



MARYVILLE
M A G A Z I N E

SPRING/SUMMER 2023

MARYVILLE



The Access
and Opportunity
Revolution is Here

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ON THE COVER

Maryville University celebrates Commencement and the announcement of the new strategic plan.



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Maryville University is a private, independent institution offering 90+ degrees at the undergraduate, master's and doctoral levels. Maryville has forged its outstanding reputation based on academic excellence, individualized student attention and alumni success.

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

I know you share my relief for the wonderfully mild winter we enjoyed and the beautiful spring/summer that surrounds us.

This 2022-2023 academic year has been truly amazing. Our students, faculty and staff continue to learn, thrive, achieve and engage in wondrous educational experiences and contribute compassionate community service. All the while, they help us lead a revolution in higher education that is truly transformative.

In this issue, you will be inspired by the courage of one of our online students who represents thousands just like her. You will learn about a new partnership with the Girl Scouts to expand access for young women. You will hear about our cybersecurity program achieving the prestigious NSA Center of Excellence designation and the work of the DeBaun Black Alumni Network in honor of Everlouis Rutledge DeBaun, '58, the first African American to attend Maryville.

Our athletic teams continue to enjoy resounding success, and our Esports teams dominate the collegiate landscape. And because of our growth, we moved our graduation ceremonies to The Factory in The District in Chesterfield, and they were a joyous success.

And amid these and many more grand achievements, you will learn about our new strategic plan, The Access and Opportunity Revolution: Maryville 2030. Using ethical artificial intelligence and data analytics, we are forging a sophisticated approach to personalized learning and service. This revolution in learning empowers students throughout their lives with the tools to enlighten, serve and achieve no matter what field of endeavor they may choose. You will meet our newest board member, Beth Rudden, one of the world's experts on ethical AI, who is guiding us on this journey.

Maryville's future is bright as we reach new enrollment heights and expand our access and opportunity revolution far and wide.

Thank you all for your generosity and good counsel.

Warmest regards,

Mark Lombardi, PhD

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New degree programs help Maryville students become part of the \$120 billion artificial intelligence market and further their careers in the field.



MARYVILLE 2030 THE ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY REVOLUTION

Maryville is the **innovative** leader in higher education,
forging a revolution in student learning
that expands **access** and **opportunity** for all.



Maryville’s next strategic plan is crafted around our strategic vision articulated in 2015 and still vitally important today: Maryville is the innovative leader in higher education promoting a revolution in student learning that expands access and opportunity for all. Rooted in the digital revolution that surrounds us, this plan embodies a total commitment to access and opportunity, cutting-edge innovation, robust student outcomes and the creation of an active learning and living ecosystem that stays with the learner for their entire life.

Join us as Maryville leads a revolution in higher education that will remake the university of the 21st century. 

MISSION

Maryville University is a revolutionary national university offering a comprehensive and innovative array of academic programs to learners across all platforms. Using sophisticated data analytics and artificial intelligence, we are laser focused on student learning, outcomes and success. This educational model is called the Active Learning and Living Ecosystem, and it is built upon an innovative liberal arts foundation leading to compelling programs in the arts and sciences, health professions, education and business that prepare students for a life of engagement and achievement.

Visit maryville.edu/strategicplan to discover more about the University’s strategic goals.



VALUES

The evolving core values of Maryville are rooted in our traditions and mindful of the dynamic, changing nature of higher education. They reflect not only what we value and how we articulate it but also what we want to impart to our students now and in the future.

DATA DRIVEN

Being data driven leverages insights to pinpoint new learning pathways that better serve our learners, improve operations and more. It is imperative to all we do, building trust with the learner; we are leveraging AI to proactively serve learners and empower them with their own data.

PERSONALIZED, LEARNER-CENTERED FLEXIBILITY

Driving to be laser focused on the learner's lifelong journey maximizes choice, access and opportunity on multiple and integrated platforms of learning.

DIVERSE, EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE

Developing and fostering a diverse community and culture offers new perspectives and innovation for the entire ecosystem. Such deep DEI commitment allows Maryville to draw upon the talents of all people while keeping us at the forefront of creating an educational culture that values each and every individual learner.

FIVE-STAR SERVICE

Dynamic, automated, 24/7/365 support with delightful and frictionless learner-centered service removes obstacles and anticipates our learners' needs. The combination of being data driven, focusing on flexibility and remaining courageous creates the ultimate atmosphere of exceptional support.

COURAGEOUS

By empowering an innovative mindset and embarking upon intentional risk-taking, we will relentlessly strive for radical improvement while modeling courageous leadership for our students.

GOALS

COLLECTIVE ENGAGEMENT

- ◆ Perfect active learning and living ecosystems with learner outcomes at the forefront of everything we do.
- ◆ Implement a learner-focused collective technology strategy, giving the learner agency through flexible, intelligent digital solutions.

COLLECTIVE EMPOWERMENT

- ◆ Guarantee access and opportunity for all who desire it where cost never prevents a learner from beginning or continuing their educational journey.

COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

- ◆ Recruit, retain, develop and foster a truly diverse, equitable and inclusive campus culture.
- ◆ Create seamless automated services rooted in ethical AI and data analytics.

COLLECTIVE TRANSPARENCY

- ◆ Expand our learner base to millions across multiple integrated platforms and actively engage and serve learners across their lifespan.
- ◆ Facilitate the lifelong learner journey with personalized, data-driven tools based on mutual trust and a commitment to the learner's career success.



MARYVILLE 2030 THE ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY REVOLUTION



The Collective

Maryville is combining technology and humanology to create the ultimate active learning ecosystem.

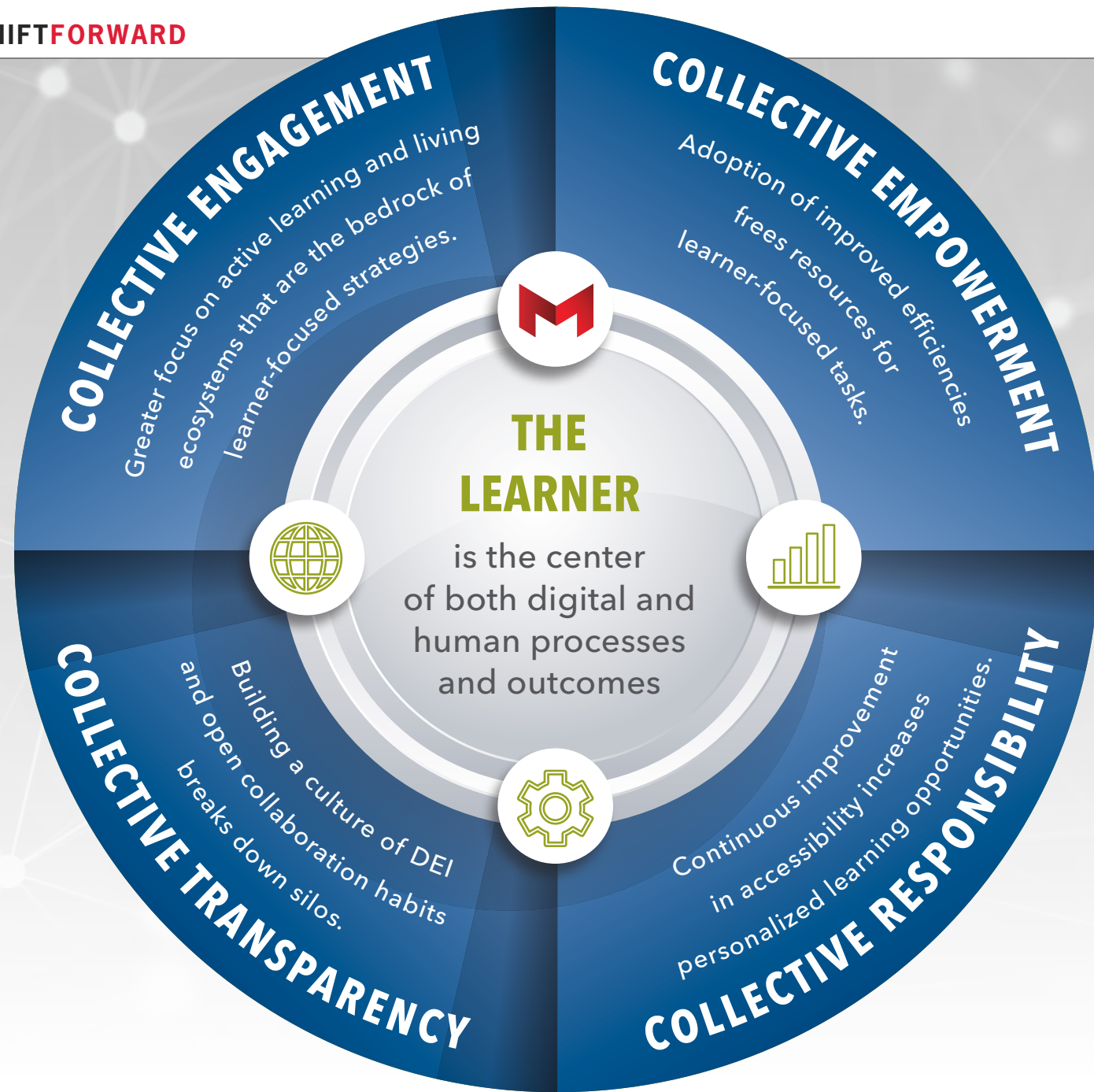
As Maryville powers forward with the strategic plan, The Access and Opportunity Revolution: Maryville 2030, “the how” of this plan will develop and evolve, centered around a central concept of collective. Simply put, the success of the plan will be anchored in how Maryville breaks down silos and organizational verticals, to promote a culture of collective responsibility and collective action. This transformation has already begun.

For example, at the end of 2022, Maryville dissolved the Information Technology (IT) Department and installed a matrix called the Digital Learning Experience or DLX. The DLX team is made of a collective group of individuals, led by a five-person team, who implement digital strategies across the University with a student-first mindset. From strategic technology investments to software development to next-generation learning tools and AI, DLX follows a strategic priority matrix to manage projects that have the largest impact on the student journey and experience.

Collective technology refers to the integration and collaboration of various technology, including digital tools, systems and human intelligence (humanology), to collectively address complex problems and achieve common goals. It is a multidisciplinary approach that brings together diverse fields such as AI, machine learning, data analytics, robotics, internet of things (IoT) and person-to-person collaboration to create innovative solutions and enhance productivity.

Collective technology emphasizes the importance of cooperation, communication and coordination among different stakeholders, from humans to machines. The idea is to coordinate the capabilities of each component to solve problems that are beyond the scope of any individual or single technology.

Popular examples of collective technology can include smart cities, crowdsourcing, collaborative robotics or integrated computer networks. Overall, it is a synergistic approach that combines technology and humanology to address challenges and improve overall efficiency.



BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

A community of practice (CoP) is a group of people who share common interests or professions and coordinate on exchanging knowledge, ideas and experiences related to their shared domain. CoPs can be formed within already established teams or across different teams within an organization and collaborate both online and offline. CoPs operate as informal, self-organized social structures that facilitate knowledge and learning among practitioners.

Some characteristics of a community of practice include shared domains, community building and taking on common training and development opportunities. CoPs can take on other various forms like professional associations or online forums.

Maryville currently has five perating CoPs, one each for Salesforce implementation, Slack integration, data quality, AI adoption and knowledge article building.

“Combining the forces of technology creates the ultimate fertile ground for enhancing the learner journey for Maryville’s students at all levels.”

The new infrastructure under the DLX team allows continuous improvement of processes to reduce overall timetables, such as streamlining easy-turn requests. From here, the success of building power user networks among different departments to help train and solve problems on a day-to-day level provides real-time user feedback. The result of CoPs allows for more transparency, scalable progress tracking and University-wide upskilling.

REINFORCING A CULTURE OF COURAGE


Just in the Salesforce CoP, there have been 75 power users trained across the University, with more than 15 hours of upskilling provided to each user. In addition, almost 2,000 badges (or mini certifications) have been completed, which adds to the supply of overall knowledge for the University.

“We have biweekly Salesforce power-user meetings that walk through the platform and set up live demonstrations,” said Julie Krebel, director of operations and communication strategy at Maryville.

“Each cohort meets on Zoom and can see the platform and ask questions in real time. It’s also a great opportunity to encourage Trailhead training courses to keep up with the evolution of the platform so they can customize their experience to their department.”

The values behind Maryville’s CoP infrastructure reinforce a culture of empowerment, trust, curiosity and, above all, courage. Combining the forces of technology — by using the most up-to-date digital capabilities and humanology, with building highly collaborative, interconnected communities — creates the ultimate fertile ground for enhancing the learner journey for Maryville’s students at all levels.

Using CoPs and adopting collective technology aligns with the Maryville 2030 strategic plan by flowing into each of the four main goals that are outlined in the strategy: collective transparency, collective responsibility, collective engagement and collective empowerment. Take a look at the chart on the opposite page to see how the advantages of both methodologies fit into each.

The use of collective technology and CoPs in higher education can provide a broad range of benefits, including enhanced learning experiences, personalized education opportunities, increased interdisciplinary collaboration, improved resource sharing, greater accessibility and more efficient administration. Maryville is strategically replacing silos of inefficiency with an integrated set of processes and outcomes that puts the student at the center of a digital universe. The collective concept guides that work. 

New Board Member Brings Humanitarian Brand of AI Expertise to Maryville

Beth Rudden’s brand of AI is focused on ethics.



As a new member of the board of trustees, artificial intelligence expert Beth Rudden looks forward to deepening her ties to Maryville as well as the University’s relationship with AI. But the distinguished engineer, cognitive scientist and anthropologist wants to make it clear that her idea of AI is contrary to what some people think about the technology.

“We’re augmenting people, not replacing them,” Rudden said. “My version of AI is the human-centered version.”

Rudden’s brand of AI is focused on ethics. At a recent board of trustees meeting, Rudden was fascinated by a question asked by another board member. The member, a sister affiliated with the Religious of the Sacred Heart, wanted to know how Maryville can be sure the University is “making good people” as well as providing a good education.

“And that just lit me up,” Rudden said. “Because I want to apply AI and technology in an evidence-based way so that humans can trust the AI and understand how it works, we are making good people by modeling the right way to use this technology. People do what you do, not what you say.”

Just after joining the board, Rudden provided the University with components of the AI products being developed by her new company, Bast.ai. The partnership will provide hands-on opportunities for students to learn about how to augment themselves with AI. “It’s a collaboration that dovetails with Maryville’s emphasis on sustaining and growing an active learning ecosystem,” she said.

Rudden believes AI has the potential to strengthen Maryville’s alumni community and its ties to the University. She envisions using community-building platforms such as Slack and Discord to connect alumni with campus life.


“By matching people up for mentoring and sponsorships, perhaps we could get alumni more involved in recruiting and supporting new students,” Rudden said. “One of the very first things that I was ever taught in the business world is that it’s always about relationships.”

As Rudden looks to the future, she envisions a world in which AI technology is not held in the corporate domain but belongs to ordinary people, using their own data so that trust is inherent. As part of Maryville’s board of trustees, she relishes the idea of helping to prepare young people as they create and apply AI in a way that makes the world a better place.

“We borrow this world from our children,” Rudden said. “All we can do is set the tone, because it’s up to the next generation to pick up where we left off.” 



ALUMNI AND COMMUNITY AWARDS 2023

Alumni and friends who give generously of their time and talents to Maryville University, as well as those whose work brings distinction to their profession, were honored during the Maryville Forward Celebration on Saturday, May 20, 2023. The alumni and community awards also recognize people or organizations that provide extraordinary service to the community at large. Following are the distinguished recipients of the 2023 awards. 



Heart of Maryville
COLLEEN “COKE” HENNESSY, ‘63

Colleen “Coke” Hennessy, ‘63, has dedicated both her personal and professional life to the service of others. She credits her time at Maryville with helping her to identify her strengths and talents and determine how to use them to serve others.

Hennessy used her talents as an estate and tax planning lawyer for 36 years. Her career as a lawyer opened up doors of opportunity to serve the community. As an estate lawyer, she often worked with widows and family caregivers. While helping them navigate legal matters, Hennessy wondered if there was a way she could help them emotionally and socially, too.

She co-founded AMEND (Aiding Mothers Experiencing Neonatal Death) and served on the board of Theos for the Widowed – Midwest, an organization that hosts grief seminars for the recently widowed. Hennessy has also volunteered with BJC Hospice and Home Care Services.

Then, in 2008, Hennessy discovered a new passion: mindfulness. She began teaching the practice of mindfulness to children in local schools. Then she realized how impactful mindfulness was for adults, too, and shifted her focus. She completed the Mindful Meditation Teacher Certification Program through UC Berkeley. Since 2017, she has presented on and taught mindfulness practice to many groups, including the Mercy Conference and Retreat Center; the Bar Association of St. Louis; Oasis; long-term care social workers; and staff and volunteers of BJC Hospice.

Hennessy, who reflects on her time as a student at Maryville with fond memories, remains a strong supporter of the University. She served on the board of trustees from 1989 to 1998 and is a scholarship donor.



Myrtle E. and Earl E. Walker Medal
SR. ROCH ROCKLAGE, RSM
(posthumously)

Sister Mary Roch Rocklage, RSM, was the modern-day foundress of Mercy’s health care system. She was known for her humble but tenacious leadership style – a blend of compassion, bold innovation and considering others before herself.

Sr. Rocklage helped lay the groundwork for a decadeslong relationship between Maryville University and Mercy. In the 1970s, Maryville absorbed Mercy Junior College to create a college-based nursing program. Rocklage helped shepherd the partnership through its formative years.

In 2013, a generous grant from Mercy created the Catherine McAuley School of Nursing in the Myrtle E. and Earl E. Walker College of Health Professions. Today, the longtime partnership provides educational opportunities for Mercy employees, clinical rotations for Maryville students and more.

DEANS' AWARDS recognize graduates who bring
distinction to their professions, to their communities and to Maryville.



**Myrtle E. and Earl E. Walker
College of Health Professions
ANDREW DWIGGINS,
MT-BC, '13**

The first time Andrew Dwiggins, MT-BC, '13, picked up a guitar, he wasn't sure where it would lead him – he just wanted to learn to play. Where it led him was to a record deal and a Grammy nomination as a songwriter.

At age 30, Dwiggins was ready for a change and decided to pursue a degree in music therapy. Now, Dwiggins uses his guitar as a vehicle for providing music therapy to cancer patients as manager of patient support services at the Saint Louis University Cancer Center.

Dwiggins has worked with patients ages 18 to 88 and views his work as an honor and a privilege. "My goal is to help remind patients that they're a person, not a set of problems," he said. Dwiggins has also supervised Maryville music therapy practicum students and interns and notes that supporting the next generation of music therapists is one of the most rewarding aspects of his career.

Dwiggins created an award-winning podcast seeking to educate the health care community on palliative care and its benefits.

**School of Education
LATONIA COLLINS SMITH,
EdD, '14**

LaTonia Collins Smith, EdD, '14, is Harris-Stowe State University's 21st president and first African American female president. The university is the St. Louis region's only Historically Black College and University (HBCU) institution.

After Collins Smith spent 21 years in social work and public health, her fellow alumna, Passion Bragg, '96, encouraged her to make a change and apply at Harris-Stowe.

Over the next 13 years, Collins Smith would hold a variety of roles at Harris-Stowe, including executive director of the Center for Career Engagement, provost and vice president of Academic Affairs, and interim president.

Collins Smith chose to pursue Maryville's Doctor of Higher Education Leadership, citing program rigor and relevance as what she needed to take her career to the next level.

During her time as interim president, her leadership oversaw more than \$3.5 million raised in scholarships, donations and grants; significant campus renovations; and its largest graduating class.



**College of Arts and Sciences
TIM ROZAR, '97**

Tim Rozar, '97, had his career trajectory set by a chance encounter. While his mother was in a physical therapy appointment, she mentioned that her son liked math but wasn't sure what field to study. The physical therapist, a Maryville graduate, suggested that Tim look into actuarial science.

Rozar now serves as senior vice president and chief of staff at Reinsurance Group of America (RGA). He began with an internship from Maryville's career fair and has since worked in roles including global head of research and data analytics and CEO of a startup company within RGA that acted as an innovation accelerator.

Rozar provides insight and advice to students, speaks on classroom panels and offers input into the Maryville program. He feels strongly about growing the field and dedicates his time to furthering the industry through the Society of Actuaries. Rozar volunteers with the organization, serving on councils, the board of directors and now as president-elect. One of his goals is to attract new students to the actuarial science profession.

**John E. Simon
School of Business
BRANDON LOESCHNER,
CPA, '02**

Brandon Loeschner, '02, works in a growing market for CPAs: gaming services. Loeschner, partner and national practice leader of the gaming services practice at RubinBrown, is building a national brand through conference speaking and client relationships.

Loeschner and another partner launched the gaming services practice in 2015. For the industry – which includes online gaming and sports betting – they viewed Las Vegas as ideal for launching one office by 2020. They succeeded in launching two offices by 2020.



Many Maryville alumni work for RubinBrown, where Loeschner views gaming services as appealing for travel and unique opportunities. His goal is to uphold the integrity of the gaming industry through good business practices and by demonstrating consistency, efficiency and compliance within a complex regulatory structure.

Loeschner, a 40 Under 40 recipient, serves on the board of directors for Angels' Arms and Fantasy Sports & Gaming and is an annual scholarship donor to Maryville.



**Online Learning
RICHARD TRIETLEY,
EdD, '22**

After more than 20 years as an active-duty officer in the U.S. Army, Richard Trietley, EdD, '22, pursued his online Doctor of Education degree to propel him to his next career endeavor: university president.

At first, people didn't see the connection between his military experience and higher education. But Trietley found many parallels, as managing the barracks is like managing campus dorms and overseeing the mess hall is like overseeing campus dining.

In the last 15 years, he has served as interim provost, executive vice president for student success and interim president. While considering the full-time role, Trietley decided to pursue a doctoral degree in education. Maryville University's program stood out to him for its cohort model and basis in reflective practice.

Now Trietley uses the leadership skills he learned from both the Army and from Maryville to guide him in his role as president of Viterbo University. He views this award as representative of all his fellow classmates who balanced full personal and professional lives while earning their doctoral degrees, making sacrifices in order to further their education.

**Volunteer of the Year
DARIN SORRELL, '97**

When thinking of what it means to be active in the alumni community, Darin Sorrell, '97, comes to mind. Sorrell serves on Maryville's National Leadership Council, Alumni Council and Pre-Law Advisory Board. He is a regular attendee and volunteer at alumni events, and he even writes questions for Maryville's annual Trivia Night.

For Sorrell, volunteering is a way of paying it forward. He remembers his time at Maryville as a formative one in which he built lifelong relationships with fellow students, faculty and staff. It's his hope that Maryville continues to be a world-class institution.

Sorrell is actively involved with St. Mark's Lutheran, having served on the church council and as a Sunday school teacher.

A 1997 political science graduate, Sorrell went on to earn his Juris Doctor at Saint Louis University. Licensed in Missouri and Illinois, he represents injured individuals in workers' compensation and personal injury cases. Sorrell is the current chair of the trial section of the Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis, serves on the Board of Governors of the Missouri Bar and was appointed to the Lawyer-to-Lawyer Dispute Resolution program.



**Young Alumni
RYAN COCKERHAM, '14**

For Ryan Cockerham, '14, giving back is a part of life. Growing up in a family where philanthropy was front and center, it's no surprise he devotes much of his life to helping others.

Cockerham earned his degree in communications with an emphasis in visual communication and broadcast media. He found a passion for telling stories through visual and digital mediums and now uses those skills to further the missions of various nonprofits.

Cockerham serves as research and development director at The LIGHT Foundation, where "philanthropically creative engineers" help youth-focused nonprofits tell their stories. He also serves as production director for LIGHT Box Productions, an extension of the foundation that produces original video, website and social media content and philanthropic event management.

Cockerham serves on Maryville's Alumni Council and the board of the Walker Scottish Rite Clinic.

He has donated his skills to Kids Rock Cancer and University events, including Homecoming and Maryville Giving Day. Cockerham directed a 45-minute documentary about the history of arts in St. Louis called "The Poetics of Place," which premiered on campus in 2022.

**Young Alumni
TRE JENKINS, '14**

Tre Jenkins, '14, has had an exciting start to his career. A Rawlings Sport Business Management program graduate, Jenkins has worked with a variety of professional sports organizations, including the Golden State Warriors. His time there earned him invaluable experience as an account executive – and a 2017 championship ring.

Jenkins now works as a corporate partnerships executive for the Atlanta Falcons. A lifelong sports fan, Jenkins said he sometimes "feels like a kid" getting to do what he loves for a living and working for the top league in professional sports.

Jenkins chose Maryville because of the sport business management program. He continues to give back and helps Maryville students when he's able, speaking on classroom panels and serving as a connection for current students in the program. He helps them find internships and job opportunities in the industry.

In addition to his full-time work in the sports industry, Jenkins has a passion project in a different sector: real estate. He founded BEQUITY, a startup focused on real estate, raising private capital and giving back to the community. His hope is to be able to provide access for underrepresented communities to passively invest in assets, regardless of their individual net worth, through affordable initial investments.

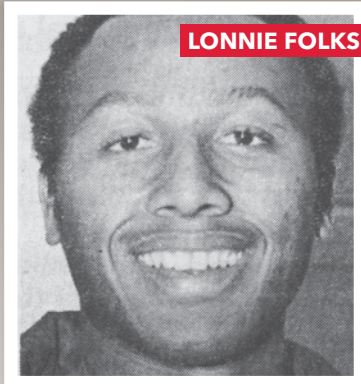




EVERLOUISE
RUTLEDGE DEBAUN



NADA WOODS



LONNIE FOLKS



LINDA SHEAD



The exhibit was
featured on
KMOV St. Louis.



DEBAUN HISTORY OF BLACK ALUMNI EXHIBIT

For Lilli Kayes, Morton J. May Foundation Gallery director and adjunct instructor of art and design; Renelle Spinks, director of diversity and inclusion; and others, building a historical remembrance exhibit for the DeBaun Black Alumni Network seemed like a special way to honor Maryville's rich history. What they didn't know was that their meaningful project would inspire and connect the community.

The group worked in collaboration to create a historical timeline of Black alumni showcasing the University's history of supporting brave students starting with Everlouise Rutledge DeBaun, '58, the first African American graduate.

"Many students didn't know Maryville's Black alumni history, so we showcased it in a way that they could physically experience it," said Kayes. She designed the display in chronological order, beginning with DeBaun paving the way and then moving through photos of today's many Black students on campus. Students who visited the exhibit in the Morton J. May Foundation Gallery were able to see themselves in Maryville's history and to picture what their future could look like.

"There's a spirit here bringing our past into the light and that we are all together part of this culture and this campus," Kayes said.

Spinks expressed, "It was visually intriguing and impactful to see change at the University starting with DeBaun. Students could walk through the timeline at their own pace and see familiar faces like Lonnie Folks." Folks, '82, '98, is the director of athletics and recreation, leading Maryville's NCAA DII athletics.

Historic Black Alumni Still Inspire Greatness

DeBaun Black Alumni Network continues connecting the Maryville community by telling the stories of its past.

HISTORY THAT RESONATES TODAY

The team expressed that some of their inspiration for the exhibit came from the difficulties current college students have had to overcome post-COVID. After not having a typical high school experience, fitting into a college campus as an adult can be trying. At the exhibit, students could imagine themselves as Everlouise Rutledge DeBaun and experience her bravery. They could see how these leaders fought issues of their time, giving today's students the courage to overcome any challenge.

Students were able to view photos and stories of their great aunts, their grandmothers and Black alumni who made a difference in the culture at Maryville. Guests were moved when they saw the faces and read the stories that they might not have known without the exhibit. They could see the history of the people who helped build the community culture.

INSPIRING MARYVILLE BLACK ALUMNI

One Black alumna who stood out was LaTonia Collins Smith, EdD, '14, Harris-Stowe State University's 21st president and first African American female president. The visual representation of her achievements was an inspiration to students and guests.

Alumna Nada Woods Vaughn, '59, made an impact on the team creating the exhibit. They shared that she participated in theater during her time as a Maryville student and that she continues today working in theater and winning awards for it at 83 years old. The team was inspired that Woods Vaughn is making a difference with impactful productions that translate to younger generations.

Students like Marissa Jones were able to see photos of their own family. Her aunt and grandmother were Black Student Union members in the 1970s and part of the history that's made Maryville the University it is today.



MAKING FACE-TO-FACE CONNECTIONS

Maryville students had a casual mixer with members of the DeBaun Black Alumni Network after the exhibit, and some were shocked by the connections they made. Spinks said students expressed appreciation: "It was so authentic. We had an introductory cultivation that helped students practice and build networking skills. Students met alumni face to face, visualizing their success and knowing, 'I am going to be an alumnus someday.'"

Overwhelmed by the display, alumni began asking for their photos and wanted to connect with other alums. It was a celebration with plans to be continued through the DeBaun Black Alumni Network.

"There's a spirit here bringing our past into the light and that we are all together part of this culture and this campus."

LILLI KAYES, Morton J. May Foundation Gallery director and adjunct instructor of art and design



New Federal Designation for Cybersecurity Program

A “crowning achievement” for Maryville brings opportunities for students.

Maryville students, faculty and alumni are celebrating a new classification establishing the University’s cybersecurity program as a top contender among U.S. institutions of higher education.

Following a rigorous application process, the National Security Agency (NSA) earlier this year designated Maryville as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense (CAE-CD) for its undergraduate program. The approval means the program is now listed as a CAE-CD, a designation awarded to regionally accredited academic institutions offering cybersecurity degrees

and/or certificates at the associate, bachelor’s and graduate levels. The classification makes Maryville a distinguished center of learning for the fast-growing discipline, according to assistant professor of cybersecurity Brian Gant, EdD, ’21.

“It’s definitely a crowning achievement,” Gant said.

Leaders of Maryville’s cybersecurity program, established in 2014, spent several years in pursuit of the designation. It was a thorough process that involved demonstrating best standards and academic excellence — basically showing that “you have to actually be doing what you say you’re doing,” Gant said.

While the application involved many hours of work on the part of those in the cybersecurity program, it also required campuswide dedication.

“It’s not just a commitment involving the curriculum, but also the commitment of the University’s president and the entire institution,” Gant said.

ADDED VALUE FOR STUDENTS

Benefits of the new CAE-CD designation are manifold and include opening access to a network of schools across the nation holding the NSA designation.

Gant said the relationships born out of these connections will boost internship and partnership possibilities.

“To be able to say that you’re at an NSA-designated institution boosts your chances for positions,” Gant said. “Even when the curriculum is already there, the classification increases confidence in a university.”

Cybersecurity major Reed Huskey, ’23, was involved in the NSA application, participating in interviews and working with a mentor.

“The classification demonstrates that our material is robust and changes to keep up with the ever-evolving world of cybersecurity,” Huskey said.

Huskey interned for Caterpillar Inc., where he now serves as a security operations center analyst. Huskey said the CAE-CD designation puts a federal stamp of approval on the program, which already attracts high-caliber professors who work in the field.

“These professors give you a good feel for which area of cybersecurity you’re interested in and how that translates into an actual career,” Huskey said. “That’s a big benefit for students.”



“The classification demonstrates that our material is robust and changes to keep up with the ever-evolving world of cybersecurity.”

BRIAN GANT, EdD, assistant professor of cybersecurity

Like Huskey, Jada Turner, ’23, feels lucky to have learned so much about the professional realm through her instructors. Calling herself an “overthinker,” Turner said instructors welcomed her frequent questions, something she believes will make her a better employee when she begins working after graduation at Emerson Electric Co. as a cloud security analyst.

Even though Drew Klauser, ’20, ’21, graduated before the University earned its CAE-CD classification, his degree will reflect the elevated status because it’s based on the curriculum in place during his time at Maryville.

In his job as a security analyst for Boston-based ezCater, Klauser’s responsibilities include hiring.

“Being an NSA-accredited school carries a lot of weight,” Klauser said. Similarly, prospective students will quickly find Maryville when they search for an NSA-designated program.

MASTER’S PROGRAM ALMOST READY TO APPLY

Cybersecurity employees work to protect an organization’s networks, devices and data.

Many jobs involve addressing security incidents, testing for potential threats or working on risk management, policy and governance.

When people hear the word “cybersecurity,” they often think of Microsoft, Google or Facebook. But you’ll find cybersecurity professionals working in every industry.

“Every organization has a computer network,” Gant said. “From the federal government to retail.”

According to Cyber Seek, there are 65 cybersecurity professionals — most of them already employed — for every 100 job postings. The demand is also evidenced by the success of Maryville cybersecurity graduates, 98% of whom have positive career outcomes. Many succeed with a bachelor’s degree alone, but earning a master’s prepares cybersecurity professionals for important certifications and can add to their lifetime earnings, according to Cliff Wilke, PhD, Maryville graduate cybersecurity instructor and program coordinator.

“We’re proud to have achieved this designation,” Wilke said. “We have a great program, and receiving this designation is another cornerstone that brings opportunities for Maryville students.”



MARYVILLE RECEIVES MILITARY FRIENDLY® SCHOOL DESIGNATION

Institutions earning the Military Friendly® School designation were evaluated using both public data sources and responses from a proprietary survey. More than 1,800 schools participated in the 2023–2024 survey, with 665 earning special awards for going above the standard.

“We have earned Silver Status for the second year in a row,” said Andrew Gates, veteran services specialist at Maryville University. “We are proud to have earned this honor, as it’s a direct reflection of the hard work we do in the Division of Operational Excellence and throughout Maryville to provide a student-centered approach for our veteran service members and dependents.”

Maryville offers a supportive environment with flexible online and campus offerings to serve active-duty service members, veterans, reservists, guardsmen, retirees and dependents.



ANDREW GATES, veteran services specialist



Maryville Celebrates a Decade with Rawlings

Commemorating a partnership that's changed the face of sport business.



For over 10 years, Rawlings Sporting Goods and Maryville University have cultivated an unparalleled educational partnership, allowing Maryville University students to gain valuable industry experience and build relationships.

In 2008, the sport business management program at Maryville University was established as part of the John E. Simon School of Business. But in 2013, the program made a change that would significantly impact its current and future students: It became the Rawlings Sport Business Management (RSBM) program, the first corporately named sport business management program in the country.

"We began working together simply by doing things that helped each other," said Jason Williams, EdD, '14, program director and assistant dean of the John E. Simon School of Business. "A decade later, we're still providing high-quality research assistance to Rawlings, as well as volunteers and interns, and they continue to work closely with our students to help them develop professionalism and job-ready skills."

10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY EXTRAVAGANZA

On Feb. 1, 2023, the 10-year anniversary celebration took place at Busch Stadium. It was a frosty evening, but the cold temperatures still yielded a great turnout to the event. It was held at the Redbird Club, a spacious locale filled with the spirit of the St. Louis Cardinals and teaming with festive décor.

As the presentation began, more than 180 guests huddled around the tables, smiling, handshaking and ready to celebrate award winners as well as hear from the key people that made this all happen. The event kicked off with warm introductions, followed by a brief speech from Maryville University President Mark Lombardi on the importance of corporate partnerships in higher education.

Lombardi recognized Williams and the rest of the faculty and staff at Maryville for their tireless support, and he introduced Mike Zlaket, president and CEO of Rawlings Sporting Goods.

"This is a perfect example of how collegiate curriculum and corporate partnerships should work. Designed to get learners involved, engaged and actively working in the field doing wonderful things by partnering with a company that is enlightened and visionary enough to embrace it," Lombardi said. "For over 10 years, significant work has been done by our students, by the great people at Rawlings, by everyone; it never would have happened if not for the great leadership of Jason Williams and the amazing work our faculty, staff, students and all of the employees at Rawlings."

Zlaket lauded the program's curriculum, practicality and fantastic end results. He attributed the success of the program to the in-depth curriculum; its practicality of focusing on professional outcomes; and the dedication of faculty, staff and students alike.

ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

After 10 years, the partnership is stronger than ever. Some Rawlings executives are adjunct professors in the program, and others are guest speakers for classes. They offer career development opportunities, including internships specifically developed for Maryville students. They also provide elite gear and equipment for the University's softball and baseball programs.

The strong partnership with Rawlings gives Maryville students access to work on real-life projects related to product design, innovation and market research. The strength of combining real-world experience along with data-focused approaches has helped set the standard in the advancement of sport business education and provides students access to unique opportunities. Students analyze and interpret data related to player performance, fan behavior, marketing and other areas.

In addition to the strong partnership with its namesake, Williams and program faculty have developed relationships with other organizations in the sports industry — like the Missouri Valley Conference, the St. Louis Cardinals, Peak Sports, Anheuser-Busch and many other industry organizations. "The sport business industry is our classroom," Williams said. Through

these partnerships, there are countless opportunities for RSBM students to volunteer and intern while earning their degree. This year alone, RSBM students had more than 50 volunteer opportunities within the sports industry, including rare hands-on experiences working major events for top-tier brands across the country.

Countless Maryville students have interned with Rawlings over the past 10 years, with many hired full time after graduation.

"Rawlings has benefited from our strong partnership with Maryville in myriad ways, from receiving professional-level product and brand research and invaluable support at industry events to having direct access to the most talented students for internship and full-time positions," said Ron Ostrowski, president of Rawlings. 

▼ From left, alumnus Rob Maruska, '12, celebrated with the program's director, Jason Williams.



MILESTONES: CELEBRATING PARTNERSHIP

- 2009**
Creation of the Sport Business Management Program
- 2010**
Official internship provider for the Texas vs. the Nation Bowl
- 2013**
Naming of Rawlings Sport Business Management program
- 2014**
Launched the Samantha Robison Career and Networking Event
- 2017**
Launched program's study abroad program
- 2018**
Students worked the 100th PGA Championship
- 2019**
Students worked the SEC Men's Basketball Championship and NCAA Men's Basketball Regional Tournament
- 2019**
Creation of multifaceted partnership between the program, Peak Sports and Rawlings Sporting Goods
- 2020**
Students worked the NHL All-Star Game
- 2021**
Expand access of program to online learners
- 2022**
Relationship begins with CBS Sports
- 2023**
Celebrated 10th year of the Samantha Robison Career and Networking Event and 15th year of the Missouri Valley Conference partnership



'Faith as a Complex Ecosystem'

Kyra N. Krakos, associate professor of biology and director of the sustainability program at Maryville University, teaches us that, yes, you can pet a bee, and science is a mix of how and why.

Kyra Krakos, PhD, stepped out of her element with a personal chapter in the new book *Every Needful Thing*. The book is a culmination of successful working women who are scholars in their fields writing about their faith. When asked to participate, Krakos, a scientist with a theology minor, leaned on her experience and her own spiritual journey. Her chapter is personal, and the book celebrates the uniqueness of these brave women, including a collaboration from each author on the cover art. Pollinators and plants represent her scholarship.

For Krakos, it took courage to publicly share her personal beliefs. To her, scientific writing is feeling strongly about data, but this type of personal writing is often challenging. The necessity of her sharing her thought-provoking wisdom is apparent when reading her work.



▲ Kyra N. Krakos is a professor of biology and director of the sustainability program at Maryville University and a research associate at Missouri Botanical Garden.

“‘Science is a how; faith is a why.’ Remember not all parts of your humanity can be measured as quantifiable data. I love my new little son. I am biologically programmed to care for him. One is the how; the other is the why. Which is true? I take joy and solace that both are true,” Krakos wrote in the chapter. She wants students to know that hows and whys are not in conflict, but opportunities.

A pre-med student once came into her office in tears. For her whole life, the student had wanted to be a doctor, but she genuinely felt cut in half between her faith and her studies during a genetics class. Krakos wants students to know that as young adults trying to figure things out for themselves, they can be a doctor and have faith if they debate the how and why — and start studying more. Sharing that there is much still to be learned in all areas of their existence usually calms students. Krakos’ methodology prevents negating science, and she finds it brings deeper understanding and opens space for faith traditions.

“I may not have wisdom to share, but I can be in the place of tension with my students,” Krakos said. “I can empathize with their pain and share the ways that I have learned to live joyfully with unresolved questions.”

She encourages students of all backgrounds to ask questions, research scientific and spiritual works and explore how faith can make them better scientists. M



MYKALE ELBE, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, director of the MSN nurse practitioner program and assistant professor of nursing, gave expert commentary published in several major news outlets on why millennials are racking up more chronic health conditions compared to other generations.



LARAINÉ DAVIS, vice president of community and government relations, was an honoree at the third annual Tribute to Women Business Leaders Brunch held by the Minority Business Development Agency of Missouri.

MONICA C. KLEEKAMP, PhD, CCC-SLP, assistant professor of speech-language pathology, has been awarded the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) 2022 Promising Researcher Award.



JAIME PETERS, DBA, CFA, assistant dean of accounting, finance and economics, and an assistant professor of finance, shared her views on financial literacy programs for children with *Forbes*, housing rates with publications including *The Wall Street Journal* and tipping culture with NBC News. Her thought leadership on the SVB collapse was printed in *USA Today*.

Associate professor of communication **DUSTIN YORK, EdD,** provided expert commentary in several publications, including *Fortune*, on ChatGPT empathy; *USA Today*, on the shifting job market; and *Forbes*, on Twitter changes and Super Bowl advertising.



KENT BAUSSMAN, PhD, professor of sociology, was featured in *Forbes* for his thought leadership on social media and conspiracy theories.

Assistant professor of cybersecurity and program lead for undergraduate cybersecurity, **BRIAN GANT, EdD,** shared insights to Security Info Watch on the risks of sharing your email address.



LEILANI CARVER-MADALON, PhD, program director and associate professor of communication, was featured in *USA Today* with a printed article on social media trends, and her thought leadership on dress codes for female lawmakers inspired additional outlets to further the discussion.

KAREN SCHECHTER, RHIA, MBA, CMPE, director and assistant professor of health care management and health administration programs, provided thought leadership on Medicare plans with major outlets, including CBS News, The Associated Press and Yahoo Finance.



ANTOINETTE BOYD, EdD, director of career success and professional development, shared expert commentary on “The Great Resignation” regret in *Fast Company* and printed in the *Chicago Tribune*.

LIFTING VOICES AND RAISING COMMUNITY

The Maryville University Gospel Choir is singing again, connecting the campus community through music.

BY DARLA FERRARIO

Damon Mitchell, director of e-commerce and business operations, believes you should use your gifts no matter where you are. Playing piano and songwriting are two gifts he's brought to the Maryville community as the sponsor of the Maryville University Gospel Choir.

Mitchell knew from his experience as a pastor and playing piano for gospel choirs that Maryville students needed access to this different type of art form. He asked students

at the annual Involvement Fair if they'd be interested in singing for the choir. Today, the choir is singing at annual events such as the President's Holiday Celebration, Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration and Women Who Dare to Dream Luncheon.

To Mitchell, "It's been joyful. I remember in college thinking about how to make friends and get through the day. A gospel choir is a safe space that makes a difference in students' lives. The looks I see in the choir members' eyes let me know that songs are helping them on a personal level. I am teaching them challenging songs that many of them haven't heard, which stretches them musically. I'm

able to combine a passion of mine with my career. I'm proud that's honored at Maryville."

With her mother as a choir director and her father as a preacher, first-year accounting major Olivia Harris, said, "Gospel music has been a huge part of my life, all of my life." Attending college without a car, she wasn't able to be as actively involved in her church choir. Now, Harris has access to sing in the choir on campus.

"I'm accessing good musical tools when singing with Damon. The Gospel Choir is kind of an outlet for me to meet new people, learn new skills and recognize there are others like me on campus."

During rehearsals, Mitchell asks the group how they're doing mentally, emotionally and academically. Harris believes being part of the choir helps students reduce their anxiety and stress while even helping the brain.

"It's a joy to watch people come out of their shells. In the gospel world, we would call Olivia a 'beast' because she can sing anything. Helping the singers progress and learn their parts is rewarding. And we have lots of laughter at practice," said Mitchell. **M**



▲ Damon Mitchell and the Gospel Choir performing at the Women Who Dare to Dream Luncheon.





ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE,



BY TIM FOX

Artificial intelligence (AI) is all around you. It suggests the movies you might like. It guesses what you mean when you mistype a word. It tells you what other products might interest you. It predicts what the rest of your sentence is going to be when you're drafting an email.

How can today's students become part of this \$120 billion market? And if they're already working in AI, how can they advance their careers?

Maryville University has answered those questions with two online AI programs. Launched in early 2023, they are a Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence and a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Fundamentals of Artificial Intelligence. A third program, a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Advanced Artificial Intelligence, is planned for Fall 2023.

TECHNICAL AND NON-TECHNICAL SKILL BUILDING

"The online learning system is a perfect match for Maryville's active learning ecosystem," said Michael Palmer, instructor of informational systems, software development and entrepreneurship at Maryville. "It allows us to provide hands-on support for students who are completely new to the area, those who are upskilling and those further on in their careers."

For example, non-technical students will gain a better understanding of what AI is, the types of problems it can solve and how to build tools that can tackle those challenges. Technically experienced students will enjoy opportunities to think outside the highly specialized boxes that tech industries often create.

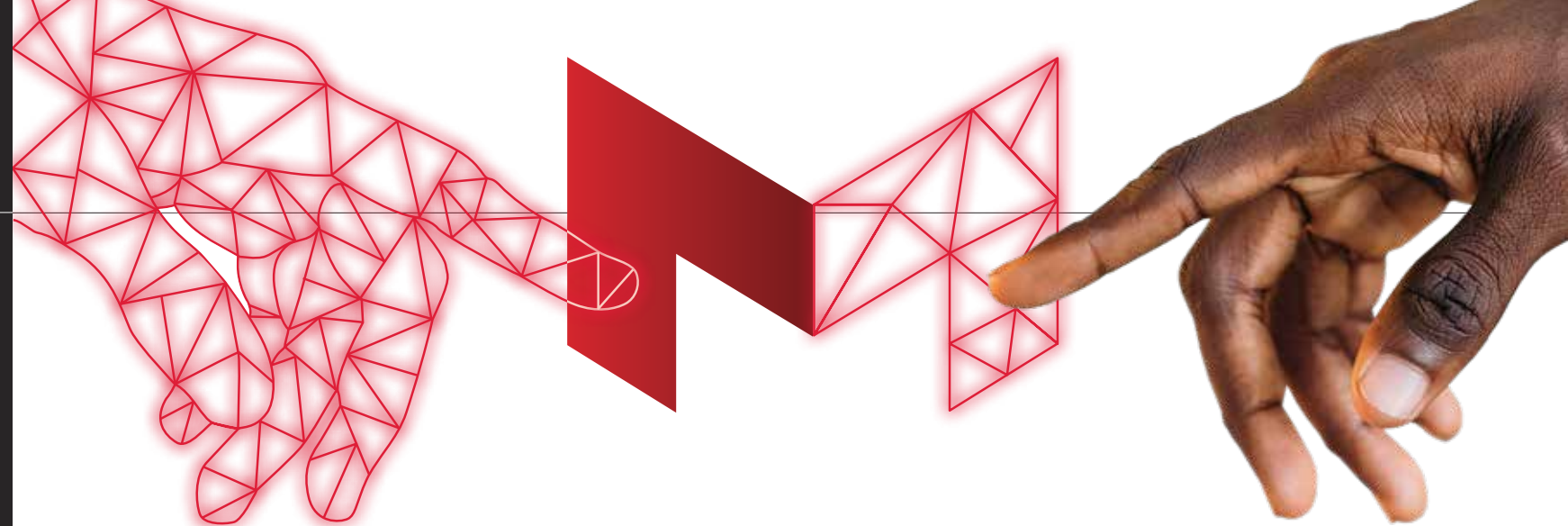
"I want to support my students as much as possible, so every program I build and every course I teach is created to make every student feel welcome," said Palmer, who is also a computer scientist, STEM education expert, and founder and former CEO of Code Red Education, an education software company.

"I want to cultivate their skills from beginning to end, whether that's a single certificate after 15 hours or two certificates or a whole master's degree. Whatever their goal is, that's my aim," he added.

ACCESSIBLE, NIMBLE PROGRAMS

Maryville's online AI programs are as nimble as the industry itself. And that's important because as more businesses start to depend on it for processes from billing to manufacturing, opportunities for AI experts will increase.

"The field has such a variety of applications that you can always build new skills or develop deeper knowledge in certain areas," Palmer said. "But it also has room for career-changers who want to break into the space or gain additional credentialing."



VERY REAL BENEFITS

Maryville's new online AI programs stress technology's practical side.

However, the first step is gaining access to a program that provides flexibility. While online education breaks down access barriers like geography, transportation and work schedules, Maryville's AI programs don't require Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores or application fees. Once enrolled, students can learn software languages such as R, Python and C++; master Jupyter Notebooks, a Python-based interactive development environment; or navigate the Amazon Web Services cloud computing platform.

Malcolm Nichols, '22, now in his first semester of the Master of Artificial Intelligence program, agrees that accessibility and breadth are two of the program's strengths.

"The flexibility is second to none; we have a set schedule to complete, and we do it within our own time," Nichols said. "The online format pushes me to advance further in my knowledge, and the professors make it easier to communicate and ask questions. Plus, the AI classes implement

many characteristics I will work with in my career."

In fact, students will leave the programs with a portfolio of work they can carry from the classroom to the workplace.

"I always want to tether things in the students' 'now,'" Palmer said. "Every student will have three or four pieces of artificial intelligence they can point to and say, 'This model does this, and it can be applied to this problem.' That will help them talk shop and feel more comfortable in their interviews and their classes."

ADVANCING ETHICAL AI


Another of Palmer's passions is AI's ethical aspects. A technology that can appear to make its own decisions and perform millions of computations in milliseconds potentially has a lot of power. He helps students think through the technology's ability to do both great good and great harm.

"In AI, people are just data, they're just numbers," said Palmer. "But the problem

is that behind those numbers are faces. AI is so powerful that we don't necessarily understand the far-reaching ripples that can happen with it.

"You need to think several steps down the line, anticipate problems and then think about how to prevent those problems in your initial design," he continued. "This technology can have drastic impacts on people's lives."

Palmer believes it's more a question of how we will use AI to make our lives better. "We can make AI enhance other aspects of our jobs, not make our jobs go away," he explained. "For example, our life coaches at Maryville use a lot of standardized processes just to enroll a student. If AI can make those processes faster, then life coaches have more time to develop interesting programs and engaging activities."

"Applications like that can really empower us," Palmer concluded. "AI can give us the one resource that no one can re-create — time." 

▲ AI ART: What happens when you ask a text-to-image generator to depict futuristic university students studying technology and predictive data? You might get images like these, which were generated using deepai.org.





◀ Left to right, Meaghan Goodman, Jill Heitzman, Robert Cunningham, Amanda Wick and Fay Fetick hold the Girl Scouts patch.

Patch program expands Girl Scouts' knowledge of health professions.

Exploring HEALTH CARE

BY NANCY FOWLER

For Vice President of Community and Government Relations Laraine Davis, '16, there's no question about the value of her childhood participation in an organization known for cookies, green sashes and community service.

"I would not be the person I am today without Girl Scouts," Davis said.

Now, thanks to Davis and several other faculty and staff, Maryville is giving back to the Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri with a program connecting girls at the Cadette level with the Myrtle E. and Earl E. Walker College of Health Professions. Through the program, the

middle schoolers learn about nursing; physical, occupational and music therapy; and speech-language pathology. After completion, they earn a patch.

The health care education patch program launched in February. Seventy-five Cadettes participated in six nights of sessions held on the Maryville campus with an option to participate virtually.

"The opportunity is twofold," Davis said. "It creates exposure and awareness of these careers as options for the girls. But it also creates access opportunities for future students."

Journey Through the Hospital

The idea for the patch program dawned on Davis after she took a group of Girl Scouts around the Maryville campus. Davis recalled another similar project, a financial education patch, from when she worked as a program manager at Wells Fargo.

"With that in place, we didn't have to completely create something new," Davis said.

Early on, Davis brainstormed the concept with Jill Heitzman, PhD, director of Maryville's physical therapy program, and Mariea Snell, DNP, APRN, FNP-C, director of the doctor of nursing practice programs, who jumped in with their ideas. Fay Fetick, executive director of development and alumni relations, agreed to help make it a reality. Fetick ensured that each girl received a box full of items such as elastic bandages, devices for measuring range of motion, Play-Doh and pictures of musical instruments for hands-on activities.

One presentation featured Dean Michelle Jenkins, PT, DHS, illustrating how different health professions work together. It was inspired by a realistic incident involving a 10-year-old girl who hit her head falling off a bike.

From Jenkins, the Scouts learned how the girl was first greeted by a nurse and then told by a nurse practitioner she needed a CT scan, which revealed some damage.

"The girl needs to be evaluated by a physical therapist and an occupational therapist," Fetick said. "She gets a little anxiety, so a music therapist comes in to help her calm down and feel comfortable with the different therapists. And then a speech-language therapist comes in to evaluate her."

"The idea was to expose them to different careers within the health professions and to have our expert faculty and alumni share more about these careers," Fetick said.

In the first session, Robert Cunningham, OT/L, ATP, assistant dean and director of the OT program, warmed up the crowd with some "dad jokes."

As the girls' nervousness gave way to laughter, Cunningham asked them to list their

"occupations," a word that, in the OT world, means activities such as cleaning house or getting dressed. Handing out 2-liter soda bottles, he asked them to take a long shoestring out of their box to create a sock aid, a device that helps patients pull up their socks. Using Play-Doh, he showed them what it feels like to try and strengthen their fingers.

Cunningham said, "I wanted to show them that occupational therapists either try to fix the problem — as with the Play-Doh — or make use of adaptive equipment like the sock aid."

Cunningham explained that occupational therapists can work in numerous places, such as school systems or even own their own business. He brought in Lisa Cooseman, OTR/L, MA, '00, '22, owner of the St. Louis-area Leaps and Bounds, a therapy center serving children.

"I wanted them to see all the different opportunities," Cunningham said. "To see anything that helps them become more interested in careers that involve science and math."

"Everybody Was up and Moving"

Cunningham said it's important to reach girls before high school so they'll have time to take enough science and math. Having their eye on a specific goal like the health professions is critical in this regard, said PT program director Heitzman. But, as with occupational therapy, physical therapy might not be part of a young girl's life.

One of the most enlightening parts of the PT session involved a "brain cap." In their boxes, the Cadettes found a colorful

▲ Middle schoolers in the program engaged with health care professionals representing fields such as physical and occupational therapy.

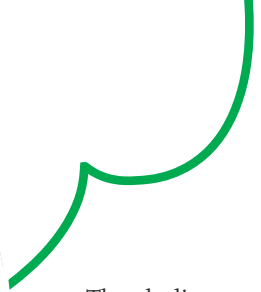
map of the brain, suitable for cutting and placing on their heads. Through the activity, they learned how injuries to specific parts of the brain affect things like telling time, knowing where your body is in space and the ability to name objects. A dramatic portion of the lesson involved affixing a brain cap to a cantaloupe, putting the cantaloupe in a helmet and dropping it, demonstrating the impact of a concussion.

Other activities included cutting out paper skeletons, taking one another's vital signs, working with therapy bands, standing on one leg, trying out crutches and walkers, and balancing on balls.

"Everybody was up and moving," Heitzman said.

The session also involved listening to speakers, including a physical therapist who entered the field after a dance injury and another whose career has focused on the geriatric population. The girls learned that PTs work with all ages and that they may be employed by any number of organizations and businesses, including manufacturing plants.





The playlists helped Wick demonstrate a core music therapy principle, ISO, in which music gradually shifts someone’s mood, especially important for patients who might otherwise have difficulty adjusting their moods.

“The exercise also helped build our relationship quickly because I knew a lot of the songs they mentioned,” Wick said. “And so it gave room for understanding and connection, which is directly related to music therapy because we use the music to connect in some way.”

Wick took out her guitar to demonstrate the stress-inducing effect of “Theme from Jaws” and calming impact of songs like “You Are My Sunshine.” But just as in actual music therapy, talking about music with the Cadettes revealed that not everyone agrees which music lends itself to a particular mood. For example, one participant reported that heavy metal calms her rather than ramps her up.

One of the points Wick strived to make is that learning music therapy and working in the field is a multifaceted experience. “I made it pretty clear to them that there’s a lot of theory and evidence-based practices,” Wick said. “At the same time, there’s a lot of room for creativity.”

Crystal Weaver, CRC, MT-BC, ’04, ’10, director of the music therapy program, lauds the program for its potential to not only benefit the girls and Maryville University but also a wider community.

“It’s about inspiring the next generation of music therapists, nurses, and physical and occupational and speech-language therapists,” Weaver said. “And I think that is our calling as an academic institution, to really secure the future of health professions.”

“Great to Hear the Different Stories”

Many of the Maryville faculty and staff participating in the health education patch program are former Girl Scouts, including Meaghan Goodman, PhD, CCC-SLP, director of Maryville’s speech-language pathology program.

As Goodman worked with the Cadettes to demonstrate techniques and devices such as speech facilitation software, she thought back fondly on her own youth.

“From Brownie to Cadette, I enjoyed my time in the Scouts, thoroughly. In fact, I attribute many of my accomplishments to what I learned as a Girl Scout,” Goodman said. “So when asked if I would be interested in helping to develop the patch, I was so excited that I literally jumped out of my seat and dug my Girl Scout vests out of storage!”

During the February sessions, one of Goodman’s vests adorned a skeleton meant to familiarize the Cadettes with the bones of the body.

Snell, director of nursing practice programs, who achieved the Girl Scouts Gold Award, also leaped at the idea of a patch program. Snell came up with the idea for a hand-washing exercise.

The Cadettes found in their boxes a bottle of hand-washing liquid designed to leave

glow-in-the-dark traces of the germs left behind after a typical washing. After an initial washup, they put their hands under a black light to reveal a multitude of germs, then washed again.

“And what always happens is their wrists will still light up like a Christmas tree because no one washes that area,” Snell said. “They were excited to take it home and show their friends.”

As the girls learned to put on sterile gloves and bandaged one another’s ankles, the nursing portion emphasized the same kind of active learning as the other sessions. “I think they appreciated being able to dig into something,” Snell said.

That was the case for 12-year-old Cadette Aubrey Dalton, who is now considering nursing and OT as possible careers.

“My favorite activity was the germ one during nursing,” Dalton said. “But the sock aid activity with occupational therapy was really fun, too.”

Her mother, Nicole Dalton, appreciated the activities and information about educational requirements for each field, as well as the personal anecdotes told by the Maryville presenters.

“It was great to hear the different stories behind each professional and how they got where they are,” she said. “The girls saw that there isn’t just one way to get there.”

“No Reason It Can’t Go National”

Davis, a member of the Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri board of directors for six years, envisions the health education patch program growing and expanding. She hopes the recorded sessions can be used for ongoing virtual classes.

Her ultimate goal for the health education patch is to expand it into a badge program.

“The difference between a patch and a badge is that a badge is for a national program,” Davis said. “Because our program has online access, there’s no reason it can’t go national.”

In addition to the Girl Scouts program, Maryville will host a four-day summer camp



▲ Girl Scouts participating in the patch program for Speech Language Pathology had fun with Dr. Goodman’s personal vests from her time as a Cadette.

◀ Each Cadette received a box of items to enhance the hands-on learning experience, shown here with Amanda Wick, Meaghan Goodman, Fay Fetick and Robert Cunningham.

for any ninth and 10th graders to teach them about health professions.

The camp and the Girl Scouts patch program, both of which reach out to a wider community, could potentially increase diversity in the health education professions, Davis said.

“That’s an important component of this,” she said. “So that when people use these therapies, they’re served by folks like them.”

She is profoundly grateful to Maryville President Mark Lombardi for supporting the Girl Scouts health education patch program.

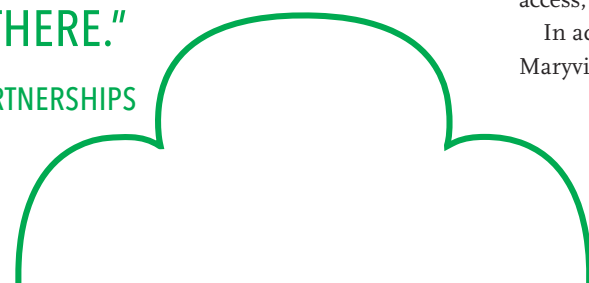
“When I come to him with my ideas, he always has faith in me,” Davis said. “This patch program would not have happened without his full endorsement.”

Davis believes that for every Girl Scout who participates in the patch program, there is one more girl who might consider a career in health professions.

“And that’s critical to the growth of Maryville University,” Davis said. “The more awareness we can create, the more we can fulfill some of our most important goals: access and opportunity.” 

“IT WAS GREAT TO HEAR THE DIFFERENT STORIES BEHIND EACH PROFESSIONAL AND HOW THEY GOT WHERE THEY ARE. THE GIRLS SAW THAT THERE ISN’T JUST ONE WAY TO GET THERE.”

NICOLE DALTON, GIRLS SCOUTS OF EASTERN MISSOURI, DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS



Advocating for ADOPTION

Recent Maryville MBA graduate Marcy Bursac is using her business savvy, IT skills and natural determination to help make the world a better place, one adopted child or sibling group at a time.

BY JOSEPH HUNTER

Marcy Bursac, '23, is a woman of many stories. This one starts at an orphanage in Moldova. Bursac was fresh out of her undergraduate studies and looking to discover her calling in life. Through her church, she found a weeklong mission opportunity working with orphaned teenage girls in one of Western Europe's most impoverished countries. It was a transformative experience for her.

"They were at the orphanage not because they had no family," she said. "Their families actually dropped them off there — and they were dropped because the family couldn't care for their basic needs. They couldn't feed them."

From the first moments visiting the orphanage and throughout her career, Bursac has seen firsthand how disadvantaged and dangerous life can be for children who don't have a family to raise them. Many struggle throughout childhood, she said, and those who age out of the system without finding a forever family are at extreme risk of abuse, imprisonment or worse.

"I remember coming back from that trip," she said, "and just having a moment of, 'I am going to adopt children. I'm going to go find kids just like the girls I just met, and I want to do something to really make that not repeat itself.'"

It's easy to connect the dots between that trip and Bursac's life today. Now a St. Louis resident and Maryville University

► Marcy Bursac, pictured with her family, said the adoption process was at times difficult and frustrating, but it ultimately was one of the most rewarding and defining times in her life.



online Master of Business Administration (MBA) graduate, Bursac has dedicated her life to helping kids in need. She is a proud adoptive mom of two; a congressionally honored foster care adoption advocate and coach; a philanthropist; a two-time book author; and the founder and CEO of The Forgotten Adoption Option, a charitable organization focused on helping children waiting in foster care find adoptive families. She also acts as creator, host, author and designer of the organization's related podcast, books, blog and app. Last year, she was named United States of America's Mrs. Ohio 2022 after entering the pageant in partnership with the Dave Thomas

Foundation for Adoption to promote foster care adoption.

That's all on top of her day job as a technical analyst and product owner at a national cybersecurity firm.

One spark of interest lit a fire of adoption advocacy that has changed lives across countless families: Through philanthropy, outreach and personal counseling, Bursac has dedicated herself to helping connect children in need with loving families.

"Keep your eye and your heart on these kids," she said. "All you have to do is muster through that process and you can become their forever family. So, that's the big picture of all the pieces."

“I know that I’m going to be able to continue to make a significant impact in my own country and around the globe — simply because I said ‘yes’ to a program that taught me well beyond the online classroom, things that apply to my life.”

Marcy Bursac, '23



Building Bonds and Stronger Families

Adoption is, by its nature, a family affair. So when Bursac met her future husband, Nathan, she was sure to broach the topic early in their relationship.

“I saw a need,” she said, “and I thought he’d say, ‘Well great, let’s break up,’ or something like, ‘This is a terrible idea. How dare you?’ or ‘I don’t even want kids anyway.’ But instead, he said, ‘I’m 100% on board with you.’”

As it turned out, adoption was close to Nathan’s heart, too. His great uncle, great aunt and grandfather, Sam, were orphaned as children in the 1920s in St. Louis when their parents both died of pneumonia.

While the other two were taken in and adopted by a family who needed help on their farm, Nathan’s grandfather never found a family. Instead, he lived a tough life struggling with homelessness, hunger and crime.

The couple’s relationship with adoption led them to focus their efforts on older children — as opposed to infants or toddlers — in the United States. It initially proved more difficult than they had hoped.

“We couldn’t find information,” Bursac said. “We could find out about infant adoption. We could find out about adopting children from other countries, but I couldn’t figure out how to adopt an older kid in the U.S.”

The process took years. But when things finally started moving — once they learned about adoption through foster care — it was a whirlwind. After a promising lead fell through, Marcy and Nathan decided to eat their feelings, but before Nathan even made it home from the store, Marcy learned through an email that their lives were about to change.

“While he was at the store, I messaged and said, ‘When you get home, be ready for anything,’” she said. “And he was like, ‘What is anything?’”

In her inbox, Bursac learned about a pair of siblings within her state — 3 and 4 years old — who needed a family quickly. There were no photos, and only a little bit of basic information was available, but time was limited. Nathan wanted to sleep on it, but Bursac reminded him that their social worker would have to do a lot to prepare their application on such short notice.

“The deadline was actually the next day, so we didn’t have the time to wait,” Bursac said. “Typically what happens is it’s a monthslong process.”

The next week, they learned they had been approved and chosen, and just two days later, they took the five-hour car ride to meet the sibling pair. The process of going from fostering to the adoption hearing was at times difficult and frustrating, but ultimately it was one of the most rewarding and defining times in Bursac’s life.



▲ Bursac credits part of her aptitude for remote, cross-country action and communication to what she learned working toward her MBA at Maryville. Initially, she chose Maryville’s program because the online format and eight-week courses gave her the flexibility to study around her schedule. However, she found that the structure also helped build her confidence, prepare her for online and tech-based interaction, and open doors to new opportunities.

A Loving Future for Thousands of Children

If it’s not clear by now, Bursac is never complacent. She sees that a better world is possible, and she’s determined to help build it.

The ups and downs of foster care adoption only inspired Bursac to do more. She channeled all the frustration and joy she experienced into creating The Forgotten Adoption Option, an effort to connect with and help other current and future adoptive parents.

“That led into a blog,” Bursac said. “Then all of a sudden, I was coaching families in my living room. The COVID-19 pandemic hit, and those conversations couldn’t happen in my home anymore. So we shifted to Zoom for a little bit, and it opened this big door: I don’t have to just

coach families that are local. I can coach families across the country.”

Part of Bursac’s aptitude for remote, cross-country action and communication stemmed from what she learned working toward her MBA. Initially, she chose Maryville’s program because the online format and eight-week courses gave her the flexibility to study around her schedule. However, she found that the structure also helped build her confidence, prepare her for online and tech-based interaction, and open doors to new opportunities.

“The MBA is such a powerful mechanism for catapulting my career,” she said. “I have no idea what’s next, but I do know that it’s something that’s going to be highly aligned with my passions. I know that I’m going to be able to continue to make a significant impact in my own country and around

the globe — simply because I said ‘yes’ to a program that taught me well beyond the online classroom, things that apply to my life.”

Bursac’s efforts with The Forgotten Adoption Option extend far beyond personal consultation now — although she’s still happy to talk eager parents through the process. Through the organization, she now hosts a monthly podcast, runs an app that helps people navigate the sometimes challenging and paperwork-dense adoption process, and published two books that have reached some 4,000 families.

“As my daughter likes to say, ‘Well, Mom, if all of them adopt two kids like you did, that’s 8,000 kids,’” she said. “I like to think of it that way.” 🍷



BUILDING STEM SKILLS

Maryville LEGO grant is helping hundreds of children develop STEM, language and social skills.

BY NANCY FOWLER

When you walk into any kindergarten or first grade classroom at Wyland Elementary School in north St. Louis County, you'll likely see dozens of busy hands creating elaborate LEGO structures. But the children aren't just playing. They're mastering STEM and other skills through a Maryville University project.

The LEGO Foundation grant Playful Engineering Based Learning Project (PEBL) is a revolutionary concept using DUPLO, the larger version of traditional LEGO bricks. It was conceived as a way to help elementary students who missed out on in-person educational opportunities during the pandemic.

The PEBL grant is part of the Maryville University Center for Access and Achievement (CA²). Led by Executive Director Steve Coxon, PhD, professor of education, CA² focuses on six underserved school districts in north St. Louis County, including Ritenour, where Wyland Elementary is located, and the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Center in East St. Louis, Illinois.

The grant provides each of the eight Wyland classrooms with a huge array of DUPLO pieces: bricks, building accessories, a collection of human figures and three mats. The 54-inch vinyl mats offer topographical features such as rivers, lakes and fields as a foundation for children's imaginations and emerging skills.

"This project really matches what Maryville is about," said Wyland's principal, Lisa Greenstein, EdD, '10. "It's very hands-on, active learning."

ENCOURAGING STUDENTS IN EVERY ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL REALM

The \$250,000 PEBL grant, launched at Wyland in Fall 2022, uses the Learning Through Play model of child development. Through a combination of free play and instruction, children are guided by trained, attuned teachers.

"A teacher might say, 'We're going to build a shape with the most rectangles possible today,'" Greenstein said. "Or 'We're going to build this shape that can roll, using the least amount of pieces.'"

There's no right or wrong in the process, she said. Every tumbled tower offers opportunities to talk about what to do differently next time.

Teaching tools include cards featuring pictures of specific DUPLO buildings, animals and vehicles such as ambulances, which students work to replicate. As kids count dots to figure out where to attach the DUPLO bricks, the activity helps them learn to follow instructions while also teaching math skills. Incorporating DUPLO pulleys and levers engages kids with science and engineering. Creating homes, schools, neighborhoods and communities provides lessons in social studies.

Learning through DUPLO play is a good fit for a wide variety of children, including English-language learners and those with autism, Greenstein said. She was excited to see physical variations in the DUPLO people, especially important at a school like Wyland, which has a racially diverse student population.

"Not only do the DUPLO figures look diverse, they have very diverse jobs, from construction worker to doctor," Greenstein said. "Which reflects Maryville's commitment to inclusion."

First-year Wyland kindergarten teacher Madison Neil, '22, '23, remembers how excited she was to hear about the program. "I jumped on it," Neil said. "I was like, 'Yes, we need those LEGOs!'"

For Neil's many students who missed out on preschool because of the pandemic, this is their first time in a school setting. As PEBL activities help the children learn STEM and other academic skills, they also foster social and emotional learning in a cooperative environment.

"One child may see another child with something and say, 'No, that's my toy,'" Neil said. "And we're going to learn we need to say, 'I'm sorry; it's my turn first and then afterward you can play, too.'"

The mats encourage creativity and learning, Neil said. One featuring an ocean recently led to an unexpected science lesson after a student wondered about what animals live there, and the class began researching ocean animals. "Which was all new because since they live in Missouri, there's no ocean nearby," Neil said.

“This project really matches what Maryville is about. It’s very hands-on, active learning.”

— WYLAND PRINCIPAL LISA GREENSTEIN, '10

A DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF LEGO AND LEARNING STYLES


The PEBL grant comes through the LEGO Foundation in partnership with the Tufts Center for Engineering Education and Outreach. Karen Engelkenjohn was a natural choice as PEBL's program director. As a now-retired teacher of gifted children, Engelkenjohn guided students through 23 years of national competitions through the First LEGO League. Even in her own time, Engelkenjohn is devoted to the brightly colored plastic bricks. She's a member of Adult Fans of LEGO and the Gateway LEGO Users Group, another organization strictly for those 18 and over.

As she envisioned the nuts and bolts of PEBL, Engelkenjohn drew upon her personal knowledge of what it's like to manage a classroom of young children.

"I tried to design it so they could work the project into concepts they're already teaching," she said. "I didn't want to develop a program they weren't going to be able to fit into their day."

In cooperation with the education arm of LEGO, Engelkenjohn is developing more learning activities. She's also creating additional training videos to ensure teachers engage with students, set objectives and ask open-ended questions.

Since its inception, between 500 and 1,000 children have taken part in PEBL activities, including students in Wyland classrooms as well as children who participated in an event at the Saint Louis Science Center. Going forward, Engelkenjohn would like to see many more kids benefit. As she looks toward the future of PEBL, Engelkenjohn said one reason it's so effective is because it dovetails with how kids naturally enjoy learning.

"Children love building," Engelkenjohn said. "When you present them with a hands-on, touch-it, build-it, problem-solving activity, they respond and they're engaged." 



After 19 years of illustrious service to Maryville University, Dr. Nina Caldwell, EdD, was recently named to the role of Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The University has made great strides in this area over the past decade and a half, but much work remains. Dr. Caldwell has been one of the stalwart champions of DEI at Maryville and across the St. Louis area, and she is ready to continue being a trusted partner and leader for our community.

DEDICATED TO DEI



► What are your goals for your new role?

My primary goal is to ensure that our institution becomes a model for diversity and inclusion in higher education. I will work with our campus community and community partners to develop and implement a comprehensive plan that supports our strategic plan, The Access and Opportunity Revolution: Maryville 2030.

One of my key priorities will be to promote culture competence and awareness across the entire University community. This will include working with faculty, staff and students to ensure that everyone is equipped with the necessary tools and knowledge to interact effectively with individuals from different backgrounds and cultures. By promoting diversity, equity and inclusion, we will not only enrich the educational experience for our students but also enhance the value and reputation of our institution in the community and beyond.

► Tell us about the progress Maryville has made in the DEI space to date.

Our president, Dr. Mark Lombardi, has lead the way in placing a strong emphasis on the importance of DEI for the campus community at all levels, and we have made great strides. Our strategic plan is a prime example that exemplifies our commitment to DEI and the value that Maryville has for this very important work.

Maryville has walked the walk year after year and has shown up in a number of spaces to demonstrate our commitment to DEI. We have increased our efforts with cultural programs and celebrations, professional development, diversity trainings, establishing best practices, and

increasing our community partnerships. The campus community has become more diverse among faculty, staff and students. Maryville has received the HEED Award multiple years from Insight Into Diversity and other national awards for the work that we are doing.

► How did this new role come about for you?

DEI has always been a part of my work and my life. I am passionate about stepping into spaces and seeing how they can become more diverse, equitable and inclusive. I have enjoyed my 19 years at Maryville leading the Division of Student Life, where most of my time was focused on creating an active and vibrant campus community and developing programs and services to enhance the student experience with a focus on DEI. During one of my one-on-one meetings with Dr. Lombardi, we discussed the possibility of me transitioning into this new role and leading the University's DEI initiatives. My passion for this work closely aligns with Maryville's path forward, so I am honored to have been given the opportunity to serve in this new role and look forward to bringing my passion, commitment and expertise to bear.

► What makes Maryville stand out in the higher education space?

We are bold and unapologetic about our commitment to DEI and the Access and Opportunity Revolution within higher education. At Maryville, it starts at the top. We have a leader in Dr. Lombardi, who uses his voice and platform to emphasize the importance of this work; he sets the tone.

An expectation has been established, and that has resulted in a culture of accountability. Staying on track means having outcomes that are measurable.


► What does the Maryville community need to know about our diversity and inclusion efforts?

The University is dedicated to DEI and will continue our commitment toward serving our campus and broader community. We will be present and intentional as a leader in this space and continue to make DEI a priority by rolling up our sleeves to do the work that is required. Maryville will continue to strive to make a difference and impact in society, to shine a light on the importance of access and opportunity.

► What are your hopes for Maryville over the next 5-10 years?

My hope is that the University will continue to make strides with our DEI initiatives. I want our social justice roots to grow stronger and deeper, and I wish to play a big role in the University's efforts to work collectively and make a lasting impact.

► What support systems do our students most benefit from?

Students thrive when they're part of a campus community that truly values DEI and focuses on the importance of learning, growing and celebrating diversity. Maryville is a community that is dedicated to allocating resources and creating spaces that foster and embrace diversity throughout campus. 



M ATHLETICS HIGHLIGHTS



WOMEN'S LACROSSE

Qualified for the NCAA DII Tournament for the first time in program history.



Head coach Melissa Gyllenborg was named GLVC Coach of the Year.

ESPORTS

League of Legends qualified for the CLoL National Championship. League of Legends became the first college team in history to qualify for the NACL. Overwatch became CECC and NACE National Champions.



WOMEN'S GOLF

First-year golfer Isabel Chaidez qualified as an individual for the NCAA East Regional Tournament.

MEN'S GOLF

Qualified for the NCAA Midwest/Central Regional Tournament and, after finishing 3rd out of 20 teams, qualified for the NCAA DII National Tournament.



SOFTBALL

Taylor Shingler earned a CSC Academic All-District nod for winning on the field and in the classroom.



WOMEN'S BOWLING

Qualified for the NCAA Championship for the first time in program history with Coach Lauren Pate being named Great Lakes Valley Conference (GLVC) Coach of the Year and NCAA DII National Coach of the Year.



BASEBALL

Earned the program's first NCAA Tournament bid in DII.

ST. LOUIS SOCCER HALL OF FAME INAUGURAL LORI CHALUPNY AWARD

The St. Louis Soccer Hall of Fame has renamed the Outstanding St. Louis Soccer Player of the Year award to The Chalupny Award after Maryville University's head women's soccer coach.

Lori Chalupny Lawson is a St. Louis native and member of the 2008 U.S.A. Summer Olympics

gold-medal soccer team, where she scored a goal in a 4-2 victory over Japan in the semifinals. She also won the 2015 World Cup in Canada with the U.S. Women's National Team and played as a midfielder with the Chicago Red Stars of the National Women's Soccer League.

Last season, Chalupny led the Maryville Saints women's soccer team in making University history by becoming the first team to win the Great Lakes Valley Conference Championship and earned the program's first NCAA Tournament bid.

The 2023 Chalupny Award is awarded to Saint Louis University's junior defender from St. Louis, Lyndsey Heckel. The St. Louis Soccer Hall of Fame Induction Banquet was held March 31 at Union Station before more than 800 soccer fans.



a long, beautiful RIDE

Equine-assisted therapy program with important Maryville connections marks 25 years.

BY NANCY FOWLER

A life-changing organization with deep ties to Maryville University is celebrating a milestone anniversary. Twenty-five years ago, Marita and Rick Wassman co-founded Ride On St. Louis, an equine-assisted services program benefiting people with disabilities and health challenges through interactions with horses.

When the couple met at Maryville in 1980, Rick Wassman, '81, was drawn to his wife's caring and passionate spirit. "She was always into volunteering and helping people," he said.

After they married, Rick Wassman was transferred to Houston, where his wife worked with a therapeutic horsemanship organization the couple discovered through former Maryville athletic director Bill Heitholt, who also lived there. At the time, these services were a brand-new concept.

"And I thought, 'Oh, my goodness, this is really what I want to do,'" Marita Wassman said.

Today, Ride On St. Louis serves between 80 and 200 people a year and has a waiting list of more than 100. Clients include children, youth, veterans and other adults. Through horseback riding and caring for the animals and their quarters, participants have found purpose, physical strength and language.

Rick Wassman, who takes care of the business end of the nonprofit, said there's no greater joy than in witnessing those moments.

"It's the spark that keeps everything going; it's magical," he said.

The support of Maryville alumni and students plays a big part in the success of Ride On St. Louis, which receives 60% of its funding from private contributions.

"The Maryville connection starts with Marita and I meeting there," Rick Wassman

said. "And I can give you 200 names of people from that time who've kept in touch over the years and helped us grow and develop this organization."

One of them is current Maryville athletic director Lonnie Folks, '82, who recently attended a fundraiser. Folks will never forget listening to the parents of clients talk about how Ride On helped their children in practical ways while also infusing their lives with meaning.

"My wife and I looked at each other like, 'Can you believe how incredible this is?'" Folks said. "We made a pledge that night to support the organization."

Sue Crawford, '83, felt a similar pull a few years ago. "There are so many charities, and if not for Maryville, I probably wouldn't know about Ride On," Crawford said. "Having and nurturing these Maryville connections is something you can't put a price tag on."

Dozens of students have also volunteered their time, often as part of the annual Maryville Reaches Out day. In her junior and senior years, Angela Layton, '19, helped with chores such as cleaning stables. She fell in love with Ride On and its staff, which includes physical and occupational therapists. Now, in her job as a nurse, Layton draws on her time at Ride On to help her own patients as they work through their limitations.


"The experience was inspiring," Layton said. "I think about it when I encourage them to get up and move and push through, despite their setbacks."

BACK-TO-BACK FLOODING AND THE SEARCH FOR A "FOREVER HOME"

In recent years, Ride On has experienced its own setbacks. The program opened in 1998 at the Wassmans' private residence in south St. Louis County. In 2002, the city of Kimmswick, Missouri, and the Anheuser family estate worked together to provide a space for the internationally recognized program. There, its services expanded for more than a decade.

A series of floods beginning in 2013 forced Ride On to leave the Kimmswick area and relocate to a temporary facility in House Springs, Missouri. But things are looking up as the organization completes a campaign to purchase a "forever home." As the program marks a quarter of a century, the Ride On board of directors is considering several possible locations.

Marita Wassman, whose faith has inspired and anchored her throughout the program's ups and downs, feels optimistic about the future of Ride On.

"Ride On is stronger now than it's ever been," Rick Wassman said. "Over 25 years, we've developed a lot of contacts and relationships with businesses and people, including those from Maryville who help promote us and keep us in the game." 



READ THE FULL STORY ON
MARYVILLE.EDU/MPRESS

New judges named to the bench, an indoor soccer player signs with a pro team and basketball alumni explore the West together.

1960s

1 **Dorothy H. Brooks, '66**, of Punta Gorda, Fla., recently published another book of her poetry, *This Pause, Like Mist Rising* (Main Street Rag Publishing Company).

Jeanne Edwards Hevesy, '67, of St. Louis, has returned to COCA following a break during the COVID-19 pandemic. Jeanne will participate in the Showstoppers performances at Clayton High School for the first time since 2019, during the first two weekends in August.

2 **Joyce Williams Walsh, '67**, of St. Louis, and her husband, Tom, are proud to announce that their



son, Brian C. Walsh, was appointed as a United States bankruptcy judge for the Eastern District of Missouri. An avid Maryville volunteer, Joyce led the charge for the Class of 1967's 50th reunion with the creation of a new tradition in reunion giving to serve as a model for future classes: the 50-Year Scholarship Fund. Her class recently completed its five-year pledge period and has contributed a combined total of over \$150,000 to the Class of 1967 scholarship.

1970s

3 **Carla Martin Fox, '74**, of San Diego, Calif., shares that she will be forever grateful for the excellent nursing education she received at Maryville. Now retired, Fox began her career at St. Vincent's Psychiatric Hospital in North St. Louis, where she became head nurse. She then served as house nursing supervisor at Weldon Springs Psychiatric Hospital for Children in St. Charles, Mo. Fox completed her time in St. Louis as a psychiatric review analyst with Blue Cross, before relocating to San Diego in 1989. In San Diego, Fox served as the department head of utilization management at Charter Psychiatric Hospital, VP of clinical standards at Mental Health Management and a



psychiatric emergency response team clinician, in addition to serving as administrator of her husband's rheumatology clinic practice for 20 years. In retirement, Fox volunteers with the San Diego Police Department as a crisis interventionist and trainer, responding to major incidents (mostly involving an unexpected death) to offer emotional and logistical support for families and citizens in the community. She also volunteers with the Rady Children's Hospital-San Diego NICU as a baby cuddler and comforter.

Carol Klobe Schmidt, '77, of Saint Charles, Mo., has accepted the role of senior vice president,

Ascension, and ministry market executive, Ascension Michigan. Schmidt has spent her career in health care, first working as a registered nurse. She served as vice president, Partnership Services, for Daughters of Charity Health System, one of the health systems that came together in 1999 to form Ascension. She most recently served as senior vice president, Ascension, and chief operating officer for Ascension Medical Group and its clinical initiatives. Prior to her current role, Schmidt was chief operating officer of Clinical & Network Services for Ascension. From 2010 to 2012, she served as chief operating officer for Ascension Sacred Heart in Florida.

Schmidt earned a Master of Health Administration and bachelor's in business from Webster University. She earned an associate degree in nursing from Maryville.

1980s

Jo Jasper Dean, '85, of Chesterfield, Mo., is a graduate of Maryville's John E. Simon School of Business who enjoyed a long career at Brown Shoe Company from her graduation through her retirement. She became a very active community volunteer, which included serving as president of the University's alumni board. During that time, she fell in love with art and finally began creating her own. In summer 2022, she was featured in an exhibit at the Duane Reed Contemporary Art Gallery, which represents local, national and international artists. She is scheduled to participate again during summer 2023 and hopes some of her classmates will come to the exhibit!

Terry Likes, '85, is a tenured full professor and head of the Department of Communication at Mississippi State University. Likes has won over 100 awards and



honors in his career. In television, Likes has worked as a reporter, videographer and play-by-play announcer in Indiana, Kentucky and Tennessee. In radio, his reports have aired on the Tennessee Radio Network, Kentucky News Network and stations in Washington, D.C.; Baltimore; Tampa; St. Louis; and Detroit. Likes earned his doctorate at the University of Kentucky and has a master's degree from Western Kentucky University and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Maryville.

Christopher Green, '89, of Miami, Fla., was appointed to the County Court bench in the 11th Judicial Circuit for Miami-Dade County in December 2022. Green had served as assistant state attorney at the City of Miami Office of the State Attorney since 2000. On Feb. 9, 2023, the City of Miami Commission issued a proclamation declaring the date "Judge Christopher A. Green Day" in the City of Miami, in recognition of his 22 years of service to the Office of the City Attorney and his appointment to the bench. Green previously served as an associate at Cole, White & Billbrough, P.A. He received his bachelor's degree from Maryville and his law degree from Nova Southeastern University, and he was recognized as a Top Government Attorney by the South Florida Legal Guide in 2011 and 2012.

1990s

4 **Laura K. Derickson, '93**, of St. Louis, celebrated her engagement to Greg Ahrens earlier this year. In 2022, she received a promotion at Booksource as the senior copywriter. Derickson is currently pursuing her Master of Business Administration degree.



Gregory "Greg" J. Dannegger, '94, of St. Louis, recently received the Global Chief Actuary Award from his longtime employer, MetLife. Greg is also a longtime member of Maryville's National Leadership Council.

Michael "Trevor" Huffman, '94, of Jacksonville, Ill., has been promoted to president and CEO of Jacksonville Memorial Hospital. Huffman joined the Jacksonville hospital in 1998, starting as coordinator of outreach services, and led its ambulatory services beginning in 2019. He received a bachelor's degree in physical therapy from Maryville, a master's degree in health and physical education from Illinois State University and an executive Master of Business Administration from the University of Missouri – Columbia. He also is a fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives.

Lisa Ann Meyer, '95, has been working at EmpowerMe Wellness since its inception in 2017, and in October 2022, she launched a new

department for the company called University Relations. In this role, she works with therapy schools to help set up clinical affiliations for student therapists.

Nancy Sippas Schuler, '97, of St. Peters, Mo., and her husband, Richard, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Nov. 11, 2022.


Joan Schoor, Hon. Alum, of St. Louis, was recently honored by Ellear B. Heffern Fine Jewelers' Extraordinary Women of St. Louis program for her "deep and lasting impact on St. Louis health care, supporting Children's Discovery Institute at St. Louis Children's Hospital, donating generously to the Maryville School of Nursing, and working for many years at the Washington University School of Medicine." The company made donations in Joan's name to Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, COCA and Sumner High School as a thank-you for what she does for St. Louis and her patronage of Ellear B. Heffern over the years.

Lucie Nordmann, RSCJ

1943-2023

The Maryville University community mourns the loss of longtime Maryville trustee and alumna Sister Lucie Nordmann, RSCJ, '68. Lucie was a treasured community member who served on Maryville's board of trustees for 16 years. Throughout her life, Lucie's professional and community work were rooted in her faith and commitment to serving others.

Lucie served in various leadership roles across the country with the Society of the Sacred Heart for over 44 years, including as Head of School at Villa Duchesne and Oak Hill School. A St. Louis native, Lucie also held a leadership role at a local nonprofit, Lydia House, and worked as a patient/family advocate and chaplain at St. Luke's Hospital.

Sister Nordmann was preceded in death by her parents, Bern and Lucie Nordmann, and her brother Bernie (Betty) Nordmann. She is survived by brothers Bob Nordmann; Bill (Fran and the late Mary) Nordmann; David (the late Cathy) Nordmann; Larry (Sue) Nordmann; John (Lisa) Nordmann; and Chris Nordmann. She is also survived by many nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews. 



2000s

Dawn Robinson Smathers, '00, of Joplin, Mo., was honored as a Fall 2022 Saints Athletics Hall of Fame inductee on Sept. 29, 2022. A 2000 graduate of Maryville, Robinson is the women's volleyball program's all-time leader in career kills, with 1,501, and in hitting percentage at .347. In addition, she holds the career blocks record, with 900, and in blocks per set at 2.37. Robinson still holds the record for kills in a single season, with 444, and in season blocks, with 263. In addition, she had the second most kills in a match, with 30 against Fontbonne University in 1997. Robinson was named the St. Louis Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SLIAC) Player of the Year in 1998 and was a three-time All-SLIAC first-team selection. She was a key member of the 1998 team, which set the school record for season wins at 22.

Lisa Cooseman, '00, '02, of St. Charles, Mo., recently spoke to a group of Girl Scout Cadettes about her experience in the field of occupational therapy, particularly about owning her

own specialty business. The talk was part of a joint patch program between Maryville's Myrtle E. and Earl E. Walker College of Health Professions and Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri.


Fred Biermann, '02, of St. Louis, has been promoted to executive vice president at St. Louis-based Alberici Construction, Inc. Biermann leads Alberici's nationally ranked civil, marine and heavy industrial markets, and he serves on the board of directors for the Associated General Contractors (AGC) of America, where he chairs the Union Contractors Committee and is an active member of the AGC of Missouri Labor Policy Committee. He also serves as a management co-chair of the Saint Louis Construction Cooperative (formerly PRIDE) and is an active member of the Waterways Council and Inland Rivers, Ports and Terminals, Inc. Biermann previously served on the AGC of America's U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Federal Acquisition and Marine Contractors committees. He earned an MBA from Webster University and a marketing degree from Maryville,

and he has completed advanced management studies at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

Marcus "Marc" P. Eickenhorst, '02, of Ballwin, Mo., and his wife, Danni, are co-owners of Steve's Hot Dogs and The Fountain on Locust in St. Louis.

Deanna Lehnen Baker, '05, '06, of Wentzville, Mo., was recently promoted to director of rehab therapy services at SSM Health Rehabilitation Hospital – Lake Saint Louis. Prior to that, she worked as the rehab therapy manager at SSM Health Rehabilitation Hospital – Bridgeton in Bridgeton, Mo.

Kenneth William Lawrence, '06, of Cape Girardeau, Mo., was promoted to deputy chief United States probation officer for the United States Probation Office in the Eastern District of Missouri.

 **Christine Dieckmann Rasure, '06,** of St. Louis, recently visited southern Utah with fellow Maryville University women's basketball alumni. During their trip, they

explored Zion National Park. The group takes a trip together every year! Pictured, from left, are: Christine (Dieckmann) Rasure, '06; Maureen (Walterbach) Redeker, '04; Devin (Haslag) LaPlant, '06; Fallon (Rehmert) Page, '06; Carrie Snyder, '06, '07; and Laura (Oetjen) Saleem, '07, '08.

Nina Caldwell, EdD, MBA, '07, of St. Louis, was appointed to the role of vice president for diversity, equity and inclusion at Maryville. Dr. Caldwell served in student life at Maryville for over 18 years, with her most recent role as vice president for student life.

Amanda Lee Clay, '07, of Plainfield, Ill., recently accepted a position working for the Illinois State Board of Education. In her new role, Amanda is supporting the 800+ districts in the state of Illinois with the residential placement of special education students. Prior to this, she served nearly 10 years at a therapeutic school working with autistic students. She spent time as a music therapist and, more recently, as an administrator, before accepting her new position.



MARK MANERA, '19, '21

TRUCKERS' WELL-BEING DRIVES PHYSICAL THERAPY ALUMNUS' BUSINESS

BY NANCY FOWLER

When Mark Manera, '19, '21, was completing his doctor of physical therapy program, he became interested in a specific group of patients: truck drivers. Working through rotations at a rural outpatient clinic, he built relationships with many over-the-road truckers.

"I saw firsthand what 20 or 30 years behind the wheel can do to someone's health if they don't make it a priority," Manera said.

Manera was alarmed to learn truck drivers have a life expectancy that's 16 years less than

average. Concerned, he came up with the idea for his company, Supply Chain Fitness.

The business works with trucking and insurance firms to create an employee benefit. Through an app, virtual face-to-face coaching and weekly texts, truckers get support for their wellness goals. Personalized plans include exercises that can be done at home as well as inside or outside the truck, recipes for making healthy meals inside the vehicle and encouragement to choose better snacks on the go.


"We look at the low-hanging fruit," Manera said. "Asking, 'What small habits can we start building into your routine to start pushing the needle in the right direction?'"

While at Maryville, Manera sometimes bounced ideas off Michael Palmer, who teaches informational systems and software development. Palmer said Manera has a gift for seeing a need, envisioning a way to fill it and breaking the process down into steps.

"Everybody has ideas, right?" Palmer said. "It's rare for people to carry them out, to put their money where their mouth is."

But Manera isn't primarily motivated by money, Palmer said. "Mark is leading with mission over profit," he said. "It's refreshing to see."

Manera's next step is to add motivational tools and a virtual personal assistant to the Supply Chain Fitness concept. The idea fits with the company's focus on accountability and human connection.

"Driving a truck can be an isolating lifestyle," Manera said. "Having someone checking in on you goes a long way." 





match of St. Louis’ new Major League Soccer franchise in Austin, Texas, on Feb. 25. St. Louis City SC surprised the friends and soccer world with a 3-1 upset victory over Austin FC.

Stephanie A. Metter, ‘13, of St. Louis, joined Elephant Rock Counseling, LLC, as a therapist. She has been a licensed professional counselor since 2017. Stephanie works with adults and adolescents struggling with trauma, emotional regulation, anxiety and depression.

7 Jessica Zorn Kleine, ‘14, of Kansas City, Mo., and her husband, William, are excited to announce the birth of their son, Henry George Kleine. Henry was born on Oct. 4, 2022, weighing 6 pounds, 2 ounces and measuring 19 inches long.

Raphael E. Garcia, ‘16, of Olympia, Wash., is currently in the U.S. Army. He has been serving since 2012.

Alison Luther, ‘16, of Ocala, Fla., is a certified nurse practitioner (NP-C) with Orlando Health Medical Group FHV Health. She has cared for patients since beginning her career as a registered nurse in 1996 and has experience with primary care; women’s health; protection and restoration of health in seniors; lung and critical care; ear, nose and throat health; cardiology; endocrinology; infectious disease; and urgent care. Luther attended Emory University and Simmons College before earning her Master of Science in nursing (MSN), women’s health nurse practitioner, at Georgia State University in Atlanta. She received a postgraduate certification in adult gerontology from Maryville and is a member of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners. In 2018, Alison joined International Medical Relief in serving the

communities in Nepal affected by the devastating earthquake.

Bethany Jansen, ‘17, of St. Louis, married her fiancé, Brendan Jost, on Oct. 29, 2022, and honeymooned in Jamaica. Jansen is a Hillsboro High School graduate with a bachelor’s degree in psychology and a master’s degree in occupational therapy from Maryville. She is employed by St. Luke’s Hospital as an occupational therapist. Her husband is employed by the Mehlville School District as a social studies teacher and is the offensive coordinator for the Affton High football team. The couple resides in Lemay, Mo.

Turan Mullins, ‘17, of St. Louis, began a new position as vice president of inclusion and engagement at the U.S. Soccer Federation in Chicago. In his new role, he provides thought leadership through research and best practices for organizational diversity, equity, inclusion and engagement. Mullins formerly served as the senior adviser to the president for access and opportunity at Maryville University and before that, as the assistant dean and director of diversity and inclusion at Maryville.

Nate Rodriguez, ‘17, of Neosho, Mo., was honored as a Fall 2022 Saints Athletics Hall of Fame inductee on Sept. 29, 2022. Rodriguez graduated from Maryville in 2017 as one of the most decorated student-athletes in University history. He won the NCAA Division II Wrestling National Championship at 141 pounds. Rodriguez was voted the 2017 College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) Academic All-American of the Year for the At-Large team, which encompasses more than 20 sports, and was first-team CoSIDA



Academic All-American. He was the Great Lakes Valley Conference (GLVC) Male Student-Athlete of the Year and GLVC’s Bertram Award Winner for Male Student-Athletes. Rodriguez was named the 2017 GLVC Wrestling Scholar of the Year and a first-team All-GLVC selection.

Erin M. Gaubatz, ‘18, of St. Louis, is an English-language arts teacher at Bernard Middle School in the Mehlville School District and recently received the honor of Teacher of the Year.

Sierra E. Holiman, ‘18, of Cape Girardeau, Mo., is the manager and head nurse of the new SoutheastHEALTH New Madrid Clinic. Holiman is an advanced registered family nurse practitioner.

Jill Welbern Tibbetts, FNP-C, ‘18, of Hermitage, Tenn., is a certified family nurse practitioner with Hermitage Family Practice, LLC, a general practice clinic that offers care to people of all ages. Jill graduated with a Bachelor of Science in nursing from Cumberland University in 1993. She then went on to earn her Master of Science in nursing (Family Nurse Practitioner

Program) from Maryville University in 2018. Attributing her success to her passion for wellness, she is an active member of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP). The AANP is the largest and only full-service national professional membership organization for NPs of all specialties.

Dr. Jenna Puricelli Wright, ‘18, of St. Louis, is the assistant principal of Truman Middle School in the Lindbergh School District and, in 2021, was named the Middle School Assistant Principal of the Year by the St. Louis Association of Secondary School Principals. Dr. Wright has been serving Lindbergh families for more than 15 years as a teacher, mentor, instructional coach and administrator. She has played an integral role serving on the district’s Middle School Redesign Task Force, helping teachers, staff and students create a flexible, high-quality learning experience that supports student success, real-world connections, collaboration and social-emotional well-being. Wright earned a Bachelor of Arts in education from Maryville University, a Master of Arts in educational administration from Lindenwood University and a doctorate in education from Maryville.

Vickie Blevins, ‘19, of Stark City, Mo., has joined the CoxHealth Surgery Monett Clinic. Blevins holds a Bachelor of Science in nursing from the University of Arkansas and a master’s in nursing from Maryville, and she boasts experience in medical-surgical nursing, pre-op and infusion, and wound care.

Casey Comte, FNP-C, ‘19, of Cape Girardeau, Mo., returned to the Saint Francis Healthcare System as a family nurse practitioner at Cape

Pulmonology and Sleep Medicine. Comte earned her Master of Science in nursing at Maryville University and is board certified by the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners. Comte began her career at Saint Francis in 2016 as a registered nurse on the medical floor and transitioned to obstetrics. Comte returns from Reliable Mental Health Services, where she worked in telehealth, and is eager to care for patients in person again.

Piqua, Ohio. Guinther specializes in family medicine and earned a Master of Science in family nurse practitioner nursing from Maryville. Guinther has also served as a traveling nurse and is a veteran of the U.S. Navy.

Kaitlyn “Katie” E. Grunert, ‘20, of Waukesha, Wis., graduated in December 2020 with a Bachelor of Science in sport business management from Maryville University’s Rawlings Sport Business Management program and began working for SponsorUnited. Launched in 2018, SponsorUnited is the leading global sports and entertainment intelligence platform.

2020s

Dale Guinther, APRN-CNP, ‘20, of Sydney, Ohio, joined Kettering Physician Network Primary Care in



In Memoriam

1940s

Mary Lillian Conaghan, RSCJ, '45
Arleen Kiesler Deters, '48
Ruth Prange Hanses, '49

1950s

Zoe C. Brown, '52
Jane Hurley Carpenter, '53
Shirley Martin Brady, '54
Beverly Balch Price, '54
Joann Costello Himstedt, '56
Doris Kirchhoff Jakubczak, '56
Lily Trout Duggan, '57
Anna "Nancy" Kelly Helmly, '57
Joanne O'Connell Reilly, '58
Ellen "Nell" Hereford Flynn, '59

1960s

Shiela Moynahan Mooney, '62
Dr. Ann Hogan Russek, '64
Ann Sherman Damron, '67
Lucie Nordmann, RSCJ, '68

1970s

Mary Diane Fehlber Giesler, '77
Peggy Ennis Swing, '78

1990s

Sue Hardin Higginbotham, '90
John B. Krebs, '92

Arren E. Romeril, '20, of Defiance, Mo., accepted a position as a life coach at Maryville University in the Division for Student Success. Romeril finished his playing career at Maryville as captain of the inaugural Saints hockey team in the 2018-2019 season and the M1 team in the 2019-2020 campaign. Prior to moving to St. Louis to continue his education and playing career at Maryville, Romeril spent two years at Williston State College in North Dakota. Romeril also played five years of junior hockey in his home country of Canada for the LaSalle Vipers, Wheatly Sharks, Essex 73s and Amherstburg Admirals.

Amanda Schwane, '20, of O'Fallon, Mo., has been promoted to vice president of finance and controller at KAI Enterprises. She also will be serving in this role for a sister firm, The UP Companies (UPCO). Schwane joined KAI in 2021 and has nearly 12 years of accounting experience. Prior to KAI, she held accounting positions at Scotttrade Inc., Mastercard International, Centene Corporation and EGA America Inc. She has a bachelor's degree in finance and a minor in accounting from the University of Missouri – St. Louis and a master's in accounting from Maryville University.

Kristen Sparks, '20, of St. Louis, has signed with the Memphis Americans of the National Indoor Soccer League. Sparks played forward for Maryville University from 2016 to 2020, where she was a four-time academic All-American. She also spent time with the Women's Premier Soccer League's St. Louis Lions from 2018 to 2019.

Phillip Thompson, EdD, '20, of Orland Park, Ill., recently became the senior director of development at Benedictine University.

Nick Adcock, '21, of New Baden, Ill., has been hired by West Star Aviation as the new Bombardier project manager at the company's East Alton, Ill., facility (ALN). He will assist the team with Bombardier projects. Adcock has over 22 years of aviation experience, previously working for Boeing, Jet Aviation and the U.S. Army as a UH-60 Blackhawk crew chief. He holds an MBA from Maryville along with a bachelor's in aviation management from Saint Louis University. West Star Aviation specializes in the repair and maintenance of airframes, engines and APUs; avionics installations and repair; major modifications; interior refurbishment; exterior paint; and accessory services and parts.

Allison B. Rhymer, APRN, FNP-BC, '21, of Marble Hill, Mo., has joined Saint Francis Clinic Jackson as a family nurse practitioner. Rhymer earned a Bachelor of Science in nursing from Murray State University in Murray, Ky., followed by a Master of Science in nursing from Maryville. Rhymer has nearly 10 years of nursing experience in labor and delivery, women's health and primary care, and she is board-certified by the American Nurses Credentialing Center.

Summer Brown, ARNP, '22, of Oskaloosa, Okla., joined the medical staff at Pella Regional Health Center in Pella, Oklahoma, at the Pella Regional Walk-in Clinic. Brown graduated from Maryville with a Master of Science

in nursing with a family nurse practitioner concentration.

Devin Darden, '22, of St. Louis, began working at Lindenwood University as an enrollment counselor upon graduating from Maryville with a Bachelor of Arts in strategic communication. Darden states that he is passionate about the power of education and strives to motivate students to pursue a collegiate career.

LaShanda Johnson, '22, of St. Louis, was selected as the next principal of Wren Hollow Elementary in the Parkway School District. She previously served as head principal at Koch Elementary in the Riverview Gardens School District. Johnson holds a doctorate in educational administration from Maryville.

Linda "Michelle" Shoemaker, FNP-BC, '22, of Osceola, Mo., was appointed to the medical staff of Citizens Memorial Hospital (CMH) and Osceola Medical Center as a family nurse practitioner. Shoemaker has more than 28 years of nursing experience and has worked for CMH for over four years. She joins the staff of Osceola Medical Center and Walk-In Clinic. Shoemaker earned a Bachelor of Science in nursing from Western Governor's University in Millcreek, Utah, and a Master of Science in nursing from Maryville University. She is certified by the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners. Shoemaker specializes in family medicine and cares for patients with acute health issues, including allergies; colds, cough and flu; minor burns; fractures; sprains; strains; minor laceration repair; chronic conditions; and wellness care.



COMMENCEMENT SPRING 2023: Maryville University Commencement ceremonies were held in a new premier Chesterfield Valley location, The Factory at The District. The University congratulated graduates from 49 states and 28 countries on their tremendous accomplishments. Join us in welcoming 1,270 new alumni to our community and in celebrating them at Homecoming this October.



SHARE YOUR NEWS!

Submit a class note for the Fall/Winter 2023 issue of Maryville Magazine. maryville.edu/classnotes



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