

MID-AMERICAN

THE MAGAZINE OF MID-AMERICA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY



Students and Alumni Caring for Patient Needs



*Dream Bigger.
Do Greater.
Spring 2021*

President's Letter

One of the most negative consequences of this pandemic may well be the separations brought about by quarantines, lockdowns, school closures and hospitalized patients unable to have family with them. We are now more sensitive to an overall pandemic of loneliness! This is why followers of Jesus must be committed to care-giving and seize the opportunities to exercise the gifts of the Spirit in loving one another!

This issue of the *Mid-American* highlights ways that our students and alumni are ministering to the needs of people around them. Our hospital practicums find students ministering to COVID-19 patients who otherwise would have no one to visit or pray with them outside of hospital staff. There are new opportunities emerging for students to participate in internships at free community clinics where the marginalized and the underserved receive medical and spiritual attention. MACU is experiencing unprecedented enrollment growth in our counseling programs, with students serving in congregational care ministries or mental health clinics. Our men's basketball team has been recognized for the unique way they have used their pregame messages to speak out against social injustice, leading indoor and online audiences in contemplation to be committed to removing injustice and in praying for our nation's healing and unity.

Caring for one another is founded on having a life-altering, loving relationship with Christ. John 13:34-35 says, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

During World War II, a church building in Strasbourg, Germany, was destroyed. After the bombing, church members surveyed the area to see what damage was done. They were pleased that a statue of Christ with outstretched hands was still standing. It had been sculpted centuries before by a great artist. However, as debris was cleared, parishioners discovered both hands of Christ had been sheared off by a falling beam. Later, a sculptor in the town offered to replace the broken hands as a gift to the church. Church leaders met to consider the offer and decided not to accept it. Those leaders



concluded that this statue of Jesus without hands would be a great reminder that God's work must be done through his people.

Indeed, there must be a balance between the preaching of the Gospel and practicing it in our behavior and ministries to the community. James 2:14-17 says, "What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."

At MACU, we impress and shape our students to become "the hands of Christ." We want them to love one another with their heads and hearts and their hands! Jesus said, "As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." (John 20:21)



Dr. John Fozard, President



President

Dr. John Fozard

Editors

Jody Allen

Whitney K. Knight

Anna-Kate Weichel

Photos/Images

Anna-Kate Weichel

Graphic Design

Spark Creative

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Butterfield Foundation Partnership

A new partnership between MACU, Butterfield Memorial Foundation and Crossings Community Church is helping give Pastoral Care students an unparalleled opportunity to minister to patients at charitable clinics.

The partnership helps fund two to four paid internships a year at Crossings Community Clinic in Oklahoma City. The clinic helps treat uninsured and otherwise underserved patients by offering medical, dental and vision healthcare.

"Butterfield Foundation is thrilled to be partnering with MACU and Crossings Community Clinic to pilot an internship program to equip students with the necessary skills to provide spiritual care to patients in a Christian-based, charitable clinic setting," said Dierdre McCool, Vice President of Butterfield Foundation.

During the course of their internships, MACU students will have the opportunity to visit with patients and family members as they come to receive care in the clinic. This includes listening to them, offering spiritual resources and providing encouragement and prayer. Students will also serve at the Crossings Community Center, which is located in the same facility.

"By the time our students have completed their Practicum courses, they've had the opportunity to care for people from all walks of life and learn how to navigate the hospital environment. Working in the clinics will give them the wonderful privilege of expanding their care in a similar environment, but one that is medical ministry focused," said Ministry Professor Justin Key.

Students will not only get to continue caring for people but will also learn a model of ministry that they might get to replicate and implement in the future.

"Furthermore, the interaction and fellowship with administrative and medical staff who are of the same mindset as it relates to serving will be a significant blessing and contribution to their overall training," Key said.

MACU student Savannah Balute is the first student to take part in the internship. She said that when Key brought her the opportunity to serve at Crossings Clinic through the Butterfield Foundation, she knew she had to take it.

"Practicum has taught me that you do not need all the answers and fixes to people's problems. Instead, it's about trusting the Holy Spirit and His guidance," Balute said. "I'm excited and honored to take this opportunity to reach even more people with God's love."

She said as a ministry major at a Christian university, it's very easy to be in what she describes as a "Jesus bubble," surrounded by other believers. Her time serving as a chaplain has challenged her and helped connect her with those who are from very different places, backgrounds and beliefs.

"It has pushed me to be able to connect with different people, believers and unbelievers, and show all of them the love of Christ in different ways," Balute said.

If you would like more information on how you can support this new effort, please contact University Advancement at 405-692-3134. All checks directed to the Pastoral Care Scholarship will be added to this fund. You can also visit give.macu.edu to give online. Every dollar helps train a student to care!



PHOTO: MACU student Savannah Balute is the first to intern at Crossings Community Clinic thanks to a new partnership with Butterfield Foundation.

Eighteen Years of Practicum in Pastoral Care



PHOTO: Ministry Professor Justin Key with Practicum in Pastoral Care students Makayla Lein and Logan Deaton.

Since MACU's Practicum in Pastoral Care course launched almost two decades ago, MACU students have touched the hearts of more than 30,000 patients, families and hospital staff members with God's loving kindness.

This spring marks the eighteenth year of Practicum in Pastoral Care, an honors-level, clinical training experience available to MACU students who have completed a significant amount of coursework in Bible, theology and ministry.

The Practicum course is designed to offer instruction that is immediately translated into ministry in a clinical setting. Students attend classroom instruction every Tuesday, where they process various aspects of pastoral caregiving. On Thursdays, they travel to partner hospital Alliance Health Midwest to offer spiritual care to patients, giving them the opportunity to put into practice the principles learned from class.

Ministry Professor Justin Key, who oversees Practicum, says the course is a perfect blend of faithful learning and faithful practice.

"Our students get to visit with people from all walks of life who are experiencing many challenges in the area of cardiac recovery, intensive care and oncology," Key said. "In the first week of caregiving alone this semester, a student visited someone who turned their caregiving visit down, a patient who was in a non-responsive condition and a patient who was terminally ill."

These are experiences that can't be replicated in the classroom, Key said, adding that MACU is blessed with the opportunity to prepare students for the reality they will face in life and in ministry.

Practicum in Pastoral Care began in 2004, after MACU President Dr. John Fozard and the late Brian Clemens, who was then the CEO of the hospital, collaborated together to create the course. Since then, Practicum has expanded to include a second level that takes place at The University of Oklahoma Medical Center, where students expand their caregiving to Levels 1 and 2 trauma and pediatric care, including the neonatal intensive care unit.

Beginning this month, Practicum students will have the unique opportunity to visit with COVID-19 patients.

"These are unprecedented times for all of us, and especially for these particular patients in the hospital who are having to remain isolated on a daily basis," Key said. "We believe that presently and in upcoming semesters, our students will have the incredible opportunity to offer care in a way that we've never been challenged with before."

To visit patients who have or are recovering from COVID-19, students will follow very strict personal protective equipment guidelines. These guidelines require double-masking, face shield, a full-length gown, gloves and coverings for their feet. They will sanitize their hands when getting on and off the elevator and between every visit, and they will wipe down their face shields repeatedly.

"Not only is this a blessing for the patient to receive a visit in the midst of their isolation, but also a wonderful growth opportunity for the student as they devote themselves to such a process for the benefit of others," said Key. "Our students have the opportunity to respond to God's call to follow Jesus Christ into any situation to be with others and demonstrate His love for them."

Alumni Spotlight

Caitlin Butler-Myers

An eighteen-year-old girl from Texas came to MACU to play softball, but she had no idea of all the wonderful things that were on her horizon.

Caitlin Butler-Myers graduated from MACU in the spring of 2020. She studied ministry leadership and pastoral care while playing softball and being an active member of her church. She also took part in MACU's Practicum in Pastoral Care courses while she was a student.

Throughout her time at MACU, she was able to connect with many professors and grow her relationship with God. "All of my professors have done an amazing job preparing me for what I want to do in the future," Butler-Myers said. She even stays connected with her MACU professors to this day.

One of her professors, Cliff Sanders, taught a class during her first semester at MACU and truly made an impact on her. She was able to reconnect herself to the Word through his teachings. Now, she attends his Sunday School class weekly, and Sanders even officiated her wedding.

The most important relationship she was able to foster during her time at MACU, however, was her relationship with God. With the encouragement of her classmates and professors, she joined LifeChurch, where she thrived in her small group and eventually met the love of her life. Caitlin Butler-Myers and her husband, Dalton, have been happily married for almost a year now and have big plans for their future together.

For Butler-Myers, those big plans include a career in oncology, in which she is working part-time while she studies nursing at the University of Oklahoma. She anticipates graduating this July.

"My time at MACU made my first year of nursing school really easy," Butler-



Myers said. "It made talking with and relating to patients way easier. Most importantly, it prepared my heart to go in there and be a light for Jesus."

Butler-Myers said she finds joy in being able to medically help people while showing God's love through her care.

"I pray with people every day or just encourage them sometimes," she said. "I want to go in there and show them what the love of God is like."

"I pray with people every day or just encourage them sometimes," she said. "I want to go in there and show them what the love of God is like."

In the future, Butler-Myers has dreams of becoming a nurse practitioner and using her intelligence and kindness for good. She wishes to open up her own no-cost clinic to help the disadvantaged.

"God knew what he was doing when he sent me to MACU. I wouldn't be the person I am today if I hadn't come here. I wouldn't have the passion for healthcare and the compassion for people that I do. Everything that has happened in my life I cannot attribute to myself — only to God!"

Counseling Students Help Heal

During COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on many people's physical state, mental stress and everything in between, but MACU has been able to help others during these difficult times.

The university's counseling program is stepping up to help in a new way. MACU now offers an internship for counseling students that allows them to get real-life experience through counseling clients weekly.

One of the participating students is Nolberto Rondon. He grew up in the Dominican Republic and came to the United States at the age of 18 with a few suitcases and his hopes of being a professional baseball player.

He played baseball for MACU but realized he had a different calling in life. While playing baseball, he often found himself getting caught up in his emotions.

"I was that guy that was overthinking everything, so understanding what this is coming from, how you can control those emotions during the game was a big part of it," he said.

"I was that guy that was overthinking everything, so understanding what this is coming from, how you can control those emotions during the game was a big part of it," he said.

It ended up being baseball that brought him to this career shift of studying counseling. By being able to delve introspectively into why he was feeling the way he was during baseball games, he also began having a better sense of himself and how his brain worked. This made him feel inspired to give the same opportunity to others.

Rondon meets with several clients a week and sees people of all ages. Especially amid a pandemic, he has seen an increase in clients with anxiety and depression.

"I try to be able to help that person because I can imagine what it is they are going through. It is very challenging, but I'm very thankful to the school because of this opportunity," he said.

This internship has allowed Rondon to gain real life experience for himself while also giving back and helping others. Since beginning this journey last summer, he has had a wide variety of clients spanning all age groups. MACU specifically designs the internship program to include a diverse selection of counselors to patients: male, female, bilingual and so on. This allows clients to choose who they feel most comfortable opening up with.

Rondon will graduate this May with his Master's degree in Clinical Counseling. Upon graduation, he looks forward to continuing to meet with clients in the same way that he is right now. He wants to gain more experience and knowledge by expanding his services to couples and families. In the future, Rondon is excited to further his education and earn his Doctorate while also continuing to help others.



PHOTO: MACU student Nolberto Rondon has been counseling clients of all ages throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

MACU Partners with Churches to Offer New Learning Opportunities

MACU has a long history of partnerships with local congregations. Whether it's offering classes to a church in Houston or broadcasting classes across the U.S., MACU has always strived to meet students where they are while providing a quality education.

To further that mission, MACU is proud to announce partnerships with two Church of God congregations to offer a unique learning opportunity for leaders in and out of the local church.

The Mansfield School for Professional Studies, named for Rev. Dr. Richard and Rev. Cynthia Mansfield, is one of MACU's new learning partnerships. The Mansfields pastor New Beginnings Church of God in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where the new partnership is located. Through the Mansfield School for Professional Studies, students can take college courses and earn a variety of certificates. These courses allow students to grow their knowledge and pursue one of the many degrees offered by

MACU. Classes will be offered both online and at the church.

Currently, there are various certificate classes available. Exploring Wesleyan Theology 1 and 2, taught by Dr. Cliff Sanders, are designed to give students applicable knowledge to Christian living, an investigation on how God affects everything in someone's life and a deeper dive into the work of Jesus. Other classes that will be offered are The Phygital (Physical-Digital) Church and Congregational Care.

"These programs are specially designed to provide individuals from all walks of life with an avenue to improve their leadership skills, whether they are in a position of leadership at their workplace or in the church, or if they are simply wishing to become better leaders in everyday life," said MACU President Dr. John Fozard.

These certificate programs can also be converted to college credits and applied towards a degree from MACU. This allows for students to dip their toes in the subject area while also planning ahead for their futures.



PHOTO: Rev. Dr. Richard Mansfield and Rev. Cynthia Mansfield are the senior and executive pastors of New Beginnings Church of God in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The new Mansfield School of Professional Studies was created in their honor.

MACU has also partnered with First Church in Columbus, Ohio, to establish the Bishop Timothy J. Clarke School for Professional Studies. Similarly, this partnership allows for students to receive an education at their church and benefit the surrounding areas.

Bishop Dr. Timothy J. Clarke is the senior pastor of First Church in Columbus, Ohio and is looking forward to this new collaboration. "The partnership between First Church, MACU and myself is one we've had for many years," Clarke said. "We are committed to developing the lives and leadership of those in our church and community."

Partnerships like these allow MACU to bring the education to the people, rather than students having to be in Oklahoma to get this learning experience.

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The courses are a blended method of online and in-person work. This helps students be able to learn in the best way that fits them.

Fozard said he is looking forward to the learning partnerships and all that students can get out of them. "Mid-America is excited to partner with our friends at First Church of God and New Beginnings Church of God in order to offer new certificate programs," he said.

Each course in the certificate program lasts just five weeks at the cost of just \$195, with an additional \$100 scholarship for the first 25 qualified participants for a limited time. For students wishing to earn multiple certificates, the price of each course following the first class is reduced to just \$149.

Clarke is very passionate about education and hopes to see many others join in.

"I would encourage students of all ages to continue to expand and extend their impact and influence through training in education," he said, "and this program is a wonderful way to do that."

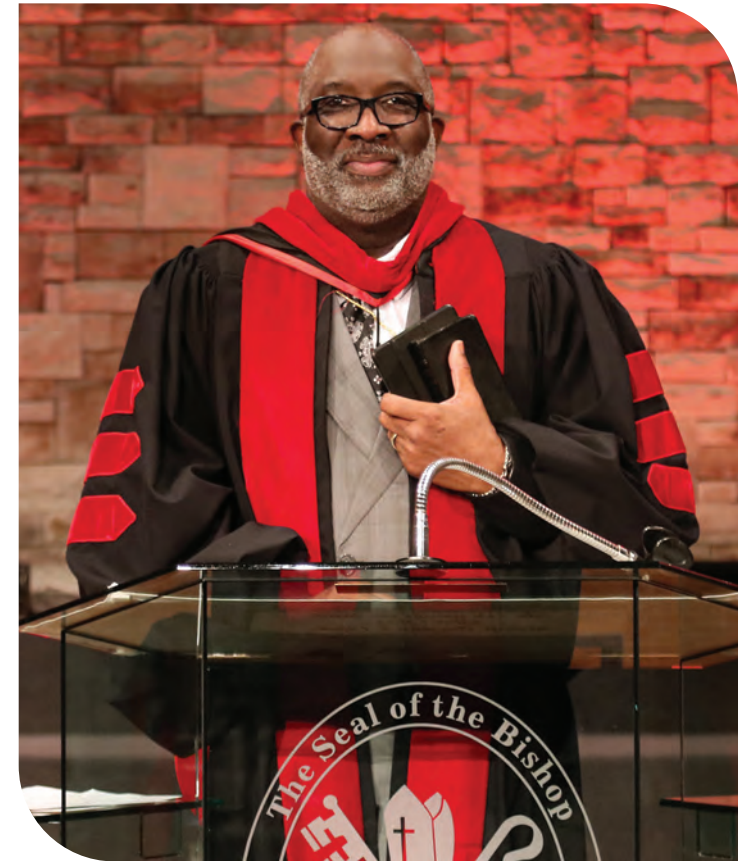


PHOTO: Bishop Dr. Timothy J. Clarke is the senior pastor of First Church in Columbus, Ohio. MACU's Bishop Timothy J. Clarke School for Professional Studies was named for him.

To learn more, please visit www.macu.edu/church-leadership.

Enrollment is open now for upcoming courses.

\$100 scholarships available for a limited time!

For churches interested in partnering with MACU to offer classes, please email David Rose at david.rose@macu.edu.

Men’s Basketball Pushes Toward Acceptance and Social Change

In a combined effort between the leadership of Mid-America Christian University and the captains of the men’s basketball team, MACU implemented a new pregame ceremony at every home game inside the Gaulke Activity Center during the 2020-21 regular season.

In an effort to help spur social change and address the nation’s racial divide, a member of the MACU men’s basketball team performed a poem or read an excerpt during the pregame ceremony to provide a personal perspective on current social matters and used their platform to share the teachings of Jesus Christ to help bridge the current racial divide.

"I am really proud of our young men, the platform they helped create and the way they used it. We talk all the time that basketball is important, but it is not the most important thing," said Head Coach Josh Gamblin. "Our players are speaking about things that they have been personally affected by. They have been using their platform as an opportunity to step out of their comfort zone to speak about social change and racial inequality."

Following the reading, another member of the MACU men’s basketball team would lead a moment of silence to honor those victimized by hatred and bigotry.



Change

"On the subject of change, I come to you all today to express something that is continuously on my heart. Equality is not something that should be an argument. And I don't come to you today as a Black Lives Matter activist, but I do come to you as a child of God. And the scripture says in Mark 12: 30-31: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

So I would say to this, let's try our best to live out our lives in the way God has called us to. Then we can begin to realize what's really important and continue to impact real change for God's kingdom."

– Dom Ford
Senior



ABOVE PHOTO: Women's Basketball Head Coach Hannah Moeller, pictured with Athletic Director Marcus Moeller, earned her 200th career win in the Gaulke Activity Center on Oct. 28, 2020, with a victory over Baptist Bible College (Mo.).

LEFT PAGE PHOTO: Senior forward Dom Ford (left) reads a piece he wrote about social change and racial discrimination ahead of a men's basketball game with senior guard Tony Dorsey (right) at his side.

Hannah Moeller Reaches Two Milestones in Same Season

During the 2020-21 season, MACU women’s basketball head coach, Hannah Moeller, reached two separate milestones in her coaching career.

Following the Evangels’ 116-31 victory over Baptist Bible College inside the Gaulke Activity Center on Oct. 28, 2020, the ninth-year head coach picked up her 200th overall coaching win between her five seasons as the MACU head coach and the previous four seasons she spent at Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College (now known as Randall University).

Moeller’s second milestone happened inside the Gaulke Activity Center on Jan. 28. After the Evangels defeated John Brown by a score of 88-71, Moeller earned her 100th victory with the MACU women’s basketball program.

The milestones came during a special season for the women's basketball program, as the team also earned its first-ever Sooner Athletic Conference regular season title.

Moeller has seen tremendous success during her five years at MACU. She has been named national Coach of the Year three times, and the Lady Evangels won the NCCAA National Championship in 2018 and 2019 during Moeller's tenure. She also led the Lady Evangels in 2019 to a win over Division 1 North Texas.

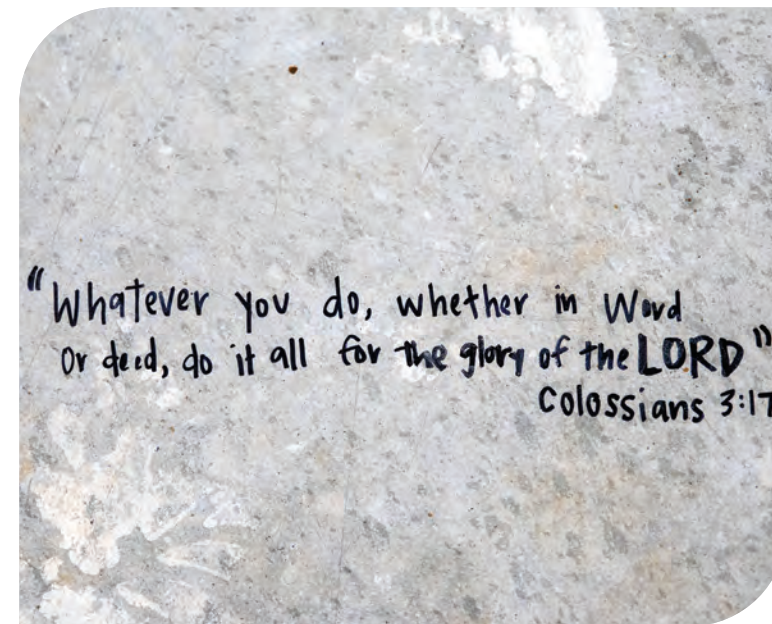
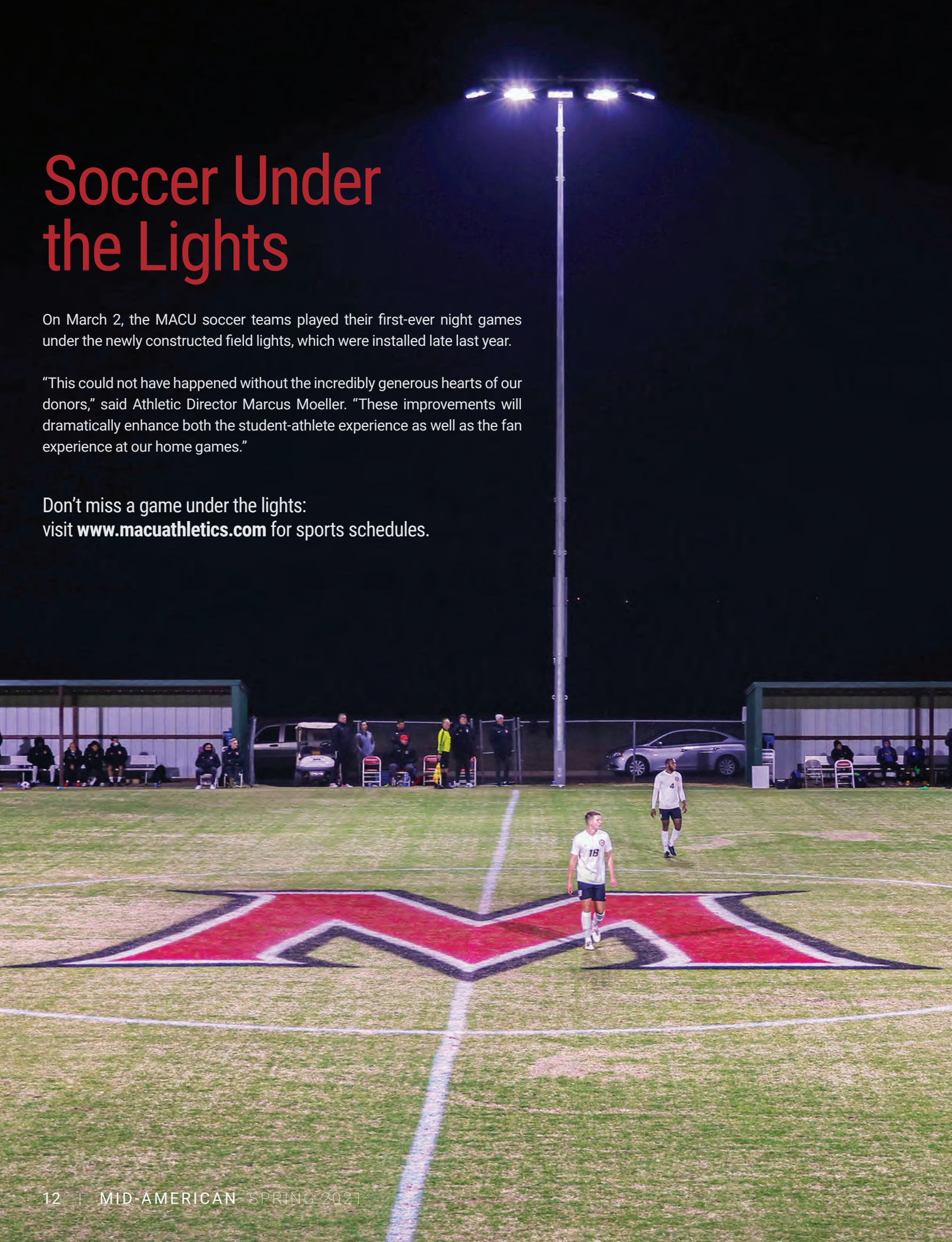
Watch live and follow the Evangels through their postseason:
www.macuathletics.com

Soccer Under the Lights

On March 2, the MACU soccer teams played their first-ever night games under the newly constructed field lights, which were installed late last year.

"This could not have happened without the incredibly generous hearts of our donors," said Athletic Director Marcus Moeller. "These improvements will dramatically enhance both the student-athlete experience as well as the fan experience at our home games."

Don't miss a game under the lights: visit www.macuathletics.com for sports schedules.



Student-Athletes Dedicate O'Brien Training Center

Construction of the O'Brien Athletic Training Center is well underway, with the center on track to open this summer. Athletic Director Marcus Moeller describes the center as life-changing for MACU Athletics.

"Seeing the progress of the O'Brien Center has been an answer to prayer," Moeller said. "Both the external 'face' of the building and the internal 'heart' of the building are beginning to really take shape. The building is going to be an incredible tool for our athletic department as we strive to lead competitively excellent programs with Christ at the center of all we do for our student-athletes."

In early March, student-athletes dedicated the building with prayer and wrote Bible verses and messages of hope, inspiration and love on the concrete floor of the facility.



MACU & OSU-CHS 3+1 Program

Oklahoma has one of the largest rural populations in the United States, with more than 30% of Oklahomans living in rural areas. These Oklahomans face inequities when it comes to receiving medical care.

To help address these rural health disparities, MACU has partnered with the Oklahoma State University Center for Health Sciences (OSU-CHS) to offer a 3+1 Program for undergraduate students.

This program gives undergraduate students studying biology at MACU the option to transfer to OSU-CHS during their sophomore year and begin their Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine program, enabling them to finish in seven years instead of the traditional eight years.

OSU-CHS is specifically aimed at training osteopathic physicians, scientists and healthcare professionals who will serve in rural and underserved communities.

OSU-CHS is specifically aimed at training osteopathic physicians, scientists and healthcare professionals who will serve in rural and underserved communities.

"There is a huge health disparity within rural communities," said JuLee Wells, OSU-CHS Director of Recruitment. "We need to get physicians into these areas. We have Oklahomans who are driving hours just to be able to see their physician."

Because many Oklahomans living in rural communities don't have easy access to medical care, they are at risk for serious and even deadly complications from what could have been a preventable or treatable condition.

MACU freshman Taylor White, who opted into the new 3+1 Program, said this is one of the many reasons why she chose to pursue her lifelong calling of entering the medical field to help others.

"I feel like I was almost born knowing I was destined to go into medicine," White said. "My dream in life is to help people in their best and worst moments in life while having the opportunity to adapt to a growing field."

White said her passion for medicine began in her youth. With many members of her family working as healthcare professionals, she said she grew up listening to advanced medical terminology — but instead of tuning out, she couldn't help but try and understand what they were saying.

"I know that God has a special place for me in life, and by trusting in Him, I believe that the medical field is where I belong," White said. "Deciding to come to MACU to pursue the 3+1 Program with OSU-CHS was one of the easiest decisions I have made in my life."



PHOTO: MACU student Taylor White is one of the first to enter the partnership between MACU and OSU-CHS in Tulsa, Okla.

Enrollment is currently open for the MACU/OSU-CHS 3+1 Program.

For more information, visit www.macu.edu/osu-chs or call **405-692-3281** to speak to MACU Admissions.

Cybersecurity Degree

Phishing, identity theft, data breaches, hacking, terrorism — these are just some of the crimes committed by cyber criminals every year, draining the global economy of more than \$6 trillion annually.

To help combat the sharp rise in cyber crime, MACU has debuted two new degrees specially catered to fighting high-tech criminals: the A.S. in Network Management and Security and the B.S. in Cybersecurity.

These new degree programs address a growing need for security professionals, said School of Business Chair, Scott McMurry.

"Ten or fifteen years ago, we used to think of network security in terms of banks and large organizations," McMurry said. "Now, as anyone who has had their credit card compromised knows, data security affects everyone."

He said that the potential loss associated with security breaches of data has drastic consequences not only for customers, but also for the continued existence of companies. According to McAfee, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation received more than 467,000 cyber crime complaints in 2019, costing American citizens and businesses more than \$3.5 billion in losses.

According to McAfee, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation received more than 467,000 cyber crime complaints in 2019, costing American citizens and businesses more than \$3.5 billion in losses.

Just as there has been a surge in cyber crime and the need for professionals to combat it, McMurry said many universities are now beginning to offer degrees in cybersecurity. MACU's two programs are built to stand out among the crowd.

"In building the degree program, what we found very quickly is that many universities offer a degree labeled as cybersecurity in a two-year format. These degrees don't actually have a lot of cybersecurity content in them, which is understandable because it's hard to get to that point in the space of an associates degree."



MACU's program is distinct because it divides the program into two separate degrees. Anyone can begin with the A.S. in Network Management and Security to gain a firm foundation in computer operating systems, basic and advanced networking, programming, scripting, and client-server software architecture.

"At the end of the associates program, we tie all these concepts about data networking, physical networks and the way data is managed into the security problems that are inherent in that," said McMurry.

That serves as a stepping stone into the bachelor's program, where students will go on to learn about hacking countermeasures, forensics, cyber crime detection, and more. Each of the two degrees helps equip students with the knowledge they need for multiple certification exams, including the Cisco CCNA.

For students who already have experience with networks, such as military members and IT professionals, McMurry said MACU's generous prior learning program will allow them to earn college credit and begin a more immediate path to their baccalaureate program.

Both the A.S. in Network Management and Security and the B.S. in Cybersecurity are offered 100% online for both traditional and busy adult students. Classes are offered in an accelerated, 5-week format, and McMurry said that many workplaces will help provide tuition assistance for an employee who is seeking education and certification in cybersecurity.

Classes are beginning as soon as April 27. To learn more or begin now, visit www.macu.edu/cybersecurity.

CELEBRATING THE *Class of 2021*

Spring Commencement Exercises

10 a.m. | Saturday, May 1st | Oklahoma City Convention Center

MACU is excited to announce Jaime Cervantes, Campus Pastor for the Benton Heights Campus of First Church in St. Joseph, Mich., will serve as the commencement speaker for the spring exercises.

In addition to serving at First Church, Cervantes also oversees local missions and outreach initiatives. Within this role, he serves as the Vice Board Chair of the New Heights Christian Community Development Association, the non-profit arm of First Church, which focuses on meeting the basic, practical and social needs of the Benton Heights community.

Cervantes also collaborates with local public health officials to raise awareness of health inequities experienced by the local community by serving as a recurring advocate and community voice in Community Grand Rounds, a series of panel discussions reaching southwest Michigan and the surrounding regions.

He is passionate about recovery, a ministry that was born of his own personal experiences. Before becoming a pastor, Cervantes would regularly speak in the rooms of recovery across the state in rehab centers, sober living homes, courts and churches. His story has been a source of inspiration for others in recovery and a testament to God's transformational power.

Cervantes is also an advocate for adult education: he earned his college degree more than 20 years after he first began, becoming a first-generation college graduate.



We look forward to celebrating the MACU graduating Class of 2021! We hope you will join us in person or watch live online at:
www.facebook.com/MidAmericaChristianUniversity



Remembering Rev. Dr. Gilbert Davila

MACU is saddened to share the passing of Rev. Dr. Gilbert Davila. Davila, who attended Gulf Coast Bible College in the 1960s, was known for his decades of ministry behind the microphone of Hermandad Cristiana. That radio program began in 1965 as a part of Christians Broadcasting Hope, a Church of God organization that seeks to produce evangelistic programming around the world to expand the Kingdom of God through radio, Internet broadcasts and other mass media tools. Davila has left behind a lifetime of love and a legacy that will live on even after his passing.

A memorial service for Davila was held on Feb. 27 in Austin, Texas. We ask that you please join us in lifting up the Davila family in prayer during this time.

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Glorifying God Through Gaming

Video games have been a part of Benjamin Boyer's life for as long as he can remember.

Now, he's using them to glorify God as a member of MACU Esports. Boyer, a junior majoring in sports management, serves as captain of the Super Smash Bros. team as well as student coordinator for the program.

"I have been playing video games for over 22 years at this point, but I never dreamed I would have an opportunity to play at this level," he said. "I love the comradery that comes with it. It's like any team sport: you gain relationships with your teammates and they become people that you can go to."

Boyer said he's also developed a deeper relationship with his coach, Daniel Peaslee. Peaslee has assumed the role of disciple partner to Boyer, allowing them to get to know each other more and learn about the Lord together.

He said he also feels that video games, particularly playing them at a competitive level, help him to prepare for his future career in sports management.

"Video games have improved my critical thinking skills and helped me develop and think about strategies," Boyer said. "I have also learned a lot about teamwork and leadership through multiplayer games."

Peaslee, who has served as head coach of the Esports program since it launched last February, said that there are still many misconceptions about video games being played competitively, even as the Esports industry has seen exponential growth.

"People love to watch athletes play football, ping pong and snowboarding, and now we live in a world where people are able to watch highly skilled players play their favorite games," Peaslee said. "Last year, people watched Twitch for a combined total of over 17 billion hours — that's over 1.9 million years. It's no



wonder that the world of Esports is booming, especially when so many people are staying home."

With MACU's Esports program entering its second year of competition, Peaslee said he is grateful for how much support the program and its athletes have received.

"One of the best things about MACU Esports is the administration buy-in. When we first started Esports, other schools were surprised and shocked at how well-supported our program is from university administrators. MACU's leadership has the vision and drive to provide this opportunity for our students and move it forward."

He said unlike other sports, which are limited to regional competition, Esports athletes get the opportunity to play against students at schools from all over the country. That includes many secular colleges and universities, which Peaslee said gives MACU students a great opportunity to spread the love of God through their love of video games.

"One thing that I remind our players is that in all they do, they represent Jesus, their school, their team and themselves," Peaslee said. "When people play Mid-America Christian University, our goal is to show them the love of Christ and be excellent examples of children of God."

He said that when MACU wins, it is a victory for Christ because he has given the players the gifts they use in His name.

"Whatever the outcome of each game, we learn how to better ourselves, use what He has given us even better and be examples of God to those around us. In all that we do, we strive to bring honor to Him."

MACU Esports is currently recruiting students for competitive play. Scholarships are available. Visit www.macu.edu/esports to learn more on how to get started.



Staff Spotlight

Daniel Peaslee

*Student Success Coordinator
and Esports Coach*

Daniel Peaslee has lived in many different places, but he's proud to call MACU "home."

Originally from Minnesota, Peaslee spent most of his childhood in Illinois, where his family had an apple orchard just outside of Chicago. For his last three years of high school, the Peaslees moved to North Dakota, where his father presently serves as lead pastor of Bowdon Community Church of God.

Peaslee and his brother originally planned to attend college in Canada near their parents' home in North Dakota. But God had something else in mind for the Peaslee boys.

"We went to International Youth Convention in Anaheim, California, where MACU Admissions had a booth. We loved hearing about the school — so much that we made the 15-hour drive to Oklahoma to check it out."

He said the brothers could tell that God wanted them at MACU. They applied, were accepted and made the drive back down to begin class just weeks later. Peaslee said his experience at the university was extraordinary.

"I didn't just grow as a young man — I grew as a Christian. Being able to attend Bible classes and talk with others about specifics about our faith was incredible. It was interesting being able to hear about Bible-focused topics in class and find out more about what others believe in the Christian faith," Peaslee said.

Peaslee graduated in 2010, but that was only the beginning of his journey at MACU. He began working for the university part-time in 2016 as a writing consultant in Student Success, then began working full-time as a Student Success coordinator in 2018. Since then, his role has expanded to include Esports Coach.



"It's a blessing to be a part of the lives of students and help them along the way," said Peaslee, adding that he enjoys seeing where students are now and being reminded of his own time as a student at MACU.

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"I also love being a part of the MACU community. Every day, it feels like everyone around me is working toward the same goal but in so many different ways. I'm thankful that we get to work in a Christian school where we are free to pray and serve God while helping students pursue higher education."



May 3, 2021 | Lincoln Park West

Registration/Check-In Begins at 7 a.m.

Come out and play golf with us! Our goal is to raise \$60,000 (or more!) for MACU's general scholarship fund. Without events like this to raise scholarship dollars, many students wouldn't be able to begin or stay in school and earn their degrees. **We can't wait to see you and your team on the course!**

There are many ways to get involved!

Text **MACUGOLF** to **41444** or visit **golfclassic.macu.edu** to register your team or sign up for our sponsorship or marketing opportunities.

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SHOW OFF YOUR EVANGEL PRIDE!

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Email us at
eddie.simons@macu.edu

Eternal Investment

Remembering Professor Steve Clouse

September 21, 1951 - December 16, 2020

The MACU Community is mourning the loss of a beloved professor, co-worker and friend. On Dec. 16, 2020, School of Business Co-Chair and Professor Steve Clouse lost his battle with COVID-19.

In his five years with the university, Clouse made an indelible impact on his students and co-workers. A memorial service was held Jan. 5 on the MACU campus.

"He is frankly irreplaceable," said Scott McMurry, who co-chaired the MACU School of Business with Clouse. "His absence challenges us every day to maintain his standards. Steve saw where a need was and he ran towards that need. He shared his joy and his infectious happiness with everyone."

As an adult learner himself who returned to college in his 40s to earn his degree, Clouse had an unrivaled passion for higher education and helping students reach their full potential.

To honor him, the Clouse family has established a memorial scholarship in his name. The Steven Clouse Business Scholarship will allow Professor Clouse to continue impacting the lives of students even after his passing. The scholarship is available for business students who are attending MACU full-time.

If you are interested in giving to the Steven Clouse Business Scholarship or the general scholarship fund, please contact University Advancement at 405-692-3191 or visit give.macu.edu.



Dear Mr. Clouse,

As a student, I got to experience your wisdom and your guidance,
And all I feel today is sorrow paired with silence.

In every student, you were planting a seed,
So they could reach their full potential and succeed.

The conversations with you shaped and prepared
me for my life and not just class,
Because of your gift to teach, there were so many students able to pass.
In business, you taught us how good leaders are defined,
Your knowledge and experience were a treasure, for every student's mind.

We learned about great leaders in business, that there are very few,
If there is one thing that I could teach you, Mr. Clouse,
It would be that one of them in my life was you.

After Professor Clouse's passing, MACU student Pero Mikulic wrote this moving poem about the impact Professor Clouse made on his life.



MACU Remembers

The best memory I have of Mr. Clouse is the way he made me feel coming to MACU for the first time. He was my first on-campus professor after returning to school after 25 years. He was patient, kind and very encouraging. I am so glad I got to see his love for students and experience it firsthand.

- **Stephanie N.**

Mr. Clouse challenged me, loved me and saw in me something I wasn't able to see in myself. I think of him every day. I miss his chuckle and his big smile. For him, I will work harder, and I will believe in the words he told me.

- **Kaitlynn B.**

Mr. Clouse, you will always be with us, and this school will never forget what you have done. Thank you for the love, support, help and advice, and for never giving up on any single student.

- **Endri C.**

You were my favorite professor without a doubt. I will never forget everything you meant to me and to all of us. You were always there for me and willing to help me.

- **Benjamin B.**



What's
Next?

APRIL 1 MACU MASH Jr.
APRIL 16 MACU Visit Day
APRIL 27 Adult Classes Begin
MAY 1 2021 Commencement
MAY 3 MACU Golf Classic