

# MESSENGER

MID-ATLANTIC CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

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## OPENING DOORS

Owen Stallings  
Cutter Williams • Ethan Sheppard  
Nolan Colwell • Tanner Skidmore • Jeremiah Cabrera



“Here I am!  
I stand at  
the door  
and knock.  
If anyone  
hears  
my voice  
and opens  
the door,  
I will come  
in and eat  
with  
that person,  
and they  
with me.”  
(Rev. 3:20)



## OPENING DOORS



“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me” (Revelation 3:20).

Do you like saying “yes,” or are you a “no” person? When I was serving in the Navy, I told my sailors that when they had a request I would always try to find a way to say “yes.” To be honest, there were times that saying “yes” created an inconvenience for me or for the command. But the sailors and/or their families benefited when I could accommodate their request.

I believe that too many of us say “no” to Jesus when he wants us to say “yes.” While not every opportunity is from God, scriptures teach that his sheep listen to his voice (John 10:27) and that if we love him, we will obey him (John 14:15). Are we listening?

One of the most renowned works of art is William Holman Hunt’s “The Light of the World.” In it, Jesus, carrying a lantern, is knocking at a door with no handle on the outside. The door is overgrown with weeds, and the nails and hinges are rusted, implying that the door has never been opened. The message: it is up to the person on the other side of the door to let Jesus in.

Most of us have heard these words in the context of an invitation to submit our lives to Jesus as Savior and Lord. We must turn the handle and open the door. Jesus does not break down the door and enter against our will. But I believe that Jesus continues to stand at the door of our hearts and knock, always seeking closer intimacy with His children. It is too easy for us to become complacent and apathetic, as the Laodiceans had. After all, the words of Revelation 3:20 were written to Christians that had become lukewarm, comfortable in their own wealth and dependent upon themselves rather than God.

That is a fair assessment of the American Church, too. We are neither hot nor cold; we are comfortable. We trust our jobs and wealth to take care of us, reducing our reliance and dependence upon God.

This is why I believe that following Jesus is a choice we must make, not once, but daily, as Jesus knocks on the door to let him into our lives.

Yogi Berra once quipped, “The future ain’t what it used to be.” Alexander Graham Bell said more artfully, “When one door closes another door opens; but we so often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door, that we do not see the ones which open for us.” Are we more excited about the doors that have closed than the doors God is opening today?

At Mid-Atlantic, we want to be aware of the knock on our door. We want to help our students open the door to Jesus by showing them opportunities of service, vocation, community, academics, and a deeper walk with Jesus. Every day is a new opportunity as we instruct in the classroom and challenge them to learn new things and discover Jesus more fully. Every day we interact with students in social settings, chapel services, cafeteria discussions, or athletic events. These are opportunities that help them open doors to accept and love others. We encourage and expect them to engage with our broader community to serve the poor, hungry, and disenfranchised. They serve at the Boys and Girls Club, food bank, and animal shelter. They write letters to deployed service members and do roadside clean-ups.

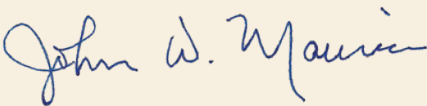
Each year we hold a Spiritual Emphasis Week and a Missions Emphasis Week to expose our students to deeper faith and global missions. We encourage students to attend the annual International Conference on Missions (ICOM) to show them the myriad ways they can serve on the mission field in volunteer or full-time capacities. We want our students to say “yes” and open the door when Jesus knocks. And we want them to do it day after day as Christ knocks, seeking a deeper relationship with his children.

As president, I have been acutely aware of our need to open doors to places we believe God is leading us. We have established relationships with other Christian universities that allow our students and graduates to follow Christ’s call into new fields. These include a 3+3 agreement with Regent University School of Law that results in a four-year degree from MACU and a law degree from Regent. We have a new Master of Social Work agreement with Dordt University that can be completed totally online. We have dual enrollment with a couple of Christian high schools, which enables their students to receive academic credit at the college level. We are working with churches and businesses to provide meaningful internships that give our students experience for employment and service.

What opportunities is God placing before you? Your congregation? Your family? Paul tells Christians in 2 Corinthians 1:20, “For no matter how many promises God has made, they are ‘Yes’ in Christ. And so through him the ‘Amen’ is spoken by us to the glory of God.”

Jesus is knocking. Will you open the door and let him in?

Listening,



John W. Maurice, President



Courtside shenanigans at a basketball game with Josh Peacock, President Maurice, Mattox Bryant, and Luke Chappin.

Jesus  
is  
knocking.  
Will you  
open the  
door  
and let  
him in?

## RETIREMENT OF MELISSA LEWIS

For 52.5 years Melissa Lewis served at what is now Mid-Atlantic Christian University. She enrolled in MACU in 1967, met her husband-to-be, and while she and Garrett “escaped” briefly for some mission work in Puerto Rico, God led them back to Elizabeth City where they would be faithful servants for over five decades. (Below: Lewises join the staff in 1972.)



Melissa has the distinction of having served as the President’s Secretary for all four of the presidents of MACU (BonDurant, 1 year; Griffin, 14 years; Perkins, 11 years, and Maurice, 7.5 years). While many might think that position is a subservient role, they should consider the opportunity of the person to influence the president due to working in close proximity. She served

in this role with distinction and grace. She made each president look better than he really was by being such a professional.

At MACU everyone wears a multitude of hats due to the skeleton staff we maintain. Through the years Melissa was a teacher, 19 as the English instructor (grammar, composition, and related courses). She also taught editorial and photographic journalism, set up and operated a dark room, and was yearbook advisor. For 27 years she and Garrett were dorm parents to hundreds of male students that would affectionately refer to her as “Mom Lewis.”

Melissa’s longtime role in producing *The Messenger* has changed and grown, including at one time or another everything from taking and developing photos, writing and editing, design, printshop work, to addressing, sorting, and mailing. Melissa also led and directed the Freshman Chorus five years and organized and directed several ensembles. Whenever a call went out for help to the staff, Melissa was one of the first ones to respond.

Melissa has taken minutes for Leadership Team meetings since 2006 and prepared for Trustee board meetings since 1992. But she also did the “little things” to take care of others, such as

## ALCOCER TO OPEN NEW DOORS FOR MISSION SUPPORT

Meet energy, focus, and devotion rolled into a fundraiser by profession but a servant of God by calling. Amy Alcocer, MACU’s new Vice President for Institutional Advancement, strives to be “the best version” of herself as she is “serving God and making a meaningful impact in everything I do,” she stated. “I am deeply passionate about higher education because I believe that earning a degree is a powerful achievement that no one can take away. It is a milestone that opens doors to a future filled with opportunity and the ability to lead, serve, and inspire others, all for the glory of God.”

She continued, “As a strong believer in the importance of faith-based education, I also understand how crucial it is to support fundraising efforts that strengthen the work of Christian universities.



Faith-based institutions like ours offer an environment where students can grow not only intellectually but also spiritually. It is here that they learn to see their education as part of God’s greater purpose for their lives. These institutions create spaces where students feel valued, encouraged, and equipped to reach their fullest potential in Christ. Smaller class sizes foster deeper connections and ensure more personalized attention, helping students to thrive both academically and spiritually. This environment prepares them to become leaders who serve the world and further God’s Kingdom.”

Amy began her career with a newspaper company and later worked in the insurance industry, where she developed a strong understanding of risk management and strategic decision-making. She



making sure there were snacks, drinks, and items to show the trustees they were appreciated and loved. She ensured that spaces were appropriately decorated and comfortable. Each year at the Christmas party, Melissa would bring games to make sure everyone felt included and had a good time. Regardless of what Melissa did, she did everything as unto the Lord, and she did it with kindness and grace.

It was a pleasure every day to work with Melissa. With her retirement, we lose more than 52 years of corporate memory. We will all miss her, but most of us realize that she made each of us a better person as she was a genuine witness of Jesus Christ in this institution. Melissa will continue to work part-time at MACU as the President's Assistant for Special Projects, which includes *The Messenger*. Thank you, Melissa, for a job well done!



President Bill Griffin, Melissa Lewis, President Clay Perkins, President John Maurice

## WELCOMING CALEB GIFFIN

Administrative assistant duties in the Office of the President seamlessly transferred to Caleb Giffin on Jan. 1, following a time of orientation and training. Caleb graduated from Johnson University in 2021 in Knoxville, TN, and completed a residency through the Leadership Institute at Christ's Church of the Valley in Phoenix,



AZ. After almost two years as the NextGen Pastor at the Bluffton Campus of Compassion Christian Church, based in Savannah, GA, he, along with his wife, Carrie, and their son, August, relocated to Elizabeth City, where he grew up. Passionate about music, art, theater, and coffee, Caleb finds joy in using his gifts to serve the local church and on MACU's chapel praise team. He is excited to be part of the MACU family and looks forward to contributing to the mission of equipping the next generation of Christian leaders.

has spent over 20 years volunteering in her community, serving on local boards to help connect people and resources. She has over nine years of experience in higher education, working across multiple departments, including marketing, advancement, the provost's office, the chancellor's office, and the office of enrollment. "These experiences have equipped me with a well-rounded understanding of how a university functions, especially in supporting its mission to nurture the next generation of Christian leaders," she said. She has also worked with nonprofits, particularly in fundraising and creating community awareness around causes.

A lifelong learner, Amy holds three degrees, an AA in Liberal Arts, Alpena Community College; a BS in Business Administration, Elizabeth City State

University; and an MBA from Fayetteville State University. She is steadfastly supported by her husband, Josh, and their two children, Juliette and Xander.

At the helm of MACU's office of Institutional Advancement, Amy is now dedicated to focusing on fundraising, marketing, public relations, and alumni engagement, all while fostering a Christ-centered approach to service and stewardship.

She said, "Our primary goal is to raise funds, cultivate lasting relationships, and build a network of supporters who are committed to advancing the Kingdom of God through education. Strengthening our foundation and reconnecting with alumni, donors, faculty, staff, and the broader community are vital as we continue to fulfill our mission. I have

found excitement in my time at MACU already and love to learn the history from those who have been here since the early years of the school and still serve our students. I find this commitment a true statement of loyalty to the work being done by MACU faculty and staff."

Vice President Alcocer closed, saying, "One of our immediate priorities is ensuring that our contact information is up to date so that we can stay connected with our valued supporters and partners. As we move forward, we are committed to seeking out partnerships and securing grant funding to offset project costs. A campaign to support our campus priorities will be forthcoming, with the main focus of continuing to grow MACU as a place where students are trained to lead with faith, wisdom, and integrity." Welcome, Vice President Alcocer!

RONNIE J. WOOLARD, M.DIV., PROFESSOR OF BIBLE

### Thinking Biblically about a Good Conscience: Part 1

#### Developing a Good Conscience (Acts 24:16)



Walt Disney's Jiminy Cricket told Pinocchio, "Always let your conscience be your guide." Conscience is God's gift to us to distinguish between right and wrong. However, our conscience cannot be our guide unless it has been properly guided. We must study God's Word in order to train our conscience to function as God intended.

First, a good conscience must be educated. The word "conscience" is found 32 times in the New Testament, and 21 of those times it is used by the Apostle Paul. Paul declared that he had "fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience" (Acts 23:1; 24:14-16).

In Paul's day the concept of "conscience" was known even among the pagans. One writer described it like this: "In my heart is an arrowhead with sharp edges. If I do wrong, it turns and cuts me. If I do wrong too often, I wear out the edges and it doesn't hurt quite as much." We are created in the image of God, and thus we have a mind to think with, a heart to feel with, and a will to decide with.

Paul's best description of the conscience is found in Romans 2:14-15. He explained that God had made Himself known even to the Gentiles with a "law written in their hearts." Every human has an inborn sense of right and wrong. However, problems arise when those standards differ from one group to another.

When the British made India part of their empire, they encountered customs which they felt had to be abolished, such as burning a widow on her deceased husband's funeral pyre ("sati"). Appalled, the British issued a new law abolishing it. Indian leaders protested claiming, "Our conscience tells us that the widow must be burned." The British replied, "Our conscience tells us that if you do, we will hang you." Both groups were appealing to conscience but were coming to opposite conclusions.

Thus, we conclude that the conscience is not the source of revelation about right and wrong. The conscience simply bears witness that there is a law of God and that we must obey that law. One writer appealed to the following analogy, "The conscience is not the sun which shines into a darkened room. It is simply the window by which that light of God shines into the room." Another writer put it this way, "Conscience tells us that we ought to do right, but it does not tell us what is right – that we must learn from God's Word." (To be continued in parts 2 and 3, "A Good Conscience Is Effective" and "A Good Conscience Is Exercised.")

#### DATES & EVENTS

Final Exam Week	May 5-8
Foundation Board	May 8
Board of Trustees	May 9
Commencement	May 10
New Student Orientation	Aug. 14-17
Final Registration and classes begin	Aug. 18
*Homecoming	Oct. 2-4
Mid-term Week	Oct. 6-10
Fall Break	Oct. 13-17
Jack W. Cottrell Lectureship	Feb. 26, 2026

#### \*HOMECOMING ACTIVITIES

(with more details to come)

Oct. 2 – Orange & Green baseball game, free picnic, 6:00 p.m. at Knobbs Creek

Oct. 3 – Grace in Every Cup:  
A Tea and Culinary Journey,  
3-5:00 p.m., Davenport Chapel  
(ticketed fundraising event)

– Main Session, 6:30-8:30 p.m.  
George C. Powell '77, Speaker  
Community Christian Church  
Williamston, NC

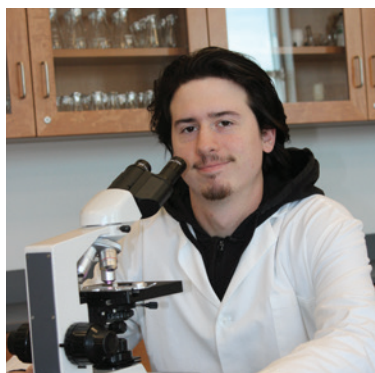
Oct. 4 – Alumni breakfast and meeting,  
call for MACU artifacts,  
workshops, and sporting event

“

**We must study  
God's Word in  
order to train our  
conscience to  
function as God  
intended.**

# BIOLOGY STUDENT AUSTRIA BOUND

Dalon Arrington, a senior biology major, was selected to give a 20-minute poster presentation at an international scientific conference, a distinction typically accomplished by graduate, not undergraduate, students. He and his professor, Dr. John Pace, attended the European Conference on Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Disease, held in Vienna, Austria, Apr. 11-15. This annual premier conference attracts about 17,000 of the top infectious disease physicians and researchers from both the pharmaceutical industry and academia. In Dr. Pace's words, "To put it in perspective, ECCMID is the largest antibiotic conference held globally each year, and that the materials we submitted were peer reviewed before acceptance by the society."



The title of the abstract Dalon submitted, which underwent peer review, is "In vitro antibacterial activity of a fosfomycin/trimethoprim/sulfamethoxazole combination plus anti-mycobacterial agents against reference strains of non-tubercular *Mycobacterium* spp." For the rest of us, he is working on a new antibiotic.

Of his time at MACU, Dalon said, "Attending Mid-Atlantic Christian University significantly transformed my perspective on life, faith, and personal values. The emphasis on spiritual growth and community engagement encouraged me to explore my beliefs more deeply, fostering a profound commitment to service and compassion. Through engaging in thought-provoking discussions, participating in campus ministry, and building lasting relationships with peers who shared similar values, I developed a stronger sense of purpose and an enriched understanding of how to integrate faith into everyday life."

He continued, "My career goal is to be a perfusionist (a professional on a cardiovascular surgical team), and MACU's biology program was the perfect undergraduate program to start me towards [that]. MACU's biology professor [Dr. Pace] is a genius with over 40 patents. He is also a very good advocate for future jobs. He is willing to help you figure out your career path and work with you. Academically, athletically, and spiritually, my time at the university has been marked by growth and achievement."

Dalon also pointed out the transformative role the baseball team had, noting that it was known not only "for its impressive athletic performance but also for its strong sense of morality and camaraderie. The coaching staff emphasized character development, teaching us the importance of integrity, teamwork, and accountability both on and off the field. This culture of excellence instilled in me the values of perseverance and respect, making my experience on the team a cornerstone of my personal growth during my years at MACU."

Theresa Hartsell M.D., Ph.D., MACU's informal pre-clinical adviser, is also attending the conference and assisted with the cost of the trip. Congratulations, Dalon, and thanks, Drs. Pace and Hartsell.

## Dean's List Fall 2024

*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. \* Indicates students who earned a 4.000 GPA.*

Joseph William Billbrey  
Titus Kray Bleckley  
Makayla May Brinkley  
Rafael "RJ" Farias Cabrera Jr.  
Johnny "John" Dewayne Colbert Jr.  
Josiah Jonielle Collado  
Nolan Anthony Colwell  
Andrew "Drew" Gordon Copeland  
Nicholas Ridley Clark Crouse  
Emily Noel Dangerfield  
Samuel Wayne Davis\*  
Madelyn "Maddy" Rose Delosreyes  
Joseph "Joey" Martin Frazier  
Ashleigh Ciara Givens  
Da'Veon Rodney Glenn  
Aidan Guise  
Kolleen Annalise Hansley  
Jake Tyler Harper  
Jahnvi Howell  
Dakota Scott Inman\*  
Sadie Kay Jarman  
Isabel Erin LaPoe  
Abdiel M. Lopez Limas  
Landen Miller  
Immanuel Jacob Nelson  
Jacob Aaron Nixon  
Aime Emmanuel Nshimiyimana  
Kathryn Nicole Pressey\*  
Evan James Price  
Kaytee Grace Reich  
Rachael Revels  
Jacques Rushema  
Ethan Terry Sheppard  
Owen Dewey Stallings  
Tristan Andrew Stinson  
Nathaniel James Taylor  
Grace Elizabeth Watkins  
Zachary "Zac" Ross Whitley  
Janai Lashawn Williams  
Terrence Rashard Williams  
Tyus Bernard Williams  
Austin Wayne Woolard  
Jake Samuel Wynne\*

*Two others requested non-disclosure*



## MACU RWANDA CONTINUES TO PRODUCE FRUIT

In January MACU celebrated the graduation of three remarkable men from the MACU Rwanda program. This educational program, offered in partnership with Rwanda Challenge, results in an affordable associate degree in Bible and theology, empowering local pastors and leaders to meet government requirements for ministry.

Please join us in praying for these new graduates and the church in Rwanda. Dr. David King and Dr. Bane Angles attended the graduation ceremony and taught there in early January. Dr. Kevin Larsen traveled there during spring break to teach Biblical Doctrines.



John Kayitare, Dr. Bane Angles, Emmanuel Ibingira, Patrick Nsanzamahoro, Dr. David King

## TWO FACULTY PRESENT AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

Dr. Patrik Skultety and Dr. Claudio Divino traveled to Prešov, Slovakia, to present at international conferences at the University of Prešov. Dr. Divino participated in the conference “Dialogue – Community – Authority: The Role of Dialogue in Community Building – A Return to the Roots” on Mar. 6 and 7. His wife, Mary, accompanied him. Dr. Skultety participated in the conference “Being Human in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: Philosophical, Ethical, and Religious Perspectives” on Mar. 3. Readers who visit <https://being-human-ai-0123uwa.gamma.site/> will note MACU’s logo under the heading “In cooperation with” alongside logos from institutions in Vietnam, Italy, Poland, and Slovakia because Dr. Skultety served as one of the organizers. He said, “My goal is to expand our mission beyond borders and create a meaningful impact around the world for His Kingdom.”



## DORDT UNIVERSITY OPENS DOOR FOR MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

Dordt University in Sioux Center, IA, is partnering with Mid-Atlantic Christian University to help students and alumni fast-track a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree. MACU students who earn a BS degree in counseling and psychology may be eligible for credit at Dordt toward an MSW. Dr. David King, advisor for MACU’s counseling and psychology program, said that “the partnership will allow MACU grads who are interested in social work to streamline the process of getting into the field. This will add more Christian social workers to the workforce and allow our students to become productive members of society sooner.”

“Dordt’s MSW program integrates Christian values that teach social workers how to serve and minister to their clients as image-bearers and to share the grace of the gospel,” said Joe Bakker, Dordt’s dean for online, graduate, and partner programs. Dr. Erin Olson, director of Dordt’s MSW program, added that their partnership with MACU will allow [the students] to further develop their professional skills while also continuing to build the firm foundation for those skills in their belief that all are made in the image of God.” MACU is pleased to have this program available to our students. (Credit: [dordt.edu/news/](http://dordt.edu/news/))



# PUTTING THE 'SERVE' IN "SERVICE"



Fourteen students and staff from MACU had the opportunity to assist at the Carolina Christian Youth Convention (CCYC) in Greensboro, NC, in February. Our team of Mustangs stepped up to serve and lead, connecting with over 2,200 attendees and helping to make CCYC an unforgettable experience for all. They assisted with workshops, offerings, vendor booths, merchandise sales, games and activities, and event set-up and take-down.

Another facet of MACU's partnership with CCYC was helping to launch the Next Gen Ministry Search at CCYC.

Next Gen is a program designed to inspire and equip young leaders. Participants in the search prepared and delivered short devotional messages, with seven students making it to the final round of live competition at CCYC.

As part of our commitment to developing future Christian leaders, MACU awarded scholarships to the finalists: 1st Place, Courtney Berry (Philippi Church of Christ, Creswell, NC), half tuition scholarship; 2nd Place (tie), Colin Barclift (Towne South Church of Christ, Elizabeth City) and Makayla Petrovich (Jarvisburg Church of Christ, Grandy, NC), both quarter tuition scholarships. All other finalists were awarded a \$500 scholarship. These awards are available for students who apply to and attend MACU. (Story adapted from MACU's website)



Ready for travel to CCYC: Zeke Breisch\*, Evan Jones, Jake Wynne, Lyla Breisch\*, Brady Osborne, Alex Groen, Esteban Quijada, David Hackett, Sadie Jarman, Imanuel Nelson, Nathaniel Taylor, Kaylon Sampson, Rachael Revels, Jahnvi Howell. Not pictured: Scooter Breisch and Dr. Bane Angles. \*Staff children.

## MAD CAMP COMING TO MACU



MACU is thrilled to partner with Roanoke Christian Camp this summer by hosting RCC's annual MAD (Music and Drama) Camp, July 20-25. Dr. Bane Angles, who serves on the camp board, learned that RCC needed to add another week of camp for middle school girls, and knew that our facilities would be an excellent location for the teens who attend MAD Camp.

MAD Camp affords campers the opportunity to explore their creative gifts, engage in worship arts, and build confidence through performance and teamwork. MACU alumnus Patrick Harrison '04 will direct the camp, which Tony Krantz '83 began in 1998. From 2000 to 2018, Tony and Patrick co-directed the week, after which Patrick assumed leadership.

Campers will receive the script and music in advance. Auditions will be held July 20, the first day of camp. On Wednesday and Thursday, they will travel to local churches to perform, and on Friday they will present their final program at MACU. For camp information and registration, visit [roanokechristiancamp.com](http://roanokechristiancamp.com).

## Thanks to the Resident Assistants for 2024-2025



**Turner Hall:** Imanuel Nelson, Erick Enamorado, Travis Snell, Ethan Sheppard, Joey Frazier, Tanner Skidmore, Dalon Arrington, Titus Bleckley, Josiah Colado.



**Presley Hall:** Carly James (top), Marylou Daniels, Isabel LaPoe.

# leadership

**Mustang Olympics gave students stress relief during exam week**



Family Feud competitors show off their medals.



Junior Jamison Miller cues up to break and begin the pool game.



Sophomore Evan Jones steps away from his usual role as drummer on the chapel praise team to sing.

# fun



## DOORWAY TO FUN IN COMPOSITION AND BUSINESS LAW CLASSES

It was still class. Students still had to think, write or speak well, build on what they had learned, and even analyze. But it was different. And fun.

**Dr. Abbey Mirau** didn't just assign a descriptive essay in her composition class. She brought pieces of art to class, discussed the assignment, then had the students study a piece of their choice. Following that, they wrote an essay describing the artwork using all of their senses, except taste, perhaps. (Bottom photo)

At the end of the semester, **Dr. Tracy Wooten's** Business Law students were tested on their grasp of the class's subject matter by conducting a mock trial. The setting in the chapel included the plaintiff's and defendant's sides, a judge, testimony, cross-examination, and a jury.



Ethan Sheppard, defendant Adam Schell, and Josiah Collado listen to the charge of "wrongful termination" against Adam.



Tanner Skidmore, plaintiff Dakota Inman, and Carlos Raven await their turn to convince the jury of Dakota's "wrongful termination."



Dr. Mirau turns to answer a student's question as Arius Alston makes his way to the board to choose the subject of his essay.

# testimony





## SOPHOMORE LEADS STUDENTS IN SUPPORT OF HIS NON-PROFIT

Who begins a journey at age 10 that results in a global mission that reaches more than 3,000 children in 29 countries? That is exactly what sophomore Patrick Boland did after he was diagnosed with Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS), a chronic and often debilitating condition.

CRPS disrupts the nervous system's ability to regulate pain signals, leading to intense burning, swelling, and hypersensitivity in the affected areas. It manifests itself in many ways and causes pain so intense that it is sometimes called the "suicide disease." Young Patrick's work began when a friend in his CRPS group was hospitalized at about the same time as a school project was due. When he sent her a package, it brought him so much joy that he wanted to do it for everyone. Thus, Ferocious Fighters, a non-profit (5013c) was born in November 2014, days after his eleventh birthday. (Learn more at [ferociousfighters.org](http://ferociousfighters.org).)

Students responded in force to Patrick's call to pack "Ferocious Fighter Kits" to be sent to children with CRPS. Thanks, Patrick, for sharing your calling and passion and for giving students the opportunity to serve in this way.



Ethan Sheppard, David Hackett, Patrick Boland, and Kaylon Sampson fold Ferocious Fighters blankets for shipping.

Tables full of students wrote piles of encouragement cards to the children receiving the Ferocious Fighters kits.



## CONGRATULATIONS!

Jamie Jernigan Sacksteder '99 was commended recently by the Virginia Board of Dentistry (BOD). She has worked in the Virginia State Government for 13 years serving in a variety of executive and senior management positions in health and human service agencies. Jamie began working with the BOD in 2019 and in 2022 became the Executive Director for the state board. In addition, she is currently vice president of the American Association of Dental Administrators, as well as a representative chosen by her peers to help develop a National Workgroup Model for Dental Assistants. The Virginia BOD concluded their accolades by stating, "Her commitment to professional growth and her keen insight into emerging trends has made her a respected voice and sought-after expert." Congratulations, Jamie! (Credit: Announcement by the Virginia Dental Hygienists' Association)



“Her commitment to professional growth and her keen insight into emerging trends has made her a respected voice and sought-after expert.”

### NEW MINISTRIES, SERVICE

**Yvonne Waters Howdyshell '90** was recently named principal of the new Buffalo Gap Middle School in Swoope, VA.

**Dori Breisch '94** teaches at NEAAAT (Northeast Academy for Aerospace and Advanced Technologies) in Elizabeth City, NC, and is an adjunct math teacher at MACU.

**Tim Cyphers '05** is serving Jessamine Christian Church in Nicholasville, KY, as Worship Pastor.

**Eric Pruitt '07** is Lead Pastor for Northside Christian Church in Wadsworth, OH.

**Kerri Dandurand Smilie '06** is Associate Pastor for One Life Church in Concord, NC.

**Jared ex'14 and Kelli Macqueen '13 Wice** have answered the call to serve with Ethnos360 in Papua New Guinea (PNG). They and their six children will have pre-field orientation in Florida in June, with their on-the-field date set for January 2026. They are going as support staff, Jared as an electrician while Kelli uses her degree in elementary education to homeschool their children.

### BIRTHS

**Jon '19 and Reilly Muse ex'21 Clifton:** Margo Vallee, Dec. 9  
Duy and **Chloe Lackey '13 Le:** Clara (Ánh Nhiên), Dec. 16

### NOTES OF SYMPATHY

Ella Mohorn Hassell ex'52, Aug. 21, 2024

Burvell Ewell '73, Jan. 3, 2025

Dean Owens '99, Jan. 5

Melvin E. Strawhand, Jr., Jan. 8, husband of  
Kim Steagall Strawhand '85

Raymond A. Pilkington ex'99, Jan. 12

H. Norman Miller '55, Jan. 31

Melva Rae W. Whitaker '73, Feb. 6

Bonnie Everette, Feb. 12, wife of MACU Trustee Board  
Chairman R.E. Everette

Nancy E. Schwitzerlett ex'72, Mar. 2

Michelle Martin Frazier ex'92, Mar. 3



## MEN'S BASKETBALL BREAKS DOWN DOORS

The MACU Mustangs have had a remarkable season, one far greater than their 15-12 record would indicate. In a historic first, the Mustangs defeated cross-town rivals, the Elizabeth City State University Vikings, 75-71, soon followed by defeating Regent University, 85-73, both much larger schools.

The Mustangs racked up another first when they defeated the Apprentice School on the Shipbuilders' home court, 81-76. The team placed second in the New South Athletic Conference tournament in Florida and soon after got a bid to play in the USCAA national tournament in Buffalo, NY,





another first. The Mustangs are seeded 6 out of 8 in a contest to be played after press time.

At senior night, the sole honoree, Geoffrey Wellons, played the game of his life, scoring a career high 19 points and ending the game with a slam dunk. He and his teammates scored a 107-49 win over the Central International College Cardinals.

The MACU family appreciates the excitement that these players bring to campus life, as well as Head Coach Charles Sims' dedication in helping them develop both their basketball and spiritual muscles.

**Bottom:** Jake Harper, Janai Williams, Elijah Dias, Nikko Trafton. **Middle:** Terrence Williams, Tyus Williams, Uriah Logan, Stewart Clough. **Top:** Geoffrey Wellons, Keith Shakes, Anthony Bannister, Janus Shepherd.



President Maurice shared the front-page news of MACU's David-and-Goliath win over ECSU far and wide.

## LADY MUSTANGS PLAY WITH HEART

The six Lady Mustangs took to the court game after game, giving all they had playing against far deeper benches. The women fought hard against tough odds, and MACU is proud of their persistence and sportsmanship. Of note is that four of these ladies also played volleyball in the fall, with some overlap in seasons. Their positivity and determination were evident to anyone who watched them play.



Isabel LaPoe, Tessa Dobson, Carly James, Emily Dangerfield, Kaytee Reich, Maddy Delosreyes

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# SUMMER TEAM ON THE ROAD



## Summer

CHRISTIAN CAMPS & CONFERENCES

JUNE 1-6

OAK HILL CHRISTIAN CAMP, HIGH SCHOOL  
Mechanicsville, VA

JUNE 8-13

ROANOKE CHRISTIAN CAMP, DEEPER LIFE  
Washington, NC

JUNE 15-20

CIY CONFERENCE-OHIO  
Bowling Green, OH

JUNE 22-27

ROANOKE CHRISTIAN CAMP, INTERMEDIATE 1  
Washington, NC

JUNE 29-JULY 4

CAMP RUDOLPH, HIGH SCHOOL  
Yale, VA

ROANOKE CHRISTIAN CAMP, HIGH SCHOOL  
Washington, NC

## Summer

CHRISTIAN CAMPS & CONFERENCES CONT.

JULY 6-11

CEDAR CREEK CHRISTIAN CAMP, HIGH SCHOOL  
Strasburg, VA

CHRISTIAN ACRES, JUNIOR HIGH  
Bluefield, WV

BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN CAMP, HIGH SCHOOL  
McCoy, VA

JULY 13-18

PARK SPRINGS CHRISTIAN CAMP, HIGH SCHOOL  
Providence, NC

JULY 20-25

CIY CONFERENCE - NC  
Wilmington, NC

CIY CONFERENCE - MD  
Salisbury, MD

CHRISTIAN ACRES, SENIOR HIGH  
Bluefield, WV

Admissions Counselor Scooter Breisch, Dustin Hopkins, Sadie Jarman, Imanuel Nelson, and Travis Snell are looking forward to serving your students in 13 camp weeks on 7 different campgrounds (and 3 CIY locations) in 5 states. Please pray for their health and witness as they serve with joy.