Trustees ample time to actively plan for a transparent and stable succession.

It has been my great honor to serve in this position, and I will have been president for 8.5 years upon retirement. I’ll be 74 at that time, and while I’m still healthy, committed to MU, and enjoying the challenges of the job, I also look forward to spending more time with my family, traveling, and finding other ways to make a meaningful contribution to this world.

Thank you for your support of me – we still have 12 months of positive progress to make together – and all of your service and care for the MU Community. Please stay in contact with MU by visiting, through our web site news and social media. I hope our paths cross very soon.

Sincerely,

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

Stanley T. Wearden, Ph.D.

IN THIS ISSUE: SPRING 2026

COVER STORY



The third of a four-part series on the academic colleges at MU. This issue features the departments that make up the **College of Arts, Humanities & Sciences**.



MU NEWS & NOTES
SCHOOL OF MED ACCREDITATION



SPECIAL SECTION
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CLASS NOTES
CATCHING UP WITH ALUMS

ALL BY DESIGN



The Cover Photo, and design of the Cover Story (on pages 6-9), were created by **Phuong Nhi Dang '27**. She is a Graphic Design major in the featured College of Arts, Humanities & Sciences.

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MONARCH

Minutes



MU News, Notes, and More



School of Medicine Gets Green Light for Recruiting

Standing in front of the Methodist University Cape Fear Valley Health School of Medicine building in October, **President Stanley T. Wearden, Ph.D.**, shared that the new school of medicine received the official accreditation approval necessary to begin its recruitment of its inaugural class of students for the summer of 2026. “Today marks a truly transformational milestone,” Wearden told the audience. “This accomplishment is the result of years of dedication, planning, and collaboration... We will soon begin the exciting work of recruiting our charter class – students who will one day transform healthcare throughout Southeastern North Carolina.” *Read more at methodist.edu/news/som-accreditation*

Alumni, Community Come Together for Students at Founders Council Events

Since 2021, MU’s Founders Council has brought alumni, community members, and friends of MU together through its annual golf tournament and tennis showcase. The two events serve one shared purpose: to support student scholarships and create connections that strengthen the MU community. The fall Founders Council Tennis Showcase took place on November 1 at MU’s Clayton Tennis Center, followed by the Golf Pro-Am Tournament on November 5, held at MU’s on-campus, 18-hole Downback golf course. Proceeds from both events support MU’s Loyalty Fund, as well as its PGA Golf Management and Professional Tennis Management programs. *Read more at methodist.edu/news/founders-council*



MU Sponsors MLK Brunch at Crown Expo

At Methodist University, MLK Day isn’t a day off, it’s a day *on* for honoring and service. In January, more than two dozen MU students, faculty, and staff attended the Martin Luther King Jr. Brunch held at the Crown Expo in Fayetteville. MU serves as a Gold Sponsor for the event each year, which affords the University the opportunity to bring students (pictured above) to share in the celebration. *Read more at methodist.edu/news/mlk-brunch*

MONARCH *Minutes* (cont.)

► New Core Curriculum Courses Examine Vocational Discernment

MU rolled out the “Life on Purpose” core curriculum in the fall. The three-course series revamps the previous “MU Journey” classes with emphasis on vocational discernment. The curriculum encourages Monarchs to think beyond their intended majors and initial career aspirations and explore purpose. At the heart of the new program is a trilogy of courses that every student will take: *Vocation and the Good Life* – The idea of “vocation” or life purpose. Exploring theories by looking at ideas from writers, philosophers, and psychologists.

Curiosity and Investigation – Connecting interests and passions with works in college. Students discuss the experience of curiosity, information-seeking behaviors, and data literacy. *Calling and Community* – Using a social sciences lens, students explore what it means to live in a community, and how the individual can benefit from that community. *Read more at methodist.edu/news/life-on-purpose*



▲ Patch Board Connects Military Students

The Military & Veteran Center at MU unveiled its Velcro patch board (provided through the support of the H.M. and Pearl Kyle Foundation) designed to honor the service, stories, and unit pride of MU’s military-affiliated students and families.

Did You Know?

MU PGA Golf Management Director **Brock White ‘07, ‘14M** (right) was recently elected secretary of the Carolinas PGA Section (the largest in the nation), and MU grads are already president (**Jeff Avant ‘96**) and honorary president (**Josh Wagaman ‘08**) of this PGA section.



Flickr Fun

Scroll through the albums on MU’s Flickr page (flickr.com/kingmonarch/albums) to find familiar faces in MU spaces.



MU Students Connect/Network at Career Fair

Methodist University opened its doors to employers from across the state in February for a campus-wide career fair. The event – held in the Union-Zukowski Lobby – hosted 30-plus organizations representing a variety of industries and organizations, showcasing how the University helps to instill students with the skills, connections, and experiences for professional success. The event emphasized the power of networking and making connections outside of the classroom. *Read more at methodist.edu/news/career-fair*

▼ Austin Honored on Baseball’s Opening Day



Tom Austin holds his retired jersey while being honored by the University during opening day of baseball season. Austin retired last year having served as head coach of the Monarchs for more than 40 seasons.

Interim head coach

Spencer Martin earned his first win, splitting a doubleheader.

Follow all of MU athletics at mumonarchs.com

Follow Everything MU On the Platform that Fits You Best

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at Methodist.edu/news



College of Arts, Humanities & Sciences

*The third of a four-part series highlighting
the Colleges of Methodist University*

by Frann Haskins

The College of Arts, Humanities & Sciences (CAHS) highlights the core of the educational foundation at Methodist University. In the CAHS, students learn how to think, communicate effectively, gain a better understanding of the world around them, and apply that knowledge to everyday life. CAHS brings together discipline in ideologies, creativity, systems, people, and science. Whether students are doing laboratory research, analyzing political systems, writing arguments, or engaging with media arts, they are building skills that shape both their professional and personal lives.

The divisions within CAHS include Communication, Composition & Rhetoric; Fine & Performing Arts; Humanities; Justice & Military Studies; Natural Sciences; and Social Sciences. Note also, the Honors Program and Interdisciplinary Studies. Together, they are a strong academic foundation for students at Methodist University.

Communication, Composition & Rhetoric

In the Division of Communication, Composition, & Rhetoric, students develop confident and capable voices in writing and speaking.

“Beginning with their required first-year writing courses, students experience mentorship and expert instruction in the basics of writing and speaking in academic and professional settings,” said Division Head Steven Corbett, Ph.D.

Under the leadership of Assistant Professor Sonali Kudva, Ph.D., the Communication & Media Program prepares students in strategic and interpersonal communication, journalism, content creation, audio and video production, public speaking, and more.

Faculty members such as Corbett and Kudva mentor students on print publication, media projects and writing-intensive coursework designed to build confidence, persistence, and interpersonal communication skills. This division prepares students for careers in media, marketing, public relations, and leadership.

Learn more at methodist.edu/ahs/ccr.

Fine & Performing Arts

The Fine & Performing Arts Division creates a tremendous opportunity for all students at Methodist University to have a chance to experience and explore the arts, whether as majors or through electives.

While Graphic Design serves as the primary degree program, the division's studio art, art history, music, and photography courses also create strong entry points for students across the MU campus to explore visual literacy, cultural understanding, and artistic expression.

Classrooms function as active studios and collaborative spaces. Students are not only studying art, they are making it. Graphic

Design majors complete client-based projects, work with community partners, and graduate with portfolios ready for the next steps in their career. Studio art students develop technical skills while refining their personal style. In music and art history courses, students analyze form, performance, and cultural context, strengthening both their creative and critical thinking abilities.

“Mentorship is the heart of our division. Our faculty know their students well and are deeply invested in their growth, helping them build confidence and a strong creative voice,” said Tori Hord, division head for Fine & Performing Arts and associate professor of Graphic Design.



The Makerspace

The Makerspace – supported in part by the William Bethune Fund for the Arts – is a fully functional creative lab open to students, faculty, and staff.

“The Bethune Makerspace is a campus-wide resource open to all students and faculty. It creates an environment where ideas can be explored through making. By lowering barriers to access and encouraging collaboration, the Makerspace fosters curiosity, technological and material exploration, and creative problem-solving across disciplines,” said Hord.

Organized into stations, the Makerspace includes sublimation printing, five 3D printers, hot-wire foam cutting, a heat press, vinyl cutting, vacuum forming, and a laser engraver. Students create prototypes, signage, packaging, tools, and design projects all in-house.

“Everybody needs to know they can use it,” said Andrew Prieto, assistant professor of Art and visual art exhibition coordinator. “There are practical applications for almost anything you’re working on. You don’t have to outsource it. You can come in here and make it.”

Student work shapes the visual and cultural life of campus through exhibitions, performances, and collaborative projects. The arts also connect with the other disciplines in the CAHS, through communication, leadership, and even science, by helping students translate their ideas and concepts into visual and physical forms. The Makerspace is one place those connections are tangible.

Learn more at methodist.edu/ahs/fine-performing-arts.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Methodist University Chorale and Orchestra are active on campus and open to students from all majors, with live performance opportunities. The two are scheduled for a combined Spring Concert at MU (in Matthews Chapel) in April 2026.



Dear Alumni and Friends,

Purpose. It is a word that sits at the center of a meaningful education and at the heart of the College of Arts, Humanities & Sciences at Methodist University. This is the place where students learn how to think deeply, speak clearly, ask better questions, and make sense of a complicated world. In classrooms and laboratories, studios and seminar tables, students discover not only what they can do, but who they are becoming.

Our academic programs are built around skills that endure long after graduation. Students learn how to conduct careful research, how to communicate with confidence and integrity, and how to analyze ideas within their contexts. Just as important, they learn how to wrestle with uncertainty. They practice listening before reacting, thinking before concluding, and engaging ideas that challenge their assumptions. These habits of mind make our graduates intellectually resilient and prepared to succeed in their next career and all those that will come after.

The College of Arts, Humanities & Sciences is also home to the University’s General Education program, the spine and heart of every undergraduate experience. We have just developed a sequence of three courses called “Life on Purpose,” a distinctive core that invites students to slow down and reflect on questions that too often go unexamined: What gives my life meaning? What am I good at? How can my education serve something larger than myself? Through guided reflection, Life on Purpose helps students connect learning to fulfillment, curiosity, and the common good. It is not about choosing a single career path, but about finding a larger, lifelong project.

Our divisions – spanning the Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Arts and Design, Communication, and Criminal Justice – work together to educate the whole person. Graduates leave Methodist University not only career-ready, but purpose-ready: prepared to adapt, to lead, and to contribute thoughtfully wherever life takes them.

It is a privilege to share this work with you and to steward an education that awakens purpose and equips students to adapt, flourish, and contribute.

Sincerely,

J. R. Hustwit, Ph.D.

Dean, College of Arts, Humanities & Sciences

Professor of Philosophy and Religion



Humanities

In the Humanities Division, students learn to use reading, writing, and discussion to analyze and support their ideas. The courses in English; History; Religion, Ethics & Meaning; and Global Studies allow students to take a closer look at history, belief systems, and cultural movements. Through their studies, they are expected to build arguments, ask questions, and use sources to support their thought processes.

Division Head and Professor of History Dr. Patrick O'Neil says that one of the most valuable skills MU students gain is the ability to interpret information that can be both complex and many times also conflicting.

“What students get most especially from studying in Humanities is the ability to make sense of complicated data,” he said. “The sources that historians deal with (laws, orders, propaganda from all sides) are the same things that it’s most useful to be able to interpret today.”

That kind of preparation is intentional. Faculty work closely with students as they design research projects, lead discussions, and refine their arguments.

The goal is not just content knowledge but confidence in analysis. Whether students move into graduate study, law, education, or public service, they leave with the ability to examine information carefully and respond with clarity.

Learn more at methodist.edu/ahs/humanities

Honors Program

A Community Within a Community

The Honors Program amplifies the academic experience for students who are motivated to excel. The program is for current students with a minimum 3.0 GPA and incoming freshmen with a minimum 3.2 GPA (on a 4.0 scale.) It encourages interdisciplinary thinking, discussion, and intellectual engagement beyond standard curriculum.

“The Honors Program is a real community within a community: ambitious, engaged students gathered together to explore a huge diversity of perspectives and think through difficult problems,” said Dr. Patrick O'Neil, Honors Program director. “It trains students not only to think brilliantly but to talk brilliantly, too, preparing them for the kinds of conversations they’ll have in graduate school and in life.”

Benefits

- Graduate Recognition
- Career Preparation
- Small Seminar Classes

DID YOU KNOW?

- The scientific training within the Natural Sciences Division supports Methodist University’s expanding health and medical initiatives, creating a pipeline of students prepared for future medical study.

Justice & Military Science

The Justice & Military Studies Division prepares Methodist University students for careers in criminal justice, forensic science, legal studies, and military leadership. Students utilize classroom knowledge with professional experiences that prepare them for careers in justice, law, and military leadership helping students navigate law, policy, ethics, and responsibility with deeper understanding, and confidence.

Students in the division are often published, make presentations, and attend conferences where they learn professional expectations and have a chance to network. This is meaningful engagement outside of the classroom.

Each faculty member brings distinct expertise and professional experience to the division and it graduates students with published work, conference experience, and a clear understanding of their role in their profession.

Learn more at methodist.edu/ahs/justice-military-science.

Natural Sciences

In the Natural Sciences Division, students explore biology and chemistry through experimentation, applied research, and close faculty mentorship. The division includes five Chemistry faculty members and four Biology faculty members whose areas of specialization range from ecology and insect biology to nuclear magnetic resonance, atomic absorption spectroscopy, and computational chemistry.

“Our faculty at MU have multi-disciplinary backgrounds and expose students in their early careers to research methodologies and practices. Not only are they wonderful educators, but they are science investigators at their heart,” said Vijay Antharam, Ph.D., division head for Natural Sciences and professor of Chemistry.

Students majoring in Biology can pursue Pre-Med and Pre-Veterinary concentrations, while Chemistry majors explore Biochemistry and Forensic Science tracks. Coursework emphasizes experimentation and analytical thinking, but instruction extends far beyond lectures.

Chemistry students operate an 80 MHz table-top NMR spectrometer and train in capillary electrophoresis and atomic absorption spectroscopy under experienced faculty such as Stephanie Hooper-Marosek, Ph.D. Computational chemists Cu Phung, Ph.D., and Tekalign Debela, Ph.D., who introduce students to advanced software approaches for solving chemistry problems.

In Biology, students work in molecular facilities and are currently building a zebrafish aquarium to support anatomy and physiology study.

Antharam says that early exposure to research builds confidence and clarity for the future.



deeply interested in how people work together and how community happens.”

In Political Science, students study power and the institutions that shape their lives. They travel to Washington, D.C., and Raleigh to meet with lawmakers, intern with the City of Fayetteville and other organizations, and study abroad.

Psychology students pursue counseling and research opportunities, while Sociology students examine social structures and examine community health issues. A new Public Health major coming next year will expand those connections for MU students within the Fayetteville community.

Learn more at methodist.edu/ahs/social-sciences.

Interdisciplinary Studies Programs

Not every student's path fits neatly inside a single division. Some students aim to connect various philosophies across departments. Programs within the College of Arts, Humanities & Sciences are intentionally designed to cross boundaries, and Interdisciplinary Studies gives them the space to do so.

Interdisciplinary Studies at MU pulls on philosophy, social sciences, communication, and history to create degrees and minors that cultivate critical thinking and reflect how issues show up in life. The minors in Black Studies and Women's Studies invite students from all majors to examine how identity, culture, and history intersect. These programs challenge students to think more in depth about power, representation, and lived experience.

The Bachelor of Arts in Professional Leadership & Ethics is designed for online students who want flexibility.

“The flexible degree pathways support career advancement by building on students’ prior learning and professional experience. Our interdisciplinary programs draw on multiple fields to prepare students for today’s complex world,” said Dr. J.R. Hustwit, dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, & Sciences, and professor of Religion and Philosophy.

At MU, Interdisciplinary Studies gives students room to shape their education around who they are and where they are headed. Within CAHS, it exists for students whose interests do not fit inside one major. The program allows them to combine ideas, experience, and ambition into a degree that meets them where they are and supports their goals. ■

“Mentoring our undergraduate students in areas of STEM has landed our graduates into some of the most prominent graduate schools and medical schools in the country,” he said.

Inside the Hendricks Science Complex, faculty and staff operate with collaboration at the forefront. Student growth is prioritized intellectually and emotionally. The result is rigorous scientific preparation paired with sustained mentorship, an experience that continues to shape graduates long after they leave MU.

Learn more at methodist.edu/ahs/natural-sciences.

Social Sciences

The Social Sciences Division centers on one question: How do people live, work, and govern together?

Psychology, Sociology, and Political Science each approaches that question differently while sharing a focus on community, behavior, and systems.

“Our division is engaged in the science of people and society,” said Chris Cronin, Ph.D., head of the Social Sciences Division and professor of Political Science. “That means we are

Bachelor's Programs in the College of CAHS

Biology
Biology (Pre-Med)
Biology (Pre-Veterinary)
Chemistry
Chemistry (Biochemistry)
Chemistry (Forensic Science)
Communication & Media
Criminal Justice*
English
Forensic Science (CSI)
Graphic Design

History
Political Science
Political Science (International Relations)
Political Science (Public Administration)
Professional Leadership & Ethics
Psychology
Psychology (Counseling/Clinical)
Psychology (Human Performance)
Religion, Ethics & Meaning
Sociology
* *Master's program available*



Forever Grateful

by Wendy Hustwit

Every great university relies on the support of its alumni, community investors, and partners. Since its founding, countless individuals have prioritized Methodist University in their hearts, pocketbooks, and calendars. The MU community is forever grateful for the volunteers and donors who have given their time, talents, and treasures.

This issue of MU Today, through the next 20-plus pages, highlights the individuals and organizations that contributed financially to Methodist University in the 2024-25 fiscal year. We start this special section by highlighting four of this year's donors who have given loyally year after year.



As an MU student, **Jason Sparrow '17**, immersed himself in opportunities. Beyond academics, he served as president and vice president for the Student Government Association. He was a resident assistant, leadership fellow, and a member of Rho Zeta Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

Sparrow has carried MU with him since graduating, too. "The mentorship, opportunities, and community I found at MU continue to influence the way I serve others – whether in my work as a cybersecurity professional or as an Army officer."

Sparrow's first gift was for the Spring 2017 Grads Give Back campaign and he has given at least one gift (and sometimes more) every year

since then. He explains, "giving back financially is my way of investing in the next generation of Monarchs so they can have the same access to growth, support, and possibility that I had. It's a small contribution compared to the impact MU had on my life, but it's one I make with pride and gratitude."

Beyond his financial support, Sparrow has invested time serving on the Alumni Association's board of directors, co-founding the Alumni Association's Black Alumni Chapter, and helping to establish the Dr. Mary M. Atwater '69 Endowed Scholarship at MU. He was recognized for his service to MU and his community with the 2023 Alumni Association Outstanding Alumni Service Award.



Jonathan H. Elliot did not attend Methodist University, yet his Monarch loyalty is strong. He is part of a family that traces their Cumberland County residency back to the 1770s. Jonathan's father, William H. Elliot Jr., first supported the University's founding and annual Loyalty Day fundraising campaigns. After William founded Arran Realty in 1964, the company became an annual contributor, as well.

As the second-generation owner of Arran Related Companies, LLC, DBA Arran Rentals, Jonathan has made personal and corporate contributions for 41 consecutive years.

"Older folks and business people understand the need to always give back," Elliot says. "It should be taught to everyone in America every day! Methodist University is an absolute gem here in Fayetteville."

There is no doubt, Methodist University is forever grateful to the thousands of consistent supporters that enable it to provide transformational education opportunities to generations of students. A Methodist University education is possible thanks to its alumni, neighbors, and so many generous business owners, such as the Elliots.



Cynthia Walker '65 was part of the second class to attend then Methodist College. She recalls, "When I entered MC in 1961, it was *very* small, but offered opportunities for a shy youngster from a small high school to grow with the college." She earned a degree in Mathematics before going on to earn a master's degree at UNC Greensboro.

Walker is a firm believer in the power of scholarships. She recalls, "My father died when I was 16, leaving my mother with three daughters to educate. But there was never a question for us about attending college. Attending MU was possible with scholarships and jobs in the library and dorm office."

After school, Walker taught four years of high school math, with the remainder of her career serving as a high school media specialist. She also served on the MU Alumni Association for almost 25 years and was the first woman president of the association.

Walker has been donating annually since she graduated, with many gifts designated to student scholarships and she believes in doing more.

"It's my turn to make a college education available for others," she said.

In 2025, Walker and her sisters, Jo Anna W. Brown '73 and Harriett W. Buss, established a new endowed scholarship to honor their family, supporting more generations of MU students.



Kaitlynn (Gray) Singer '17 first gave at the 2017 Grads Give Back campaign and has given annual recurring gifts ever since to the MU Loyalty Fund. While she was a student, Singer served as a resident assistant, a peer mentor, and an orientation leader. She was in the marching band and member of Alpha Sigma Alpha.

"I am forever grateful for my time at Methodist University," Singer says. As a former phonathon student caller, she understands the importance of giving back. "I know my experience was better because of the donors who gave while I was a student, so I look at donating as a way to pay it forward."

After graduating from MU, Singer earned a master's degree from Appalachian State University and now has a career in higher education student affairs. She finds joy in giving and building a strong future for all Monarchs, but especially for a certain special future Monarch in her own home.

"Knowing that I can help the current students have an even better experience than I did is incredibly rewarding," she said. "Even if that means sacrificing a few iced coffees, it's totally worth it. Plus, I'm raising a future Monarch, so we need to make sure MU is still going strong for future generations!" ■

TOP 20 CLASSES

IN DOLLARS GIVEN AND PARTICIPATION

Methodist University sincerely appreciates all alumni gifts, whether large or small. The percentage of alumni participation is especially critical, as it impacts rankings and grant opportunities.

TOP 20 Alumni Classes By Dollars Given

Class	Dollars Given	Class	Dollars Given
'70	\$75,825.00	'01	\$10,207.00
'73	\$64,869.56	'14	\$9,288.80
'68	\$57,980.00	'99	\$8,150.00
'66	\$31,785.00	'65	\$6,545.00
'97	\$22,995.00	'13	\$6,471.00
'69	\$22,560.00	'11	\$6,260.68
'67	\$13,487.73	'94	\$5,790.00
'00	\$12,980.74	'10	\$5,780.56
'07	\$12,190.00	'03	\$5,229.56
'71	\$10,980.00	'05	\$4,865.00

TOP 20 Alumni Classes By Participation

Class	Percent	Class	Percent
'24	49.76%	'73	10.88%
'68	20.45%	'81	10.38%
'70	20.13%	'76	9.89%
'65	19.15%	'75	9.76%
'64	18.52%	'74	9.22%
'69	17.69%	'72	9.16%
'66	17.02%	'05	8.84%
'78	16.05%	'23	8.50%
'67	13.79%	'00	8.43%
'71	12.50%	'11	8.08%

Methodist University GIVING SOCIETIES

Diamond Society
\$1,000,000 and above

Platinum Society
\$500,000 to \$999,999

Gold Society
\$250,000 to \$499,999

Circle of Vision
\$100,000 to \$249,999

Circle of Distinction
\$50,000 to \$99,999

Circle of Excellence
\$25,000 to \$49,999

Trustees Society
\$10,000 to \$24,999

Founders' Society
\$5,000 to \$9,999

President's Society
\$1,000 to \$4,999

Monarch Society
\$500 to \$999

Green & Gold Circle
\$250 to \$499

Century Club
\$100 to \$249

Bell Tower Club
up to \$99

Methodist University *President's Society*



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. Your bold investment of \$1,000 or more between July 1 and June 30 provides direct transformational experiences and demonstrates your belief in the power of education.

Join the President's Society today with a gift of \$1,000 or more, paid in full or installments by June 30, 2026. You may make your gift at donate.methodist.edu or by calling 910.630.7200.

A License to Thrill

Monarch supporters whose vehicles are registered in North Carolina can show their pride with a specialized MU license plate, as well as make a small donation to the University. The cost for a personalized MU plate is \$55 and \$25 for a regular MU plate, in addition to the annual license renewal fee. Methodist University will receive \$15 for every plate purchased.

For more information, contact the Advancement Office at 910.630.7200.





Honoring a Monarch Icon & Supporting Monarch Students

by Wendy Hustwit

In June 2024, 10 PGA Golf Management (PGM) alumni launched an ambitious campaign: raise \$300,000 for a new endowed scholarship at Methodist University. This scholarship will benefit generations of Monarchs, and is named for MU icon and PGM Director Emeritus, Jerry Hogge.

The original 10 donors were quickly joined by dozens more alumni, supporters, faculty, and friends. Now, just about 20 months after launch, they have raised \$205,000 from 96 individual contributions.

Donors to the Jerry Hogge Endowed Scholarship are giving in a range of amounts, some over a few years, some all at once. Some funds have been raised through charitable golf events. Through the Member for a Day platform, many golf clubs have auctioned special golf experiences. And the MU PGM Program recently hosted an alumni golf tournament at Pinehurst's Forest Creek Golf Club.

Nearly 100% percent of Monarch students rely on financial support to complete their degree and when the fund reaches \$300,000, it will produce up to \$13,500 in

scholarships in a single year. This makes a real difference for students working to earn a Methodist University degree. As the fund grows, so will its impact on generations of eager, ambitious Monarchs. ■

The Jerry Hogge Endowed Scholarship funds will be awarded annually to MU PGA Golf Managements students who are recommended by the faculty considering the following criteria:

- Maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0.
- Exhibit leadership qualities through participation in school or community activities.
- Show a commitment to community service and volunteer work.

After 32 years as MU's PGM Program director, Jerry Hogge stepped aside in 2019 to take on a new role for the school (MU's Board of Trustees named him Director Emeritus). At that time, the program had graduated more than 1,100 students, each of whom landed a job in the industry. Methodist University alumni now lead at some of the most prestigious golf courses and industries in the world.

PGA Golf Management
Alumni Founders of the Jerry
Hogge Endowed Scholarship

- Derek DiStefano '05
- Walter DiStefano '08
- Devin Gee '08
- Cory Head '07
- Hugh Matthis '04
- Glen Murray '04
- James Ondo '05
- Forrest Ramser '04
- Andrew Shuck '95
- Nathan Stith '03



Endowed Professorships & Chairs



Mary Lynn Bryan Endowed Professorship
Elizabeth E. McLean Endowed Professorship
Thomas R. McLean Endowed Professorship
Col. (Ret.) David R. Nimocks Endowed Professorship
Col. (Ret.) David R. Nimocks International Professorship of Business
Charles M. Reeves, Jr. Endowed Chair in Business Entrepreneurship
Lura S Tally Endowed Professorship
Samuel J. & Norma Womack Endowed Chair in Religion & Philosophy
The John W. Wyatt, Jr. Family Endowed Professorship in the Sciences
The Union-Zukowski Endowed Professorship
The Union-Zukowski Endowed Professorship
The Union-Zukowski Endowed Professorship

Endowed Awards

Robert S. Christian Endowed English Achievement Award
Fred E. Clark Memorial Science Service Award
Theresa P. Clark Legal Writing Endowed Award
Walter B. Clark Maximum Effort Award
Alfred E. Cleveland Award for Excellence in Teaching
Jane Weeks Gardiner Advising Award
Fleeta Harris Gibson Library Endowed Fund
Dr. Sue L. Kimball Creative Writing Contest Endowed Award
Coach Larry Kirchner Gold Medal Award
Ronald P. Kirchner Award in Resort Management
Dr. William P. Lowdermilk Student Achievement Award
McLean Foundation Coach of the Year Award
McRae-Klein Math Endowed Award
George and Lillian Miller Award
Trevor Morris Political Science Student Award
Ott-Cooper Science Award
Pauline Longest Education Award
Plyler Humanities Award
Lura S. Tally Award for Leadership Excellence



Other Endowed Funds

D. Keith Allison Hall Endowment
Bullard Science & Religion Lecture Series
Dr. Darl H. Champion Endowment for
Criminal Justice
Friends of Davis Memorial Library
General Endowment
Lafayette Society Endowment
Last Dollar Fund Endowment
James Maynard Library Endowment
PA Program Enhancement Endowment

Pauline Longest Nature Trail
Pauline Longest Science Endowment
Quasi-Endowment Investment Fund
Reeves School of Business
Technology in the Classroom Endowment
The Tobler-Wang Endowment for Political Science
Wesley Heritage Celebration Fund
The Yarborough Family Fund
The Union-Zukowski Jewish Studies Endowment



Methodist University Independent College Fund of North Carolina 2024-25 Donors

The Independent College Fund of North Carolina was established in 1953 to provide North Carolina businesses with an effective vehicle to support the state's private colleges and universities. Since its inception, the fund has raised close to \$95 million for its member colleges and universities. These funds are used to provide student scholarship aid and to support campus enrichment programs. We thank the following for their gifts to the Independent College Fund during the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Those shown in bold participated in the named scholarship program at Methodist University.

CLASS NOTES & MORE

STAYING ENGAGED WITH CLASSMATES

Walter Townley '69 retired from Lafayette Public Schools.

Charles (Jim) Nash Jr. '76 was among three members of the Editorial Committee to receive an MVP (Most Valuable Pen) coin. The committee is part of the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials International (APCO). He retired in July 2010 after serving with the Maryland National Capital Park Police, Montgomery Co. Park Police Division, for over 32 years.

Rob Foreman '92 and Susan Foreman '98 recently relocated from New Hampshire to Florida. Rob is working as the Director of Events & Reservations at Florida Gulf Coast University. Susan is teaching 4th grade at Harns Marsh Elementary.

Elizabeth (Passacantando) Ramos '01 published her first children's book, "LT The Hangry Dino". The inspiration for the book came from having her son.

Ashley (Sloan) Mackey '07 obtained her master's in Legal Studies from Washington University School of Law. She was recently accepted into a doctoral program at Clark Atlanta University.



Stacey Park Milbern '09 (1987-2020) was honored by the U.S. Mint as a 2025 American Women Quarters program honoree. She was a disability rights advocate who fought tirelessly on behalf of those with physical and intellectual disabilities, along with being a co-founder of the Disability Justice movement.

Milbern made significant progress in advancing disabled rights during her lifetime. Governor Easley appointed her to serve North Carolina while she attended Methodist University, and she later served as a presidential appointee in the Obama administration.



Jerome Purdie '14 hosted the second annual Project Uplift Excellence Scholarship and Awards Gala. He is the founder of Project Uplift Alliance, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing life-enriching opportunities for underserved youth through mentorship, educational enrichment, and community engagement.



Bryant Tumblelekis '14 is the founder of Dark Horse Group, based in Fayetteville, N.C. His company has ranked as the #1 real estate team in Fayetteville for three years. RealTrends ranks Dark Horse Group as a top-five team in the state of North Carolina.

WEDDINGS



Ashlynn (Elliott) Mumford '24 and Evan Mumford were married on July 5, 2025. Ashlynn works as a teacher.



Lauren (Colenda) Kelly '12 and Brion Kelly '11 renewed their vows on their 11th anniversary at The Barn at Righteous Oaks in Fayetteville, N.C. They were originally married at a courthouse in Columbus, Ga. in 2014. Since then, they have added three children to their family: Juliana (10), Kendall (7), and Sean (5), all of whom were in the wedding party.

BIRTHS



Jayda Shaw '19 and Daniel Fisher '19 welcomed their son, Carter, on June 6, 2025.

SHARE YOUR NEWS



We want to hear what is going on in your life, additions to the family, engagements, weddings, and certainly honor our alumni and friends "In Memory." One great way to keep your classmates updated is by simply filling out our form online at: methodist.edu/alumni/class-notes or scan the QR code.



John Dunn Jr. '65, 81, of Fayetteville, N.C., passed away on August 23, 2025. He loved spending time at the family beach house in North Myrtle Beach and enjoyed playing golf and watching the UNC Tar Heels. He will be remembered for his warm personality, quick wit, and a sense of humor that brought joy to those around him.



Lynda Stainback '68, 77, of Atlantic, N.C., passed away on June 14, 2025. She spent 39 years teaching either elementary or special needs students in schools in Craven, Alamance, and Carteret Counties.



Lynn Gruber Clark '72, 75, of Fayetteville, N.C., passed away on August 10, 2025. Lynn became the Alumni Director at Methodist University in 1985 and later moved to the position of Events Coordinator and Assistant to the President. She received the Alumni Association Outstanding Alumni Service Award in 1983 and the Outstanding Faculty/Staff Award in 2013. Lynn retired from Methodist University in 2011. Lynn was very active at Hay Street United Methodist Church, serving on many committees and teaching in the Sunday School and Bible School.



John Butler '73, 80, of Fayetteville, N.C., passed away on October 6, 2025. John served in the U.S. Air Force and worked at Averitte and King Engineering, Hercules Steel, and Eaton Corp. He enjoyed watching TV and photography.



Stephanie Craig '73, 77, of Charlotte, N.C., passed away on August 19, 2025. She had various careers, but her two favorite endeavors were teaching preschool at The Children's Place at Providence Road Church of Christ and working as a librarian at the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library. These touched on her love of children, literature, and movies. In her spare time, she could be found reading books of all genres, watching classic movies, or caring for a favorite cat.



Charlotte McLaurin '74, 73, of Eastover, N.C., passed away on July 18, 2025. Charlotte loved football, a passion that she obtained while attending Massey Hill High School football games to watch her brother play. In the fall, most Saturdays she could be found at home football games, which she began attending when her son was a member of the

Marching Tarheels.



Cindy Eulench '75, 72, of Lubbock, Texas, passed away on September 10, 2025. Cindy worked in Civil Service in locations throughout the United States, where she made close friends everywhere she lived. She was known as a true friend to so many.



Michael Gillmer '77, 69, of Durham, N.C., passed away on April 24, 2025. Michael will be remembered for his friendliness and levity, no matter the situation, and his impact on his community and those fortunate enough to know him.

Bianke Wagnon '85, 62, Smiths Station, Ala., passed away in July. She was well known for helping anyone who needed it and for preparing her students well for their next steps.



Bobby Walston '85, 91, of Fayetteville, N.C., passed away on July 18, 2025. Bob remained deeply engaged with his community and military family. He was a proud member of First Baptist Church of Fayetteville, the Special Operations Association of America (SOAA), Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity, and the Pi Gamma Mu International Honor Society in Social Science (MU), among other organizations, and graduated from Fayetteville High.



Barbara Forbes '89, 64, of Raeford, N.C., passed away on July 13, 2025. Spending time outdoors, Barbara enjoyed fishing on the pier at the coast or simply fishing by the river. She served as a former pianist and organist at Bolton Baptist Church and, most recently, worshipped with her husband, Keith, at Freedom Biker Church in Fayetteville. She will be missed by all who knew her.



Wallace Tyson Jr. '89, 73, of Palm Harbor, Fla., passed away on July 20, 2025. Wally's legacy of service extended beyond the battlefield and the boardroom. He was a beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother, and friend – known for his sharp/dry wit, kind soul, and steadfast loyalty. He cherished time with his family and was most proud of the generations that followed him, whom he guided with love and strength.



Willie Covington '90, 85, of Fayetteville, N.C., passed away on July 14, 2025. He leaves to cherish his loving memory: wife, Wilhemina Covington; children, Kevin Covington, John Covington (Lenette), and Brian Covington (Dana); sister, Parthenia Covington; three grandchildren and two great grandchildren, and a host of other relatives and friends.



Sulema Shelton '98, 80, of Fayetteville, N.C., passed away on October 12, 2025. A dedicated educator, Sulema devoted 30 years to teaching Spanish, sharing her knowledge of the language and her passion for learning. She retired in 2014.



Selenia Washington '03, 49, of Fayetteville, N.C., passed away on June 21, 2025.

Former Students



Rockney O'Donnell, 73, of Topeka, Kan., passed away on August 29, 2025. A cowboy at heart, Rocky loved watching rodeos and anything western. He had a fondness for collecting boots and hats, which reflected his adventurous spirit and love of the open road.



Mykeal Price, 38, of Erwin, N.C., passed away on August 15, 2025.

Former Faculty/Staff



Eric Wilkerson, 70, of Fayetteville, N.C., passed away on September 13, 2025. Eric was a man who lived fully and loved deeply. He enjoyed sports of all kinds, whether he was playing, watching, or talking about the game. Eric's happiest moments were when he was surrounded by those he loved, sharing laughter, stories, and memories. He was

more than just a family man; he was a friend, a mentor, and a role model to many. His personality was unforgettable, bubbly, outspoken, and full of humor. Eric never hesitated to speak his mind, often with no filter, but always with honesty and love. He had a special way of leaving an impression on everyone he met, and many of his friends became more like family.



Walter Swing, 88, of Fayetteville, N.C., passed away on July 3, 2025. During his tenure at MU from 1980 to 1997, he was Professor Emeritus, Assistant Academic Dean, Acting Academic Dean, and Chair of the Business, Accounting, & Economics Department. The University honored his excellence in teaching, years of service,

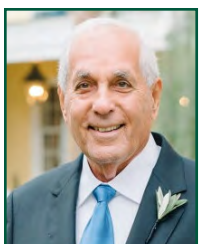
dedication, and community involvement by awarding him the Outstanding Faculty Award and hosting a Walt and Loretta Swing Day during a football game at Monarch Stadium.

Former Board of Trustees



made him one of the most respected figures in North Carolina television history.

Charles Gaddy, 93, of Raleigh, N.C., passed away on June 12, 2025. A trusted journalist, gifted communicator, and legendary broadcaster, Charlie delivered the news to WRAL-TV viewers for 24 years. He was admired not only for his professional skill but for his humble nature, warm Southern charm, and the steady, reassuring tone that



Club, the Eastover Civic Club, and the Fort Bragg and Pope Air Force Base Special Activities Committee. He was a past chair of the Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce's Military Affairs Council. Don never knew a stranger and will be remembered most for his kindness, generosity, and witty sense of humor.

Don Price, 82, of Eastover, N.C., passed away on September 10, 2025. Before retiring after 50 years in the automotive industry, Don not only grew and maintained a thriving business but also never forgot the community that helped him achieve so much throughout his life. He was an active member of Salem Methodist Church, the Fayetteville Kiwanis

Friends



hours camping and freshwater fishing at High Rock and Smith Mountain Lakes with his family.

Dearl Brunce, 90, of Lexington, N.C., passed away on September 1, 2025. D.L. loved life. He was an avid vegetable gardener and enjoyed gathering and sharing his bounty with family, friends, and neighbors alike. His "gardens" more resembled small farms than typical backyard garden plots. He was also a passionate fisherman. He spent many



Moorman Kizer and Reitzel, Inc. He was a devoted member of Haymount United Methodist Church for over 50 years.

James Kizer, 85, of Fayetteville, passed away on June 2, 2025. He was the Co-Owner of



John Harvey Oliver Jr., 98, of Fayetteville, passed away on May 26, 2025. Harvey had a successful career in the financial services industry serving as a general agent with Pilot Life and the General American Life Insurance Company, earning recognition as a life member of the Million Dollar Roundtable for his excellence in insurance sales. ■

MONARCH MEET-UPS



Monarch Meet-Ups are informal social gatherings hosted by alumni ambassadors in cities across the country. Meet fellow Monarchs, enjoy light food and refreshments, network, and stay connected in a casual setting.

Are you interested in helping to plan a Monarch Alumni event in your area? Let us know and we'll provide support, promotion, and recognition for your event.: methodist.edu/monarch-meetups or scan the QR code.

THEN

1979



&

2026

NOW



STUDENTS HAVE A WINTER BLAST

In Fayetteville, on the MU campus, most days are “fun in the sun” for students. But this year, as in years past, a couple snow days resulted in snowball battles, snow angels, and in this case, some superhuman activities. Whether it’s 1979 or 2026, the cold has never stopped our Monarchs from embracing the excitement of a campus covered in snow. ■

CONGRATULATIONS

TO OUR NEWEST ALUMNI,
METHODIST UNIVERSITY'S CLASS OF 2026!





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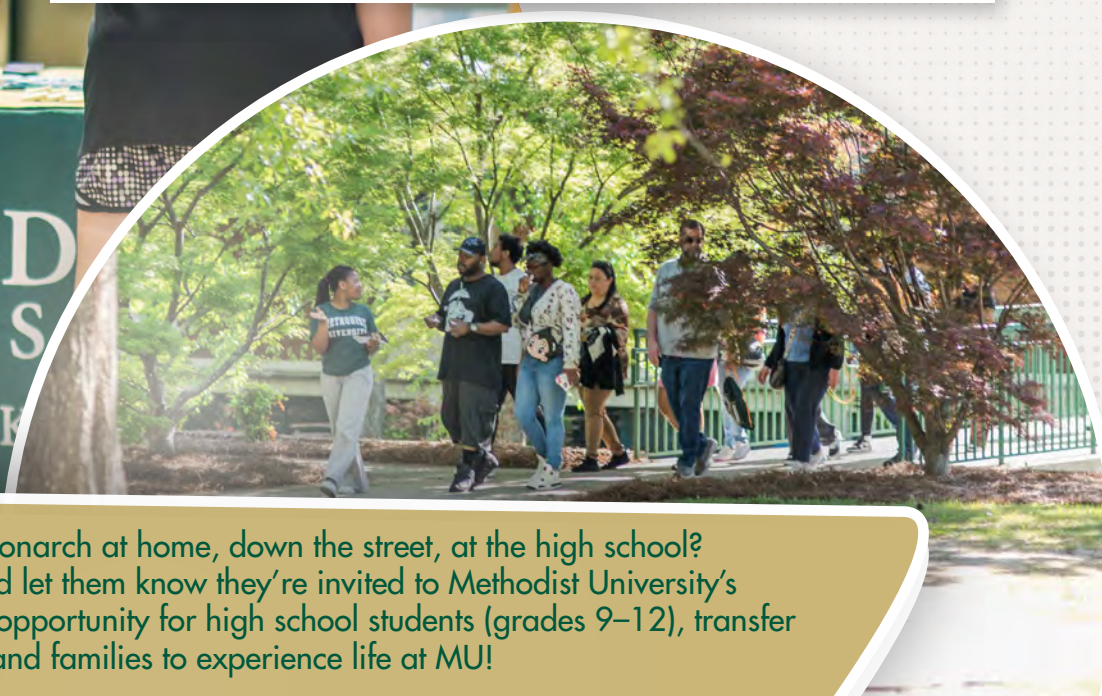
See what it's like to be a **Monarch.**

A young woman with long dark hair, wearing a green t-shirt and denim shorts, is smiling and holding a green drawstring bag with the 'KU' logo. Behind her, a man in a light-colored polo shirt is also smiling. They are standing in front of a green banner that partially reads 'METHODIST UNIVERSITY' and 'SOCIAL WORK'.

OPEN HOUSE

OCTOBER 24

methodist.edu/open-house



Have a potential future Monarch at home, down the street, at the high school?
Help us spread the word and let them know they're invited to Methodist University's
Fall Open House — an exciting opportunity for high school students (grades 9–12), transfer
students, and families to experience life at MU!

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