At SAS, we hold students to high academic standards while encouraging them to seek new experiences, pursue leadership opportunities, and self-advocate. It is preparation that allows them to take full advantage of college from their very first day.

“Not only did the rigorous coursework at SAS prepare me for courses at the collegiate level, but boarding school allowed me to become more mature and ready for life on my own.”

Kenneth Thomas ‘17  
B.A. Business Analytics  
UT-Knoxville ‘20

“At SAS, I learned the critical thinking and analysis skills that are the basis of practicing law. I definitely had a head start as a college freshman. The experience of speaking up in classes gave me the confidence I later needed to speak up in court. I always felt I had an edge because of what I learned at SAS.”

Abigail Turner ‘88  
B.A. Magna Cum Laude English and Political Science  
UT-Knoxville ‘92  
J.D. Vanderbilt Law School ‘95

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A golden day awakes on the Tennessee River as seen from the UT Knoxville boathouse.

PHOTO BY STEVEN BRIDGES
UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE
“I just challenge all of us, as we work together to challenge public school systems, to be better and that we support them in ways that are innovative and creative, that we disrupt the status quo,” Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee said in late 2019.

The University of Tennessee has been doing just that. From establishing community schools in Knoxville to developing dance education teachers and changing teacher preparation programs, UT works to continue to produce educators who excel in leading their students. What teachers do and say in the classroom impact future generations, and their importance cannot be shortchanged.

As UT Knoxville alumna Alison Manning wrote in this issue’s Last Word (Page 48), “Teaching is not easy. It never has been. It is more than making awesome lesson plans, having great test scores and getting a top score on an evaluation. It took me a few years to realize that.” In that realization, she also learned what made her work worth it.

It’s been three years since we did a major redesign of Tennessee Alumnus. We decided it was time to tweak a few things inside and out. Please let us know what you think of a slightly updated look. You can send a letter to the editor at alumnus@tennessee.edu or reach out to us on social media. We can be found on Twitter @TNAlumnus, Facebook at Tennessee Alumnus and Instagram at @tennessealumnus.
A message from the interim president

Education is the great equalizer. It begins with a strong pre-kindergarten through 12th grade foundation. But we must build on that.

When the Morrill Act was established back in 1862, it was created to educate individuals in practical areas such as agriculture, home economics, mechanical arts and the like. The goal was to make education available and accessible to all, regardless of economic earnings or social status. Having one of two land-grant institutions in the state, we take this mission seriously.

Fast forward to today—while 46 percent of our students will graduate from one of our schools with zero debt, which is better than most institutions, we still realize that the cost to attend one of our universities may seem out of reach for the middle- and working-class.

I have been traveling the state to talk about UT Promise, our innovative, free tuition program. In one month, I visited 14 high schools and traveled 1,573 miles to tell 4,500 students how they can obtain their dream of a college degree.

UT Promise is a last-dollar scholarship program for qualifying Tennessee undergraduate students with a family household income of under $50,000. It guarantees free tuition and mandatory fees after other financial aid is received at UT Knoxville, UT Chattanooga, UT Martin and UT Health Science Center. Students must qualify for the Tennessee Hope Scholarship and meet the academic qualifications for the institution to be eligible for this new scholarship. To help ensure success, students will be matched with volunteer mentors and will complete eight volunteer service hours each semester.

While the deadline has passed for high school students to apply, there is still important work to do. The University of Tennessee Foundation launched its UT Promise Endowment campaign last fall, and $17.5 million has been raised toward the $100 million goal. An additional $4.025 million will soon be added with the sale of the Eugenia Williams home. This endowment will allow us to keep our promise for years to come.

I invite you to join us in helping ease the financial burden for the state’s middle- and working-class families. Education is the great equalizer and is the route to change lives, which then change communities and the state.

Randy Boyd, Knoxville ’79

For more information on how you can get involved, please visit utpromise.tennessee.edu.
Dear Editor,

Just wanted to say, the current issue of the *Tennessee Alumnus* magazine has to be the best one yet! I really enjoyed the spotlight placed on our veterans and the wholesomeness of this edition in general. The focus on family and traditional values was a welcome change from what you see from a lot of schools of higher learning these days that often want to focus on progressive issues that are divisive.

I especially enjoyed the story from Michael Johnson (Fall 2019, “The Last Word”) and not because we share the same name. He faced life’s challenges and then took the blame for his mistakes. Too many times, individuals and certain groups want to blame their failure on others, but he manned up, and my hat is off to him.

Mike Johnson
Martin ’87

Dear Editor,

Thank you for another great edition. So many interesting stories!

How would it be to change the name to “Tennessee Alumni?” Alumnus is male, singular. Alumna is female, singular. Alumni is the male plural, but in Latin, the male plural is used whenever a group includes both men and women. This would reflect the fact that we now have lots of female graduates. Just a thought!

Renate Rosenthal
Professor, Assistant Dean of Behavioral Science Integration, UT Health Science Center

Dear Editor,

Apparentley our University of Tennessee family is more dysfunctional than I thought, at least according to Cheryl Koski, Knoxville ’02 (Letter to the Editor, Fall 2019). I’m unsure why featuring accomplished alumni in a recent magazine as “game changers” was so abhorrent to her and our readers. She says, “It promotes what the university appears to consider its Hall of Fame,” putting words in the university’s mouth. They said no such thing. I didn’t know that there was a racial and gender quota to prevent a hall of fame from becoming a “hall of shame,” as Koski implies. She follows that logic by stating, “Such white males do not represent ‘game changers.’” Apparently, one cannot accomplish anything noteworthy as a white male. She says our university is “blind when it comes to the issue of white male dominance in leadership positions throughout Tennessee.” I guess our Chancellor Donde Plowman’s appointment doesn’t count as a leadership position. She is correct in that Tennessee’s house delegation is all white males, although we have a female senator.

We can debate the causes of these numbers for all eternity. What we don’t need in our magazine is to see our university attacked so unfairly. Koski is certainly entitled to all her opinions and to express them in any manner she sees fit. However, I am sick and tired of being insulted and demeaned just because of my race and gender. Criticism can always be expressed in an objective, rational manner and should be. Bitterness, racism and sexism, though, should have no place in our magazine or our university family.

Chuck Frazier
Knoxville ’76

Dear Editor,

My wedding was held there (Patten Chapel) in 1975. I attended UTC for my freshman year before transferring to UTK. I fell in love with the Gothic architecture of the chapel the first time I attended a program there and thought it would be the perfect place for a wedding. I’m not sure this is true, but it was my understanding that our wedding was one of the last before the pipe organ was renovated. I do remember that our organist had to play at least one piece in a different key because of the organ.

Linda Loucks Black, Knoxville ’76

March 1983: My husband and I walked that aisle in the midst of a tornado warning, sirens and all. It was a beautiful candlelight wedding. We will always treasure Patten Chapel.

Jan Wandell Patrick, Chattanooga ’77

I love Patten Chapel. It is truly the heart and soul of the campus past and present.

Richard Johnson, Chattanooga ’81

Joining my fraternity began by receiving my bid and running out the chapel doors. Marrying my wife there ensures that Patten would forever be associated with two lifelong commitments.

Dave Wagner, Chattanooga ’00
## The State of Education

### U.S. average teacher salary
**for 2017-2018**

$60,477

1. New York: $84,227  
35. Tennessee: $50,900  
51: Mississippi: $44,926

### Average change in salaries
**from 2016-2017 to 2017-18**

was 1.58%

Largest decrease: Nevada: -0.7%
Largest increase: Arkansas: 4.6%

(Nationally, inflation-adjusted average teacher salaries decreased by 4.5% from 2009-10 to 2018-19.)

### U.S. average per student expenditure
**for 2017-2018**

$12,602

1. New York: $23,894  
45. Tennessee: $9,225  
51. Idaho: $6,809

### Public school districts
**total**

16,728

1. Texas: 1,200  
36. Tennessee: 146  
51. Hawaii: 1

### Public school total enrollment
**Fall 2017**

50,014,228

1. California: 6,229,121  
16. Tennessee: 1,003,445  
51. Vermont: 87,506

### Public high school graduates

**2017-2018**

3,309,248

1. California: 418,800  
17. Tennessee: 64,855  
51. District of Columbia: 3,831

**2016-2017**

3,281,660

1. California: 429,323  
17. Tennessee: 64,407  
51. District of Columbia: 3,830

### Information from National Education Association Rankings of the States 2018 and Estimates of School Statistics 2019

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**2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress**

**The Nation’s Report Card**

### Grade 4 Math
**National Public Average**

240

Minnesota: 248  
Massachusetts: 247  
Tennessee: 240  
New Mexico: 231  
Alabama: 230

### Grade 4 Reading
**National Public Average**

219

Massachusetts: 231  
New Jersey: 227  
Tennessee: 219  
New Mexico: 208  
Alaska: 204

### Grade 8 Math
**National Public Average**

281

New Jersey: 292  
Minnesota: 291  
Tennessee: 280  
District of Columbia: 269  
New Mexico/Alabama: 269

### Grade 8 Reading
**National Public Average**

262

Massachusetts: 273  
New Jersey/Connecticut: 270  
Tennessee: 262  
Alaska/New Mexico: 252  
District of Columbia: 250
Karen Holst, Pond Gap Elementary coordinator, Christopher Almanza, former Pond Gap Elementary student, and Bob Kronick, UT Knoxville professor of education psychology and counseling, believe in the power of community schools.
The memories rush back to Christopher Almanza as he watches a half-dozen Pond Gap Elementary students flip and tumble on blue mats in the school’s basement. Behind him, an after-school teacher—Shift Two, as they’re called by the school’s administration—helps a boy balance himself on a ball like a circus performer. Others in the back practice rolling across the room on wooden spools without falling.

When he was a student here a decade ago, Almanza wasn’t sure why they did circus acts at school. He only knew he enjoyed it, like he enjoyed talking to the professor who walked the halls followed by dozens of other adults—some teachers, others UT Knoxville students—who descended upon Pond Gap weekday afternoons after the final school bell rang.

This is what Almanza learned later. In 2009, around the time Almanza was starting third grade at Pond Gap, two men—Bob Kronick, a UT Knoxville professor of educational psychology and counseling, and Randy Boyd, (Knoxville ’79) a businessman now serving as the UT System interim president—made a decision that would fundamentally change education for children in two of Knox County’s urban schools. Kronick and Boyd launched University-Assisted Community Schools (UACS), an initiative to provide children with academic support services, physical education, music and art programs after regular school hours.

“My model was simple: Start where the need is the greatest,” says Mr. Kronick. Kronick, who serves as director of UACS.

The initiative started at Pond Gap and in 2015 expanded seven miles north to Inskip, another school designated Title I by the state for its high-poverty rates.

UACS continues to provide students with 170 yearly hours of tutoring and 170 hours of enrichment programs, from Harry Potter-themed reading clubs to vegetable gardening. Two on-site coordinators—Karen Holst at Pond Gap and Blaine Sample at Inskip—organize hundreds of volunteers from the university and the surrounding community who walk hand in hand with the students in hopes of helping them on a path to success.

Their impact has been substantial. During the 2017-
18 academic year at Pond Gap, where nearly one-third of students participate in UACS after-school activities, students showed learning gains in reading and had significantly higher gains in math compared to students who did not participate. At Inskip, the numbers are similar: significantly higher learning gains in math and significantly fewer absences and behavioral referrals compared to other students. On top of tutoring and enrichment programs, the initiative also meets physical needs, serving more than 10,000 snacks and dinners to its students.

Almanza is only one of hundreds of young people who have benefitted from the UACS’s presence at Pond Gap. In 2018, he graduated from West High School. But, after football practices his junior and senior years, he’d return to Pond Gap, where his youngest brother still attends school, to volunteer as a tutor.

“If you really want to help people, you need to go into the community,” Almanza says. “I learned that from Mr. Kronick.”

The idea to work in Knoxville’s elementary schools came to Kronick in 1989 on a long drive home from Pikeville, Tennessee, where he worked for many years with teenagers in the criminal justice system. That morning he had met three boys from Knoxville who had murdered a homeless man in Tyson Park. He recognized their names.

“They were in my daughter’s class at school,” Kronick remembers. “I realized then that I needed to get to kids before the Department of Corrections did if they were going to have a chance.”

Influenced by the community-schools movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Kronick developed a model to transform local schools into resource hubs, meeting the educational, medical and social needs of their communities through the backing of the local university.

“If you want to fix education in America, you’ve got to focus on the noncurricular needs of children,” Kronick says. “School buildings are empty at 3 p.m. You don’t want these buildings open and nobody in them. I could use the buildings.”

That’s the case Kronick made to then-Knox County Superintendent Charles Lindsey, who told him to pick where he’d like to start. In 2000, the first university-assisted model launched at two magnet schools, Sarah Moore Greene and Green, then expanded over the next decade and a half. For his project to work, Kronick relied
Children and parents learn new recipes during culinary classes in an outdoor kitchen.

on the help of UT students eager to take their learning experience outside of the classroom.

One of Kronick’s early volunteers was Jamie Coble, who earned a bachelor’s, master’s and doctorate from UT Knoxville before joining the faculty in 2013. Nine years earlier, Coble took a university honors course with Kronick. As part of the class, she volunteered at Green.

“Before people started talking about experiential learning, that’s what we were doing in Bob’s class,” says Coble, now an associate professor of nuclear engineering.

Kronick hired Coble in 2005 to serve as his volunteer coordinator for Sarah Moore Greene’s after-school program while she completed her master’s degree. Coble’s role, which was in a volunteer capacity because she refused to be paid for it, paved the way for the positions later designed for Sample and Holst. For four years, she organized an hour of homework help with UT student volunteers and ran the Science Club, where the children once tried to make the Guinness Book of World Records for most Jell-O eaten using chopsticks.

“It was fun—and a huge mess,” Coble says. “But it was how we gave back as volunteers. Nuclear engineers cannot go out in the community and build a nuclear reactor. Scientists and engineers could give back outside the classroom through what we were doing.”

Even now, Coble remains involved. She coordinates the nuclear engineering department’s UACS volunteers, who go to Pond Gap and Inskip to read to students about nuclear power through books like Marie’s Electric Adventure.

Several other UT programs put dozens of volunteers on the ground every week. Haslam Scholars, an honors program that aims to develop civicly engaged scholars, places 30 students every year at both Pond Gap and Inskip, with a minimum of 15 required service hours a semester. “These are the best and brightest at UT,” says Sylvia Turner, associate director of Haslam Scholars. “We see where education has taken them. Why not give back in that same way?”

Since 2014, the scholars have started some of the UACS’s most popular clubs, including Lego League, Dungeons and Dragons, Science Saturday and Cultural Saturdays, where students explore the world through different languages, games and the traditions of other nations.

“One of the biggest impacts for our kids are the relationships they get to form through the different UT programs,” says Trina Bruns, principal of Pond Gap Elementary. “The fact that somebody else cares about their success—a college student. That is huge.”

One of these students is Margaret Murr, a third-year audiology and speech pathology major from Farragut, who was introduced to Pond Gap through 1794 Scholars, a UT honors program.

Although she mostly volunteered during Girls Inc. and sports clubs on Fridays, Murr fit in wherever she was needed.
“Sometimes you go volunteer at places, and you feel like you’re just standing there,” says Murr. “Here, there’s always someone guiding you. It’s like organized chaos. And, as you keep going, the kids remember you. If you skip a week, they notice.”

Kronick keeps a presentation Murr made about volunteering at Pond Gap tucked in the corner of his office: “University-Assisted Community Schools: The Importance of Relationships.” That is what Murr took away from her time at Pond Gap—the children who squeezed her hand, pelted her with questions and spilled their hearts every Friday afternoon.

One day, during a regular afternoon drawing class, a group of children asked Murr where she lived. She knew saying a dorm room would not mean much. So, she explained. “I live in a small room in a big building. I share a room and a bathroom with a roommate.” One of the boys nearby said calmly: “That sounds like where my mom lives.” Curious, Murr asked what the boy meant. “My mom is in jail,” he said.

Murr was struck.

“That’s when I realized why this program matters,” Murr says. “I’ve lived 15 miles away my entire life, and I didn’t know the need that was right here. I’ve gained a new appreciation for the value of education.”

In 2009, the first time Kronick walked into Boyd’s office, Boyd told him about his idea to raise $2 million to open a charter school.

Kronick’s response was blunt: There were already enough buildings. Making a difference in children’s lives would require leveraging the facilities that already existed to provide broader support in at-risk communities. Boyd was in for whatever Kronick suggested.

“In the Boy Scouts, we have a code of the outdoors,” says Boyd, who spent 17 years as a scout leader. “Basically, leave every trail better than you found it. Education was the best way for me to live that metaphor.”

Initially, Boyd agreed to fund UACS for three years. Within a year, he recommitted another $450,000. Now, he says, Kronick will call from time to time to ask whether he will renew his pledge. Boyd’s response is short, like Kronick’s a decade ago.

“I’m in this for life,” Boyd says. “There’s few things I believe in more.”

Since Boyd’s initial commitment, other organizations have become involved in funding or sponsoring different aspects of the UACS. United Way has awarded $350,000 in three-year increments. Dow Chemical funded an outdoor classroom. Krystal’s provides Tupperware. The Knoxville Racquet Club has donated tennis shoes. The list of supporters and partners is long.

Through the funding provided by the Boyd family and United Way, UT Knoxville hires approximately 35 part-time positions—the Shift Two staff—to support Holst and Sample. The staff’s work is so closely tied to the school’s mission that many Knox County teachers stay after the school bell rings to work part time with UACS through a 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant the initiative receives from Tennessee’s Department of Education.
“Our Shift Two teachers have these amazing and diverse background experiences, which are really neat when paired with what our Shift One teachers bring,” Bruns says. “You will not find better people to care for your children.”

Roger Innis runs the Boys to Men program at Pond Gap during the day. Developed by Bruns and her predecessor Shelly McGill, it supports nearly 60 children who display anger or behavioral issues.

“It’s a safe zone for the kids,” Innis says. When they don’t want to talk, he takes out a pack of cards and starts dealing. Or he takes them into the gym to shoot basketball. Eventually, many of the children open up.

“I knew I wasn’t going to be a teacher,” Innis says. “But I understand these kids are going through hard situations. Maybe they didn’t eat the night before or their lights were cut off, and that’s why they’re so angry. I listen and talk to them.”

After school, Innis, who has an associate’s degree from Pellissippi State Community College and thinks he may pursue a career in social work, is Pond Gap’s after-school assistant coordinator—a natural extension of his daytime work.

For Innis, Murr and Kronick, it’s the relationships that matter most. It is the image of a girl graduating from high school and returning to Pond Gap to walk the halls in her cap and gown, of Almanza turning in a UACS job application this past October to mentor neighborhood children, of a mom and her daughter cooking a meal together in a culinary class led by UT Knoxville science majors and education students.

Kronick and Boyd have spent the past decade working with students in urban environments. However, they both recognize that many of the same quality-of-life disparities seen in places like Pond Gap and Inskip are mirrored in Tennessee’s rural communities. Within the next year, they plan to start a new program in Sunbright, extending the UACS vision of schools as places to learn, play and engage with the world farther across the state.

“I think the challenges are greater today than they were back when I first started,” Kronick says. “But, if we can use education to teach kids they can do something with their lives, we can deal with it.”
From Strength to Strength

UT System Hosts Teacher Preparation Convening

BY JANE HUDSON

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE SYSTEM annually prepares hundreds of teachers to enter classrooms in all 95 counties in Tennessee as well as public and private schools across the nation.

To prepare teachers is to impact the future—and UT understands the importance of training them well. David Haselkorn, the president of Recruiting New Teachers—a nonprofit group that promotes teaching as a profession—said, “Teaching is the essential profession, the one that makes all other professions possible.” Without teachers, there would be no future presidents, doctors, lawyers, counselors or law enforcement officers. Teachers equip their students with the necessary tools it takes to succeed and by doing so affect society’s future.

Despite the essential role teachers play, fewer graduates are choosing to enter the teaching profession in the United States. According to the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), during the 2017-2018 school year, the country was estimated to be short more than 110,000 teachers—a figure that almost doubled in two years.

The UT System is working to further strengthen its education programs to meet the nation’s growing need and ensure teachers have the tools necessary for success in the classroom.

In September 2019, the UT System hosted the first Teacher Preparation Convening, bringing together faculty and administrators from the UT campuses, state and local education leaders, lawmakers and other key stakeholders to discuss ways that new innovations and collaborations could better meet state needs.

In speaking about their programs, campus leaders emphasized their commitment to effective educator training and highlighted best practices.

UT Chattanooga leaders highlighted collaborative recruitment efforts with its partner school districts to identify, recruit and support teacher candidates. UT Chattanooga sponsors the Institute for Teaching and Learning at the Tyner Teaching Academy, which prepares high school students for careers in teaching.

UT Knoxville leaders spoke of $200,000 awarded from the Tennessee General Assembly in 2019 to recruit, prepare and retain minority teachers. The UT Knoxville David T. Bailey Graduate School of Education produces the highest number of mathematics teachers in the state, and UT Knoxville is ranked among the top in the state in graduating special education and world languages teachers.

UT Martin was one of 24 U.S. institutions to receive a $3.3 million Teacher Quality Partnership Grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Through this grant, UT Martin is developing partnerships among colleges and universities, local educational agencies and high-need schools to prepare teachers to teach in high-need schools, support them in their critical first years and increase the number of highly qualified STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) teachers. UT Martin also offers the Call Me MiSTER (Mentors Instructing Students Toward Effective Role Models) program, which recruits candidates from diverse backgrounds and prepares them to pursue successful careers in elementary and middle schools in Tennessee.
IN JUNE, ALTHA STEWART STOOD ON A WASHINGTON, D.C., STAGE to address a packed house at a black-tie benefit sponsored by actress Taraji P. Henson to raise money for the TV star’s foundation to build mental health awareness in the African American community.

An associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center and the first African American president of the American Psychiatric Association (APA), Stewart was a keynote speaker for the “Empire” actress’s star-studded evening.

It’s safe to say, Stewart is comfortable on the national and international stage. After completing her time at the helm of the APA and with a new title of senior associate dean for community health engagement for the UTHSC College of Medicine, Stewart will be working to extend health care to everyone in Shelby County.

It’s really an extension of her work focusing on making sure young people in Memphis and Shelby County have a chance to succeed and thrive.

ADVOCATING FOR YOUTH

Born and raised in South Memphis, Stewart graduated from public and parochial schools in the city and was among the first class of women admitted to what is now Christian Brothers University in Memphis. She received her medical degree from Temple University Medical School in Philadelphia and completed her residency at Hahnemann University Hospital there in 1982.

She credits her family with instilling in her a sense of service. Medicine and, in particular, psychiatry gave her the avenue.

She worked in mental health care for two decades in the public and private sector in New York, Philadelphia and Detroit. Each city had its youth and families to serve and save, but when Memphis called, she returned.

Stewart moved back to Memphis in 2002, working first as a psychiatric consultant and then in 2011 as the executive director of the Just Care Family Network, a federally funded program to help young people with mental illness at risk of going into the juvenile justice system. The position solidified the next phase of her career as an advocate for the youth and families of the Bluff City.
After working as the director of the Shelby County System of Care for the Public Defender’s Office, she was hired by UTHSC in 2015 as an associate professor, the chief of social and community psychiatry, and the founding director of a new Center for Health in Justice Involved Youth.

U.S. District Judge Mark Norris—then a state senator deeply involved in trauma-informed juvenile justice issues—connected Stewart and the university. He has been a key collaborator in developing the Center for Health in Justice Involved Youth and in Stewart’s work.

“I would say Dr. Stewart is a force of nature and has been incredibly effective at making the case for early intervention and alternatives to incarceration, because of not only her clinical experience, her pedigree, but her personal experience,” Norris says. “She’s uniquely suited to do this work, as evidenced by her immediate success. And she is working effectively with other organizations that are dedicated to the same work.”

Stewart is a widely recognized expert on public sector and minority issues in mental health care, as well as on the effects of trauma and violence on children. The mission of the center is to reduce the number of young people in the juvenile justice system by addressing the trauma and exposure to violence that contribute to the behavior that lands them there.

The prevention strategy espoused by the center is based on the recognition that adverse childhood experiences—poverty, violence and trauma early in life—foster the behavior that contributes to a cycle of hopelessness and failure that can ultimately end in incarceration. By addressing the root causes of the behavior, recognizing what triggered it and helping children and families to find services that offer solutions, the center seeks to change young lives for better futures.

In Shelby County, the numbers illustrate the need. According to Juvenile Court administrators, 5,300 children were brought to juvenile court on delinquency complaints in 2018, with 926 detained and charged. Of those, 23 were charged with murder, 50 with aggravated robbery and 22 with aggravated assault.

Changes in the local juvenile justice system, including a new Youth Justice and Education Center, aim to reduce those numbers. By creating a trauma-informed culture across the city, working with schools, churches, law enforcement agencies and family service organizations, Stewart’s goal is to avert the need for intervention by juvenile justice authorities.

**MOVING THE MISSION FORWARD**

There is progress. The Center for Health in Justice Involved Youth, which started with a $200,000 grant from the Tennessee Legislature, has recently received more than $2 million in federal funding for its work.

In August, UTHSC marked the opening of a new Youth Advocacy Coalition. Located on campus, the coalition is the result of a collaboration between the Center for Health in Justice Involved Youth and the Shelby County Government Division of Community Services.

The coalition will provide support and community-based resources for at-risk and justice-involved youth, ages 12 to 17, and their families by providing trauma-informed screenings, individualized recommendations for referrals to community-based behavioral and trauma-related services, and follow-up. The coalition is voluntary, restraint-free, trauma-informed, family-centered and independent from juvenile court. Referrals may be made by individuals, parents, schools and community members. Here again, the goal of the center is to reduce further contact or avoid contact with the juvenile justice system.

Funded as a pilot project with intent to expand, the coalition will concentrate initially on young people in the Frayser community of Memphis, an area with high need and an established and strong network of community resources ready to collaborate.

“We’re going to focus on the children we believe can be diverted from the system, either through a referral from law enforcement at the point of contact in the community, a referral from a school resource officer, a self-referral from a family member or a community organization that works with children who recognize some of the signs of at-risk behavior in that child,” Stewart told those gathered for the coalition’s opening.

“Our basic job is to protect the hope of others,” she says. “We have to be hopeful they will get better or they won’t be.”
When Abby Murphy was 3, she saw *The Nutcracker*. Her parents could never have known how that family outing would put their daughter on a path to influence hundreds of other children and audience members during the next few decades.

“I started dance when I was 3, and then by second grade I decided that I wanted to be a teacher. So, when it came time for me to go to college, I realized you can get a major and actually teach dance in schools,” Murphy (Martin ’15) says.

Murphy is now the first and only dance teacher at Mt. Pleasant High School in Maury County, and she says her decision to teach high school comes from knowing how important that creative outlet was for her as a high school student.

“There’s a lot of things that happen during high school, a lot of drama, a lot of emotion; you’re trying to figure yourself out. And to be able to have dance—something that I enjoy doing, a passion—to escape to, that’s something that motivated me to begin (teaching),” she says. “Then, when we did observations in college and I saw the impact that (dance) had on the students, I ended with my senior thesis on getting dance into public schools and why it was so important. These students need that opportunity.”

Mt. Pleasant High School Principal Ryan Jackson can attest that the arts program—visual art, choir, music and theater as well as dance—has impacted the high school as a whole.

“Our attendance is up. Our enrollment is up. Discipline is way down, and our graduation rate keeps climbing. Kids are coming to school, they’re acting non-violent, and I have more kids in arts programs than we’ve ever had in this
school’s history. I attribute that almost solely to the impact that art has had on the culture of our school,” he says. His experience with arts integration is not confined to Mt. Pleasant, and he says a 10-year career with inner-city schools in Nashville showed the same results.

“I had very much (seen) the power of integrating art into a STEM curriculum with inner-city students. … If we can really make students feel like they belong, we can get their fingerprints on cool projects,” he says. “I saw how art could really change students’ lives.”

Arts programs, including dance, are known to increase attendance rates and test scores, encourage critical thinking and boost creative writing skills—and for good reason.

“The arts foster analytical thinking. They foster higher-level thinking skills. (Art) also fosters respect for

other people’s point of view,” says Carol Eckert, professor of art and interim chair of the UT Martin Department of Visual and Theatre Arts. “The powers that be tend to push (art) aside and think of the arts as not being important, but I think they are mistaken, and I think they’re not being forward-looking. It’s that creative element that really gives people skills and problem solving. I really think we need problem solvers more than ever before.”

While most academic subjects focus on finding one right answer and eliminating other options, Eckert says the arts allow students to become comfortable with innovation and better able to find creative solutions.

“When you’re given an art assignment, there is no set answer. You have this material, and you have this problem—the assignment—and you have to figure out how you’re going to use those materials to do those things,” she says. “In most subjects, there’s one right answer. (But in art) there are multiple answers, and to me that’s the way the real world is. There’s more than one right answer to everything. In the real world, there’s a lot of gray.”

Windy Wang, assistant professor of art, frequently cites movie director James Cameron and inventor Steve Jobs as examples of creative artists in her classes, even though neither man works within the visual art realm.

“The MacBook, when it was first produced, was very unique … in terms of appearance, the menus, the functions. It was very different from other PCs,” she says. “The capability of doing things in a creative way is what makes (Jobs and Cameron) successful. These kinds of qualities would benefit people from all careers,” she says.

In the high-pressure world of standardized tests and college entrance exams, students at all levels can benefit from arts courses as outlets for stress and sources of personal confidence.
Melody DeMoulin, a sophomore from Paris, is pictured demonstrating a ballet technique.

“I am a firm believer that every young person deserves the chance to just feel good about themselves. That sounds really basic, but that is key to confidence as a human being,” says Julie Hill (Martin ’94), professor of music and chair of the UT Martin Department of Music. “Having the opportunity to feel good about oneself will allow you the confidence to tackle any obstacles in life, and for some young people that will not exist through math or science or sports. (Young people) deserve those opportunities, and it can absolutely be a game changer.”

“We have students who want to be artists or they want to share their love of the arts, and they can do that. But our field can also provide an outlet (for others),” Eckert says. “I’ve had pre-med students (in my classes), and (their advisers) tell them, ‘You need to have something besides your career or you’re going to burn out.’ … I think there are some fields that are recognizing the importance (of the arts), … that it’s not just about work.”

However, using an arts class to relieve stress does not mean it is all fun and games. While some may remember elementary arts classes focusing on make-and-take projects with little relevance to other courses, art is now being taught as an integrated subject area with many connections to core academic courses.

“The way art is taught now, it’s not isolated. It’s really integrated into the curriculum, and it has a very active part in fostering the

Arts programs, including dance, are known to increase attendance rates and test scores, encourage critical thinking and boost creative writing skills—and for good reason.
The arts foster analytical thinking. They foster higher-level thinking skills.
“I’ve got friends who are living eight high in a two-bedroom apartment in New York (City) being table waiters right now, but the dance ed degree allows me to teach in public schools (and) allowed me a lot more opportunities,” he says.

UT Martin is the only university in Tennessee to offer a dance education degree with K-12 certification. Students in this major take dance courses as well as education courses and complete their student teaching rotations in dance classes rather than more traditional academic subjects.

“You do have the option of getting a major in dance, however, that does not qualify you to teach in public or private schools,” explains Murphy. “That does separate (UT) Martin from most other colleges. Had I just gotten a degree in fine arts, I would also have had to get that education background, which would have been two degrees to try and balance.”

From saxophones in Memphis to toe shoes in Mt. Pleasant and paintbrushes in Mountain City, arts education is influencing the next generation of Tennessee dreamers. The UT Martin programs in art, music and dance education are training teachers to make arts programs available for all students and bring color and passion back into pre-K-12 schools across the state.

Matthew Gunn, Haruka Oda and other students participate in a ballet class at UT Martin.
A Beacon for Youth Education

By Patricia McDaniels and Katie Jones | Photos courtesy UTIA (except noted)

LISTEN TO A PODCAST. READ NEWS ARTICLES and opinion pieces. Glance through professional journals. Everywhere, pundits seem to take aim at the U.S. educational system. One UT alumna is working to improve the performance of Tennessee students—and students around the nation—through 4-H.

Jennifer Richards (Knoxville, ’07) works as a curriculum developer who aligns Tennessee 4-H with state content standards. Years ago, 4-H modernized beyond corn, cows and sows; the program continues to set its sights on relevance to today’s youth.

Richards, a former classroom teacher, taught language arts and social studies to youth during the challenging years of seventh and eighth grade. She knows the difficulties teachers face when trying to interest and motivate young people, and she knows the criteria set by stringent state curriculum guidelines.

“Every minute in the classroom is an opportunity to reach a young mind,” Richards says. “Today’s teachers don’t have the luxury of diverting classroom time to subjects or discussions that are not aligned with state standards.”

Richards holds a joint appointment between UT Extension and the Herbert College of Agriculture as an assistant professor in the agricultural leadership, education and communications (ALEC) department. As a curriculum development specialist, she works with subject-matter experts to update Tennessee 4-H curricula so that its 27 project areas complement classroom efforts while holding the attention of the youth. She “fell” into developing STEM curricula when her husband returned to UT for a post-doctoral appointment in food science while she pursued a doctorate in education with an emphasis on research, curriculum and evaluation.

“Around the time I was beginning my doctoral studies, most federal funding agencies began requiring outreach components for big research grants. I met some of the faculty in the food science department through my husband and was recruited to develop educational outreach components to accompany some grant proposals. From there, everything seemed to fall into place,” Richards says.

Richards spent more than 10 years focusing on developing educational programming that incorporates food safety concepts into a standard middle school curriculum that also teaches science, math, language arts and social studies. Her curriculum was licensed by the UT Research Foundation (UTRF) and is now available to middle school teachers across the country. Since 2006, it has helped educate more than 85,000 students in 44 states.

In 2015, Richards migrated to ALEC. The Tennessee 4-H curricula needed overhauling, and she eagerly pursued the assignment.

4-H brings educational programming, hands-on activities and educational camps to K-12 students across the nation through Cooperative Extension. The Tennessee 4-H program is managed by UT Extension, within the UT Institute of Agriculture, and is among the nation’s largest 4-H programs with more than 168,000 active members and thousands more alumni. The state program cooperates with local educational systems and home-school cooperatives to administer programming in subjects that include family and consumer sciences as well as agriculture.
and natural resources. The key is for the 4-H curricula to support and reinforce classroom learning.

Because extension agents serve in each of the state’s 95 counties, they bridge the gap between traditional classroom learning and extracurricular activities. However, extension agents aren’t subject-matter experts in every topic 4-H teaches. Richards helps the experts develop age- and setting-appropriate curricula that correspond with best practices. In addition to curricula aimed at student education, Richards is creating a course to prepare extension agents who don’t come from a youth-teaching background to handle the social, mental and emotional development of children at various ages and stages.

“It is an intriguing problem that’s not well documented,” she says. “How do we intentionally guide best practices in educational programming, and what does that look like in the field? The lessons must also be accessible, providing cash-strapped systems and teachers with the resources and tools to teach the materials.”

Above all, both in the classroom and in 4-H, Richards emphasizes the materials must reinforce the state standards on which students are tested while representing best practices in youth education.

To enable widespread availability of the programs, UTRF has executed four license agreements on original educational programs that Richards helped develop: the original food safety curriculum that was privately licensed; a version of the food science curricula that is available through 4-H nationally; a program for hands-on STEM labs focused on engineering design and the basic mechanics behind building bridges; and a hydroponics curriculum for high school students. In each case, Richards paired with subject-matter experts in food science, agricultural and civil engineering, and soil and plant sciences.

More curricula and updated 4-H projects are in the works, and Richards could not be more excited about the effort. “I always wanted to teach, but I never thought I would have the opportunity to impact the education of so many young people.”

Additional content available at alumnus.tennessee.edu.
Emerald Academy is Knoxville’s only public charter school, a K-8 college preparatory experience for scholars in the heart of the city.

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Minding the Gap

CIS Works to Recruit for Manufacturing Jobs

BY SUSAN ROBERTSON | PHOTOS BY SUSAN ROBERTSON AND ANDRE TEMPLE

“Over the next decade nearly 3 and a half million manufacturing jobs likely need to be filled. The skills gap is expected to result in 2 million of those jobs going unfilled.”

- THE MANUFACTURING INSTITUTE’S REPORT: THE SKILLS GAP IN U.S. MANUFACTURING.

WORKING WITH MANUFACTURERS ACROSS THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, the UT Center for Industrial Services (CIS), an agency of the UT Institute for Public Service, frequently hears comments that echo the Manufacturing Institute’s findings.

In addition to providing technical assistance in the form of Lean Manufacturing assessments, quality management, Six Sigma training and cyber security reviews, CIS promotes the field of manufacturing across the state. In October, CIS consultants helped organize Manufacturing Day events in businesses and industries in every region of the state. Manufacturing Day is a national grassroots movement started to promote modern-day manufacturing.
The Manufacturing Institute and Deloitte Skills Gap Study confirmed there is still a significant shortage of talent in U.S. manufacturing, and it is only projected to grow during the next decade. A surprising 84 percent of executives agree there is a talent shortage in U.S. manufacturing. As the baby boomer generation retires and more jobs are created by economic expansion, the skills gap will continue to expand, making the need for companies to attract and expand workers even more critical.

“We want to change the way our state’s youth view manufacturing,” says UT CIS Program Manager Dwaine Raper, who leads the agency’s Manufacturing Extension Partnership program. “That is why we actively participate in Manufacturing Day events across the state. We work with partners to bring high school students to industries in every region. We want the students to see that manufacturing is high-tech and innovative these days. These aren’t the same plant floors where their grandfather might have worked.”

Students from Fulton and Halls high schools in Knoxville visited the University of Tennessee Fibers and Composites Manufacturing Facility for a tour and to learn about the varied areas of manufacturing. The facility is just one of the partners working closely with the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and the Institute for Advanced Composites Manufacturing Innovation.

“It’s interesting to see all of the different things happening in manufacturing and research,” says a junior from Halls High School. “It’s great to get an opportunity to visit these facilities and learn about everything they do.”

In Middle and West Tennessee, CIS also organized high school visits with different manufacturers. Ninety students from Riverside and Scotts Hill visited Kolpak/Welbilt. Almost 30 students from Van Buren County schools and White County schools toured Acument Global Technologies in Van Buren County. The students and several teachers experienced a plant tour and heard from the plant manager. The visitors also played a 5S numbers game after the tour. 5S is a workplace organization method that uses a list of five Japanese words: seiri, seient, seis, seiketsu and shitsuke. These have been translated as: sort, set in order, shine, standardize and sustain. One of the teachers from White County asked if the company will come to the high school in the future to conduct the 5S talk to a larger group of students.

CIS, the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development and the Delfield Company in Covington sponsored a group of 35 students from Brighton, Covington and Munford high schools. Following a tour of the Welbilt facility, students heard from the human resources director who talked about job descriptions, benefits and the job-application process.

Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee joined the CIS Manufacturing Day at Crockett County High School. He visited the school as part of his focus to strengthen schools across the state and to place an emphasis on career and technical education programs in high schools.

“The reason we passed the Governor’s Investment and Vocational Education Act, the GIVE Act, is to strengthen and fund programs like this one. So, one of the things we want to do around the state is to look at models that we can duplicate, and the career and technical education program here is a model,” Lee says.
KATIE PICCIUTO IS A NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED teacher who says her college education both affirmed and expertly prepared her to achieve her lifelong dream of becoming a teacher. Picciuto earned bachelor’s degrees in education and Spanish at UT Chattanooga in 2010, and seven years later, she was one of just 33 K-12 teachers from throughout the United States honored with a Milken Educator Award.

“I hadn’t heard of the award before,” says Picciuto, a teacher at Battle Academy in Chattanooga when she was honored in 2017. “Everyone had shown up for an assembly at school, and Tennessee Education Commissioner Candice McQueen also was there. We learned she was there to announce an award, and everybody assumed it was something for a veteran teacher.”

What McQueen announced instead was the presence of Jane Foley, senior vice president of the Milken Educator Awards. Foley then declared Picciuto a Milken winner.

“It was extremely exciting,” Picciuto says. “Winners become part of a network across the country, and now that I’ve won, I’m a part of that.”

Initiated in 1987, the Milken Educator Awards recognize up to 40 honorees across the country every year. Picciuto is a member of the 30th anniversary class, the only Tennessean in that group and one of just 68 Tennessee teachers honored in program history.

Dubbed the “Oscars of Teaching” by Teacher magazine, the Milken awards’ motto is: “The future belongs to the educated.” The program intends to ensure a future of educators by encouraging today’s promising teachers to return to the classroom tomorrow, Picciuto says.

“It’s a call to action to teachers who are new to the field, to compel them to stay with it,” she says, “and it’s to demonstrate that someone has noticed and appreciates your work.”

After seven years at Battle Academy, Picciuto today teaches at Mill Creek Elementary in Nolensville, about 20 miles south of Nashville, where her husband’s career took them in 2018.

“What’s most important to me about my UTC education is that it got me in the classroom early on,” Picciuto says. “I’ve always known I wanted to be a teacher, but I had a roommate who also was an education major but not because it had been a lifelong goal for her. She had just decided on teaching as a career, but she got in the classroom and learned it wasn’t for her. To find out late in your college education that teaching isn’t for you would be really unfortunate.

“I’m really glad the program got me in the classroom as early as it did—just to observe and for other exposure opportunities leading up to student teaching. When I got to the point of student teaching, and I’d been in the classroom multiple times before and much earlier, I realized how that prior exposure was really beneficial to me.”
Picciuto also praises UTC’s commitment to pairing students with teaching mentors.

“I had mentors carefully selected for me by UTC, and they were great,” she says. “They were Ms. (Jenny) Elliott, who taught first grade at McConnell Elementary (in Hixson), and Ms. (Michelle) Howell, who taught kindergarten at Chattanooga School for the Arts and Sciences. They were very patient and helpful to me and gave me good feedback about why they do certain things.”

And what about the Milken award—what has winning the recognition and its $25,000 cash prize meant to Picciuto? First, it meant participating in a conference for all the winners in the 2017 class; second, it meant she could afford to pursue her interest in a graduate degree.

“At the conference, a previous Milken winner—an Alabama school principal—was assigned as my mentor who would call once a month to talk about professional and personal goals and then held me accountable to those things,” Picciuto says.

“The cash prize made it possible for me to get a master’s degree, and my mentor was a resource in that, too, talking through expectations and reasons for going to graduate school.”

Today, almost 10 years into teaching, Picciuto is as sure she made the ideal career choice as she is of what she likes best about teaching.

“I love spending my day, every day, with kids all day long,” she says. “I like their curiosity and fresh perspective, especially with fifth graders who are just becoming aware of the world around them and forming opinions they can express.

“Every group of kids is different, and every year brings something different in what their interests are, in what will come easily to them and what is a struggle for them. Every year, what that will be is always new, and you get a new, blank slate, and you start over again.”

30 TENNESSEE ALUMNUS • Winter 2020
The first time Colleen Ryan (Chattanooga ’15) witnessed a student’s “a-ha!” moment, it cemented her desire to be a teacher.

“Seeing those students’ eyes light up when they finally got something correct; seeing the excitement on the teacher’s and the student’s face at the same time,” she recalls of that moment.

The first thought may be that her own “a-ha!” moment hit her when she was a student teacher, standing in front of the class and leading a lesson or leaning over students, helping them with an assignment. But that’s not the case.

Ryan, who won the national Toyota Teacher of the Year Award for 2019, had just started the UTC School of Education’s Teacher Education program when she had her first experience with a living, breathing classroom. As part of the “Education in the United States” course, she was there simply to observe, not participate.

While her experience cemented her desire to teach, it did the opposite for others.

“There were some of my friends who were in that class, and it opened their eyes, and they were like, ‘I don’t want to do this,’” says Ryan, now a kindergarten teacher at Rivermont Elementary School in Chattanooga. “It wasn’t a bad thing. They just didn’t want to go all the way through and then realize: ‘This isn’t what I want.’”

And that’s the point. Unlike the teacher-education programs at many universities, UTC chucks its students into a classroom in one of the first courses they take.

“Education in the United States” is a fish-or-cut-bait moment for students thinking about being a teacher, giving them a chance to bail if they decide they don’t.

“The course is normally taken around their sophomore year, so they haven’t been accepted into the teacher education program,” says Renee Murley, UTC School of Education director. “We want it early enough so, if they decide it’s not for them, they can transfer easily into another program. We really want them to decide: ‘Is this really the field I want to go into?’

“This is not an easy profession; it’s not a fallback profession.”

Requiring 10 hours each semester, the classroom experience is eye-opening for almost every student but, in general, out of the 180 or so students who take the course each academic year, only about nine change majors, she says.

Being in the classroom early also tells the students whether they have the personality for a teaching career, says Kim Wingate, teacher education program coordinator.

“That’s a big deal,” she says. “They’re not aware of that at 18 or 19 years old, so they’re getting an appreciation and understanding of the day-to-day balancing a teacher does.

“It is quite different than babysitting or when you were working part-time in a daycare. I did that,” Wingate says. “But it’s working part time in child care versus when you actually go out and start looking at it like: ‘I would be in charge.’”

Before they’re in the classroom, students are given a specific list of things to observe. Classroom management strategies. How the teacher engages the students. Lesson designs. Dealing with problem behavior. Meeting each child’s needs.

“There’s a classroom that’s full of children with all different needs,” Murley says. “Attempting to meet the needs of all the children in the classroom has got to be in the forefront of their mind.”

For Ryan, being in the classroom gave her the courage she needed to make teaching a career.

“It gave me the confidence to make an impact in students’ lives, just by showing me the tools that I need and telling me that I can do it,” she says. “I think it gave me the experience I needed. It really pushed me into making sure, to seek out opportunities to make an impact.”
Changing a State One Student at a Time

DeAlejandro Leads tnAchieves

BY JENNIFER SICKING
PHOTO BY WADE PAYNE

AS KRISSY DEALEJANDRO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR of tnAchieves, readily admits, “Really, a lot of what we do is drawn out of mistakes I made as a student.”

Those mistakes are helping thousands of Tennesseans find success.

As a freshman enrolling at the University of the South, DeAlejandro didn’t file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). She didn’t know that such a thing existed.

“No one told us,” she says.

She’s making sure that high school seniors hear that message along with the one that there is a path forward for higher education, whether it’s attending a technology college, a community college or a four-year university. In 2018, nearly 60,000 Tennessee high school students in 90 counties filed out the FAFSA form with the help of tnAchieves. With the national average of seniors completing the FAFSA at 61.2 percent, tnAchieves’ filing rate hit 87.6 percent.

After earning a Master of Arts in political science from UT Knoxville in 2004 and going on to completing all but her dissertation in a doctorate in political studies, DeAlejandro realized she didn’t want to be a professor. While working as deputy chief of staff for then-Knox County Mayor Mike Ragsdale, she was handed a new project called knoxAchieves to help Knox County students attend college. In it, she found her passion.

“I can’t imagine doing any other kind of work,” she says.

Since 2015, tnAchieves has partnered with Tennessee Promise to increase higher education opportunities for high school students across the state by providing last-dollar scholarships along with mentor guidance. It’s changing the students’ thoughts from “I can’t” to “I can” by removing as many barriers as possible.

While helping students fund college remains critical, the 9,000 mentors living in 90 of Tennessee’s counties provide the heartbeat to the program. The mentors—who live in the students’ home counties—answer students’ questions ranging from “What is a credit hour?” to “What do I do if I fail a math test?”

“We quickly understood that funding would be critical, but if students lacked support, it would be a zero-sum game,” DeAlejandro says. “Now, it’s the heart of the program.”

In another component of the program, students have returned 2.55 million volunteer hours to their communities—giving back to those who have given to them.

Whether the high school students go on to earn a welding certificate, an associate’s degree in computer information technology or a bachelor’s degree in English, DeAlejandro knows that credential is the only path to economic prosperity and independence for many of the tnAchieves students. In turn, that impacts Tennessee’s future.

“One student at a time, we’re building a future workforce to bring businesses into the state,” she says.

Changing one student’s life can change a family, which can change a community, which can change a state.
Learning to Lead

Academy Prepares Future Principals

BY MELISSA TINDELL

NATIONALLY, PRINCIPALS ARE LEAVING THEIR SCHOOLS IN DROVES, and UT Knoxville’s Center for Educational Leadership is trying to do something about it in East Tennessee.

According to the Institute for Education Statistics, one in five principals in the 2011-12 school year left their school by the 2012-13 school year. Additional research shows that 50 percent of principals are not retained beyond their third year of leading a school.

“Today’s school principal has an increasingly important and complex job, so we rigorously prepare accomplished educators to become effective school leaders with a clear focus on equity and excellence,” Jim McIntyre, UT Knoxville Center for Educational Leadership director, says. “We’ve been fortunate to have unwavering support from the university, and our remarkable graduates are now having a positive impact on student learning and success in schools across Tennessee.”

The Leadership Academy is a collaborative venture between UT Knoxville and area school systems that prepares talented individuals to become outstanding new school principals through a full-time, intensive 15-month fellowship program. Leadership Academy fellows spend four days a week working in a school with an experienced mentor principal. The fifth day is spent in coursework and seminars with professors and expert practitioner partners.

Since the program’s inception in 2010, the Leadership Academy has graduated 103 fellows with a master’s or education specialist degree, along with placement as an administrator in their county or city school system. To complete the program, students participate in a research project that includes an electronic portfolio documenting proficiency in school leadership.

“The UT Leadership Academy has played an integral part in preparing me in the beginning of my administrative career,” says Jesse Cigarroa, current Leadership Academy fellow and assistant principal at Mountain View Elementary School in Johnson City.

“The knowledge and guidance gained from the professors and fellows have assisted me in making the best decisions possible to support the students, faculty, staff and families at my school. I look forward to continuing in this wonderful program.”

Jonathan East was a member of the inaugural cohort of the Leadership Academy in 2010. He is currently serving as assistant principal at West High School.

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Betsey B. Creekmore Special Collections and University Archives builds collections of manuscripts, rare books and other unique materials to support the scholarly interests of the University of Tennessee community, the residents of Tennessee and researchers around the world. Here are a few of the more unusual objects to be found in the UT Libraries’ archives.

**PACK OF PHILIP MORRIS CIGARETTES**  
*memento of World War II*

Popular culture during World War II glamorized smoking, and the military made cigarettes cheaply available to soldiers. The daily K-ration for combat troops included a four-pack of cigarettes at each meal—breakfast, lunch and dinner. An unopened pack of Philip Morris cigarettes is one of the wartime mementos donated to UT’s Center for the Study of War and Society by the family of World War II Army ordnance officer Edwin Best. Best was a member of the United States Army 6th Engineer Special Brigade, 618th Ordnance Ammunition Company, an amphibious force that participated in the Allied invasion of Normandy at Omaha Beach in June 1944.

**Clarence Brown’s WALKING CANE**

Legendary Hollywood film director Clarence Brown (1890–1987) enrolled at UT Knoxville at age 15 and, by age 19, had earned degrees in mechanical and electrical engineering. The young engineer’s career path veered from the automobile industry to the burgeoning film industry. After an apprenticeship under silent film director Maurice Tourneur, Brown moved to Hollywood, where he directed many of the great stars of the golden age of motion pictures—Greta Garbo, Lionel Barrymore, Clark Gable and Joan Crawford, among others. He produced seven of Garbo’s films, including her first talkie. Brown’s $12 million bequest to the university built UT’s Clarence Brown Theatre and endowed the theater company. The ornate walking cane is inscribed with Brown’s signature.

**MINIATURE BOOK**  
*Addresses of Abraham Lincoln*

This tiny book—at just under 2 centimeters high, the smallest in the UT Libraries’ collections—includes the unabridged text of the Gettysburg Address. It is one of a set of three tiny volumes of former President Abraham Lincoln’s speeches published in 1929 by the former Kingsport Press to show the skills of the press and its workers. Like any other hardback book, it includes a title page, a dedication, page numbers and even an index.

**BUTTON**  
*from a jacket tailored by former President Andrew Johnson*

Andrew Johnson, the 17th president of the United States, was a self-made man. He was born in a two-room shack and never attended school. At age 10, he was apprenticed to a tailor and later established a successful tailoring business in Greeneville before entering politics. The button was originally part of a coat that Johnson made while working as a tailor in Greeneville.

**INSCRIBED JAWBONE**  
*presented to U.S. Sen. Estes Kefauver*

Estes Kefauver, a U.S. senator from Tennessee between 1939 and 1949, was known as a...
master campaigner with a larger-than-life personality. The collection of Kefauver’s political papers includes the usual examples of campaign memorabilia such as keys to the city—as well as this odd memento from Kefauver’s campaign swing through Grant’s Pass, Oregon, during his 1952 bid for president. The inscribed jawbone (most likely from a cow) was presented to Kefauver by the Grant’s Pass Cavemen. The local booster group was noted for dressing in furs and caveman wigs and performing antics such as initiating politicians into the club.

**DRIED FLOWERS**

given to Margaret Gray Blanton by Sigmund Freud

Margaret Gray had only a sixth grade education when she married Smiley Blanton in 1910. Her husband’s career as a physician and professor of speech disorders and child development allowed her to take university courses. Over the years, husband and wife co-authored several books. In 1929, Smiley spent several months in Vienna undergoing psychoanalysis with Sigmund Freud. No doubt, this was when Margaret received the flowers, which she dried and saved in a papier-mâché box. Smiley later became a practicing psychoanalyst, and his *Diary of My Analysis with Freud* was published after the author’s death. Smiley was also the co-founder, along with Norman Vincent Peale, of the American Foundation of Religion and Psychiatry.

**J. G. M. Ramsey’s WALLET**

Typical of 19th-century wallets, this example features separate compartments for gold coins, postage stamps and the owner’s spectacles. James Gettys McGready Ramsey (1797–1884) was a Knoxville physician, banker, historian and author of a 700-page book on the history of Tennessee before 1800. During the Civil War, Ramsey supported the Confederacy and served as a Confederate treasury agent. He had a long-standing feud with the pro-Union editor of the Knoxville Whig, William “Parson” Brownlow. One of Ramsey’s sons, who was Confederate States district attorney of Knox County during the war, had Brownlow arrested for treason, and Brownlow was forced into exile. Later, as Tennessee governor, Brownlow ordered Ramsey’s arrest, but Ramsey secured a pardon from President Andrew Johnson. The historic Ramsey House in East Knoxville, now a museum, was the family’s ancestral home.

**PLASTER CASTS of the hands of three pianists**

The manuscript collections include an extensive archive of some 1,500 musical scores assembled by the pianist Gottfried Galston (1879–1950) to document his career and that of his mentor, pianist-composer Ferruccio Busoni (1866–1924). Among the memorabilia are plaster casts of the hands of Galston, Busoni and the 19th-century virtuoso pianist Anton Rubinstein. The practice of making hand casts of famous pianists arose in the 19th century, during the Romantic era of Western classical music. Casts were taken of living pianists and sometimes at the time of death to commemorate a great musician. The cast of Rubinstein’s hand was taken after death.

*Moonshine still painted on a SAW BLADE*

This scene of a moonshine still was painted with fingernail polish by Sky Sutton, daughter of the near-mythic Smoky Mountain moonshiner Popcorn Sutton. The UT Libraries places a strong emphasis on the history and culture of the region—including resources on the legal and illegal distillation of hard liquor—and the popular culture that has grown up around it. The Moonshine and Distillation Collection includes everything from a 16th-century treatise on the art of distilling spirits to folk art, movie posters and whiskey labels.
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UT Announces Sale of Eugenia Williams Home

The UT System announced the sale of the Eugenia Williams house to the Aslan Foundation in mid-October.

“Historic preservation is a key funding priority for the foundation, and we are pleased to be a part of ensuring that this building and its grounds are preserved for future public use and appreciation,” says Andrea Bailey, executive director for the foundation.

The university worked with the state of Tennessee Real Estate Asset Management office to solicit sealed bids for the purchase of property. Bids were subject to a preservation easement on the house. The Aslan Foundation submitted the strongest bid at $4.025 million for the property, with provisions to preserve the house and retain the natural beauty of the property. Proceeds from the sale will be used to establish the UT Knoxville Promise Dr. David Hitt Williams Endowment, in honor of Williams’ father.

Moore Appointed as UT Board of Trustees Secretary and Special Counsel

After a national search, the UT Board of Trustees appointed Cynthia Moore as its secretary and special counsel. Moore previously served as the University of Pittsburgh’s deputy secretary of the Board of Trustees.

“This is such an exciting time to join the University of Tennessee,” Moore says. “I look forward to being an engaged member of the UT community and working collaboratively with Interim President Randy Boyd, the senior leadership team and all the many dedicated individuals from across the system who are contributing daily to its progress and future success.”

Catherine Mizell (Knoxville ’71, ’75)

UT secretary, chief of staff and special counsel, retired at the end of 2019 after almost 40 years working at the university.

UT Kicks Off UT Promise Endowment Campaign

At the UT Knoxville and UT Chattanooga football game, the UT System kicked off a $100 million UT Promise endowment campaign with the announcement of $17.5 million raised since March. Until the endowment is funded, the university will cover the cost of the students’ scholarships.

“This endowment will allow us to keep our promise for years to come,” UT Interim President Randy Boyd says.

The goal of UT Promise is to make higher education even more accessible and affordable for Tennessee students. UT Promise will welcome its first class in the fall of 2020, and the scholarship program will include those students who were previously enrolled in college when the program begins.

For more information or to make a donation, see tennessee.edu/ut-promise.
T-Shirt Story Goes Viral

This fall, the internet went wild over the story of a Florida fourth grader who was teased after drawing his own UT design and pinning it to an orange T-shirt for his school’s college colors day. The boy’s teacher posted a note on Facebook, and a variety of university offices—including the VolShop, Athletics, the Office of Communications and Marketing and the Office of Alumni Affairs—responded by sending the boy a package filled with UT shirts, hats and other branded items. Then Threds, a Knoxville-based custom apparel and promotional products company, created an official UT shirt using the boy’s design. The VolShop began selling it, with proceeds going to Stomp Out Bullying, an antibullying organization. The public response was overwhelming. To date, more than 110,000 of the shirts have been sold. The university subsequently offered the boy honorary admission to the Class of 2032 and awarded him a four-year scholarship for tuition and fees if he decides to attend UT and meets admission requirements.

Nursing Receives Largest Gift in Its History

The UT College of Nursing has received its largest gift ever—$7.5 million—from alumna Sara Croley and her husband, Ross. About $5.5 million of the gift will support the college’s building renovation and expansion; the rest will be used to establish the Sara Rosenbalm Croley Endowed Dean’s Chair. With a growing need to educate more nurses to meet state and national demands, the gift will pave the way for much-needed growth. The college has outgrown its current building, which is 41 years old, and has had to turn away highly qualified applicants because of a lack of space and resources. A $60 million renovation and expansion project, to be funded through a combination of donations and state funds, will more than double the size of the building. The college has set a campaign goal to raise $10 million in private support, and the Croleys have agreed to serve as campaign chairs.

Small Named Permanent VC for Diversity and Engagement

Tyvi Small, who began serving as the interim vice chancellor for diversity and engagement in December 2018, has now taken on the role permanently. Small has launched a number of initiatives, including training programs for faculty and staff, a framework for academic colleges to create diversity action plans, and new and expanded speaker programs. Chancellor Donde Plowman says, “Tyvi has proven himself to be a compassionate, thoughtful and creative leader who has built strong relationships based on trust and respect across our campus and the broader community. Through his experience as a first-generation student and his various roles on campus, he understands the importance that mattering and belonging play in student success.”
Campus News from CHATTANOOGA

UTC Chancellor Notes
50-Year Milestone
With UT System

The 50th anniversary of UT Chattanooga's affiliation with the statewide UT System was among the highlights UTC Chancellor Steve Angle cited at his annual State of the University address in September. Before a standing-room only crowd inside the recently renovated UTC Guerry Center—originally a University Center named for the university's seventh president, Alexander Guerry—Angle contrasted some key statistics between 1969 and 2019, including enrollment increasing from 1,300 to more than 11,600, University of Chattanooga Foundation assets soaring from $3 million to more than $200 million, and UC Foundation scholarship endowment funds now totaling more than $31 million and providing 1,492 scholarships. Distinguished guests included Zan Guerry and Alexis Guerry Bogo, grandson and great-granddaughter of Alexander Guerry; interim UT President Randy Boyd; Chattanooga Mayor Andy Berke; Tennessee Sen. Patsy Hazlewood and Rep. Yusuf Hakeem; and former UTC chancellors Roger Brown, Fred Obear and Bill Stacy.

UTC, Wolf Trap Partner

An unprecedented collaboration between Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts and UTC’s Southeast Center for Education in the Arts (SCEA) brings arts-based teaching and learning programs to early childhood classrooms in Chattanooga and a 17-county service area.

UTC-Wolf Trap marks the Virginia-based institute’s first higher-education partnership, its newest affiliate and expands its network to 21 organizations across the U.S. and Singapore.

UTC-Wolf Trap will implement the institute’s model for early childhood arts integration, which pairs learning experiences for the youngest students with effective professional development for early childhood educators. Children in greater Chattanooga schools, child care centers and other learning environments will engage in arts-based lessons that span the curriculum, including science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM, while the community’s educators will receive customized, hands-on training in arts-based techniques they can apply to their current and future classrooms.

UTC Professor
Appointed 2019-2020
NSF Program Director

Li Yang, Guerry professor of computer science and engineering and assistant dean of the UTC College of Engineering and Computer Science, has been named a program director at the National Science Foundation (NSF) for the 2019-2020 academic year.

Yang is the first UTC faculty member to receive such an NSF appointment. She is directing the NSF's CyberCorps and Secure and Trustworthy Cyberspace programs to advance and bolster U.S. cybersecurity education and workforce development. As a program director, Yang will oversee the vetting of proposals for NSF-funded research.

Yang’s cybersecurity expertise has attracted about $4 million in research funding to date. Under her leadership, UTC has secured external funding to promote innovation in applied research and to foster diversity, inclusion and excellence in computing and cybersecurity. She will spend two years at NSF, then return to UTC.
Rocketing Up

Three engineering students from UT Martin placed fourth in their category and 12th overall in the third annual Spaceport America Cup, held in Las Cruces, New Mexico. This annual competition is the only international collegiate rocket engineering competition in the world.

Speaker Tackles iGen

Jean Twenge, professor of psychology at San Diego State University, spoke Sept. 3 as the first guest in UT Martin’s ENGAGE Civic Initiative. Her presentation focused on “iGen: The Smartphone Generation” from a psychological perspective and offered insights into current social and health trends for those born from 1995-2012. “Around 2011, 2012, I started to notice changes that were bigger and more sudden. ... More and more teens started to say that they felt left out or that they felt lonely. More and more started to say that they can’t do anything right or that their life wasn’t useful or that they did not enjoy life,” she says. As a correlation, teens’ time online doubled from 2006, up to six hours per day, and they spent less time face to face with others. Twenge recommends limiting leisure smartphone use to fewer than two hours per day, not including time needed for professional work, homework and navigation. “You don’t have to give up the phone. You don’t even have to give up social media, if that’s something that you want to do. But think about those things that really do make you happy,” she says.

UT Martin Tops U.S. News & World Report Lists

UT Martin is the top-ranked public Tennessee institution on the 2020 U.S. News & World Report lists for top regional universities in the South, best universities for veterans in the South, best-value universities in the South and regional universities for social mobility in the South. The Princeton Review also has included UT Martin among the best southeastern colleges for the 17th consecutive year, and Washington Monthly ranks UT Martin 31st in its “Best Bang for the Buck” category for southern schools. The university is also among Institutional Research & Evaluation Inc.’s list of “America’s 100 Best College Buys” for the 14th year in a row.

Enrollment Increases

UT Martin reports 7,296 students enrolled this fall semester, including both undergraduate and graduate-level students. This shows a 3.2 percent total increase from the fall 2018 enrollment numbers. More than 500 graduate students are studying at UT Martin this fall (a 37.9 percent increase from fall 2018), and undergraduate enrollment stands at 6,779 (a 1.3 percent increase from last fall). Dual-enrollment courses, which offer college credit to high school students across the region, report a 17.4 percent increase from fall 2018 for a total of 1,422 students currently enrolled in at least one course.
Assistant U.S. Surgeon General Visits UTHSC

Rear Admiral Timothy Ricks, the chief dental officer for the U.S. Public Health Service and an assistant U.S. surgeon general, visited UTHSC in October, urging dental students to focus on oral health as a key to overall health across the lifespan.

“Part of my job is to impress on people the importance of oral health,” Ricks says. “It’s the idea of dental students thinking beyond the mouth and to the role oral health plays in general health.”

College of Pharmacy Expands Nashville Campus

The UTHSC College of Pharmacy has expanded its Nashville campus by moving to a new, larger facility in southeast Nashville at 301 South Perimeter Park Drive.

The college moved to accommodate the growing demands of the Nashville campus. The building and new campus have state-of-the-art features, including a simulated pharmacy.

“This move is a dream come true for our students and the college,” says Dean Marie Chisholm-Burns. “In this new, larger space, we are able to better accommodate our students and provide some of the same resources we offer at our other campuses in Memphis and Knoxville.”

Show Some Spirit!

Show your UTHSC spirit by preordering a collegiate license plate featuring the UTHSC logo.

The state has approved the creation of a UTHSC plate but requires 1,000 people to preorder the plate and pay a $35 deposit for production to begin. UTHSC will pay the $35 deposit for the first 1,000 people who reserve a plate. Collegiate plates cost $61.50 annually. Those who preorder will pay only $26.50 for the first year, due when the plate is picked up.

Plates may be ordered at uthsc.edu/license-plate. Three designs have been proposed. The design with the most votes will be the official UTHSC plate. Once the requisite number of preorders is achieved, the plates should be available in four to six months. Money generated from the sale of the plates will support educational outreach at UTHSC.

Vote for your favorite UTHSC license plate by ordering one at uthsc.edu/license-plate.
Agriculture and Alumni Shine at Ag Day

“Our future’s so bright” was the theme of UTIA’s annual Ag Day celebration. More than 700 friends and supporters gathered before kickoff of the Tennessee-Georgia football game to celebrate agriculture and honor three distinguished alumni.

Jerry Ray (Knoxville ’76) was recognized as the UT Extension Tennessee Farmer of the Year. Ray farms 1,900 acres in Moore County and raises corn, wheat, soybeans, forage and 1,400 head of cattle. UTIA’s Meritorious Service Award was presented to Ruth Henderson-McQueen (Knoxville ’73, ’75). McQueen served nearly 30 years with UT Extension, developing international programming, serving with 4-H Roundup and Congress as well as training agents. She remains a 4-H volunteer. The institute also recognized Seiche Genger, a 2014 graduate of the College of Veterinary Medicine, with the 2019 Horizon Award. Genger is the East Asia Technical Manager for Hy-Line International, a company that raises egg-laying chickens. She is moving to Thailand to supervise operations throughout Asia and Australia in food safety and veterinary care.

Ag Day also included visits from American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue, who took time to visit exhibits and chat with students about their career plans.

Plant Sciences Sizzles with Plant Drop and Fresh Electric Farm

In October, students in the plant sciences class “Plants that Changed the World” gave away 1,000 potted coleus plants in two minutes on the UT Knoxville pedestrian walkway. The students’ instructor, Andy Pulte (Knoxville ’08, ’16), thought the chaotic “plant drop” would be an exciting way to get the word out about the benefit of plants. The result? One thousand plants actively remind 1,000 Vols about careers in plant sciences.

Also in October, UTIA and partnering organizations celebrated the opening of the Fresh Electric Farm—a farm inside a shipping container. The farm produces crops indoors while reducing carbon and acreage footprints. The first crop is kale, which was started as seedlings and will be finished in columns under bright, purple LED lights that aid photosynthesis. Directed by Carl Sams (Knoxville ’74, ’76), a distinguished professor and plant physiologist, the project is a cooperation of plant sciences, the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Knoxville Utilities Board and the Electric Power Research Institute. Students will learn directly about producing food indoors, and the crops will be donated to Second Harvest Food Bank of East Tennessee.
IPS added training space in Nashville to meet the demand.

IPS Expands in Middle Tennessee

The UT Institute for Public Service (IPS) is expanding its footprint in Nashville by adding 7,750 square feet of training space to one of its existing office locations.

The additional training space will be at 193 Polk Ave., adjacent to the current offices of the IPS agency UT Center for Industrial Services. The additional space will be broken into training rooms, breakout rooms, coordination space, a kitchen and a conference room. Work to retro-fit the space is expected to start in late 2019.

Increased training requests in Middle Tennessee have necessitated the need for the space.

Naifeh Center’s CPM Program Approved for Veterans’ Benefits

The Naifeh Center for Effective Leadership has received approval from the Veterans Administration, through the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, for the training of veterans and their eligible dependents in the Certified Public Manager program.

“I found out about the TN CPM program from a good friend of mine, and I thought that the program would be a great opportunity for me because I have a passion for leadership and management training based upon my prior military career,” says Michael Parson, a current program student.

The curriculum is for those who would like a challenging career and to be exposed to new ideas. With the recent approval for veteran training, participants will be enriched with the invaluable experience from those who have served in military roles.

UT Center for Industrial Services Certifies Three New Economic Developers

The UT Center for Industrial Services graduated its 11th class in its Tennessee Certified Economic Developer (TCED) Program. This cohort brings the total number of Tennessee certified economic developers to 67.

The graduates gathered in Nashville to present their capstone projects, the final requirement for certification. TCED candidates completed a week-long Basic Economic Development Course in addition to a series of six core courses pertinent to economic and community development. The TCED Program gives participants a broad-based knowledge of economic trends, tools and core components required to compete in today’s global economy.

The fall 2019 TCED graduates are:

• Kathy Barber, economic development specialist with the UT Center for Industrial Services, Knoxville
• Bridget Jones, CEO and principal, Jones-Bridget Consulting Group, Columbia
• Julian McTizic, mayor, Bolivar
1 UT alumni from across all campuses enjoyed a 10-day Glacial Adventures of Alaska cruise. Back row, from left, Dale Colwell, Ed Lawrence (Chattanooga '84), Donna Lawrence (Chattanooga '81), David Ingram (Knoxville '77), Tom Sterling; second row, from left, Leland McNabb, Mike Davidson, Tabitha McNabb (Knoxville '85), Linda Davidson, Debbie Ingram (Chattanooga '84, Knoxville '94), Judy Counce (Martin '65), Jimmy Counce (Martin '69); front row, from left, Teresa Huggins (HSC '81), Don Abitz, Casey Colwell Wingo (Knoxville '17), Jayne Sterling (Martin '68), Jackie Wise (Knoxville '09) and Lisa Abitz.

2 Sharon Nowlin marveled at the size of a Lady Vols Basketball player’s shoe during a locker room tour as part of the Spectator Camp event hosted by the Alliance of Women Philanthropists and the Tennessee Fund.

3 Jane Guthrie (Chattanooga '61), UTC student Quin Crumb and John Guthrie (Chattanooga '60) are pictured at the annual UTC Donor and Student Scholarship luncheon.

4 From left, Ben Scott, Riddell Scott (HSC '02), Nishel Patel (HSC '11) and T.J. Patel, HSC Department of Dermatology chair, attend the 2019 College of Medicine Outstanding Alumni Awards.
Bill (Martin ’70) and Rosann Nunnelly meet with two of the first four scholarship recipients from the couple’s $22 million bequest to fund scholarships, the largest in UT Martin’s history. Pictured are, from left, Jacob Bybee, Rosann Nunnelly, Cierra Russell and Bill Nunnelly.

The 2019 College of Medicine Outstanding Alumni Award recipients were honored during a special dinner. Pictured, from left, are Bill Mariencheck (Knoxville ’63, HSC ’65), Donald Barker (HSC ’75), Gene Mangiante (HSC ’75) and Peter Whittington (HSC ’71).

Seiche Genger, center, (Knoxville ’14) was awarded the Horizon Award at Ag Day. She is pictured with Tim Cross (left), UTIA senior vice president and senior vice chancellor, and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue.

From left, Mario Parson, Jazmine Clark, LaDarius Parson, Tania Parson and Tonya Parson (Martin ’93) attend UT Martin’s Legacy Luncheon.

At the 2019 Ag Day, Ruth Henderson McQueen (Knoxville ’73, ’75), middle, received the Meritorious Service Award. McQueen developed international 4-H programming and was involved in many areas of the 4-H organization. She is pictured with UTIA Senior Vice President and Senior Vice Chancellor Tim Cross, left, and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue.
UT Knoxville celebrated 25 outstanding alumni at the 225th Anniversary and Alumni Awards Gala. Back row, from left: Ed Ingle (Knoxville ’83), J. Reginald Hill (Knoxville ’77, ’80), Chuck Griffin (Knoxville ’84), Kelly Headden (Knoxville ’88), Dane Bradshaw (Knoxville ’06, ’07), Marshall Ramsey (Knoxville ’91), Lauren Akins (Knoxville ’12), Keith Carver (Knoxville ’95, ’09), Chad Goldman (Knoxville ’93); middle row, from left: James Herbert (Knoxville ’62), Judi Herbert (Knoxville ’63), Syreeta Vaughn (Knoxville ’05, ’13), Sunshine Parker (Knoxville ’03, ’04), Cheri Beasley (Knoxville ’91), Delores Ziegler (Knoxville ’79); front row, from left: Larry Pratt (Knoxville ’73), Cavanaugh Mims (Knoxville ’86), Shuwanza Goff (Knoxville ’06), Joe Johnson (Knoxville ’60, ’68), Theolis Robinson Jr. (Knoxville ’65), Karen Bowling (Knoxville ’94), Holly Sullivan (Knoxville ’94, ’98)

10 Alejandro (Chattanooga ’01) and Amy Lopez with son Mateo attend pre-game activities.

11 Alumni and donors to UT Knoxville gather at the Tyson Alumni Center before each home football game to tailgate. From left, Brandy Brown (Chattanooga ’17) and Jameko Williams (Knoxville ’00).

13 Members of the UT Martin class of 1969 returned to campus to celebrate their golden class reunion.
The Class of 1969, the last graduating class of the University of Chattanooga, recently celebrated its 50th reunion. Members of the class enjoyed a luncheon, campus tour and class dinner. During a service held in Patten Chapel, the class members were inducted into the UC Fifty Plus Club.

Jerry Ray (Knoxville ’76), middle, receives the 2019 Tennessee Farmer of the Year award. He is pictured with UTIA Senior Vice President Tim Cross, left, and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue.

From left, Jean Payne (Chattanooga ’82), Kim Garner Combs (Chattanooga ’81, ’89) and Julie Steele (Knoxville ’83) attended the third annual Alliance of Women Philanthropists Tailgate prior to the UT Knoxville vs. UT Chattanooga football game.

Attending the 2019 College of Medicine Outstanding Alumni Awards are, from left, Errol Thomas (HSC ’00); LaTonya Washington (HSC ’04); Scott Strome, UTHSC College of Medicine executive dean; Corbi Milligan (HSC ’00, Knoxville ’13); Jessica Minor-Ruffin (HSC ’00) and Bianca Sweeten (HSC ’97).

In September, the UT Knoxville Alumni Board of Directors celebrated 10 years of helping to advance the university and enrich the lives of students and alumni.
“There is no way I can do this anymore.” Those are the words that just about every teacher has said at some point in his or her career. I utter those words just about every year around May. I would be lying if I said I haven’t truly thought of leaving the teaching profession at least once. I am often asked why I stick with it. For the past 14 years, I have taught high school English and theater arts. In those years, education has changed in many ways.

Education places considerable demands and stress on classroom teachers. Funding cuts, increased class sizes, added emphasis on standardized tests and impossible observation requirements have made many new teachers flee in the first five years.

Sitting at my desk ready to pack up my belongings and considering early retirement, the bell rings, and the students comes pouring in through my door. As I observe each one, I remember how two days ago one of them was thrilled because he aced my “ridiculously hard test” (his words, not mine), and I smile as I recall how funny one of the stories shared by another student was the day before. One particular student can’t wait to tell me that she read ahead in the book and she cried at the end because “I just couldn’t believe how sad the ending was.” As the day goes on, I share laughs, triumphs and dreams with the numerous students whose paths cross mine. I also have listened and attempted to hold back tears as students have told me about a mother or a father who is an addict.

Teaching is not easy. It never has been. It is more than making awesome lesson plans, having great test scores and getting a top score on an evaluation. It took me a few years to realize that. I believe our children are our most important investment in the future, and it is in that future that I am still investing.

When my first class of the day begins and I am in a world that my students and I have created together, I remember why I still come into the classroom day after day and year after year. I see a folder I keep on my desk with the words, “It’s all worth it,” written on it. Inside are each and every thank-you card, Christmas card, graduation invitation and note that I have received. There are Post It notes with “We love you Mrs. Manning” and smiley faces written on them. As I read over these pieces of paper, I can’t help but laugh a little at a couple of apology notes from a few students who weren’t always easy. A handwritten note says, “We hope your Mom gets better!” with all the students’ names crammed on it. My students had left it on my desk when I was out caring for my ailing mother. Then I remember how, after my mother’s death, my theater arts class took up money among themselves to buy my family dinner after her funeral.

These small gestures and moments bring me back day after day and year after year. What keeps me in the classroom remains the very thing that attracted me in the first place: I get to spend my days with the most amazing people—my students. That makes this whole crazy profession worth all the aggravation.

Alison Manning (Knoxville ’98) (shown left, in green) teaches English and theater arts at Cumberland Gap High School.
At SAS, we hold students to high academic standards while encouraging them to seek new experiences, pursue leadership opportunities, and self-advocate. It is preparation that allows them to take full advantage of college from their very first day.

“Not only did the rigorous coursework at SAS prepare me for courses at the collegiate level, but boarding school allowed me to become more mature and ready for life on my own.”

Kenneth Thomas ’17
B.A. Business Analytics
UT-Knoxville ’20

“At SAS, I learned the critical thinking and analysis skills that are the basis of practicing law. I definitely had a head start as a college freshman. The experience of speaking up in classes gave me the confidence I later needed to speak up in court. I always felt I had an edge because of what I learned at SAS.”

Abigail Turner ’88
B.A. Magna Cum Laude English and Political Science
UT-Knoxville ’92
J.D. Vanderbilt Law School ’95

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