THE MCMURRY UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI & FRIENDS

FALL 2014

THE REDEDICATION OF OLD MAIN
Celebrating Homecoming
Alumni and Friends,

The McMurry Board of Trustees approved a roadmap for McMurry’s future during its meeting at Homecoming in October. This comprehensive planning effort, titled McMurry Momentum: Grounded in History, Soaring to the Future, lays out McMurry’s plan for continued commitment to academic excellence and student engagement as we approach our centennial celebration in 2023.

While the McMurry commitment to academic excellence and student engagement continues to flourish, institution-specific challenges necessitated this comprehensive planning effort for our future.

The McMurry University strategic planning process began in October 2013 with a planning timetable suggested to the Board of Trustees. The initial 2013-2014 centennial visioning process involved the entire McMurry campus through various leadership groups, Town Halls and series of “President’s Office Hours” to discuss the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats currently facing the institution. In all over 175 faculty, staff and students participated.

The result was the commission of an academic visioning group to begin drafting a Strategic plan in the spring.

A campus-wide invitation to review the material and join one of the 16 planning imperatives was issued and resulted in 90 individuals being directly involved in the strategic planning effort.

Following an initial review of the plan by the Board of Trustees in June the strategic visioning process went on the road, visiting with alumni and friends from across Texas and New Mexico to gain their input and expertise.

This effort resulted in discussions from all of our audiences about who McMurry is now, who the community would like to be and what it will take to get there.

All of these activities and efforts resulted in the McMurry Momentum plan that will guide us through the next decade. The rich 91-year history of McMurry University with its dedicated Board of Trustees, alumni, faculty, staff, students, and community friends will collaborate to make our Centennial Vision a reality.

View McMurry Momentum: Grounded in History, Soaring to the Future. (link to the PDF?)

SANDRA HARPER, PH.D.
PRESIDENT
Prepared to Face the Challenges
Young McMurry alumni entrepreneurs are building successful businesses.

Homecoming a Soaring Success
This year’s Homecoming brought to campus one of the largest groups of alumni, family and friends in recent history – and whether they were Indians or War Hawks – They Are Always McMurry!

The New Old Main
The iconic Old Main Building is back and better than ever!

Impacting the Lives of Thousands
Coach Neel LeMond touched the lives of many McMurry students and staff during his more than 50 years on campus.
McMurry Students Work With Autistic Children

Students in Dr. Stephanie Scott’s Special Learners class got some real world experience working with autistic children when they assisted at a meeting of Reach for a Difference, a support group for parents of kids with autism spectrum disorder.

Parents were able to attend the meeting worry free because the McMurry students entertained their children with games and snacks. The twelve students learned first-hand the challenges of working with autism. The class will continue attending these meetings once each month.

The class also got to interact with parents. One mother of two autistic boys related the challenges she faces each day raising her sons.

Alpha Lambda Delta Wins 2014 Delta Silver award

The McMurry Chapter of Alpha Lambda Delta has won a 2014 Delta Silver award from the society’s National Council for increasing membership by 32% from 2012-13 to 2013-14.

Alpha Lambda Delta is a national honorary society for first-year students who earn a GPA of 3.5 or higher. McMurry’s chapter is advised by Dr. Philip LeMasters, sponsor, and Dr. Christina Wilson, co-sponsor.

Shannon Davis Named Outstanding Young San Antonian

The Rotary Club of San Antonio Board of Directors was pleased to announce the selection of Shannon Sedgwick Davis ’96 as the 2014 Outstanding Young San Antonian.

Davis is the CEO of Bridgeway Foundation, a philanthropic organization dedicated to ending and preventing mass atrocities around the world. Established in 2000, as the charitable giving arm of Bridgeway Capital Management, the Bridgeway Foundation serves as a catalyst for peace and reconciliation in international communities suffering from oppression, genocide, and other human rights violations. As an attorney, activist, passionate advocate for social justice, Sedgwick Davis has guided Bridgeway Foundation in pioneering solutions to these seemingly intractable issues. The organization has supported such efforts including Aegis Trust, Resolve Uganda, and

McMurry education students in Dr. Stephanie Scott’s class work with autistic children.

Alumnus Establishes Endowment for Men’s Basketball

Donald Ray Taylor ’56 has established a new endowment in memory of his wife Charline Taylor and their daughter Donna Taylor Rocha that will benefit the men’s basketball team at McMurry University.

After graduating from McMurry, Taylor was hired to coach and teach mathematics at Roosevelt ISD, in Lubbock, Texas. After receiving a master’s degree he moved into administration eventually becoming the Superintendent. He retired from the Roosevelt ISD after 44 years and moved back to his hometown, Acova, Texas where he takes care of his family home and attends as many local athletic events as he can, especially War Hawk games.

“You don’t know what a small town is until you have been to Avoca, Texas. My McMurry education gave me opportunities I had never dreamed of and I am thankful for that,” he said when asked why he is creating this endowed fund.

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Collaborative Agreement Signed to Offer Engineering Degrees

Through a collaborative agreement with the University of North Dakota (UND), McMurry University students will now have a unique opportunity to earn an engineering degree accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) while completing the majority of their classes in Abilene.

McMurry will deliver foundational courses in physics, chemistry, math and some introductory level engineering courses, while UND will provide upper division engineering courses online.

“The collaboration will allow students to combine solid foundational courses of the small liberal-arts school education with professional preparation in the large university,” said Dr. Tikhon Bykov, professor of physics and chair of the physics department at McMurry. “The University of North Dakota (UND) is the only school in the country that we know of that has a complete ABET-accredited engineering program delivered online.” This program may be especially attractive to the local Abilene population, since currently it is the only way to obtain ABET-accredited engineering degree without leaving Abilene for an extended period of time. This program would require students to travel to UND for several weeks during one summer (Mechanical Engineering program) or two summers (Chemical Engineering program) to complete laboratory portions of some courses.

ABET accreditation is important for people who are seeking engineering employment right after graduation with BS engineering degree. The number of years one must work for an engineering firm before getting engineering license is reduced for people who have graduated from an ABET-accredited program. Students will also find it easier to enter master’s level engineering programs.

“In a typical engineering program at a large university students are taking foundational courses in huge classes of several hundred people and many of them will not go past that point, since these classes are not designed to fit individual student needs,” Dr. Bykov said. “At McMurry every student will receive individual attention and we will make sure that our students have all the necessary preparation to move to the next level of specialized engineering subjects. Moreover, even when students are taking online courses from UND during their junior and senior years, they will still receive assistance from McMurry faculty. They will not be left completely on their own.”

The program is designed as a five year program. At the end of the program students will receive two Bachelor of Science (BS) degrees. The Mechanical Engineering track will lead to BS degree in Physics with minor in Mathematics from McMurry and ABET-accredited BS degree in Mechanical Engineering from UND. The Chemical Engineering track will lead to BS degree in Chemistry with minors in Physics and Mathematics from McMurry and ABET-accredited BS degree in Chemical Engineering from UND.

Students will be getting much broader education compared to one they would have gotten by completing a standard engineering program,” said Dr. Bykov. “That would open up more career paths to these graduates including possibilities of going into graduate programs in physics or engineering as well as employment in technical fields and teaching.”

“Typical engineering preparation is very much focused on a single engineering field, while having additional physics background would allow for easier transitions from one engineering field to another in case if students’ future career paths would require such a transition. And, as we all know, changing career paths is not an uncommon situation in the modern day economy,” said Dr. Bykov.
Leah Doughty Receives Dr. Sandra Harper Women’s Leadership Scholarship

Leah Doughty, a senior early childhood education major from Abilene, has been selected to receive the Dr. Sandra Harper Women’s Leadership Scholarship for the 2014-15 academic year.

The Dr. Sandra Harper Women’s Leadership Scholarship was established by women leaders in the Abilene area in honor of the inauguration of Dr. Sandra Harper as McMurry University’s 12th president and in recognition of the accomplishments of outstanding women leaders. Applicants were required to complete an application process and submit a 500-word essay regarding their interpretation of “Women Leading for the Greater Good.” The $5,000 is awarded to a female student at McMurry who has excelled in the classroom and who has distinguished herself through service on campus and in the Abilene community.

Doughty served as vice president of the Association of Texas Professional Educators chapter at McMurry and participated in the organization’s state conference in 2013. She is a member of Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society. She served as student director and chaplain for the McMurry track team, where she led weekly Bible studies and prayer services.

She has been active in the Abilene community through Meals on Wheels, working with McMurry’s Thanksgiving donation drives, tutoring elementary school students and leading a junior high girls “Big God” church event.

TCU Energy Institute for Mineral and Royalty Owners Held at McMurry

The Energy Institute at Texas Christian University (TCU) conducted a very successful three-day training program for mineral and royalty owners in Abilene and West Central Texas in September in the Furr Welcome Center. Organizers said the program will continue to be offered at McMurry on a regular basis.

The non-degreed, adult education program is aimed at mineral owners who want to level the playing field and get everything that they are entitled to when they interact with oil and gas companies. The Royalty Owner Program is open to new or prospective royalty owners, who want to master the basics of mineral ownership. The ROP instructor is Glen Webb, an experienced attorney and mineral owner who lives in the Abilene area.

“We have been offering the Royalty Owner Program for more than a year, and it has been a huge success in Texas and around the country,” Dr. Ken Morgan, Director of the TCU Energy Institute. “TCU is delighted to partner with McMurry to provide the program to the mineral owners in West Central Texas.”

“McMurry is committed to providing educational opportunities pertaining to the oil and gas industry, and our alliance with the TCU Energy Institute enables us to fulfill a portion of that commitment with programming specifically directed toward mineral owners,” said K.O. Long, Dean of the School of Business.
Dr. Rob Sledge Receives United Methodist Award

The General Commission on Archives and History of the United Methodist presented its 2014 Distinguished Service Award to Dr. Robert W. Sledge, Distinguished Professor of History, Emeritus, at McMurry University. The Commission gathered with friends and colleagues of Dr. Sledge to present an award given annually to person(s), group, institution, or church(es) who have made significant contributions to the “ministry of memory” of The United Methodist Church. The award was presented at a banquet in Mead Hall on the Drew University campus.

Dr. Sledge was the first president of the Historical Society of the United Methodist Church and was a member of the Commission on Archives and History in the 1980s. He is a leading authority on the Methodist Episcopal Church South. His publications include: Hands on the Ark: The Struggle for Change in the Methodist Episcopal Church 1914-1939 and “Five Dollars and Myself:” The History of Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South,” published in 2005. He is a frequent contributor to Methodist History, the Commission’s quarterly scholarly journal. In 1989, he was the founding president of the Historical Society of the United Methodist Church and now serves as coordinator of the society’s annual Saddlebag Selection award.


He presented a paper entitled: “It All Depends Where You’re Coming From” a reminder to historians that as much there is an attempt to do their work without bias, the places people come from, whether socially, geographically or theologically, Association of Texas Professional Educators

Chapter Wins Local Unit of the Year

McMurry University’s local organization of the Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE) was recognized for their commitment to public education through political involvement, furthering education and community service. Through their endeavors they became one of three university finalists up for an award along with Texas Women’s University and Dallas Baptist University. After several years of being finalists in this category, McMurry was awarded ATPE’s highest honor which will include $1,000 to help McMurry ATPE expand their reach and community service.

“With over twenty university local units across the state who are eligible for this award, McMurry ATPE went above and beyond to win. We were very excited to go up against two universities with memberships of over 500 students,” said faculty sponsor Gae Lynn McInroe. “With our outstanding students and a membership of only 51, we are grateful for the help and opportunities given to us by Region 14, and Abilene ATPE to help promote furthering education and building relationships with the best teachers in field.”

Traveling to the ATPE convention were Leah Morgan, Leah Doughty, Jenna Fahrney, Leslie Ward, Ashlee Chapman, and Chelsi Boswell along with sponsors Dr. Gae Lynn McInroe and Dr. Stephanie Scott. The convention included leadership training, professional development sessions, opportunities to be involved in the ATPE’s political process as well as listening to current state candidates for governor and lieutenant governor.
McMurry University produces graduates with a variety of degrees and passions. They are provided with the education to enter the workforce, achieve their professional goals, and face the challenges ahead. With the national trend of young entrepreneurs on the rise, a number of those graduates are entering the workforce aspiring to operate their own business as an entrepreneur of their generation.

According to an article published by Forbes in 2012, approximately 30% of entrepreneurs are between the ages of 20 – 34. That number has only continued to rise as graduates are drawn towards the flexibility, challenges, and accomplishments of becoming an entrepreneur.

Meet four McMurry graduates who used their undergraduate growth and experience to build a successful business and become young entrepreneurs.
**ISAIAH NAVARRETE ’01**

Isaiah Navarrete ’01 purchased Cobra Coating in 2005 when the Odessa, Texas company had less than 10 employees. Almost ten years later, the company, that applies coatings to oilfield pipes and fittings, has locations in Odessa and Cleburne, Texas with more than 60 employees. The McMurry graduate was the 2013 Odessa Hispanic Businessman of the Year and credits his business courses and athletic involvement at McMurry for much of his success.

“Playing football at McMurry provided me with teamwork skills and taught me perseverance that carried over to help me run a business. You’re going to have hard times, but you have to keep going and support each other. The camaraderie of playing football taught me that,” said Navarrete.

According to Navarrete, Dr. Patricia Lapoint and Mr. George Starbuck, two of his favorite business professors, taught him valuable skills about running a business that he didn’t fully understand until being a business owner himself. Through his business courses, and his time studying abroad, Navarrete became a more capable entrepreneur.

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**ADRIAN NAVARRETE ’03**

Entrepreneurship runs in the Navarrete family. The younger brother of Isaiah, Adrian Navarrete ’03 took over his father’s business, Roberto’s Backhoe Service, Inc., in 2008. Located in McCamey, Texas, the business is a general oilfield maintenance and construction business that has been running since 1980.

Prior to operating Roberto’s Backhoe Service, Inc., Adrian worked in other business-related jobs and trained under his father, Roberto Navarrete.

“Accounting classes at McMurry were really helpful in learning how to run a business,” said Adrian. “Just being in college at McMurry helped me learn to operate a business because you learn networking, interacting with different people, and motivation.”

Following his brother’s footsteps, Adrian enrolled at McMurry, but says he wasn’t entirely ready for college his freshman year. After a brief hiatus, he returned to the University and graduated with the support of his peers and mentors.

“The professors really help and care about you,” said Adrian. “This company wouldn’t be as successful as it is today without McMurry.”
Sabrina Davis ’08 had always dreamed of opening a bakery. Located in Abilene, Texas, Sweets du Jour opened in 2012 featuring a variety of bakery items, soups, and sandwiches.

The McMurry accounting and finance graduate said she already knew how to bake, but it was the business classes that helped her succeed in opening Sweets du Jour.

“I don't believe I'd still be open without the education I received at McMurry,” said Davis. “The satisfaction of when a customer bites into something, and they get this big grin, it reassures me that I did my job right.”

Davis recently expanded her bakery to offer catering and private dinner parties. In addition, many McMurry faculty are customers at Sweets du Jour, and once a year Davis speaks to a McMurry business class of undergraduate students about the process of opening your own business and entrepreneurship.

“I didn't go to culinary school,” said Davis. “But if you have a passion for something, and the drive, you can do anything you want.”
Jason Rodriguez ’00 began the process of launching his market research, marketing, and branding company, Zpryme, in 2005, and officially rolled out the business in 2007. After graduating McMurry, Rodriguez received his Masters of Business Administration at Texas State University, entered the workforce, and pursued another graduate degree at the University of South Florida.

“I always knew I wanted to own my own business. That foundation was built at McMurry,” said Rodriguez. “The McMurry atmosphere is really inclusive in building successful future entrepreneurs.”

Zpryme is an established name in market researching for the energy industry and is located in Austin, Texas. In addition, the company works with hundreds of companies such as BMW, Toyota, Toshiba, IBM, and numerous other Fortune 500 companies with an energy, transportation, or mobile focus, both in the United States and overseas.

“Today’s graduates are competing on a global scale,” said Rodriguez. “Entrepreneurs need to think global, sustain a level of professionalism, and produce a successful business plan. The atmosphere at McMurry gives their students that.”
When Betty Shewbert ’58 arrived on campus as a freshman, she didn’t realize the impact McMurry College would have on her life. Neither did the other young women who lived on the freshman floor of President Hall. Betty’s life, and the lives of Glynell Armstrong ’59, Linda Adcock ’57, Mary Marcom ’58, Nancy Clifton ’58, Mary Ella Bigony ’58, Nevelyn Crawford ’58, and Margaret Milikien ’58 became intertwined through their shared collegiate experiences. They bonded as “slimes” and shared the indignities of freshman initiation.

Their friendship deepened when they all joined the same social club, Delta Beta Epsilon. McMurry brought them together and proved to be a tie that has bound them to each other for sixty years.

The eight young women enjoyed college life to the fullest—all participating in campus organizations, some singing in Chanters and others working on campus. They shared the same Christian values but weren’t averse to some practical joking, such as the time when Nevelyn was away and the other girls decided to move her
furniture out of her room onto the balcony of Gold Star Dorm. There was the time that Linda and Margaret, in an act of rebellion against the strict dress code, went to a neighborhood drugstore with shorts on underneath their raincoats.

Cupid’s arrows flew during their time at McMurry. Darrell Vines and Mary found love and married shortly after her graduation. Uel Crosby ’58 and Margaret became good friends their freshman year but didn’t date until later. After a whirlwind courtship and short engagement, they married in July 1958. Though Ted Dotts was going to college at Tech, he made regular trips to Abilene to see Betty, who he had met when she was a summer youth director in Lubbock. One evening, as the varsity basketball team was gathered around the piano in President Hall, Linda caught the eye of Carl Andersen ’57, a tall lanky athlete from Sweetwater who was also president of the freshman class. They married in April 1957. One by one, all eight friends found true love and by the end of 1959, all had graduated and all were married.

In most cases, the end of one’s college career signals the demise of many friendships as the graduates, separated by distance and the end of their shared collegial experiences, move on to the next chapter in their lives. This wasn’t the case with this group of friends. In February 1957, three pairs of college roommates—Betty and Glynell, Ellie and Nevelyn, and Margaret and Linda—enjoyed a weekend trip to the home of Betty’s parents in February 1957. Bess Shewbert, Betty’s mother, reminded them of the importance of their relationships and suggested a “Round

Front row from left to right: Betty Dotts ’58, Linda Andersen ’58, Mary Vines ’58 and Margaret Cosby ’58. Back row left to right: Ted Dotts, Carl Andersen ’57, Darrell Vines and Uel Cosby ’58.
Robin” letter as a way for them to stay connected after graduation. She explained the process: A list would be compiled of all participants. The first person on the list would write to the total group but mail her letter only to the second person on the list. The second person would write her letter and send the two letters to the third person, and so it would continue until all the letters would be returned to the first person, who would replace her letter with an updated one and the process would begin anew.

The “Round Robin” letter project began in the early 1960s. In the days before e-mail and cell phones, the letter served to strengthen their bond as they shared news of their lives, careers and families. Gradually, “snail mail” was replaced with e-mail and communication became more immediate but no less important.

In 1983, the group had a reunion. Margaret flew in from Arizona, Ellie from Indiana, Nevelyn from Amarillo, Glynell from Abilene, and Betty and Linda from Lubbock. Mary joined the “Round Robin” that summer. Other reunions followed, and the group grew as Nancy Wiseman joined them. They savored their weekends together—laughing and crying, and sharing their McMurry memories.

Their husbands, five of them also McMurry graduates, began to covet the girls’ fun weekends together. In 1993, the girls decided the men could join them on Sundays, a compromise that allowed them to protect their “girl time” while allowing the men to get to know each other better. The girls decided that including the men actually made calendar management easier, visits were more fun, and conversations were richer.

From 1993 to the present, the couples have met at least once a year, laughing over funny memories, sharing news of weddings and grandchildren, and grieving for each other’s heartaches. The women have continued their “girl time”; and the men have shared adventures such as visiting an airplane factory, working on Carl’s and Linda’s cattle ranch, swimming in the Frio River, and taking a road trip to see the largest mesquite tree in America!

They have become an accountability group for each other. By their own admission, the women have become better wives and the men have become more relational. All eight couples are still happily married, an amazing

Their admonition to current students is to “cherish your friendships, work hard to stay connected, and pay it forward.”
accomplishment in this day and time.

During their weekend retreats, Ted Dotts has taken the lead as discussion facilitator and he has among other things, encouraged the group to share what they love most about their spouses, an exercise that has elicited emotional responses from these couples who have all celebrated their golden wedding anniversaries. While each couple has experienced tragedy, he has asked each to focus on the areas of their lives for which they are thankful and has led the group through tough discussion topics such as death, dying, and end of life decisions. These retreats are deeply spiritual, and worshiping together is as much a part of the weekend’s activities as eating, talking and playing games. Their time together is precious, their discussions are private, and the intimacy they share is carefully nurtured.

Though many years have passed, the former classmates always remember where it all began and speak of their alma mater with pride. Several years ago, the eight couples made a decision to create an endowed scholarship at McMurry in honor of Betty’s parents, J. E. and Bess Shewbert. They considered this a fitting tribute since the blessings shared through their friendships over the past sixty years would never have been theirs without Mrs. Shewbert’s “Round Robin” letters and McMurry University. They remember feeling valued and nurtured at McMurry, and they felt compelled to give back to the University that had cared for them. Their admonition to current students is to “cherish your friendships, work hard to stay connected, and pay it forward.”

The story of these eight couples is unique and noteworthy—but it is much more. It is a story that reminds us that relationships are to be treasured and further, it inspires us to nurture the friendships that began here at McMurry University.

Note: In addition to providing support for the J. E. and Bess Shewbert Endowed Scholarship, Carl and Linda Andersen also established the Grady and Hope Adcock Endowed Scholarship in 2005 in memory of Linda’s father and in honor of her mother.
Thanks to all our alumni, friends, faculty, staff, students, and the Abilene community for your role in making this year’s homecoming a soaring success! With our traditions like Tipi Village, pep rally, football and volleyball games, and the many social club and class reunions, there was something for everyone to enjoy. Special thanks go out to local veterinarian Dr. Mark Hitchcock who brought two Harris hawks for Tipi Village. Take a moment to view photographs from this year’s Homecoming at: mcm-gallery.smugmug.com/Homecoming-/Homecoming-2014

Thank you for making this year’s Homecoming a soaring success!
This year’s honorees were:

Dr. Max Wynn ’80
Distinguished Alumni Award Recipient

Steven Bristow ’96
Spirit of McMurry Award Recipient

View all of the award recipients at alumni.mcm.edu/awards

ALACUMBA!

Join Us Next Year!

If your class year ends in 5 or 0, you’re celebrating a reunion next Homecoming - if you’d like to help plan events for your class during the weekend, please reach out to the alumni office at alumni@mcm.edu.
The New Old Main
Restored to its Original Glory
BY LORETTA FULTON

After graduating from McMurry in 1955, Jack Darnell spent the next 31 years seeing the world courtesy of the United States Navy. He sailed the Atlantic, the Pacific, the Mediterranean—just about every body of water large enough to float a Navy ship. But even after a lifetime of seeing some of the world’s greatest sights, Darnell, 80, was stunned when he walked into the newly renovated Old Main, the primary building on campus during his years.

“I was really pleased,” Darnell said, “to see what they have done, not only with the auditorium, but the entire building.”

For Darnell, a member of the McMurry alumni board, it wasn’t just seeing a nicely restored building. It was making a connection with the past and seeing the building being enjoyed by today’s students just like those in his day.

“It was just great to see it being used again,” he said.

When Darnell was on campus, Old Main was a beehive of activity. The auditorium, which has been restored to its original glory, was used for drama classes and biology labs, lectures, and even pep rallies.

“You were in and out of that building all the time,” Darnell recalled.

Old Main was the original building on campus when McMurry opened in 1923. Current McMurry president, Dr. Sandra Harper, understands the emotional attachment that Darnell has to the building, especially the auditorium.

“J.W. Hunt stood on that stage and opened it,” she said, referring to McMurry’s founder and first president.

With the restoration, the auditorium was renamed to honor William Watt Matthews, who died in 1977 at age 28 from injuries sustained in a plane crash on the family ranch near Albany.
Donations from family foundations made the restoration possible.

The new name is one of many the auditorium has carried over its lifetime. Dr. Robert Sledge, professor emeritus of history at McMurry, recalled at least three previous names - College Auditorium, College Chapel, and Radford Memorial Auditorium before present-day Radford was built.

Sledge recalled that graduations were held in the auditorium before graduating classes outgrew it. Over the years, the auditorium deteriorated in appearance and in status until being brought back to life.

“It became kind of a classroom for a while,” Sledge said, “and then kind of a storeroom.”

One of the few people who could see through the clutter of the storeroom and gaze into the past and future of the auditorium was Rick Weatherl, the preservation architect commissioned to
oversee the restoration.

Weatherl's handiwork can be seen all over Abilene. He was responsible for the restoration of the Grace Museum, as well as numerous other sites. Weatherl's work requires that he not be deterred, no matter what is discovered once the layers of paint and grime start coming off. “In preservation, you always find surprises,” he said. “It's how you respond to the surprises that's the hard part.”

The surprises in Old Main were mostly pleasant. Weatherl loves to scrape down to the original colors in historic buildings. The Old Main auditorium provided just the challenge he loves. The auditorium originally was painted three shades of green, which happens to be Weatherl's favorite color. Other colors also appeared, which many people would find surprising, Weatherl said.

People tend to think that buildings constructed in the early 20th century were painted in earth tones, not a variety of colors. But, just like the Grace Museum, Old Main had its share of rich colors, which Weatherl matched for the restoration.

Original oak window sills and doors were restored on the first floor, as well as some original glass. All the window frames were painted green, just like the original.

The same plaster craftsmen that Weatherl employed for the Grace Museum project came back to Abilene from Fort Worth for the plaster work in the Old Main auditorium.

“It just turned out great,” Weatherl said.

No one would argue. Current students love their beautiful new digs, as do faculty members whose offices were scattered all over campus the past three years.

Harper, who began her tenure as president a year ago, formerly was a faculty member at McMurry. The restoration work was in full swing at Old Main when she came back to campus to interview for the president's job.

She understands the pride the founder must have felt when he stood on the stage of the Old Main auditorium the day McMurry opened. That historical link is still present, both physically and as a metaphor, Harper noted.

“To me, it's a great symbol of us approaching our centennial,” Harper said. “It's really pretty powerful.”
Loved by many, Coach Neel was an integral part of the fabric of McMurry University and was a dear member of the McMurry athletics family. His energy and enthusiasm at McMurry events, his regular phone calls to his many friends, and his drop-in visits across campus will never be forgotten.

Although he wasn’t a student, a coach, or a teacher, he was active in every aspect of campus life at McMurry. Coaches and players treated him as one of them, and indeed, he was. Through his volunteer support of athletic teams, religious life projects, club fundraising efforts, and church activities, he modeled service to others and lived by the Golden Rule.

Neel took great pride in his family at McMurry University. He loved assisting the coaches and becoming friends with many of the students there. In his younger years, he would stay all day on the campus, except at lunch and dinner time. After he ate, he would go back on campus and stay till dark. He did not want to miss anything.

His father and brother both went to McMurry University and it was only natural that he would follow in their footsteps. He was a truly dedicated fan. He took pride in never missing a football game. When there were away games, he would tune in his radio and cheer his team on. You could hear his excitement throughout the

Thomas Neel Lemond positively impacted the lives of thousands of McMurry students during his more than 50 years on the campus. Affectionately known as “Coach Neel” to generations of students, faculty and staff, he passed away March 2, 2014.
whole house as he was jumping up and down and yelling, “Go! Go! Go! Now that’s the way it’s done!”

Somehow it seemed only fitting that the last thing Neel did was listen to McMurry men’s basketball’s 95-94 overtime win at UT-Permian Basin on the radio. It was as if he willed McMurry to victory one last time before he took his eternal place with the best seat in The House.

Neel didn’t care who wore the Maroon and White; nor what national athletic affiliation we held; or even who the opponent was. Neel loved McMurry because it was ... well, McMurry! We were truly blessed by God to have Neel in our lives. He was a gift from God.

**McMurry's Plan to Honor Coach Neel**
The Coach Neel Lemond Endowment for Athletes in Service is to be awarded annually to scholar athletes/varsity teams who embody the characteristics that exemplified Neel’s life—servant leadership and Christian faith. With the earnings from this endowment, coaches of athletic teams and sponsors of other campus organizations for athletes may request funds for student participation in service projects on campus, in the local community or in other locations where there is a demonstrated need.

There are currently a number of athletic teams and scholar athletes who participate in service projects in the local community or in other areas during travel to athletic competitions or during off season. Service to others is strongly encouraged by the NCAA; however, athletic budgets do not include funds for these types of projects. This endowment will make it possible for greater participation in areas of service by our athletic teams, while honoring Coach Neel’s memory for his many years as a servant to McMurry Athletics, the University as a whole, and to his church.

**Annual Award for Student Athletes**
In addition to this endowment for service in Coach Neel’s name, the University will also implement a scholar athlete awards program in his honor. Beginning with the 2014-15 academic year, the Coach Neel Heart of a War Hawk Award will be awarded annually to student athletes, male and female, who, in addition to participation in varsity athletics, are involved in spiritual development, religious life activities, and who embody the characteristics of servant leadership and good sportsmanship.

For more information about how you can support the Coach Neel Campaign, contact Nancy Smith, executive director of Donor Relations at 325-793-4667 or email smith.nancy@mcm.edu.

Coach Neel brought joy to many on campus through his artwork. He drew everything from holiday cards to game day posters that he would then hand deliver to his friends.
ATHLETICS

ATHLETE PROFILE

Kristen Grant ’15

You may be able to look over McMurry University women’s soccer senior Kristen Grant ’15, but you most certainly can’t overlook her. While she may lack stature, she stands tall in just about every other area of her life.

At 5-foot-1, you might miss Grant in a crowd of people; however, when it comes to soccer, the classroom and campus life, Grant has had an outstanding career for the War Hawks. It has been a time full of “goals” achieved, in many areas.

On the field, she already holds McMurry school career records for goals scored, points, assists and match-winning goals … and adds to it with each match played by the War Hawks. She has been a huge part of the growth of McMurry’s women’s soccer into a respected program.

And as a student – Kristen is a marketing and management major and planning on a December 2014 graduation – she has collected academic accolades with seemingly the same ease as she scores goals. Grant has been on the Dean’s List every term and was named as a conference all-scholastic team member as a junior (and at press time was headed for similar honors this year, as well).

Around campus, it’s hard to imagine anyone being able to be involved more than her. She has been on the Campus Activities Board for three years, is president of the Shareholders Business Club, was a part of the Student Managed Investment Fund for two semesters, serves as the Delta Beta Epsilon secretary (and was the past fundraising chair) and has been a team captain of Relay for Life for three years.

This past summer, Kristen also did an internship with a company called Around Campus, which sells advertising in college publications to local businesses. Her team hit 100-percent of its sales goals, despite some trying times. “My work ethic was definitely tested,” Grant recalls. “I was the one who set my schedule; they just told us what was expected of us. During that last week of selling, I was doing two-a-days for soccer. I would literally go to some appointments I’d made, leave that, change, go play soccer and then go back to selling.”

It was that determination which first caught the attention of McMurry women’s soccer Head Coach Alan Riches, and her small stature is what he believes led many larger programs to miss her in the recruiting process.

“I think we are blessed to have a player of her caliber in our program,” Riches explained. “She is definitely very talented. But I think some schools passed on her because of her size.”

“But when I watched her play, I could see her heart and her strong work ethic. I knew right away that she was a player I wanted in our program. She was a perfect fit for what I envisioned for the future of McMurry women’s soccer. And Kristen has not disappointed at all. She has been the team leader and example I knew she would be.

“And as good as she is as a soccer player, Kristen is an even better person. She is truly a ‘dream player’ to have as a coach.”

With so much going on in her world, how does this human dynamo handle things?

“I have good time management skills,” Grant states matter-of-factly. “So I can do all my homework, play soccer, Delta Beta, C.A.B … you just have to find that hour.”

Grant also takes very seriously her role as a leader of the War Hawks’ team. Knowing full well how she performs – on and off the field – affects her fellow players.

“We don’t really have set captains,” Grant explained. “It’s pretty much anyone can step up at any given time. You’re going to have that moment where the game falls on you. I’m not one of those who yells ‘c’mon guys, you can do it!’ I try, personally, to lead by example. I’m going to make my moments count.”

And count they have, as Grant closes the books on her McMurry career and moves on to the next chapter in life … and new goals ahead.
In sports, when a team or individual calls a timeout it is usually for a rest or to try to adjust to what an opponent is doing. But for McMurry University sophomore men’s basketball player Thierry Tchenko ’17, he called a “timeout” of sorts on his own career for an once-in-a-lifetime professional opportunity that is far from a break.

Tchenko, who played for Head Coach Clif Carroll as a freshman in 2013-14, is taking the fall semester away from both basketball and McMurry to work in the gubernatorial campaign of Democratic candidate Senator Wendy Davis. The plan is for him to rejoin both McMurry and the War Hawks’ team for the second semester. And he is doing so with the full blessing and support of Carroll.

“Thierry would have been a huge part of our team this fall with only a few returning guys,” Carroll explained. “He worked so hard to put himself in position to be one our main guys, but knew this was an opportunity he couldn’t pass up.

“At the end of the day, we have to make sure that when our young men leave our basketball program they not only had success on the court, but they leave ready for the life ahead of them. Working for Wendy Davis is giving Thierry a chance of a lifetime. Thierry will grow as a person from this experience and we will welcome him back with open arms. He is a dynamic personality, a relentless worker, and a natural leader. I’m excited for what he will add to our program mid-season.”

Tchenko’s title is a Field Organizer for Davis’ campaign, one of several in that position. He is given an area (his is in North Houston) with the charge of setting up events that volunteers can participate in and get involved with the campaign. The purpose of the events is to educate people about Davis and to increase voter turnout. He works at the “grass roots” level of the campaign, frequently sitting on committees and talking to community leaders about how to best promote involvement.

Originally, Tchenko was not even looking at the position he currently has but was exploring summer opportunities. In talking to Professor of Philosophy Dr. Jeffery Kinlaw, he learned about the possibilities to work in the Davis campaign. After a month-long interview process, he was hired and hit the ground running.

Tchenko draws a lot of parallels between what he has learned in basketball and his efforts on behalf of Davis’ campaign.

“I’m working with a team,” Tchenko said. “I have a specific area I’m in charge of, but we have a region with maybe seven to eight organizers like myself. It’s very similar to a basketball team, having different guys and being able to connect and communicate with them and share ideas on how to do their job better.”

“On the court, I may have a teammate tell me ‘Hey Thierry, do this so that your game can improve.’ On the political side of things, I get ‘Hey Thierry, you may want to try this; so that you can maximize your efforts and be more efficient at what you are doing. There are a lot of similarities.’

“Basketball has been able to help me out in my work in politics and being able to have an even head and (staying) even-keeled and calm, understanding it’s a long process.”

When all is said and done, Tchenko is garnering a wealth of valuable real-life experience that he can use for future opportunities. He does admit that the closer the election gets, the less amount of time he has to get in the gym and work on his basketball skills.

“I haven’t had as much time lately as I had (earlier in the campaign season),” Tchenko confesses. “As November gets closer time shrinks.”

Tchenko, who served as the freshman class president at McMurry in 2013-14, has only had the fires stoked for a possible career of his own in politics. “My passion is being able to serve people,” Tchenko reflected. “Being able to serve people through the political realm is incredible. To be able to see communities prosper and help people within those communities live up to the potential that they have is something I want to do. Lord willing, I’ll be able to do something in politics in the future.”
RICK NOLLY ‘82 is now principal of Irving ISD’s Secondary Reassignment Center and the Wheeler Transitional and Development Center. Nolly served as the school’s interim principal since January 2014.

POLLY (MILLS) BURKHEAD ‘83 is a 6th grade ELA teacher in the Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD at Prairie Vista Middle School. She recently returned from a mission trip with her church, Pleasantview Baptist in Arlington, TX. The group traveled to the battay of Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. Residents there were very grateful for the stories of Jesus and the crafts brought to create with them.

HANK FRANKENBERG ’69 is the Global Sourcing Manager for 3M Electronics & Energy Group Laboratories. Formerly, he served as Business Sourcing Manager for several 3M divisions in his 35-year 3M career (3M acquired the company he worked for in 1982). He has four awesome children: A NYC Hedge Fund Professional, a 4th grade school teacher, a Cardiac ICU RN, and a Network Installation Technician. Hank is a clarinet player (Austin Symphonic Band for its 32 year history), SCUBA diver, speaker builder, member of 3M Dragon Boat race team, and just took a flying trapeze lesson! As the sign on his desk states: “I have no plans to grow up!”

BRET PARR ’76 is the Mayor of Childress, Texas, a retired teacher and coach (31 years), and now runs First Childress Insurance Agency. He served five years on City Council and two as Mayor Pro-Tem. He and his wife Barbara Sue (Nelson) Parr ex ’73 have five children and 10 grandchildren. Barbara Sue works in vehicle and voter registration for Childress County.

DR. MAX K. BURKHEAD II ’84 & Polly (Mills) Burkhead ’83 reside in Fort Worth, TX. Max is a credit analyst with TIB – The Independent Bankers Bank in Irving, TX. He is also on the adjunct faculty of Arlington Baptist College. Polly is a sixth grade ELA teacher in the Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD at Prairie Vista Middle School.

CHAPLAIN (MAJOR) JEFF MATSLER ’89 (BA, MCM; M.Div., SMU; ThM, Duke) is a graduate student at Yale University conducting research in the field of Bioethics. Upon completion of his degree, he is assigned to Walter Reed Military Medical Center and School as a teaching faculty member and Bioethicist for United States Army Medical Command (MEDCOM). This past February he presented his Duke University thesis.

REY ’00 AND SHELLY (WALDON) BUCHANAN ’00 announce the arrival of their third child, Liam Yong-sun Buchanan. Liam came home from South Korea on March 13, 2014. Big sister Talia (9) and big brother Max (8) were excited to welcome Liam home after a 20 month wait!
JENNIFER (VODAK) JULIAN '05 and husband Daniel welcomed a new baby girl, Kierstyn, on August 9, 2014. She joins big sister, Gwyn.

DR. JENNIFER CODDING '06, an Honors program alumna, is working on her postdoctoral fellowship at Stanford in Xinnan Wang’s laboratory studying the role of mitochondrial motility in stroke.

DR. JESSICA CRAWFORD MUELLER ’06, an Honors alumna, recently passed her boards and is now a certified and practicing OB/GYN.

NEIL CORBETT ’08 AND SALLY STEELE CORBETT ’11 were married on November 16, 2013 in Fort Worth, TX and currently reside there.

ADRIAN GAONA ’10 AND ALEXIS (GRAVALOS) GAONA ’10 met at McMurry and were married on June 22, 2013. Both are teachers at Lucyle Collins Middle School in Lake Worth ISD. They recently celebrated their 1-year anniversary and moved into their first home.

SARAH STANGEBYE-HIBLER ’12 and husband Tim welcomed a son, Leif Owen Hibler, born June 8, 2014!

SAMANTHA SHAFFER ’14 is working as the Associate Director of Development for the College of Education & Human Services at Texas A&M University-Commerce. Samantha worked as the student intern for Institutional Advancement at McMurry during her senior year where she found a passion for philanthropy in higher education.
Dear Alumni,

The Alumni Association Board of Directors held our fall meeting during Homecoming and adopted a three-year strategic plan. The plan is, in part, derived from the results of our Alumni Attitude Survey conducted in May 2014, and was also inspired by a challenge issued by President Harper for every board, group, employee, alum and student to step up their game. Now, more than ever, McMurry needs an active and engaged alumni base if we are going to collectively rise to meet the many challenges ahead for small, private higher education institutions.

The plan will engage alumni by creating meaningful interactions between alumni and current students – the goal is for students to identify as alumni long before graduation. It will also provide direction and goals for alumni programming both on and off campus. Our McMurry University Alumni Association is championing lifelong connections.

Now is the time for ALL McMurry alumni to be connected, to give back and be involved in whatever way we are able. Because we know our university first-hand, alumni can be the best recruiters. We can help by speaking to the importance of one-on-one relationships formed with professors, and the impression those had on our career choices, or the fond memories we made during our college years both in and outside of the classroom.

We can get involved - if you have questions or suggestions for ways to grow alumni engagement, let us know. If you’re interested in serving on the Alumni Association Board of Directors, or know someone who might be an asset, please let us know. This group of alumni volunteer leaders must be representative of all McMurry alumni, serving from a wide range of class years, majors, career fields, geographic locations, and campus clubs and organizations. We are actively seeking alumni who desire to be agents for change for service on the board.

McMurry alumni events are happening more frequently, and we want all alumni to feel welcome and participate. Since her arrival in October of 2013, Dr. Harper has been on the road meeting alumni and has held multiple listening sessions throughout Texas and New Mexico to garner insights, questions, and suggestions as McMurry develops it strategic plan focused on 2023 – McMurry’s 100th anniversary. If you have an idea for an alumni event in your area or if you would like to host one, please reach out to the Office of Alumni Relations.

Finally, McMurry has outstanding alumni who have done amazing things - we need alumni to share stories with us so we can share them with the world! You can help us honor them by nominating them for one of the annual awards presented by the Association.

In closing, get up and get busy – McMurry matters.

Ala cumba,

STEVEN BRISTOW ’96
PRESIDENT
McMurry University Alumni Association Board of Directors
Moved? New Job?

Update your information and submit a classnote to let your fellow McMurry alumni know about the milestones in your life—including everything from weddings to births, retirements to awards, adoptions to promotions. We'll print your update and photos in The Messenger and deliver to over 11,000 of your McMurry friends and family!

Send your note by email to Suzann Couts, Director of Alumni Relations, at couts.suzann@mcm.edu or fill out and mail this form to The Messenger, 1 McMurry University, #938, Abilene TX 79697.

NAME

MAIDEN NAME (IF APPLICABLE)

EMAIL ADDRESS

STREET ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP

CLASS NOTE:

(use additional sheet of paper if needed)

To learn more about an IRA rollover gift and how it can benefit you and help McMurry, please contact us at 325-793-4761 or visit us online at mcm.edu/rollover.

What is Your McMurry Family Legacy?

The von Ende and Seago families have deep McMurry roots, going back to 1940 when H. Dewitt Seago graduated from the school. He would later become the founding pastor for Aldersgate United Methodist Church across from the McMurry campus in 1950. Dr. Richard von Ende was a professor with the McMurry Fine Arts Department for 23 years and led Chanters for many of those years.

Those two families became intertwined when Dewitt's daughter Catharyn and Richard's son Ted fell in love at McMurry and started a family which would see nineteen members come to McMurry over the span of 75 years.

Tell us your story at news.mcm.edu/share

The Messenger reserves the right to make the final selection of all photography based upon available space, subject matter and photo quality.
**Odis Claxton ’52**
Odis A. Claxton, Jr., age 83, died on Friday, May 16, 2014. He was born January 30, 1931 in Abilene, Texas, the only son of Odis Sr. and Nola Bradford Claxton. He attended Abilene public schools and was a member of the band programs, performing as a drum major from junior high through college at McMurry College.

His early work began at Caldwell Music Co. on Grape Street. He then moved to Lubbock, later to Pharr/McAllen, and ultimately to Brownsville in the music store business. Later earning professional credentials as a real estate broker, he spent several years in the residential, commercial, development, and resort business in South Texas and New Mexico. Later moving to Houston, he was associated with two real estate firms, retiring in 2002.

**Rev. David Hamblin ’53**
Rev. David William Hamblin, Sr., 84, of Abilene passed away on Aug. 26, 2014, in Abilene. He served on the McMurry Board of Trustees for many years and was also awarded the Doctor of Divinity Degree in May of 1982 by McMurry University.

Hamblin was a United Methodist minister for 44 years, retiring in 1995. He served his ministry appointments in Shep/Wingate; Eula/Potosi/Rogers; Blackwell; Sunray; Fairpark (Abilene); Trinity (Snyder); O’Donnell; Memphis; Littlefield; Aldersgate (Abilene) and Muleshoe. He also served as District Superintendent of the Big Spring District and the Lubbock District. From 1986 through 1995 he served as the Senior Pastor of St. Paul United Methodist Church (Abilene).

**Admiral Hugh Don Campbell (USN Ret.) ’59**
Admiral Hugh Don Campbell (USN Ret.), a 1991 McMurry University Distinguished Alumnus, passed away peacefully at home on Friday, October 3, following 17 years of recovery and therapy from a massive stroke in 1998. He would have been 77 on October 25.

After a distinguished career in the Navy, Admiral Campbell retired as The Judge Advocate General of the Navy and the Marines, reporting to the Secretary of the Navy. His honors included Inspector General of the Naval Material and Naval Sea Systems Command. His personal decorations included the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal and the Navy Commendation Medal, including a Combat “V.”

**Billy Cole III ’16**
McMurry University scholar athlete Billy Charles Cole, III, of Sachse, Texas, died on August 12, 2014, as a result of a traffic accident.

Cole graduated from Sachse High School in 2012 and was just about to start his junior year. He was a running back and special team player for the War Hawk football team.

Cole consistently kept a GPA of 4.0 throughout his entire high school and college careers. He made the Dean’s List every semester as well as was invited to become a member of the McMurry Investment Committee his sophomore year. He was also inducted as a member of the Alpha Lambda Delta National Academic Honor Society at McMurry, outstanding academic excellence, Triple Crown Award for Excellence in Athletics and other awards.
When Lila Senter ’75 returned to college at McMurry she was fortunate to have a supportive husband, Bill, and an exceptional professor, Caroline Couch Blair, who encouraged and inspired her. One year Professor Couch Blair gave Lila a “word gift” and she will never forget that moment. Lila says, “I had always been enchanted with the magic of words and this was a unique and wondrous gift.”

A word gift is a very particular choice of words chosen for a special person. It can be a poem, short story, quote, or original work as long as it serves as a way of saying, “I am thinking especially of you.” The feelings associated with receiving a word gift stayed with Lila and she continues to send word gifts to her loved ones, especially during the holiday season.

As an avid enthusiast of all things Abilene, Lila supports many causes, including the McMurry Fund. She says “West Texas and Abilene are hidden treasures. We have everything! A prominent cultural landscape, strong industry, lots of educational opportunities, and ways to serve our world and fellow man. We all should do what we can to strengthen our community and what it has to offer.”

Lila served on the founding board for a local non-profit, Abilene Hope Haven, whose mission is to cure homelessness, one person at a time. She was always brainstorming ideas for how to provide long term support for this organization. The memory of receiving Professor Couch Blair’s word gift rushed back and inspiration hit. Her idea to write a book comprised of word gifts featuring friends’ art and photography came to fruition and all of the proceeds were used to create an endowment for Abilene Hope Haven. Funds from the endowment help provide a simple, wholesome place for residents to live while working to improve their situations. Executive Director and alumna Alana Jeter ’01 says, “Abilene Hope Haven’s goal is for our resident’s to become self-sufficient, responsible and productive members of our community. Lila’s unwavering support over the last 20 years has made our mission possible.”

To purchase a copy of *The Gift* and support Abilene Hope Haven call 1-800-788-7654.

“I HAD ALWAYS BEEN ENCHANTED WITH THE MAGIC OF WORDS AND THIS WAS A UNIQUE AND WONDROUS GIFT.”
Gifts to the McMurry Fund Jay-Rollins Library provide students with resources like computers and educational books.

Thank you for your support.