

MESSENGER

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CAN GOD USE SOMEONE LIKE ME?

3 | Drew and Amanda Bromm
5 | Travis Williams

10 | Ronnie Woolard
17 | Huguens Mercier

A PERSONAL NOTE FROM PRESIDENT MAURICE

I want to thank our amazing MACU family for the last four years as you journeyed with Sherry and me through pancreatic cancer, diagnosis of stage four liver disease, and attempts to obtain a liver transplant. In early September, we enrolled Sherry in hospice when she became certain that no efforts were working to help her overcome her debilitating illness. On September, 28, Sherry passed away, holding on to Christ and the hope of resurrection. Your prayers, love, and encouragement were inspirational to her, me, and our entire family. Thank you for the love shown in our time of sadness and grief.

Your prayers, love, and encouragement were inspirational to her, me, and our entire family.



Cover: In 1985, faculty and staff didn't do just "their" jobs. They rolled up their sleeves and volunteered to help build Harold C. Turner Hall. Even while carrying their everyday campus responsibilities, they gave their time and energy to something bigger. Today, many of those same faithful servants are still building the Kingdom. God used people just like them. And He can use someone just like you.

GOD CAN USE SOMEONE LIKE YOU?



Several years ago I was channel surfing and came across a speaker named David Ring. His severe disability was obvious as he shared his amazing testimony. When David was born, he was dead for 18 minutes. His father died when he was very young. His mother died of cancer when he was 14. David was passed from family to family and faced a myriad of challenges, including cerebral palsy.

But David chooses not to be a victim and not to seek pity. He speaks to more than 100,000 people a year, is married, and has children and grandchildren. David recounts being called to preach, saying his response was, "But God, I have cerebral palsy."

When God calls us to serve Him, it is easy to pile up excuses. I am too young, too old, too incompetent, too unprepared, and the list goes on. David's point is that if anyone has a good excuse not to serve God as a preacher, it is a person with cerebral palsy.

Have you ever looked at your life and wondered if God could ever use someone like you? It is easy to feel unqualified, focusing on what you lack rather than what God can do. However, the resounding answer from scripture and history is, "Yes, He can, and He will." In fact, God specializes in using ordinary, flawed people to do extraordinary things.

God's grace is greater than your mistakes, your past, or your insecurities. The Bible is not a storybook of perfect people; it is a catalog of broken individuals used by a perfect God.

- Moses was a murderer with a speech impediment.
- David was an adulterer and a murderer.
- Rahab was a prostitute.
- Peter denied Jesus three times.
- Paul persecuted Christians before becoming one.

If God could use them, He can use you. Your past sins or present brokenness do not disqualify you. They simply make you a candidate for His grace.

You do not need to be like anyone else to serve God. God will use your specific, unique experiences, even the difficult ones, to accomplish His purposes. If you feel too messed up, too small, or too average, you are exactly the type of person God loves to use to show His strength. Mid-Atlantic Christian University can help you find your calling and prepare you for service in the Kingdom of God.

Humbled to be used of God,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John W. Maurice".

John W. Maurice, President

SOMEONE LIKE HIM? HER? ME?

Too often we see perceived shortcomings as obstacles to serving God. Nothing could be further from the truth. God's transformative love and grace shape and redirect the person who yields his heart. Starting with this issue of *The Messenger*, you will read stories of alumni whose faith presupposes their service in a variety of places and professions.

Drew '11 and Amanda Brandon '11 Bromm
Lead Minister, First Christian Church of Columbiana, Columbiana, Ohio
Licensed Professional Counselor, Christian Counseling Associates



About forty percent of ministers leave the ministry within five years. The next dropout milestone is around ten to fifteen years. Yet here we are, nearing our fifteenth year of professional ministry, faithful to Jesus' calling on our lives because of two enduring influences:

the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and the lasting impact of Mid-Atlantic Christian University.

MACU's influence began before I even knew MACU existed. I wanted to go into youth ministry because of the influence of my youth minister, Mick Buchanan. The fact that he was a MACU graduate made choosing a school easy, so this Hoosier made his way to North Carolina. Meanwhile, Amanda wanted to pursue a professional licensed counseling degree. She started at a community college but was influenced to continue her studies at MACU by her former executive-minister-turned-president-of-MACU, Dr. Clay Perkins. Amanda and I met on the second day of freshman orientation. MACU didn't just influence our ministries. It also brought us together.

Amanda and I agree that our longevity in ministry, aside from the Holy Spirit, can be attributed to MACU in two ways. The first is the education we received. We were blessed to be taught by amazing, knowledgeable professors. For Amanda, the combination of counseling, ministry, and Bible classes prepared her for her current role, working as a licensed counselor for Christian Counseling Associates, which functions not just as a counseling center, but also as a genuine ministry. The conversations she had with professors McKinney and Greene helped her to be a professional, to love people the way Jesus did, and to apply biblical truth to her clients.

For me, every piece of knowledge I received has been a resource to succeed in ministry: how to run a ministry, how to lead a team,

how to put together a sermon, even using the devotionals I wrote for Dr. Bob in *Western Civilization*. I received a second education from MACU when I worked there for three years as the campus minister/student life director, enabling me not only to work for, but also to be mentored by Dr. Ken Greene. I believe I can do ministry because of him. MACU truly trained us to be the counselor and ministers we are today.

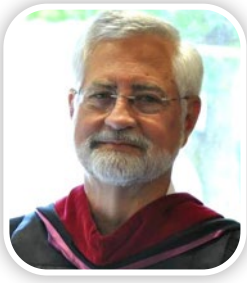
The second way – and to us, the most important way – MACU contributed to our ministry is the people MACU brought into our lives. Amanda and I found each other. Three professors were in our wedding. Our first ministry opportunity was given to us by a MACU alumnus. When ministry got hard, professors reached out. When Amanda's mom passed away, professors reached out, and MACU became a resting place for her while dealing with that loss. Amanda and I met our "family" (friends who became family) at MACU. They are our best friends and encouragers. We have weathered the highs and lows of life together, even though Amanda and I live 516 miles away. Dr. King was hired after our time as students, yet he still helped Amanda during her provisional license phase. MACU gave us a wonderful education, but the people have enabled us to thrive.

Amanda and I are doing what Jesus called us to do fifteen years ago. She is a licensed professional counselor, and I am a lead minister at a church in Ohio. Ministry has not been the easiest profession, but we remain faithful, and God remains faithful. We are grateful for the education and resources MACU gave us, and even more grateful for the people from MACU who love us and whom we love in return.



Drew, Amanda, Dr. Abbey Mirau, Student Life Director Emily Meneely, Athletic Director Andy Meneely

A GOOD CONSCIENCE IS EXERCISED



RONNIE J. WOOLARD, D.D., PROFESSOR OF BIBLE EMERITUS

Thinking Biblically about a Good Conscience: Part 3 Developing a Good Conscience (Acts 24:16)

Parts one and two of this article, published in previous Messengers, considered that a “good” conscience must be educated and effective. Part Three considers two goals God had in mind for a good conscience to accomplish. Everyone has muscles, but we vary in the extent to which we exercise them. Similarly, it is not enough simply to have a conscience. We must exercise it.

In Hebrews 5:11-14, the writer rebukes some who were not maturing. To urge them to improve, he uses a word picture, referring to those who “by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.” The Greek word translated “trained” is the basis for our English word “gymnasium.” The writer is reminding them that just as athletes must exercise their muscles, Christians must exercise their conscience.

Two Christian businessmen, Bob Rowling and Jim Caldwell, exercised their conscience. In 1996, when Bob Rowling purchased the Omni Hotel Chain, he discovered that adult pay-per-view movies were in use. That year guests spent about \$175 million watching adult movies. Since hotels keep 20% of this total, it was a significant source of income.

Guests could block these movies, but that was not enough for Rowling. Little did he know how difficult and expensive this decision would be. Removing the movies was a four-year, \$4 million ordeal. Existing contracts had to expire first, followed by resistance from the movie providers. None wanted to provide any movie service unless adult movies were included since they provided 50% of the profits.

Finally, Rowling found a provider who would tailor a package for him. But that meant replacing the televisions in all 9,100 hotel rooms because Omni’s previous provider had donated them. It cost \$4 million to replace them, plus \$3 million more in lost revenue from the adult movie business. It cost Rowling a lot to exercise his conscience.

Rowling said, “Although we considered the cost of doing this, we didn’t focus on the money so much. We’re both believers, so we try to run our business in a manner that honors our faith and our God.” Caldwell added, “Money was not the issue in this matter. Every business decision should not be fiscally driven. We believe this is the right thing to do, the right thing for Omni Hotels, our associates, and our customers.”

Since this decision became public, Rowling has received over 30,000 messages commending him for his moral courage. These two men who exercised their conscience and did the right thing had a positive impact not only on themselves, but also on others who might have failed to exercise their conscience in the face of temptation. A good conscience is not only educated and effective, but also exercised.

What do you do if you have ignored your conscience and sinned against God’s Law? The only way to be freed from a guilty conscience is by putting your faith in Jesus Christ, who shed His blood as a sacrifice for our sins (Hebrews 10:22-25).

SOMEONE LIKE ME?

Travis Williams '05

Assistant Director for Marketing and Communications for the Office of Research and Innovation at Virginia Tech



I'm not a minister, but I think I do some holy work.

For much of the past two decades I've written and edited stories for either the main newspaper of Southwest Virginia or one of the largest universities in the state.

I've reported on everyone from elementary school spelling bee contestants and college athletes to local, state, and federal officials, and even a few people accused of crimes.

My most recent work focuses on telling stories of Virginia Tech researchers and their efforts to make life better. Through advancements in areas ranging from biomedical engineering and child psychology to 3D printing, AI, and national security, they're doing great things, and I get to help extend the benefits to others through story.

Telling stories can be a holy experience. Interviewing provides another human the opportunity to put words to all the thoughts and feelings rolling around inside them. Writing is all about sharing that person's insights in a way that allows others to find meaning for their own lives. It is work that hinges on the ability to truly value people, both subjects and readers.

For me, this is rooted in a belief that all people are made in God's image, and I should love them as myself. No matter who a person is, what they do, or what they believe, I think there's something good and relatable in them. I think they are worth both listening to and writing for.

I try to approach interview subjects with a combination of dignity and curiosity to help best reveal their true selves. I try to understand life from their position, while also connecting it to our shared experience. My writing and editing are done with the goal of creating something worth another person's time. I believe that no matter if it's a sermon or a feature film, the time folks spend with our content is part of their lives they can never get back. We honor that by ensuring it is accessible, accurate, and some combination of informative, inspirational, or entertaining. In my field this means pushing aside any worry of looking dumb or invasive to ask questions needed for clarity, chasing down those best sources and voices, and fact-checking aggressively.

I couldn't say my time at MACU put me on a direct path to this career, but I can say the people I met there played a critical role in how I view others, this world, and how we interact with one another. I can also say that Professor Donald McKinney's keys to good counseling – genuineness, empathy, and positive regard – routinely show up when I'm invited to speak to college journalism classes.

After graduating in 2005, I went through a few different fields while always dabbling in communications on the side. Eventually, this passion was too great to ignore. I quit my job as a middle school history teacher and got one writing high school box scores in the middle of the night at *The Roanoke Times*. A year and countless misspelled names later, I shifted to a full-time role and began to cultivate the relationships and reporting that would launch my career in this field.

My career has allowed me to sit with people who hold a wide range of skills, beliefs, and worldly status, and work alongside great people from all walks of life. I think my approach has allowed me to develop many of these encounters into a beautifully diverse network of friends and acquaintances.

I don't shy away from sharing my faith, but I've come to realize the greater impression is almost always made by showing up ready to listen and help. I actually can't tell you the last time I initiated a conversation about faith, but I also can't count the number of times I've been on the opposite end of a subject or co-worker's curiosity about Christianity or the church.

I hope that's the value others will find in my story. I hope they leave it a little more curious about Jesus than before they heard it.

Travis enrolled in MACU, influenced by his youth minister Brandon Craig '97, Belmont Christian Church, Blacksburg, VA. To his MACU bachelor's degree, Travis added a Master of Science in education from Radford University and a Master of Arts in new media journalism from Full Sail University.



Williams with son Dawson and wife Annie



McCloud Family: Carter, Grace, Ashley, Jimmy, Ellie, and Braylon

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: JIMMY MCLOUD

Mid-Atlantic Christian University is pleased to recognize former student Jimmy McCloud ex'07, whose three years at the university helped shape a life of leadership, faith, and lasting service to churches and communities nationwide.

Jimmy currently serves as Lead Pastor of First Christian Church in Canton, OH, where his passion and the church's vision is to share the good news that Jesus is for all people. Through his leadership, First Christian Church helps individuals find hope, purpose, and a place to belong in the family of God.

In addition to his pastoral role, Jimmy serves as chairman of the Board of Directors for The Solomon Foundation, a foundation that helps churches take their next steps by providing loans to acquire property, build and renovate facilities, and expand existing ministries. He also serves as a ministry consultant with The Unstuck Group, working alongside pastors and church leaders to identify roadblocks to sustained church health and to strategically plan solutions so churches can reach more people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Jimmy's commitment to excellence was evident during his time at MACU. An honors student, he was known for his engagement in both academics and spiritual formation.

"Jimmy was one of those students who was deeply engaged in his classes and Bible studies and took his education seriously," said Ronnie Woolard, one of Jimmy's former professors. "He approached learning with intentionality and a genuine desire to grow."

Staff member Garrett "Pop" Lewis also reflected on Jimmy's well-rounded involvement, noting, "Jimmy was musically gifted and talented, and he also played a good game of basketball."

Today, Jimmy and his wife, Ashley, live in North Canton, OH, with their four children: Braylon, Carter, Ellie, and Grace.

Mid-Atlantic Christian University celebrates Jimmy McCloud as an example of faithful leadership, lifelong learning, and Christ-centered service.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION REIGNITES ENGAGEMENT



The Mid-Atlantic Christian University (MACU) Alumni Association reunited its members at a meeting held during homecoming in October. At this gathering, an executive committee was established, marking an exciting step forward as the association resumes active engagement with the university and its community.

The executive committee is currently organizing committees to expand alumni involvement and strengthen collaboration with churches connected to the university. One key focus of these committees is addressing the growing need for ministry leadership positions within Christian churches and churches of Christ by holding interest meetings in several churches that have alumni who can build alumni chapters.

MACU currently provides a platform on its website where churches can post available ministry positions. These openings align closely with the university's academic offerings, including ministry and preaching degrees and a Professional Christian Ministry Certificate that prepares students to serve in church leadership roles. Recognizing the strong demand for qualified ministry leaders, the alumni association aims to help bridge the gap between churches seeking leadership and graduates prepared to serve.

A central objective of the association's efforts is the establishment of regional alumni chapters. By creating structure through the executive committee and its sub-committees, these chapters will strengthen relationships among the university, congregations, alumni, and prospective students. These alumni chapters will foster collaboration among alumni, churches, and Christian leaders to help identify, prepare, and support the next generation of spiritual leaders, ministers, and servants of Christ. Through mentorship, networking, and ministry partnerships, alumni can play a direct role in guiding students and young leaders toward meaningful service in the church.

The long-term goal for the alumni chapters is to fill their current ministry vacancies, support Mid-Atlantic Christian University in student recruitment, and ensure that any funds raised by each chapter are directed toward scholarships for members within the churches that make up that chapter. These resources will help provide financial assistance to students from those congregations who choose to attend the university, strengthening the connection between local churches and the institution while supporting the development of future ministry leaders.

Through these efforts, the MACU Alumni Association seeks to build a stronger network that supports churches, encourages students, and advances the mission of preparing leaders for ministry.

Ron Lawrence '15, Chair, Alumni Association

Through mentorship, networking, and ministry partnerships, alumni can play a direct role in guiding students and young leaders toward meaningful service in the church.

TODAY'S FORECAST: SHOWERS OF BLESSING

There's a saying: When you pray for rain, make sure you carry an umbrella.

April is a season of renewal. Showers prepare the ground for growth, but growth does not happen by hope alone. It requires preparation, stewardship, and action. Today we find ourselves in one of those defining moments. To meet this year's obligations and position the university for long-term stability, we must raise \$815,000 before June 30, 2026. This goal addresses immediate operational needs and essential campus improvements that directly affect our students' quality of life.

These funds will not only close the remaining gap in our annual operating budget, but also address critical deferred maintenance, including replacing HVAC units in residence halls, repairing the Blanton Center roof to prevent further structural damage, completing elevator repairs and ADA upgrades, and strengthening our IT infrastructure to improve connectivity and security. These are not cosmetic upgrades. They are investments in safety, accessibility, comfort, and the overall quality of campus life. Our facilities shape student morale, influence family confidence, and impact retention.

When this college was founded, faculty and staff built much of what we still use today. That pioneering spirit shaped our identity. Today, however, building codes, OSHA regulations, and compliance requirements require licensed professionals and significant financial investment. Responsible stewardship means addressing needs before they become larger problems. Deferred maintenance left unaddressed grows more costly and disruptive. Addressed now, it preserves our mission and strengthens student life for the next generation.

When we pray for rain, we carry the umbrella.



Showers
prepare the
ground for
growth, but
growth does
not happen by
hope alone.
It requires
preparation,
stewardship,
and action.

Will you help us carry it?

Please consider giving to Mid-Atlantic Christian University.

All gifts can be mailed to

715 N. Poindexter Street, Elizabeth City, NC 27909 or
made online at <https://secure.givelively.org/donate/mid-atlantic-christian-university-inc>

CAN GOD USE A UNIVERSITY LIKE MACU AND A CHURCH LIKE YOURS?

Churches of Christ in Eastern North Carolina in 1948 were so short of ministers that most had preaching only one or two Lord’s days each month. It was not unusual for one minister to serve four or even six churches. This shortage was caused when a once-loyal ministerial school serving the area began teaching German rationalism or “modernism.” Without the challenge of a divine Christ, few ministerial students entered and fewer graduated from this college, and once churches realized what was being taught, many refused to use graduates of that school.

Congregations had died, and others were weak spiritually, numerically, and financially. Meeting places consisted generally of small frame structures with plain auditoriums for worship and few Bible school rooms. To answer this need, Roanoke Bible College was conceived early in 1948 and began classes that September.

From the school’s beginning, the vitality of the college and the area churches was intertwined. Student preachers filled pulpits. Congregations prayed for the school, sent financial support, and welcomed teams of freshmen who would visit to preach, teach, and sing. They realized they were helping future generations to have well trained men and women serving in their churches and communities.

Seaford Christian Church in Seaford, VA, is one congregation with a longstanding relationship with MACU. Gregg Breisch, Sr., and his wife, Shirley, were in the group that helped form the congregation in 1975. Dave Cuthbertson, a 1970 graduate, was the minister for the new church planted by Olivet Christian Church, Newport News, VA. More alumni preachers followed – David Willis ‘90, Jason Thornton ‘99, and the current minister, Chris Cuthbertson ‘97, son of the first preacher. Alumni youth ministers include Scooter Breisch ‘94 (first full-time youth minister), Myron Williams ‘99, and Jena McDaniel Cumming ex’07.

Scooter and his sister Gina ‘00, children of a founding couple, are two of the students from the church who received financial support from Seaford to attend a Bible college. Gina, the first baby born into the new congregation, continues to worship at Seaford today. Scooter works in student services and admissions at MACU and is the resident hall director for the men. Other alumni are also from Seaford.

Seaford has been blessed by graduates serving them, and the school has been blessed by the congregation’s faithful financial support and by their youth who have attended. It is one of many congregations that God has used to help grow His Kingdom. We invite your congregation to partner with us, also.



On Nov. 1, members of the Seaford church welcomed Vice President for Institutional Advancement Amy Alcocer at a breakfast gathering. Alcocer thanked the members for their faithful support and shared an update on the university’s ministry. She was especially excited to hear about the many connections among the members, some who had attended the university themselves and others who have relatives who are current or former students. Alcocer noted that these stories highlight the deep, personal investment stakeholders have in the university.

WOOLARD RETIREMENT, CLASSROOM DEDICATION



The Ronnie J. and Trish Woolard classroom in Heritage Hall was dedicated on Feb. 26. Professor Woolard is accompanied by his son, Eric '01, for the occasion.

From the fall of 1974 through December of 2025 – 51.5 years – Professor Ronnie Woolard has shared his passion for the Bible with students. The old and new testaments came to life in his survey classes and specialty courses. Professor Woolard has also taught a number of theology courses and other Bible related courses. Some of his more well known include Bible Evidences,

Christian Ethics, and Science and the Bible. The era of his full-time teaching closed in December, but he continues teaching part time as Professor of Bible Emeritus.

Professor Woolard honed his work ethic growing up on a small farm in eastern North Carolina. Devout parents instilled in him a pursuit of honest and worthy service, which was obvious in his high school and scouting careers. Faithfully attending church helped establish a foundation for his life's work of teaching Bible, ministry, and service. During his first 30 years of teaching, he taught full-time and served three different congregations. His third and final ministry was from 1988 to 2004 with a new congregation, Towne South Church of Christ. His wife, Trish, served the three congregations alongside her husband.

In addition to teaching and preaching, Professor Woolard worked as the college printer for nearly 20 years. He regularly attended student activities and answered calls for "all hands on deck" for countless campus projects. Trish also worked for the college (25 years), and together they served as sponsors for several classes and produced end-of-year comedies and dramas.

In all this service to others, Professor Woolard recognized his family as the main priority. Dr. Kevin Larsen, vice president for academic affairs, noted in his remarks at Professor Woolard's retirement celebration, "While the extent of people that have encountered God through Professor Woolard's teaching and

preaching will never be known, what we can quantify is the legacy that he has made and continues to make through his family. As a husband to his wife Trish, he has faithfully led their marriage. Unlike many fathers in scripture who neglected their children, Ronnie, along with Trish, has raised amazing faithful servants of God in their children, Tara and Eric. Ronnie and Trish, we say thank you for modeling for all of us how to have a healthy Christian home."

Throughout Professor Woolard's tenure, his students, the university, and the Board of Trustees have bestowed various honors on him. Several times he was named the yearbook dedicatee by the senior class. Other notable honors include receiving an honorary doctorate degree, retiring with the designation "Emeritus," and having a classroom in Heritage Hall named in honor of him and his wife.



Professor Woolard and students David Hackett, Esteban Quijada, and Josh Peacock

Excerpts from "The Lives You've Touched," Professor Woolard's retirement memory book, bear witness to his life of teaching, service, and example:

"Ronnie could have been successful in many careers, yet he denied himself, picked up his cross, and followed Jesus. God saved him for students like me and the many others like me."

"As he unfolded the Old Testament class after class, his excitement never waned. That excitement was infectious."

"Your daily actions and words of wisdom to me and so many others helped to shape my faith in untold ways."

"He taught me much about the Bible, but more about being a man, husband, father, and follower of Jesus."

"When he taught us the Old Testament, he did it with such enthusiasm you could almost feel as though you were right there on the battlefield alongside David facing Goliath."

SENTARA HEALTH LAB NAMED IN HERITAGE HALL

On Feb. 24, Mid-Atlantic Christian University unveiled its newly named Sentara Health Lab, a space designed to inspire and prepare the next generation of local healthcare professionals. Titus Bleckley, a senior at MACU, who would soon be traveling to Germany to present research he conducted in the Sentara Lab, was present to talk at the unveiling ceremony, along with President Maurice and Sentara Albemarle Medical Center President Teresa Watson.

Sentara has invested \$1.5 million in northeast North Carolina since 2023, and this new lab is another big step in strengthening STEM pathways, supporting student success, and helping grow the region’s own homegrown nurses, providers, and science leaders. Here’s to brighter futures, stronger care, and the next wave of healthcare heroes!



Sentara Albemarle Medical Center President Teresa Watson, Senior biology major Titus Bleckley, and President John Maurice pose in the spacious Sentara Health Lab.



Attendees gather in the hallway outside the lab, located on the second floor of Heritage Hall.

THREE MACU PROFESSORS TRAVEL TO RWANDA

Three MACU professors taught classes on campus at MACU-Rwanda this school year.



In January, Dr. Bane Angles (right) taught two classes, College Success and Christian Formation. Scott McClimans, U.S. Co-director of Rwanda Challenge, is on the left. Dr. David King was also in Rwanda in January to teach Introduction to Counseling.



In October, Dr. Kevin Larsen (center front) taught Biblical Doctrines.

SKULTETY GARNERS ANOTHER INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR MACU STUDENTS



Dr. Patrik Skultety participated in securing a grant that covers two trips per year to Europe for three individuals, fully funded. This grant creates space for academic enrichment, intercultural dialogue, and meaningful Christian impact abroad and here at home.

Dr. Skultety submitted the grant in partnership with the University of Prešov (UNIPO) under a European Union program focused on cross-cultural studies and education. He stated that for him, “This is far more than an academic achievement. It is the result of many years of international work, relationships, and service in education across continents. My long-term mission has always been to open global doors for our students – not only academically and professionally, but spiritually and culturally as well.”

MACU students or faculty selected for the trip will be able to represent Christ-centered education internationally, to build bridges across cultures, and to demonstrate how faith and scholarship can work together. Those who participate will not only experience academic exchange, but also serve as ambassadors of Christian character, leadership, and integrity. Dr. Skultety, his wife Zuzanna (an adjunct instructor), and Dr. Kevin Larsen made the first trip April 3-13.

This grant positions MACU as a leader among colleges in our area, not only in international engagement, but in integrating faith, learning, and global service. The university is grateful for Dr. Skultety’s passion to secure such opportunities for MACU.

THREE SENIOR BIOLOGY MAJORS ACCOMPANY PACE TO CONFERENCE IN GERMANY



Senior biology majors Titus Bleckley, Jamison Miller, and Tristan Stinson were among the seven from MACU who attended the 2026 European Society for Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Disease Global Conference in Munich, Germany, April 16-21. Dr. John Pace (left), professor of microbiology said, “We

submitted four presentations to be given at the ESCMID, and all four were accepted, which is rare because they typically reject 30-50%, depending on the number of submissions. Three current biology majors (Bleckley, Miller, Stinson), two alumni (Travis Snell, Carrington Townes), my research assistant Nick Stuart, three of my collaborators (Theresa Hartsell, M.D., Ph.D., Susan Gardlik, Ph.D., Steven Volla, MPH) and I are co-authors [of the four studies accepted for presentation].”

In addition to teaching at MACU, Dr. Pace is Chief Scientific Officer of FleurirABX, LLC, a biotechnology company based in the United States and France. He is an infectious disease microbiologist possessing more than 30-years postgraduate biotech/pharma and academic experience in the US, France, and Denmark. He is a creationist, while being a world class scientist and training MACU students accordingly in the biological sciences. His perspective is, “God is the ultimate molecular biologist, and I am blessed to have the opportunity to teach students about some of God’s greatest creations.”



Ministers attending the lectureship gather at the conclusion to offer prayers of thanks and encouragement for Dr. Moore.

JACK W. COTTRELL LECTURESHIP RECAP; LECTURESHIP 2027

On Feb. 26, over 200 heard Dr. Mark Moore’s challenge to think deeply about the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. Drawing from decades of ministry, scholarship, and teaching, he reminded attendees that the Holy Spirit is not distant or abstract, but active. The Holy Spirit forms Christ in us and fuels obedience to empower the church to reflect God’s love in a broken world. In the spirit of Dr. Jack Cottrell’s legacy, his message was a call back to biblical clarity – grace that saves, truth that anchors, and a Spirit who actively works in believers to transform hearts and communities. Don’t miss the 2027 Cottrell Lectureship, Feb. 27, presented by Dr. Johnny Pressley.

NEW MAJOR: BS IN DIGITAL MARKETING

If you have ever purchased anything online or supported a cause you learned about online, you have benefited from digital marketing. In fact, digital marketing is the most crucial marketing space today. MACU will be preparing students to enter this critical and extensive field starting next fall.

Next semester students may enroll in a digital marketing program (BS in Digital Marketing/Bible Minor). The program, which includes a minor in foundational Bible studies, provides students the opportunity to learn about essential digital platforms for marketing, including social media platforms, email, SMS, and search engines. Through hands-on projects designed with feedback from industry experts, students will practice using the backend tools used for each platform, develop data analytics skills to interpret results for informed decision-making, and gain experience presenting their findings clearly and effectively.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, marketing managers are among the most highly paid professionals in the modern workforce. The number of marketing manager roles is expected to grow by 6% in the next 10 years, which is faster than the average for all occupations. In fact, digital marketing is continuously growing in importance, enabling further reach and higher engagement than traditional marketing. As such, digital marketing is the most crucial marketing space. Find program details at macuniversity.edu/academics/bachelor-programs/digital-marketing/.

THE WORLD AT OUR DOORSTEP

Inaugural International Student Conference on Entrepreneurship, Non-Profits and Missions

On April 25, MACU will welcome students and faculty from across Europe, Latin America, and the United States. Organized by Global University Institute, a U.S.-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the conference brings together participants from France, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Ecuador, and the USA to explore how entrepreneurship, nonprofit leadership, and mission-driven initiatives can create meaningful social impact in local and global communities.

The conference features student presentations, faculty-guided discussions, and collaborative dialogue focused on ethical entrepreneurship, nonprofit innovation, service-learning, and faith-inspired leadership. Designed as an academic yet practical forum, the event encourages students to see business and nonprofit work not only as careers, but also as callings that serve the common good.

“This conference reflects the heart of international education, bringing diverse perspectives together to learn from one another while addressing real-world challenges,” said Dr. Patrik Skultety, conference founder and associate professor at MACU. “Our students are engaging globally while remaining grounded in purpose, service, and values.”

By hosting the conference, Mid-Atlantic Christian University continues to strengthen its commitment to global engagement, experiential learning, and the integration of faith, scholarship, and service.



DEAN'S LIST FALL 2025

Jenna Marie Ayer*
 Adam James Bailey
 Joseph William Bilbrey
 Savannah Lee Blackburn
 Katherine Grace Branscome
 Makayla May Brinkley
 Michelle Lynn Cabaniss
 Luke Edward Chappin
 Johnny Dewayne Colbert Jr.
 Madelyn Rose Delosreyes
 Dakota Dickerson
 Joseph “Joey” Martin Frazier
 Emilie Jane Haislip
 Elizabeth Lauren Haynes
 Dakota Scott Inman
 Luke Michael Johnson
 Cayleigh Bryonna Martin
 Lily Nicole McLean
 Andrew Ray Mullis
 Imanuel Jacob Nelson
 Audrey Elizabeth Newell
 Rebekah Grace Newell
 Kaytee Grace Reich*
 Brian A Sanchez
 Janus James Shepherd
 Liliana Kai Sines-Kleist
 Lea Caroline Styons
 Molly Saylor Sykes
 Nathaniel James Taylor
 Michelle B. Ward
 Jake Samuel Wynne*

*The Dean's List is comprised of full-time students (12 credits or more) who earned a semester grade point average of 3.5000 or higher. * Indicates students who earned a 4.000 GPA. (One student who achieved Dean's List honors requested non-disclosure.)*

MEN'S BASKETBALLERS ENCOURAGE NEXT GENERATION

The MACU Mustangs men's basketball team present a signed basketball to Central Elementary School student Carter Barcliff, who recently scored 10 points in his school's winning game. The Mustangs have encouraged young players this year by presenting signed basketballs to teams at several area schools.



SENIOR LOGAN EXEMPLIFIES MUSTANG CHARACTER

Uriah Logan, a transfer student from Atlantis University, played MACU basketball for two years and was honored recently at Senior Night. Head Coach Charles Sims said of him, "Uriah's legacy at MACU is defined by his Christian character. A leader in every sense, he walked the halls and the hardwood with a steadfast belief in God. He led by example, showing his teammates that 'Mustang Toughness' is rooted in humility and a servant's heart." An exemplary student, Uriah, a Counseling and Psychology/Biblical Studies major, recently gave a motivational talk to high school students at River City YouthBuild in Elizabeth City.



Assistant coaches Roundtree and Carter, Head Coach Sims, Jayden Skinner, Cynsere Petty, Janus Shepherd, Keondre Rodgers, Eli Dias, Senior Uriah Logan, Emil Hernandez, Nikko Trafton, Keenan Iseli, Janai Williams, Dontrel Lee, Latrell Thompson, Assistant coaches Wellons and Press.

JAMES SHINES AT SENIOR NIGHT

In February, Mustangs gave a tribute to senior Carly James, honoring her for her commitment to the Mustangs women's basketball program. Her dominate performance made her Senior Night extra sweet. She led all scorers with 26 points, as the Mustangs defeated Appalachian Bible College, 64-29. Coach Andy Meneely shared, "Coaches are always excited when a senior graduates, but some are still tough to see leave." Congratulations, Carly, for your perseverance and leadership throughout your career with the Mustangs.



Senior Carly James is flanked by her parents and surrounded by her teammates and coach. Front: Maddy Delosreyes, Emily Dangerfield, Angelina Bologna. Back: Isabel LaPoe, Hope Andrews, Scott James, Carly James, Debbie James, Lily McLean, Head Coach Meneely.

MUSTANGS WIN DOUBLE HEADER EARLY IN THE SEASON

Congratulations to this young team that captured their first and second wins Mar. 14, defeating Pennsylvania State University Scranton, 8-7 and 11-4. Cheer on the ladies and other MACU teams at uscaasportsnetwork.com and follow them on Facebook at MACU Mustangs.



Back: Assistant Coach Dickerson, Lili Sines-Kleist, Dakota Dickerson, Emilie Haislip, Lea Styons, Carly James, Marylou Daniels, Head Coach Delosreyes. Middle: Assistant Coach Lewis, Angelina Bologna, Lily McLean, Cayleigh Martin, Maddy Delosreyes, Samarra Hall, Isabel LaPoe. Front: Tessa Dodson.



DATES AND EVENTS

Apr. 25

International Student Conference

May 7

Foundation Board Meeting

May 8

Board of Trustees Meeting

May 9

Commencement

May 9

Grace in Every Cup

July 4

Amplify Faith Festival

July 12-17

MAD Camp

Sept. 13

@MACU

Zack Holton, speaking

Oct. 2

MACU Annual Rally and Homecoming

Nov. 5

Ministers Appreciation Breakfast

Foundation Board Meeting

Benefactors & Scholars Banquet

Nov. 5, 6

Board of Trustees Meeting

Nov. 7

Fall Open House

Feb. 27

Cottrell Lectureship

Dr. Johnny Pressley, speaking

PRAYER AND PRAISE IN THE PRESS

Students gathered in the Roanoke Press one evening for a different kind of prayer meeting. Using the acronym "P.R.A.Y.E.R.S.," they moved from station to station, each one calling them to offer prayers or praises in ways that engaged their hearts, minds, and creativity.

P – Praise God by decorating a rock that expresses thanks and share it with others.

R – Repent by writing a prayer for forgiveness, then give the matter to God, symbolized by wadding up the paper and throwing it away.

A – Ask by writing a prayer request on two different sticky notes and adding them to the poster board, one a prayer for you and one for someone else.

Y – Yield power to God by writing a prayer and choosing a scripture verse to pray over your life.

E – Express your faith to others by taking clothes pins and writing scripture verses on them. Clip the pins on others.

R – Respond to your personal convictions by writing on an index card what God may have placed on your heart tonight.

S – Share by telling a friend some of your prayers or praises. Take a moment to pray for one another.



Rebekah Newell and Caroline VonRosenberg paint rocks at the praise station.



Nathaniel Taylor, Esteban Quijada, Jake Wynne, and Nathan Smith respond to what they believe God is placing on their hearts.

STUDENTS IN MINISTRY



Nathan Smith, a sophomore majoring in Ministry (Preaching) & Biblical Studies/Counseling, assists in a worship service at Jarvisburg Church of Christ.

MACU students have numerous opportunities to serve others. Several are engaged in regular ministries, while others answer calls for preaching or help as needs arise.

Senior Jake Wynne is associate minister with First Christian Church in Roanoke Rapids, NC.

Freshman Braelyne Brewer is a part-time worship leader for Geneva Park Church of Christ in Chesapeake, VA. Freshman Lea Styons is the children's minister at her home church, Jarvisburg Church of Christ, Grandy, NC. On campus, they both also serve on the chapel praise team.

Several juniors have ministries. Luke Chappin is in youth ministry with Friends in Fellowship Christian Church in Winterville, NC. Sam Davis is supply preaching for Beaver Dam Church of Christ in Washington, NC, assisting minister Tony Krantz '83. Joey Frazier ministers with youth at Philippi Church of Christ, Creswell, NC. Imanuel Nelson is a youth leader at Corinth Baptist Church in Elizabeth City and will also serve his ministry internship at Corinth.

SOMEONE LIKE ME?

Huguens Mercier ex'12

U.S. Army Chaplain, stationed in Texas



The story of international student Huguens Mercier is a testimony to God's willingness to use for His glory and purpose a person who offers himself in service to the Lord.

Huguens Mercier enrolled in MACU in the spring of 2009, thanks to a providential encounter with H.O. "Chip" Chesson in December of 2007, who shared the following account. (Above: Huguens and Mr. Chesson on campus in 2009)

I went on a mission trip to Haiti with Family Health Ministries, a non-profit dedicated to improving the health of underserved communities around the world. On this trip, I met a special young Haitian named Huguens Mercier. Huguens lived in the slum of Cite Soleil, a section of Haiti occupied by 80,000 and built on top of a landfill.

When he was five, Huguens' parents brought him to his pastor and said that they couldn't feed him any longer. Over the years, the pastor did his best to support him. Now 18, Huguens began dreaming of something bigger – studying in America to become a Christian minister like the pastor of his Haitian church. I talked with him about a small Christian bible college that my parents helped found in the 1940's, but with no resources other than the clothes on his back, his dreams were hardly achievable.

After the visit, I learned that a week after I was there, Huguens was the victim of a random shooting while walking home from school. His pastor called me with regular updates on his condition, and although he was not expected to live, he did.

I was attracted to Huguens because of his remarkable will and determination. Despite his hardship, he graduated from high school, learned English, and initiated taking the TOEFL (English proficiency) test twice in order to pursue his college dreams. But even with these tools, he had no money, no support, no scholarship of any kind. Most in his circumstances

would have given up on their dreams long ago. In May of 2008, I received a call from New York. It was Huguens, who, along with his father, had received a green card and admission to the US. He had a part-time job and was attending Brooklyn College studying English. He asked again about the bible college I had mentioned. On his own initiative, he contacted the school, visited and took an entrance exam, and was admitted. But again, he had no resources, beyond his determination. Huguens had an undying faith that God would provide, and that he was going to serve God as a pastor, despite those that told him, "Your dream is too big."

Inspired by his determination, I decided to raise the tuition for Huguens' first semester at Roanoke and then let him apply for whatever financial aid he might receive beyond that point. He began classes in January of 2009. His professors said he was a model student, one with a hunger for learning and a love of Christian teachings.

Huguens continued his studies beyond MACU, eventually earning a divinity degree. He married his Haitian school sweetheart, Lovely. They and their two children live in Texas, where he is a chaplain in the U. S. Army.



Chip Chesson and son Gary (left) pose in Chesson Gymnasium in front of the plaque honoring Chip's parents, Hilton and Merle Chesson, in whose memory the gym was funded and named.

NEW MINISTRIES, SERVICE

Mike Clear '96 has been named Chief Operations Officer for Phase Family Center in Alpharetta, GA.

Chrissy Dissmore Hobbs '04 is serving as a parent advocate with Maine Parent Federation, Inc. She said, "All parents need to have someone who can help them understand all the confusing lingo and evaluations and to have someone who in their kids' corner."

Dan Dodson '08 has been called to serve as Director of Ministries at Compass Christian Church in Fuquay-Varina, NC.

Suzanne Hamilton '08 is a cardiovascular operating room nurse (CVOR RN) at ECU Health Medical Center at East Carolina Heart Institute, Greenville, NC.

Luke Swain '12 has been called to serve Compass Christian Church, Mechanicsville, VA, as associate minister. He and **Tiffanie '11** are returning to the states, having completed nine years serving with Kontaktmission USA as church planters in Ireland.

WEDDINGS

- Shane Kinner and **Tracy Lipscombe '03**, Sept. 5
- Chris Meehan and **Breanna Teetor '19**, Sept. 13
- Zach Bundy and **Emily Winslow ex'22**, Oct. 25
- Tico Mendoza and **Amber Goodyear '20**, Nov. 8
- Wayne Walker and **Jenna Kelly '00**, Dec. 8
- Antonio Mendoza and **Dawn Brookins '02**, Jan. 10

Financial PlanningTM Ministry

EDUCATIONAL WEBINARS ON WILLS AND TRUSTS

As an FPM partner, MACU invites you to attend a **free** webinar about wills and trusts. Sign up for one today. <https://www.fpm.org/generalwebinars>

Upcoming dates: Webinar, June 4.
In-person seminar, Nov. 5.

BIRTHS

Jared ex'14 and **Kelli Macqueen '13 Wice**: Ruby Evangeline, Sept. 13

Harris and **Olivia Crehan '13 Styons**: Fitz Douglas, Sept. 15
Chris and **Maria Caputo ex'15 Martinez**: Ronin Amais, Oct. 3

Phil ex'06 and Kourtney **Thomas**: Ender Dune, Oct. 6

Matt '16 and **Emily Whitten '15 Hughes**: Winona Skye, Oct. 22

Max and **Meghan Lee '19 Martens**: Sadie Elizabeth, Dec. 31

Jackson '19 and Bailey **Cooper**: Bryson Lee, Jan. 9

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

PRESIDENT, PROFESSORS ON THE ROAD

Dr. Bob Smith presented a four-part series, "The Church: Past, Present and Future," at West Park Church of Christ in Portsmouth, VA, on Wednesday evenings during the month of February. This series considered lessons from the past and called participants to be the church that the Lord deserves today and in the future.

Dr. Kevin Larsen taught a four-part apologetics seminar, "Critical Issues," at Wildewood Christian Church, Papillion, NE, Feb. 20, 21.

Prof. Ronnie Woolard taught an eight-week Wednesday night series, "Science and the Bible," at Son Rise Church of Christ, in Kill Devil Hills, NC

Pres. John Maurice has recently presented MACU and/or preached at Great Bridge Church of Christ in Chesapeake, VA; Mt. Ivy Christian Church in Fuquay-Varina, NC; and West Park Church of Christ in Portsmouth, VA.



President Maurice presents the work of MACU at West Park Church of Christ, Portsmouth, VA.

NOTES OF SYMPATHY

Mike Davis ex'86, Sept. 4

Sherry Johnson Maurice ex'80, Sept. 28

Joe Ragland III, Sept. 29, husband of Bonita Harden Ragland '80

Fred Wilson ex'65, Oct. 12

Bertie Watson Dougherty ex'57, Nov. 6

Hope Walker '05, Nov. 8

Wesley Ange ex'80, Dec. 2

Lindsay Lee '66, Dec. 24

Justin Edwards, Jan. 4, son of George ex'94 and Linda Sanderlin

Erin Barber '12, Jan. 7

Sharon Sawyer Thornton '71, Jan. 8

Ruby Ange ex'71, Jan. 19

Tom Long, Feb. 17, son of Bruce '68 and Linda Long ex'70

Lamar Tillman '56, Mar. 9

HONORS, AWARDS, MILESTONES

Robin Johnson '81 retired Dec. 31 after serving as a church secretary for 42 years, 38 of them at her home church, Hales Chapel Christian Church/Crossroads Christian Church, in Gray, TN.

Charlotte Boshier Miller '81 retired from 23 years of serving Grace Christian Church in Mechanicsville, VA, as administrative assistant.

Tim Turner '83 retired from his ministry with Christ's Church in Winterville, NC, and is now serving as a regional director promoting the work of Central India Christian Mission.

Pam Lockridge Pippin '95 received the 2025 NCSHRM (North Carolina Society for Human Resource Management) Hall of Fame Lifetime Achievement award. She is a Certified HR Professional (SPHR), with almost 30 years of domestic and international experience, a corporate trainer and speaker.

Anna Okerlund ex'12, RN, was recognized with a Daisy Award at Sentara Albemarle Medical Center in Elizabeth City for her dedication as a family maternity center nurse whose compassion and support made a profound impact on her patient's birthing experience, who said that Anna was "the best support she could ask for" during one of life's most important moments.

Kelly Anders Covington '18 completed her Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision from Capella University.

Britni Parker Gresham '23 was named the Winterville Chamber of Commerce Teacher of the Year. She teaches 5th grade at Ridgewood Elementary School, Winterville, NC.

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/>

MAD CAMP AT MACU

MACU is partnering with Roanoke Christian Camp again by hosting RCC's annual MAD (Music and Drama) Camp, July 12-17. MACU alumnus Patrick Harrison '04 is dean for the week. On Wednesday and Thursday, campers and staff will travel to local churches to perform, and on Friday, July 17, they will present their final program at MACU. For camp information and registration, visit www.roanokechristiancamp.com/camp-schedule.

MINISTERS APPRECIATION BREAKFAST

Nov. 5, 9-11 am

Mustang Café at Alligood Commons
Dr. D. Clay Perkins, Sponsor & Host
Financial Planning Ministry

READ THE NEWS, SHARE THE NEWS

If you or your congregation wishes to be added to The Messenger mailing list, please send your request to rebekah.santiago@macuniversity.edu.

To access the magazine online, visit <https://www.macuniversity.edu/about-macu/macumessenger/>

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YOU'RE INVITED!

For all events at Mid-Atlantic Christian University, view nearby lodging options at:
[//www.macuniversity.edu/admissions/future-students/campus-visit/lodging/](http://www.macuniversity.edu/admissions/future-students/campus-visit/lodging/)

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 714 N. POINDEXTER STREET, ELIZABETH CITY

11 AM KICKOFF / 1 PM MUSIC

JULY 4, 2026

PICNIC ON THE LAWN | 11:00 AM
 Food available for purchase: BBQ Sandwiches, Chips & Fresh Fruit
 *Families are encouraged to bring their own picnic blanket.

GAMES | 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
 Yard games for all ages, including:
 • Sack Race • Corn on the Cob Eating Contest • Cake Walk

RUNWAY FIREWORKS CELEBRATION | 12:00 PM
 Kids, adults, and even pets are invited to dress in their most festive patriotic outfits and walk the runway as we create a "firework show."

LIVE WORSHIP MUSIC | 1:00 PM
 Powerful, live on-stage worship performances from surrounding churches.

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 A TEA & CULINARY JOURNEY

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 Seatings at 11am, 1pm & 3pm
 Tickets: \$100

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 MID-ATLANTIC CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
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 ELIZABETH CITY, NC

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