

# MESSENGER

MID-ATLANTIC CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

Fall 2025

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## GRATEFUL IN EVERY SEASON

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Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Psalm 100:4, 5 (NIV)



Cover photo. Top: Keondre Rodgers, David Hackett, Logan Alford. Second: Kaytee Reich, Zack Whitley, Sashay Thompson. Third: Isabel LaPoe, Owen Stallings, Cutter Williams. Bottom: Imanuel Nelson, Tyus Williams, Emily Dangerfield.

## GRATEFUL IN EVERY SEASON AND CIRCUMSTANCE



Gratitude is one of the most powerful attitudes a believer can cultivate, especially when it is directed toward God. While it is easy to thank Him when life is smooth and blessings are abundant, true spiritual maturity is marked by a heart that remains thankful even during trials, uncertainties, and pain. The Bible encourages us to “give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 5:18, NIV). But how can we live this out – being thankful to God in every season?

Mid-Atlantic Christian University has gone through some difficult seasons recently and is now focused on a new season of opportunity, vision, and growth. I am thankful that God brought us through those storms to experience this new season. During this time, I have learned that:

**Gratitude Anchors Our Faith.** When storms of life come – and they will – it is easy to focus on the chaos. But thanksgiving redirects our eyes from the problem to the Problem-Solver. It reminds us that God is still good, still sovereign, and still with us. In seasons of loss, disappointment, or confusion, gratitude becomes a statement of faith: “God, I don’t understand, but I trust You.”

**God’s Character Doesn’t Change.** Job’s friends told him to “curse God and die” when he was going through trials. Yet, even in that time God was protecting and watching over Job. Our circumstances may shift like the wind, but God remains constant. His love, mercy, and promises are unchanging. Being thankful in every season is not about denying reality or ignoring pain – it is about recognizing that, no matter what changes around us, God is still good and worthy of our praise.

**Hard Seasons Shape Us.** Difficult circumstances often bring hidden blessings – growth, maturity, empathy, and deeper intimacy with God. In the Navy there is a saying that experienced sailors use on the newbies when they haven’t yet developed their “sea legs.” It bears true in life: “Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors.” James 1:2-4 tells us to “consider it pure joy . . . whenever you face trials,” because they produce perseverance and maturity. When we thank God in the midst of hardship, we are acknowledging that He is doing something in us and through us, even when we cannot see it yet.

As we enter this new season, we do so with an attitude of gratitude and thanksgiving – for a new semester, new students, new opportunities, new growth in Christ. Please join with all of us at MACU in giving thanks to our God, who lives and reigns forever!

Always grateful,

John W. Maurice, President

## GRATITUDE FOR GOD’S BLESSINGS

Setting the Stage, RiseUp Campaign and Heritage Hall Unveiling, and More



Amy Alcocer  
Vice President  
Institutional Advancement

Since stepping into the role of Vice President for Institutional Advancement in January, Amy Alcocer has focused on building a strong foundation for long-term growth, starting with the essentials. One of her first major initiatives was to streamline and consolidate all donor and contact lists into a single, unified database, allowing the university to communicate more effectively, track engagement accurately, and, most importantly, recognize the generosity of those who support our mission.

When she arrived, the end-of-year campaign had just concluded, and the RiseUp Campaign for Heritage Hall was actively underway. She said, “Before launching forward, I took a necessary step back to ensure past donors who had made significant contributions – especially those qualifying for naming opportunities – were acknowledged. On August 1, we hosted a private event to honor those donors. Guests were given a personal tour of the new academic building and the opportunity to capture commemorative photos in the spaces they helped bring to life. It was a meaningful celebration of the impact they’ve made on the future of Mid-Atlantic Christian University.”

In addition to honoring current donors, a few special guests were invited to tour the facility. “These visits allowed us to engage in deeper conversations about the evolving needs within their industries and how Mid-Atlantic Christian University can serve as a partner in educating and preparing the next generation of Christian leaders to meet those needs,” Alcocer noted. These discussions are opening exciting doors for future collaborations and program development.

She also launched an ambitious and successful end-of-fiscal year fundraiser needed to support the university’s operating budget. Mid-Atlantic Christian University would not be able to carry out its mission without the unwavering support of her donors, alumni, students, employees, and surrounding community.

Every gift, large or small, makes a direct and lasting impact. That impact is real and deeply appreciated because it supports the mission of training students as they grow God’s Kingdom, preparing future ministers and equipping all who come here to learn, lead, and live out their faith with purpose.

She continued, “Looking ahead, we’re excited to unveil a tiered donor recognition wall as part of the RiseUp campaign, to be installed when the campaign ends. This lasting tribute will include the names of all those contributing under \$50,000 to RiseUp. There are still opportunities to name labs, classrooms, and offices – an incredible way to leave a lasting legacy and invest in the next generation.”

“As a part of the homecoming celebration in early October, we are calling for artifacts,” she added. “Our goal is to collect and display meaningful pieces of the university’s history – photos, memorabilia, and other significant items that tell the stories that have been made at the university over the years. As these treasures are brought in, we hope to create engaging displays across campus that tie the past to our present and future. One of those spaces will be in the Presidential Legacy Classroom, named to honor all the past and current presidents.”

We are not just building spaces. We are building a legacy. Thank you for being a part of Mid-Atlantic Christian University’s story. To help us continue the story or to learn more, contact [advancement@macuniversity.edu](mailto:advancement@macuniversity.edu).





## DEAN'S LIST SPRING 2025

*Arrington, Dalon Thomas  
Bilbrey, Joseph William  
Brinkley, Makayla May  
Brown, Robert Allan\*  
Cabaniss, Michelle Lynn\*  
Chappin, Luke Edward  
Colbert, Jr., Johnny Dewayne  
Crouse, Nicholas Ridley  
Frazier, Joseph Martin  
Givens, Ashleigh Ciara  
Guise, Aidan Matthew  
Hackett, David Mathias  
Hansley, Kolleen Annalise\*  
Harper, Jake Tyler  
Hixenbaugh, Denver Wayne\*  
Inman, Dakota Scott  
Miller, Landen  
Nelson, Imanuel Jacob  
Nixon, Jacob Aaron  
Nshimiyimana, Aime Emmanuel  
Pressey, Kathryn Nicole  
Reich, Kaytee Grace  
Shepherd, Janus James  
Watkins, Grace Elizabeth  
Woolard, Austin Wayne  
Wynne, Jake Samuel\**

*The Dean's List is comprised of full-time students (12 credits or more) who earned a semester grade point average of 3.50 or higher. An \* Indicates students who earned a 4.000 GPA.*

## WISE CHALLENGES CLASS OF 2025



Chaplain Mike Wise, LCDR, US Navy, sent the Class of 2025 into their future with encouragement. Wise, a graduate of Florida Christian College and Liberty Theological Seminary, has been preaching for 40 years with ministries in four states and Canada. He has also been in the military for 27 years, serving in the Marine Corps, Army, and currently as a Navy chaplain for the Coast Guard in Elizabeth

City and covering the entire coast of North Carolina. He preaches every Sunday at the Wings of Faith Memorial Chapel on the Elizabeth City base. Mike and his wife, Christie, have four children and six grandchildren.

Honors during commencement included speeches delivered by valedictorian **Nicholas Crouse** and salutatorian **Grace Watkins**. Longevity awards were also presented: For 5 years of service – **Randy Blake**, Facilities. For 10 semesters of adjunct teaching – **Kara Woodworth** and **Vince Tucker**. For 10 years of service – **Dr. Abigail Mirau**, Associate Professor of English Composition. For 20 years of service – **Dr. Kevin Larsen**, Vice President for Academic Affairs. For 60 years of service, **Phillip Alligood**, Groundskeeper.



Da'Veon Glenn, a first-generation college graduate, accepts congratulations from President Maurice.



Phillip Alligood is recognized for 60 years of faithfully serving as the university's groundskeeper, 50 years full-time and 10 part-time.

## CLASS OF 2025 DEGREES PREVIOUSLY CONFERRED AND PRESENTED:

**Emmanuel Ibingira**  
AA, Bible and East African Ministry^

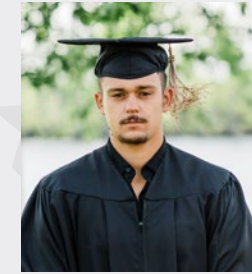
**Michaela Anne Meads\***  
BS, Counseling and Psychology  
Biblical Studies

**Patrick Nsanzamahoro**  
AA, Bible and East African Ministry^

**Jessi Jean Pelszynski**  
BS, Counseling and Psychology  
Biblical Studies



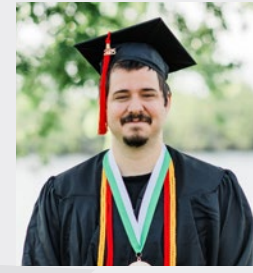
**Rafael Farias Cabrera, Jr.**  
AA, General Studies



**Josiah Jonielle Collado**  
BS, Bus. Admin/Global Mktg  
Biblical Studies



**Andrew Gordon Copeland**  
BS, Bus. Admin/Sport Mgmt  
Biblical Studies



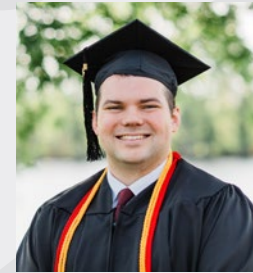
**Nicholas R. C. Crouse\*\*\***  
BA, Youth & Family Ministry  
& Biblical Studies^



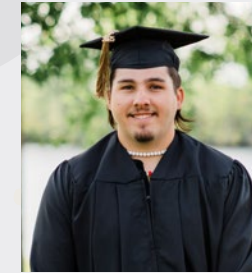
**Da'Veon Rodney Glenn**  
BS, Bus. Admin/Org. Ldrship  
Biblical Studies



**Kolleen Annalise Hansley**  
BS, Elementary Education  
Biblical Studies



**Denver Wayne Hixenbaugh\***  
AA, Biblical Studies (honors)



**Jalyn Kelly Lee**  
BS, Bus. Admin/Sport Mgmt  
Biblical Studies



**Kathryn Nicole Pressey\***  
BS, Business Administration  
Biblical Studies



**Camden W. R. Riley**  
BS, Bus. Admin/Global Mktg  
Biblical Studies



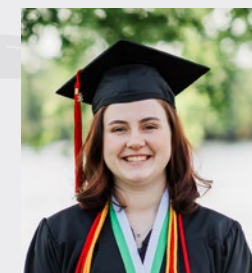
**Christopher Lee Robinson**  
BS, Biblical Studies  
Family Studies



**Joshua Thomas Rowland**  
BS, Youth and Family Ministry  
& Biblical Studies^



**Jack David Valachovic**  
BS, Bus. Admin/Sport Mgmt  
Biblical Studies



**Grace Elizabeth Watkins\*\***  
BS, Biblical Studies  
Non-Profit Administration

\*Cum Laude  
\*\*Magna Cum Laude  
+Theta Alpha Kappa  
Honor Society  
^Double major



## CONGRATULATIONS, AUGUST GRADUATES!

Completing their programs of study in the summer, three received their diplomas at convocation on Aug. 21 (from left):

**Geoffrey Jerome Wellons, Jr.**  
B.S. Business Admin., Biblical Studies

**Travis Daniel Snell**  
B.S Biology, Biblical Studies

**Ethan Terry Sheppard**  
B.S Business Admin., Biblical Studies

## SPRING AWARDS PRESENTED IN HONORS CHAPEL

**Student Body President**  
Travis Snell

**Christian Service Award**  
Travis Snell

**Christian Character Award**  
Immanuel Nelson

**School Spirit Award**  
Kathryn Pressey

**National All-Academic Award**  
Aidan Guise, Dakota Inman, Isabel LaPoe, Landen Miller, Terrence Williams, Tyus Williams

**Mustang Pride Award**  
Dakota Jacobsen

**Distinguished Student Award**  
Travis Snell, Grace Watkins

**Association of Christian Librarians Research Award**  
Dalon Arrington

**Biology Award**  
Dalon Arrington

**Business Administration Award**  
Bobby Brown, Josiah Collado, Drew Copeland, Da'Veon Glenn, Jalyn Lee, Kathryn Pressey, Camden Riley, Ethan Sheppard, Geoffrey Wellons

**Youth & Family Ministry Award**  
Josh Rowland

**MACU-Zondervan Greek Award**  
Nick Crouse

**Theta Alpha Kappa Honor Chords**  
Denver Hixenbaugh, Grace Watkins, Nick Crouse

**Academic Honor Chords**  
Denver Hixenbaugh (Cum Laude), Grace Watkins (Cum Laude), Nick Crouse (Cum Laude)

## STUDENTS SELECT FACULTY, STAFF HONOREES

Members of SGA nominated individuals for the faculty and the staff Person of the Year, then students voted on the recipients. The two selected at the close of the school year as people who made a significant impact on the students were Dr. David King (faculty) and Garrett "Pop" Lewis.



Dr. David King

Dr. King was honored with: "The first individual being recognized will make you think. From conversations in the classroom to ones in the cafe, you will learn to think outside the box and appreciate everyone for who they are. This individual will encourage you to do anything you set your mind to, will provide a listening ear when needed, and will ask many questions to help you learn to think for yourself. Psalms 32:8 says, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you." This individual is a great example of this scripture verse."



Garrett "Pop" Lewis

Pop Lewis was honored with the words, "From the phone calls, texts, emails, and multiple personal touches, this person makes you feel extremely important and made sure we felt welcome from the day we set foot on campus. Ephesians 6:7-8a says, 'Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do.' This verse must be this individual's life verse. We are beyond grateful for the dedication, servant-mindedness, and love this person shares."

*Mid-Atlantic Christian University is pleased to announce that Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) has granted reaffirmation following our ten-year review.*

## MACU BIOLOGY STUDENTS EXCEL GRADUATE CONTINUES AS STAFF

Two Mid-Atlantic Christian University seniors, Dalon Arrington and Travis Snell, scored at the top of a nationwide biology exam. The Educational Testing Service administers "Major Field Tests" for various disciplines that institutions of higher education across the United States use to measure their program's effectiveness and students' achievement of learning outcomes. MACU uses the one for biology. One student's overall



Travis Snell (right), who graduated in August, is now working with Dr. John Pace as a lab assistant and in the admissions office as an admissions counselor.

score placed him in the 97th percentile, with a raw score of 179. The other student's overall score of 182 placed him in the 98th percentile. Fifty percent of test takers across the U.S. have a composite score within the range of 143-162.

The exam measures student knowledge in four key areas of biology: cell biology, molecular biology and genetics, organismal biology, and population biology, evolution, and ecology. The sub scores of each MACU student were well above the national average. Dr. Robert Smith, chair of the department of arts and sciences at MACU, said, "I am encouraged by how the biology program has grown over the short time that MACU has offered this academic program."

Dr. Kevin Larsen, vice president for academic affairs, remarked, "At MACU we desire that everything we do brings glory to God. In an effort to understand God's creation, we have put together a rigorous undergraduate biology program that is producing amazing results. This school year one of our students made a presentation at an international microbiology conference in Vienna, Austria. Now, these two students rise to the top of a nationally recognized exam. I am so proud of how our biology faculty and students are learning about God's creation."

## DIVINO MOVES INTO NEW MINISTRY

Dr. Claudio Divino concluded 11 years of service with Mid-Atlantic at the close of school in May. In saying goodbye to Dr. Divino, we say goodbye to a man who gave students a wealth of valuable experiences far beyond the classroom.

He planned and led students on mission trips to Zimbabwe and to his home country, Brazil, exposing them to ministry in other cultures. He arranged for MACU faculty to teach ministers in Brazil. His on-campus mission activities also included an evening meal of international food, introducing students to flavors from around the world. And who can forget Brazilian steak nights he hosted at his home for students and staff alike.

Dr. Divino retired from MACU as Associate Professor of Ministry. During his career he taught courses in cross-cultural ministry and practical ministry. He also assisted with the accreditation process, particularly with the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP).

While we bid him farewell from campus, he will continue teaching as an adjunct professor. He has accepted a full-time preaching position with Pleasant Grove Church of Christ in Fairfield, North Carolina. Thank you, Brother Claudio, for your ministry with us.



Dr. Claudio and his wife Mary at his farewell reception in May

## MACU JOINS NCICU

North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU) is the statewide office for private, non-profit colleges in North Carolina. MACU is pleased to be the first university admitted to membership in a number of years. Membership benefits include financial and resource support.

The financial aid officers at NCICU work hard to make sure that attending member colleges is affordable, with both numerous grant-funded initiatives and scholarship funds. Already, NCICU has made student scholarship money available to MACU.

Also, through membership in NCICU, the Watson-Griffith Library has acquired NC Live, a library consortium that grants users online access to eBooks, audiobooks, videos, magazines, databases, and more. Its approximately 1.8 billion resources give students a plethora of resources. More than 80 databases will be added during fall semester and will be accessible both on and off campus. The library staff are excited to help students access these valuable resources.



Evan Wooten, library assistant and QEP director, shows Sophomore Emily Dangerfield how to access sources using NC Live.

## NEW! HEALTHCARE ADMINISTRATION CONCENTRATION

Mid-Atlantic Christian University is excited to announce the launch of a new Healthcare Administration concentration within the Business Administration program, beginning January 2026. The specialized track is designed to address the growing demand for business-trained leaders in the healthcare sector and responds to an industry increasingly focused on operational efficiency and regulatory compliance.

This new concentration represents the university's latest effort to align undergraduate education with critical workforce needs in the region's expanding healthcare market. Starting this January, business administration majors can declare the concentration, which integrates seamlessly into the university's existing four-year degree program.

This new concentration expands what MACU offers students who desire to serve others in a health-related profession. Contact Dr. Tracy Wooten, program advisor, for more information at 252.334.2000.

## 2026 JACK W. COTTRELL LECTURESHIP: THE HOLY SPIRIT



Mark Moore will speak for the 2026 Cottrell Lectureship on Feb. 26. Mark joined the staff at Christ's Church of the Valley (CCV) in Peoria, Arizona, in July 2012 as a teaching pastor. CCV has multiple campuses throughout the Phoenix Metro area and an in-person attendance of around 40,000. Prior to joining the CCV team, Mark was a professor at Ozark Christian College (OCC) in Joplin, Missouri (1990-2012).

Currently, he is an online professor for OCC and for Haus Edelweiss, Vienna, Austria. Mark is the author and co-author of many books, mostly on the life of Christ, the book of Acts, and Revelation. He lives in Peoria with his wife, Barbara.

To register, scan the code below or contact Amy Alcocer, vice president for institutional advancement, at [advancement@macuniversity.edu](mailto:advancement@macuniversity.edu). Registration of \$20 includes lectureship admission and lunch. The lectures will be in the Davenport Chapel in the Blanton Center at 10 a.m., 12:30 p.m., and 1:30 p.m. (Q&A). Lunch is at 11:15 a.m. in the Mustang Café at Allgood Commons.



## GRATITUDE AND A GROWING VISION

As we reflect on this season of thanksgiving, our hearts are full of gratitude for the faithfulness of God and for the continued encouragement and support of our university family. We are especially thankful for the opportunity to serve our students in a Christ-centered environment.

Yet as we grow, so do the challenges and needs. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, we do not receive state or federal funding. We rely fully on the generosity of individuals, churches, and foundations who share our vision for Christian higher education.

Today we ask for your partnership in helping meet several critical unfunded infrastructure needs, including:

- Bulkhead repairs to protect and preserve our campus foundation
- Additional vehicles to expand transportation options for students
- Roof repairs to ensure safety and longevity of our buildings
- New air conditioning units to provide comfort and care during all seasons

These are significant needs, but we serve a God who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think (Ephesians 3:20). We believe that, together, with your help, we can rise to meet them.

We are also building for the future in another way. Plans are underway for alumni gatherings in 2026 to renew lifelong connections and create new pathways for mentorship and ministry. We will also focus on working closely with church youth groups to invite the next generation into the life-changing experience of ministry training and Christian education.

Again, the infrastructure needs are in addition to funding that will complete the RiseUp Campaign and the funding to meet our \$1.2 million annual operational need. Thank you for standing with us, sowing into the lives of students, and helping us carry out our important mission.



The Pasquotank River is eating away at the bulkhead and eroding the soil, causing many holes along what appears to be a pristine waterfront – from a distance.

We are especially thankful for the opportunity to serve our students in a Christ-centered environment.

### MINISTER APPRECIATION BRUNCH

On October 17, Mid-Atlantic Christian University welcomed a member of the Board of Trustees, Colonel Lawrence M. King, USMC (Ret.), as the guest speaker for a Ministers Appreciation Brunch. During this time of fellowship, King shared heartfelt words of encouragement and empowerment with ministers from across our region. Drawing from his life of service and leadership, Col. King reminded leaders of the strength that comes from perseverance, the importance of courage in the face of challenges, and the hope we have in God to sustain us in faithfully carrying out our calling.



Colonel Lawrence M. King, USMC (Ret.)

President John Maurice, stated, "For 77 years Mid-Atlantic Christian University has been educating servants for ministry. Our history is filled with sacrificial preachers and teachers that have proclaimed the good news, walked with families through their darkest crises, celebrated with people through their highest joys, and served the Lord and His Church faithfully. It is an honor and privilege to host those called to serve on campus for a time of thanksgiving. MACU continues to prepare all students to be 'set for defense of the gospel'" (1 Peter 3:15).

# TWO STUDENTS TRAVEL TO RWANDA WITH DR. ANGLES

Two students accompanied Dr. Bane Angles to MACU-Rwanda to take classes with our students there. Juniors Jake Wynne and Imanuel Nelson enrolled in Introduction to Homiletics, enjoying the opportunity to study and share ministry with brothers and sisters in Christ in another culture. Dr. Angles travels to Rwanda twice each year to teach. (Dr. Angles, Jake, and Imanuel [white shirt] are standing in the center of the back row.)



## SKULTETY INCREASES COMMUNITY IMPACT

In addition to serving as an elected member of the Business Advisory Board at College of the Albemarle Library, Dr. Patrik Skultety, director of online education and associate professor of management, has been appointed to the Northeastern Workforce Development Board as a business representative. He said, "My presence and participation will be beneficial to MACU and our students, particularly in strengthening our connections to workforce development initiatives and opportunities." Congratulations, Dr. Skultety.

## DATES & EVENTS

Mission Emphasis Week	Oct. 20-24
Open House	Nov. 8
Sports workouts	Nov. 8
New student orientation	Jan. 9-11
Spring semester begins	Jan. 12
Spiritual Emphasis Week	Feb. 23-27
Cottrell Lectureship	Feb. 26
Spring Break	Mar. 9-13
Easter Break	Apr. 3-6
Seniors by the Sea	Apr. 10
Foundation Board	May 7
Board of Trustees	May 8
Commencement	May 9

# TIME WELL SPENT, A SPACE WELL NAMED



Professor Ronnie Woolard, whose retirement from full-time teaching was announced at homecoming in early October, is a hallmark of excellence in biblical education. As we celebrate his more than 50 years of faithful service and visionary leadership, we are proud to announce a special initiative

to honor his lasting impact on our university and the countless lives he has touched. In recognition of Ronnie's remarkable contributions, a group of generous donors has launched a campaign to raise \$50,000 to name a classroom in his honor – a space that will inspire future generations just as Ronnie has inspired us all.

Throughout his tenure, Ronnie has embodied unwavering dedication, compassion, and a deep commitment to the mission of Mid-Atlantic Christian University. His influence extends far beyond the classroom – shaping the hearts and minds of students, mentoring colleagues, and strengthening the very foundation of our community. Naming a classroom in Heritage Hall in his honor is a meaningful and lasting tribute, ensuring his legacy will continue to impact future students for years to come.

We invite you to be part of this special effort.

**To contribute to this campaign:** Visit [www.macuniversity.edu](http://www.macuniversity.edu), click "Give Now," and under "Dedicate this donation," please write: Heritage Hall – Ronnie Woolard.

Or, mail your donation to: Mid-Atlantic Christian University, 715 North Poindexter St., Elizabeth City, NC 27909. Please include "Heritage Hall – Ronnie Woolard" in the memo line.

Let's come together as a community to express our gratitude and admiration for Professor Woolard and create a permanent reminder of the profound difference he has made in our lives, in the life of this university, and in the Kingdom at large.

## PERSONNEL CHANGES

### HODGKINS NAMED NEW VICE PRESIDENT FOR FINANCE



In July, Jane Hodgkins began her tenure as MACU's Vice President for Finance. She comes to the university with 25 years of experience in finance and management, most recently serving as Executive Director of Albemarle Family YMCA in Elizabeth City.

Since graduating from Middle Tennessee State University in 2000, Vice President Hodgkins has served a variety of companies and organizations, fulfilling such roles as credit analyst, operations coordinator, internal staff auditor, financial accountant, senior accountant, and board of directors president. She has demonstrated competencies in strategic financial leadership, budgeting and forecasting, audit management, facility management, capital improvement oversight, and more.

She said of her new role at MACU, "I'm truly grateful and thrilled to be part of such an amazing organization that passionately believes in encouraging students to reach their full potential through faith-based mission and academics." We are thankful that she has brought not only her expertise but also a heart for service to her position. Welcome, Vice President Hodgkins.

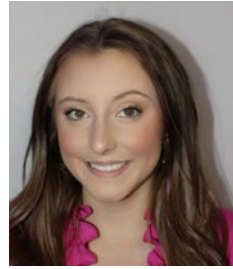
### FELTON OPENS THE DOOR TO FINANCIAL AID



For the past year, Traniqua Felton has been a source of help and joy for the women in Presley Hall, where she has been serving as resident hall director. This year she has added the role of MACU's financial aid administrator to her responsibilities. A 2020 graduate of East Carolina University, Felton has worked for Acceleration Educational Services, Inc., in Greenville,

North Carolina, as an employment specialist. For three years she was an elementary general music educator in the Elizabeth City Pasquotank Public County Schools, during which she received accolades as a "Beginning Teacher of the Year" and an "Employee Exceeding Excellence." She brings not only her joy and love for students, but a host of skills to her new role, including critical thinking, problem solving, time management, and technology.

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: ISABEL LAPOE



Isabel LaPoe, a junior at Mid-Atlantic Christian University, is boldly chasing both her academic and spiritual goals. A pre-law student from Core, West Virginia, Isabel is living out excellence, leadership, and unwavering faith. As a three-sport athlete, she has earned recognition as an Academic All-American and was named to the Top 12 Women's Basketball All-Conference Team. Beyond the court, she is student government president and an RA (Resident Assistant).

But Isabel's story runs deeper than accolades. Her journey to MACU was shaped by personal trials that challenged her faith and redirected her path. "My life goals were heavily influenced by a trial God presented me with," she shares. "In fact, it changed my entire career path." After being removed from her home several years ago, Isabel faced six months in a new environment, separated from her mother and struggling to understand God's purpose amid hardship. She asked the same question many do: "What did I do to deserve this?" But through scripture and spiritual growth, she found clarity: "As God moves us through

trials and tribulations, it is not a punishment . . . rather a test in your faith to ensure your soul is strong in Christ."

Now thriving at MACU, Isabel sees her role in the community as a calling. She aspires to become a lawyer and advocate for others, using her faith to positively impact the world. Her testimony is anchored in scripture, especially her life verses, Romans 8:28 and Isaiah 40:29-31. She said, "Even though I will face difficulties as a college student, I have learned that God has given me the power to conquer them."

Isabel describes MACU as more than a school, but rather a second family. She is deeply grateful for the opportunity to grow, serve, and shine. "Thank you for allowing me to create a better relationship with God. Thank you for allowing me to be a beacon of light for others. Without you and this amazing family at MACU, none of this would be possible." Isabel's journey is a reflection of the mission of MACU: to transform lives through Christian higher education. She reminds us that through trials, faith, and community, God's light can shine brightly in even the darkest places.

## A GOOD CONSCIENCE IS EFFECTIVE



**RONNIE J. WOOLARD, M.DIV., PROFESSOR OF BIBLE**  
*Thinking Biblically about a Good Conscience: Part 2*  
*Developing a Good Conscience (Acts 24:16)*

Part One of this article, published in the previous *Messenger*, examined that in order for a person to have a "good" conscience, it must be educated. Part Two considers two goals God had in mind for a good conscience to accomplish.

First, a good conscience discourages bad behavior. Just imagine how many sinful deeds have been prevented by the influence of the conscience! The temptation was so appealing, and yet that "little voice" sounded a warning that was just enough to keep the person from yielding.

Yes, there are times when even the warnings of conscience are not enough to stop a person from sinning. The conscience sends

a strong signal, but the person chooses to ignore it and plunges headlong into sinful behavior anyway. But what did his conscience do? It haunted him! Thus, even though his conscience did not prevent him from sinning, it may have succeeded in preventing him from committing that same sin again. God gave us a conscience to discourage evil behavior.

If we think the world is filled with evil now, imagine what it would be like if there were no God-given restraints on human behavior.

Second, a good conscience encourages good behavior. One of the reasons Abraham Lincoln is so respected is that he stood for what he believed was right when our nation was torn apart by a bloody Civil War.

As Lincoln prepared to take the oath of office, he resolved never to compromise his integrity. His words reflect that resolve, "I desire so to conduct the affairs of this administration that if at the end, when I come to lay down the reins of power, I have lost every other friend on earth, I shall at least have one friend left, and that friend shall be down inside me."

Because Abraham Lincoln's conscience was educated by the Word of God, it could be effective in (1) discouraging evil behavior and (2) encouraging good behavior. *(To be continued in Part 3, "A Good Conscience Is Exercised")*

## ENROLLMENT UP, RETENTION ON THE RISE



**New students** present for the orientation photo. **Front:** Trel Lee, Cynsere Petty, Angelina Bologna, Sashay Thompson, Lizzy Haynes, Lily McLean. **Second:** Miranda Everett, Jordan Myrick, Ashanti Rodgers, Cayleigh Martin, Bekah Newell, Emilie Haislip, Haley Smith. **Third:** Chloe Simmons, Jayden Skinner, AJ Bailey, Timothy Williams, Cristian Bustamonte, Lea Styons. **Top:** J'shonna Gatling, Alex Deaton, Dedrick Blow, Markell Simmons, Isaac Miller, Kaleb West.

**New students** (continued). **Front:** Katie Branscome, Lili Sines-Kleist, Samarra Hall, Kaylee Scott, Rachel Cornette, Hope Andrews, Emil Hernandez. **Second:** Braelyne Brewer, Audrey Newell, Savannah Blackburn, Jenna Ayer, Selena Beans, Keilyn Sims, Rafiq Coles. **Third:** Andre Bowles, Justin Marcum, Jack Willoughby, Andrew Mullis, Zach Roth, Brian Sanchez, Tyrone Ruffin. **Top:** Daniel Rose, Jay Brown, Luke Johnson, Hunter Benjamin, Trevin Capela, Julius Burke, Dakota Dickerson, Marcus Askew.

# STUDENTS EARN CITY'S THANKS

With encouragement from Ray Scaffa, who works part-time as special assistant for strategic activities, students engage in a variety of community service activities. One recurring activity is litter clean up on the streets of Elizabeth City, in partnership with a local volunteer organization, Green Saves Green. Two faithful participants, Diamond Lewis and Imanuel Nelson, represented MACU to receive a certificate of appreciation from the community. Mayor Kirk Rivers and the city council thanked them and the student body for their community work and especially for faithfully helping with litter sweeps.

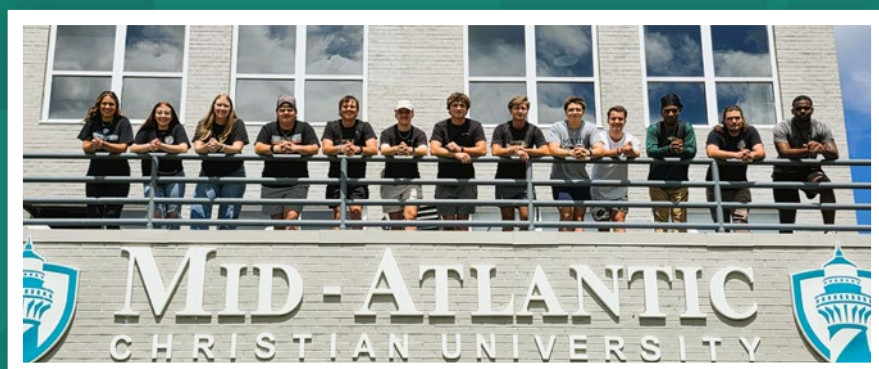


Students Diamond Lewis and Imanuel Nelson, Mayor Kirk Rivers

MACU students participated in four litter sweeps, some volunteered at the Boys and Girls Club, two led prayer at the community's National Day of Prayer service. They participated in three blood drives during the school year, each of which met its goal.

# STUDENT LIFE TEAM EXPANDS

In addition to the resident assistants (RAs) who work closely with students living in the dorms, the new Student Life Team includes a liaison who will work with commuters and online students.



**Student Life Team 2025-2026.** Emily Dangerfield, Isabel LaPoe, Kaytee Reich, Logan Alford, Titus Bleckley, Imanuel Nelson, Zac Whitley, Owen Stallings, Cutter Williams, Joey Frazier, Keondre Rodgers, David Hackett, Tyus Williams.

# ARE YOU READY TO BECOME A MUSTANG?



Come spend Nov. 8 with us at Mid-Atlantic Christian University and see what sets our campus apart. During your visit, you'll tour the campus and see student life in action, attend chapel to experience our Christ-centered community, enjoy a meal in the dining hall, meet with our admissions team to learn about scholarships and financial aid, explore academic programs, check out athletics and student activities, and connect with the students and faculty who make MACU feel like home. This is your chance to get a genuine feel for life as a Mustang and discover how faith and learning come together at MACU. For more information, visit <https://visit.macuniversity.edu/event/macuniversity-events.1057234>

# SUMMER ON CAMPUS

Although students and faculty leave campus in the summer, the campus still buzzes with activity. Besides the annual summer cleaning and refurbishing projects, groups arrange to use our beautiful campus for their activities. MACU hosted an R'n'R day for youth who came to Elizabeth City for a G.R.O.U.P. work camp. Hundreds of teens from around the country painted, cleaned, and repaired properties around town. On one of their days off, they enjoyed water sports, relaxed on campus, and were treated to door prizes and pizza provided by the community.

Two week-long camps were held on campus. Roanoke Christian Camp's M.A.D. (Music and Drama) Camp stayed on campus, ate in the cafeteria, and practiced in the chapel. Starting on Wednesday of that week, they performed "King David and the Cardboard Flock" for two congregations and presented their final program in the chapel. Patrick Harrison '04 led that week. John Baker '22 returned with his youth group from New Life Christian Church in Chantilly, Virginia, for a week of camp he planned, complete with a beach day.

MACU's soccer coach, Chuck King, held a one-day soccer camp, which attracted over 30 youth. Numerous groups rented spaces for celebrations. School may be out in the summer, but the campus is never dormant.



M.A.D. campers present their final performance of "King David and the Cardboard Flock" in Davenport Chapel.



For the third year, teens from New Life Christian Church, Chantilly, Virginia, came to MACU for a week of camp planned by their youth minister, John Baker '22.



**Student Life finds another fun "national day" for students to celebrate.** At lunch, diners were invited to celebrate National Oreo Day by sampling several flavors and choosing a favorite. Eli Dias, Godfrey Costa, Darris Boswell, Cam Riley, and Landen Miller consider the options.

# A WINNING COMBINATION

The Mustangs' combination of teamwork and the leadership of 11 seniors, led them to recover from a first-round loss at the USCAA Small College World Series in Dubois, Pennsylvania. They won their next two games, finishing fourth in the national tournament.

Four Mustangs were named to the USCAA All-American Teams: Dakota Jacobsen (Honorable Mention), Josiah Collado (1st Team), Travis Snell (1st Team), and RJ Cabrera (2nd Team). Three were named to the USCAA National All-Academic Team: Landen Miller, Aidan Guise, and Dakota Inman.



Mustangs celebrate their 8-7 win over the Apprentice School Builders in the third round of the USCAA Small College World Series. Senior Josiah Collado was named to the All-Tournament Team with 9-18 at the plate, 2 doubles, 2 home runs, and 8 RBI.



**2024 2025 Mustangs. Seated:** Isaac Smith, Landen Miller, Cam Riley, Josiah Collado. **Kneeling:** RJ Cabrera, Owen Stallings, Logan Alford, Titus Bleckley, Jack Valachovic, Travis Snell, Dakota Inman, Adam Schell. **Standing:** Chase Smith, Aidan Guise, Dakota Jacobsen, Zac Whitley, Nolan Colwell, Jeremiah Cabrera, Colin Langley, Nick Boyle, Ethan Sheppard, Tanner Skidmore, Da'Veon Glenn, Jamison Miller, Cutter Williams, Tristan Stinson, Wyatt Berlin, Darris Boswell.

# SOFTBALL IS BACK!

Following a dormant year with too few players, softball has come roaring back at MACU. Head Coach Nicole Delosreyes and Assistant Coach Garrett Lewis spent the past year traveling to numerous tournaments speaking with coaches, parents, and players. Many emails and phone calls later – success! The Lady Mustangs will field a team of fifteen players, along with four coaches. Coach Delosreyes has chosen Colossians 3:23, 24 as Bible verses to guide the team. She said, “We want our team to view softball as more than a game, rather as an opportunity to use this talent to glorify and to serve our Lord. Ultimately, our mission as coaches is to prepare athletes not only to compete at a high level but also to grow in their faith, character, and leadership so they leave our program as strong women of God ready to impact the world beyond the softball field.”



**Lady Mustangs 2025 2026. Front:** Chloe Simmons, Dakota Dickerson, Ashanti Rodgers, Madelyn Delosreyes, Samarrah Hall. **Middle:** Assistant Coach Garrett Lewis, Lea Styons, Liliana Sines-Kleist, Cayleigh Martin, Marylou Daniels, Tessa Dodson, Head Coach Nicole Delosreyes. **Back:** Assistant Coach Angela Ballance, Kaylee Scott, Emilie Haislip, Carly James, Lily McLean, Pitching Coach Brittany Mansfield. **Not pictured:** Isabel LaPoe.

# "A" COMES BEFORE "B" BASKETBALL

The New South Athletic Conference honored the 2025 Men's Basketball All-Academic Team, comprised of players carrying a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher on a four-point scale.

“At the small college level, more than any other college level, academic progress and excellence are still cornerstones of athletic success,” said NSAC commissioner Mike Davis. “That’s why I take special interest in honoring these 53 young men who lead the way in a well-rounded college experience.” (report from newsouthconference.com)

Ten out of these 53 from 9 schools were MACU Mustangs. MACU is proud of and congratulate them: Arius Alston, Stewart Clough, Elijah Dias, Jake Harper, Uriah Logan, Kaylon Sampson, Janus Shepherd, Janai Williams, Terrance Williams, and Tyus Williams.



**NEW MINISTRIES, SERVICE**

**Jon Langley '87** is ministering with Maple Grove Christian Church in Jamesville, NC.

**Jennifer Hitch Kelsey '99** has been named Assistant Principal for P. W. Moore Elementary School in Elizabeth City, NC.

**Glenn Crocker '07** has been called to serve First Church of Christ, Washington, NC, as senior minister.

**D. J. Maxey '14** is preaching for Arthur Christian Church, BellArthur, NC.

**Caleb Reynolds '16** is serving Eastern Pines Church in Greenville, NC, as lead minister.

**Demetrius Stokley '16** is a NextGen/Youth Career Adviser with NCWorks Career Center of Elizabeth City, Edenton, and Outer Banks.

**Donald Waltz '16** is ministering with Suffolk Christian Church in Suffolk, VA.

**Ben Nichols '18** has begun serving Philippi Church of Christ, Creswell, NC, as senior minister, following several years of youth ministry there.

**Brian Warren '19** graduated from Professional Naval Chaplaincy School - Basic Leadership course, July 31.

**Elizabeth Berkheimer '21** is a residential supervisor at Greenlight Operation, a nonprofit in South Central Pennsylvania that works to disrupt human trafficking and restore survivors.

**Nick Crouse '25** is serving as youth minister with Corinth Baptist Church in Elizabeth City.

**Josiah Collado '25** is playing for the Martinez Sturgeon, Martinez, CA, a team in the Pecos League, an independent professional baseball league.

**Jalyn Lee '25** is playing cosmic baseball with the Tri-City Chili Peppers, Colonial Heights, VA. "Cosmic baseball," played under black lights, is a promotion in the Coastal Plain League, a summer collegiate baseball league.

**Josh Rowland '25** is now on staff with Roanoke Christian Camp in Washington, NC, working with facilities upkeep and maintenance.

**Senior Titus Bleckley**, a biology major, shadowed two local physicians during the summer.

**Senior Esteban Quijada** served a summer internship as youth minister with Freedom Christian Church in Cumberland, MD.

**Senior Kaylon Sampson** served a summer ministry internship with Journey Christian Church in Elizabeth City.

**HAVE A MINISTRY NEED IN YOUR CONGREGATION?**

Churches can now post job openings directly on the Mid-Atlantic Christian University website, connecting ministries with our students and alumni faster than ever! <https://www.macuniversity.edu/ministry-openings/>

**ORDINATIONS**

**Joshua Rowland '25** was ordained by the elders of his home congregation, South Mills Church of Christ in South Mills, NC, May 18.

**Sophomore Austin Woolard** was ordained by the elders of his home congregation, Old Ford Church of Christ, Washington, NC, Aug. 3.

**WEDDINGS**

Students **Kaylon Sampson** and **Rachael Revels**, April 10

**Dristan Nobles '23** and **Gracie Watkins '25**, June 21

**BIRTHS**

**Dr. Josiah** and **Danielle Peeler**: Asa Zechariah, May 2

Zack and **Madison Atkinson ex'22 Ballance**: Ronan Lee, June 28

**Ben '18** and **Jacqui Hilts Nichols '19**: Jack Ezra, July 7

Nate and **Caitie Goss '16** Rosillo: Eliana Mae, July 22

**Josh '15** and **Sarah Lunceford '17 Bueno**: Birdie Isabel, July 20



**LTJG Brian Warren, CHC USN** is flanked by RADM Carey H. Cash (left), Chaplain of the Marine Corps/Deputy Chief of Chaplains of the Navy, and CAPT Charles E. Varsogea (right), Commanding Officer, Naval Chaplaincy School, at his graduation. LTJG Warren has been assigned Deputy Chaplain at Naval Submarine Base, Kings Bay, GA.



**Thomas Hamilton '18**, lead pastor for Journey Church, Washington, NC, spoke for convocation, Aug. 21.

**NOTES OF SYMPATHY**

Charli Hayes Lucier, Mar. 24, sister of Pat H. Lewis '73 and Ivy H. Brothers ex'82

Charles G. Presley '52, April 19

Timothy W. Sparks '74, June 9

Harold "Herbie" Hardy, July 23, husband of Mary Thompson Hardy ex'88

Tawanna "Wannie" Wagner, July 26, sister of Tiffney White, Admin. Asst. for Finance

Ann Norman Valure ex'85, July 27

W. Michael Whitaker ex'79, July 27

Donita Allen Hamilton '72, Aug. 10

Eddie Hancuff '90, Aug. 15

Gary Patterson '68, Aug. 18

**HONORS, AWARDS, MILESTONES**

**Johnny Pressley '75** retired from eight years as senior minister with First Church of Christ in Washington, NC, which followed his 34 years of teaching at Cincinnati Christian Seminary. He closed his ministry with a series entitled "Parting Words," which looked at the faith, hope, and trust Job demonstrated. Readers can view his three final messages on his Facebook page or that of First Church of Christ.

**Richard Clark '78** has retired as Vice President for Advancement at Johnson University in Knoxville, Tennessee. He served there 10 years after serving nearly 40 years in local church ministry. He and wife, Joanne "Buff" '76, are living in Florida.

**Glenn '85** and **Nadine Lowen '85 Brickhouse** both retired in June. Nadine retired from 17 years with Windy Rose in her law office in Columbia, NC. Glenn finished 19 years of preaching for Philippi Church of Christ in Creswell, NC, and 40 years of located full-time ministry. Of the messages, service, and weekend, Glenn said, "To say that we were blown away by all the love and support is putting it mildly."

In May **Kim Moulden ex'02** earned a Master of Arts degree in Higher Education and Student Affairs from Grand Canyon University.



**EDUCATIONAL WEBINARS ON WILLS AND TRUSTS**

As an FPM partner, MACU invites you to attend a webinar about wills and trusts, provided by MACU at no cost. Sign up for one today. <https://www.fpm.org/generalwebinars>

**STEWARDSHIP BEYOND THE GRAVE**



When Dr. D. Clay Perkins agreed to serve as MACU's third president in 2006, the university already had a working relationship with Financial Planning Ministry (FPM). He said, "[That relationship] was a significant factor in my saying yes to RBC [MACU]. Any small school that was involved in legacy giving

was very impressive. It showed a long-term commitment to financial stability and future viability." Following Dr. Perkins' tenure at MACU (2006-2017), he began serving with FPM and in May was appointed Executive Director of FPM's new department, Legacy Services, a department devoted to assisting families through the estate administration process. He shares the following encouragement.

Whether you have a little or a lot, you need a plan. Having a plan for what happens to all your stuff (assets) when you go home to Jesus is one aspect of stewardship. Leaving without a plan will cost time, money, privacy, and more. Probate is the government's way of determining who gets what. A will gives the court a road map. Without a will, you are considered an orphan of the state, and the state writes your plan. Either way, your loved ones will endure probate.

But your loved ones could skip probate if you create a properly funded Revocable Living Trust. Everyone involved benefits from a plan, rich or poor, especially a plan that cares for loved ones and honors God. That plan states who gets what, helping your loved ones while they are grieving and avoiding possible conflicts among family members.

You can honor God by leaving a bequest to a Christian cause. While you are living, you typically can give from a small fraction of our assets. But when you pass, you can give from 100% of all that God has blessed you with during your lifetime. For many, this final gift will be your largest to advance the Kingdom of God. This generosity is a great example for your loved ones. You are sharing with them one more time what matters to you, passing on not only your valuables, but also your values. So, whether you have a little or a lot, decide today on a plan to care for your loved ones and honor God with a bequest for future Kingdom advancement as a witness of your values.

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## MY MESS, HIS MESSAGE

APRIL 10, 2026

A day of celebration with seasoned saints on the shores of the Pasquotank River and less than an hour from the ocean! Be encouraged, challenged, and reminded of God's goodness.



Register here

Or contact [advancement@macuniversity.edu](mailto:advancement@macuniversity.edu)

9:30 Coffee, lunch, and program, \$25