

# MID-AMERICAN

THE MAGAZINE OF MID-AMERICA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY



*Dream Bigger.  
Do Greater.*

WINTER 2016  
[WWW.MACU.EDU](http://WWW.MACU.EDU)





## A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

### *Dear Friends,*

**"IF YOU BUILD IT, HE WILL COME,"** is one of the most famous movie lines ever. That line came back to me as I watched the 2016 World Series. It also came to mind as I contemplate the university's future facilities.

The film "Field of Dreams" is a fantasy story of Ray Kinsella, a novice farmer who hears a voice in his cornfield telling him, "If you build it, he will come." He then plows under his Iowa cornfield to build a baseball field with the intention of calling back the great players of the 1919 Chicago White Sox.

Jeffrey Huston once noted that this film mirrored the full extent of what Christians call the "Walk of Faith" – a walk that does not call us to pursue our own passions or desires, but calls us away from them. "It calls us to mortgage those dreams, to sacrifice them, to risk them all for the sake of what 'The Voice' would have us pursue instead."<sup>1</sup>

Ray Kinsella was a man who could look beyond what is and see what needs to be. In the film, he becomes captivated by the possibilities of what he was constructing. MACU's Master Planning Committee embraces a similar, compelling vision. Unlike Kinsella, our vision isn't about reliving the past, but thinking of the future needs of our students.

What facilities will we need to recruit and retain students? How will they meet a student's spiritual, mental and physical needs? Sometimes the answer to these questions has been to develop additional degree programs that equip students with the leadership skills and knowledge for great career opportunities. Sometimes the answer lies in developing powerful platforms and tools for distance learning. Sometimes the answer is to build new residence halls. This issue of the *Mid-American* presents the vision for a training facility that holds immense opportunities.

**Sometimes people don't associate brick and mortar with ministry and mission.** It might surprise people to learn some of our most effective church pastors and missionaries have come from our sports programs. Those athletes came to play ball but while here, they heard the voice of God calling them into another pathway.

In any given year, up to half of our traditional student enrollment is composed of athletes. These are serious, degree-seeking students. Last year, 72 of those athletes were named Academic All-Conference or All-American Scholar Athletes. Entire sports teams had 3.5 and above cumulative grade point averages.

These athletes are not only scholars – they are servants. They participate in efforts to feed the hungry. They visit nursing homes and coach inner city kids in after-school programs using athletics as a pulpit to preach the Gospel. Coaches lead teams in daily devotions and several of them engage in one-to-one discipleship with their players.

While in the past we invested in constructing new residence halls, classroom buildings, expanding our student center and the café, the university lags behind other schools in providing the training facilities needed for a vibrant sports program. Our traditional student fees do provide membership to a local YMCA, but students have to walk about a mile to get to that facility while crossing a busy four-lane street, across property that has no walkways – sometimes in inclement weather.

In this *Mid-American*, you will review the architect's conceptual drawing of this future training facility. Consider the impact such a building would have on our students' spiritual and physical lives. One major section of the building provides a fitness and exercise area for all of our traditional students. It would also provide all outside sports programs with locker rooms, coaches with offices and indoor practice areas.

Ray Kinsella was a man who could look past what was to what needed to be. He became captivated by the possibilities of what he was constructing.

Would you help us fulfill a similar, captivating vision? Would you join us in giving the funds that will provide a place to evangelize and disciple our athletes and provide a wellness center for students? Would you pray and consider making a generous year-end gift to this future facility? God bless you and thank you for helping move this facility from a dream to a reality.

  
Dr. John Fozard, President



1. Huston, J. (2014). Why 'Field of Dreams' is the Best Christian Parable in Movie History. Retrieved from <https://www.onfaith.co/onfaith/2014/10/21/why-field-of-dreams-is-the-best-christian-parable-in-movie-history/34656>

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Mid-America Christian University

3500 SW 119th Street  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73170  
405-691-3800

[www.MACU.edu](http://www.MACU.edu)

President  
Dr. John Fozard

Editors:  
Jody Allen  
Whitney K. Knight  
Elizabeth Sieg

Photos/Images:  
Frankie Heath  
Andy Marks, Grandeur Photography, L.L.C.

Do You Have an Alumni Update or Story Idea?  
PLEASE SEND IT TO  
[COMMUNICATIONS@MACU.EDU](mailto:COMMUNICATIONS@MACU.EDU)



MID-AMERICA  
CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY



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WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAY AT 10 A.M.

### COVER PHOTO

MACU students volunteer at the Moore Food  
& Resource Center in Moore, Okla.

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A member of Norahua Mexican Folkloric Dancers  
of Oklahoma performs in Café 1412 as a part of  
MACU's annual Celebration of Culture Day.



# ED ABEL

Photo Credit: [www.abellawfirm.com](http://www.abellawfirm.com)

**AS HIS NAME SUGGESTS**, Ed Abel certainly is “able” to do all things through Christ. An accomplished trial attorney with a litany of awards, titles and recognitions to his name, Abel recently celebrated 50 years as a legal practitioner. He only had his sight for about half of that time.

Born and raised in Oklahoma, Abel was eight years old when he was diagnosed with juvenile diabetes. He managed the chronic illness well, minding his diet and staying active, even dabbling in various sports in junior high and high school.

That didn’t stop the disease from robbing him of his vision about two decades ago.

He still remembers returning from a snow skiing vacation in Colorado, wondering why the gnats he swatted from his eyes wouldn’t go away. Abel soon learned they weren’t bugs at all, but the result of hemorrhaging in both eyes. He sought out doctors at home and in other states, traveling as far as Detroit to see specialists and surgeons who could preserve his vision a little bit longer.

“They were helpful,” Abel said, “but they ultimately couldn’t prevent me from going blind.”

In the 1970s, he lost the sight in his left eye, and the vision in his right began to diminish. As he drove his young family to downtown Oklahoma City one afternoon, he clipped a police car as he came off the highway. That sobering experience ended in Abel handing the keys to his wife.

It was the last day he ever drove.

Packaged with the fear of not being able to continue his practice or take care of his family, Abel turned toward the hope he didn’t need eyes to see.

A believer since his youth, Abel was raised in a strong Christian home with parents cemented in their faith. He had many mentors who poured biblical influence and teaching into him. He said it has always been a comfort to him.

“The Lord has been a part of my life for a long time,” Abel said.

It was by His power and glory that Abel knew he could overcome this new adversity in his life.

“I knew I had a choice to make so I prayed about it a lot. I asked God, ‘What do I do with this blindness?’. The message I received was what the apostle Paul did: ‘My grace is sufficient for you.’”

To help with the transition, Abel found a counselor. He said those sessions were helpful in coming to terms with his blindness.

“I finally came to the realization that if God was in my corner, I could still be effective as an attorney and do what I needed to do,” Abel said.

To continue practicing law, Abel used an assistant to read his depositions so he could prepare for cases. He learned to memorize the smallest details of what he was once able to easily reference.

“Through the Good Lord’s guidance, I developed the philosophy that you’ve got a couple choices in life: you can

go sit in the corner and cry about it or you can get up and do what you can do," Abel said.

And what Abel does is something that not many others can.

"I guess there's not very many blind trial lawyers around," he chuckled.

Abel first found his love of law in high school after he joined the debate team. He went to tournaments around the metro with his team and carried that passion with him to the University of Oklahoma in Norman, where he debated at the collegiate level and eventually graduated from law school.

In his five decades as a trial attorney, Abel said he's tried about 300 cases in a handful of states. He's gone toe-to-toe with big names like Black & Decker and represented several MACU students.

Abel came to know MACU through his friendships with President Dr. John Fozard and University Advancement Vice President Rev. Steve Seaton, both of whom he met at Crossings Community Church in Oklahoma City. As God cultivated the seeds of friendship between the men, Abel accepted an offer to serve on the MACU Board of Trustees.

"MACU is very special," Abel said. "Not all universities and colleges have that basis in Christ. The professors really care about the students, they're really open to them — that's not always true in a lot of schools."

He said professors' willingness to talk to students — even outside of the classroom — helps set MACU apart from other schools. Abel remains actively involved in Evangel campus life, frequenting President's Roundtables and proudly serving on the Board of Trustees. He said it's a part of the successful life he's been able to maintain despite his blindness.

He's also been able to keep up with another one of his great loves: the outdoors. Beneath his father's guiding hand, Abel hunted squirrels and raccoons from a young age and developed a great fondness for coonhounds. When he left home, Abel started a kennel and raised and sold puppies. He traveled across the eastern U.S. showing his dogs, and even though his blindness has prevented him from pursuing his passion the way he once did, he hasn't ruled out getting back into dog breeding.

**"I KNEW I HAD A CHOICE TO MAKE SO I PRAYED ABOUT IT A LOT. I ASKED GOD, 'WHAT DO I DO WITH THIS BLINDNESS?'. THE MESSAGE I RECEIVED WAS WHAT THE APOSTLE PAUL DID: 'MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU.'"**

To share his love of hunting and wildlife with others, Abel writes a monthly article for a few outdoors magazines, aptly named "The Legal Hound." He helped start the Oklahoma Federation of Coonhunters, a group dedicated to supporting political figures who are open to the sport and want to see it continued. Because of Abel's hard work with the group, they've helped outlaw killer traps that could harm dogs and extended the hunting season to year-round.

He's also in his sixteenth year on the governing board of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife.

In addition to splitting time between work and hobbies, Abel has donated time to Lawyers for Children, a group of attorneys and social workers who represent children in foster care situations free of charge.

"If it had not been for the Lord, I never would have made any of it happen," Abel said. "I have a really good life. I'm married to a very wonderful lady, I have four amazing children and six beautiful grandchildren. I've been able to continue as a trial attorney. I've been able to participate on the board for MACU. I've been allowed to do a lot of fun things like hunting and all of that even though I can't see a lick. That's not by accident. It didn't just happen."

It happened because while Ed Abel may be blind — his faith is surely not.

#### **CELEBRATING 50 YEARS**

*Attorney and MACU Board of Trustee member Ed Abel has served as a legal practitioner for five decades.*





**TO PROVIDE LADY EVANGELS** with the same leadership opportunities as their brothers in Christ, Student Engagement and Success Vice President Jessica Rimmer set out to create the Women of Valor — a mirror group to MACU’s Iron Men program.

More than 20 female students of all class levels make up the Women of Valor, which got its start this semester. Students meet on the first and third Monday of every month for an hour-long session centered on different professional topics, ranging from attire to etiquette. After hearing from a keynote speaker, the MACU ladies divide into small groups with a faculty mentor to discuss the tips and tools they learned in the session and learn how to apply them in their own lives.

Rimmer said she hopes it will help the students develop as leaders and professionals prior to graduating.

“Research in women’s leadership literature shows that women count themselves out even when other people don’t,” she said. “Some women think, ‘I don’t see myself as a leader, therefore I’m not going to put myself in a position of leadership.’ With the Women of Valor, we hope our students will see what is actually possible instead of what they think is possible and rise up to their full potential.”

Regardless of where God takes students after graduation, Rimmer said the content covered in the Women of Valor program is applicable to all occupations.

“We’re trying to show a way to be in leadership no matter where you choose to lead,” she said. “That can be in the home as a mother or it can be as a company president. We want to expose them to all possibilities and for them to see themselves as leaders in whatever capacity that makes sense for them.”

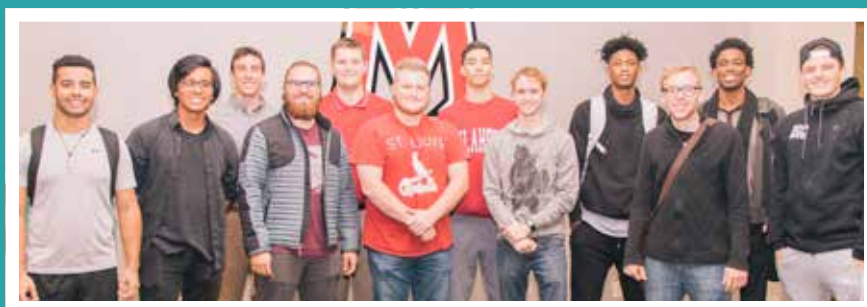
The name “Women of Valor” comes from Proverbs 31:10, which praises the worth of a wife of noble character — that is, a woman of valor — as one more valuable and precious than rubies. Rimmer said it is those biblical principles the program hopes to instill in MACU’s young women.

“We want to show them how to be women of character, of valor, of leadership, while setting our own example and putting people in front of them who are leaders so they can picture themselves in that position.”

Makailee Davis, who was chosen to be a part of the inaugural Women of Valor group, said she loves the program.

“It’s all about empowering women,” Davis said. “It’s about teaching us that not every woman has to have a stereotypical female job. We talk a lot about the GiANT tools MACU utilizes and what it means to implement them in our lives.”

If you know an exemplary female leader who would like to speak to the Women of Valor in the spring semester, please contact Jessica Rimmer at [jrimmer@macu.edu](mailto:jrimmer@macu.edu).



## IRON MEN

# MAKAILEE DAVIS

**WHEN MAKAILLEE DAVIS** first came to MACU, she — like a lot of high school graduates — wondered if she had made the right decision in furthering her education. As she prayed over her choice, it didn't take her long to realize she was exactly where God wanted her to be.

"He really connected me to this school and told me I belonged here," she said.

English major Davis, who graduates next fall, is well-known around campus. She serves as the engagement intern for Student Life, meaning she oversees the student government and helps with campus activities, including club events. In addition, she was recently awarded a \$2,600 scholarship from UPS and The Council of Independent Colleges (CIC).

As a member of the Women of Valor, she's learning how to become a leader in whatever ministry God leads her into after graduation — and she's already putting those skills to use right here at MACU, where she works in payroll as a student employee.

"It makes you think about finances completely differently," Davis said. "It's not a simple job. So many things go into payroll; it makes you realize there's much more to a university than just coming to school. It gives you a better appreciation

for all the people you don't see and the hard work they're doing."

It's that devotion to hard work and Christ-like spirit that recently netted Davis a special honor. After four years working in the business office, she received MACU's student worker of the year award.

"I was completely shocked," Davis said. "I wasn't expecting an award at all."

Davis said even though she is a student, she has never felt overlooked by her co-workers.

"They always make sure I'm part of the team," she said.

After she graduates, Davis hopes to become a public speaker or a spokeswoman for a nonprofit organization. Wherever she goes, she knows God will lead the way — just like He did when He brought her to MACU.

"I've learned and grown in so many areas, especially spiritually. The mentors I've had, the tools I'm being taught now are going to be ones that stick with me for the rest of my life. MACU is a huge part of my story."



# Campus Update

**TEXTBOOK RENTALS**, automated delivery and consolidated expenses are just a few perks coming to the MACU bookstore thanks to a new partnership with Tree of Life Bookstores, a Christ-based company with humble beginnings.

Tree of Life got its start in 1997 as a local Christian bookstore and coffee shop in Indiana. Early on, students and administrators came to the store wanting more than a cup of joe: textbooks were too expensive, and Tree of Life sold the same titles for less. Sensing a solution and feeling the need for a unique ministry, the company entered its first partnership with a nearby university. Over the years, they expanded, using their Christian values to carve out a unique place in the world of textbook dealers and campus stores.

As of December, Tree of Life is a part of the MACU family – and they've brought a lot of price-saving benefits with them.

With a robust rental catalog, about 90 percent of MACU textbooks are now available to rent through Tree of Life, potentially saving students hundreds of dollars per semester or course. For residential students, books can be returned on campus at the end of the semester; commuting and non-

traditional students can ship the textbook back for free with a prepaid shipping label.

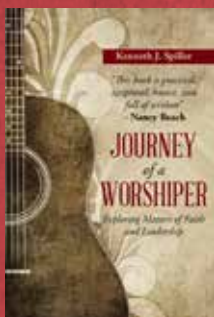
To help students save more on their books, Tree of Life has also introduced a variable pricing strategy to mark rental prices. Every night, prices reset to ensure rental and purchase prices adjust with the fluctuating market.

To make that process easier, Tree of Life allows students to "subscribe" to their textbooks. Using a service called Textbook Butler, students can set a preference (new, used or rental) and have their books automatically purchased and shipped to them before the start of their next course.

Lastly, Tree of Life gives proud Evangs more opportunities to wear their pride on their sleeves with fashion-forward MACU gear. The bookstore now stocks recognizable brands like Nike and Under Armour both in-store and online, as well as from OnMission Clothing, a brand that supports Haitians transitioning out of the orphanage system with dignity.

To buy your MACU gear, visit the new campus bookstore website at [macu.treeoflifebooks.com/](http://macu.treeoflifebooks.com/).

## TURNING THE PAGE: BOOKS BY ALUMNI AND FRIENDS



### JOURNEY OF A WORSHIPER

Parkgate Community Church (Pasadena, Texas) worship leader and 2008 MACU graduate Kenneth J. Spiller wrote this book on God-honoring, biblical worship and how it extends beyond Sunday mornings. You can find *Journey of a Worshiper* on Amazon in Kindle, hardcover and paperback formats.



### HERE'S HOW AN INTRODUCTION TO PRACTICAL DISCIPLESHIP

Lee Brown, who graduated in 2009 and serves as an associate pastor at Meadow Park Church of God in Columbus, Ohio, authored this book on discipleship. Inside, readers will find practical lessons on the basics of truly following after Christ. *Here's How: An Introduction to Practical Discipleship* is available on Amazon for your Kindle, as well as in hardcover and paperback formats.



### BIND UP YOUR BROKEN HEART

Timothy J. Clarke is MACU Board of Trustee member and senior pastor of First Church of God in Columbus, Ohio. This semester, he served as the keynote speaker of Spiritual Emphasis Week. *Bind Up Your Broken Heart* teaches readers that when mankind fails them, they can find healing with the Lord. You can purchase paperback copies of *Bind Up Your Broken Heart* on Amazon.

MEN'S BASKETBALL NAIA

# National Championship

RING CEREMONY



More than 900 Evangel fans packed the Gaulke Activity Center Oct. 28 to honor the 2016 NAIA National Championship men's basketball team with a championship ring and banner ceremony. In addition to rings handed out to players and coaches, last season's graduated seniors presented MACU President Dr. John Fozard with his own ring and a special shadow box commemorating the legendary season. For more information about MACU athletics, visit [www.macuathletics.com/](http://www.macuathletics.com/).



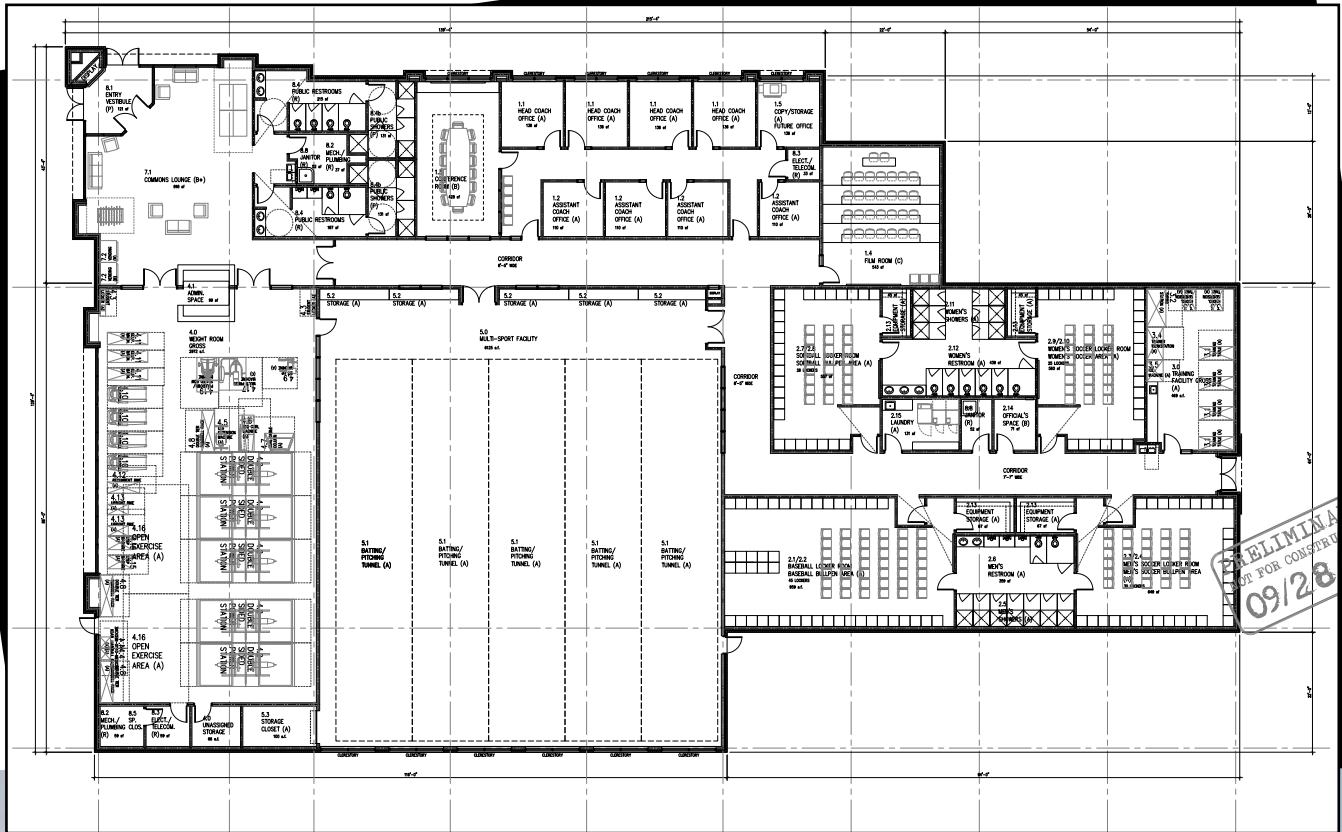
# BUILDING A *Greater* CAMPUS EXPERIENCE

**WE ARE SO EXCITED** to share with our Evangel friends and family members the floor plan and conceptual art for a 21,879-square-foot athletic facility. The building will be fully equipped to serve our student-athletes and traditional student body with:

- Indoor batting cages
- Locker rooms for soccer, softball and baseball
- A large workout facility for all students
- Training room
- Coaches' offices
- Conference room
- Film room

We need your help to move this vision of an athletic facility to reality. Please consider donating a year-end gift today at [give.macu.edu/](https://give.macu.edu/).







## ADVANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

I hope you are as excited as I am at the prospect of this athletic facility for our hard-working students and student-athletes. This building will be a first in MACU history and will help bring our athletics program into the grand future these young men and women deserve.

On the last two pages, you saw an inside look at some of the amenities this building will offer our present and future Evangels — **but we can't do it without you!**

We're asking you — alums from the days of Gulf Coast Bible College all the way up to this year's record-breaking class of 2016, our cherished friends and our dear partners — to join us in raising the funds we need to begin constructing the building.

Together, we can create an athletic facility suited for developing and maintaining the physical and spiritual wellness of our student body. God bless you for standing with MACU students — and for considering the role you'll play as we build a greater campus experience.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support. Your gift will impact the lives of our students for years to come!

*Your gift is tax deductible as allowed by the law. When you give to us, 100% of your donation goes directly to this tremendous project. God bless!*

Rev. Steve Seaton  
Vice President of University Advancement



## ATHLETIC FACILITY NAMING OPPORTUNITIES

- Batting Cages (1) - \$50,000
- Weight Room (1) - \$50,000
- Locker Rooms (4) - \$25,000
- Training Room (1) - \$25,000
- Coaches' Offices (8) - \$10,000
- Student Lounge (1) - \$10,000
- Coaches' Conference Room (1) - \$15,000
- Film Room (1) - \$10,000

# DAY OF Service

**AT MACU,** love is woven into everything. From classroom curriculum to weekly chapel services and nighttime devotionals, we believe love is at the core of the Christian faith.

As an expression of that faith, we also believe in serving others. Every semester, traditional students fulfill 12 hours of community service at local food banks, nursing homes, animal shelters, elementary schools and more. This fall, the university launched that commitment to volunteerism ministry on a nationwide scale with the first ever MACU Day of Service.

On Sept. 29, **more than 130 students, faculty and staff members from across the U.S.** banded together to make a difference in communities throughout the country, serving Oklahoma City and beyond.

Locally, MACU partnered with the Moore Food & Resource Center, a Regional Food Bank distribution center serving clients in Moore and south Oklahoma City, and the Homeless Alliance, a faith-based nonprofit dedicated to ending homelessness in the state.

Between two four-hour shifts at the food bank, more than 60 Evangelists distributed over 12,000 pounds of food, equal to about 10,350 meals.

"This incredible group was able to serve 138 families through food distributions, packing and sorting food items in our warehouse and restocking our grocery floor," said Tyler Geohagan, Moore Food & Resource Center director.

"Their great service attitude, work ethic and big smiles made for a great day for both our staff and our clients."

At the Homeless Alliance in downtown Oklahoma City, a team of about a dozen MACU volunteers chopped down a wall of overgrown greenery and served lunch to the homeless.

In addition to serving Oklahomans, MACU also encouraged online students in other states to participate in their own communities. **A total of 63 students from 22 other states** joined in the MACU Day of Service, including Nate Hughes, an online student who served at a women's shelter in Little Rock, Ark.

Less than two months after having back surgery, Hughes was unable to lift heavy boxes or items. Instead, he devoted his time to sweeping the floor, collecting clothes and sorting hangers, remaining dedicated to serving the Lord despite his own adversities.

"I was thankful for the opportunity to minister to my community," Hughes said.

Student Services Director Amanda Harris and Support Specialist Trina Arnold helped plan the Day of Service. Harris said the event was an eye-opening experience for area students.

"It was humanizing," she said. "It gave them a new outlook on homelessness and hunger right here in their own backyards."

She said although MACU plans to turn the Day of Service into an annual event, the university's mission to love and serve others is something that has no timestamp.

"We called this single day a Day of Service, but our mission as a university is to 'Dream Bigger' and 'Do Greater.' That's something we do throughout the year. Just because our official event is over doesn't mean that our mission is."

Harris said MACU's culture of giving comes from the greatest gift of all: the Lord Jesus Christ.

"If He was willing to give His life for us despite all of our problems and differences, then who are we to not do the same for others?"

**MACU plans to make the Day of Service a fall tradition. We hope you'll join us next year!**



## MOORE FOOD & RESOURCE CENTER

*MACU volunteers sorted and packed fresh fruits and vegetables into crates.*



## HOMELESS ALLIANCE

*During their shift, volunteers at Oklahoma City's Homeless Alliance cleared an overgrown wall of greenery from the property.*



## FRIEND OF MACU

*JakeFM personality Carly Rae sports a MACU Day of Service T-shirt as she meets with Gov. Mary Fallin.*



# CELEBRATION OF *Culture Day*



**EVERY SEMESTER**, MACU observes different cultures with its semi-annual Celebration of Culture. This fall, the university came to life in colorful songs, dances and festivities with a grand celebration of Latino-Hispanic heritage.

On Oct. 7, members and friends of the university packed the campus chapel. After a bilingual worship service, alternating song choruses of English and Spanish, Pastor Josué Chavez of the OKC Family Church spoke on the growing and changing cultural landscape of the country.

As the keynote speaker, Rev. Mark Inscoe, a teacher from Capitol Hill High School who was raised in Panama, spoke out on his youth ministry. Along with his wife Carmen and other Christian adult leaders, Inscoe is dedicated to helping young men and women transform their lives through Christ's salvation.

MACU family members and guests came together in Café 1412 after chapel services to enjoy an inspired Latino-Hispanic lunch highlighted by traditional fare. Members of the Norahua Mexican Folkloric Dancers of Oklahoma provided lunchtime entertainment, filling the school with festive tunes and footsteps.

After lunch, about a dozen students drove to the Tony Reyes Bilingual Child Development Center, a part of the Latino Community Development Agency located in Oklahoma City. Volunteers weeded flowerbeds, mowed the lawn, cleaned up the playground area and interacted with some of the children at the center.

To cap off the festivities, MACU joined with the OKC Family Church in a bilingual service on Oct. 9. Several MACU students and faculty members joined the congregation, which is composed of both English and Spanish speaking individuals.

"We want to not only introduce students to the culture in chapel, but we want to give them opportunities to take part and meet people who share that culture," Campus Pastor Johnny Bland said. **"We share the same city, the same side of town, we just happen to speak a different language and have a different culture – but we share the same God."**



# HISPANIC SCHOLARSHIP

**MACU HAS BEEN GIVEN** a meaningful financial gift to be used specifically as scholarships for Hispanic and Latino students pursuing a degree in business or leadership.

The scholarship can be applied for students attending on-ground or online classes.

To qualify for the scholarship, prospective recipients must be:

- Enrolled in a business or leadership program at MACU
- In good academic standing
- Hispanic and/or Latino
- Fully admitted to MACU
- Enrolled full-time

The scholarship covers up to two-thirds of tuition cost.

**For more information about the scholarship or to apply, please visit [www.macu.edu/hispanic-scholarship/](http://www.macu.edu/hispanic-scholarship/).**

## TSIS UPDATE

**SINCE IT FORMED IN 2005**, the Thomas School of International Studies (TSIS) has seen hundreds of Hispanic students from across the world graduate from certificate and degree programs developed to equip them to impact their world for Christ.

Headed up by TSIS Executive Director Dr. Enrique Cepeda, the school has delivered learning opportunities to nearly a dozen Latin-American countries in the past decade. In addition to a Master of Leadership degree in Spanish, TSIS also offers multiple certificate programs and uses workshops, media, conferences, pastoral counseling and retreats to reach out to the local Hispanic community.

Cristela Luna, TSIS administrative assistant, said the program helps bring Christ-based programs to Spanish-speaking individuals who would not ordinarily have the same opportunity.

"Speaking in a different language is always difficult," Luna said. "With TSIS, people can go into a program that's in their own language."

In October, TSIS celebrated 50 new graduates in Marietta, Ga. and Buenos Aires, Argentina. One of those graduates, Éxodo Rivas, called TSIS "a blessing" for his family and his company.

"Its profound material, but at the same time it's practical because of the clear dynamics of its teaching," Rivas said. "The tools learned can be applied in any field, whether ecclesiastic, business or personal. I am grateful to Dr. Cepeda and MACU for the opportunity to participate in this program."

**For more information, please visit [www.macu.edu/tsis/](http://www.macu.edu/tsis/).**



### CONGRATULATIONS GRADS!

*Members of the TSIS program recently celebrated graduations in Buenos Aires and Marietta, Ga.*




 A photograph of Marvin Middlebrooks, an older man with white hair and glasses, wearing a dark suit and tie. He is standing on a stage, receiving a medal from a man in a light-colored suit. Another man in a dark suit stands to the left, and a woman in a patterned top and white cardigan stands to the right. Marvin is wearing a large, dark, shiny robe over his suit, and a red ribbon with a circular medal is around his neck.
 

# MARVIN MIDDLEBROOKS

After 24 years as a beloved part of the Evangel family, Marvin Middlebrooks has been named professor emeritus of Mid-America Christian University to mark his success at the helm of the ministry program he retired from this school year.

During chapel services in October, MACU Board Chairman Dr. Claude Robold presented Middlebrooks with the title and accompanying medal in front of his colleagues and the MACU student body.

"It's been my privilege to know Marvin for 52 years," Robold said. "I've watched how God has worked in his life. He's been a tremendous blessing to the Kingdom of God. The honor we bestowed to him as professor emeritus doesn't even begin to say 'thank you' enough for what he's done for Mid-America Christian University."

Middlebrooks and his wife, Janice, have been involved with the university for many decades. He first came to the school as a student and standout basketball player when it was located in Houston as Gulf Coast Bible College. After graduating, the Middlebrooks married and went on to serve

at six churches and raise five children together — all MACU alumnus.

The Middlebrooks family came home to MACU in 1993. He has served in a variety of roles throughout the past two decades, ranging from professor for both traditional and adult learning programs to serving as chair and director of the Specialized Ministries program. He also worked as director of MACU's first distance learning program for ministry.

"I am very honored and humbled to receive this recognition," Middlebrooks said. "I am blessed to be a part of a group of people that serve the Lord and work together to impact the world for Christ."

Middlebrooks retired Dec. 9 after leading the last chapel of the fall semester. He plans to remain involved in various activities at MACU, including preaching in chapel, attending sporting events and continuing his lifetime of Kingdom Work for the Lord.


 A photograph of a woman with blonde hair, wearing a blue and white striped sweater, looking down and smiling. In the background, there are several dark, round objects hanging on a wall.
 

## BETHEL CLASSES STARTING JANUARY 2017

The Bethel Series is designed for pastors and ministry staff, Sunday school teachers, Bible study leaders, Christian counselors and those who desire a deeper understanding of the Bible. Spring 2017 classes begin soon — **ENROLL NOW: [bethelonline.macu.edu/](http://bethelonline.macu.edu/)**.

*Mid-America Christian University*

20 **M** 17

# DREAM SCHOLARSHIP GALA



*Save-the-Date*  
APRIL 6, 2017

*Civic Center Music Hall*

ONE NIGHT TO INSPIRE A  
STUDENT TO DREAM BIGGER!



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# MACU IN THE NEWS

Recently, Mid-America Christian University was recognized by multiple organizations for its dedication to affordable Christian education, student safety and more. Included among the school's honors:



## MOST AFFORDABLE ONLINE BIBLE COLLEGES

Value Colleges placed MACU at number four in the country for its wide range of degrees and the flexibility of its online programs for non-traditional students.

"Their bachelor's and master's degrees in Christian Ministry are one of their strengths, but they offer numerous programs in other areas, such as Criminal Justice, Public Relations and Business, including a well-regarded online MBA program," the website stated. "Their online degrees are perfect for busy adult students."



## SAFEST COLLEGES IN OKLAHOMA

BackgroundChecks.org rated MACU as one of the safest colleges in the state as a part of its annual report. To compile the report, BackgroundChecks.org combined data from recent Department of Education reports, national language analysis, social media sentiment analysis and their own research to create a ranking of the Safest Colleges in Oklahoma.

"It's a true testament to a great administration, strong leadership, student and community involvement," said Jessica Pierce, a BackgroundChecks.org public safety analyst.



## BEST ONLINE CHRISTIAN COLLEGES

Affordable Colleges Online recognized MACU's promise to give students the opportunity to earn a higher education in an environment focused on faith. To be considered as one of the Best Online Christian Colleges in the country, schools had to offer a Christian ethos, affordable tuition, online programs and a number of student support services.

**"We wanted to highlight Christian colleges that are setting a high standard for online programs,"**

said Dan Schuessler, CEO and Founder of Affordable Colleges Online. "It is important to honor these universities who are going above and beyond the standard for distance learning."



## MILITARY FRIENDLY SCHOOLS

For more than a decade, Victory Media's Military Friendly ratings recognize companies and colleges with leading programs for veterans, members of the Armed Forces and military spouses. MACU earned the designation this year for "exhibiting leading practices in recruiting and supporting post-military students!"

## OKLAHOMA GREAT COMPANIES TO WORK FOR

Every year, Oklahoma Magazine selects 45 state-based companies representing 16 sectors to highlight in their publication. This year, MACU was appointed to the list that represents great places to work in the great state of Oklahoma.

"Each of these companies offers great benefits and an exciting work environment for its employees," the magazine's website said.

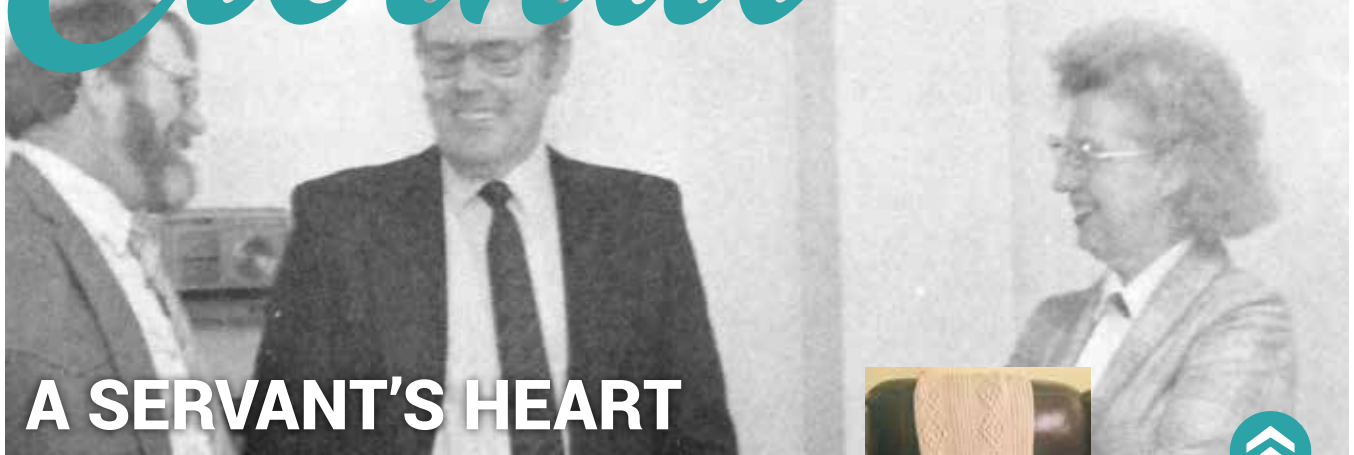


## MOST AFFORDABLE BACHELOR'S DEGREES IN COMMUNICATION

TheBestSchools.org recently highlighted MACU's online bachelor's degree in Communication and Ethics. The website applauded the program for its multiple start dates and accelerated option, allowing non-traditional students to complete the degree in four years while maintaining other obligations.

To compile their list of the most affordable online communication programs in the country, TheBestSchools.org looked at the yearly net cost of the school, online offerings and range of courses included in the degree program.

# Eternal INVESTMENT



## A SERVANT'S HEART

As a former Board of Trustee member, Maxine Smith-Hinderliter has seen MACU through some bleak financial times. Now, through her generous giving and faithful spirit, she's helping ensure those days will never come again.

As Smith-Hinderliter was planning a strategy for her estate earlier this year, she made a decision to leave her entire estate to the university, and to the students she holds dear to her heart.

*"I hope that my gift will allow my support of MACU to live long after I do,"* Smith-Hinderliter said.

Smith-Hinderliter has always had a heart for education, having served as the chief financial officer of the Clovis public school system in New Mexico. In addition to serving there and for fifteen years on MACU's board, she and her late husband Lloyd faithfully gave to MACU until his death in 2013.

Her only greater passion is her love of God. To this day, Smith-Hinderliter remains an active member of Living Word Church of God. She's also attended the First Church of God there, which led to an enduring relationship with MACU's School of Teacher Education Chair, Esther Rehbein. Rehbein's father pastored the church when she was in high school.

"When I think of that time in my life, I realize how many special people not only attended the church, but had an impact on me as a teenager," Rehbein said. "Maxine was one of those people."

During her adolescent years, she said Smith-Hinderliter was a remarkable role model with a contagious smile.

"She always had time to listen, and it was obvious that she genuinely cared," Rehbein said. "She was a woman who truly showed the love of Jesus to me."

Although many miles separate Oklahoma and New Mexico, Rehbein has kept a reminder of her dear mentor with her for nearly four decades: a handmade afghan presented to her on her wedding day.

"When she gave it to us, her one request was that we didn't stick it away in a closet, but to please put it to use," she said. "We have done just that."

Even though it's been washed repeatedly and used by many in its 37 years, it's still a staple in the Rehbein household — just like Maxine Smith-Hinderliter's eternal investment is to MACU's God-led legacy.



### MAXINE SMITH-HINDERLITER

*meets with fellow Board of Trustee members in this Clarion photo from 1991.*



### WITH LOVE FROM CLOVIS

*This handmade afghan was given as a wedding gift to School of Education Chair Esther Rehbein.*



Give.MACU.edu

## IN REMEMBRANCE

With heavy hearts, we would like to share with our MACU friends and family the passing of Martin Shackleton. Martin came to the university in 1991 as the Chair of Music. His first love was creating worship services that helped people enter into the presence of God. Along with his wife Jean, Martin often directed musical productions on campus, developed curriculum for the classroom, wrote music for chapel and guided students in developing their worship leadership.

Martin touched many souls and hearts during his time at MACU with his love of Christ, students and music.

**Please remember the Shackleton family in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.**



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# SAVE-THE-DATE

**JANUARY 11:** Traditional Spring Classes Begin

**JANUARY 19:** Adult On-Campus Orientation

**JANUARY 20, 23:** Adult Online Orientation

