

BELHAVEN UNIVERSITY

# TARTAN

FALL 2023



**BU's New Jimmy Hood Welcome Center**

# LETTER FROM The President

During my State of the University address, I “counted our blessings,” and was overwhelmed by the goodness of God toward Belhaven and the scope of significant work we do. The list is amazing:

- We are in a category with only a handful of peer universities, delivering a sophisticated integration of orthodox Christian worldview teaching across the entire curriculum.
- We demonstrate respect and love for the students we serve, as we are guided by our desire to be as committed to Grace as we are to Truth.
- We are one of only 36 institutions nationally accredited in all four major arts. Our influence on the Arts in Christian higher education has been far-reaching as many CCCU institutions have gone to emulate our success.
- Our STEM programs have dramatically expanded in number and quality. At the same time, our humanities majors have held their own in an education climate that is dominated by students seeking more technical degrees.
- Our School of Education is preparing more teachers than any other university in the state, and our School of Business is teaching students in China about capitalistic business practices – with both schools providing a significant array of master’s degrees and doctoral level education.
- Belhaven's athletic teams are each grounded in discipleship as the primary objective, while giving our athletes a robust NCAA intercollegiate experience. And we are quite good at winning.
- God has provided us a well-maintained charming campus with quality facilities that would cost about \$300 million to replace, but we carry less than \$15 million of capital debt.
- We navigate successfully through the minefields of financial controls, computer information management, government regulation, and web/social media reach.



- We are well respected by our constituency and the public as a university that is serious about Christian faith, without being political or dogmatic in our message.
- Spiritual growth is incubated in Belhaven’s residence hall bible studies, service ministry projects, offices, classrooms, and practice field conversations, as well as from RUF, FCA, and weekly chapel.
- We made it through three extremely tough, back-breaking academic years of COVID turmoil, and we are not only still standing, but we are still nice to each other.
- God placed us in a city that has some enormous challenges with its infrastructure and crime, plus a tarnished national reputation, but we are able to continue to grow and be safe in our Haven.
- While we are watching the rapid crumbling of several Christian universities across the nation, God has allowed us to remain on a firm financial foundation and in our Christ-centered mission.

**Thank you for supporting Belhaven University with your students, gifts, and prayers.**

**DR. ROGER PARROTT,  
PRESIDENT**

## THE TARTAN

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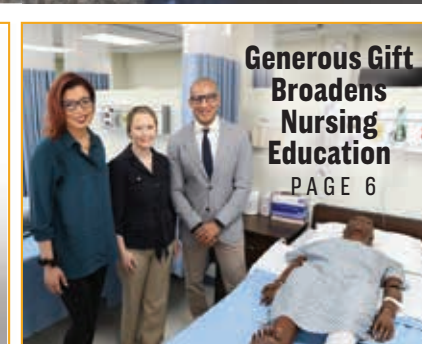
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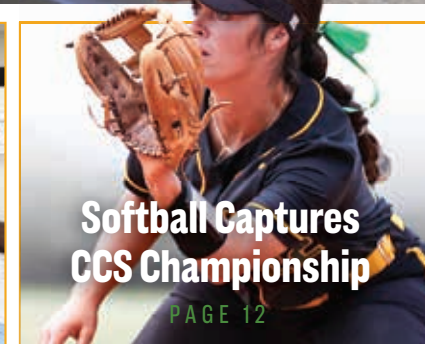
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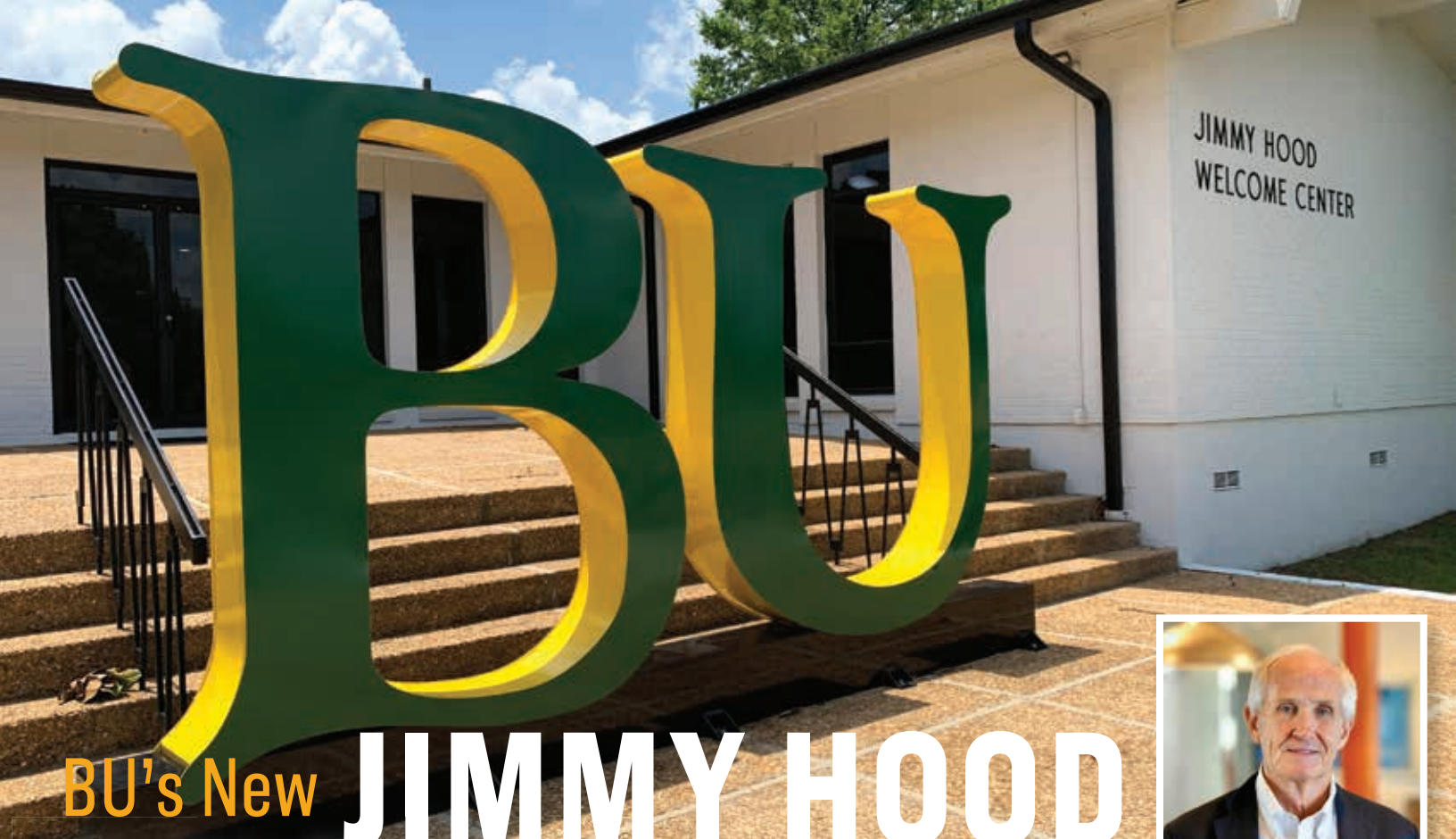
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# BU's New JIMMY HOOD WELCOME CENTER

The former Boy Scout Building is transformed into the new home of Belhaven's Office of Admission and becomes the first stop for prospective students visiting campus.

The Jimmy Hood Welcome Center is one of the newest additions to Belhaven's expanding campus. Located between Wilson Hall and the Center for the Arts, this renovated space will host first-time visitors and is the new home for Belhaven's Office of Admission. The building is named in honor of Jimmy Hood, ('75) Belhaven University's Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

The University purchased the building from the Boy Scouts of America. "We went to the Boy Scouts of America several times to purchase their property," said Belhaven University President Dr. Roger Parrott. "At one point, we offered them over a million dollars for the building. The

property was very important to us, but they didn't want to sell. We worked on this four to five years and finally gave up on it."

Then unexpectedly, the chair of the Boy Scouts contacted Dr. Parrott. He had to sell the building, but only wanted to sell it to Belhaven University. The University bought it for the appraised value, which was \$438,000, compared to the over \$1 million that was offered several years before.

"The leadership at Boy Scouts was thrilled to sell it to us; they believe in our mission and are very supportive of us," Dr. Parrott added. "We put together a quick fundraising effort. In only four months, we raised \$1 million for the purchase and renovations."

Belhaven University board members, alumni, and others in the community believed in the project and generously gave financial support.

According to Dr. Parrott, it was a key purchase for the University. It freed up space on campus to house the Office of Student Development in the McCravey-Triplett Student Center. He added that this is the first time in nearly 20 years that the campus has had extra space. Dr. Parrott said, "This new building gives us continuous property on Riverside Drive, all the way up the street. It gives us a higher level of security because we own almost everything on that street and we can extend our security lights and cameras up Riverside Drive."



Jimmy Hood



Left to Right; Judith Edele and Jennifer White; Markese Lee, Garrett Masters, and Cole Bishop; Micah Anglin, Allan Innman, Greg Johnson, and Sarah McMahan

The Jimmy Hood Welcome Center is one of the first places on campus that prospective students and families visit. An enormous green and gold "BU" landmark identifies the entrance of the new facility. The "BU" has garnered the attention of many, and in only a few days, has become one of the most popular spots on campus for photos. Associate Vice President for Enrollment Suzanne Sullivan said, "Most visitors are getting photos by the sign. It makes for a great photo opportunity."

All of Belhaven University's Enrollment Services are now in one facility. A team of more than 31 staff members all work together in a variety of ways to welcome and recruit students.

Before the move to the Jimmy Hood Welcome Center, Sullivan said the physical distance between the departments certainly had an impact on office camaraderie.

*"...having a starting point for tours that is easy to find and welcoming is a plus! Visitors will see lots of activity on their tour as they visit the student center and classrooms."*

Now that everyone is under one roof, the staff can better serve students. They can also develop better connections with each other. They celebrate birthdays together and even start their week with a devotional.

Sullivan adds, "We are so glad to have all our enrollment teams under one roof! It makes collaborating and sharing ideas easier. It also allows for more spontaneous discussions to happen, and sometimes those are the best!"

Sullivan continues, "We may not be in the center of campus, but having a starting point for tours that is easy to find and welcoming is a plus! Visitors will see lots of activity on their tour as they visit the student center and classrooms. And for our online students who want to visit with us but don't need a tour, it is a great new space because of its location and curbside parking at the building." 🍀



Left to Right; Krista Bower, Megan Voos, and Caleb Henry; Amy Cox and Anna Creel





Left to Right: Melissa Quinn, Martha Hooey, and Dr. Timothy Quinn with nursing mannequin

# GENEROUS GIFT BROADENS NURSING EDUCATION

Dr. Timothy Quinn ('95) and his wife Melissa ('20, MBA '22) have generously donated funds to provide several new nursing mannequins to Belhaven University's School of Nursing. These lifelike patient simulators are set to improve the training experience for nursing students, enabling them to engage in realistic scenarios that mirror the complexity of real-world medical care.

"The Quinns demonstrate their commitment to community health and healthcare needs through giving financially and giving of their time," said Dr. Johnnie Wijewardane, Belhaven's School of Nursing Dean. "Their recent donation of the mannequins for our skills lab allows our School of Nursing to increase student capacity in our lab and provides students more opportunities for one-on-one time for skills practice and simulated clinical experiences. We are grateful for our partnership with the Quinns and their impact on improving the health of our community members and multiplying their impact through support of nursing education." Dr. Quinn is a board-certified physician in family

and weight loss medicine as well as the medical director of Quinn Healthcare, PLLC. His wife Melissa Quinn is chief operations officer. The Quinns, both alumni of Belhaven University, committed to funding the mannequins last fall.

*"We are grateful for our partnership with the Quinns and their impact on improving the health of our community members and multiplying their impact through support of nursing education."*

The African-American nursing mannequins stand as a testament to the Quinns' commitment to fostering a diverse learning environment. Having racially-diverse mannequins mirrors the cultural and ethnic diversity of actual patients in Mississippi as well as Belhaven's nursing students. This deliberate approach recognizes the importance of preparing future healthcare professionals to provide effective and empathetic care to patients from all walks of life.

These new mannequins will provide nursing students with a hands-on platform to practice a wide range of medical situations, such as resuscitation, blood pressure, defibrillation, full body CPR, and IV management. By introducing scenarios that encompass the diversity of patient experiences, the mannequins equip students with the skills and cultural competence necessary to provide positive patient-centered care. ❤️

# NEW ACADEMIC LEADERS APPOINTED

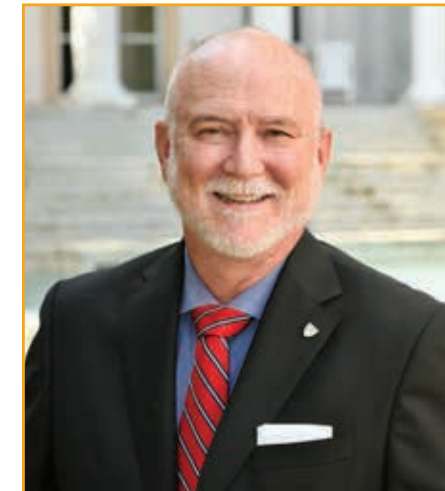
**DR. AUDREY KELLEHER**  
Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs



As the new Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dr. Audrey Kelleher brings extensive experience and innovative thinking to the role. Having previously served as Vice President for adult, graduate, and online studies, she spearheaded the enhancement of Belhaven's online curriculum and student experience. Dr. Kelleher's collaborative approach led to the establishment of partnerships with institutions worldwide, amplifying the University's global footprint.

Recognized for her commitment to education, Dr. Kelleher's background includes leadership positions in both education and business. With a Ph.D. in Leadership and Education, she demonstrates a profound understanding of academic innovation and problem-solving. Her appointment signifies a strategic move to consolidate academic functions under her leadership, fostering unity and growth within the institution. ❤️

**DR. BRETT ANDREWS**  
Dean of the School of Business



Dr. Brett Andrews assumes the role of Dean of the School of Business. With extensive experience as a business school dean, he is poised to continue Belhaven's legacy of educational excellence. Andrews' leadership at Oklahoma Wesleyan University and his involvement in academic innovation, online education, and the Christian Business Faculty Association highlight his dedication to shaping future business leaders.

His dynamic leadership approach aligns with Belhaven's commitment to integrating faith and learning. Andrews' vision is to guide students towards a Christian worldview that equips them for meaningful contributions to the marketplace. Armed with degrees in Marketing, Business Administration, and Management, he is primed to enhance the influence and reach of the School of Business. ❤️

**DR. JOHNNIE SUSAN WIJEWARDANE**  
Dean of the School of Nursing



Dr. Johnnie Susan Wijewardane's appointment as Dean of the School of Nursing underscores Belhaven University's commitment to healthcare education. A respected figure in the nursing education landscape, Wijewardane brings 18 years of experience and a holistic approach to nurturing future healthcare professionals. Her leadership, including her tenure as inaugural dean of the Radford University School of Nursing, showcases her ability to drive program growth and innovation.

With a background in both clinical practice and academia, Dr. Wijewardane embodies the intersection of theory and practice in nursing education. Dr. Wijewardane is a Fellow of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners and has leadership roles in the Mississippi Nurses Association. ❤️



# LIONSGATE MOTION PICTURE GROUP SELECTS ALUMNA TO LEAD DIGITAL MARKETING

*Brianna McElroy's* VOYAGE INTO SHAPING HOLLYWOOD'S MOVIE MAGIC

**I** loved watching movies growing up,” said Brianna McElroy (’11). She had her favorite movies and could quote her favorite lines from her favorite actors. Little did she know that one day she would be working alongside the same actors and directors she so admired as a child.

In February of this year, the Lionsgate Motion Picture Group named McElroy, a Jackson Mississippi native and Belhaven alumna, head of worldwide digital marketing. This lead role is crucial because her department is one of the main communication channels that promotes their upcoming movies.

While with Lionsgate, McElroy has led 360 digital campaigns for releases such as *John Wick: Chapter 4*, starring Keanu Reeves, and will lead upcoming releases including *The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* and *Now*

*You See Me 3*, to be directed by Ruben Fleischer. The Lionsgate film slate also includes *Expendables 4*; *Ballerina*, which expands the John Wick universe; and many more.

“I’ve always loved movies. I’ve always loved their creativity and storytelling. I was over the moon when I discovered this career. I get to have fun for my job. Are you kidding?”

McElroy works closely with directors, producers, and even actors. “It’s awesome to meet actors that I’ve seen in movies growing up. They’re obviously highly-creative and highly-motivated people, and that energy is contagious.”

Now a part of the film industry, she not only realized the amount of effort that goes into making a movie, but also the work actors put in to promoting their movie. “I had to go on a promotional tour with a star once. My job was to be everywhere this person was and capture social media content. I remember looking at the schedule and seeing days start at 4:30 a.m.

and end at 10 p.m. The talent put a lot of time and energy into shooting the movie, but there is tremendous work that goes into the publicity and marketing of a film as well.”

McElroy leads a large team that have various roles. “My team is comprised of social media, digital strategy, and creative asset leads,” said McElroy. Her team is constantly listening to fans and monitoring social media to develop the best content possible to help market movies.

McElroy’s job requires a good amount of multitasking. She is working on many films at different stages. “Even when a movie release is just a week or two away, we are simultaneously working on other campaigns. We might be preparing for a trailer launch for a different film that doesn’t release for another year, or even planning on-set content capture for a movie that hasn’t even gone into production. Honestly, there is work being done on every single movie at any given time.”

When asked if she had a particular movie she was looking forward to, McElroy said she couldn’t pick a favorite. “When working on these, you’re working on a piece of art that someone has put their heart and soul into. It means the world to them, so it all means the world to me. We’re being trusted with the care of these stories. It’s a big privilege and responsibility.”

Before her appointment as head of worldwide digital marketing, McElroy served as Twitter’s global client lead in media and entertainment for over two years. While at Twitter, she oversaw

partnerships with Warner Bros., Discovery, and The Walt Disney Company.

Before Twitter, she was director of digital marketing at Warner Bros. Pictures, driving digital marketing campaigns for *Wonder Woman*, *Kong: Skull Island*, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, *Ocean’s 8*, *A Star Is Born*, and *Pokémon Detective Pikachu*.

Warner Bros. is one of the oldest studios in Hollywood, and this is where McElroy’s career took-off, giving her valuable experience on

“**...take the risk and do the thing that is exciting and inspires you. Because there’s a way to really love the work that you do.**”

major motion pictures. McElroy added, “I loved every minute of it. It’s where I would say I grew up in terms of my career. I learned so much.”

For McElroy, her job is more than just promoting movies and advertising. She believes her job brings value beyond herself because she gets to help propel something that people can connect with.

“You know, the thing that I always go back to is that in dark times, and happy times, and in many ways, since the dawn of time, the thing that is consistent about humanity is our love of stories, I think for a lot of us, it’s because they help us feel less alone. They help us laugh when we’re down, or cry when we need

to. They are an essential part of the human experience, and to help share these stories with the world, well, it is a privilege.”

“When I worked on *Wonder Woman*, the number of little girls who would come up to me dressed as little wonder women – wanting to be superheroes – it all moved me to tears. I think I cried throughout that whole campaign because I was so inspired.”

According to McElroy, her career skills and knowledge were sharpened while studying at Belhaven University as a communications major. During her time on campus, her love for storytelling grew. “I remember one of the things I learned while at Belhaven was from a professor in my writing class. He said something along the lines of, ‘Every story is interesting depending on how you tell it.’ So for me, there is always a good story, and I admire and appreciate the storytellers for the magical work they do.”

Her time at Belhaven was meaningful. She loved the way the curriculum connected. “When going through classes at Belhaven, everything you’re learning is in sync with the topics you’re studying in other classes. That ultimately deepened my curiosity in everything. It built a comprehensive view of the world as it is, as it was, and as it might be.”

Now in a successful career for one of the world’s most prominent studios, McElroy encourages current students with this advice. “It may feel like a risk and sometimes things don’t work out, but take the risk and do the thing that is exciting and inspires you. Because there’s a way to really love the work that you do.”

# BLAZER FOOTBALL: FORWARD MOMENTUM

**AFTER 2022'S RECORD EIGHT WIN SEASON, BLAZERS AIM TO EXTEND WINNING LEGACY**



The 25th season of Belhaven Football proved to be the most successful as the Blazers won a program-record eight games in 2022. In its inaugural season in the USA South Conference, the Green and Gold finished second in the league with a 6-2 conference record.

The Blazers captured Win No. 8 by way of a hard-fought 20-7 road win over Brevard. The win also marked the team's sixth-consecutive victory. Belhaven outscored its opponents 249-63 during the winning streak.

After tying the season-high win total 2 years ago, head coach Blaine McCorkle and his veteran group were able to continue their success into the historic 2022 campaign.

The Blazers are looking for another strong season as they bring back 72 returners from their 2022 roster to go along with 32 newcomers. On offense, the Blazers bring back 10 of 11 starters while returning 6 of 11 defensive starters from a year ago.

Belhaven opened up the 2023 campaign in convincing fashion, taking down Millsaps 47-7. The Blazers set the tone early and often to claim their third-straight victory in the Riverside Rumble series.

Five home games are scheduled throughout the season, leading up to the Homecoming game vs Methodist happening Saturday, October 21st. ❤️

# BELHAVEN UNVEILS NEW PARKING GARAGE: ENHANCING CONVENIENCE AND SECURITY

One anonymous donor has made a significant impact to the campus through a \$12 million gift. The University's new parking garage, completed in August 2023, provides a convenient and practical solution to Belhaven's parking challenges. "I've been a university president for 33 years, and I never expected anyone to give money for a parking garage," Dr. Roger Parrott said. "It's pretty remarkable."

The landscape of the Blazer campus looks much different now than it did only three years ago. In a relatively short time, four major construction projects have marked a significant step in university history. The tallest of these projects can be seen from a distance. The five-story parking garage shares the Belhaven skies with other big campus buildings such as the McCravey-Triplett Student Center and University Village.

Parking has long been a challenge at Belhaven, due to steady growth in enrollment over the years. Dr. Parrott calls the garage "a game changer" for the campus. "It makes the best use of our land," he said. "We're a small campus, and we can't take up everything with parking. It gives us enough capacity to assure that we could build another residence hall and classroom building eventually."

The garage was constructed over the existing parking lot between Heidelberg Gymnasium and the Dr. Billy Kim International Center and in front of Lakeview Residence Hall. Access is from the two university entrances off Peachtree Street, with one entrance putting drivers at the lowest level of the garage and the other higher in the garage.

The garage's exterior, constructed with brick, harmonizes with the existing buildings on campus. Its design incorporates two below-grade stories, minimizing its visual impact from Peachtree Street, ensuring the garage's aesthetic integration with the campus.

Beyond its look, this new garage has an applied and practical use. With its central location, the garage provides students with improved access to their classes, residence halls, stadium events, cafeteria, and other essential campus facilities.

What sets this parking garage apart from conventional ones is the deliberate effort to create a distinct experience for its users. Belhaven's leadership recognized the importance of designing a garage that defied the typical perception of parking structures. Dr. Parrott explained, "It is filled with lots of light. Many garages feel scary, but this one is different. Equipped with security cameras and ample lighting, the garage will cater to residential students, faculty, staff, and commuters alike. ❤️"



# SOFTBALL CAPTURES

# CCS CHAMPIONSHIP



The Belhaven Softball team's 2023 journey was one marked by determination and triumph. Securing a notable #15 ranking in the final National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) poll, the Blazers stood tall as they captured the CCS Championship as well as advancing to the NCAA DIII Softball Tournament Super Regional for the second consecutive year.

With an impressive season record of 32-13, the Blazers demonstrated their resilience, winning an impressive 25 out of their last 29 contests. The CCS

Regular Season and Tournament Champions made the most of their at-large bid in the NCAA Tournament, sweeping through the Marshall Regional with remarkable finesse. Victories against #8 Texas Lutheran (twice) and #6 East Texas Baptist earned the team a resounding regional title in a dominant 3-0 weekend. Blazer Softball fought the good fight up until the very end, eventually slipping to Berry College in game two of the NCAA Super Regional.

As the season came to an end, individual excellence was also celebrated, as Allie Gordon, Ellie Jones, Kennedy Carruth, and Madi Miller earned well-deserved All-Region VI honors from the NFCA.

CCS accolades were also given to:

- **COACH KEVIN GRIFFIN**  
CCS Softball Coach of the Year
- **KENNEDY CARRUTH**  
CCS Pitcher of the Year
- **ALLIE GORDON**  
CCS Player of the Year

The 2023 season highlighted the Blazers' commitment to hard work and dedication, achieving greatness while securing a lasting place in the annals of collegiate softball.

Blazer Softball looks forward to the 2024 season with anticipation and determination. 🍀



Allie Gordon

Kennedy Carruth



## STUDENT ATHLETE SPOTLIGHTS



**BRETT SANCHEZ** of the Belhaven Baseball team has been named the National Pitcher of the Year by the D3baseball.com publication, an affiliate of D3sports.com which covers a variety of NCAA Division III Athletics.

Sanchez was also named a First Team All-American in the release. The Belhaven right-hander was dominant on the mound last season as he continues to put together an impressive career resumé. Sanchez led the Blazers with a 6-2 record across 11 starts with five complete games. The Slidell, Louisiana native posted a sparkling 1.81 ERA and 0.88 WHIP while throwing a team-high 84.1 innings on the season. 🍀



**ASHAUNTI BARNES** of the Belhaven Women's Track & Field team represented the Blazers at the NCAA Division III Outdoor Track & Field Championships competing in the 400 Meters.

Barnes, a Jackson native, earned qualification in the 400 Meters after posting one of the Top 22 times in the nation during the outdoor season. Barnes' qualifying time was 56.39 seconds which was the 15th best time in the nation and won her the event championship for the Collegiate Conference of the South.

At the meet, Barnes ran a 58.75 in Heat 1 and finished 7th among runners in her Heat. Overall, Barnes' time placed her 21st as she got her first opportunity to compete for a National Championship as a member of the Belhaven Track & Field program. 🍀

# A Mother's Labor of Love

Nursing Major Meggan Mickle juggles family, faith, school, and career

The path to a career and calling can be simple for many. Some have clear direction, and some know their vocation at a young age. Meggan Mickle's ('22) path was full of ups and downs, but God has a way of using hardships to change our trajectory in a good way.



Mickle is from Crystal Springs, Mississippi, and grew up in the foster care system. While Mickle knew her biological family and could take care of herself, she constantly saw other children struggle with shuffling from home to home. This lit a spark within her. She realized the need to help children and become a voice for those who did not have one. She might not have known how she was going to do it, but for Mickle, "this was it for me; I was going to change the world."

Mickle gained clarity on her purpose and that put significant pressure on her college choice.

Her first significant step toward helping others was when she chose to become a police officer. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from Jackson State University. "My plan was to start an outreach program for underprivileged and foster care youth," said Mickle. "I

thought I had it all figured out and began walking in my purpose."

Many know that life never goes the way we plan it. Mickle found herself pregnant with twins. "Excited and scared,

I prayed for guidance because I thought my plans to become an officer and help people were gone."

A few months into her pregnancy, she would find out that her daughter would be born with Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome. "This was devastating. Not only was I not going to become an officer, but my daughter would be sick. However, it was the beginning of God's true purpose for me."

After the birth of her twins, Mickle spent the first three months praying over her daughter while she had multiple surgeries for her heart. During these surgeries, Mickle, a single mother, would live at the Ronald McDonald House on the campus of University of Mississippi Medical Center, caring for her twin son.

"The first two months were the hardest but, while there, something inside me was growing." Mickle observed, "Out of everyone that helped us at the hospital, I can only remember the names of our three nurses. They didn't just come and go. My daughter wasn't just another patient to them. They were the difference between me crying all night long and having the strength to take care of my children. They helped me persevere through this hard time."

After experiencing the loving service from these three nurses, Mickle made a life-changing decision at that moment. "Those bedside nurses gave me hope. I wanted to become one of those nurses and help as many people as I could. God had given me my path. It was at that moment I decided to become a nurse."



Through her journey with Belhaven's School of Nursing, Mickle showed her hard work and dedication to her studies. The Mississippi Nurses Foundation selected her as the recipient of the 2022 Oneita Dongieux Award for Excellence.

This award, established through the Mississippi Nurses Foundation, recognizes those who are excelling in their studies to become a nurse. Only two Mississippi students are given this prestigious award every year.

During her senior year at Belhaven, Mickle earned an internship in pediatrics at University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC). Nursing students from around the state

competed for this internship, and only a few are selected each summer.

As Mickle got closer to her goal of nursing, she reflected on her past and the many hardships she experienced. "God does not

make mistakes, and he gave me my children to lead me to my

purpose. I needed them, and my daughter is the reason I wanted to become a nurse."

Her dreams became a reality when she walked across the stage and held her diploma for the first time. Mickle is now a full-time registered nurse in UMMC's Pediatric Intensive Care Unit. Her daughter Madison received a heart transplant in November 2022, and "her health is good with all things considered," added Mickle.

Madison's doctors have even given her the "all clear" to visit Disney World in October of this year. The twins are now five years old and started kindergarten, and Mickle has also started her MBA at Belhaven.❤️

“Those bedside nurses gave me hope. I wanted to become one of those nurses and help as many people as I could. God had given me my path. It was at that moment I decided to become a nurse.”



# GRADUATION CELEBRATION

## *Class of 2023*

Over 6,000 people were in attendance to celebrate Belhaven University's CLASS OF 2023 on April 29 at the Mississippi Coliseum. The excitement was palpable as all traditional, adult, graduate, and online students gathered for one graduation ceremony. The University awarded a total of 409 diplomas that day.

Retired School of Business Dean Dr. Chip Mason was honored for his many years of service and conferred as dean emeritus.

Retired Dr. Bradford Smith, Belhaven University Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, was awarded an honorary doctorate. Smith was given the honor of commencement speaker. He served a total of nine years at Belhaven University.



# Campus News

## JEFF BRANNON AUTHORS NEW BOOK

Dr. Jeff Brannon, Professor and Chair of the Biblical Studies Department at Belhaven University, has published a book, *The Hope of Life After Death*. Following his successful first publication, *The Heavenlies in Ephesians*,



Dr. Brannon's new work navigates the intricate subject of life beyond death with insightful clarity.

In *The Hope of Life After Death*, a notable addition to *Essential Studies in Biblical Theology (ESBT)*, Dr. Brannon artfully uncovers the threads of resurrection hope throughout Scripture, even in the most unexpected passages.

Anchored in biblical narrative, his exploration of life, death, and resurrection corresponds with the biblical-theological framework of creation, fall, and redemption. This nuanced study invites readers to contemplate the transformative implications of resurrection for Christian faith and discipleship.

As the editor of *ESBT*, Benjamin L. Gladd, aptly puts it, "Jesus' resurrection and the future resurrection of his followers truly changes everything." Dr. Jeff Brannon's insightful works are available at all major booksellers, and his forthcoming book promises to be an illuminating addition for students, church leaders, and laypeople seeking deeper theological understanding. 🍷

## FILM STUDIES PROFESSOR RICK NEGRON WRITES AND PRODUCES INDEPENDENT MOVIE

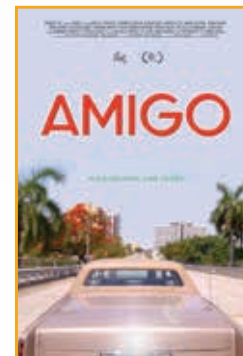
Rick Negron, chair of Belhaven's Film Production Department, wrote and produced the feature film *Amigo*. Currently in post-production, this full-length film was shot in the summer of 2022 on location in Miami, Florida.



Directed by visual artist and filmmaker Luis Gispert, *Amigo* follows Tomás, a Latino immigrant

who works odd jobs for a wealthy family. A series of events forces Tomás to visit people in his community in search of something lost, but the journey reflects his own social and emotional limitations.

"Right now, *Amigo* is in post-production and is almost finished," said Negron. "Once it's complete, it will be entered in several film festivals."



Negron utilized the talent of recent Belhaven film production graduate Seth Scruggs ('21.) Scruggs, who currently works with singer/songwriter Rory Feek as an editor and video producer for his streaming platform, was the first assistant director. "The two weeks of production were a little bit of a whirlwind," said Scruggs. "Of course, unexpected things popped up such as weather or sudden schedule conflicts, but we were able to move quickly and efficiently to get the film made."

Negron began writing the script in October, 2021. "I love to write, and I am always writing something," said Negron. "Luis and I worked on the story together, and I wrote the actual screenplay. *Amigo* features diverse characters and tells a simple, compassionate tale set against a Miami landscape, not often seen on screen." 🍷

# BELHAVEN UNIVERSITY ANNOUNCES SEVEN NEW ACADEMIC OFFERINGS

Belhaven University recently launched seven new academic offerings that are now available for new and continuing students. The University is offering a major in fashion merchandising, a concentration in game design for computer science, and minors in data analytics, digital marketing, web design, cybersecurity systems, and animation.

"The new major, concentration, and minors allow students to tailor their academic preparation to best meet their career interests," said Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Audrey Kelleher. "When you layer on Belhaven's Double Major, Fifth Year Free program, students will be able to present a resume that truly stands out during the job search process."

A **DEGREE IN FASHION MERCHANDISING** prepares students to lead business operations in the fashion industry with a heavy emphasis on entrepreneurship. Students can apply all elements of merchandising, marketing, and management of operating a fashion business and be fully prepared through industry connections and case study collaborations with business leaders.

For computer science majors, Belhaven is offering a **GAME DESIGN CONCENTRATION**. Video games have invited people into worlds of imagination for decades.

Students can now play a role in the development of video games while earning a degree in computer science.

Belhaven's **MINOR IN DATA ANALYTICS** combines computer science, mathematics, and statistics to prepare students for careers as data scientists or in fields related

*"The new major, concentration, and minors allow students to tailor their academic preparation to best meet their career interests."*

to those in business, government, and industry. Since data is being collected everywhere, including smartphones, computers, and televisions, there is an increasing demand for qualified scientists who can recognize and use algorithms and statistical models to interpret big data.

The **DIGITAL MARKETING MINOR** prepares students to develop data-driven strategies for social media, websites, and email campaigns. Students who enroll in this minor will be skilled in SEO/SEM tactics and be able to make data-driven decisions utilizing analytics and business intelligence when they enter the industry.

Students who earn a **MINOR IN WEB DESIGN** will learn the skills of developing functional and attractive web experiences while building the tools to be career ready. Topics of study include user experiences, testing design, iteration, color, product development, coding, and graphic design.

The world relies on safe internet usage, and protection of personal and commercial data is becoming increasingly valuable. A **MINOR IN CYBERSECURITY SYSTEMS** will build Belhaven students' expertise in cybersecurity issues. Students will study common malicious attacks, cybercrime, emerging technology for cybersecurity, network security, and cyber forensics.

A **MINOR IN ANIMATION** will ready students for a career in the fields of fine art, design, digital media applications, video games, television and film, and a spectrum of applied creative fields. Studies will focus on traditional and emerging practices, principles of animation, concept art, figure drawing, storyboards, and character and object design.

**For more information about these new academic offerings, please contact Belhaven University Admission by email at [admission@belhaven.edu](mailto:admission@belhaven.edu) or call 601-968-5940.** 🍷

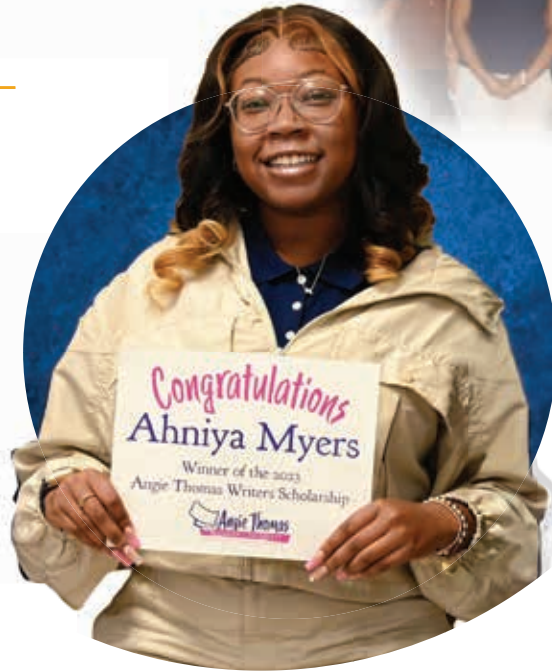
**BELHAVEN SURPRISES  
WINNER OF 2023  
ANGIE THOMAS  
SCHOLARSHIP AT  
CANTON HIGH SCHOOL**

Best-selling author Angie Thomas ('11) and Belhaven University surprised an unsuspecting high school senior with a full-ride scholarship for creative writing.

A group of Belhaven University staff and faculty visited Canton High School to make the announcement. Thomas, currently on a new book tour, delivered the news via video. Students burst into cheers as Thomas congratulated senior Ahniya Myers for winning the 2023 Angie Thomas Writers Scholarship.

Myers is a Canton, Mississippi, native and was named winner for her creative writing submissions. "As I read Ahniya's writing samples, I immediately fell in love with her craft," said Thomas. "Her talent and skill blew me away, and I know that the creative writing program was created with a student like her in mind."

The scholarship, named in honor of Belhaven University alumna Angie Thomas, was created to help young aspiring writers who need the extra support to make their dreams of authorship a reality.



"By giving Ahniya this scholarship, she can focus more on her studies and writing, which will allow her gift to thrive," observed Thomas. "It's an honor to know that this scholarship could play a key role in the journey of yet another exceptional writer."

*"As I read Ahniya's writing samples, I immediately fell in love with her craft. Her talent and skill blew me away, and I know that the creative writing program was created with a student like her in mind."*

Myers is the fourth student to win the scholarship, which covers tuition, room, and board at the University for four years.



Professor and Chair of Creative Writing Dr. Randall Smith said, "Ahniya embodies both the spirit of the Angie Thomas Scholarship and the potential of an Angie Thomas Scholar. The community of writers at Belhaven University is excited to welcome Ahniya to the BFA program, where we help one another master craft, find our purpose as writers, and reach our potential."

The Angie Thomas Writers Scholarship is awarded to only one incoming freshman each year, but other applicants receive partial scholarships. Thomas is the author of New York Times best-selling novels *Concrete Rose*, *On the Come Up*, *The Hate U Give*, and *Nic Blake and the Remarkables: The Manifestor Prophecy*. *The Hate U Give* and *On the Come Up* were both developed into major motion pictures. 🍷

Scan the QR Code to Watch The Angie Thomas Scholarship Announcement on Facebook

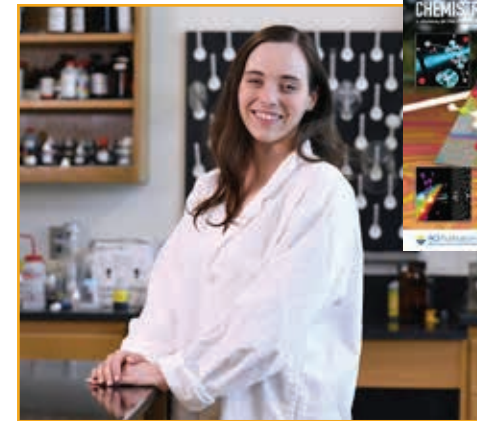
**OLIVIA HANEY  
PUBLISHES ARTICLE IN  
CHEMISTRY JOURNAL**

The *Journal of Physical Chemistry A* has published the peer-reviewed research of junior chemistry major Olivia Haney.

"It is rare for an undergraduate student to get a published paper, even for larger research universities," said Chair and Associate Professor of Chemistry Dr. Brandon Magers. "Many of our

chemistry students participate in internships, but Olivia being an author of a peer-reviewed research article, goes above and beyond. Her lab experience, conference participation, and now-published research will make Olivia a top pick for a job or placement into graduate school."

Dr. Ryan Fortenberry, associate professor of chemistry and



biochemistry at the University of Mississippi, was the lead researcher and advisor for this project. Haney worked under Fortenberry and his research team during the summer of 2022.

The research paper, "Red-Shifting the Excitation Energy of Carbonic Acid Clusters Via Nonminimum Structures," focused on carbonic acid. The molecule is difficult to study because it tends to break apart into water and carbon dioxide.

Scientists don't know much about carbonic acid, such as its structure or the shapes of clusters, but that changed a few years ago. A laboratory was able to freeze solid carbonic acid using super cold temperatures. At this temperature,

the atoms were stuck as carbonic acid and unable to break apart. The laboratory ran tests on how much light it could absorb but did not study the energy state of carbonic acid. That is where Fortenberry's team focused their efforts.

Haney said, "Using computational chemistry, I was able to generate potential shapes that this frozen carbonic acid could take and what kind of excitation energies it would experience in these shapes." She would manually manipulate a carbonic acid molecule, such as rotating a bond and changing its angle, then code that rotation into her calculations. Haney would run multiple jobs where "snapshots" of the molecule would be taken, and its energy would be recorded during its rotation.

"The geometric structure of a molecule is very important information because it tells us how it responds to itself, with other molecules, and with its environment," observed Haney. "This project helped us learn more about the potential geometric structure that carbonic acid is in nature, which is something that has barely been studied." 🍷

**BELHAVEN PARTNERS  
WITH INGALLS  
SHIPBUILDING**

Belhaven University is proud to partner with Ingalls Shipbuilding. Through Belhaven's Adult, Graduate, and Online Programs, the University will provide educational opportunities and benefits to eligible Ingalls employees.

As the largest manufacturing employer in Mississippi, and a major contributor to the state's economic growth, Ingalls recognizes that its most valuable asset is its people. Together, and through this partnership, the goal is to help build a more vibrant and sustainable workforce.

"We are very excited about our newfound partnership with Ingalls, and through our combined efforts, we plan to forge a strong and long-lasting relationship. Ingalls, through its Education Assistance program, offers its employees an opportunity to earn a degree that can set them on a course to not only enhance their personal career goals, but also make a greater impact on their organization," said Dr. Kevin Russell, Vice President for University Enrollment and Marketing. "Belhaven's online format will allow them to complete their degree anywhere, anytime, and in a highly-flexible format, while at the same time juggle their work, family, and academic obligations."

"Ingalls Shipbuilding is proud to partner with Belhaven University in providing our employees with affordable education opportunities," said Ingalls Shipbuilding Training Representative Sherry Joubert. "This partnership not only encourages our employees to enhance their skills and knowledge in their current position but also allows Ingalls to invest in the developmental growth of our employees, further creating a shipyard where the best ideas and technology can be leveraged to meet the needs of our customers." 🍷

## BLAZER FOOTBALL TEAM RALLIES BEHIND LITTLE GIRL IN HEARTWARMING SURPRISE AT CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

BY KASIE THOMAS  
Courtesy of WLBT

The Belhaven football team lives by the motto, 'To serve, not to be served.' Even so, they had no idea those words would mean so much to one little girl named Natalie Hughes.



Natalie Hughes

Natalie is a seven-year-old who grew up smiling, dancing, and loving everything pink until news from the doctors brought her life to a standstill. Natalie was diagnosed with a rare blood condition called Aplastic Anemia, and began treatment, but little did she know it was only the beginning.

Her immune system attacked her bone marrow and made it stop working. After a year and a half of weaning off medication for the final step, the medication failed, and her immune system attacked her bone marrow again. Natalie needed a bone marrow transplant. They finally found one through a 100% donor match, but it still wasn't

enough to make the little girl feel completely normal.

Through the years, Natalie felt like she was just a kid who couldn't do the things she wanted. "The most difficult part was just not letting her be a kid," John Hughes, Natalie's father, said. "We can't risk her breaking something or getting fallen on or anything like that that could have internally made her bleed out."

All of these challenges were made a little easier when they realized they weren't alone in this journey; in fact, they had an entire team behind them. Blaine McCorkle, head football coach at Belhaven, first learned about Natalie through Jon Brewer, one of his player's dads. He called the coach and mentioned that there was a young girl from his hometown who was sick and struggling and needed some encouragement. That's when Coach McCorkle decided to take it to his team.

"He [Coach McCorkle] just kind of came to us and told us that there was a little girl with a rare form of anemia and that their family was going through a lot of hardships and stuff like that, and we want to do something to be able to just lessen something. We couldn't do a lot, but we wanted to do what we could," said Jeremiah Buenrostro, a senior football player majoring in nursing.

The team went to the Children's of Mississippi Hospital, where Natalie



Left to Right; Jeremiah Buenrostro, John & Natalie Hughes, Coach Blaine McCorkle, and Bogan Brewer

was being treated, and surprised her. They wanted to make her feel loved and let her know that people cared for her. They showed up and were able to see her in her window. They did some backflips, made signs, wore their jerseys, and were happy to even get a smile from Natalie.

"To see our kids make her smile as a father meant a lot, and as a coach, it definitely made me proud," said Coach McCorkle.

Natalie's father said it was amazing to see them do that, and Natalie thought it was pretty impressive. Bogan Brewer, a junior football player said, "I remember she got into the window and just lit up, and I was like, 'That's why we're doing it. That's why we're doing it.'"

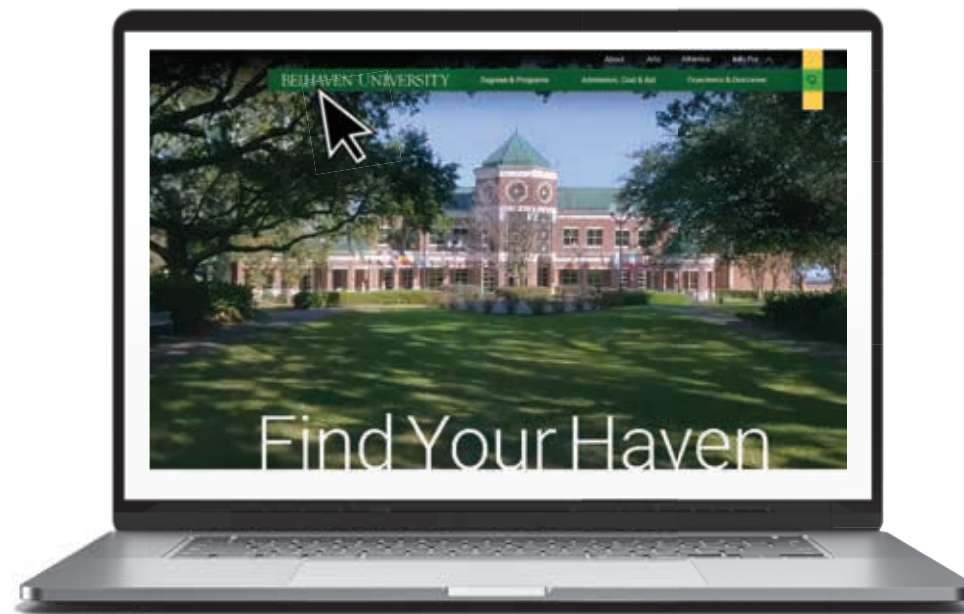
In that moment, Natalie became an official honorary member of the Belhaven football team. The team wanted to show Natalie that they were there for her, and it made all the difference. They brought joy and

hope to a little girl's life, and it was a reminder that, sometimes, the smallest act of kindness can have the biggest impact.

"I've learned that God didn't just do this to me to say that I wasn't supposed to do things in life," Natalie said. "I've learned that he did it because I needed to learn in life that nothing's really easy. You have to climb. So many people have told me I can't do things that normal kids can do until this is over, and, like I mean, it felt like forever. Now it's getting cured, and I just feel happy about that." ●

## BELHAVEN LAUNCHES NEWLY-REDESIGNED WEBSITE

Belhaven University is thrilled to announce the launch of its newly-redesigned website, offering an enhanced online portal designed to effortlessly connect users to the vibrant world of the University. Whether on a desktop or a mobile device, the website offers an enhanced experience,



showcasing captivating visuals and user-friendly navigation.

Recognizing the prevalence of mobile usage, the new website ensures a smooth browsing experience across devices. From smartphones to tablets, accessing Belhaven's world is now as seamless as ever.

"As we are now fully in a digital world, having a dynamic website that better serves prospective students is critical," said Vice President for University Enrollment and Marketing Dr. Kevin Russell. "The number one purpose of the Belhaven website is to recruit students for all of our programs! We now have that. We also needed a site which caters to mobile and hand-held devices as we see 75-80% of our prospects coming to us through portable devices. We have been very pleased with the results as our applications have increased 17% in the short time since we launched."

The website also places visuals at the forefront, telling the story of Belhaven University through compelling photos and video that capture campus life, academics, and community spirit.

Navigating the website is intuitive and streamlined. Users can quickly access information about academic programs, admissions, campus events, and more. Finding what you need has never been easier.

*As we are now fully in a digital world, having a dynamic website that better serves prospective students is critical.*

Belhaven's new website serves as a dynamic hub for students, faculty, staff, and visitors, offering a holistic view of the institution's academic excellence and Christian values. Explore the new website today and discover all that the university has to offer. ●

Scan Here to Visit Our New Site!



TEAM OF ALUMNI AND STUDENTS CONTRIBUTE TO MAJOR MOTION PICTURE

Belhaven University students and alumni were involved in making a major motion picture. Four film production majors and four alumni contributed their talents to film and produce the Christmas comedy *How the Gringo Stole Christmas*, featuring actor and stand-up comedian George Lopez.

Belhaven alum Amile Wilson ('07) served as the producer and unit production manager. "George Lopez plays a proud Mexican-American gardener with a landscaping business. His daughter surprises him by arriving with her hippie boyfriend; hilarity ensues," said Wilson.

The entire movie was filmed in Jackson, Mississippi. Parts of the movie were even filmed on Belhaven's Track and Field Complex, which became a key scene in the movie. "There is an argument about the recreation and games that adults can and can't play. And so, the family challenges the boyfriend to a game of soccer," Wilson explained.

Lopez got the big billing because he is a well-known actor, but the movie was written and cast to

be an ensemble comedy. Other talented actors like Mariana Treviño, who recently co-starred in a movie with Tom Hanks entitled *A Man Called Otto*, are in the movie with up-and-coming actors Jack Kilmer and Emily Tosta.

Lopez was interviewed on campus and had this to say about Jackson. "Nothing really kind of gets done in Hollywood anymore," said Lopez. "So to come here, double your money because of the tax incentives, I think it's good for the economy here. And it's good for people like me, who, you know, wouldn't really get to see the beauty of Jackson, Mississippi." Lopez says that this won't be the last time he will be here shooting a movie in Jackson.

Four students from Belhaven's Film Production Department took roles as production assistants, giving them valuable learning experiences. "It is such a blessing for the students to be able to work on a feature film during their summer break," said Chair and Associate Professor of Film Production Rick Negron. "They are totally ready for this opportunity, and it allows them to be able to assess themselves and gain valuable professional experience. The cast and crew are from all over the country, so they're also able to make connections with professionals that may be able to help their career in the future."



Joey and Casey Nelms

While students were learning, alumni were hard at work, putting their skills to use. Bill Wilson ('84) was on set, working in the production design department. Production designers are responsible for the visual concept of a film. They identify a design style for sets, locations, graphics, props, lighting, camera angles, and costumes.

Amile Wilson, Bill's son, was the producer and unit production manager for this movie. This was his fourth full-feature film in which he played a major role. In fact, he was a co-producer for another film shot in Jackson called *The Movers*, featuring Christopher Lloyd, Jena Malone, and Terrence Howard. He also spent time in development for studios rather than direct production.



Left to Right: Trinity Tubbs, Azahraya Beals, Rick Negron, Tamia Davis, Brewer Young; Comedian & Actor George Lopez

Casey Amanda Nelms ('14) and Joey Nelms ('14) are a married couple and alumni who also had prominent roles in *How the Gringo Stole Christmas*. Casey was a production supervisor, helping with operations, and Joey was a script supervisor. "I labeled and kept track of every shot for the film, so we would know what we've shot and what we haven't," stated Joey Nelms. "I was the connection point between the editor, director, and writer. I made sure we shot everything that best represented the screenplay, and I made sure the lines were right, and that nothing jumped around (different costumes, clock times, light levels, etc.). I also estimated the runtime for each scene and time takes on set, keeping an eye on the total length of the film."

After Belhaven, Joey Nelms went to the Savannah College of Art and Design for an M.F.A. in Dramatic Writing. Before that, he was working on streaming projects for NBC/Universal (Esmail Corp/Peacock) in Los Angeles, California. According to Nelms, he and his wife are putting up their own feature production in Mississippi next year. ❤️

BELHAVEN UNIVERSITY SHARES CLOSE CONNECTIONS WITH USA IBC

Faculty, students, and alumni from Belhaven University's Dance Department all had major roles in the 12th USA International Ballet Competition (IBC) this summer. This event on June 10-23

remains one of the oldest and most respected dance competitions in the world.

From selection committee member, dance school administrator, and artistic administrator to assistant stage manager, production crew, and dance school counselor, Belhaven dance professionals contributed their expertise to this prestigious competition. The University also hosted USA IBC Dance School. Some of the world's best dance instructors were on campus training students who came from around the world just to be a part of the program.

Krista Bower ('06), Chair of Belhaven's Dance Department, served as USA IBC's Dance School Administrator in 2010 and 2014, and Dance School Assistant in 2006. "The USA IBC provides incredible opportunities for Belhaven University dance students, faculty, and alumni to engage with a world-class dance event in Jackson, Mississippi," said Bower. "We are honored to provide support and staff for this event and to host the USA IBC Dance School in the Bitsy Irby Visual Arts and Dance Center."

Professor of Dance Ravenna Tucker Wagon was part of the prestigious USA IBC Selection Committee. She reviewed over 330 applications and selected the top talent to be presented at the 12th USA IBC. Arianna Marcell, Belhaven University's Specialty Instructor of Dance, served as the assistant stage manager at Thalia Mara Hall. She

formerly served as the USA IBC's Dance School Assistant in 2014, Artistic Manager for the Reunion Gala in 2016, and Administrator of the Dance School in 2018.

Andy Leatherman ('07), Belhaven's Director of Dance Production, served in his second season as the assistant to the production manager. In this role, Leatherman prepared the studio rehearsal spaces at the Jackson Convention Center, oversaw facilities for the USA IBC Dance School, and assisted with preparations at Thalia Mara Hall and in the City of Jackson.

Belhaven University dance alumna Sara Berry-Lee ('19) served as the artistic administrator for the USA IBC. In this role, Berry-Lee oversaw competitor schedules, jury procedures, and complex performance details. Several current dance majors were also involved in key roles. David Bowen, Dottie Burt, and Violet Pasqua were employed as production assistants. Gabby Godwin and Naomi Tharp served as counselors in the USA IBC Dance School.

Belhaven University has a long, connected history with the competition. During many previous competitions, the University was known as the International Village. Belhaven housed competitors, students, and visitors from around the world. Competitors would use the dance studios for practice and classes. The two-week Dance School culminated with a student performance and award ceremony in Belhaven's Center for the Arts Concert Hall. ❤️



# ALUMNI NEWS

## HARRISON SCOTT KEY SOARS WITH BEST-SELLING BOOK

Harrison Scott Key ('97) has published a new bestseller, *How to Stay Married: The Most Insane Love Story Ever Told*. Known for his witty and insightful storytelling, Key delves into the complexities of marriage, faith, and the pursuit of truth.



In *How to Stay Married*, Key takes readers on a hilarious and introspective journey as the protagonist navigates the challenges of maintaining a marriage. With his trademark humor and candid reflection, Key explores the intricacies of love, forgiveness, and personal growth within the context of marriage. Key's unique ability to blend humor and depth has garnered

him recognition in the literary world. His previous works, including *The World's Largest Man* (Thurber Prize for American Humor winner) and *Congratulations, Who Are You, Again?* showcase his talent for crafting stories that resonate with a wide audience.

As an accomplished writer, Key's contributions have graced the pages of esteemed publications such as *The New York Times*, *Oxford American*, and *McSweeney's Internet Tendency*. With *How to Stay Married*, he once again demonstrates his prowess in capturing the essence of the human experience with charm and insight.

Harrison Scott Key's journey from his Belhaven days to becoming a best-selling author exemplifies his dedication to storytelling and his alma mater's commitment to nurturing creative talent. *How to Stay Married* stands as a testament to Key's ability to illuminate the complexities of relationships, leaving readers entertained, enlightened, and eagerly turning the pages. 🍷

## BELHAVEN NAMES 2023 ELIZABETH SPENCER AWARD RECIPIENTS

Faculty from Belhaven University's English and Creative Writing Departments honored four students excelling in the written arts.

The winners of the Elizabeth Spencer Award 2023 are junior

Ella Simmons, senior Maurissa Winford, junior Tara Teter, and junior Madilyn Hiley.

Winford was honored for her work in poetry, Simmons was recognized for her efforts in fiction, and Teter won the award for her creative nonfiction. The fiction, nonfiction, and poetry awards were determined by faculty in Belhaven's Creative Writing Department and were awarded in April.

"All three winners for creative writing demonstrated artful command of craft in their respective genres," said Chair and Professor of Creative Writing Dr. Randy Smith. "Like the award's namesake, each wrote perceptively about how personal, family, and societal tensions intersect and influence one another."

Hiley was honored for her research essay, "Elizabeth Spencer and Her Female Characters: Both Knowing and Changing Home." The scholarly essay award was decided by faculty in Belhaven's English Department. The award is based on completion of an exemplary research essay regarding some aspect of Spencer's work.

"It is fitting, and perhaps, inexorable, that Madilyn Hiley would garner the Elizabeth Spencer Award for her literary essay," said Chair and Professor of English Dr. Donald Hubele. "After all, as a double major in dance and English, she was awarded outstanding service in both fields.



Top left to right; Tara Teter, Maurissa Winford  
Inset: Elizabeth Spencer  
Bottom left to right; Ella Simmons, Madilyn Hiley

She could have majored in anything and risen to the top. Her goal is to use her considerable, and alas, rare gifts to help others, and to honor Christ. She is an embodiment of the Belhaven motto 'To serve, not to be served.' She has been an indelible mark of God's grace on our campus."

The winning selections and essay will be published in Belhaven University's digital fine arts journal, *The Brogue*.

The Elizabeth Spencer Writing Awards were created to encourage students in creative writing and scholarly engagement with the literary works of Spencer. The four award categories include fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and scholarly essay. The annual scholarships are funded by Virginia Wicke Morris ('67), a Hattiesburg, Miss. native and Belhaven Board of Trustee member. 🍷

## Create a Legacy Plan That Takes Care of Your Family

We've partnered with **PhilanthroCorp** to offer their free legacy planning services to any of our alumni who wish to use them. PhilanthroCorp is a Christian organization that empowers believers to maximize their impact in the present and the future. With their help, you can easily provide a secure future for your children.

The team at PhilanthroCorp has devised a new online tool for individuals and couples with simple planning needs to streamline the will and estate planning process in under 30 minutes.

This tool will help you address guardianship needs (including a children's trust) and get your house in order. Not only will you be able to bless your family it also shows you ways that you can bless ministries that you care about after your children are grown.

The Estate Plan Organizer is available online 24/7 and will walk you through the process at your own pace. If something too complex for the online tool arises, they can easily connect you with an estate specialist- free of charge.

Should you choose to finalize documents through the Estate Plan Organizer, PhilanthroCorp has partnered with a network of attorneys to draft the documents for just \$309 (usually over \$1,000).

To take advantage of this service, please visit:

[gobelhaven.com/estate-planning](https://gobelhaven.com/estate-planning)





# Chemistry Alum's Research Could Help Protect Environment

One Belhaven University alum is researching a new class of chemical material that could help fight climate change.

Since graduating with a chemistry degree from Belhaven University in 2015, Dr. Sixbert Muhoza continues his passion for research. He is now a research fellow at the Department of Energy's (DOE) Argonne National Laboratory and is studying a class of chemical materials which hold promise for use in green energy technologies.

"The overarching goal of my research work is to develop green energy generation and conversion

devices to curb and/or reverse the effect of climate change," said Muhoza. This new class of materials called MXenes are two-dimensional metal carbides and/or nitrides with high electrical conductivity, among other properties. Muhoza and the team at Argonne are studying MXenes from three angles.

First, they are exploring how they can develop novel ones with tuned and customized composition and complexity. Second, they want to use them to make new and better electrodes for batteries. Third, they are studying how to use them to convert carbon dioxide into useful fuels.

Muhoza's research has important and practical applications. Since most renewable energy technologies use or rely on electrochemical principles, his research provides a significant contribution to the fight against the impact of climate change.

"My research spans a variety of topics on applying electrochemistry to develop environmentally-benign devices and technologies," noted Muhoza. "The applications include developing high-capacity batteries, conversion of carbon dioxide into fuels and chemicals, sensors for pollutants, and more."

According to Muhoza, developing high-capacity batteries is key to achieving wide adoption of electric vehicles and solar power, which will substantially reduce the release of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. "One angle to accomplish this is to develop energy devices that do not rely on fossil fuels. If we don't burn fossil fuels, we don't emit greenhouse gases, and, hence, undergo no unnatural changes in temperature/climate."

His work on carbon dioxide reduction provides another method to attack the same problem, but from the opposite end. He is researching ways the carbon dioxide already released in the atmosphere can be converted into useful chemicals such as ethanol or methane.

According to Muhoza, this type of research will have a wider impact on the scientific community as well. "Not only is that going to be beneficial for developing more efficient electrodes for batteries and electrolyzers, but it will also help guide the general scientific community on material development methods."

The trajectory of Muhoza's life took a turn after he graduated from high school in his home country of Rwanda (Africa). Initially, he wanted to go to medical school and had even been admitted into one there.

He thought and prayed over his life and career. Muhoza

commented, "Being a doctor and treating people is very important, but I became more interested in work that would change how people lived. As I saw it, scientific innovation is the reason why people in this generation are living better than those in previous generations, and I wanted to contribute to that progress."

His confirmation came when he was awarded a presidential scholarship to come to the United States. He packed his bags and headed to Jackson, Mississippi.

“*The overarching goal of my research work is to develop green energy generation and conversion devices to curb and/or reverse the effect of climate change.*”

Belhaven University and its professors had a major impact on Muhoza and his decision toward research. "I had my first research project at Belhaven University with Dr. Gary Reid Bishop, and everything rolled out from there. It is thanks to my professors and classmates that I was able to pursue this path with enthusiasm."

Muhoza said that the support he received didn't stop at the chemistry department. He had much help from people in other departments as well. "I basically had an open invitation to the



offices of Dr. John Estes (Chair of the Mathematics Department), Dr. Tracy Ford (Dean of Worldview Studies), Dr. Chip Mason (retired Dean of the Business School), to name a few. The guidance and advice they gave me have stayed with me to this day."

By the time he graduated, Muhoza had completed a variety of research projects with multiple professors, which was critical in securing his graduate school admission to Wake Forest University where he earned a Ph.D. in Materials Chemistry in 2019.

In 2018, Muhoza completed a graduate fellowship at the DOE's National Energy Technology Laboratory where he was first exposed to and picked interest in the work of national laboratories. He continues his research work at the Argonne National Laboratory. "I am excited to continue developing/researching these technologies and then see some of them turn into parts of industrial processes that impact our lives for the better." ●

Left to Right; Wake Forest Professor Dr. Michael Gross and Sixbert Muhoza in the lab | photos courtesy of Wake Forest University

# SAVE the DATE! Homecoming & FAMILY WEEKEND

OCT 20-22, 2023  
Schedule of  
EVENTS

## FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20

### PARENT AND FAMILY CHECK-IN

3:00-5:00pm | Welcome Desk, McCravey-Triplett Student Center (Students and their families)

### ALUMNI AWARD RECIPIENTS MEET AND GREET

4:30-5:15pm | Joy Lackey Conference Room, 2nd Floor, McCravey-Triplett Student Center  
This reception is for 2023 Alumni Award recipients and their spouses.

### ALUMNI AWARDS CEREMONY

5:30pm | Dr. Billy Kim International Center  
This will be a great time of fellowship and celebration. Dinner will be served. Tickets are \$25, seats are limited. RSVP by Oct. 12th.

### PEP RALLY AND HIGHLAND GAMES

7:30-9:00pm | Belhaven Bowl  
This will be the third annual Pep Rally and Highland Games, open to students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

### ALUMNI TENNIS REUNION

8:00pm | Belhaven Town Center, 1121 N Jefferson St, Jackson, MS 39202

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21

### ALUMNI TOUR OF CAMPUS

9:00am | Welcome Desk, McCravey-Triplett Student Center  
Join the Alumni Office for a guided one-hour tour of campus.

### ALUMNI TENNIS MATCH & PICKLEBALL

9:00am | FitNetWork, 300 Lake Circle, Madison, MS 39110

### 50 YEAR CLUB

10:00am | Dr. Billy Kim International Center, Room 202  
All alumni from the classes of 1973 and earlier are invited to attend and reminisce. Brunch will be served. RSVP by Oct. 12th.

### ALUMNI HOMECOMING TAILGATE

11:00am | Belhaven Bowl, Stadium Operations & Media Center Patio  
Join us under the alumni hospitality tent to watch the game and fellowship. Lunch plates available for purchase. We will celebrate the Tennis National Championship Anniversary.

### PARENT & FAMILY TAILGATE

11:00am | Belhaven Bowl, Halftime of football game  
This will be a come-and-go table with snacks, giveaways, and games for families and students.

### FOOTBALL GAME: BELHAVEN VS. METHODIST UNIVERSITY

12:00pm | Belhaven Bowl  
Watch the game from the alumni hospitality tent or from the Belhaven Bowl. Free Admission.

### MOTHER AND DAUGHTER TEA

Immediately following football game | Dr. Billy Kim International Center 202 | This will be the third annual Mother and Daughter Tea. Open to all female students and visitors.

### FATHER AND SON AXE THROWING

Immediately Following Football Game | Location TBD  
This will be a new event open to all male students and visitors.

### WOMEN'S SOCCER: BELHAVEN VS. WESLEYAN COLLEGE

5:00pm | Belhaven Bowl | Free admission.

### HOMECOMING DANCE

8:00pm | Auxiliary Gym  
This traditional event will be open to Belhaven students.

## SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22

### HOMECOMING AND FAMILY WEEKEND WORSHIP

8:30am | First Presbyterian Church, N. State St., Jackson, MS 39202

SCAN FOR  
Updated Events!



# BELHAVEN TO HONOR 2023 ALUMNI Award WINNERS

On Friday, October 20, Belhaven University will honor nine alumni during a special awards dinner at the Dr. Billy Kim International Center. This event will coincide with Belhaven's 2023 Homecoming Weekend and will highlight alumni who are successfully living out the University's mission, "To serve, not to be served."

### ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

#### Harrison Scott Key ('97)

To a distinguished alumnus who has achieved excellence in their field of service and embodies Belhaven University's mission in their life and work.

### YOUNG ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

#### Sixbert Muhoza ('15)

To a recent graduate of the past decade that pursues excellence in their field and has achieved success as a younger leader.

### SPIRIT OF BELHAVEN

#### Tom Jackson ('91)

To an alumnus who exemplifies the heart of Belhaven University's mission "to serve and not be served." This designation honors a servant leader of distinction who embraces Belhaven's mission and serves Christ Jesus in their career, in human relationships, and in the world of ideas.

### BETTYE QUINN EDUCATION

#### Kim Parks Duhs ('80)

To a Belhaven School of Education graduate who reflects Ms. Quinn's dedication, commitment, and loyalty to teaching and service to their community.

### BUSINESS SUCCESS

#### Aileen Ferguson Thomas ('91)

To an alumnus who integrates Christian values and ethics in the marketplace. A servant leader committed to excellence and dedication to serving others.

### MINISTRY INFLUENCE

#### Chuck McArthur ('81)

To a graduate who has been influential in their pastoral or service-ministry, building the Kingdom through their work.

### STEM DISTINCTION

#### Dr. Jarrett R. Morgan ('10)

To a Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics graduate who has achieved significant success in their professional role, and encourages a Christian worldview while discovering innovations and best practices in their field.

### ENTREPRENEURIAL EXCELLENCE

#### Cade Trisler ('95)

To a servant-leader entrepreneur who has proven success in business – profit or non-profit – and demonstrates a commitment to ethical leadership in the marketplace.

### ARTS EXCELLENCE

#### Jocelyn Zhu ('14)

To a graduate who has achieved excellence in the Arts professionally and honors the Lord through their creativity.

TO READ MORE ABOUT THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS, SCAN THIS QR CODE!





ALUMNI UPDATES

1960

**Diana Gomez Howie** ('69) moved in March of 2022 to Huntsville, AL, to be near her daughter and family.

2000

**Dr. Brad Bailey** ('00) was recognized by the Alabama Communication Association in 2022 with the John H. Saunders Service Award. This annual award recognizes those who have



actively created opportunities for others to use their voice. He was elected to serve as the president of the Mississippi Communication Association (MCA) for the 2023-2024 term. The Mississippi Communication Association is a scholarly not-for-profit organization which promotes the study, criticism, research, teaching, and appreciation of the artistic, humanistic, and scientific principles of communication. MCA also seeks to create a sense of unity among high school, community college, and university communication departments in

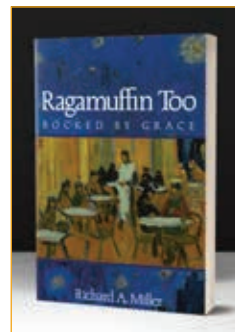
the state of Mississippi. Brad is the Dean of Teaching and Learning at MS Gulf Coast Community College. He resides in Gautier, MS, with his wife **Mandy** ('01).

**Teresa Mack** ('01, '12) serves as an elected alderwoman, Ward 4 in the City of Byram.



**Amanda Bell** ('03) is the Tribal Archivist, BAH, MDAH-NAGPRA/SEC 106 Representative for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

**Richard Miller** ('04) recently authored a book titled *Ragamuffin Too: Rocked by Grace*. This book provides insight on Jesus. A vagabond. A nobody from the middle of nowhere. Friend to scoundrels and misfits. Perfectly positioned for insignificance.



And yet, this dusty, itinerant teacher changed the world. He came to set the record straight. To expose the lies and reveal the truth. To teach us how to live a life of joy, peace, and purpose. To be our guide. He offers a new life, charged with supernatural power and sealed with an eternal guarantee.

**Jennifer (Coronado) Wolfram** ('04) is now a pilot for Delta Air Lines. She resides in Tarpon Springs, FL.

**Matthew Wilson** ('05) upon graduation moved to Sunny Side, GA, and began working in the mortgage industry. In the summer of 2007 he married **Megan (Johnston)** ('07), whom he met while at Belhaven. They recently celebrated their 15th wedding anniversary. They have four children: Jeremiah, Ephram, Rohan, and Siobhan. Matthew currently is a data analyst at Boaty's Transport, Inc., in Jackson, GA. He is grateful for his time at Belhaven. Coach Roland and the football team recruited him despite his broken leg, which enabled Matthew to be a Blazer for five seasons, giving him the opportunity to grow as an athlete, student, and in his walk with Christ.

**Byron Davenport, II** ('08) is an American war veteran, chef, restaurateur, and entertainer at thewison.com, showcasing small business and chefs worldwide. His show airs on TigoTV. The show began in Peru and shares the USA with South America. His show is dedicated to his mother who had Multiple Sclerosis and was unable to travel to see the world.

**Stephen McDill** ('08) recently won an outstanding achievement award from Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina where he is employed as a licensed sales counselor for the company's individual and family Affordable Care Act health insurance plans. He resides in Columbia, SC.

**Thomas Shoffner** ('10) opened a counseling practice, Finding Hope Counseling Services, LLC, in September of 2020 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. After

having worked in community mental health in Pennsylvania and Mississippi and seeing a need, the practice was opened to help ensure that no one was turned away from therapy due to costs. The practice is modeled to use a sliding scale and financial aid options for those who do not have insurance. The practice has grown to requiring a second therapist and now has opportunities for those in graduate school or who have completed graduate school and are working to become a Licensed Professional Counselor.

2010

**Melissa and Andrew White** ('10) celebrated the birth of their third daughter. They reside in Pennsylvania where Andrew just recently co-developed a board game, *Alynthia*.

**Dr. Rickey L. Thigpen** ('12) is the President and CEO of Visit Jackson. In February 2023, he was named by the Mississippi Business Journal as one of Mississippi's Top CEOs.



**Craig Kittrell** ('13) Deputy Executive Director for Intellectual and Developmental Disability Services with the MS Dept. of Mental Health, was recently recognized with the Paul D. Cotton Leadership Award. This award is presented to a Mississippian who has demonstrated exemplary leadership in the field of services for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

**Olivia (Cadle)** ('14) and **Sam Roselli** ('15) currently live in Nashville, TN, with their three children: Florence, Emilia, and Wesley. Olivia is the Asst. Director at Fellowship School of Creative Arts teaching classical ballet, and Sam is a renewable fuels trader.



To submit alumni updates for the next Tartan Magazine, scan the code and follow the link.

Swing by our new **ALUMNI WELCOME ROOM!**

2nd Floor of Fitzhugh Hall by the fountain! We'd love to hear from you and visit with you.

**Fitzhugh Hall 210**

# IN MEMORIAM

THE PASSING OF BELHAVEN ALUMNI, FACULTY, & FRIENDS

**Marianne Dyer Gannon** ('43)  
7/20/2022

**Louise Smith Oakes** ('43)  
8/3/2022

**Dora Jean Mangum Whatley**  
(47) 6/4/2022

**Eva Frances Dixon Phares** ('48)  
1/19/2023

**Labryne Stavropoulos Angelo**  
(49) 8/26/2023

**Virginia Gillespie Brock** ('50)  
8/7/2022

**Jean Hughes Miesse** ('50)  
8/17/2022

**Ethel Guice Dillon** ('51)  
2/3/2023

**Sarastelle Jones Sigrest** ('51)  
9/28/2022

**Margaret Villee Compton** ('51)  
7/29/2022

**Ann May Irby** ('52)  
9/9/2022

**Annelle McCay Majors** ('52)  
5/12/2023

**Mary Ann Sibley Morriss** ('52)  
3/11/2023

**Frances Todd Haslam** ('52)  
12/15/2022

**Judy Walters Ritter** ('52)  
11/6/2022

**Myrna Vesta Carmichael Horton**  
(53) | 8/26/2022

**Sarah Anita Kelly Albritton** ('54)  
4/1/2023

**Carol Alford Moore** ('55)  
12/17/2022

**Greta Childress Rees** ('56)  
9/3/2022

**James Albert Turner** ('59)  
1/21/2023

**Carolyn Lee Heiden** ('59)  
7/20/2023

**Dr. John W. Stodghill** ('60)  
9/18/2022

**Rev. Thomas D. Walker** ('61)  
10/22/2022

**Mary J. Neal** ('62)  
1/1/2023

**Mary Beth Steed Ray** ('63)  
4/11/2023

**Elise Huie Ware** ('64)  
1/1/2023

**Jane Kay Stodghill** ('64)  
12/2/2022

**Dewey Wayne Howard** ('64)  
11/15/2022

**Sandra Harris** ('66)  
4/6/2023

**Donna Marie Slater Wright** ('68)  
12/9/2022

**Gloria Ann May** ('68)  
5/20/2022

**Jesse "Jay" Baucom, Jr.** ('68)  
5/16/2023

**John M. Warren, Jr.** ('68)  
5/28/2023

**Ernest G. Wolf** ('73)  
4/14/2023

**Gail Petit Tuit** ('75)  
12/17/2022

**Ronny F. Fore** ('77)  
6/26/2023

**Susan Genevieve Chapman  
Clifford** ('79) | 10/7/2022

**Margaret Clay Overby Davis** ('79)  
11/17/2022

**Carol Cooke McLellan** ('81)  
4/23/2023

**Pamela Dabney Truett** ('82)  
9/12/2022

**Helen Lee Sun** ('84)  
2/28/2023

**Craig E. Barnard** ('89)  
1/29/2023

**Andrew Wambari Kihumba** ('89)  
9/12/2022

**Sara Nabers Martin** ('96)  
4/25/2023

**William Barnard Pace** ('96)  
9/2/2022

**Terry Lee Hammonds** ('97)  
7/21/2022

**Barbara L. Dorr** ('98)  
4/4/2023

**Rosemary Hosemann  
Murphy** ('98) | 11/19/2022

**Lisa Ann Pendleton** ('99)  
11/10/2022

**John C. Holman, II** ('00)  
7/12/2023

**Tracy Lynn Smith** ('04)  
12/31/2022

**Theresa G. Williams** ('04)  
7/8/2023

**Kristi Wright Jones** ('08)  
6/11/2023

**Zina Louise Brooks** ('11)  
3/23/2023

**Karisa Ann Rowlands  
Ernsberger** ('13) | 7/17/2022

**Lakendra Johnson** ('15)  
9/18/2022

**Tabitha Ellen Todd** ('17)  
7/20/2022

**Ofa Hautau** ('17)  
2/10/2023

**Paul Michael Young** ('18)  
8/22/2022

**Stephanie Lynnette  
Holman** ('19) | 9/22/2022

**Boris L. Thomas** ('22)  
4/4/2023

**Zachary Abramson** ('22)  
7/12/2023

**Frances Jeannette  
Barnes** ('23) | 6/26/2023

**Dr. Phillip Kelly**  
6/22/2023



Dr. Kelly, long-time professor of chemistry at Belhaven University, passed away on June 22, 2023. He was born in Greenwood, MS, on December 6, 1943.

In 1979 Dr. Kelly came to Belhaven University, where he taught chemistry and physics and chaired the Department of Natural Sciences and Math for 32 years.

Dr. Kelly graduated from Leflore County High School in 1961 and went to Mississippi College, where he majored in chemistry and received the Joseph Barnhill Chemistry Award in 1965. After graduation, he accepted a NASA Fellowship to pursue a Ph.D. in organic chemistry at the University of Southern Mississippi.

**Dr. Joseph Moody Martin**  
3/4/2023



Dr. Martin, beloved educator, missionary, and minister of the Gospel, died on March 4, 2023, at his home in Jackson, MS.

Dr. Martin was a missionary in Brazil for 25 years, taught for 27 years at Belhaven University, and pastored Union Church Presbyterian Church in Union Church, MS, for 18 years.

Joe was born Feb. 13, 1938, in Dallas, GA, the son of Rufus Russell Martin and Grace Moody.

In 1990, Joe began serving at Belhaven University until his retirement in 2017. During that time, he served as Chair of the Christian Ministries Department, teaching Bible, Theology, and Missions.

If you would like to honor the memory of the passing of an alum by way of a monetary gift, please scan the QR Code to give online, or mail your gift to the address.



Belhaven University  
1500 Peachtree St  
Campus Box 158  
Jackson, MS 39202

# *Cinderella*

*Book and Lyrics by*

*Oscar Hammerstein II*

*Music by Richard Rodgers*

*Adapted for the Stage by Tom Briggs*

## *Showdates*

Nov. 9-11 | 7:30PM

Nov. 11 | 2:00PM

Nov. 16-18 | 7:30PM



**BELHAVEN THEATRE** had a successful 2022/2023 season performing *The Spitfire Grill*, *The Burial at Thebes*, *Suite Surrender*, and *An Evening of One-Acts*! The new season has just been announced, and we look forward to yet another successful year! Follow us on social media and stay up to date on upcoming performances and ticket information.

UPCOMING 2023/2024

## **BELHAVEN THEATRE SEASON**

- THE ANNUAL 24-HOUR THEATRE EVENT
- A LOVELY SUNDAY FOR CREVE COEUR
- CINDERELLA
- THE MARRIAGE PROPOSAL
- THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST
- A NIGHT OF BROADWAY!

FOR RESERVATIONS: CALL 601-974-6478 OR EMAIL: [BOXOFFICE@BELHAVEN.EDU](mailto:BOXOFFICE@BELHAVEN.EDU)

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[www.belhaven.edu/academics/arts/theatre/](http://www.belhaven.edu/academics/arts/theatre/)