BILL LIBBY
Teacher, Mentor, Coach and Shepherd
Alumni and Friends,

It has been a year of change at McMurry University. The new members of the leadership team, who will help guide us through the years ahead, are a major component of the evolution of McMurry University. In chronological order of their arrival on campus, we conducted national searches for the following leadership positions:

**Intercollegiate Athletics:** Sam Ferguson became McMurry’s Athletic Director on May 1, 2014 and has ably led the athletic department in its return to NCAA Division III during this transition period. He joined McMurry from Averett University in Danville, Virginia. He brought us a wealth of experience in NCAA Division III athletics. Ferguson served as Averett University’s director of athletics for five years from 2006-2011. Since arriving at McMurry, Ferguson has had the important task of filling head coaching positions in football, men’s and women’s soccer, men’s and women’s basketball, cross country, men’s and women’s indoor and outdoor track, and men’s and women’s golf. These new leaders will, along with our new Faculty Athletics Representative Dr. Robert Wallace, shape a well-respected scholar athlete program as we return to the American Southwest Conference.

**Enrollment Management:** David Heringer joined McMurry as the vice president for enrollment management on February 9, 2015. In his new position, he oversees the admissions, financial aid, student affairs, registrar, the academic enrichment center, and the Dyess offices. Heringer brings a wealth of enrollment experience garnered during his twenty-three years as an enrollment professional in private higher education.

**Academic Affairs:** Dr. James W. Hunt began serving as Vice President for Academic Affairs on April 1, 2015. Previously he served as the provost and Dean of the Faculty at Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas. Dr. Hunt has outstanding academic and administrative credentials as well as a demonstrated commitment to excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service. Hunt’s expertise will serve us well as he works with the faculty to develop an academic plan that advances academic excellence while enhancing student success, the first centennial imperative in the strategic plan.

**Religious Life:** Rev. Jeff Lust, a 1983 McMurry alumnus, will be back on campus as our new University Chaplain and Director of Religious Life starting July 1, 2015. Rev. Lust comes to us after serving as the provost in the New Mexico Conference of the United Methodist Church. As the McMurry chaplain, Rev. Lust will provide professional pastoral care and counseling for faculty, staff and students and will oversee comprehensive religious life programming on campus in coordination with faculty, staff and student leaders. Rev. Lust will also help develop domestic and international mission opportunities and partnerships. As articulated in the Centennial Vision, McMurry will continue to claim its church-related identity that God’s grace and a life of service are foundational to all persons. The University Chaplain and faculty leaders, with the support of a grant from the Lilly Fellows Program, will encourage an ongoing institution-wide dialogue and reflection on the practice of teaching and scholarship at a church-related institution.

As confirmed in the alumni attitude survey in 2014, a key strength of the McMurry University experience is the relationship between our students and other members of the McMurry community. We believe that our students will benefit greatly from our new leaders in academic affairs, enrollment management, religious life, and intercollegiate athletics. Please join me in welcoming them to our academic community.

SANDRA S. HARPER, PH.D.  
PRESIDENT
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McMurry Student Foundation Presents at CASE Conference

The McMurry Student Foundation was invited to speak at the Council for Advancement and Support of Education Affiliated Student Advancement Programs (CASE ASAP) District IV Conference on February 7 at the University of North Texas. The McMurry Student Foundation president, Shelby Wattenbarger ’15, and vice president, Sara Wickenheiser ’15, did a presentation on an event the group has facilitated each of the last three years called Student Engagement and Philanthropy Day.

The presentation, titled *Little Wallet – Big Voice*, educated participants on how students at McMurry University are given a voice in philanthropic endeavors by the McMurry Student Foundation, even if they are unable to give direct financial support. Shelby and Sara articulated this point by walking through each year’s event, from planning to execution, answering questions from the audience throughout. The presentation was designed to provide examples of how Student Engagement and Philanthropy Day can be implemented or improved on any campus, to discuss how to incorporate stewardship into this student centered day, and to demonstrate how the McMurry Student Foundation empowers students to give without actually asking them for money.

Biology Student Receives Award

McMurry biology student Mitchell Crittenden ’15 was awarded the Vernon Bailey Award recognizing the Outstanding Poster Presentation in Classical Mammalogy by an Undergraduate at the 33rd annual Texas Society of Mammalogists (TSM) meeting, held February 13-15.

Mitchell’s poster entitled “Clarification of the distribution of the eastern mole (Scalopus aquaticus, Talpidae) on the Southern Rolling Plains region of Texas” described his summer research project collecting moles in the counties surrounding the city of Abilene. Mitchell found that moles are more abundant in this region that previously recorded and prefer fine sandy soils.

This project was funded through the Clark W. Beasley Endowment Fund, which was selected by the Science and Math Advisory Board (SMAB) to students in the School of Natural & Computational Science wishing to do summer research. Mitchell will graduate with a B.S. in Biology in May.

War Hawks’ Record First No-hitter

Senior right-handed pitcher Mitch Labbie ’15 recorded the War Hawks’ first no-hitter since McMurry reinstated baseball in 1996 after a 47-year hiatus (and the only one on record) with a dominating performance against the DeSales University Bulldogs on March 7, 2015.

Dr. Harper Elected to United Methodist Board

Dr. Sandra S. Harper has been elected to serve on the 26-member board of the National Association of Schools and Colleges of the United Methodist Church (NASCUMC). Her term extends through the 2017 summer meeting. In the United States, there are 119 institutions listed by the University Senate as United Methodist-related schools, colleges, universities, medical college, and theological schools. Institutions are represented in NASCUMC by their chief executive officers.
Two Donors Help with Campus Improvements
The generosity of two McMurry donors will make it possible to complete three paving projects around campus this summer.

The parking lot south of the Seidel-Swagerty Tennis Center on Hunt Street will be paved for the first time. Also, War Hawk Way, the road east of Wilford Moore Stadium, and McMurry Court between Radford and Maedgen will be repaved.

Hukill Elected to Theatre Association Office
Charlie Hukill was elected President-Elect of the Texas Educational Theatre Association (TETA) at its annual Theatrefest convention in Houston January 30-February 1. After serving in this capacity for two years, he will assume the role of the President for two years.

The Texas Educational Theatre Association, founded in 1951, strives to use all resources available to strengthen theatre teachers, and build on existing programs around the state to continue to improve the quality of theatre education in the state of Texas.

Hukill also directed McMurry student Charles Hughes ’15 winning TETA Playfest original script, Moran, at the conference. The play was performed by McMurry students Graeme Regan ’17, Lacey Reece ’17, Karl Taylor ’16, and Isaac Chantos ’16. Hughes is the 14th winning McMurry playwright in the TETA Playfest competition since 1999.

Model UN Wins Awards
The McMurry Model UN team won two awards at the National Model United Nations-Rome conference in November. The students, representing Argentina, won the Distinguished Delegation Award, and Salome Block ’15 and Matthew Brown ’16 won the Best Position Paper Award in the General Assembly Plenary.

Ashlea Beckner ’17 Elected to CASE
Ashlea Beckner ’17, current awareness officer of the McMurry Student Foundation, was recently selected to be a district representative for a national organization. The Council for Advancement and Support of Education, Affiliated Student Advancement Programs (CASE ASAP) strives to foster and enhance student involvement in all areas of advancement—from alumni relations and communications to fundraising, marketing and related areas.
Hardin Elected to Texas Historical Foundation Board

The Texas Historical Foundation (THF), a 61-year old preservation organization, announced the recent election of Dr. Stephen L. Hardin to its board of directors.


David Martinez, president of THF, said, “Having someone of Steve Hardin’s stature on the THF board, adds great depth to our organization. We expect that he will make significant contributions to the Foundation’s magazine, quarterly meetings, and in discussions regarding history projects that THF helps fund.

Since 1954, the Texas Historical Foundation has funded preservation and education projects around the state and helps promote the cultural legacy of Texas. Among the group’s main efforts is its award-winning Texas HERITAGE magazine and a preservation grants program.

Ar

Dr. Don Frazier Gives Book Talk in Boston

History professor and award-winning author Dr. Don Frazier presented a talk on his newest book, *Blood on the Bayou: Vicksburg, Port Hudson, and the Trans-Mississippi*, on March 10 at the Boston Athenaeum in Boston, Massachusetts.

In the book, Dr. Frazier recasts a well-known story of the struggle for control of the Mississippi in the American Civil War as a contest for control of the Confederacy’s African-American populations. Although Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation freed the slaves in 1863, the task of moving these liberated people into the Union and making use of their labor in the war effort fell to the Federal army and navy. Frazier’s book shows how the campaign to reduce Rebel forts west of the river also involved the creation of a black army of occupation and a remaking of the landscape of the nation.

Founded in 1807, the Boston Athenaeum is one of the oldest and most distinguished independent libraries and cultural institutions in the United States.

Band Invited to March in London New Year’s Day Parade

The McMurry War Hawk Marching Band has received an invitation to march in the 2016 London New Year’s Day Parade. The parade is the largest New Year’s Day parade in the world, annually drawing a street audience of more than a half million people and a worldwide television audience of nearly 300 million viewers. Set in downtown London, the two-mile parade passes the city’s iconic landmarks, ending in the famed Parliament Square.

A special ceremony was held Thursday, February 26, in the Garrison Campus Center Mabee Room as Lord Mayor of The City of Westminster Duncan Sandys, great grandson of Winston Churchill and Executive Director of the Parade Robert C. Bone extended a formal invitation to the McMurry Band. The National Anthems from both countries was played by the band as part of the ceremony.

Participation in the parade is only by invitation from the parade’s steering committee in the United Kingdom. The 2015 parade featured more than 8,500 performers from 20 countries around the world and included only two American university marching bands, the University of Northern Iowa Panther Marching Band and the Appalachian State University Marching Mountaineers.
As a freshman in 2013, Charles Hughes ‘16, came up with an idea for a play, wrote it, and solicited help from playwriting professor Charlie Hukill. Hughes wasn’t in Hukill’s class, but that didn’t matter to him or Hukill, who read Hughes’ play, along with those written by his students, and saw potential. Just because Hughes wasn’t in his class didn’t stop Hukill from doing what McMurry teachers do—he jumped at the opportunity to help Hughes succeed.

“This play wouldn’t exist without Mr. Hukill,” Hughes said.

Hukill would tell you that his reward is in the success of his students. But he and Hughes both were nicely rewarded in February by the Texas Educational Theatre Association at its meeting in Houston. Hukill was chosen president-elect of the association and Hughes’ play, “Moran,” the one Hukill helped with, was named one of two winners in the university division. The other winning writer was a graduate student at Texas Tech University.

Hughes’ winner was Number 14 for the McMurry University playwriting class taught by Hukill. He first started offering the class about 1997 and his first winner came in 1999. Schools of all sizes, from community college through large state universities, compete against one another in the university division.

Hukill credits his students for all those honors, but his students, like Hughes, say that without Hukill’s mentoring, their plays wouldn’t even exist.

Students have been saying that since Hukill joined the Theatre Department faculty in 1985. His philosophy of teaching playwriting came from one of his former professors, the late Paul Baker, who taught graduate courses at the Dallas Theater Center. It was Baker’s belief that all his students had a play in them, Hukill said, and required them to write it.

“I kind of hold that same attitude,” Hukill said.

Hukill teaches his playwriting class every other spring and then enters selected scripts in the Texas Educational Theatre Association contest between those class years. His grading system is based on the student’s ability to meet a deadline and adherence to a set format.

“I usually just try to guide them,” he said. “I don’t try to rewrite.” Whatever the process, it obviously works, and Hukill’s students are grateful for his guidance. Former students stay in touch and current students, like Hughes, appreciate his knowledge and dedication.
The following are the three imperatives upon which all activity will be focused:

1. **IMPERATIVE**

   Advance Academic Excellence while Enhancing Student Success.

2. **IMPERATIVE**

   Recruit, Retain, and Graduate a diverse and engaged student body with the propensity to learn.

MCMURRY MOMENTUM: GROUNDED IN THE PAST,
The approved plan *McMurry Momentum: Grounded in the Past, Soaring to the Future* was a collaborative effort that included broad based input from stakeholders across campus through various leadership groups and town halls.

McMurry graduates will continue to be servant leaders and to contribute to our multifaceted society in meaningful ways. McMurry will be known for the excellence and integrity of its programs and the academic and professional success of its students, graduates, and faculty. The University will be acknowledged nationally as a community engaged campus.

McMurry University with its dedicated Board of Trustees, alumni, faculty, staff, students, and community friends will collaborate to make the strategic plan a reality.

To view the complete plan please visit about.mcm.edu
One of the more recent plaques added to his wall is the Heartbeat of Campus Service award given last fall. The inscription says, “These awards carry special meaning because they symbolize the singular importance of faculty and staff in the McMurry experience.”

Bill Libby is the embodiment of that award. He has touched anyone with a tie to McMurry during his time on campus in some way.

When Torik Banks was in Libby’s religion class in the late 1990s, he realized that his professor was more than just a man who knew a lot about religion. He knew about Libby’s experiences as an Army chaplain in Vietnam and his relationship with students in the cross-country program that he started. He sought Libby’s advice and guidance.

“Who would be better as a mentor?” Banks asked. “No one.”

Banks graduated from McMurry with a degree in political science in 2001. He now is a director of operations with Aramark in San Antonio, the same food service that provides meals at McMurry.
He has built on what he learned in classes at McMurry and from professors like Libby. At McMurry, Banks learned from the way Libby interacted with others and now puts those same principles to use in his job.

He saw in Libby a shepherd’s heart, a desire to see others succeed and a willingness to invest time in them to help them succeed.

“Those are some of the things I want to do,” Banks said. “Invest in people.”

By the time Libby arrived at McMurry in 1996, he already had lived a full life and had invested in hundreds of lives. His bachelor’s degree from Texas A&M University carried an Army commission with it. He later was ordained by the United Methodist Church and transferred that commission to the chaplaincy corps.

After his service in Vietnam, Libby was asked to counsel soldiers who had returned from active duty, often emotionally scarred.

“I literally was talking almost weekly about Vietnam to these young soldiers,” he said. That experience, plus being a minister and possessing an extrovert’s personality, all contributed to making Libby a perfect college professor and mentor to young people.

“I would read a book,” Libby recalled, “and they would watch the movies.”

Talitha Belcher Alexander remembers those trips with fondness. She was a basketball player and joined Libby’s cross-country team as a way to stay in shape in the off-season. She remembers the team dancing in the aisles of the bus trips—and getting Libby to join them.

“He would do it,” Alexander said, “and just laugh and go back to doing what he was doing.”

Since graduating in 2002 with a degree in multi-disciplinary studies and a teaching certificate, Alexander has taught or been in school administration. Today, she is principal of a charter school in Austin.

In every job, she has used the psychology she learned from Libby when she was running cross-country or in his religion class. He was passionate about his team and constantly pushed them to do better,” Alexander recalled. One day she had a revelation.

“You know what,” she thought, “I can do better.” And she did, improving from “back of the pack” to third in conference competition her senior year.

Alexander also appreciated how Libby’s influence helped a group of students from diverse backgrounds get along together and become a team.

“It all came from him,” she said. Students aren’t the only ones who have developed a relationship with Libby over two decades. Since 2002, Libby and political science professor
Paul Fabrizio have co-hosted a radio program called “The Professors.” Originally a twice-a-week program, the show was so popular that the management of KWKC 1340 made it a daily program in 2005.

Spending that much time together has given Fabrizio an opportunity to see deep into what makes Libby tick. He has a deep desire, Fabrizio said, to communicate what he has learned through his varied life experiences.

Libby has a “teacher’s heart,” Fabrizio said, a willingness to share his knowledge and experience, not try to impress others with it. And as he teaches, he also is constantly learning. He closely follows developments in the Middle East and has a better understanding of that culture and history than most. Besides teaching Old Testament courses, Libby for years has led teams of students on archaeological digs in Jordan.

“He is uniquely curious about the world,” Fabrizio said.

He also may be the most recognizable face on campus. Libby is known to “wander from building to building,” as he put it, making a point of getting to know students and faculty.

“I think he’s got a pretty regular circuit on campus,” said K.O. Long, dean of the School of Business.

Long and his wife first got to know Libby when he was associate pastor at St. Paul UMC and taught an adult Sunday School class. They also have traveled together to London, leading teams of students over the Christmas break.

Like Libby’s students, Long has noticed how encouraging and affirming he is. Probably no one at McMurry attends more campus athletic, educational, and cultural events than Libby.

“You can count on Bill to be there and send out an email encouraging people to attend,” Long said. “He’s a great promoter and booster of everything on campus.”

Bill Libby carries a number of labels from current and former students and colleagues—teacher, mentor, coach, encourager, and shepherd. But perhaps his longtime friend and radio co-host, Fabrizio, summed it up best.

“Bill is just a good man,” he said.

Professor Rev. Bill Libby Donates Property to University

Rev. Bill Libby recently donated his 140-acre ranch southeast of Abilene to McMurry as a field research station for use by biology science students and faculty.

“Since coming to the McMurry faculty, I have invited numerous individuals and groups to use the property. For example, Dr. Joel Brant (Biology) has used the area for research with cameras and traps to document various forms of wildlife. Dr. Brant and I cosponsored the KIVA Men’s Social Club which has been out numerous times for cook outs and overnight camp outs along with other student groups,” said Rev. Libby.

Nicknamed Firebase Libby in honor of Rev. Libby’s service as a United Methodist chaplain with the 101st Airborne during the Vietnam War, the ranch will provide a venue where ecological and physical monitoring can occur. Students will benefit from the real world, hands-on experience of collecting this essential data, better equipping them for post-graduate opportunities.
Texas First Lady Cecilia Abbott was the keynote speaker at McMurry University 2015 Women’s Leadership Luncheon—“Women Leading for the Greater Good” on Tuesday, March 31, in the Garrison Campus Center Mabee Room. She addressed the more than 280 women leaders from the Abilene community and the surrounding area as well as McMurry faculty, staff and students. Abilene Mayor Norm Archibald proclaimed the day as Texas First Lady Cecilia Abbott Day in Abilene.

Mrs. Abbott has devoted her life to serving others. She was a teacher, vice-principal and then principal at several schools across Texas. Most recently she served as the principal of the Cathedral School of St. Mary in Austin from 1996 to 2001. Governor Perry appointed Cecilia to the State Board of Educator Certification, where she served from 2001 to 2008.

She has also focused on health care for seniors. Since 2004, she has served as the managing director of community relations at Harden Healthcare, a network of senior adult health care facilities and services.

It was announced at the luncheon that Taylor Russell, a junior biomedical science major from Liberty Hill, Texas, has been selected by McMurry University to receive the Dr. Sandra S. Harper Women’s Leadership Scholarship for the 2015-16 academic year.
The Dr. Sandra S. Harper Women’s Leadership Scholarship was established by women leaders in the Abilene area in honor of the inauguration of Dr. Sandra S. 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 scholarship 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.

Russell is a McMurry honors student and has been named to the Dean’s List three times. She is a member of the Student Athlete Advisory Committee, T.I.P. women’s social club, the Bass Club and Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

She has been active in the Abilene community through service at the Disability Resources Inc. Pumpkin Patch, Abilene Youth Expo, Boo at the Zoo and Abilene Heart Walk.

The scholarship is funded through proceeds from the annual Women’s Leadership Luncheon.
STUDENTS CONFIDENTLY PURSUING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE WORKING WORLD

KATHERINE MANSON
McMurry University produces graduates who feel confident leaving campus to pursue opportunities in the working world. Those students graduating from the University’s school of business credit much of that confidence to their Senior Capstone class, Strategic Management.

The class is required for all business students and focuses on integrating the core requirements and fundamental topics of marketing, finance, accounting, management, and economics.

Dr. Pat Lapoint, a professor in the school of business, has been teaching the Capstone course for more than 10 years and is an instrumental component of the success of the class.

“I’m not an easy professor; I’m pretty rigorous and demanding,” said Dr. Lapoint. “I set my expectations very high for these young people, and what I’ve generally learned, is that they meet my expectations. By the time they finish this course, they feel confident and know they can handle and master any challenge.”

The course’s final project revolves around the Business Simulation Game, featuring an online experience that the class participates in as teams. They work as senior level management would, in roles like CEO and president, to manage and make decisions for their simulated company. The Business Simulation Game allows the teams to compete against the rest of the class, as well as on a global basis.
In the last six years, one team at McMurry has been ranked 6th nationally within their industry category at the Business Simulations Invitational.

“Some of the kids in your class surprise you,” Dr. Lapoint said. “You don’t always think they’re paying as much attention, but they continually prove that they are learning.”

The teams manage their simulated companies while competing against their classmates, as well as against other university students across the world participating in the same online Business Simulation Game. The global competition is called the Top Global 100, and features colleges and universities worldwide ranging from 3,600 to this year’s total participants of 5,500.

“I’m always reminded that these young people have an enormous amount of talent,” Dr. Lapoint said. “They have a different way of approaching things, their talent just bubbles up and it’s wonderful to see.”

The class has been recognized in the past through teams ranking high in the Top Global 100. The Global 100 rankings are calculated on key performance indicators and overall score. The ranked teams represent a select group of students with excellent overall Business Simulation Game performance.

“Several teams from previous Capstone courses placed in the Top Global 100 for several weeks throughout the semester, and in one case, for all 10 ‘game years’. In this year’s current course, one team tied for 94th rank in the simulated year 2014,” explained Dr. Lapoint.

Throughout the history of the successful simulation game, approximately three teams have been awarded top honors in the Strategic Management course after being invited to compete in the Business Simulation Invitational. The invitational is a unique two-week intensive competition featuring all first ranked teams from various colleges and universities. In the last six years, one team at McMurry has been ranked 6th nationally within their industry category at the Business Simulations Invitational. These business simulations put students in difficult business situations where they must work as senior leadership would, in order to make the appropriate business decisions. Students leave the course with the ability to approach complex problems and work as a team.

Connor Davis ’14, knows firsthand how Dr. Lapoint’s Strategic Management class prepared him for life following graduation. The business management and finance graduate is currently an Associate Service Consultant at CenterPoint Energy in Houston.

“Dr. Lapoint holds her students to a higher standard,” explained Davis. “The Capstone course taught us how to become overly prepared, and ready for anything that might be thrown at us. We were always expected to act professionally and present ourselves in that manner throughout our class presentations and projects. Dr. Lapoint would hold us to a higher standard than we would sometimes hold ourselves.”

The capstone course is only available for
Students in the School of Business Strategic Management Capstone course participate as teams in the Business Simulation Game. They work in roles like CEO and president, to manage and make decisions for the simulated company. They then compete against their classmates and over 5,500 colleges and universities worldwide. In this year’s current course, one team tied for a 94th ranking.

During its history three teams have been awarded top honors after being invited to compete in the Business Simulation Invitational. The invitational is a unique two-week intensive competition featuring all high-ranking teams from various colleges and universities.
“The most rewarding part of my job is knowing that I made a difference in an animal’s life.”

Lori Hehm
A Passion for Making a Difference

From Veterinary Medicine to Children’s Author

Katherine Manson

Lori Hehn is passionate about what she does. For the past 11 years, Hehn has been practicing veterinary medicine, after completing her undergraduate studies from McMurry University and obtaining her Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine. She is currently practicing at Desert Hills Animal Hospital in Phoenix, Arizona.

“The most rewarding part of my job is knowing that I made a difference in an animal’s life,” Hehn said. “I like challenging medical cases, and find joy in seeing that I have brought comfort to an animal, or even to their owner who is trying to make difficult decisions. I find that by treating each animal as if it were my own is the best way to practice.”
While an undergraduate student at McMurry, Hehn knew science was her favorite subject and she began studying Biology. After growing up with horses and a dog, Hehn shadowed a local veterinarian in her hometown that inspired her to pursue veterinary school after her three years at McMurry. While an undergraduate student, Hehn worked a part-time job at a local veterinary clinic in Abilene, where she gained invaluable experience alongside her studies.

“McMurry has a great science program,” explained Hehn. “At the time, I don’t think I realized just how valuable a liberal arts education is. The small class sizes and amazing professors are the reason that I loved McMurry. I actually got to know my teachers and their mentorship was a huge part of me becoming successful. At McMurry, I wasn’t just another number, and the teachers really care about the students.”

Her liberal arts education paid off as she expanded her career past veterinary medicine. In addition to her work as a veterinarian, Hehn began writing and publishing children’s books in 2011.

After visiting the local library with her children from the time they were babies, Hehn developed the idea to create a series of children’s books that show the process of what happens when a pet gets sick and what happens when you take your pet to see the veterinarian. The five books also teach young readers about pet care, basic species knowledge, and introduce new medical terms. With the help of her father, who illustrated the books, Hehn’s first book Albert Einstein Goes to the Vet was published in 2011.

“It became a great project for us to accomplish together,” Hehn said of working alongside her father. “Our Little Vet Books are designed for children with a desire to learn more about animals and veterinary medicine. I wrote these books so that young readers may help the vet make a diagnosis, treat the pet, and see them get better.”

Albert Einstein Goes to the Vet, Razz Has Surgery, Mavis the Rescued Tortoise, Winter’s Sugar Gets Colic, and Harriet Has a Parasite are available at Amazon.com.

After the publishing of her books, Hehn began hosting an annual event with fellow veterinary colleagues at her local library called “Little Vet Day.” The event is open and free to the Phoenix
community and allows children to have a hands-on glimpse of what veterinarians do in their daily jobs. Children are able to look at pet x-rays, view various skulls and bones at the anatomy station, view mites and fleas under a microscope in the parasite station, and listen to the heart beats of visiting dogs.

“One of the things that I learned in servant leadership at McMurry, and find is very important for any profession, is finding some small way to give back to the community. This is one of the best things you can do for yourself and for others,” said Hehn.

For Hehn, combining her professional work as a veterinarian with the creative outlet of her children’s books went hand-in-hand.

“One of the things that makes me the happiest is seeing children learning and happy,” Hehn said.
ATHLETE PROFILE

Connor Robinson ’15

HERE’S TO YOU, MR. ROBINSON!
In his four-year career as a McMurry University men’s basketball player, senior Connor Robinson gained a somewhat quiet notoriety as a blue-collar player. And he was just fine with that.

“I’ve never really been the ‘flashy’ guy on the court that would beat someone with pure athleticism,” Robinson reflected. “One thing that I tried to tell myself before every game or practice was to just stick to my strengths and the stuff that has gotten me this far in my basketball career. I would approach the game with running different scenarios through my head and different situations that allowed me to think about the game, this I believe helped me to be engaged mentally even before the ball has been tossed for tip-off.”

Robinson was like building the framework for a house: he provided that unseen stability. Especially during his first three seasons, Robinson labored with consistent excellence across the board, but did not necessarily gain the same attention that came to others with better “glamor numbers” during those seasons.

“It was definitely different not being the ‘go-to guy’ my first few years,” Robinson said. “In high school I saw the ball in my hand a great deal, similar to this year. But coming in my first few years I knew there were guys that have had more experience at the college level and had a good feel for everything. I looked to learn things from guys like Steve Jones ’14, Kenny Williams ’14 and Alfred Perez ’14. After playing with them throughout the years, I feel like it transformed me into the player I am today, and allowed me to be ready once my number was called.”

As a senior in 2014-15, the spotlight finally belonged to Robinson, as McMurry’s lone four-year player on the roster. Now the elder statesman for the Maroon & White, Robinson left the opposition black-and-blue after putting the hurt on virtually every opponent.

His season finished in the near-sacred realm with an average of 25.2 points per game, which surpassed the previous record of 24.4 points per game set by McMurry legend Rick Penny ’76 in 1974-75. Robinson’s total of 554 points was the 15-best total ever amassed by a McMurry player. He had double-figure scoring in 20 of 22 games played, scored better than 20 points on 16 occasions and surpassed 30 points in eight of those contests. He shot better than 62 percent from the field, while also averaging 8.6 rebounds and 2.3 assists per game.

The first two outings of the 2014-15 season (both McMurry wins) were a foreshadowing of what was to come for the 6-foot-6 native of Austin. In the opener versus Concordia-Texas, Robinson scored 44 points – missing the school’s single game record by a single point – and grabbing 15 rebounds. In the next game at Centenary College, Robinson poured in 37 points and cleaned the glass for 21 rebounds.

The skills displayed on the court by Robinson were an extension of his off-court work ethic, which earned him the nickname of “lumberjack” (which he also adopted as his Twitter handle) as a tribute to how he approached practices. Robinson was the proverbial “first-one-in, last-one-out” for the War Hawks’ team. More importantly, he also carries one of the top grade point averages on the squad.

“As much as I love athletics, at the end of the day I know that academics is extremely important and should be taken seriously,” Robinson explained. “I do approach both basketball and the books similarly; through hard work and dedication you will either receive that good grade on a test or big game against a strong opponent.”

“After college if a pro career in basketball doesn’t pan out, I plan to move back to my hometown of Austin, Texas. From there I plan on using my Finance degree to find a job in the financial field, all while hoping to achieve my main goal in life which is to own my own business:”
McMurry University women’s tennis player Jessica Bentley may seem like she’s burning the proverbial candle at both ends, but the senior wouldn’t have it any other way. In addition to being a third-year member of the War Hawks’ tennis team, she also currently serves as the student body president.

And that’s just scratching the surface.

“Being involved at McMurry is great,” Bentley reflected. “Along with being the Student Body President and a member of the women’s tennis team, I am the captain of the women’s tennis team, a previous chaplain for the tennis team, a member of T.I.P. women’s social club, a McMurry tour guide, a McMurry Orientation Leader, a member of the Honor’s Program, and ATPE just to name a few things I do.”

“Being involved in multiple organizations and activities allows me to get more than an education and diploma from my college experience. All of these activities have taught me important life lessons like time management, how to handle criticism, how to act professionally in a variety of settings, and the best way to deal with situations. As an added bonus to learning not only about McMurry but about life, my involvement on campus has given me the opportunity to have loads of fun and make life-long memories and friendships.”

But being “involved” has been Bentley’s hallmark from when she first began at McMurry and her continued work with McMurry Student Government (MSG) – and ascendency to student body president – have been a natural progression. In her years on campus, she was elected freshman class president, sophomore class president and also served on McMurry’s Board of Trustee Finance Committee as the MSG student representative.

“I love interacting with people be it in a team setting, a classroom setting, or in other capacities, Bentley explained. “I knew that being student body president would allow me to meet and build relationships with many of our students, faculty, and awesome alumni and be impactful while doing so. Basically, I wanted to make a difference and meet a lot of people along the way.”

There have been benefits beyond the interpersonal, as well. Bentley’s collegiate years have already taught her some good time management skills and the ability to multi-task. “It is challenging at times, Bentley says of her hectic schedule. “There are days where I ask myself, ‘What did I get myself into?’ Take Homecoming for instance. I had to attend a Board of Trustee meeting at 7:30 Friday morning, take pictures for tennis at 8 a.m., go back to the Board meeting immediately after pictures, and go to the alumni tournament that the team was hosting as soon as possible. It was hectic, but sometimes you have to go to what you can when you can, even if that means wearing a tennis uniform to the first half of a meeting or a suit and heels to a tournament to support your team.”

“The key to balancing MSG and tennis is time management and dividing the appropriate amount of time between both activities; I like to think I do a good job at this. I am also very blessed with MSG members and sponsors, a tennis team, and a tennis coach who are always willing to lend a helping hand when balancing everything gets difficult.”
RALPH EUGENE COOPER ‘60 writes, “I have completed two master’s degrees (one from SMU in Dallas and another from Western Evangelical Seminary in Oregon, now a part of George Fox University graduate school). We were also missionaries to the Dominican Republic for two years. We are now retired.”

JESSE WAYNE PARHAM ‘73 writes, “I had been severely wounded in Vietnam on my 21st birthday in 1968. My brother, Sammy, was at McMurry on a scholarship. While in the hospital, I decided to apply to attend McMurry College and become a coach. They accepted me in July ’69 and I graduated in December ’73 and taught and coached. Thank you McMurry for everything!

DEAN BROWN ‘78 has recently taken the position of Technology Director at SageRider, Inc, a company he started with two friends in June 2008. Those friends were partners in starting a previous company with him as well in 2004, called Reliance Technology Specialists, LLC.

RANDALL WHITE ‘87 is the Vice President of Administrative Services and Chief Financial Officer at Northwest Florida State College in Niceville, FL. He retired in 2013 as a Colonel after 33 years of active duty in the US Air Force. His wife, Maria, is a colonel in the Air Force Reserves and federal civil servant. They are members of and absolutely love Crosspoint UMC where they actively attend.

MONNIE HISE ‘96 is now the Director of Telecom Operations for AEP Texas.

JACKIE WARD ‘99 is now working as Senior Division Order Analyst for Osborn Heirs Company in San Antonio, Texas.

DAVID CHANDLER ‘00 accepted a position at St. Edward’s as their first head cross country coach.

KEVIN EVANS ‘04 AND EMILY PAYNE EVANS ‘04 are both graduates from the school of Education. Emily is a teacher and coach at Peaster High School just outside of Weatherford. Keith has recently hung up his coaching and teaching gear for assistant principal attire at Fort Worth Brewer High School in White Settlement just east of Weatherford. The couple reside in Springtown, TX with their seven year old daughter, Kinley.
'02 DONLEY BIXLER-RIGG ‘02, married Ryan Bixler-Rigg on September 27, 2014 in Chicago, IL. Donley works as a Children’s Planner in the Buying Department for Shoe Carnival, Inc. at the corporate office.

'03 JESSICA LUCAS STAPP ‘03, Breckenridge Junior High School principal, was selected as one of three finalists for the Texas Junior High School Principal of the Year for 2015 awarded by the Texas Association of Secondary School Principals. Last July, Jessica was named the Region 14 Middle School Principal of the Year for the 2014-2015 school year. As a five-year administrator, Jessica has headed the leadership team at Breckenridge Junior High for four years. She has been with the BISD for a total of eight years.

'14 BRADLEY ROWLAND ‘14 had a feature article published in the February issue of Nanomedicine: Nanotechnology, Biology and Medicine, an international, peer-reviewed journal. After completing his degree at McMurry, he worked as an intern at the Abilene campus of Texas Tech School of Pharmacy with faculty mentor Dr. Irene LaBeck. Bradley currently works at Hendrick Medical Center in the emergency room and is planning a career in medicine.

ALUMNI AUTHORS

'70 NORMA NATION ‘70 has published a work of fiction, Beloved Wife. Base on a true story, “It is a tale torn straight from the yellowed pages of history deep in the heart of small-town Texas.” The book is available at amazon.com and xlibris.com, or by visiting your local bookstore.

'96 LEESA FREEMAN ’96 released her second novel, Into the Deep End, in March 2015. Leesa writes this novel is, “A labor of love, I can’t wait for readers to meet Luke Stevenson and discover his story.” More information can be found on her website leesafreeman.com.

'04 LYNDSAY LLEWELLYN BAKER ’04 and her husband Kevin welcomed their little girl, Kaitlyn Jo Baker, into the world on August 12, 2014, at 12:12 p.m. She was 7lb 10oz and was 20.75 inches long.

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:

(leave additional sheet of paper if needed)
Dear Alumni,

We welcome our newest members of the McMurry Alumni Association. For many years, there has been a disconnect between being students and being alumni. To help with this transition and create a more engaged alumni base, the Alumni Association has created an “alumnus in training” initiative.

From the day they arrive on campus until they receive their degree, students should understand what it means to be McMurry alumni. We need more purposeful and frequent interactions between the two. Since my last letter in the fall, alumni have participated in career activities for students on campus, given a communication seminar, and shared their perspectives on campus. Alumni working on advanced degrees have returned for classroom visits have helped put concepts taught into practical application. Students also had the experience of participating with alumni in the inaugural McMurry Serves event across the state.

These are a great start, but we need so many more alumni volunteering and participating – serve as a mentor to current students, work with social clubs, call prospective students, make classroom visits. In short, give back and get involved.

I also want to take a moment to introduce my friend, JoLisa Hoover ’92. JoLisa will begin her two-year term as President of the McMurry Alumni Association in June. It has been my honor and privilege to serve in this capacity for the last two years. We have seen real progress in the work we’ve done with strategic planning for the Alumni Board, and our efforts to intentionally support McMurry’s centennial vision. I’m excited about the future of our university! We are always McMurry.

STEVEN BRISTOW ’96
PRESIDENT
McMurry University Alumni Association Board of Directors

Calling all Future War Hawks

We love our alumni and we love celebrating with them in life! Through the Alumni Relations Office, the McMurry Alumni Association will send the bib pictured here on baby Violet to any alumni who share their exciting birth/adoption announcements with us! Email us at alumni@mcm.edu.

Violet Driskell is the daughter of McMurry alumna Sarah Hufstedler Driskell ’08 and Jordan Driskell.

If you are a McMurry alumni and have recently had a baby, grandbaby, niece or nephew, let us know so we can put get this out to you in the mail. We can’t wait to have you share your good news with us!
CHARITABLE GIVING
THROUGH YOUR IRA

If you are like many individuals, your IRA has increased in value over the years and you have more income than you may need. If you are over age 70½ the Federal government permits you to make a tax-free rollover gift from your IRA. You could make a gift of $1,000, $10,000 or any amount up to $100,000 this year to satisfy your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD).

Contact your IRA custodian and request that McMurry receive your generous gift.

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.

McMurry Serves

More than 160 alumni, students, families and friends of McMurry gathered together on Saturday, April 25, for the first McMurry Serves, a community service initiative that embodies the Servant Leadership spirit at McMurry.

There were three different activities in Abilene - Nelson Park cleanup, McMurry campus beautification and Adaptive Recreation Services - as well as events in 11 cities in Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico.
Dr. Oneta Furr ’37

Longtime Texas educator Dr. Oneta Roberts Furr ’37, a great friend of McMurry and one of the University’s oldest alumni, died on January 13, 2015, in Abilene, Texas, at the age of 100.

Born and raised in Anson, Oneta attended McMurry graduating in 1937 with a B.S. in Elementary Education and a minor in English. She received her Master’s in Education and English at the University of North Texas, and in 1968 she received her Ed.D. in Reading and Childhood Education and Elementary Education. It was at this time she met her husband, Dr. Bedford Furr. When they graduated with their doctorate degrees, they were the only married couple to accomplish that achievement at the University of North Texas up to that time. In 1979 Oneta retired as Professor Emeritus in Education from Midwestern State University. She and her husband moved to Abilene and for several years, she served as the teacher certification officer for Hardin-Simmons. The Drs. Furr were significant benefactors to McMurry through the Shaping the Future Campaign by donating the funds to build the Furr Welcome Center, as well as establishing the Doctors H. Bedford and Oneta Roberts Furr Endowed Scholarship.

Rev. Ted Dotts

Former McMurry University Trustee Rev. Ted Jim Dotts, Jr. died on Sunday, Feb. 8, 2015, in Lubbock, Texas, at the age of 80. He was born Aug. 31, 1934, in Guymon, OK, and married Betty Shewbert on Sep. 4, 1959. They had two children: John David and Sara Rebecca Hunt.

Dotts serviced as pastor of Ropes Methodist Church, Saint James Methodist Church in Abilene, Idalou-Becton United Methodist Churches, district superintendent of the Pampa District, pastor of Saint John’s United Methodist Church in Lubbock, ethicist and associate chaplain at Methodist Hospital in Lubbock concurrently as Teaching Pastor at Second Baptist Church.

After retirement he became senior vice president of the Covenant Health System. He taught twenty-eight years in the Course of Study School at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University. He served for twenty-six years as trustee of Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas, and thirteen years as trustee at McMurry University.

With Betty, he Co-founded the PFLAG Lubbock Chapter.

Dr. E. Lyndol Harris ’56

Dr. E. Lyndol Harris, 81, passed away February 21, 2015. He was born November 12, 1933 in Busby, Texas to Velma (Holloway) and Edward Lafayette Harris.

He attended McMurry (College) University from 1952 to 1956. He then transferred to LSU where he obtained a PhD in chemistry. Upon graduation, Dr. Harris returned to McMurry when he taught chemistry from 1961 until he retired in 1994.

The family has requested any memorial gifts be sent to McMurry University.

Dr. Roy W. Sonntag

Dr. Roy Windham Sonntag, 85, passed away December 20, 2014, in Abilene, Texas. He was born in Cleburne, Texas November 17, 1929. He met Rachel Dunkelberg at North Texas State College and they were married in 1953.

Dr. Sonntag taught chemistry at McMurry from 1960 to 1996. He was inducted into the McMurry Science and Mathematics Wall of Honor in 2006 by the Science and Math Advisory Board.

Oneta Robert Furr ’37 of Abilene, TX died January 13, 2015.

Elvin Mathis ’41 of Melvin, TX died February 13, 2015.

Lucille Rucker Chessmore ’42 of Fort Worth, TX died January 12, 2015.


Lucilee Grimes Edgar ’50 of Odessa, TX died October 12, 2014.

Robert Loving ’53 of Irving, TX died March 27, 2014.

Edward Harris ’56 of Austin, TX died February 21, 2015.

Daniel Gilbreath ’58 of Abilene, TX died October 8, 2014.

Joy Medlin Busey ’68 of Bedford, TX died September 6, 2014.

Eugene Jennings ’69 of Arlington, TX died January 26, 2015.

Craig Gann ’80 of Midland, TX died October 1, 2014.

Mary Robertson Coats ’89 of Aspermont, TX died February 2, 2015.

Leah Ciclo ’03 of Odessa, TX died February 22, 2015.

Lucas Vaughn ’06 of Gunter, TX died February 1, 2015.

Sara King Wright of Dallas, TX died December 2, 2014.

Roy Sonntag of Bedford, TX died December 20, 2014.

Jerry Dean (JD) “Coach” Isler of Clovis, NM died January 11, 2015.

Ted Dotts of Lubbock, TX died February 8, 2015.
George Shoup, Jr. loved his home state of New Mexico and he loved McMurry University. So, when he died in 2012, the Shoup Family didn’t have to think twice about how to honor his legacy. They established the Shoup Memorial Scholarship fund at McMurry.

And who will benefit from that legacy? New Mexico students bound for McMurry, of course. Shoup didn’t attend McMurry, but he had a strong connection with the University, the United Methodist Church, and New Mexico. The elder Shoup was a member of the McMurry Board of Trustees in the 1990s and served as chairman of the board for several years. His son is now following in his footsteps, not only running the family business, Constructors, Inc., in Carlsbad, but also serving on the McMurry Board of Trustees.

Even though David was assured a spot in the family business after graduating from high school, his father demanded that he get a college degree. David didn’t hesitate. He immediately chose McMurry.

After earning a bachelor’s degree in business in 1991, David immediately went back to Carlsbad to join the company that his grandfather, George Shoup Sr., founded in 1958.

Today, David is following in his father’s footsteps in another way—he also touts McMurry every chance he gets.

David is pleased that the Shoup Memorial Scholarship will allow future students from New Mexico, with strong academics and a financial need, to attend his alma mater. He knows his father would be proud.

“We thought it was important to continue his legacy,” David said.
The Dodge Jones Alumni Giving Challenge is in the midst of its final year.

The Dodge Jones Foundation is now challenging all alumni to give to the McMurry Fund by October 31, 2015, matching $200,000.

Visit mcm.edu/dodgejones to see how your donation could be doubled or tripled.