

Inspiring
Solutions

Inspiring
Fellowship

Inspiring
Leadership

THE MESSENGER

McMURRY UNIVERSITY FALL/WINTER 2020-2021

we did it!
-Class of 2020

1923

**McMURRY
UNIVERSITY**

2023

CENTENNIAL ERA





FROM THE PRESIDENT

Inspiration is all around us. In this time of perpetual turmoil, inspiration may come in many unexpected forms like educators learning new tools to teach their classes, students learning remotely, athletes stepping onto the competition floor after a semester of cancellations or even healthcare workers masked up to take on another shift. As the world continues to challenge us, inspiration is compelling us to continue striving and pushing forward to adapt to change and disruptions.

In a 2004 article in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, authors Todd M. Thrash of the College of William & Mary and Andrew J. Elliot of the University of Rochester state that “inspiration may be decomposed into separate processes related to being inspired “by” and being inspired “to.”

As I reflect on this year and the trials that we have overcome, I find myself being inspired by many individuals. I am inspired by leaders like the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg who was a champion of gender equality and admired for her grit; our educators who persist through every curveball and new piece of technology thrown at them to bestow knowledge to the next generation; our alumni who stick with us through thick and thin and embody the lives of service that we hold so dear; and our students who choose to challenge themselves and persevere to reach their goals.

This year has been one for the record books, and it would be easy to concede to the intensity and weirdness of the pandemic era. Nevertheless, War Hawks refuse to yield. We refuse to stop being inspired to create opportunity when we are feeling so challenged. This issue of the *Messenger* explores three different areas in which our faculty, staff, alumni and students have been inspired to do something, be it creating solutions to pivot in the face of a pandemic, adapting religious worldviews and perspectives, or creating leaders and teaching diplomacy.

In McMurry’s 97 years, we have accomplished a great deal; there is so much to be proud of in our successes. But our work is far from over. As we continue our march toward McMurry’s Centennial and look ahead to our next 100 years, my hope is that we continue to be driven by inspiration and never cease aiming to be inspired “to” or inspired “by.”

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandra Harper". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

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PRESIDENT
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THE MESSENGER

FALL/WINTER 2020-2021

A PUBLICATION OF McMURRY UNIVERSITY



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Around Campus

1. WELCOME

With a new year comes new faces on campus. This summer, McMurry welcomed Grant Greenwood, vice president for enrollment management, and Matt Draud, vice president of academic affairs and dean of the faculty. Greenwood joins a dynamic admissions team who stood tall in the face of adversity this spring and helped secure a solid freshman class, and Draud leads an experienced team of faculty who, in spite of a global pandemic, managed to complete the spring semester stronger and daresay savvier than when it started.

In addition, we have added 10 new individuals to our faculty, staff and campus. Yirehyah "Ray" Mellen, Bradley Blackwell, Neena McLain, Michael Morris, Amanda Vickers, Jesus Cortez Roldan, Nicholas Weddle, Allison Eggena, Weston Weast, Shawnta Griffin.

2. RETIREMENTS

As we begin another McMurry chapter with the start of the 2020-2021 school year, let us take a moment to celebrate a few chapters that have recently concluded. With a combined 115 years of service, we recently said farewell and good luck to four friendly faces on campus.

David Ainsworth, associate professor of theatre, 17 years of service (2003-2020)

Richard De La Rosa, security officer, 24 years of service (1996-2020)

Nancy Shanafelt, catalog librarian, 32 years of service (1988-2020)

Dr. Pug Parris '73, professor of kinesiology, 42 years of service (1978-2020)

3. GRANTS

McMurry University was pleased to announce this fall that it was a recipient of two Department of Education grants: A Title V Grant for \$600,000 per year for the next five years and a Student Support Services (SSS) Grant for approximately \$261,888 per year for five years.

The new Title V grant will continue the advancement of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) degree programs at McMurry and expand STEM support for Hispanic students. The university will create a summer pre-calculus program and will be offering a new degree in engineering physics beginning in Fall 22. The grant will also provide support for academic success services supporting STEM.

Facility improvements to the Finch-Gray Science Building and Cooke Building will provide up-to-date and highly functional lab and classroom spaces for students to learn.

The highly competitive Title V grants are awarded to outstanding Hispanic-serving institutions strengthening efforts and fostering opportunities for Hispanic success in STEM fields. McMurry recently received its third year of funding for the university's first Title V grant focused on STEM programs in the health sciences and sustainable and renewal resources and the development of an undergraduate research program in conjunction with Cisco College.

McMurry will develop pathways aligned to student goals, including 2-, 3-, and 4-year graduation plans. The Career Development Center will offer aptitude testing as well as counsel on practical ways, such as internships, to prepare for a career





after graduation. Through collaboration with area employers from in-demand industries and occupations and an emphasis on leveraging connections to university supporters and alumni, McMurry University will ensure its students have opportunities to gain the skills and knowledge to thrive in in-demand STEM-based industries.

The SSS program is one of eight Federal TRIO Programs (TRIO) designed to identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. McMurry anticipates receiving these funds for the next five years to support the needs of low income and first-generation college students and those with disabilities.

The Department of Education notes that recipients of the grants are public and private higher education institutions with experience in serving disadvantaged youth and secondary schools. McMurry's student profile aligns well with the grant target audience since McMurry serves a high percentage of first-generation students and is also classified as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI).

According to the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the differences in academic experiences and outcomes between American students from wealthy backgrounds and students from less economically advantaged backgrounds are remarkably significant and have been growing in recent decades. Additional AERA studies note that students whose parents have completed more years of education and have more significant financial resources are increasingly likely to perform better in school. These students also enjoy greater lifetime benefits of educational success than students whose parents have less education and fewer financial resources.

McMurry student body is nearly 50% of minority students, and 66% of minority students are eligible for SSS support. McMurry's goal is to increase students' success and retention through receiving SSS services such as tutoring and academic coaching and advising. Participating students will gain an environment where they will consistently receive support and services that will increase the university's Early Alert program's effectiveness.

Around Campus

4. GREENHOUSE

If you haven't been to campus lately, then you have missed seeing that we are in the process of upgrading our greenhouse. Thanks to one of our Title V grants, we were able to add new and exciting features including a new cooling system, a retractable shade and a covered pavilion to be used as an outdoor classroom. The renovations are scheduled to be completed this fall.



5. CROSSWALK UPGRADES

The new pedestrian crossing signs and lights were installed on Sayles Boulevard in September. This is a great addition to the crosswalk and will help keep students and visitors safe while crossing Sayles. Look for it the next time you are in town or visiting campus.



6. RECITAL HALL SEATS

In honor of Jacque Nell Holland, beloved mother and grandmother, who instilled a passionate love of music in her children and grandchildren, a generous gift from the Holland Family Foundation has given the Ryan Fine Arts Recital Hall a long overdue facelift. With this gift, this important space on campus has become the Jacque Nell Holland Recital Hall.

7. STAND TOGETHER

In the midst of a pandemic, McMurry alumni and friends were inspired to do more to continue McMurry's mission of educating servant leaders and making sure that each student knows he or she is enough.

This summer, the Stand Together campaign was created with the servant leader's spirit to financially support students who has been impacted by the coronavirus. Currently, \$420,750 has been raised by 25 donors under the Stand Together campaign and have allowed many students to continue their educational journey at McMurry University.



8. BLACK ALUMNI NETWORK LAUNCH

The McMurry Black Alumni Network officially launched in September. The purpose of this group is to promote the advancement of the best interests of the university and the Black Alumni Network by providing fellowship and the furtherance of professional relationships among the alumni, students, faculty, staff and friends of the Black Alumni Network. This network will also strive to become an integral part of McMurry University Alumni Association.

9. COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

This October, McMurry announced the Community Commitment financial aid package. This program is true to McMurry's commitment to servant leadership and honors those who are dedicated to service and helping others by covering at least half of the cost of tuition at McMurry University.

Community Commitment is available to those who have committed their lives to service: police officers and firefighters, nurses and doctors, teachers and religious leaders, military members and government workers, and so many more. If a student or student's parent, guardian or spouse works full time for a service-focused organization, he or she is eligible.

Applicants must be full-time freshmen and maintain a 2.0 GPA.

The Community Commitment salutes McMurry's heritage of service and adds to the university's intentional focus, which began almost 30 years ago in 1990 with the university's servant leadership curriculum that guides students to develop a sense of purpose in their studies, careers, and contributions to community and society. Community Commitment advances McMurry's core values of Christian faith as the foundation of life; Personal relationships as the catalyst for life; Learning as the journey of life; Excellence as the goal of life; and finally the foundational value, Service as the measure of life.

McMURRY
COMMUNITY
COMMITMENT

HALF TUITION FOR
FAMILIES WHO SERVE



INSPIRING SOLUTIONS:

**McMurry Faculty, Staff and Students
Pivot in Face of Pandemic**

The call was made near the end of spring break.

McMurry decided to end in-person instruction for the spring semester in March as horror stories about huge death rates and overwhelmed hospitals in China, Iran and Italy fueled fears of a COVID-19 outbreak that would kill millions of Americans, including in West Texas. That forced faculty, staff and students to pivot—fast—to virtual learning.



The return to classes was postponed by a week.

“That gave the faculty one week to get ready for remote instruction,” said Dr. Cynthia Rutledge, associate vice president of academic affairs for curriculum and faculty development. “We had the information technology group give some workshops. The distance technology group gave some workshops. Other faculty and colleagues who had had some experience with these tools and years of online instruction experience gave sessions for their colleagues.”

The Monday that classes should have resumed, department chairs had a meeting at 8:45 a.m. on the transition plan, said Dr. Alicia Wyatt, associate vice president for academic affairs, academic administration.

“We talked through what we had to do,” she said. “The main thing I told them was, don’t set your bar too high. Your main objective is to take care of your students and use the technology you know how to use. If you don’t know how to do something and don’t have the software, it’s not going to work for you.”

The university quickly determined that the best communications tool for the whole campus was Microsoft Teams, which was already integrated on its systems. Once classes resumed, professors lectured live on Teams during



reports, but they were watching the procedures on the screen instead of actually performing them.

Other academic disciplines were easier to transition to remote learning:

“As a sociologist, our classes were fairly well straightforward, so it was not a difficult transition to make, ultimately,” said Dr. Jerry Hollingsworth, who took a crash course in lesser-used components of Moodle, the university’s

“Your main objective is to take care of your students and use the technology you know how to use.”

— DR. ALICIA WYATT, ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

their regularly scheduled class times.

But there were challenges, such as how to handle labs for classes like physics and biology when everyone was virtual. The solution was setting up lighting systems and webcams in a few labs and having the professors film themselves doing the lab work, Wyatt said. Students still had to write lab

learning management system. While he said the training gave him the confidence to complete his course instruction online, “We were left with a vacuum that was difficult to embrace. I missed my students, and only a few of them had taken online courses.”

The transition went far beyond campus. Students who couldn’t return to Abilene because of the pandemic faced their own challenges.

“There were some who really struggled with the online learning,” said James Greer, director of career development



and supervisor of counseling and disability services. "Some really flourished. It depended on the class and the professor. It was a real learning experience for both the students and the professors."

Greer led his office's transition into a virtual counseling center to help students wherever they were geographically. It took some doing because online counseling services have to comply with the privacy law known as HIPAA. The counselors helped students deal with barriers including anxiety, depression and navigating family relationships as some returned to their childhood homes.

Other students had issues getting online for their classes.

"Some students who had to go home had to go to work because so many people in their families had been laid off—working in the oilfield or whatever," Wyatt said. "So they were driving to Starbucks or Panera to go to class. There are also lots and lots of people in Texas who don't have good internet at home. We were surprised by the technical difficulties that students were having if they went home."

McMurry has already awarded more than \$500,000 in emergency grant aid to students from the federal coronavirus stimulus bill passed this spring, said Grant Greenwood, vice president of enrollment management, admissions, recruiting and financial aid. The university has also provided additional

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— DIRECTOR OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND SUPERVISOR OF COUNSELING AND DISABILITY SERVICES

assistance to students who are in need from donors and within the institution, he said.

"We're trying to do that fairly and compassionately," he said. "We want to continue to make sure that McMurry is an affordable option for our students."

On the recruitment side, the university has also had to pivot to virtual campus visits and has created new tools that McMurry will likely use long after COVID, Greenwood said. One example is setting up prospective students with faculty members and students in certain disciplines.



Students are also being evaluated in a more "holistic" way, he said, with the ACT and SAT standardized tests now optional for admission through 2021.

Another McMurry institution—Tuesday morning chapel—also shifted completely online in mid-March, with prerecorded services streaming on Facebook and Instagram. Assistant Chaplain Julia Puac-Romero had to learn how to edit videos and handle the technological details, and she also spearheaded efforts to turn the baccalaureate—the chapel service typically held the night before graduation—all virtual.

For the baccalaureate, "we had around 3,000 views!" she said. "We had a lot of students who were graduating who said, this is what we needed. It really meant something for the students."

While McMurry is returning to in-person instruction and services this fall, it plans to continue to use many of the new tools developed in the spring as it works to maintain a safe environment.

Over the summer, the faculty spent 28 days in online training to make everyone better at the technology, and 25 classrooms have been outfitted with cameras so classes

can be simulcast to and recorded for those who can't attend—including any who may be under quarantine. Many classes will offer hybrid instruction to maintain social distancing, meaning students will attend alternate sessions online and in person. Though that's harder to implement in some disciplines than others: "For Anatomy and

Physiology, they're going to have the lecture and can either do that online or do the switching thing," Wyatt said. "But they're probably going to split the labs in half. They'll do the first hour and a half in the lab with the infrastructure, and then they can go home and do the rest on software called Virtual Body. Then the other half of students will come in."

There will also be extra safety measures on campus involving masks, social distancing and more frequent cleaning, and rooms will be set aside in the residence halls for quarantine and isolation.

"We had a lot of students who were graduating who said, this is what we needed. It really meant something for the students."

— JULIA PUAC-ROMERO, ASSISTANT CHAPLAIN





INSPIRING FELLOWSHIP





McMurry's Interfaith Initiative Knocks Down Religious Barriers



A historically Methodist university, McMurry has had a Religions of the World class as part of its curriculum for decades, but several years ago a group of faculty and students thought the school could do much more. What has emerged is an interfaith initiative that has become the envy of schools across the nation—and one that is equipping students with the ability to work and interact with people of other faiths and creeds when they graduate.

McMurry is “building a laboratory for interfaith cooperation and a launching pad for interfaith leaders,” said Eboo Patel, founder and president of the Interfaith Youth Core, a national nonprofit that works in higher education partnering with U.S. colleges and universities to make interfaith a vital part of the college experience, providing education and skills to help students of different faiths bridge differences and find common values. “The future of America is a future of diversity and cooperation,” said Patel. “Students attending McMurry are experiencing that.”

Mark Waters, director of international education and professor of religion, and a group of students accelerated the effort when they attended the 2009 Parliament of the World's Religions conference in Australia. Then in 2013, the university president and chaplain attended a meeting sponsored by President Barack Obama's Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge. The same year, McMurry got involved with the Interfaith Youth Core.

After the Australia trip, “there was this spirit that there's so much that we can learn from each other,” said William Reilly '12, who was a sophomore at the time and is currently pastor of a Baptist church in Georgetown,

Kentucky. While he didn't go on the trip, he and his friends began finding ways to create dialogue on campus about religions and spirituality.

"One of the key parts of the college student experience is learning how to look at things from someone else's perspective, and that's exactly what Religions of the World and the interfaith initiative teach," Waters said. "Being able to see things from others' perspectives is part of the maturing process. Interfaith is the ability to adapt one's worldview, not necessarily to change one's religion."

When Jori Sechrist '01, an associate professor of sociology and criminology who also serves as McMurry's director of institutional effectiveness, was a McMurry student, most of the students were Methodists, and the student body was recruited heavily from Methodist churches. Now, she says, the campus is much more diverse, but its core values haven't changed.

"We are to be welcoming and particularly engaged with our neighbors," Sechrist said. "To me, that means ensuring that when we meet people, we are respectful of them and their worldviews and engage with them as people first."

By the spring of 2016, the number of students who affiliated with other non-Methodist spiritual traditions—or none at all—surged. It was the perfect time to embrace understanding.

"We have our weekly chapel; we're still Christian," said Marty CashBurless '78, the university chaplain and director of religious and spiritual life. "We as Christians understand hospitality. Hospitality to the stranger in our midst is something that Jesus

practiced."

McMurry took the principle of embracing understanding a step further, encouraging the formation of a student group called Better Together, which gives participants a safe forum to get to know people of other faith traditions and ask questions—as well as share their own.

Jaden Jones, a junior who has been active in Better Together since his freshman year, says it's not just about spirituality. Jones' fondest memories of Better Together were events to celebrate the Hindu festival of Holi—"We threw colored powder on one another, each color representing a different quality like wealth or good health"—and an international food festival.

"In a time when tension and violence between different religious communities are common around the world, the program seeks to promote civic

pluralism in which people, irrespective of their religious identity, come to respect the freedom of all people to believe, worship and live as they choose," said Dr. Philip LeMasters, professor of religion and director of the honors program.

For Yuwei Bao '20, an international student from China who was invited to attend Better Together as a sophomore in 2018, the gathering was one of her first exposures to Christianity and religion in general. "I wasn't aware what a religion really means," she said. "I don't really have a religion, but I had a spiritual life. They

invited me to talk about the things I believe, and they invited someone else who had a different faith. It was pretty fun. I had not talked about my faith before."

Bao, who graduated from McMurry in May, ended up going



**"There was
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there's so much
that we can
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each other."**

— WILLIAM REILLY '12





“In a time when tension and violence between different religious communities are common around the world, the program seeks to promote civic pluralism”

— PHILIP LEMASTERS, MCMURRY PROFESSOR OF RELIGION

on four different interfaith trips, including a gathering at Baylor University and a world religions congress in Toronto, Canada.

Jones sums it up best: “Learning about others’ faiths gives students the tools to better work with people of all creeds and backgrounds as friends and members of the same community. This will give you an edge on your future career because you’ll know how to interact with others.”

And Reilly said it made his own faith stronger:

“I’ve learned the value of ritual and tradition from my

Jewish friends and the spirit of community from members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” he said. “My friends that are Muslim have shown me a strong sense that their faith will determine how they live their lives. Being able to witness people allowing their faith to determine how they live sets an example for me as a Christian as well. That doesn’t mean that I’m any of those groups and I’m not a Christian and I don’t love Jesus, but I’m still able to be inspired by other people’s journeys toward God, and it enriches what I’m doing.”



MODEL UN

Program Inspires Leadership as It Teaches Diplomacy

Model UN is an experiential learning program in which students are assigned specific countries to study and represent at regional, national and international gatherings, including an annual conference in New York, where the United Nations is headquartered. The national program bills itself as a forum for students to “hone skills in diplomacy, negotiation, critical thinking, compromise, public speaking, writing and research.”

Over the past 20 years, McMurry students have developed a reputation within the national program as having great leadership and communications skills, and many student leaders on campus are part of the Model UN program.

“They are up against kids from Ivy League schools and realize there is no reason they cannot perform just as well,” said Dr. Tina Bertrand, chair of the political science department, who has directed the Model UN program at McMurry since 1999. “They really come away with a more nuanced understanding of how the world works.”

“I’m very fortunate to have gone to a West Texas school and have had this international experience,” said Dr. KC Pospisil '05 who serves as the vice president of academic operations at Concordia University in Austin, Texas. “It teaches you how to look at a different culture—how to look at a problem or an issue from all angles.”







When Nis Sorhirun '11 was transferring universities in 2010, the thing that clinched her decision to come to McMurry was the highly respected Model UN program. "Model UN also gave me a way to plug into the McMurry campus, particularly since I was commuting every day from San Angelo," Sorhirun recalls.

"I definitely made more friends through Model UN and got to know them on a personal level since we spent days and nights together for at least a week in an unfamiliar city," she said. "The program sharpens the skills you never knew you had and enhances your character and broadens your mind."

Bertrand says she's seen her students transform in a week, in both behavior and demeanor, as they gain the confidence to argue their points. It also teaches them to look at the world from a new perspective.

"Representing a different country well requires a lot of deep research," Bertrand said. "First, students must learn how the country operates and where it stands on all sorts of global issues. Then they have to find ways to best represent its positions through policy papers, public speeches and negotiations with students representing other countries at the conferences."

When representing Belize in New York in the spring of 2019, Sherack Malokwu '20, one of this spring's graduates, had

to be prepared to discuss cyberthreats because the Central American country has a lot of cybercrime. He also had to research nuclear disarmament and international security as well as international cooperation and the peaceful uses of outer space. "Since Belize isn't a spacefaring nation," shared Malokwu, "it wants to prevent a Star Wars-style international arms race because of the danger that weapons testing in outer space could trigger natural disasters on Earth."

"It's helped me understand diplomacy and how it really works," Malokwu said. "One of the important things for me is realizing the issues that we face in the world today and how those issues need to be addressed, especially when it comes to women and children. There are so many important topics that get overlooked or ignored every day."

"Students representing a country have to look into that nation's social issues," Sorhirun said. "Its current political stand, economic influences, any issues they're facing, and how they all relate to each other and affect the country's outlook toward the rest of the world."

"We had to go through a mountain load of treaties, UN charters, resolutions, to make sure we 'stay in character' of the country we're representing," Sorhirun said. "Then, we had to learn how delegates act in the UN and write UN documents, which is totally different from any essays you would write for other classes."

"One of the important things for me is realizing the issues that we face in the world today and how those issues need to be addressed."

— SHERACK MALOKWU '20



In Bertrand's experience, the skills that students learn this way can be hugely important in their lives after McMurry.

"It's a great exercise because, regardless of their major, these students at some point will be asked to present some sort of project, and they're going to need to know how to sell those ideas, how to adapt—creative wins so the boss isn't displeased," she said. "They need to learn how to do that in a collegial way."

Sorhirun used her time at McMurry and in Model UN to springboard into that international career she always wanted, with an internship at UNESCO—the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization—and then a job at a technology company that has her dividing her time between Buffalo, N.Y., and Bangkok. "Model UN was the experience of a lifetime for me," she said.

Malokwu said his participation in the program and the conferences has changed how he sees the world and helped him decide to apply to law school.

For Pospisil, who was at McMurry on 9/11, learning about Middle Eastern countries at a time when the nation had a negative attitude toward that region was "impactful in how I view the world." She said it also made her a better researcher, one "more able to view the world in the complexity that it is—not just in black and white."

Editor's note: Continuing a 15-year McMurry tradition of attending these conferences in other countries and New York, students were planning to travel to Japan this year for a Model UN gathering. Previously students have attended conferences in Switzerland, Malaysia, South Korea and other locations.

Dr. Tina Bertrand has led McMurry's Model UN program since her arrival on campus in 1999. And as she's led her students to awards and accolades within the program, she's received recognition of her own.

The secretary-general of the United Nations invited her to Kyoto, Japan, as a field expert at the 14th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, though the April event was subsequently postponed to 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic.

While in Kyoto, she was planning to participate in the launch of a book to which she has contributed called "Crime Prevention and Justice in 2030: The UN and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

"We were going to present our research and announce the book launch," she said. Publication is going forward "without fanfare," Bertrand said, and it's unclear whether the launch will be virtual via Zoom or at a conference toward the end of the year.

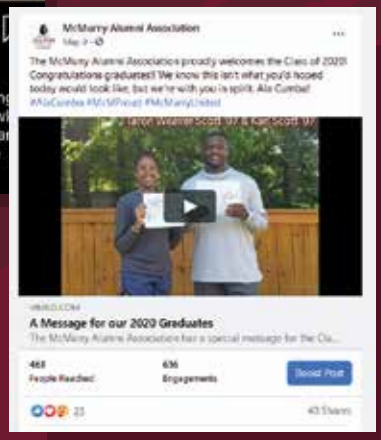
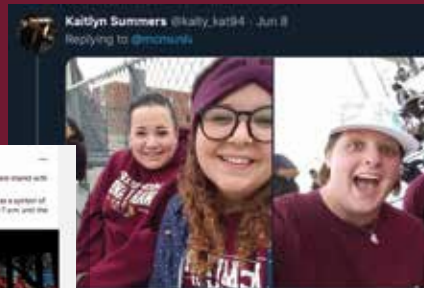
The book's lead authors approached Bertrand two years ago at the annual conference of the Academic Council on the United Nations System in Vienna, where she was presenting a paper on the Alliance of Civilizations, a UN initiative that she became interested in after some of her students participated in the alliance in Model UN. Begun by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the alliance encourages international, intercultural and interreligious dialogue and cooperation.

The original ACUNS paper was published in a journal in December.

GET SOCIAL WITH US!



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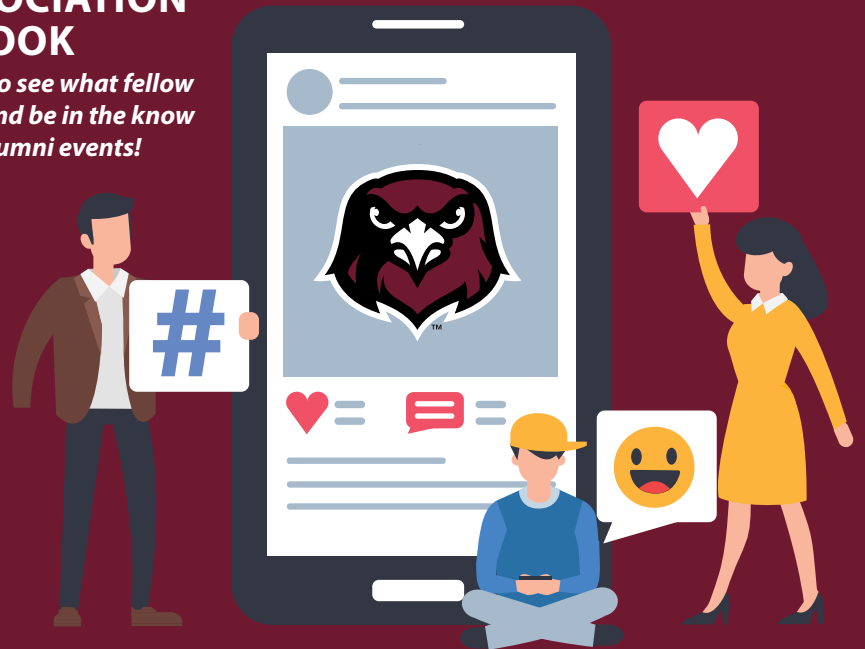


ALUMNI ASSOCIATION FACEBOOK

Keep in touch with us to see what fellow classmates are up to and be in the know about different alumni events!

Watch our page for occasional throwback photos!

You might see someone you know or even be featured yourself!





THE McMURRY Fund

When you give, you open doors and provide opportunities for students like me who wouldn't be here without your help. Know that your donation isn't being wasted. Your generosity is truly inspiring, and it has made my McMurry education affordable.

Your choice to donate truly has the ability to change the course of someone's life — of my life! I can't say thank you enough.

Gwendolyn Murchison '21

The McMurry Fund scholarships are often the financial support that fill the gap and allow students to attend McMurry University.

Help support our students in pursuing their dreams by giving to the McMurry Fund.

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Consider Rolling Over **Your IRA** Today!

By taking a distribution from your IRA this year, you will likely pay more in taxes and may even be in a higher tax bracket. **Rolling over** part of your IRA's "Required Minimum Distribution," or RMD, to McMurry University can help you to reduce your tax bill while supporting the university.

An **IRA charitable rollover** gift can benefit both you and McMurry's mission! Contact your IRA administrator to get started with your gift. While you will not receive an income tax deduction, you will not pay taxes on any distributions made to McMurry. Please inform us of your plans so we use your gift in a way that means the most to you.

Debra Hulse | 325-793-4761 | hulse.debra@mcm.edu

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Can Direct
Up to
\$100,000**

Alumni Class Notes

1960s and 70s

Hank Frankenberg '69 retired from the 3M Company March 31, 2018, after 38.75 years as a manager of purchasing. In December 1982, 3M acquired the Austin company where Hank worked. During his 3M career, Hank managed sourcing operations for several different 3M divisions, covering U.S., Asian and European manufacturing plants. Hank is still a paddler on the 3M Dragon Boat racing team. (1)

Paul '71 & Molly Lenker '70, K.O. '70 & Marilyn Long '70, and Eddie '69 & Mary Anne Sides '69 all celebrated 50 years of marriage in August! Although they haven't been able to commemorate the milestones as planned, they have still enjoyed their friendship, which dates back to their time at McMurry. The Lenkers drove the other two couples around in Paul's 1941 Ford as part of a mini celebration. Congratulations to you all! (2)

1980s

Steve Weber '85 started a new position as controller at MIMCO in El Paso in February.

Kreg Gillispie '89 was promoted to IT manager, gas systems for enterprise products, in April.

1990s

Sarah Graff Bodner '96 participated in TEDxSan Antonio Women last December. Her talk was titled "From MeToo to UsTwo: Getting Real About Men as Allies". Sarah was recently elected to serve on the Alumni Association Board of Directors. You can view her talk at [ted.com: bit.ly/2GAXxLA](https://www.ted.com/talks/sarah-graff-bodner-from-metoo-to-ustwo-getting-real-about-men-as-allies) (3)

Sonya Papion Outland '98 was named Alief ISD Teacher of the Year for 2020! Congratulations, Sonya! (3)

Lewis White '99 was appointed associate judge for Fort Bend County in January 2020. Congratulations, Judge White! (4)

2000s

Tamika Brunetti '02 was made vice-chair of the Texas Chapter of the Alliance of Black Technology Professionals. (5)

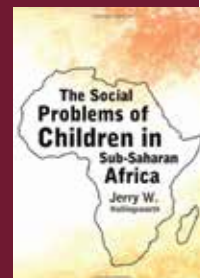
ALUMNI @ WORK

BOOKS

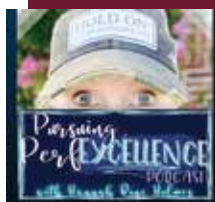
Logan Sharry '20 illustrated the book "Samantha Strong Becomes Super." The book is a collaboration with author **Seth Pietsek**, adjunct professor and speech and debate coach at McMurry.



Dr. Jerry Hollingsworth '95 has a new book out titled "America's Third World Societies," which focuses on Native American communities in the United States. Dr. Hollingsworth's other books, also available on Amazon, are "Children of the Sun" and "The Social Problems of Children in Sub-Saharan Africa."



PODCASTS



Hannah Bone Holmes '99

Pursuing Perfection

hannahboneholmes.com/podcast

A Type-A-tastic journey away from the paralyzing pursuit of perfection and toward the empowering expectation of excellence.

Ashley Schelde Titus '07

Life on the Upcycle

lifeontheupcycle.com

Devoted to providing busy families with tools and information to incorporate environmentally sustainable practices into their daily routines.

David Bailey '04, member of McMurry's Board of Trustees, was promoted in May to executive vice president and senior lender of the Abilene region at First Financial Bank. Congratulations, David! (6)

KC Walters Pospisil '05 was promoted to vice president of academic operations at Concordia University Texas and also earned her PhD! KC sits on the Alumni Association Leadership Council, at McMurry and we are so proud of her achievements. Congratulations, KC! (7)

Guillermo Hernandez III '07 has become a partner at Vidaurri, Lyde, Rodriguez & Haynes, a firm he's been with since 2016. Congratulations, Guillermo! (8)

Katy O'Shields '09 started at Condley & Company in September as assurance manager.

2010s

Rhyn Cason '10 graduated in December 2019 with his MBA from Georgia Southern University. Congratulations, Rhyn! (9)

Lindsey Lowry Sobehrad '11 graduated in August from Texas Tech with her master's degree in educational leadership. She is now serving as the assistant principal for two campuses in Lubbock ISD: Maedgen Elementary and Honey Elementary. (10)

Chelsea Miller Rico '13 was honored with Abilene ISD's Elementary Teacher of the Year! Congratulations, Chelsea! (11)

Samantha Spain Roberson '16 & Rayce Roberson '18 were married on June 27, 2020. Congratulations, Robersons! (12)

Katie Gorka Grimes '18 & Kent Grimes '16 were married on Sept. 26, 2020. Congratulations to the happy couple! Katie also graduated with her master's degree in athletic training from ACU in August. Way to go, Katie! Picture with Katie and Kent are fellow McMurry alumni **Robyn Remschel '18** and **Samantha Spain Roberson '16**. (13)





HALL OF HONOR



Each year, McMurry University Athletics honors select individuals and teams who have brought prestige and excellence to the university by inducting them into the Hall of Honor. The Class of 2019 highlighted eight new additions, including four individual inductees, two athletic teams that dominated the mid-2000s, the Grant Teaff Beyond the Game honoree, and the Bob and Clara Brown award winners. The ceremony was held on Feb. 1, 2020, in the Mabee Room, and the honorees were celebrated again that afternoon in between McMurry Basketball's double-header against Concordia-Texas inside Kimbrell Arena.

DAVID NELSON '78 – David Nelson played for the McMurry Men's Basketball from 1974-78 and started as a freshman for legendary coach Hershel Kimbrell. The 1974-75 team is one of four under Kimbrell to reach 20 wins with a 22-6 record, including two wins over Hardin-Simmons and one over Abilene Christian. For his efforts that season, Nelson won Texas Athletic Conference Freshman of the Year. He went on to lead the team in rebounding the next three seasons and was the first player in school history to score 1,000 career points and have 1,000 career rebounds. After graduation, Nelson enjoyed a successful career as a certified public accountant. From 1994-2017, Nelson was the chief financial officer at the Nurses Unlimited home health agency before enjoying a semiretirement as a part-time accountant consultant. He and his family have been involved with numerous community service projects, and in 2013 Nelson earned the Faye Smith Spirit Volunteer of the Year Award from Medical Center Health System.

AMANDA FINDLEY (HUNTER) '98 – Known by many as "Mandy," this former volleyball standout played from 1995-98 and helped take the program to new heights as a player. Findley played on the first team to compete in the American Southwest Conference as a sophomore in 1996. She was a two-time first team all-conference selection as an upperclassman, was an honorable mention as a freshman and made the UTPB all-

tournament team as a senior. Her final two seasons were some of the best in program history as head coach Cammie Petree led the team to a 20-2 conference record in that span. Findley was an integral part of Petree's teams, finishing with 1,042 kills to rank fifth in McMurry history. Findley went on to a successful coaching and teaching career immediately after college, taking her first head coaching job at Sweetwater High School in 1999. She also coached volleyball and softball at Abilene High from 2000-05, helping both programs make the state playoffs every season. Her 22-year career in education brought her to Midland, Texas, where she is currently a department chair at Abell Junior High School.

RODE MCELREATH '07 – Rode McElreath golfed at McMurry from 2003-07 and became an All-American. Coming onto the scene as a freshman, McElreath earned first team all-conference honors and helped the team win the American Southwest Conference championship. This sparked success for the next few seasons, with a program-best 72.9 scoring average his senior year and carded the second-lowest round of golf in school history at 67 strokes. McElreath graduated from McMurry in December 2007 with a degree in psychology. Immediately after graduation, he went on to work for Basic Wireline for 10 years as an explosives engineer, field supervisor and area manager. He currently works as an athletic coordinator, teacher



and coach at Clack Middle School in Abilene. At Clack, he coaches football, basketball and track while providing golf lessons on the side.

TARRA RICHARDSON (KERSH) '08 – Highly regarded as one of the best players in NCAA Division III basketball history, Tarra Richardson played at McMurry from 2004-08 and is the school's all-time leader in career points, career rebounds and career blocks. She is also the American Southwest Conference's all-time

leading scorer. The pinnacle of her career came as a senior in 2008, when she was awarded the Jostens Trophy. This award goes to one player throughout the nation that excelled on the court, in the classroom and in the community. She led McMurry to a conference championship in 2006 and helped the team appear in the ASC finals all four seasons. She has countless All-American, all-conference, all-region and Player of the Year honors to her name. Life after college has also been successful, as she became an oil and gas accounting professional following graduation. She currently holds a position at TEP Barnett USA, LLC in her hometown of Fort Worth.

PHILLIP RHODES '84 – The Grant Teaff Beyond the Game award was introduced in 2018 and is given annually to a former McMurry scholar-athlete who brings prestige, dignity and honor

to the university in areas of life beyond graduation. Phillip Rhodes is a former track and field athlete who competed from 1979-82 before graduating with a degree in physical education and social studies. Rhodes had been a teacher and coach at Childress High School for over 30 years before retiring in 2017. Students, alumni and fellow staff members at Childress High School have shared many stories that have been shared about the positive impact Coach Rhodes has made. These stories caught the attention of "Good Morning America," who honored Rhodes as the Super Coach Surprise winner and sent him on a special trip to Superbowl LI in 2017. He currently serves at New Beginning Baptist Church in Childress, Texas, and continues to sub at the high school, helping mold many young lives for the future.

LARRY AND MARCIA WALRATH – The Bob and Clara Brown award highlights an individual or couple who significantly contributes to McMurry Athletics, and this year's winning couple have been longtime supporters of



the War Hawks. Larry and Marcia Walrath are both from Nebraska and have spent time in New Mexico but call Abilene and McMurry University home. Just as the Walraths are synonymous with McMurry, they are also deeply involved with the Meals on Wheels organization and with Wylie Methodist Church. Furthermore, their daughter is McMurry head volleyball coach Cammie Petree, who is the program's all-time winningest coach.

2005-06 WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM – With Howard Payne University triumphing the basketball world for several years as a national power, the 2005-06 McMurry Women's Basketball team emerged as the team who could dethrone the reigning American Southwest Conference champions. Led by 2005-06 ASC Coach of the Year Sam Nichols, McMurry went 26-3 with a 20-2 record in conference play. The team won three straight games in the ASC tournament to hoist the program's first and only conference championship. All-Americans Tarra Richardson and Symbri Tuttle anchored the loaded roster, while Allison Nelson and Maigen Sawyer earned all-conference honors.



2006-07 WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM – Following its first conference championship in program history, McMurry Women's Basketball continues this excellence into the 2006-07 season with a 24-5 overall record and a 19-2 conference record. This team won 14 of its first 15 games and made back-to-back appearances in the ASC Championship game. Despite falling short, McMurry still received an NCAA Division III tournament bid. Joining the likes of Tarra Richardson, Symbri Tuttle, Allison Nelson and Maigen Sawyer was Amber Horton, who earned ASC all-defensive team honors. Richardson was also named a CoSIDA Academic All-American this season. One record that still stands today came from this season, as Nelson shot 93.7 percent from the free throw line in 2006-07.

Friends We'll Miss

- Richard Adams '53** of Lubbock, Texas, died Dec. 19, 2019.
- Bobby Almager '90** of Corpus Christi, Texas, died July 10, 2020.
- William Ammons '55** of Merkel, Texas, died March 8, 2020.
- Opal Burkes Beall '64** of Abilene, Texas, died April 4, 2020.
- Chase Bellah '11** of Brownwood, Texas, died Feb. 20, 2020.
- Raymond Brigham** of Lubbock, Texas, died July 13, 2020.
- Clovis Brown Jr. '72** of Midland, Texas, died Jan. 16, 2020.
- Robert Browning** of Madill, OK died Dec. 22, 2019.
- Steven Campbell '70** of Slaton, Texas, died July 5, 2020.
- Billie Parrish Carmichael '45** of Sweetwater, Texas, died Aug. 22, 2020.
- Juanita Farrell Carter ex '45** of Dallas, Texas, died July 16, 2020.
- Melba Reed Carter '70** of Eastland, Texas, died March 21, 2020.
- Sarah Casey-Doucette '56** of Abilene, Texas, died Aug. 7, 2020.
- Brooklyn Castillo '19** of Hawley, Texas, died July 12, 2020.
- Glenn Clark '64** of Dallas, Texas, died April 2, 2019.
- Mark Cox '81** of Wylie, Texas, died March 7, 2020.
- Ella Hill Cunningham '56** of Ridgeland, Miss., died July 20, 2020.
- Janette Walker Danford '64** of Carthage, Mo., died May 1, 2020.
- James Davis** of Midland, Texas, died Dec. 21, 2019.
- Ronald Davis '68** of New Braunfels, Texas, died Aug. 11, 2020.
- Elizabeth Plesscher Defily '66** of Burnet, Texas, died September 5, 2020.
- Philip DuBois '65** of Eugene, Ore., died July 10, 2020.
- Georgiana Bean Ewing '55** of La Veta, Colo., died Jan. 23, 2020.
- Tommy Fry '55** of Windcrest, Texas, died July 16, 2020.
- Richard Gilmer '75** of Paris, Texas, died April 29, 2020.
- Bobby Goswick '92** of Breckenridge, Texas, died July 27, 2020.
- Olen Grady '71** of Odessa, Texas, died Oct. 25, 2020.
- Bruce Harper '65** of San Marcos, Texas, died July 15, 2020.
- Florence Blansit Harrington '52** of Bryan, Texas, died May 5, 2020.
- Morris Hartgraves '55** of Runaway Bay, Texas, died Aug. 27, 2020.
- Jimmy Hodges '54** of Tyler, Texas, died June 9, 2020.
- J. Paul Holcomb '62** of Flower Mound, Texas, died Dec. 16, 2019.
- Bonnye Newman Isenhower '77** of Tyler, Texas, died Aug. 1, 2020.
- James Jackson '60** of Palestine, Texas, died Oct. 18, 2020.
- Mary Harrison Johnson '89** of Abilene, Texas, died May 24, 2020.
- Thomas Jordan '67** of Round Rock, Texas, died April 24, 2020.
- George Kehl Jr. '72** of Atlanta, Texas, died May 8, 2020.
- Marian Kirk** of Johnstown, died March 9, 2020.
- Alton Kite '56** of Gainesville, Texas, died May 20, 2020.
- Joe Lake '61** of Bryson, Texas, died April 28, 2020.
- Mary Russell Lanford '43** of Richardson, Texas, died July 16, 2020.
- James Littlepage Jr. '53** of Snyder, Texas, died June 15, 2020.
- Richard Lollar '96** of Anson, Texas, died Feb. 26, 2020.
- Dalton Malone '18** of Abilene, Texas, died September 8, 2020.
- Shirley Palmer Marquette '88** of Austin, Texas, died Jan. 13, 2020.
- Norman McCarty '76** of Laguna Vista, Texas, died Jan. 18, 2010.
- Selina Starr McGuire '96** of Abilene, Texas, died Feb. 9, 2020.
- Bynum Miers '59** of Abilene, Texas, died Dec. 25, 2019.
- Joan Shaver Muller '65** of Tyler, Texas, died July 31, 2020.
- Jose Naredo '74** of Abilene, Texas, died Dec. 31, 2019.
- William Narrell '61** of Andrews, Texas, died March 19, 2020.
- Traci Lemons Noah ex '93** of Abilene, Texas, died March 23, 2020.
- Susan Williamson Parks '71** of Mineola, Texas, died September 19, 2020.
- Betty Sue Wescott Plummer '61** of Webster, Texas, died June 14, 2019.
- Fred Ray III '88** of Bridgeport, Texas, died Aug. 28, 2019.
- Les Richards '77** of Abilene, Texas, died May 22, 2020.
- Donald Riffe** of Stratford, Texas, died Dec. 28, 2019.
- Carl Robertson** of Lubbock, Texas, died Aug. 6, 2020.
- Arline Ragle Rugger '46** of Canyon, Texas, died Jan. 24, 2020.
- Floyd Sackett '59** of Pampa, Texas, died Aug. 20, 2020.
- Bertha Patterson Sharp '56** of Denton, Texas, died Aug. 11, 2020.
- David Simpson '88** of Abilene, Texas, died Feb. 12, 2020.
- Wanda Smith Spence '46** of Rio Rancho, N.M., died July 8, 2020.
- Sara Edwards Spencer '62** of Abilene, Texas, died Oct. 7, 2020.
- Sarah Cook Stamey '87** of Cisco, Texas, died Jan. 19, 2020.
- John Teague '60** of Abilene, Texas, died Feb. 4, 2020.
- Nathan Tubb** of Levelland, Texas, died April 5, 2020.
- Jere Wilson Turner '47** of San Angelo, Texas, died Jan. 1, 2020.
- Wallace Wade '56** of Dallas, Texas, died June 22, 2020.
- James Warner '64** of Waco, Texas, died Aug. 1, 2020.
- Connie Webb-Gilbreth '63** of Kerrville, Texas, died April 28, 2020.
- Bernard Weems '54** of Snyder, Texas, died March 22, 2020.
- Stan Whisenhunt '59** of Abilene, Texas, died Feb. 27, 2020.
- Robert Whitis '57** of Belen, NM died Aug. 29, 2020.
- Arthur Wiebusch '74** of San Angelo, Texas, died Oct. 10, 2020.
- Shirley Campbell Williams '88** of Albany, Texas, died Oct. 6, 2020.
- Larry Williamson '67** of Roby, Texas, died Dec. 26, 2019.
- Clinton Wood '60** of Big Spring, Texas, died March 10, 2020.
- Floyd Wuthrich '58** of Saint Louis, MO died January 13, 2020.



A gift beyond my lifetime.

I've agreed with this sentiment for decades: Those to whom much is given, much is expected. With the gift of scholarship funding from McMurry, I was able to graduate and make a good life with my husband, Darrell, for almost 50 years. I attribute my ability to adapt, achieve and acclimate to various work environments to my experiences at McMurry. My goal now is to leave a legacy that will assure a bit of me lives on, helping young people who come from little to make a difference in this challenging world. We don't have to give big dollars to make a difference; we just have to share what we have to make a difference.

You can make a difference. You can make a gift. You can create a legacy.

M. Lynn Varner Yearwood '69

B.S., Education

Former Chair, McMurry University Board of Trustees

For more information about creating a gift beyond your lifetime, contact Debra Hulse '80,
Vice President for Institutional Advancement, at 325-793-4761 or email hulse.debra@mcm.edu.





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Your impact on McMurry will be felt for years to come as your generosity makes a difference for our students. Your commitment to supporting our mission and students is inspirational. Thank you for participating in **#McMGives!**

Thank You
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Thank You!!
-Abel Aguirre

Thank You
very much
-Maddy Alvarado '23

Thank you so much
for your support!
-Celeste Sanchez '23

Thank you, God
bless you!
-Jedie Hernandez

Cherrante J. Bell
Thanks, '20
Ala Lumba

Thank You!
-Allanna

We wouldn't be
able to be so successful
without you!
-Rachael B.

Thank you SO Much
God bless!
-Jaden Jones '2
CRACK A BOOM

Thank you!
Carrk.

You make a difference!
-Dean Withers