

# FORWARD

CHANGING TOMORROW THROUGH EDUCATION TODAY • A PUBLICATION OF MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY'S COLLEGE OF EDUCATION



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**COVER:** The drumline of MSU's Famous Maroon Band lines up during the Dawg Walk of a 2019 football game. The Famous Maroon Band continues to add to its number, making the 2019-2020 academic year the biggest band to date.

## LETTER FROM THE DEAN



The College of Education tagline is "Changing Tomorrow Through Education Today." Clearly, the outstanding work of our faculty, staff, and students aligns perfectly with this statement. One only has to review the pages of this publication to recognize that the College of Education is having a significant impact on teaching, research, and public service.

Such accomplishments are consistent with our mission to provide quality instruction, research, and service to state, national, and international audiences which significantly impact educational attainment, economic development, and quality of life issues. The accomplishment of this mission is made possible by the work of outstanding faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends. It is important to note that the successes outlined in this newsletter are a mere subset of the work going on in the COE. In my 15th year as dean of the Mississippi State University College of Education, I continue to be impressed with the work of our people and the professionalism they display in conducting this work.

Accomplishments such as those outlined in this publication are extremely challenging during a period of limited state assistance for higher education. However, we have been aided greatly by the generous support of our loyal alumni and friends. We are appreciative of this generosity and humbly ask for your continued support.

Hail State,

Richard Blackburn  
*Dean, College of Education*

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MSU's Lee Receives CDE's Inaugural Online Teaching Award



MSU Professors of Music author books



The third time isn't always the charm. Sometimes it only takes two.

## THREE-TIME GRADUATE SELECTED AS COLLEGE OF EDUCATION'S 2019-2020 ALUMNI FELLOW



John Jordan, 35-year education veteran, has been selected as the college's 2019-2020 Alumni Fellow.

Sponsored by the MSU Alumni Association and the university's eight academic colleges, the Alumni Fellows Program recognizes alumni who have distinguished themselves in their respective careers. They are selected by each academic college and are invited to return to campus to meet with students, both in the classroom and informally.

John is a three-time Bulldog graduate – proudly boasting his degrees from the university's College of Education. He earned a Bachelor of Science in social studies education in 1976, a Master of Arts in education in 1980, and a Doctor of Education in school administration in 1982.

As a young adult, John's MSU degrees allowed him to be seriously considered for professional leadership positions in Mississippi. He began his career as a classroom teacher at E.E. Bass Jr. High School in Greenville and then later at Woolfolk Elementary School in Yazoo City. Following these positions, he returned to MSU and earned master's and doctoral degrees and worked as a technical writer for the land-grant institution's Research and Curriculum Unit.

By 1983, John moved into his

first public school administrative role as principal of Natchez Cathedral School, where he served for four years. He would follow that role with seven years as an assistant superintendent at Jackson School District. Then in 1994, John spent eight years as Superintendent of Education for the Oxford School District. He then joined the Mississippi Department of Education as Deputy State Superintendent of Education and later in an interim position of State Superintendent of Education.

All these roles have provided John an impressive resume that's still growing. In 2006, John served as the first executive director in the pre-construction phase of the Mississippi Children's Museum. Since 2012, John has been executive director of Core Learning, LLC, an educational consulting firm he founded.

During his career, John has been saluted by MSU on two previous occasions – induction into the MSU Hall of Fame in 1981 and an MSU College of Education Circle of Excellence Award for contributions to the field of education in 1998. Also, in 1998, he was honored as the American Association of School Administrators Mississippi Superintendent of the Year. Additionally, John received the Golden Lamp Award for Service to the Field of Education in 2010 by the Mississippi Association of School Administrators.

John is a native of the community of Carter near Yazoo City. He and his wife, Lou, now reside in Madison. They have three children.

The MSU Alumni Association welcomed the 2019 class of Alumni Fellows on campus Nov. 14 - 16, 2019. The group was honored in conjunction with the MSU vs. Alabama football game. As Alumni Fellows, these graduates will hold the distinction for life. ●

## MSU educational psychology graduate awarded Phi Kappa Phi fellowship



A recent Mississippi State University graduate is one of only 58 students nationwide to receive a Phi Kappa Phi fellowship.

Angela Provenzano, who graduated in May 2019 with a bachelor's degree in educational psychology, will receive \$8,500 from Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest and most selective collegiate honor society for all academic disciplines. The fellowship will support Provenzano, a native of Milford, Connecticut, as she pursues a doctorate in occupational therapy at Ohio State University.

Since its creation in 1932, the fellowship program has become one of the society's most visible and financially well-supported endeavors, allocating \$615,000 annually to outstanding students for first-year graduate or professional study.

The selection process for a fellowship is based on the applicant's evidence of graduate potential, undergraduate academic achievement, service and leadership experience, letters of recommendation, personal statement of educational perspective and career goals, and acceptance in an approved graduate or professional program.

Phi Kappa Phi fellowships are part of the society's numerous award programs, which give nearly \$1 million each year to outstanding members and students on chapter campuses through study abroad grants, dissertation fellowships, funding for post-baccalaureate development, member and chapter awards, and grants for local, national and international literacy initiatives. ●



# KAPPA KAPPA PSI BAND FRATERNITY NAMES REGIONAL AWARD AFTER MSU'S AARHUS

**M**usicianship, leadership and service is the motto of Kappa Kappa Psi National Honorary Band Fraternity. An associate professor in Mississippi State's Department of Music who exhibits those same characteristics was honored by the organization in a special way.

Craig Aarhus, the university's senior associate director of bands, now is namesake of the Sponsor/Band Director Excellence Award, given each year to one chapter sponsor or college band director in Kappa Kappa Psi's Southeast District.

Aarhus was initiated into Kappa Kappa Psi as an undergraduate student at Auburn University in 1993. He is co-adviser of the fraternity's fifth oldest chapter at MSU and has served since 2011 as the Southeast District's governor, or adviser.



"This was a complete surprise and is humbling to say the least," Aarhus said. "You don't serve in a role like this expecting recognition, but it is nice when it comes along. This organization has given me so much, and I am very appreciative of this special acknowledgement."



Founded on the campus of Oklahoma State University in 1919, Kappa Kappa Psi operates primarily as a student service and leadership recognition society. With more than 200 active chapters across the country, the organization works to assist college and university directors of bands in developing organized service activities and other leadership experiences. For more, visit <https://kkpsi.org>.

Aarhus said the Sponsor/Band Director Excellence Award recognizes those who have made a significant impact on students' success throughout the year. Kappa Kappa Psi chapters nominate potential recipients, and the winners are honored during the Southeast District's annual convention.

"Generally, recipients are people who are very involved in the work of their chapters on campus—helping coordinate projects, advising on chapter matters, making sure that they are fulfilling their roles within the band program," he said. "They are very supportive of the work that Kappa Kappa Psi does within their band programs."

An MSU faculty member since 2003, Aarhus co-directs the Famous Maroon Band and basketball pep bands, conducts the concert and campus/community bands, and teaches conducting and brass techniques courses in the music

department. He is part of a team that has led MSU's band program to unprecedented growth, making it one of the largest bands in the Southeast.

Aarhus, a native of Sylacauga, Alabama, received his Bachelor of Music Education degree from Auburn University and his Master of Arts and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees in conducting from the University of Iowa. Prior to his appointment at MSU, he was a successful band director in the public schools of Lanett, Tallassee, and Mobile, Alabama.

A member of the College Band Directors National Association, Pi Kappa Lambda, Phi Mu Alpha, Tau Beta Sigma and the Mississippi Bandmasters Association, Aarhus also is president of the Delta Chapter of Phi Beta Mu International Bandmasters Fraternity.

Serving since 2007 as music director at First Presbyterian Church in Starkville, Aarhus has been an adjudicator and clinician throughout the Southeast, Midwest and Canada. He has received multiple awards for excellence in teaching, research and service, including Kappa Kappa Psi's A. Frank Martin Award in 2017.

Professor and Head Barry E. Kopetz said MSU's music department is proud that Kappa Kappa Psi has named one of its awards for Aarhus.

"This honor indicates in a tangible manner that Dr. Aarhus possesses the characteristics embodied within the award, reflected by his long-term positive work with college musicians," Kopetz said. "He is a credit to the instrumental music profession and to Mississippi State University." ●

## MSU's Lee Receives CDE's Inaugural Online Teaching Award



An assistant professor in Mississippi State's Department of Instructional Systems and Workforce Development is the inaugural recipient of the Online Teaching Award given by the university's Center for Distance Education.

Sang Joon Lee is receiving \$500, plus registration and expenses to attend a distance education conference.

The award acknowledges and rewards an MSU online instructor who employs best practices to engage, inspire and support students in an online environment.

The nomination process includes multiple letters of support from colleagues, deans, department heads and current and former students; a teaching vita; access to an online

STORY CONTINUED >

course; and a description from the nominee describing his or her personal philosophy for effective online pedagogy.

Jenny Hartness, a former graduate student who was among Lee's nominators, said his class was informative and enjoyable. She further described it as "a well-designed course with an abundance of practice assignments, appropriate reading materials and resources to ensure student success."

"Dr. Lee has shown his sincere interest in students as well as genuine concern for students' progress, and he has constantly displayed a high degree of responsibility, integrity and compassion in his teaching," said Chien Yu, an instructional systems and workforce development colleague who submitted a letter of support.

Lee joined MSU in 2013 and quickly developed a reputation for being highly effective among students, faculty and staff.

He assisted in the creation of the Master of Science in Instructional Technology online degree program, developing several new courses such as Multimedia Design I and II and Learning Technologies in Distance Education.

"Receiving this award is a wonderful experience," Lee said. "I have a passion for online teaching and learning, and it is an honor to be recognized in this way,"

Lee's online teaching philosophy is informed by a constructivist perspective of teaching and learning. His interest falls in student-centered learning environments where students' knowledge construction is the primary focus.

Hannah Street Owens, another former student and current MSU lecturer, cited his "thoughtful development of interactive exercises, engaging discussions and team-oriented, project-based learning" as evidence of his commitment to student-centered learning.

"We are thrilled to celebrate excellence in online teaching at Mississippi State by presenting our first Online Teaching Award," said Susan Seal, Center for Distance Education executive director. "Dr. Lee embodies the attributes that enrich the online experience for our distance students. Not only are his courses designed for student success, but his instruction and level of engagement are exemplary. He is well deserving of this inaugural award." ●





## MSU LIBRARIES, DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC HONOR YOUNG MUSICIAN WITH ANNUAL DOCHER AWARD



**N**o matter the genre, music has the power to impact lives in unforgettable ways.

Mississippi State University Libraries and the Department of Music paid tribute to a young musician with this kind of influence by honoring another who will carry on his legacy.

Quinlan X. Gray, MSU senior music education/instrumental major from De Kalb, Texas, was honored March 29 with the 2019 Keyone Docher Student Achievement Award during the university's 13th annual Charles H. Templeton Ragtime and Jazz Festival.

Presented at one of the festival's evening concerts, the Docher Award recognized Gray's demonstrated academic and musical excellence, qualities shared by the honor's namesake Keyone Docher. The Weir native and former MSU junior music education/piano major died in 2014 following a 13-year battle with cancer.

Studying the trumpet for more than seven years, Gray has honed his craft as an active performer with MSU's Trumpet Consort, Dixieland and Jazz ensembles, and Symphonic and Concert bands, among other groups. He also has engaged in research on music education and plans

to pursue a graduate degree in wind conducting following graduation.

Chip Templeton, festival co-chair and son of festival namesake Charles H. Templeton Sr., presented Gray with a certificate and check during the recent concert. Templeton, who also serves as director of the MSU College of Business's Small Business Development Center, said audiences were captivated five years ago when witnessing the talents of Docher, who served as the festival's first student performer.

"Keyone really touched our hearts and our lives that night, so we wanted to honor him, not just for his beautiful music, but for what he stood for. This award helps us carry on the tradition that Keyone laid out for us," Templeton said.

After receiving his award, Gray performed German Baroque composer Georg Philipp Telemann's "Air de Trompette" on piccolo trumpet. He received piano accompaniment from MSU music professor Rose Sebba, who holds the prestigious Steinway Artist designation. With more than 40 years of experience in piano performance, Sebba is among a select group of highly esteemed musicians from around the world who have chosen to play exclusively on pianos

produced by internationally renowned piano manufacturer Steinway & Sons.

Docher's parents, Charles and Tammy Docher, also attended the concert, describing it as a special occasion they look forward to every year.

"Keyone's love for music was powerful," Charles Docher said. "He would get on his piano and play into the night, and I could tell when he hit a wrong note because he would come back and correct it. He was a professional. He just loved to get it right."

"He spent so much time playing, and he believed in education and inspiring young people to do the right thing," Docher continued. "We want to thank the Templetons, Dr. Sebba and everybody in the Mississippi State community for the support."

In addition to Gray, other Docher Award recipients include Catherine N. Patriquin, a 2018 magna cum laude music education graduate from Ocean Springs; Abby L. Weinstein, a 2017 cum laude music/vocal graduate from Marietta, Georgia; Tyler J. Stallings, a 2016 music education/instrumental graduate from Pontotoc; and Sarah G. Wallace, a 2015 magna cum laude music graduate from Brandon. ●

# FACULTY S



*Dana Franz*

Dana Franz initially thought she would begin her career at MSU as an adjunct instructor. She and her family moved to the area from San Antonio in 2002 when her husband was stationed at Columbus Air Force Base. After taking a chance and calling to see if there were any available adjunct positions, she found that the Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Special Education was posting a math education position that day. She is now a professor in the department.

"I come from a long line of teachers. Both my parents were teachers, and I have several aunts and cousins that are also teachers. Even my sister! It's in my blood," she said.

Before becoming a full professor at Mississippi State, Franz spent 12 years in the classrooms of San Antonio and was vital in developing a school for students who were academically at risk. Students included single parents that had access to a childcare center on campus, so they could earn their degrees without having to drop out to care for their children. The

establishment of the school helped the school district overcome graduation disparities among students.

"We started really digging in and looking at what were the issues that were keeping students from graduating, and that's where we realized that they, for a variety of reasons, would fall further and further behind in school. We needed to do something that would enable them to finish their degree because these were good, bright students. They just needed help," explained Franz.

She currently teaches both secondary math methods courses for the Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Special Education. Every semester, she pulls from her teaching experience. She emphasizes to her current students that one of the most important things in education is being aware of those students who need help or who might learn differently. She wants her college students to understand that those students are bright and intelligent and have great potential, but teachers have to help them navigate the school system in a way that makes them get through it.

Franz explains if a student wants to teach math, then they probably are already really good at math and that sometimes this leads to teachers not fully understanding or appreciating a child that struggles at it. To help them understand, each semester she has her students work with students that are struggling in mathematics, including an interview with the student to talk about what they are learning and why they don't like math.

"I want my students to understand that they can't always be the kind of teacher they learned under because they were going to learn math no matter what. I want them to see that there's a whole bunch of kids out there that need something different than what they were successful at," Franz explained. "One of the things we talk about is that how it's okay to say you don't like math, but it's not ok to say I don't like to read. We have to demystify math and make it stop seeming magical. It's up to use to show everybody that you really do use math every day."



# SPOTLIGHT



*Megan Holmes*

In her nearly ten years at Mississippi State, Dr. Megan Holmes has found that to develop and maintain an exercise regimen it invariably comes down to one thing: play.

“It’s the pleasure and joy that you get from being active-- if you can find activities that bring you joy it stops being something that we have to do and becomes something that we want to do,” explained Holmes.

Holmes points out this one of the reasons that most children are so active. They seem to be having more fun exercising than adults do. She’s hoping that eventually, adults recapture that mindset of play. Having worked frequently with children, Holmes has grown interested in stress in the population and how it relates to childhood obesity or different aspects of metabolic health and if that relationship can be modified or improved with physical activity. Most recently, Holmes and her graduate students looked at a way to incorporate some physical activity into the classroom by adding rubber bands to the

bottom of middle school students’ desks. The bands allowed the students to move and fidget without distracting the people around them.

For Holmes, one of the most exciting aspects of the project wasn’t the results, but that the teachers were willing to try it. For her, getting teachers to buy into ideas and being willing to try things that are outside of their ordinary routine means she and her fellow researchers are headed in the right direction.

As a physical activity epidemiology professor, researching how people, especially children, are active and how they can become more active has always been fascinating to Holmes. During an internship at the University of Nebraska at Kearney’s human performance lab, she got to work with a walking school bus project that involved students walking a route to school and picking up other students along the way. The project, which was developed to help students become more active, also led Holmes to catch the “research bug.”

That love of research is something she encourages her students to catch.

“It’s so much fun to watch my students start to critically think about the research they read and come up with their own research ideas. We were just talking about how we should do more research with dog ownership, stress and physical activity. Do those people get more physical activity? Are they likely to meet the minimum thresholds for physical activity?”

In regards to what type of activity is best, Holmes stresses that some is better than none, and more is better than a little. The important thing is to keep moving and do what you enjoy.





# **FAMOUS MAROON BAND KEEPS GETTING BIGGER AND BETTER**

## **AFTER NEARLY 12 DECADES AT MSU**

Individually, they represent a variety of backgrounds, academic majors and career aspirations. Together, the 420 students in Mississippi State's 117-year-old Famous Maroon Band make up the largest college band in university history.

"It is an exciting time to be a part of the university and the band program," said MSU Director of Bands Elva Kaye Lance. "Our students represent every college and school on campus and really are a microcosm of the university student enrollment. We are excited to again serve this year as the 'soundtrack' for so many significant university events."

With an overall average GPA of 3.3 and ACT score of 27.3, this year's Famous Maroon Band membership consists of 16 high school valedictorians and 10 salutatorians. Students hail from 19 U.S. states, as well as Colombia, South America.

An MSU alumna, Lance said she and associate directors Craig Aarhus and Clifton Taylor have been pleased with new and current band students' professionalism and willingness to

learn in preparation for a busy year.

"Those of us in leadership positions with the band realize we are standing on the shoulders of all who have gone before us and who have established the performance traditions that have become the Famous Maroon Band," Lance said.

"With this large group, it is imperative that the students respond quickly to our instruction and that they help us keep the spaces organized and orderly," she said. "They demonstrated outstanding cooperation in all areas. Additionally, they are talented musicians, which makes our job as directors a lot of fun."

Aarhus said 275 high school students from across the region who make up the university's annual Marching Honor Band joined Famous Maroon Band members in a Sept. 14 halftime performance during MSU's home football game versus Kansas State.

The band's fall halftime performances included "Musical



Royalty” and “Savage”-themed shows, as well as the annual homecoming and patriotic shows.

In October, Aarhus said family and community members were invited to rehearsals as part of a Famous Maroon Band meet and greet.

The Famous Maroon Band also chose its newest drum major. The four students representing Mississippi, Alabama and South Carolina are leading Mississippi State’s Famous Maroon Band as drum majors during the upcoming academic year.

Chosen from a group of 14 student auditions, they include:

—Brooke O. Balla, a senior biological engineering/biomedical engineering major from Huntsville, Alabama, and a Virgil Grissom High School graduate.

—William C. “Will” Frye, a junior music education major from Ocean Springs and an Ocean Springs High School graduate.

—Hunter M. Harris, a junior aerospace engineering/aeronautics major from Graniteville, South Carolina, and a Midland Valley High School graduate.

—Trevor G. Wasden, a senior management and marketing double-major minoring in entrepreneurship and a Helena High School graduate from Helena, Alabama.

“I am thrilled to have been chosen to lead and work with the one and only Famous Maroon Band. It’s such an honor to have the chance to add to the foundation that so many amazing alumni have established,” said Wasden, who is serving as head drum major. “I am excited to perform for the absolute best fans in the SEC and create so many new memories with my friends and family in the band, one show at a time.”

Balla said she too is honored to serve as a Famous Maroon Band drum major and looks forward to the memorable experiences this upcoming season can provide.

“Band has always been an important and constant family in my life. To serve and lead some of the most important and uplifting people of the Bulldog family is a privilege I’m grateful to have,” she said.

Band members nurture and showcase their talents under the baton of Director of Bands Elva Kaye Lance, along with Craig Aarhus and Cliff Taylor, who serve as associate directors of bands and associate professors in the university’s nationally accredited Department of Music. ●



## Gadke to lead MSU’s Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology and Foundations

**M**ississippi State associate professor of school psychology Daniel Gadke is the new head of the university’s counseling, educational psychology and foundations department.

“Dr. Gadke has a distinguished record of accomplishment in teaching, research, and public service. Furthermore, he possesses the requisite skills to provide quality leadership to the department. I have the utmost confidence in his ability to direct the Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Foundations to new heights,” said Richard Blackburn, Dean of the College of Education.

For the past year, Gadke has served as the interim head of the department, and since becoming department head, he is turning his focus on expanding the department and creating more opportunities for his students.

“A big hope of mine is to continue to offer a lot of student opportunities through research, clinical and hands-on experiences. We already have the autism clinic, but we’re looking at ways to be creative about providing more opportunities in the counseling lab. Hopefully, that’ll lead to things like greater recruitment and greater retention,” explained Gadke.

Gadke also hopes to expand the department and has plans to offer more degrees. This includes the creation of an accelerated program to help people attain their master’s and bachelor’s degrees sooner.

“I’m excited to be in this role, and I feel fortunate that it worked out the way it did. I was really lucky that the department was already in a really good place when it was given to me. And I’m excited to continue to work with the faculty and students and to be able to take a good place and help figure out how to continue to make it better,” said Gadke.

In addition to serving as department head, Gadke will continue to serve as the clinical director of the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Clinic, a position he’s held for the past six years. His research interests include Autism Spectrum Disorders, academic/behavior interventions and severe and disruptive behaviors in children with developmental disabilities.

Gadke joined the MSU faculty in 2013 as an assistant professor in the Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology and Foundations. He received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in psychology and his Ph.D. in school psychology, all from Illinois State University. He completed his post-doctorate work at the Kennedy Krieger Institute at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. ●



## ***Book Co-Authored By MSU Professor Tells New Stories Of School Desegregation Through Mississippians' Eyes***

**A** new book published by a Mississippi State faculty member reflects on a yet untold perspective of the Civil Rights Era in the Magnolia State.

MSU Professor James H. "Jim" Adams and co-author Natalie G. Adams, a University of Alabama professor, wrote their look at school desegregation in the state with the intention that it will lead to fresh discussion about Mississippi's public-school system.

"We come from a long line of public school teachers who instilled in us an unwavering commitment to public schools. This book is an extension of their dedication," Jim Adams said. "We are grateful for their influence and hope the book is a tribute to each of their legacies."

Seven years of archival research and more than 100 oral history interviews led to "Just Trying to Have School: The Struggle for Desegregation in Mississippi," published in 2018 by University Press of Mississippi. The book features oral histories of more than 100 parents, students, community leaders, school board members, principals and superintendents who worked during desegregation of Mississippi's schools.

A professor in MSU's Department of Instructional Systems and Workforce Development, Jim Adams was a ninth-grader at DeKalb High School during the first year of school desegregation in Kemper County. Natalie, a professor of social and cultural studies in education at UA, was a third-grader in 1970 when her elementary school in rural north Louisiana was desegregated. Their parents were white educators who made the decision to leave their children in public schools at a time when many of their friends were fleeing to newly opened private academies.

Jim Adams said that while several teachers and students have written personal memoirs about their experiences in a

particular locale during this time period, no other book has been written combining the voices of educators, parents and students statewide.

Sid Salter, a longtime Mississippi journalist who now serves as MSU's chief communications officer and director of public affairs, said the book examines and preserves "the history of one of the most important and impactful events of the previous century in Mississippi and the Deep South."

In reviewing the book, Salter writes, "Massive school desegregation was a national political issue, but in Mississippi it was intensely personal and produced far-reaching changes in the state's communities. The unsung heroes of this dramatic social and educational transformation were the teachers and administrators—both black and white—in Mississippi's public school districts. The Adamses have lovingly and faithfully captured this poignant narrative in this exemplary book."

Jim Adams teaches MSU courses such as Diversity in Work and Educational Environments and History and Philosophy of Vocational and Technical Education with research interests in post-secondary educational programs for marginalized students, diversity issues in the work place, work in a post-industrial society, GED programs in high school settings, multicultural education in higher education, and leadership issues in higher education settings. He has published articles in the Journal of Career and Technical Education, International Journal of Instructional Media, Journal of Interactive Learning Research, and Journal of Critical Education Policy Studies.

Natalie Adams also serves as director of the New College interdisciplinary liberal arts program at UA. She is co-author of "Cheerleader! An American Icon" and co-editor of "Geographies of Girlhood: Identities In-Between." ●



Stratton-Gadke  
brings extensive  
experience to  
**DIRECTORSHIP  
OF MSU'S  
T.K. MARTIN CENTER**



Mississippi State assistant professor Kasee Stratton-Gadke, an internationally recognized children's disabilities scholar, is the new director of the university's T.K. Martin Center for Technology and Disability.

Opened in 1996, the research center works with individuals with disabilities to help them benefit from technological solutions and innovative assistive technology. The center continues to serve children and their families through programs in the Project IMPACT Preschool, Assistive Technology Services, Express Yourself! Art, IGNITE Dyslexia Services and Camp Jabber Jaw that introduces augmentative and alternative communication devices to campers and their families. The center operates within the MSU College of Education.

Stratton-Gadke is founder and director of the Bulldog CHARGE Syndrome Research Laboratory at MSU, one of only two international sites focused on educational, behavioral and quality-of-life research for individuals with the disorder and their caregivers.

She also is co-founder and co-director of the university's Autism and Developmental Disabilities Clinic, which provides individualized behavioral, academic and life skill services to individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities. It also delivers training to parents, community members, and MSU undergraduate and graduate students, and conducts research on developing better evidenced-based interventions for individuals with disabilities.

With well-documented, successful experience in service to children with disabilities, Stratton-Gadke has secured, along with co-principal investigators, more than \$3.3 million in grant funding and approximately \$375,000 in training grants in the past few years. Through her work, the autism clinic has acquired \$325,000 in private donations.

Her 33 publications, including peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, technical briefs and more, also are other examples of the knowledge and skill she brings to the position.

In 2012, Stratton-Gadke was selected for the prestigious Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine/Kennedy Krieger Institute Post-Doctoral Fellowship, which provides intensive training in applied behavior analysis, developmental disabilities, behavioral pediatrics, and family therapy. There, she worked with more than 400 children during her two-and-a-half-year stint. She holds doctoral and master's degrees in school psychology, and a bachelor's in psychology/youth studies, all from Central Michigan University.

In 2015, Stratton-Gadke, a licensed psychologist and National Certified School Psychologist, was appointed by Governor Phil Bryant to serve a one-year term on the Mississippi Autism Board and was re-appointed in 2016 to a four-year term with the regulatory agency for applied behavior analysis, currently serving as chair.

Along with her instructional duties in MSU's Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology and Foundations, the Pittsford, Michigan, native is a consultant to the university's ACCESS program for students with intellectual disabilities and the Autism Liaison program, serving degree-seeking college students with autism.

This year's president-elect of the national Trainers of School Psychologists (TSP), she is the 2019 recipient of the organization's Presidential Award for contributions and service to TSP and the school psychology field. The College of Education awarded her the 2018 Herb Handley Research honor, and she is listed in Central Michigan's 10-in-10, which includes the 10 most successful and influential graduates in the past decade. ●

## COLLEGE OF EDUCATION INSTRUCTOR

# Recognized For Excellence In Undergraduate Student Advising



**D**r. Kasia Gallo, an instructor in the Department of Counseling Educational Psychology and Foundations was awarded the Wesley A. Ammon New Academic Advisor Award Thursday, April 24, 2019.

“The College of Education is excited that the quality advising provided by Kasia has been recognized. Her service to our student has always been exemplary,” said Dr. Richard Blackburn, Dean of the College of Education.

Gallo, who has been an instructor and advisor in the department since 2015, said that she was very humbled by Dr. Morse’s suggestion that she apply for the award. Over the past four years, Gallo has advised hundreds of undergraduates, guiding them through their college careers and beyond. Gallo explained that once someone becomes her students, they are always her student.

How Gallo ended up advising for the Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology and Foundations might come as a surprise to many. She received a bachelor’s and a master’s in landscape architecture before realizing her passion laid elsewhere. While co-teaching with other faculty members in the department one noticed her interest

in best practices for teaching students and mentioned that Mississippi State had a degree that concentrated on that: educational psychology.

Gallo explained that her switch in careers has helped a lot in advising because often she deals with students that are worried about choosing the wrong major and eventually the wrong profession. She likes to point out to her students that landscape architecture and educational psychology are two very different fields, but she made the switch easily. She wants her students to know there are options when it comes to finding opportunities on campus and future careers that suit them.

“One of my favorite things about advising is helping students break down barriers. Often students know what they want to do, but they have no idea how to go about doing it. My job as an advisor is to help guide them through these processes, whether it’s wanting to do more research or find a future career that integrates their love of science with their love of counseling.”

The Wesley A. Ammon New Academic Advisor Awards recognize both a faculty and staff member who have demonstrated qualities associated with outstanding academic advising of undergraduate students and who have served as academic advisors for less than five years.

Gallo received her bachelor’s and masters from Louisiana State University in 1997 and 2000 as well as a second master’s and a Ph.D. from Mississippi State in 2015 and 2018.

The award is a memorial to Ammon, who served as director of MSU’s University Academic Advising Center until his death in 2016. Ammon joined the University Academic Advising Center in 1995 and was promoted to assistant director before taking on the director’s role in 2009. A Vicksburg native who earned a bachelor’s in political science and a master’s in public policy and administration from MSU in 1985 and 1988, respectively, Ammon regularly lectured to classrooms with more than 100 students. He was an avid Bulldog sports fan and a member of Calvary Baptist Church. ●



# WALKER AWARDED 'DISTANCE MAKES A DIFFERENCE' SCHOLARSHIP



Lindsay Walker did not understand the feeling of “pride in your university” until she was accepted into the Mississippi State University (MSU) Online Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education with a concentration in Middle School program.

“When I was accepted into MSU there was a pride that overwhelmed me. I never understood it before that moment,” said Walker. “I immediately went out and got a sticker for my car, a keychain for my keys and three MSU shirts! Now I wear maroon on Fridays because that is what MSU Bulldogs do!”

Walker, a fall 2019 recipient of a \$1,000 “Distance Makes a Difference” scholarship, shared her story in her scholarship application.

“After graduating from high school, I wanted to be a wife and mom, which is what I did,” Walker said. “But I soon began to realize that I also had a dream of becoming a teacher.”

When asked about that dream Walker explained that she loves children and believes God has gifted her with the ability to listen to them, talk with them and support them as they grow into adults.

She further explained that she has a love of learning and she wants to share that love with students.

Walker’s dream, however, appeared to be out of reach because her husband is disabled, and her income as a school bus driver was required to support their family which includes four children.

Going to school as a traditional student would mean losing bus routes and income, something the family could not afford.

The Mississippi State Online degree program in elementary education was the solution to keep her dream alive.

“The online program at MSU provides me an excellent education I can complete in my hometown while I continue to work to support my family,” Walker explained.

She has dedicated herself to work hard in pursuit of becoming a teacher.

“I will teach my children and the community’s children to further their education so they may live successful and productive lives in which they can contribute to our society and future generations,” said Walker.

The \$1,000 scholarship has also helped to make Walkers dream a reality.

“Thank you so very much for this scholarship. It is a tremendous help for my family and a big stress relief,” Walker said with emotion. “It helps me to focus on schoolwork and graduating instead of having to worry about finances. It’s a huge honor to receive it and one I truly appreciate.”

Mississippi State Online offers 47 accredited online programs from several colleges on Mississippi State University’s campus. Bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees as well as professional certificates are available to students across the country and around the world. ●

*For more information, visit [www.online.msstate.edu](http://www.online.msstate.edu).*

## THE 2019-2020 METP SCHOLARS CLASS INCLUDES *(by hometown)*:

**BILOXI**—Macy N. Chism, a junior secondary education/English education major.

**BIRMINGHAM**, Alabama—Ruby Alyssa Beard, a freshman elementary education/middle school major.

**BRANDON**—Bailey M. LaFontaine, a senior elementary education/middle school major; and Brooke Hodges, a freshman elementary education major.

**BROOKSVILLE**—Reilly C. Mapp, a freshman special education major.

**CANTON**—Margaret E. “Meg” Gordon, a freshman elementary education/middle school major.

**CLINTON**—Savanna M. Clardy and Chelsie R. Hennen, both freshman elementary education/middle school majors.

**FLORA**—Samantha J. Caldwell, a freshman secondary education/chemistry education major.

**GERMANTOWN**, Tennessee—Emily L. Cardosi, a freshman elementary education/middle school major.

**LOUISVILLE**—Makinsie B. Clark, a sophomore secondary education/English education major.

**LUCEDALE**—Katelyn M. Cooley, a freshman secondary education/English education major.

**MADISON**—Sarah E. Franklin, a freshman special education major; and Emily K. Hudgens, a junior secondary education/biology education major.

**MERIDIAN**—Alexis D. “Lexie” Rawson, a freshman secondary education/mathematics education major; and Dunnam O. Shirley, a senior secondary education/biology education major.

**PASCAGOULA**—Cameron D. Wells, a freshman secondary education/mathematics education major.

**PASS CHRISTIAN**—Marly S. Crawford, a freshman special education major.

**PELAHATCHIE**—Ethan T. Morris, a freshman secondary education/mathematics education major.

**PONTOTOC**—Jonathan P. Weeks, a junior secondary education/mathematics education major.

**RIDGELAND**—Susan Camille Felder, a freshman elementary education/middle school major.

**SIGNAL MOUNTAIN**, Tennessee—Hailey A. Fookes, a freshman secondary education/mathematics education major.

**STARKVILLE**—William T. “Will” May, a freshman elementary education/middle school major; and Maggie E. Miller, a freshman elementary education/early childhood major.

**TERRY**—Lendon K. Chandler, a freshman elementary education/middle school major.

**TUSCALOOSA**, Alabama—Kathryn A. Watkins, a sophomore elementary education/middle school major.

**UNION**—Mallory W. Malone, a freshman secondary education/English education major.

**VANCELEAVE**—Morgan R. Sanford, a freshman secondary education/English education major; Cari R. Sims, a freshman elementary education/middle school major; and Emma L. Wages, a freshman elementary education/middle school major.

**VESTAVIA HILLS**, Alabama—Hannah Beth McCall, a freshman elementary education/middle school major.



## MSU Mississippi Excellence in Teaching Program Announces Newest Cohort

**T**hirty-one Mississippi State University students are new scholarship recipients in one of the state’s most prestigious teacher education programs.

Housed in the university’s College of Education, the Mississippi Excellence in Teaching Program, or METP, is a collaborative endeavor with the University of Mississippi. The scholarship includes full tuition, with room, board and books, a \$1,000 technology stipend, and a fully funded national or study-abroad experience. The award is available to students majoring in secondary mathematics, secondary science, secondary English, elementary education and special education.

“We are very excited to have these new students in the program. It is encouraging for Mississippi to have determined students that are extremely passionate and committed to the opportunity of educating our most valuable resource, our children,”

said Annice Jenkins, METP program manager. “Mississippi’s future lies in the hands of our children, and these new METP students are eager to rise to the challenge and prepare themselves for the service that lies before them. I am excited and look forward to working with them.”

Funded by the Jackson-based Robert M. Hearin Support Foundation, the scholarship is valued at approximately \$100,000 over four years.

Competitive applicants should have at least a 28 ACT—or 1310 SAT—score and a 3.5 high school grade point average. Applicants participate in an interview with faculty, write an essay about why they want to enter the teaching profession, and commit to teaching in Mississippi in their program area for at least five years after graduation, though the obligation may be deferred if students decide to pursue graduate degree programs. ●





## MSU-MERIDIAN EDUCATION STUDENTS RECEIVE MAJOR RECOGNITIONS

Two students in MSU-Meridian Division of Education have received major recognitions for achieving 4.0 GPAs during their academic career.

Rachel Laird was honored at MSU-Meridian's May 2 commencement ceremony as the Division of Education's Outstanding Graduate Student. A Riley Scholar and member of Phi Theta Kappa during her undergraduate days at MSU-Meridian, Laird also was named the division's Outstanding Undergraduate Student two years ago.

A student at East Central Community College when she first realized her love for literature could lead to a career, Laird said that feeling only intensified as she studied secondary education with an English concentration at MSU-Meridian.

"Although I didn't really have any idea what I wanted to do when I started at ECCC, once my path was set, there was no looking back or second guessing myself," she said.

That single-minded purpose spurred Laird on to continue her studies at MSU-Meridian and pursue a Master of Arts in Teaching Community College Education degree, which will give her the opportunity to teach on a high school, college level or both through dual credit programs.

While in graduate school, Laird worked four days a week as a private tutor for a teenage boy with special needs. Looking back over the past six years of college, she knows she is prepared and ready for her own classroom.

"What I'm most looking forward to though is the opportunity to show students—especially those who don't like to read—how English is practical and relevant to their everyday lives," she added.

Katie Stuart Gilmore was honored as a Stephen D. this

time at Mississippi State University-Meridian as a Stephen D. Lee Scholar.

Although she initially started her college career at MSU's Starkville campus, the Carthage native transferred to MSU-Meridian her junior year when she realized that elementary education was the right field for her.

In August 2018, the 22-year-old was hired as a first-grade assistant at nearby Union Elementary School and became part of MSU-Meridian's Professional Advancement Network for Teacher Assistants (PANTA) initiative. Both the work and school locations were convenient for her since the previous spring she had married her high school sweetheart, Quint Gilmore of Sebastopol, and the two settled in his hometown.

"I loved being part of the PANTA initiative," Gilmore said. "As an assistant, I saw firsthand how the entire school system works. When some of my classmates were only in the classroom a few days a week, I was there every day for all the meetings and behind-the-scenes stuff. I was involved in planning and instruction, even before my student internship began."

Working full time also presented more of a challenge for Gilmore to maintain her 4.0 grade-point average, but she was determined and persevered.

"I've always tried to achieve in everything I do. I knew I was capable, but once I started working, I had a lot less free time to study and do school work. Quint was very supportive and always encouraged me to do my best, even when that meant cold cereal for supper many nights of the week," she said.

Gilmore will continue to work at Union Elementary this fall, but she will have her own classroom. ●

## ALL SPRING GRADUATES, THE HONOREES INCLUDE (by hometown):

AMORY – Abby Cantrell, a secondary education/biology major.

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama – Hannah Duke, an elementary education/middle school major.

BRIGHTON, Tennessee – Bailey Roe, a special education major.

CANTON, Georgia – Rachel Morley, a senior elementary education/middle school major.

CARTHAGE – Brooke O'Malley Stuart, a senior secondary education/English major.

CONEHATTA – Taylor Fulkerson, a senior elementary education/middle school major.

CORINTH – Heather Marie Pannell, a senior elementary education/middle school major.

CUMMING, Georgia – Caroline Thomas, an elementary education/early childhood major.

DALLAS, Texas – Zara Mishler, a senior elementary education/middle school major.

D'IBERVILLE – Lyn-Marie Kirkland, an elementary education/middle school major.

FAIRHOPE, Alabama – Zoey Gibson, a senior special education major.

FRANKLIN, Tennessee – Caitlin McFarland, an elementary education/middle school major.

FRIENDSWOOD, Texas – Alyson Ball, an agricultural education major.

HOULKA – J.T. Washington, a senior kinesiology/physical education and coaching major.

HOUSTON – Sydney Ramirez, a senior music education/vocal major.

HUNTSVILLE, Alabama – Shanika Parker, an elementary education/middle school major.

KILN – Jady Saucier, a senior special education major.

LAUREL – Jodie Leigh Newsom, an elementary education major.

LONG BEACH – Cameron Haag, an elementary education major.

MAGEE – Emily Crace, a secondary education major.

OLIVE BRANCH – Nicole Lloyd, an elementary education/middle school major.

PHEBA – John Taylor Champion, a secondary education/social studies major.

PRATTVILLE, Alabama – Kayla Callahan, a music education/instrumental major.

RICHLAND – Kari Jordan, a secondary education/social studies major.

STARKVILLE – Skyler Buford, a special education major.



## MSU College of Education recognizes outstanding teacher interns

Twenty-five Mississippi State College of Education graduates were recognized as outstanding teacher interns for the spring and fall 2019 semesters.

Nominated by their classroom mentor teachers, the award honorees were selected based on their resourcefulness, initiative and effectiveness. Those recognized demonstrated outstanding teaching performance, professionalism and a high level of commitment to the teaching profession. They completed their teaching interns at various public school systems throughout Mississippi.



## Instructional Systems and Workforce Development Associate Professor named **NATIONAL COLLEGIATE TEACHER OF THE YEAR**

Dr. Pamela Bracey was awarded the National Business Education Association's (NBEA) Collegiate Teacher of the Year at the NBEA Awards Luncheon on Friday, April 19th in Chicago.

Bracey, who has been a member of the National Business Education Association since she was an undergraduate student, said that receiving the prestigious award has helped her remember why she does what she does, and the fact that she was nominated by someone from another state makes her even more grateful.

"The feeling is honestly indescribable. I have cried many tears of joy. This award is the highest honor that I could possibly attain in my current role as a business technology educator; and to learn that I have earned it at such an early state of my career is honestly breathtaking, humbling, yet extremely rewarding," Bracey said.

The National Business Education Association is the nation's leading professional organization devoted to serving individuals and groups engaged in instruction, administration, research and dissemination of information for and about business. NBEA is devoted to the recognition that business education competencies are essential for all individuals in today's fast-changing society.

An associate professor since 2013 in MSU's Department of Instructional Systems and Workforce Development, Bracey credits her involvement in NBEA to a professor at her undergraduate college, who stressed the importance of being a part of professional organizations.

Prior to earning a doctorate at the University of North Texas in applied technology and performance improvement, Bracey completed a master's degree in higher education administration at Mississippi College and a bachelor's in business technology education at the University of Southern Mississippi.



## MSU'S BLACKBOURN selected for Harvard University Leadership Institute



**T**his summer, the dean of Mississippi State's College of Education took part in an elite Harvard University professional development experience designed to help higher education administrators master new approaches to leadership.

Richard Blackbourn was selected for Harvard Graduate School of Education's Institute for Management and Leadership in Education and joined other senior administrators from around the world June 16-28 for the two-week, on-campus program. The MLE program accepts experienced higher education administrators from a variety of academic disciplines.

"I was extremely excited to have an opportunity to enhance my leadership skills by working with such esteemed colleagues. Fellow participants possessed unique insights, and it was fun to learn from one another," Blackbourn said.

"I gained an understanding of the challenges that confront these leaders and the varied strategies they might employ to address them," he said.

A three-degree alumnus of MSU, Blackbourn is currently in his 15th year as dean. He previously served as both a teacher and principal in Mississippi public school systems and held teaching and administrative posts at the University of Louisiana-Monroe and Clemson University.

During his tenure at Mississippi State, Blackbourn has chaired the Council of Southeastern Conference Education Deans, served as president of the Mississippi Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, and was co-principal investigator on a \$42 million proposal that established the Mississippi Excellence in Teaching Program. In 2015, Blackbourn was ranked among the top 30 most influential deans of education in the United States by Beaumont, Texas-based Mometrix Test Preparation.

Blackbourn's late father, Joe M. Blackbourn, also was a longtime MSU education faculty member. ●





## STINSON-PEREZ named Director of Older Individuals Who are Blind Technical Assistance Center *at MSU RESEARCH UNIT*

**T**he National Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision at Mississippi State University has named Sylvia Stinson-Perez as the new director of the Older Individuals who are Blind Technical Assistance Center.

Stinson-Perez has more than 20 years of experience in the field of vision rehabilitation and five years in higher education. She assumed her new leadership role in January 2019.

Funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration under the U.S. Department of Education, OIB-TAC training and technical assistance activities focus on agencies that serve older individuals with blindness to improve administration, operation and performance of their programs.

"We are very pleased that Sylvia is leading the OIB-TAC," said Michele McDonnell, NRTC director. "She is well qualified for the position and has a thorough understanding of the unique role our center plays in the continued enhancement of independent living outcomes for individuals who are blind or visually impaired."

Housed within MSU's College of Education, the NRTC has been awarded more than \$31 million over 37 years to support research, training, technical assistance and dissemination activities, enhancing employment and independent living outcomes for individuals with blindness and other visual impairments. The NRTC is the only federally funded center focused on employment outcomes of persons who are blind or visually impaired.

Most recently, Stinson-Perez served as chief executive officer and executive director for the Lighthouse for the Visually Impaired and Blind in Port Richey, Florida. The

non-profit organization provides a full range of vision education, rehabilitation and employment services to individuals of all ages experiencing vision loss or blindness.

A graduate of Florida State University and Saint Leo University, she holds master's degrees in social work, visual disabilities education and business administration. Stinson-Perez is also a certified vision rehabilitation therapist.

"Vision loss is one of the many challenges of aging, yet one that can be successfully overcome. Services and rehabilitation training provided by programs designed to help seniors remain independent, productive and engaged can make a huge difference in adjustment to vision loss," Stinson-Perez said. "I am looking forward to leading the OIB-TAC team as we continue to work with state agencies and community rehabilitation providers to promote independence, community involvement and well-being for older individuals who are blind."

Stinson-Perez is herself visually impaired and believes strongly in advocacy, best practice and professional development. She has been an active member of the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired, previously serving as Florida chapter president.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the number of adults with vision loss is expected to continue increasing rapidly, with cases of age-related macular degeneration expected to double and diabetic retinopathy expected to quadruple by 2050. Each state receives federal funding with the goal of developing an effective program to meet the needs for independence of this aging population with blindness and visual impairments. ●



#### THOSE CERTIFYING IN 2019 (BY SCHOOL DISTRICT) INCLUDE:

**Choctaw Tribal Schools**—Eula Sullivan, certified in literacy.

**Kemper County School District**—Rajkumari Jukkula, certified in science/early adolescent.

**Lauderdale County School District**—Kelly Johnson, certified in literacy (certification renewal); Britney Pippin, certified in literacy; Lori Taylor, certified in exceptional needs (certification renewal).

**Lowndes County School District**—Sarah Caldwell, certified in exceptional needs; Melanie Counts, certified in English language arts/AYA; Meagan Spencer, certified in math/early adolescent; Mary Rebecca Studdard, certified in math/AYA; Teresa Wittke, certified in exceptional needs; Ashley Wyers, certified in exceptional needs.

**Neshoba County School District**—Kaitland Copeland, certified in exceptional needs; Mindy Hutchison, certified in literacy; Wendy Ishee, certified in exceptional needs; Tanya Mosher, certified in exceptional needs; Jessica Stroud, certified in exceptional needs.

**Pascagoula School District**—Kelsey Hardy, certified in early childhood generalist.

**Pontotoc City School District**—Anne McGregor, certified in math/early adolescent.

**Starkville Oktibbeha School District**—Sharon Bonner, certified in middle childhood generalist (certification renewal); Mallory Carlisle, certified in social studies/early adolescent (certification renewal); Jennie Mason, certified in math/early adolescent; Amy McReynolds, certified in early childhood generalist (certification renewal); Dane Peagler, certified in science/AYA; Carrie Word, certified in literacy (certification renewal).



# MSU'S WORLD CLASS TEACHING PROGRAM CELEBRATES PROFESSIONALS EARNING NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION

The World Class Teaching Program at Mississippi State is celebrating new board-certified teachers who were honored recently at a spring pinning ceremony.

MSU's World Class Teaching Program began in 1996 to support and guide teachers as they work toward National Board Certification.

The university-based initiative recruits and mentors teachers seeking advanced certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards process. Teachers who earn board certification show exemplary teaching in their respective subjects.

The process sets uniform standards nationwide and offers professional and personal growth for teachers looking to positively impact students' learning. Mississippi is ranked fourth in the nation in the 2018 state rankings by percentage of board-certified teachers at 12.95 percent and seventh in the nation for the total number of teachers with National Board Certification. MSU has supported two of the five schools that had four or more teachers to certify this year.

# MSU-Meridian initiative helps fill teacher shortages at area schools



Recent graduates from Mississippi State University-Meridian's inaugural Professional Advancement Network for Teacher Assistants initiative are filling a void this semester as classroom teachers in local schools.

With many school administrators having difficulty finding qualified teachers in the middle of the school year, Quitman Upper Elementary School Principal Leah Ivey said the opportunity to hire PANTA graduates Dre'Anna Davis and Tera Yelverton was a huge blessing.

Implemented in 2017, PANTA helps teacher assistants complete the educational requirements to become licensed teachers.

December graduates Davis and Yelverton are now fifth- and third-grade teachers respectively at Quitman Upper Elementary. Both part of the PANTA initiative's first cohort, they are former kindergarten assistants at Quitman Lower Elementary in the Quitman School District.

"I'm grateful that we didn't have to settle for a short-term fix," Ivey said. "The fact that these ladies had already proven themselves in the classroom and they knew procedures and policies of the district ensured as smooth a transition as we could have possibly expected. I couldn't have asked for a better solution."

Yelverton, a teacher assistant for the past 11 years, knew she wanted to be a certified teacher five years ago, but did not pursue a degree at that time because she needed to keep working.

"What drew me to the PANTA initiative and MSU-Meridian was knowing I could continue to work while going to school, even when it came time to do my internship," Yelverton said.

Davis considered going into teaching in

2016 while a senior at Quitman High School.

"I used to help out in one of my teachers' classrooms during my free period and thought it would be something I'd like to do," Davis said. "But I was also interested in pursuing a degree in physical therapy."

A meeting with her advisor at Jones College in Ellisville led her into teacher education.

Davis started taking classes at MSU-Meridian in the summer of 2017 after graduating from Jones and marrying. To help pay for her schooling, she applied for a teacher assistant job and was hired at Quitman Lower Elementary for the fall and then became part of the PANTA cohort.

According to Ivey, both Davis and Yelverton already had made a name for themselves at Quitman Lower Elementary as people who were ready for more.

"They did a great job in the capacity they were in but everyone around them, including Principal Amanda Allen, saw they also had gifts and the potential to have their own classroom one day," Ivey said. "The PANTA initiative provides a way for administrators to identify staff like Tera and Dre'Anna, encourage them to enroll in elementary education and still retain them in our school districts."

Working in the classroom while studying to be an educator provided Davis, Yelverton and other teacher assistants a front-row seat to the teaching profession, something other education majors may not have.

"When it came time for my internship, I felt like I was already ahead of the curve," Yelverton said. "As an employee of the district, I knew the teachers I'd be working with, as well as the district's policies, and I even knew some of the children. That knowledge took

away the fear that many student interns feel when stepping into a school for the first time."

"There is a definite advantage that I see with the PANTA initiative," Ivey said. "I don't think there is anything that can replace the all-day, everyday experience from the beginning of the school year to the end—and that's the advantage teacher assistants or other paraprofessionals working on their elementary education degrees bring to the table."

Still, for both Davis and Yelverton, becoming the lead classroom teacher is a transition that takes some adjustment.

"It was an eye-opening experience to me, particularly the time it takes to plan out your lessons and activities for each day," Davis said. "As a teacher assistant, whatever the teacher asked me to do, I did. As the teacher, the responsibility is now in your hands—you have data to look at, and you need to figure out how to differentiate your lessons to reach each child to make sure they are achieving their goals."

Yelverton added, "I've been an assistant for over 11 years and every one of the educators I worked with were so different. I've had to figure out what works for me and develop my own teaching style. I've also had to take into account the group of kids I'm working with and adapt to their needs and learning styles as well."

Ivey said the PANTA initiative is a win-win for everyone.

"The assistant who becomes a certified teacher receives a salary increase and their own classroom, and administrators get seasoned people they know will be able to handle their classroom and work together as a team."





BRANDI SUMRALL

## MSU-MERIDIAN RECEIVES GRANT TO TRAIN TEACHERS IN FIRST STATE-RUN RESIDENCY PROGRAM

Mississippi State University-Meridian is playing a pivotal role in a new teacher training program that is the first state-run initiative of its kind in the United States.

The free, two-year program is designed to recruit underserved students to complete a Bachelor of Science in elementary education, which then makes the new college graduates eligible to teach any subject in kindergarten through 6th grade; English, computer science, mathematics, science and social studies in 7th and 8th grade; and special education in kindergarten through 8th grade.

**BRANDI SUMRALL**, MSU-Meridian MTR co-director of special education, said, “The beauty of this initiative is that students will have a comprehensive understanding of research-based theory and practice for both elementary and special education. Special education has been a critical shortage area for decades in our state, and through this program our students will be licensed in both areas.”

**JEFF LEFFLER**, co-director of elementary education for the MTR program, said MSU-Meridian is in a distinctive position to aid in this first-ever initiative because of its current offering of the Professional Advancement Network for Teacher Assistants program, or PANTA.

PANTA uses a blended delivery format that allows working adults to participate in either face-to-face instruction or remotely when they are unable to attend class,” the MSU-Meridian assistant professor said in discussing the critical need to fill the state’s elementary teaching positions with permanent hires.

“Last year, more than 200 teachers working for JPS were emergency hires, meaning they could only serve as teachers for one year without a degree or alternate route teaching certificate,” he said. “In order to keep a paying job after that one year, they continue with the district as substitute teachers at a dramatically lower salary when they should be gaining the skills they need to obtain a four-year degree, pass the PRAXIS exam and enter the classroom as a licensed teacher.”



JEFF LEFFLER



Michele McDonnell



Elton Moore



# NRTC current, former directors at MSU receive national honors for work in blindness field

**T**wo Mississippi State University leaders, Elton Moore and Michele McDonnall, were recognized with prestigious honors from the American Foundation for the Blind for their impactful work in the blindness and low vision field.

Elton Moore, retired MSU College of Education associate dean and professor who also is a former director of the MSU-based National Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision and Michele McDonnall, current NRTC director and MSU research professor, accepted two of the organization's highest awards during its 2019 leadership conference in Arlington, Virginia.

Moore said receiving the Migel Medal—the highest honor in the blindness field—is among the most significant achievements of his career, along with his 2002 selection as a Giles Distinguished Professor at MSU.

“To receive the Migel Medal is the quintessential lifetime achievement award in the blindness field, and to be a part of a nationally renowned group that includes Helen Keller is truly humbling,” Moore said.

A preeminent leader in the blindness field over the last quarter century, Moore's leadership of MSU's then Rehabilitation Research and Training Center included oversight of considerable research related to the employment of people with vision loss. This research was applied by private and governmental organizations to serve those with blindness and visual impairments throughout the United States. Moore frequently has lectured and contributed to the field's body of knowledge through his editing and authoring of dozens of articles and books. He is well known for his advocacy skills, analytical capabilities, leadership, and grant-writing expertise.

“I am extremely excited that Elton has received this significant recognition. Clearly, he has been a major player

in the field of low vision and blindness for many years and has had a major impact on the lives of numerous individuals. This award is an outstanding way for Elton to cap his career,” said dean of MSU's College of Education Richard Blackburn.

Established in 1937 by the late M.C. Migel, AFB's first chairman, the Migel Medal honors professionals and volunteers whose dedication and achievements improve the lives of people who are blind or visually impaired. The Migel Medal Committee typically selects two honorees each year whose life work affects services to people with vision loss on a national level.


Michele McDonnall said AFB's Corinne Kirchner Research Award is a reflection of her collaborative teamwork with MSU colleagues and others working in the field.

“I am sincerely honored to receive this AFB award. Also, my research accomplishments would not be possible without the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research's support of our research and center staff who I have collaborated with on this research,” she said. “This is an award that I truly share with the NRTC and all of its staff.”

The Corinne Kirchner Research Award honors individuals whose leadership and dedication illuminate the most pressing needs of people with vision loss through timely, innovative and authoritative research. It is named in honor of a longtime AFB staff member whose research into demographics, education and employment research in the blindness field laid the foundation for much of the continuing research today.

McDonnall, who has been NRTC director for eight years, serves as the principal investigator of multiple projects for the 2015-2020 Rehabilitation Research and Training Center grant on Employment for Individuals with Blindness or Other Visual Impairments from NIDILRR. She has published extensively over the last 15 years on employer attitudes, predictors of employment and improving delivery systems as they relate to individuals with blindness or low vision, with the ultimate goal of improving competitive employment outcomes and other indicators of employment success. In addition to being published in academic and professional journals, McDonnall and the center's staff have translated research into plain language summaries for ease of access and understanding.

A certified rehabilitation counselor, McDonnall earned a bachelor's degree from Florida State University, a master's from MSU and a Ph.D. from the University of Arkansas. She serves as a peer reviewer for multiple professional journals and is a member of several professional organizations. ●



## MSU ONLINE PROGRAMS ONCE AGAIN HIGHLY RANKED BY U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT

Mississippi State University College of Education's distance education programs are recognized in the 2019 U.S. News & World Report online programs rankings, with three programs ranking in the top 50 nationally in the analysis released on Tuesday, January 15, 2019.

The College of Education is once again being recognized for its online graduate programs. The 2019 rankings have MSU at No. 77, up six spots from 2018. For more on the College of Education's seven online programs, visit <https://www.educ.msstate.edu/academics/online-degree-programs/>.

"Mississippi State University takes pride in providing our students with an excellent experience and a quality education, and our online programs are no different," said Susan Seal, executive director of MSU's Center for Distance Education. "With student success at the heart of what we do, our online programs are designed to meet the needs of our diverse student population. The national rankings that we continue to reach are a testament to the quality of our online programs and to our exceptional faculty and staff."

Established in 1933, U.S. News & World Report releases annual rankings of universities and individual academic programs from across the country and is in its eighth year of collecting data from distance education programs. To see the full rankings, visit <https://www.usnews.com/education/online-education>.





## MSU Professors of Music author books

Two Mississippi State University professors of music, Dr. Jason Baker and Dr. James Sobaskie, recently penned books offering lessons and insights into the world of music.

Jason Baker's recently published book provides young percussionists with solos and exercises for the timpani – often

referred to as the “kettle drums” and used in both orchestra and band.

In his book, “33 Elementary Etudes for Timpani,” Jason Baker provides examples and exercises that are intended to help students build confidence in reading timpani parts and moving fluently around the drums. The exercises also include performance



techniques, tuning changes, metric schemes and other indications that can be commonly found in student-level solo, band/orchestra and percussion ensemble repertoires.

The book began as a spring-summer project that came about after listening to percussion auditions for the coming school year. Baker realized that there weren't many solo options for younger percussionists to choose from, especially timpani players. He was determined to fix that.

"I resolved that each week or so, I would write a new short little piece, and they would all be geared towards students from an advanced middle school level all the way through high school," said Baker.

Baker explained that the pieces he's written don't require a high degree of technical proficiency to play, but are representative of music that students might play in a high school ensemble or even college or professional ensemble. Thus, making them great pieces to use at auditions.

"I knew they needed to teach a sense of musical intuitiveness and how things begin, develop and resolve musically," said Baker. "So when I was done with it, I was most happy with the fact that I enjoyed performing all of them."

The book is part of HoneyRock Publishing, a publishing company located in Everett, Pennsylvania that specializes in a broad range of high-quality percussion literature. Their books range from beginning works to works meant for college-level players and professional performers. "33 Elementary Etudes for Timpani" is now available for purchase.

Baker holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Connecticut, a master's degree from the New England Conservatory of Music and a doctorate from the University of

North Texas. Since coming to work at MSU, he has completed a master of business administration.

Dr. James Sobaskie has co-edited a book on the music of Franz Schubert published in the United Kingdom by Boydell and Brewer.

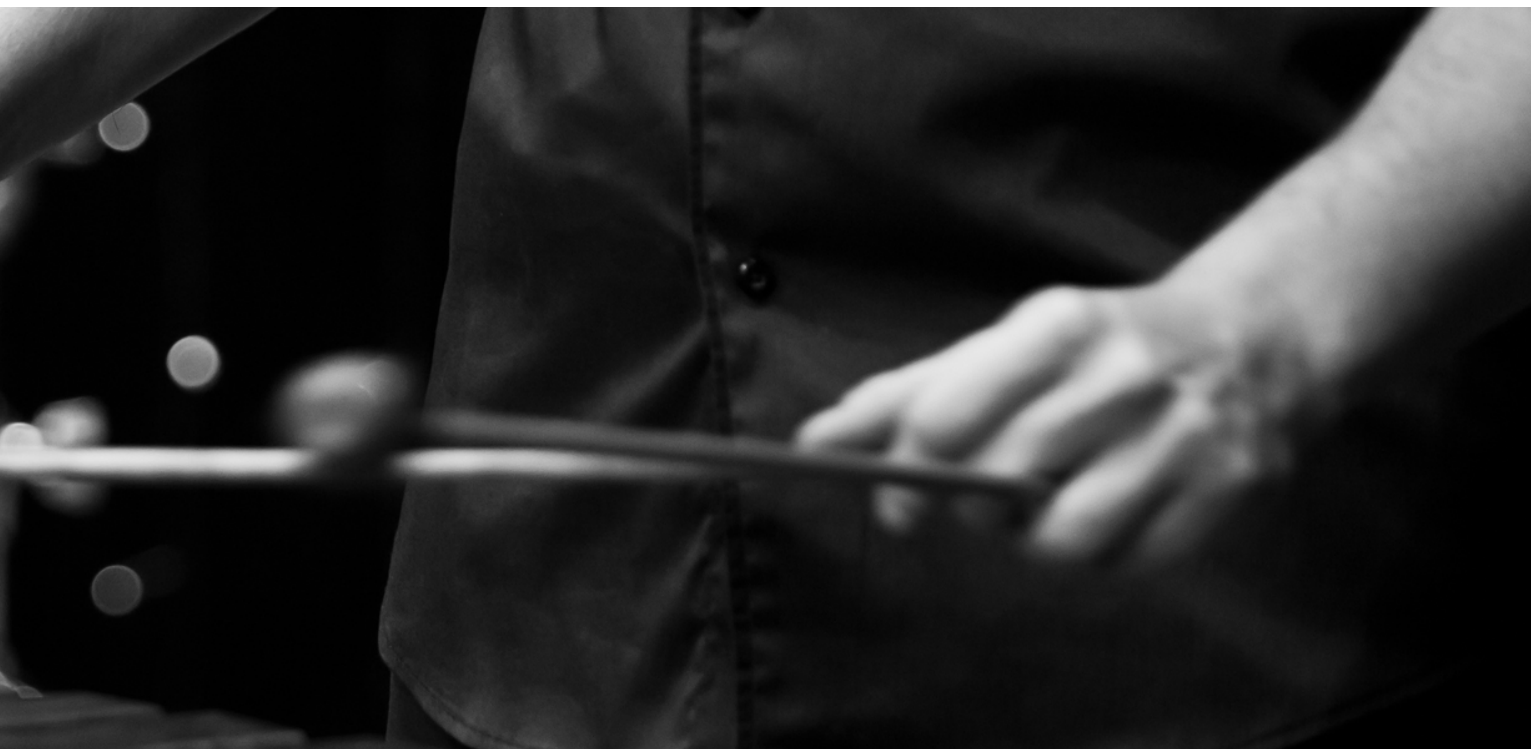
"Drama in the Music of Franz Schubert" challenges the assumption that Franz Schubert, best known for his songs, symphonies and chamber music, lacked a comparable talent for drama by demonstrating previously unsuspected locations of dramatic innovation in his vocal and instrumental music.

With co-editor Joe Davies, a Music Faculty member at the University of Oxford, James Sobaskie secured the participation of eleven Schubert experts, representative of seven countries, to establish a new, collective and diverse perspective on drama in the composer's music. Sobaskie's contributions also include two chapters, "The Dramatic Monologue in Schubert's Mass in A flat major" and "The Dramatic Strategy Within Two of Schubert's Serenades" and a co-written introduction to the book.

"Schubert's image is evolving, and we wanted to confront a longstanding misconception surrounding the Romantic Era composer's dramatic music. It turns out that Schubert invested drama within other genres besides opera, incorporating subtle narrative simulation, and we've aimed to change how people regard and listen to him. I'm already using my colleagues' ideas in my teaching."

[Sobaskie adds,] "I am grateful to my Department of Music colleagues for their encouragement and am fortunate for the support of the College of Education. Schubert's creativity thrived on the good will of those around him and so does mine.





I'm excited to see this book in print and motivated to complete my next project – a book on the music of Gabriel Fauré.”

Sobaskie holds a bachelor's and master's in music from the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis and a doctorate in music from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Currently, he teaches music theory, ear training, form and composition for the Department of Music at Mississippi State. He is an editorial board member of the “Nineteenth-Century Music Review,” a music journal published by Cambridge University Press and has served for ten years as book reviews editor.

“Drama in the Music of Franz Schubert” is available now in the local authors section of Barnes and Noble on the MSU campus.

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“Drama in the Music of Franz Schubert” is available now in the local authors section of Barnes and Noble on the MSU campus.

Established in 1903, MSU's College of Education is now home to six academic departments, one research unit and numerous service units. For more about the college, visit <http://www.educ.msstate.edu/>.

MSU is Mississippi's leading university, available online at [www.msstate.edu](http://www.msstate.edu).



# DEPARTMENT OF KINESIOLOGY'S **iCanBike Camp** PROMOTES BIKING INDEPENDENCE

**W**e've all heard the phrase *'It's as easy as riding a bike.'* But for one group of people, that phrase doesn't always ring true. Not everything is as easy as riding a bike, and for some, riding a bike isn't all that easy. In fact, within the special needs population, around 80 percent will never learn how to ride a bike. MSU Department of Kinesiology hopes to make learning to ride a bike more accessible and fun as it hosts the iCan Bike camp each summer.

Going on its fourth year at MSU, the camp is offered in cooperation with iCan Shine, Inc. The non-profit charity travels the country teaching physical activity skills to children with special needs. The iCan Bike camp is just one of three camps that are offered by the charity and the only one offered at Mississippi State. Through the use of adapted bicycles

and specialized training, the camp teaches special needs children how to ride a two-wheel bike. Dr. Gregg Twietmeyer, camp director, established and ran the camp for five years at Marshall University before coming to Mississippi State in 2015 and establishing the university's own camp in 2016. Dr. Twietmeyer explained that learning to ride a bike is one of the first significant steps towards independence and adulthood. For those who do not or cannot learn to ride a bike, there's a pretty big deficit.

"There's the independence factor, but I also think just the joy of riding. We take that for granted, not everyone has that joy of the wind in their hair and riding down a hill and learning to ride without your hands. Not that we teach that in the camp, but I think we discount the play factor and the fun factor too much," Twietmeyer explained. "There are also health





benefits; there's peer inclusion, socialization. And so for self-confidence, there's a lot of benefits."

The riders begin on adapted bikes with tapered rollers replacing the wheels. Once the riders have completed six stages of rollers, they moved on to a tandem bike. Then from there onto a regular bicycle that has a pole extending up for spotters to grab if the rider panics and forgets how to brake.

The camp is so successful that approximately 80% of the people who participate in the program learn to ride a conventional two-wheel bike independently by the end of the five-day program. The remaining 20% of campers make tremendous progress towards riding independently.

Because of Mississippi's warmer weather, Dr. Twietmeyer would like to take the camp from summer only to offering the camp throughout the year by having a fleet of specialized bikes

on campus permanently. That way, volunteers could travel around the state to different college campuses and school districts to offer these camps throughout the academic year. He explains that one of the most significant advantages of having year-round camps is the cost of each camp would go down significantly.

To qualify for the camp, participants must be able and willing to wear a bike helmet and able to walk without an assistive device. Since the interventions they use don't always work with younger children, campers must also be at least eight years old. Generally, the camp is geared towards people with down syndrome or autism, but Dr. Twietmeyer encourages anyone with a disability, intellectual or physical that inhibits learning to ride to apply.

For more information about MSU's iCan Bike program or to volunteer with the program visit [www.bulldogbike.msstate.edu](http://www.bulldogbike.msstate.edu). ●

The third time  
isn't always  
the charm.  
Sometimes  
it only  
takes two.



For music education major Leah Boyd she only had to compete twice in the Miss MSU pageant to be crowned the winner on September 27 in Bettersworth Auditorium in Lee Hall on the MSU campus. She explained that while this is her second time competing in Miss MSU, it is only her fourth pageant overall. Boyd didn't start competing until 2018, unusual in a world

where many women begin competing at a young age. She earned third runner up at Miss MSU last year, but won the title of Miss Greenville and placed in the top ten at Miss Mississippi in June of 2019.

"I've always grown up seeing the Miss Alabamas and the Miss Mississippis and even the Miss MSUs, and I never thought it would be me. I didn't understand that it wasn't





just about what you look like, but it's also about your heart for service and community outreach and academic success," Leah said. "Once I really understood that, I was like 'I can do that.' So I gave it a shot and have been really excited to find success in it."

Boyd explains that the Miss MSU pageant is unique from other pageants in the local system for Miss Mississippi because winners aren't just representing themselves, but their university. Like all local system competitions, a lot is going on that audiences don't see. The Miss MSU pageant contains a private interview portion that lasts 10 minutes with the judges where contestants need to have a resume and an essay prepared. Then during the competition night, there's an evening gown, a social impact statement section, an onstage interview question and a talent. Boyd, who won the interview award, says that even before all that, the women competing had a week-long rehearsal tie where they learn an opening number.

While studying both voice and piano, the Madison, Alabama native chose to showcase her skills at the piano as her talent for the competition choosing to play Chopin's "Fantasy Impromptu." The selection was a natural choice for her since she'd performed it for her senior piano recital this past year. Boyd will also start her teacher internship during the 2020 spring semester stating that she couldn't be more excited to start student teaching. After spending seven semesters at Mississippi State and learning so much about teaching, music and education, she's excited to get into the classroom and start working with kids finally.

Her student teaching even falls in line with her competition platform. As a music education major and as Miss MSU, Boyd is an advocate for music education. She explains that the data has shown that music and music education is crucial to a child's development and that students who are involved in music education have higher test scores and higher graduation rates.

"I see it every single day how music education allows all students to participate and doesn't leave anyone behind. Music is for everyone. It's for students who have disabilities, students who might otherwise be unreachable, students who need to express themselves, students who are artsy or who are into STEM," she said. "It doesn't matter your background, your race, your ethnicity, your financial status. It doesn't matter. With music education, there is room for everyone."

Boyd credits her high school choir teacher for developing her interest in music, stating that she never really felt like she fit with any one particular group in high school, but knew she always had a place in the choir room. He was the type of choir teacher that she aspires to be.

"I think, in order to get students to buy in you can't just start teaching content. I think first and foremost, students have to know that you care about them and that you respect them so that they trust you," Boyd said. "And then once you have established that trust, they'll allow you to take them to where their fullest potential is. That's the kind of teacher that I've learned how to be here at Mississippi State."

Of her time at Mississippi State, Boyd expressed gratitude for the opportunities that she's had on campus — saying that she's grown in so many ways because of those opportunities. She tells how grateful she is that as Miss MSU, she can reach and interact with students she might not have had the chance to meet as a music education major. Like everyone else, Boyd will have to wait until June 2020 to see if she can achieve the honor of Miss Mississippi, but she also explains that she's already proud of herself for coming so far.

"If I take home the crown, that'd be a big honor, but at the end of the day, I'm just proud to be Miss MSU because Mississippi State is my home." ●



## T.K. MARTIN CENTER FOR TECHNOLOGY AND DISABILITY CONTINUES TO SERVE CHILDREN IN THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE

Days at Project IMPACT begin just like any other preschool. Children are being dropped off in the early morning with teachers greeting each of the smiling faces by name saying how happy they are to see them. Like any other preschool, play and song start almost immediately and don't stop until the very last child leaves at the end of the day. Project IMPACT at the T.K. Martin Center on the Mississippi State University is just like any other preschool. The only significant difference is that all of the students enrolled in Project IMPACT have developmental disabilities ranging from autism to Down syndrome to severe motor impairment.





Preschools similar to Project IMPACT are far and few between in the state, and most of the children attending T.K. Martin don't have anywhere else to go to receive that specialized education piece. At Project IMPACT, no matter what their physical limitations might look like, they are still able to get their early academics, but in a social setting. They will get access, socialization, beginning life skills and adaptive skills all built into their curriculum. Initially a small program, Project IMPACT has grown to serve more than 40 children and their families from 10 different school districts each year. Though other preschools are larger, the smaller size lends itself well to giving each of their students one on one attention.

"Our mission is that academics are a part of everything. And with that, we consider what adaptive skills each student needs. Our real focus is to get the students school-ready and to catch the students up because any delay means they've fallen behind in their physical development, cognitive, social, emotional or adaptive," center director Dr. Kasee Stratton-Gadke explained. "So if we can get them caught up in those five areas, that's our ultimate goal. The goal of special education programs is not only to give the student an equal playing field but to give them a boost."

Children in Project IMPACT only attend half-day since most students go to an outpatient center for occupational and physical therapy or even equine therapy at the end of the day.

"They've just got so much more to do, or they're just going back to their daycare, so they get some typical peer interaction. So they're very busy. But they work so hard

everywhere that they go. And that's one thing that keeps us going as teachers and as assistants. We expect them to come in and work super, super hard every day, even with the needs that they have. And so how can we not expect ourselves to give them our all as well?" teacher Traci Campbell said.

Everything teachers Christan Toney, Traci Campbell and Madalyn Beard do in their classrooms throughout the day is a way to help their students achieve their IEP goals. For each class, they take those five developmental areas and center the class's activities around them.

"If a child is struggling with handwriting, then for this child, his or her art would be working on how they're holding the marker or crayon while they color. That way, one activity can be centered around different goals for different children, it's just the way you present it," Toney explained.

Even snack time is an activity. For many of the children at T.K. Martin, feeding themselves with spoons and forks or drinking out of an open cup is a goal. Toney jokes that she and her fellow teachers have to be the bad guys to help students navigate a lot of food exploration, especially with different textures like applesauce and fruit cups.

"Our classrooms are set up very much like a regular preschool," Campbell explains. "So we have circle time, we have art and music, time to go to centers, motor play and snack time."

In addition to classroom instruction time, many students get pulled out of the classroom for occupational, physical and speech therapies.

STORY CONTINUED >



Third-year teacher Madalyn Beard's morning class is currently preparing for life outside of Project IMPACT. All eight of them are on track to go into kindergarten next school year. Like almost every preschooler across the country, they are working on pre-academic skills that will get them ready for kindergarten next year. Her afternoon class of three-year-olds isn't too far behind, learning how to function in a classroom, how to sit and participate in group time activities, waiting their turn and using their expressive language skills to answer questions. All skills that are key to be successful in any kindergarten classroom.

"Seeing the progress of my students in my first two years and having a measurable success of my students not just on paper, but being able to observe it, and share that with the parents and for them to share it with their peers. It's very reassuring for me that I'm doing it to the best of my ability," Beard explained. "For them to be able to achieve skills that come inherently their typically developing peers, it's just really rewarding. It makes the challenging parts of the job all the more special."

Stratton-Gadke explains the goal for the teachers at the preschool is to get students as ready as possible for kindergarten, whether it's a mainstream classroom, self-contained classroom or a mixture of the two.

"Our teachers do a great job of working with the school districts to make sure they know where this child's at, what they think would be the best setting and what their goals should be. They put a lot of time and energy into that because that becomes those are their babies. They want to make sure that they're taken very good care of with that transition."

For more information on how to donate to the many T.K. Martin Center programs or learn more about the center, please contact: Kasee Stratton-Gadke, Director of the T.K. Martin Center at [kstratton@tkmartin.msstate.edu](mailto:kstratton@tkmartin.msstate.edu) or Trish Cunetto, Director of Development for the College of Education at [tcunetto@foundation.msstate.edu](mailto:tcunetto@foundation.msstate.edu). ●



# MSU AWARDED \$27.9 MILLION FEDERAL GRANT TO SUPPORT COLLEGE ACCESS AND READINESS



Mississippi State University has been awarded a seven-year, \$27.9 million grant to prepare low-income students to enter and succeed in postsecondary education.

The funding is through the U.S. Department of Education's Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) grant program. The grant will support students in the Greenville, McComb and Meridian public school districts and provide benefits for high school students aspiring to attend college across Mississippi.

"Education will play a vital role in preparing Mississippi to be competitive for generations to come, which makes it critical that we do everything we can to expand access to all educational opportunities," MSU President Mark E. Keenum said. "I am proud of MSU's leadership in GEAR UP Mississippi and I would like to thank our congressional delegation for supporting our funding request. I look forward to seeing all the positive ways this initiative will impact our state."

MSU's grant application was supported by U.S. Senators Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-Miss.) and Roger Wicker (R-Miss.).

"Mississippi State has established a well-respected program to prepare students, who might not otherwise have the necessary support, for college studies. This seven-year grant gives the university and its partners the capacity to reach more youth across Mississippi, which will benefit our state in the long run," said Hyde-Smith, who serves on the appropriations subcommittee that funds the GEAR UP program.

"The GEAR UP program can make a difference in the lives of students, providing them with the preparation and support they need to succeed in college," Wicker said. "This new grant will enable

Mississippi State University and its partner organizations to provide these invaluable services to thousands of students across our state for years to come."

The principal investigator for the grant is Carol Cutler White, assistant professor in the MSU College of Education's Department of Educational Leadership. MSU's Research and Curriculum Unit is the lead center for the grant, overseeing

the implementation and staffing for all professional learning services. Partners for the GEAR UP Mississippi program include the Mississippi Department of Education, Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, the Woodward Hines Education Foundation and ACT, Inc.

"Mississippi State is proud to lead the federally funded GEAR UP initiative," White said. "In collaboration with our named school district and statewide partners, we are committed to creating evidence of effective practice in support of Mississippi students who aspire to attend college."

Betsey Smith, RCU director and co-principal investigator for the grant, said GEAR UP will expand educational opportunities for students in Mississippi.

"Thanks to the great leadership provided by MSU and our congressional delegates, the RCU is excited to have the opportunity to be a leader in bringing together diverse perspectives to improve educational outcomes of students across our state," Smith said.

The GEAR UP program will identify a cohort of students in the partner school districts and work with them, beginning at the middle school level, to increase academic performance, increase high school graduation rates, increase enrollment in postsecondary education and increase their knowledge of postsecondary education options, preparation and financing. The Research and Curriculum Unit will support the school districts as they aim to strengthen academic outcomes and provide opportunities for career exploration.

In addition to students in the partner school districts, Mississippians throughout the state will benefit from GEAR UP initiatives. Project partners will develop a virtual reality tour app that includes all of Mississippi's public university and community colleges, as well as eight key industries. Additionally, a chatbot will be developed that can provide 24/7 responses to common state and federal financial aid questions. The Woodward Hines Education Foundation will provide financial aid application support for students and families and manage statewide ACT test prep services. RCU will work with the Mississippi Department of Education to provide targeted teacher training and STEM outreach. ●

# MSU Researchers Address Secondary-Level STEM Learning **WITH \$1.6 MILLION NSF GRANT PROJECT**



Yan Sun

Mississippi State faculty members in the university's colleges of Education, Arts and Sciences, and Bagley College of Engineering are receiving a \$1.6 million National Science Foundation grant to develop teaching materials from weather data to help secondary students learn data analysis and interpretation.

Dubbed "3D Weather," the project will include professional development and instructional activities that will directly involve and benefit 44 secondary science teachers and approximately 2,000 middle and high school students in the state.

"Utilizing open-source, 3D visualization tools, the project will turn publicly available weather data into exciting secondary science learning experiences to improve both teachers' and students' comfort and competency in understanding data," said Yan Sun, principal investigator and assistant professor in MSU's Department of Instructional Systems and Workforce Development.

Formally titled "Integrating Computational Science Practice, Weather Data Analysis, and 3D Visualization in the Secondary Earth and Environmental Science Curriculum," the STEM+C educational project also is led by Jamie Dyer, professor of geosciences; Jean Mohammadi-Aragh, assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering; and Jonathan Harris, outreach coordinator at MSU's Northern Gulf Institute, with all three serving as co-principal investigators for the project that runs January 2020 through December 2022.

A post-doctoral researcher and four MSU graduate research assistants also will receive support and mentoring through the project.

The interdisciplinary project team will focus on developing and validating teaching and learning materials based on 3D weather visualization to foster atmospheric and computational science literacy. Sun said while large atmospheric datasets are publicly available and offer educational possibilities, they are difficult for secondary science teachers and students to access, make sense of, and use in meaningful ways.

Real world scientific inquiry requires scientists to use big data and computational models to develop knowledge about the structure and function of complex systems, and to make predictions about changes in these systems. Sun explained that the science teaching and learning materials developed also will help address one of the most daunting challenges posed by the Next Generation Science Standards—how to integrate computational thinking and practices into the teaching and learning of science in authentic, innovative and effective ways.

The three-year grant will allow the team to generate research-based findings regarding the effects of using weather data as the instructional medium to fuse computational thinking and practices into secondary science education. Team members agreed the research has tremendous potential in advancing scientific literacy and interest both locally and nationally. ●





## MSU COLLEGE OF EDUCATION HONORS STUDENT RESEARCH AT ANNUAL FORUM

Faculty-guided student research was in the spotlight when Mississippi State's College of Education held its 12th annual research forum near the conclusion of the spring semester.

More than 200 participants attended the event, with more than 30 undergraduate and graduate students participating in the poster session. The forum focused on the theme, "Virtual Reality: Opportunities for Educational Research," and featured keynote speaker Vince Jordan, CEO and Founder of Lobaki, Inc., a virtual reality application company.

Three undergraduate and three graduate students who conducted faculty-guided research projects throughout the 2018-2019 academic year were recognized.

Undergraduate award recipients include:

**FIRST**—Hannah N. Hardwick, a senior kinesiology major from Burnsville, "The Effects of Unified Soccer Program on Motor Performance and Sport Skill in Young Adults," under the guidance of Chih Chia Chen, assistant professor of kinesiology.

**SECOND**—Meredith R. Bass, a senior kinesiology major from Columbia, "Ankle Kinematics in Individuals with Chronic Ankle Instability during Unexpected and Expected Drop Landings," under the guidance of Adam

Knight, associate professor of kinesiology.

**THIRD**—Angela M. Provenzano, a senior educational psychology major from Milford, Connecticut, "The Influence of Social Support on Custodial Grandparents' Health Outcomes: The Effectiveness of Support Groups," under the guidance of Kasia Gallo, instructor of counseling, educational psychology and foundations.

Graduate award recipients include:

**FIRST**—Lauren M. Meyers, an educational psychology doctoral student and 2016 MSU graduate from Lauderdale, "Using Flashcards to Improve Math Accuracy with a Child with Autism Spectrum Disorder," under the guidance of Carlen Henington, professor of counseling, educational psychology and foundations, and Daniel Gadke, associate professor and interim head of counseling, educational psychology and foundations.

**SECOND**—Keely M. McCulla, an educational psychology doctoral student and 2017 MSU graduate from Nashville, Tennessee, "Understanding Deficits in Early Reading Skills and the Value of a Tailored Intervention," under the guidance of Henington.

**THIRD**—Poram Choi, a kinesiology doctoral student from South Korea, "Risk Factors of Falls in Adults with Intellectual Disabilities," under the guidance of Stamatis Agiovlasitis, associate professor of kinesiology. ●

Dr. Teresa Jayroe,  
Associate Dean,  
Recognized the  
research committee  
for their hard work  
preparing for the  
forum. The research  
committee includes:

Dr. Teresa Jayroe, Chair, Associate Dean  
of Research

Dr. Mitzy Johnson, Assistant Dean

Dr. JoAnne Beriswell, Instructional Systems  
& Workforce Development

Dr. Jennifer Cmar, National Research &  
Training Center on Blindness & Low Vision  
(NRTC)

Ms. Theresa Hall-Brown, America Reads  
Mississippi

Dr. Nicole Miller, Curriculum, Instruction  
and Special Education

Ms. Emily Noble, Mississippi Writing  
Thinking Institute

Dr. Leonard Taylor, Educational Leadership

Dr. Rebecca Robichaux-Davis, Curriculum,  
Instruction and Special Education

Dr. Ryan Ross, Music

Dr. John Eric Smith, Kinesiology

Dr. Kasee Stratton-Gadke, Counseling,  
Educational Psychology & Foundations

Dr. Jeff Leffler

Dr. Glenn McGee, Director of the Center  
for Educational Partnerships

Ms. Michelle Stubbs, World Class  
Teaching Program



## MSU DOCTORAL STUDENT SELECTED AS **JACKSON HEART STUDY SCHOLAR**

**R**obert Booker, a doctoral student in kinesiology at Mississippi State University, has been selected as a member of the inaugural cohort of the Robert Smith, M.D. Graduate Scholars Program as part of the Jackson Heart Study's new Graduate Training and Education Center (UMMC GTEC) at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson.

Booker, formerly of Ozark, Missouri, will join seven other graduate students to embark on the research opportunity beginning with a summer institute scheduled for June 24-28.

Part of the broader National Institutes of Health-funded Jackson Heart Study, the largest community-based study of cardiovascular disease risk factors in African-Americans, UMMC-GTEC is a two-year research training program. Designed for doctoral and health professional students who are considering careers in cardiovascular health sciences, the program allows students to participate in the research process – from idea generation to publication – alongside mentors from leading research institutions.

Dr. Bettina Beech, founding dean and professor of population health science at the John D. Bower School of Population Health is the principal investigator and co-director of UMMC-GTEC.

“Our scholars are going to be able to work with and be mentored by some of the top biomedical researchers in the nation who will be committing time and energy over the next two years to introduce them to the wonderful world of research,” Beech said. “They will learn more about health disparities research, not just that the fact that health disparities exist.”

Applicants for the program must be doctoral and health professional students at Jackson State University, Mississippi State University, University of Mississippi, University of Mississippi Medical Center or University of Southern Mississippi. They must be an individual from a group identified by the National Institutes of Health as underrepresented in the biomedical, clinical, behavioral and social sciences. They must also be a United States citizen or permanent resident.

The two-year program will provide an intense research and training experience. Scholars commit to attending a five-day summer training institute both summers, one mid-year meeting, quarterly webinars, and traveling to a Jackson Heart Study Vanguard Center at Johns Hopkins University. One of the benefits is that scholars will have regular interaction with senior researchers and mentors throughout the program. Mentors will help the scholars learn how to write peer-reviewed manuscripts, conduct analyses and make scientific presentations. ●





## MSU COLLEGE OF EDUCATION OPENS VIRTUAL REALITY ACADEMY AND LAB

**M**ississippi State's College of Education has opened a new Virtual Reality Academy and Lab, which has state-of-the-art technology beneficial to all university students.

MSU leaders officially opened the lab with a ribbon cutting ceremony Thursday [Nov. 14]. Located in the Industrial Education Building on Herbert Street, the lab provides 20 virtual reality stations for use by both students and faculty, as well as for professional development training.

"Technological advancements are constantly impacting our daily lives and also affecting the various fields where we place our students," said Richard Blackburn, College of Education dean. "The establishment of this Virtual Reality Academy and Lab is one way our college is preparing and training professionals in the use of cutting-edge technology. We owe this to our students and the constituents who employ them."

MSU Provost and Executive Vice President David Shaw said the project is a good example of the many ways MSU gives students the opportunity to learn from and use the most current technologies.

"I think the best is yet to come as we watch what's happening in not only this technology, but a lot of other computer-aided teaching technology efforts," Shaw said.

Trey Martindale, Instructional Systems and Workforce Development department head, explained that the lab will help teachers learn to use VR experiences to excite children about learning.

"The limitations of using VR and education are really only limited by your imagination. This facility is going to be a place for teacher training, camps for kids and for building VR environments. This includes math, English, history and science applications," Martindale said.

Daniel Gadke, head of the Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology and Foundations, said in addition to professional development for teachers, the lab creates direct training opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students in many different fields.

"This lab opens up a whole world of research opportunities, whether that's instruction, classroom management, industry, psychology or mental health," Gadke said. ●



## *Dak Prescott's Faith, Fight, Finish Foundation* **RAISES \$20,000 FOR MSU'S T.K. MARTIN CENTER**

Mississippi State alumnus and Dallas Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott's Faith, Fight, Finish Foundation has raised \$20,000 that will support life-changing work at the university's T.K. Martin Center for Technology and Disability.

Kendrell Daniels, a 19-year-old Kemper County resident who paints Cowboys-themed art inspired by Prescott, created a painting that was recently featured in an auction at the foundation's first official fundraiser in Dallas, Texas.

Gene Jones, wife of Cowboys owner and fellow avid art collector Jerry Jones, purchased Daniels' painting for \$20,000. Proceeds will benefit the T.K. Martin Center's efforts to provide comprehensive assistive technology, art, early intervention and dyslexia services to individuals of all ages with disabilities.

Daniels, who was born without arms and paints with his feet, has been part of the T.K. Martin Center's Express Yourself program for about three years, primarily working with now-retired research associate Judy Duncan. Using Artistic Realization Technologies (A.R.T.), the "Experiencing Painting as Recreation and Express the Spirit within Yourself" program provides a means for Daniels and other Mississippians with the most severe disabilities to feel the power of self-expression through art.

As explained in ESPN's Sports Emmy Award-nominated video "Artist born without arms provides inspiration for Prescott," Daniels and Prescott's friendship inspires them to be the best they can be in their parallel commitment to "Fight, Faith, Finish," a motto Daniels illustrates in one of his paintings for Prescott.

The MSU Foundation offers alumni and friends multiple ways to support the T.K. Martin Center for Technology and Disability, which is part of MSU's College of Education. ●





*Dear College of Education Alumni and Friends,*

It is hard to believe another year has come and gone.

The College of Education has had a very busy and exciting year. Planning is underway for a new, much needed music building with groundbreaking to be held in the spring of 2020. This new building will make a huge impact on both students and faculty in the department.

The initiative to become an All Steinway Music School is still going strong, and we were able to purchase a new concert grand piano this past June thanks to the generosity of one of our donors.

A new kinesiology building is also in the planning stages, and groundbreaking will take place sometime late 2020 or early 2021. Kinesiology continues to be the largest department on campus and will greatly benefit from new facilities. Fall 2019 brought 31 MSU students who were recipients of the Mississippi Excellence in Teaching Scholarship, one of the state's most prestigious teacher education programs. The Starkville Oktibbeha County Consolidated School District Partnership School at Mississippi State is slated to open in Fall 2020. Classroom arrangements will allow MSU education students to observe teaching techniques without interrupting instruction, and the school's design features spaces for rotating displays from MSU museums and galleries. Mississippi State's College of Education has opened a new Virtual Reality Academy and Lab, which has state-of-the-art technology beneficial to all university students.

Located in the Industrial Education Building on Herbert Street, the lab provides 20 virtual reality stations for use by both students and faculty, as well as for professional development training. Dr. Kasee Stratton Gadke was named as the new director of the TK Martin Center for Technology and Disability. The center continues to provide assistance to a wide-range of clients and has plans to increase and expand its services in the coming year. If you have not visited the center, I encourage you to drop by when you are on campus.

We thank you for your continued support of the college and want you to know that your gifts to the college truly make a difference. There are many ways to give some of which include scholarships, faculty support, and naming opportunities. These gifts can be made as outright gifts, pledges or planned gifts through your estate. If you would like additional information about giving opportunities please contact me at 662-325-6762 or [tcunetto@foundation.msstate.edu](mailto:tcunetto@foundation.msstate.edu)

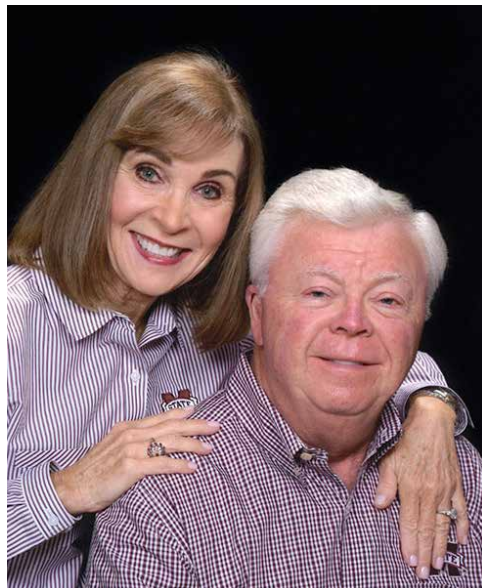
We would love to visit with you any time you are on campus. Please feel free to stop by the Deans Office, 309 Allen Hall for a visit.

Best Regards,  
Trish Cunetto  
Director of Development

Alinder, James B.	AmFed Companies LLC	Bowen, Ernest Lake	Education	Drake, Suanne Johnson
Burdine, Nancy	American Endowment Foundation	Brackstone, Sam	Charlton, Anna Martin	Dueitt, Courtney Kimbrough
Cunetto, Ida Loving	Andrews, Lester	Braden, Frederick William	Choate, Terry E.	Dumke, Rachel
Freeman, Harry Mason	Anthony, Tommy Van	Bradley Marketing, LLC	Christman, James D.	Dungee, Darlene W.
Greer, Pat	Arkansas Community Foundation	Brannan, Hines	Cirlot-New, Janie J.	Dunn, Durward B.
Hampton, Pastella T.	Armistead, Jerry	Breazeale, Linda Moore	Coble, Keith H	Dunn, Paul Richards
Hawkins, Elizabeth J.	Artmann, Mary Ann	Briggs, Billy Ray	Cochran, Robert Bennett	Eades, Walter Joe
Howard, Esther M.	Atmos Energy	Brooks Properties LLC	Cohen, John Aaron	Earthmark LLC
Markham, James B.	Avis, Rebecca N.	Brooks, Tommy	Cohen, Stephen Prinz	Elam, Nelle Delouach
Terrell, Lester R.	Axton, Sally	Brown, Alan B	Cole, Elizabeth Dianne	Estate of Robert Erk
Wells, Susan Wooten	Bailey, Joann Parkman	Brown, Cynthia	Concannon, Bettie Freeman	Evans, Wylie Franklin
West, Loretta D.	Baker, John Hedley	Brown, Erik R	Connelly, David B.	Fairchild, Mary Ellen B.
Acosta, Tony	Baker, William Bertram	Brown, Franklin Delano	Connor, Rosemary D	Faith Fight Finish Foundation by Dak Prescott
Archer, Doris Pierce	Barnes, John Douat	Brown, Marianna	Conwill, Melissa Lee	Falls, David B.
Atkinson, Roxene H.	Barnes, Terri T.	Brown, Vickie Ann	Cook, Carley Nichole	Fanning-Otis, Sharon C.
Burnham, Debbie Carol	Barnett, Hermanell H.	Brownlee, Cedric Earl	Cooper, Patrick Hall	Ferguson, Helen A.
Downey, Catherine Valee	Barrett, Linda Holliday	Brunet, Katherine	Correro, John Vincent	Ferguson, Whitney W.
Dressel, Suzanne	Beach, Paul	Bryant, W. Daniel	Cotton, Rhonda	Fidelity Charitable
Dyess, Samuel C.	Beaufait, Fred W.	Buckhalter, Arnetta Darcell	Cogle Holdings Inc.	Fielding, Kennie E.
Edwards, Marylee O'Neal	Beck, Ronald Edward	Building Technology Services, LLC	Cox, Timothy Whitten	Financial Concepts
Graves, Randy E.	Bell, Don Smith	Bulldog BWW, LLC	Crigler, Gail Terrell	Finch, Tanya Kay
Martin, Linda P	Bell, Loren Sudduth	Burney, Doyce R.	Cross, Anne G.	Fisher, Elizabeth Harris
McReynolds, Nell O.	Bell, Susan Downey	Burrows, Thomas F	Cruse, Don Hugo	Flanagan, Charlotte Brooks
Mullen, Thomas W.	Benefield, Daniel	Butler, Johnnie Russell	Cunetto, Patricia	Fogg Management LLC
Newman, Florence Hearn	Bentink-Smith, Roger Bentinck	Butler, Leigh Kathryn	Cunningham, Phillip Tucker	Foster, Sara Mason
Perkins, Bena	Benton Education Services, LLC	Butler, Wendell C.	Curtis, Cathy Anne	Frances R. McCarty Revoc Trust
Smith, David B.	Benton, Kim Suzette	Butts, Megan A.	D'Arcy, John F.	Franklin, Donna B.
Tabereaux, Charlotte B	Beriswill, Joanne Elizabeth	Cadence Bank	Dabbs, Danny N.	Franklin, Mark Thomas
Walden, Libby	Billingsley, Dorothy Sharon	Camp, Robert Dan	Daniel, William Lee	Frascogna, Louis Greg
Welch, Patricia K.	Blake, Desiree	Canada, George B.	Davenport, Gladys E.	Freeman, Mike
Abate of MS, Inc. - Southwest Chapter	Blankenship, Thomas Larry	Cannon Charitable Foundation Inc.	DeBerry, Linda Crosby	Frontstream
Abert Lodge #89	Bloodworth, Morris D.	Carr, Kathleen A.	Delta Lambda of Delta Gamma	Frye, Charles Ray
Adams, Douglas L.	Boles, Ellen Anne	Carr-Tabb, Eileen Yvette	Dennis, E. J.	Fuller, Bobby Dewayne
Adams, John William	Bonds, Gary Coffey	Carter, Kimberly	Dettwiller, Brandon William	Funderburk, Brent
Aldridge, James A.	Boozler, Drayton D.	Carter, Kimberly	Devine, Karen D.	Gaude, Danielle W
Alexander, James	Borowski, Oded	Carter, Lorenzo	Dickson, Davis Walter	Gertrude C. Ford Foundation
Alford, Hayden T.	Bost, Carolyn W.	Cater Group LLC	Dimino, Vicki Elizabeth	Gibson, Sheila Dianne
Alpha Delta Pi Epsilon ETA Chapter	Boutwell, Steve Ray	Center for Innovation in	Doodlebugs- A Southern Style	Gideon, Louis B.
			Downey, Janet Elizabeth	Ginn, Jerry

Givens, Roger A.	Jolly, Natalie R	Metcalf Commercial Properties, Inc.	Riser, Ellis Hillman	The John and Katherine Duda Foundation, Inc.
Glover, Bob	Jones, Darrell Duane	Miao, Joseph	Roach, Brett R	The Kroger Company
Goodman, Ellen Ellen	Jones, Douglas	Michael A. Berry MD PLLC	Roberts, Schansa	The Riley Foundation
Grafton, Stephen C.	Jones, Karen Keifer	Middlebrooks, Joseph A.	Robertson, James C.	The Robbi Davis Agency, Inc.
Grant, Beverly C.	Jurney, Louis Marion	Mike McKennon Insurance Agency, Inc.	Robinson, Janet Mann	The Schwab Charitable Fund
Graves, James E.	Karatassos, Straton E.	Miller, John F.	Robinson, Lori Beth	Theta Chi Chapter of Kappa Delta Pi
Gray, Dorothy A.	Kauchak, Lara Ivey	Mills, Julianna G.	Roby, Ginger	Thompson, David
Green, Bonnard C.	Kennard, Henri Sue	Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities	Rogers, William C.	Thompson, Morris K.
Green, James Thomas	Kids Therapy Spot, LLC	Mitchell Eye Care, PLLC	Rowland, Charles Ray	Thrash, Jeanette B.
Greer, Alma Shaw	Killcreas, Wallace E.	Mock, Frederick C.	Roy, James Ronald	Tiffin, David S.
Greer, Kevin	Kinard, Jerry Lamar	Montgomery, Virginia Hart	Ruby, Roy H.	Tilley, Nancy Goodson
Greer, Richard	Knights of Columbus	Moody, Melanie Lynne	Rush, John Phillip	Tokoly, Linda Grace
Gregory, Jennifer Glaze	Knudsen, Martha	Moore, James Elton	Rust, Richard Marshall	Tokros
Grogan, Jack Lawrence	Kowalkoski, Ann A.	Moore, Leland	Rutherford, Deborah	Tomlinson, Robert T.
Gun Dog Supply LLC	Kroot, Evan	Moore, Margaret J.	Rutherford, Katrice Dian	Toyota Motor Sales, USA
Hall, Nelisa Joy Craig	L. A. Green LLC	Moore, Nicole	Rutherford, Kelly	Trotter, James Donald
Hand, Mary Evelyn	Ladner, Lynn Tincher	Moore, Roger Lee	Rutland, Willard Darrell	Trulove, Joe
Hannon, Jeffrey Keith	Land, Guy Paul	Morgan, Anthony Dewayne	Sabourin, Brian M	Turner, Bill D.
Hardin, Mallory Elizabeth	Landers, Elizabeth	Morgan, Edna Ruth	Sanders, Mike W.	Turner, Steve Cornell
Hardin, Orly B.	Larsen, Percy J.	Moritz, Joe S.	Sawtelle, Richard G.	Twietmeyer, Greggory John
Harlan, Donald	Lawrence, Tim	Mosby, Michael	Scheaffer, David	Twietmeyer, Patricia S.
Harless, Brian Jerome	Lee, Sidney Bruce	Ms Band of Choctaw Indians	Scrivner, Teresa Michelle Lily	Ueltschey, Martha L.
Harrison Law Office, P.L.L.C.	Leggett, Sharon Parkman	Murdoch, Alice S.	Seaman, Joseph Carryl	Van Landingham, David A.
Harrison, Bradford Lee	Lenker, Kevin Patrick	Myers, Linda	Segalini, Tajuana Sue	Van Wyck, Kimmie Lynn
Harrison, Gladys Inez	Lewis, Thomas P.	Nelson, Michael K.	Shackelford, Stephen L.	Vance, Stuart P.
Hart, Erika	Liddell, Peggine Joice	Nester, James Michael	Shannon, Paul H.	W. A. Taylor Foundation
Hartness, Phil	Lightsey, Malcolm B.	Neubert, Hunter Stevens	Shappley, Jessica Rian	Wade, Floyd D
Hasson, John Bailey	Lightsey, Michael L.	Nicholson, Janice I.	Sharek, Patricia	Wagner, Michael Lennon
Hawk, Jimmy E.	Livingston Bryant Properties, LLC	Nobles & Harleson Denistry Partnership	Sheffield, William H.	Waldrop, Lake W.
Hawthorne, Linda S.	Lockhart, Nancy Evans	Novak, Diane	Shook, Marcus Matthews	Walters, Kevin Leigh
Haynie, Mary F.	Loden, Michael W	Nowell, Brenda Smith	Showah, Joe	Waltman, Cynthia
Hearn, Barbara	Long, Lisa Lyn	Oktibbeha County Co-op	Simmons, Don B.	Walton Insurance Agency, Inc.
Hemphill, James V.	Love, Malcolm Allyn	Olsen, Robert D.	Simms, Rhonda	Ward, Deborah Hughes
Hendricks, John M.	Loviza, Joseph L.	One Source Enterprises, Inc.	Skrmetti, John Patrick	Washington, Billy Joe
Hendrix, Perry S.	Lucas, Donna	Oswald, Amy Daniel	Slaughter, Linda Kyle	Waters, Jerry L.
Henley, Thad	Luke, Kathy Chester	Oswalt, Yun Liu	Slaughter, Peggy Sue	Watkins, Dane M.
Henry, Janice Lenoir	MS Farmhouse Fraternity Assoc.	Outlaw, Markeeta	Smith Animal Hospital LLC	Watson, Olivia Paige
Henry, Thomas Charles	Male, Barry L.	Overman, Flavia Ethridge	Smith, Allan Livingston	Weatherly, Charles E.
Herring, Barry William	Mallory, Lewis F.	Overstreet PTO	Smith, Bobby Joe	Webb, Daniel Warren
Hillman, Mary Beth	Malone, Leamon Elree	Overstreet, Bob	Smith, James Russell	Webb, Judy A.
Hitt, Milford Irving	Marett, Lawrence Kent	PRC-Salttillo	Smith, Linda Karen	Webster, Bruce C.
Hodge, Sandra Gayle	Mark S. Jordan Family Foundation	Page, Lisa Miller	Smith, William	Welch, Lee Erwin
Hodgson, Michelle L.	Marsh, Kelly A.	Parker, Michael	Snellings, Jon C.	Welch, Mark
Holloway, Elton Dewitt	Marszalek, John F.	Patterson Family Foundation	Southern Tradition Tailgating, LLC	Welding Works
Homan, Louis Clay	Martin, Ambro	Patton, E. Kathy W.	Sparrow, Charles A.	Westby, Faith Hopper
Honeycutt, Robert L.	Martin, Gene	Peacock, Lisa Elizabeth	St. Louis, Benson P.	Whatley Evaluation Services, LLC
Hood, Burrell S.	Martin, Randy	Pearson, Allison W.	Staggers, Celsie	White, George Andrew
Hood, Fred B	Martin, Sidney Paul	Peavy, Thomas Ostine	Stallings, Kirk	White, Lisa DeAnne
Hopkins, Janice B	Mary Paige Huxford DMD, PLLC	PediaTrust Columbus, LLC	Starkville Civic League	White, Lora A.
Hopper, George Martin	Massey, Ann Helsin	Peebles, E. David	Starkville Clinic for Women	Whittington, Joel L.
Housley, Warren F.	Mauldin, Joe K.	Peterson, Bruce Werner	Starkville Junior Auxiliary	Williams, Freddie
Howell, David W.	Mayfield, Andrea	Peyton, Lockett Lamar	Starkville PTO	Williams, Joe Louis
Hurley, Paige A	McAlister's Deli	Poche, Ann	Steel Dynamics Foundation, Inc.	Williams, Ouida W.
ICC Student Occupational Therapy Assn	McBride & CO Real Estate LLC	Pope, William J.	Stewart, Stanley W.	Williams, Richard T.
Inmon, Jerry B.	McBride, Michelle L.	Porter, Albert Jack	Stover, Wayne	Williford, Bill
Inmon, Jessica Claire	McCabe, John Patrick	Porterfield, Sheila Yvette	Stowers, Gregory V.	Williford, Mary Margaret
Ivy, Harry G.	McCalip, Gwen S.	Pryor, Paula Parker	Strange Brew Coffeehouse	Willis, Beth O'Neal
Jackson Family Dentistry of Vicksburg PLLC	McCommon, Steven W.	Puckett, Mary Lee	Stringer, J. Ken	Wilson, Valerie Jean
Jackson, Eric	McCormick, Amos J.	Pugh, Ava Fay	Stubblefield, James R.	Wingo, Camille
Jackson, Jennifer Haynes	McCully, Mary Lynn	Putnam, James K.	Sutphin, Cary	Wingo, Dean Kirk
Jackson, Megan	McDivitt, David	Ramsey, Stephanie J.	Swan, Pat Henry	Winn, Dennis F.
Jackson, Melissa Ann	McDougal, Yancy B.	Rawls, Ben Monger	Swann, Tamra Hannon	Womack, Ollie Eugene
Janak, Bonnie Stringfellow	McGee, Glenn M.	Read, Carol Moss	Synergy Enterprises, Inc.	Wong, Betty Jean
Jason A. Coats, DMD PLLC	McGrath, Vincent R.	Reed, Bryant A.	Taylor, Margaret Elaine	Wood, Michael Walton
Jaudon, Joseph Max	McGrew, Wynema	Remy, Keith Harold	Tennessee Renaissance Festival, Inc.	Wright, Julian Herbert
Jeter, Rodney E.	McHalfey, Van E.	Renasant Bank	Thacker, Billy A.	Young Law Group PLLC
Jimmy and Carolyn Dahlem Living Trust	McKnight, Thomas	Reynolds, Jerry L.	Thames, Charles D.	Young, Fred Rickey
Jobe, Max E.	McKnight, William Craig	Rheinfrank, John T.	The Benevity Community Impact Fund	Young, Kathy
Johnson, Brent D.	McMullan, Eileen Ruth	Rhodes Heating & Air Inc.	The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta	Young, Maxwell
Johnson, Marion Leath	McPherson, Jimmy	Richards, John H.	The Fitness Factor	Zeringue, Sallye Parkinson
Johnson-Belser, Rona Nell	McReynolds Orthodontics	Rigby, William H	The George Bishop Family Foundation	
	Mei Li Body and Spa Inc	Ripplemark, Inc.		





# GEORGIA COUPLE'S GIFTS CREATE SCHOLARSHIPS AT MSU

**G**enerous support from Mississippi State alumni couple Fred and MariAnna Brown of Roswell, Georgia honors their commitment to higher education at the largest university in their home state. A recently established deferred gift from the couple will further their support of the land-grant institution, primarily through student scholarships.

The Browns earned degrees from Mississippi State with the assistance of student loans and through their philanthropy hope to help make an education possible for future students. The couple's gift will create three academic-based endowed scholarships and provide support for the university's music department.

The couple's gift establishes the Mary and Wendell Ladner Endowed Scholarship in the College of Education in honor of MariAnna Brown's parents. The Ladners were strong proponents of education who lived in Flora, where they raised their daughter. The scholarship will benefit entering students majoring in teacher education with at least a 3.0 GPA who demonstrate financial need and meet other established criteria.

"Neither of my parents had the opportunity for four-year degrees, and they would be thrilled to know their legacy is helping deserving students receive an education from Mississippi State University," said MariAnna Brown, who earned an MSU education degree in 1968 and taught for nearly a decade in public schools before targeting her career toward teaching English as a second language.

The Browns have emphasized and encouraged the pursuit of higher education and have been fortunate to provide the means for their three children to attend college. Now the couple is placing value on assisting a new generation of students.

"Scholarships truly make a positive impact and give people a better life. A student either can be hindered by his or her personal hardships or use hardships as the motivation to reach for success. We want to encourage future recipients to meet challenges in their lives and succeed along their paths toward future careers with our scholarships as incentives," said MariAnna Brown.

Fred Brown shares the goal of their deferred gift. "Education is important to the quality of life for everyone, and we want students who hold our scholarships to work hard and be rewarded with a clean slate after graduation, free from the financial burdens of education," he said.

Additionally, support from the couple will assist the university's Steinway initiative in the College of Education's Department of Music. Once an All-Steinway status is complete, the university will work to maintain and replace these pianos over time. The Browns will help make that possible through their deferred gift.

Apart from the deferred gift, the Browns currently fund a Loyalty Scholarship in the College of Education and an annual scholarship in the G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery Center for America's Veterans through the MSU Division of Student Affairs. ●

# 2019-2020 AWARDED SCHOLARSHIPS

Claire McNatt  
Hagen Jones  
Abigail Galey  
Emily Nolt  
Landrey Godwin  
Delila Moore  
Anna Maria Henderson  
Jada Harris  
Bristina McElhenney  
Charles Brand  
Lauren Lawing  
Liza McKibben  
Brandon Henry  
Amanda Bush  
Natalie King  
Kristen Nichols  
Chelsey Schuller  
Emily Bruce  
Sadie Studdard  
Alexandra Waterbury  
Taylor Harris  
Kirsten Smith  
Andrea Berryhill  
Chelsea Everett  
Taylor Johnson  
Jadyn Saucier  
Melissa Arnett  
Haley Perry  
Abby Taggart  
Jonathan Harris  
Katherine Mitchell  
Alexa Lewis  
Jadyn Saucier  
Claire McNatt

Kendall Kimberlin  
Caitlin Pittman  
Madeline Leblanc  
Taylor Harris  
Alexis Alexander  
Anna Maria Henderson  
Carley Dye  
Anjolie Kennard  
Andrea Berryhill  
Katie McGraw  
Jaime McDonald  
Lakyn Davis  
Elizabeth Whitten  
Aubree Campbell  
Kailee Martin  
Elizabeth Counts  
Britny Bassett  
Kristin Hicks  
Hillara Summerford  
Elizabeth Williams  
Sydney Ogletree  
Anna Young  
Natalie Duncan  
Makinsie Clark  
Christopher Baker  
Melissa Arnett  
Coleman Patterson  
Jaylah Wright  
Lauren Heep  
Maryana McGee  
Haley Perry  
Alaina O'Bryant  
Madeline Leblanc  
Erin Kaufman

Michele Jones  
Natalie King  
Bailey LaFontaine  
Alexandra Waterbury  
Lyndsey Cowart  
Chelsea Everett  
Melvin Ellis  
Kathryn Watkins  
Emma Wages  
Chelsie Hennen  
Jonathan Weeks  
Macy Chism  
Maggie Miller  
William May  
Bailey LaFontaine  
Makinsie Clark  
Emily Hudgens  
Dunnam Shirley  
Emily Cardosi  
Ruby Beard  
Savanna Clardy  
Sarah Franklin  
Samantha Caldwell  
Mallory Malone  
Hannah McCall  
Katelyn Cooley  
Margaret Gordon  
Cameron Wells  
Alexis Rawson  
Brooke Hodges  
Morgan Sanford  
Cari Sims  
Susan Felder  
Lendon Chandler

Ethan Morris  
Hailey Fookes  
Marly Crawford  
Reilly Mapp  
Madison Boykin  
Skylar Belton  
Logan Pierce  
Kayla Gaskin  
Anna Mueller  
Kayla Gaskin  
Lauren Cole  
Lauren Barr  
Danail Dimitrov  
Patti Berryhill  
Lauren Toombs  
Kelsy Minga  
Anna Broome  
Macy Strawn  
Amanda Wilson  
Allison Galinsky  
Carly Alexander  
Luke Meyer  
Merill Ray  
Merill Ray  
Merill Ray  
Ally Todd  
Jaime McDonald  
Elizabeth Easterling  
Courtney Whitehead  
Alexis Rawson  
Brooklyn Watson  
Austin Gafford  
Delila Moore





## Historic High for MSU Fundraising: **\$113 MILLION FOR FY 2019**

Mississippi State leaders announced in July the single largest giving year in university history, marking the sixth consecutive year of raising in excess of \$100 million.

For the just-ended fiscal year, the 141-year-old land-grant institution attracted \$113.1 million in private gifts and pledges of future support—an increase of \$10.6 million from FY 2018's \$102.5 million. The largest fundraising year previously recorded was in excess of \$109.6 million during FY 2015.

"The generous support of alumni and friends places Mississippi State at the forefront of academic quality, student and faculty successes, and research-driven economic development," said MSU President Mark E. Keenum. "With consistent private support, we're building our expertise and our reputation in critical areas that make a positive difference in our world."

All commitments for FY 2019 are part of the university's ongoing Infinite Impact campaign, which has raised \$965.5

million. Since beginning quietly in mid-2010, the campaign marches toward its \$1 billion goal and a scheduled June 2020 conclusion.

"The signs of progress at Mississippi State are definitely apparent in our Infinite Impact campaign and in our six consecutive years of raising over \$100 million," said John P. Rush, vice president for development and alumni and MSU Foundation CEO. "Our university is experiencing growing numbers of first-time major gifts donors, and we anticipate continued response through the remainder of the campaign."

Another noteworthy FY 2019 accomplishment is growth of the university's annual giving program, which amassed in excess of \$2 million for the first time in school history. The percentage of former students who support Mississippi State surpassed 18 percent, a measure well above the national average and most of the university's peer institutions. Additionally, a strong year in deferred gifts marked an impressive 24 percent increase from FY 2018.

## Striking the right chord: **NEW MUSIC BUILDING ON THE HORIZON**

By Amy Cagle



Music education students and faculty will soon have an opportunity to creatively collaborate in harmony with state-of-the-art equipment in a new environment. Mississippi State's Department of Music in the College of Education is slated to break ground on the southeast side of campus this fall for a one-story structure that will bring much-needed classroom and studio space for teacher and student interaction.

A combination of state bonds and university funds will make possible the 36,935-square-foot facility designed by Allred Architectural Group P.A. of Ocean Springs. Additional support for enhancements will come from gifts by alumni and friends, and a cornerstone commitment for the entire facility can bring with it a special naming opportunity.

Once complete, the facility will house classrooms, faculty and student practice studios, a student lounge, a large lecture hall, the department head's suite, a choir suite, and administrative offices. The new building will also accommodate the department's faculty of 24 full-time and 13 part-time members.

Planned construction on Hardy Road will position the new building adjacent to the existing band and choral rehearsal hall. A courtyard will adjoin the two, while an outdoor plaza will connect the new building and the existing Lance Practice Field, which was made possible through an endowment effort led by James J. Rouse, a 1962 industrial management alumnus and retired vice president of ExxonMobil Co., and his wife, Julia, of Suwanee, Georgia. This configuration between new and existing structures will enable the Department of Music to form an epicenter of musical arts.

"A new music building will serve our college threefold by improving departmental operations, providing instruction and learning facilities for our faculty and students, and increasing productive interaction among those two core groups," said Richard Blackburn, College of Education dean. "Additionally, the building will enhance the arts culture of the Starkville-MSU community."

Developing quality music educators for Mississippi and the Southeast region and providing advanced study of music in the liberal arts tradition are the primary missions of the Department of Music. Accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music, the department currently offers undergraduate degrees in music and music education, with specific concentrations in instrumental music, vocal music, piano and guitar. The department has approximately 120 majors, along with 40 more with music as their minor field of study.

"In the coming years, we will see an enrollment growth of 15 to 20 music majors, giving us 200 at MSU, and the new state-of-the-art facility will go a long way toward attracting those additional numbers," said Barry E. Kopetz, department head. "The facility will aid in our ability to recruit the top music students and top music faculty from across the nation."

Furthermore, the new building will significantly advance the Department of Music in its quest to receive the enviable All-Steinway School designation, as awarded by Steinway & Sons, the internationally renowned manufacturer of pianos.

"It is our collective vision when the new building opens its doors that every studio, practice room and classroom will contain the world's finest piano, the Steinway," Kopetz said. "Because we are striving to become an All-Steinway School, this building must be as acoustically perfect as humanly possible, with acoustical treatment that blocks out external sounds and vibrations."





Kopetz continued, “Through generous gifts, donors can contribute to the quality of the new facility and to the training of the next generation of musicians. These young artists enter the musical world underprepared when forced to learn on subpar instruments, and we can rectify this by providing world-class Steinway pianos in each and every classroom, studio and practice room.”

Rosângela Sebba, a professor in the department, has earned the distinctive Steinway Artist designation, an honor few achieve. Promising students will train with Sebba and other internationally-recognized faculty within the new building.

With more than 100 concerts, recitals and other programs annually, the department regularly contributes to the cultural atmosphere of Starkville and the Golden Triangle. A combined lecture and recital hall within the facility will feature two nine-foot Steinway concert grands. The first was donated by longtime professor Jackie Edwards-Henry, in memory of her late parents and her late husband. A second Steinway concert grand came through the generosity of Kathy Olsen of Nashville, Tennessee, who graduated from MSU in 1973 with a Bachelor of Arts in music and in 1974 with a master’s in music education.

For completion of the Steinway Initiative, between 25-28 additional Steinway “B” and Steinway upright pianos are needed through private gifts. The department hopes the completion of the All-Steinway Initiative will align with the building’s official opening. Any contribution can help fulfill the All-Steinway Initiative, and a special 88 Keys Program enables contributors to participate at any level. Gifts help purchase single or multiple keys on a piano, benches, faculty and practice room upright pianos, and grand pianos. Beyond contributions to purchase new Steinways, the Department of Music seeks funds for an endowment for the future. Earnings

from the endowment will ensure proper maintenance of the Steinways over time.

Alumni and friends can help make the facility a reality. Donors may name select areas such as classrooms, studios, the lecture hall or the choir director suite in honor or in memory of family members, friends or mentors. All commitments are payable over a five-year period. For specifics about contributing or naming the facility, contact Trish Cunetto, the College of Education’s director of development, at 662.325.6762 or [Tcunetto@foundation.msstate.edu](mailto:Tcunetto@foundation.msstate.edu).

#### FEATURED NAMING OPPORTUNITIES:

Lecture Hall .....	\$500,000
Choir Hall .....	\$250,000
Plaza .....	\$250,000
Recording Studio (with control room).....	\$250,000
Department Head Suite (with Steinway piano) .....	\$225,000
Piano Lab.....	\$150,000
Choir Director Suite .....	\$100,000
Computer Lab .....	\$100,000
Small Percussion Room (with storage).....	\$100,000
Chamber Rehearsal Room.....	\$50,000
Student Lounge.....	\$50,000
Three Major Classrooms (with study rooms).....	\$50,000 each
Offices.....	\$25,000 each
Practice Rooms and Studios .....	\$25,000 each

Learn more about the Department of Music and its activities by visiting [www.music.msstate.edu](http://www.music.msstate.edu).



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