

MID-AMERICAN

THE MAGAZINE OF MID-AMERICA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY



*Dream Bigger.
Do Greater.*
Winter 2022

The Historic Investiture of President Philip A. Greenwald

President's Letter

The fall semester is a time of celebration at Mid-America Christian University. Throughout this issue of the *Mid-American*, you will see evidence of great things happening for God's glory.

Chapel sessions on Wednesday and Friday mornings are a rich blend of student-led music and inspired speakers. Enrollment is up 3.39 percent and our residence halls are full. The President's Leadership Class has 59 students and our discipleship programs are growing. Athletic teams are experiencing great success on the field and court.

We celebrated our past, present and future at the Presidential Inauguration in October. Our Board of Trustees met to discuss our vision for strengthening our historic commitments to ministry training, investing in future growth opportunities and ensuring that we are constantly focused on a Christ-centered, Biblical worldview in all that we do.

Our campus looks beautiful, with updates occurring in the Gaulke Activity Center, on the grounds and throughout Fozard Hall. Professors are deeply engaged in teaching and connecting with students. Our alumni are active in attending events, praying for students and giving back through supporting scholarship funds.

As we enjoy the holiday season, I want to express my gratitude and appreciation to our MACU family for joining us in Dreaming Bigger and Doing Greater. Your prayers, presence, gifts and service to the University are making it possible to inspire and educate students who will lead companies, churches, organizations, communities and countries. Every day I encounter our amazing students as they explore God's call upon their lives. Their faith, commitment to learning and love for one another inspires me. When you step on campus, you cannot help but feel surrounded by the presence of the Holy Spirit!

Please consider including Mid-America Christian University in your year-end giving. Your support will enable us to provide opportunities for students to receive a first-class,



Christian education. Many students who could not afford to attend a private Christian university are doing so because of your generosity. Pray about including MACU in your estate planning. We are actively working to expand endowments to ensure that our mission continues for generations to come.

In 2023, we will celebrate 70 years of serving the Church of God through ministry training as an institution of Christian higher education. Who would have dreamed all the ways that God has blessed our University! What's next? I believe the best is yet to come. Thanks to each of you – students, alumni, family, friends, donors and community partners – for being a special part of our MACU family.

May the peace and joy of Christ be yours throughout this Christmas season!



Phil Greenwald

Rev. Philip A. Greenwald President



President

Rev. Philip A. Greenwald

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Do You Have an Alumni Update or Story Idea?

Please send it to:
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Winter 2022

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***Dream Bigger.
Do Greater.***



Investiture Ceremony Celebrates President Phil Greenwald

By Whitney Knight

Food, festivities and fanfare marked the historic inauguration of MACU's fifth President, Rev. Phil Greenwald, Oct. 8-10.

Hundreds of guests filled the campus during the three-day celebration, beginning with MACU Community Fun Day on a crisp, fall Saturday. Throughout the day, members of the campus and local community enjoyed a myriad of activities, including a BBQ picnic, inflatables, miniature golf, stilt walkers, alumni sports games, pickleball, an esports tournament and food trucks.

On Sunday evening, the walls of MACU's JASCO Chapel were filled with the joyful sounds of award-winning Avalon Worship for A Night of Worship with Avalon. The GRAMMY-nominated group put on a moving concert for students, faculty, staff and guests, performing some of their greatest hits as well as requests from the audience.



"I'm honored to humbly accept the high calling, responsibility and privilege of servant leadership as the fifth President of our University,"

At long last, the inaugural events culminated in a special ceremony held Monday morning. The Investiture Ceremony is a formal academic ceremony in which the new President is conferred with the authority of the office.

President Greenwald's Investiture Ceremony was marked with an academic procession, a Call to Service by members of the MACU community both past and present, musical performances by Avalon Worship, prayer, worship and the presentation of the symbols of office: the University Medallion and the MACU Academic Mace.

To cap off the ceremony, President Greenwald – donning his new regalia and the University Medallion – gave an inaugural speech, moving the audience to a standing ovation as he addressed the packed Gaulke Activity Center.

"I'm honored to humbly accept the high calling, responsibility and privilege of servant leadership as the fifth President of our University, standing on the shoulders of women and men, Trustees, alumni, faculty, staff, administrators and community partners," said President Greenwald. "I will lead this institution with gratitude, recognizing their work, service and sacrifice which inspires each of us to do greater things as we follow God's leading."

President Greenwald, his wife Stephanie, his daughters Kalli and Torri, and the entire MACU Family are grateful to everyone who joined us for this cherished occasion. Thank you for being a part of MACU history!





Great Things for God's Glory

The Inaugural Address of President Philip A. Greenwald

October 10, 2022

Today, we celebrate great things happening for God's glory at Mid-America Christian University. From our humble beginnings in 1953 as a ministry training center, to our role in 2022 as one of the leading institutions of Christian higher education in America, God has richly blessed our university.

We remain deeply committed to the core values of our founding Pioneer Class and our reform movement as part of the Church of God. We give thanks for our rich history, rejoice in our present success, and we believe the best is always yet to come!

"Our vision is preparing people to do greater things for God and His Kingdom."

Our vision is preparing people to do greater things for God and His Kingdom. We want every student to have a greater encounter with God, a greater engagement in learning, a greater global awareness and influence, and a greater expression of doing good. Our present reality and future success are defined by our motto: Dreaming Bigger and Doing Greater.

I'm honored to humbly accept the high calling, responsibility, and privilege of servant leadership as the 5th President of our university. Standing on the shoulders of women and men – trustees, alumni, faculty, staff, administrators, and community partners – I will lead this great institution with gratitude, recognizing their work, sacrifice, and service which inspires all of us to greater things as we follow God's leading.

It's especially meaningful to stand on the shoulders of four servants in God's Kingdom – President Max Gaulke, President John Conley, President Forrest Robinson, and our 4th President, now Chancellor, John Fozard. These faithful witnesses have carried the academic and spiritual mantle of leadership which I assume today with both humility and confidence.

At MACU, we are proud of our distinguished faculty, who teach, train, and disciple our students with academic rigor and spiritual compassion. Our diverse student body represents the body of Christ with people of all ages from 42 nations and nearly every state across this country. With the deep support of alumni and colleagues in the Church of God and other Christian churches near and far, we stand firmly grounded in tradition and surrounded by prayer.

"Our mission is preparing students to create, collaborate, and innovate to solve local and global problems for the glory of God through Jesus Christ and for the good of society."

Over the past few months, many people have asked what my favorite thing is about being the President of MACU! That's easy – I love our students! I love meeting, supporting, encouraging, challenging, and inspiring every student. Our mission is preparing students to create, collaborate, and



innovate to solve local and global problems for the glory of God through Jesus Christ and for the good of society. I believe God is preparing our students at MACU – women and men – both online and in-person – past, present, and future - to change the world. Students, your stories, notes, smiles, laughter, and tears, bring joy to my heart. I am deeply committed to investing in you and praying for you every day and look forward to seeing you serve Christ and others in the years to come. You will lead companies, teach children, serve in churches, offer healing through medicine and counseling, represent Christ in athletics, and raise Christian families. I could not be prouder of you as you dream God's dreams for your lives and I pray God will lead and guide you every step of the way.

"Thank you for marking this historic day in the life of our institution with your presence, prayers, and support."

Today, I want to express my gratitude to our Board of Trustees, members of the President's Advisory Council on Excellence, distinguished presidents and representatives of other colleges and universities, honored guests, family, and friends. Thank you for marking this historic day in the life of our institution with your presence, prayers, and support.

I'm especially pleased to share this moment with my wife Stephanie, who serves and leads with dignity and grace as our First Lady. She is a passionate follower of Christ and a spiritual mentor to our daughters and students. Stephanie

and I pray that our relationship will serve as an example of a Biblical, Christ-centered marriage for all our students.

To our daughters, Kalli and Tori, we are so proud of you for becoming the whole persons God created you to be. While being PG5 is a high calling and a cool job – being married to your mom and being your dad are the greatest joys of my life!

"Today's ceremony is filled with rich and meaningful symbolism."

Today's ceremony is filled with rich and meaningful symbolism. We celebrate the symbols of academic excellence. We honor our faculty whose regalia symbolizes their commitment to standards and rigor of learning which stand the test of time. The medallion is an inspirational academic symbol which contains images of our university seal, the cross, and our previous institutional names. The mace symbolizes the academic authority of our university and the Bible, with themes from Luke 2:52 reminding us of the holistic development of each student growing in wisdom, stature, favor with God, and favor with man. We also celebrate the symbols of our spiritual pursuit – the prayers of faithful leaders, the prie dieu, and music that guides our worship.

Yet today, the symbol conveying the deepest meaning for me is our school color and the color of the Presidential robe which I have chosen – red. Red reminds us of the crimson blood of Jesus Christ, shed for the forgiveness of our sins. Red has often symbolized sacrifice. The color found in our seal and logos and uniforms calls us to be Christ-like in our

passion and commitment to doing God's will. We look to Jesus as our example as found in Mark 10:45 "even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many." The blood of Jesus was poured out for you and me as evidence of God's love and grace. For our university, Jesus is the subject, and the color red reminds us that we are called to lead and serve by His example.

At Mid-America Christian University, we will hold fast to our historic commitment of lifting high the name of Jesus with the Bible as our guide and the Holy Spirit as our encourager. We will not bow to progressive theology or a woke culture. Instead, we find our identity in Christ! We will remain Christ-centered with a Biblical worldview in every class, on every field and court, in every profession and in every situation. We know who we are – created in God's image – female and male – working to become the whole persons God created us to be.

"We will take a stand for the non-negotiables of our faith: the Lordship of Christ over our personal and corporate lives, the authority of the Scripture for daily living, and the pursuit of personal holiness."

We will take a stand for the non-negotiables of our faith: the Lordship of Christ over our personal and corporate lives, the authority of the Scripture for daily living, and the pursuit of personal holiness. We will celebrate our diversity, while

focusing on unity in the body of Christ. We desire to be reconciled to God and one another through Christ. We will faithfully follow the Great Commandment of loving God and loving our neighbor. We will live out the Great Commission of going into all the world to make disciples, teaching and baptizing in Jesus' name. We claim these orthodox tenets so that we might do great things for God's glory.

"We will celebrate our diversity, while focusing on unity in the body of Christ."

At MACU, we will live here and now in a spirit of abundance, generosity, and gratitude, and live eternally in God's presence because of Jesus' atoning sacrifice. We claim and experience healing and wholeness and mercy and grace, the prevenient, justifying, sanctifying, and perfecting grace of God Almighty.

You may know that I've been asking the question "wouldn't it be great if?" Already, more than 100 ideas have been shared and many new initiatives are underway. But the moments that matter will occur when we ask: wouldn't it be great if revival happened on our campus and in our churches? Wouldn't it be great if students become leaders in their homes, churches, businesses, and countries? Wouldn't it be great if healing of physical, mental, spiritual, and relational needs happened among our students and alumni? Wouldn't it be great if reconciliation starts here, if God's kingdom is manifested in our work, if individuals and churches are restored and refreshed by turning to Christ and the Bible?

Friends our rich heritage and story is almost 70 years old, but

we are just getting started. The best is yet to come! You have given me a charge today which I will faithfully perform – I'm fully invested in the work and story of Mid-America Christian University – past, present, and future. As our students like to say, I'm all M!

And now as the President of this university, I charge you – students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends, to do great things for God's glory. To make a difference by sharing Christ and bringing hope to the world. Let your lives reflect our vision, mission, and values as you pursue great things. As we heard from the book of Ephesians, God has lavished His love upon us for His glory. He chose us, redeemed us, blessed us, and marked us, and together we will do great things for God's glory. The glory of the blood, the beauty of the body, broken for our forgiveness. May God alone receive all the glory, honor, and praise, in Jesus' name! Amen.





Upcoming Alumni Events

Women's Basketball Alumni Day | February 11, 2023

2023 Grad Night | May 5, 2023

MACU Golf Classic | May 8, 2023

MBC 90s Reunion | June 8-10, 2023



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Kelvin Williamson (GBC and Men's Basketball Alumnus) takes a look at the newly updated locker rooms in Gaulke Activity Center



Men's and Women's Soccer Alumni came out to support our Evangel soccer teams in October



2001 National Championship Volleyball team being recognized at a volleyball game



MACU Welcomes Executive Director of Alumni Engagement

By Anna-Kate Weichel

This fall, we welcomed back Ashley Gotcher to the MACU Family as the Executive Director of Alumni Engagement. Gotcher is a MACU alumni who graduated with her MBA in 2019 – and she has her own empowering story to tell about MACU's adult program.

After graduating with her Bachelor's degree from Oklahoma State University, Gotcher got married and began her family soon after. She started classes towards her Master's degree at a different institution.

"I got about two classes in and I couldn't do it. Between having a full-time job, being a wife and everything else, I couldn't finish it," she recalled.

Years later, she went back to restart her degree, but this time at MACU.

"Through a lot of encouragement and prayers, I eventually finished," she said. "The structure of the way you can earn your degree at MACU was the right fit for me."

Gotcher also worked as the Director of Admissions from 2016-2021 and saw one of the University's largest-ever graduating classes (729) graduate in 2019. Among them were many students who she got to know during their admissions process.

"Working in Admissions and getting to see those students that you

brought in graduate is really exciting and inspiring," she said.

That passion for students and for the mission of MACU made Gotcher the perfect fit for the new role of Executive Director of Alumni Engagement, said President Phil Greenwald. "I know our alumni will be thrilled to connect and engage with her and the MACU campus in this exciting new role."

Gotcher hit the ground running in her new role, hosting alumni events in October that included reunions for volleyball, basketball, soccer, and baseball teams. She said she is looking forward to connecting with more alumni through events, state meetings, and other outlets, such as social media.

"For me, this role is an incredible opportunity to invest in and reconnect with our incredible alumni community," she said.

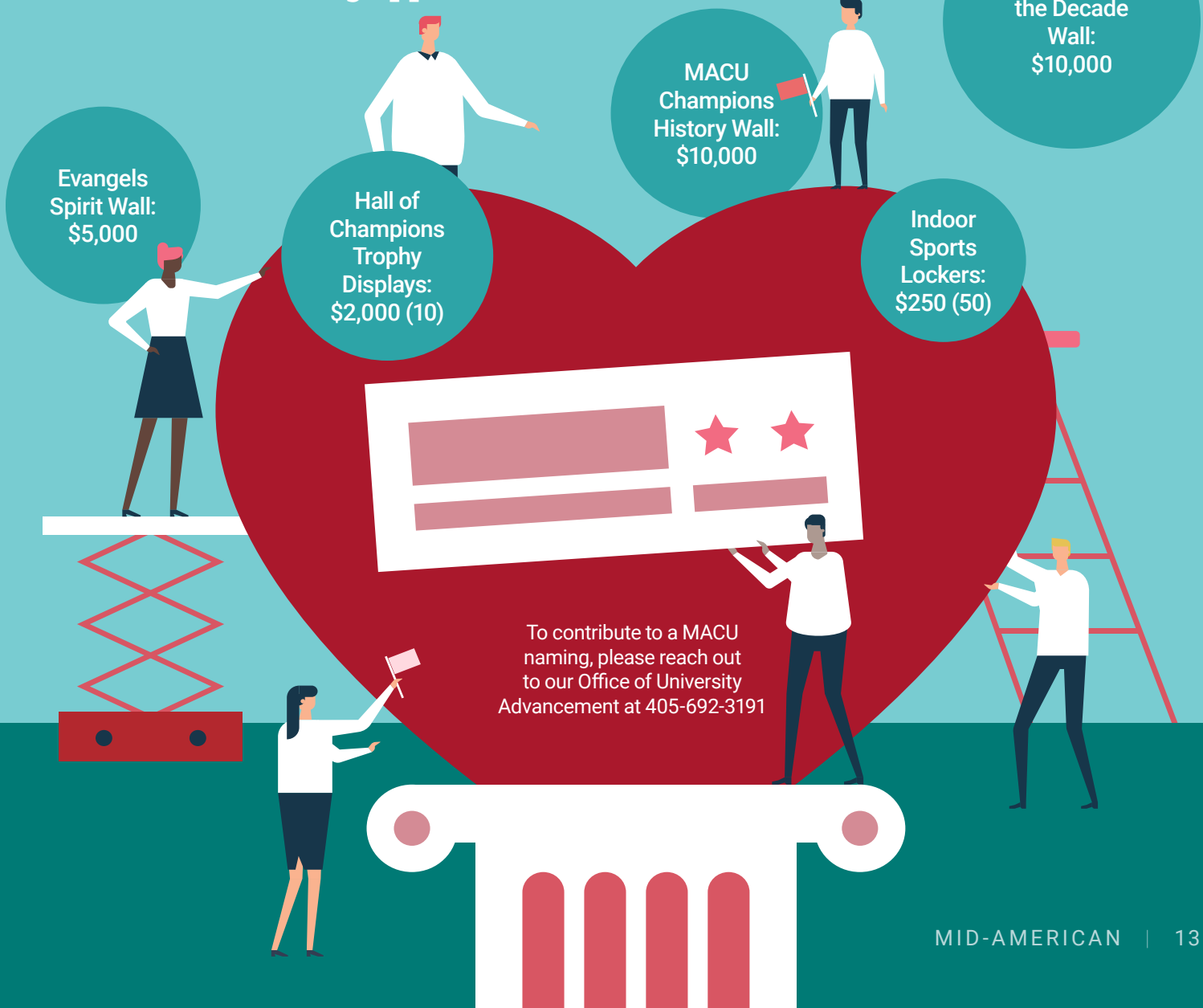
"As our university has seen a lot of incredible growth, especially over the last 5-7 years, our alumni base is really big now. We want to bring them back to campus and celebrate them."



One of the first events held in the newly renovated Gaulke Activity Center was a celebration of our men's basketball alumni & dedication of the Athletic Director's Suite in honor of former Men's Basketball Head Coach and Athletic Director Willie Holley.



To honor or recognize a teammate, a special MACU team or a friend of MACU, please consider these naming opportunities:



Gaulke Activity Center Updates

By Anna-Kate Weichel

The Gaulke Activity Center, home of Evangel's basketball and volleyball, recently underwent some impressive renovations. In addition to the court, Gaulke houses updated locker rooms, administrative offices, a training room, a modernized concession stand and a new team shop featuring Evangel gear.

Generous donors helped make the updates possible, with the Office of University Advancement raising over \$16,000 to fund the project and recruit new student-athletes.

In addition to upgraded facilities, the Gaulke has also added new decor elements, including vertical TVs that rotate through lively game day graphics of players. New trophy cases, photos and plaques boasting statistics were also installed in the foyer, reminding all who enter the gym that champions are made at MACU!



Campus Enhancements

By Anna-Kate Weichel

As part of President Greenwald’s ‘Wouldn’t It Be Great If?’ initiative, MACU is excited to announce some campus improvements.

MACU recently added an outdoor pickleball court on the east side of campus. Pickleball is a combination of tennis, badminton and ping-pong which has seen a recent rise in popularity. Students, staff and alumni have been enjoying playing on the new court with the cool, fall weather!

MACU’s Campus Store has also gotten an update, including a “We Proudly Serve” Starbucks inside – as well as a new name, Evangel Corner, representing the addition of the coffee shop. Students, employees and guests will be able to shop for new MACU merch while sipping on their favorite Starbucks drinks this fall.

Finally, we have also added Chick-fil-A sandwiches as a fun option for lunches on Thursdays. These are truly exciting times at MACU!

Be sure to follow the newly-improved Evangel Corner on Instagram! @MACU



President's Leadership Class

By Anna-Kate Weichel

Under the new guidance of President Phil Greenwald, MACU is unveiling its revised leadership program for incoming students.

His leadership class, PG5LC, is designed to allow time each month for President Greenwald and other school leaders to invest in students’ leadership qualities and spiritual walk.

“President Greenwald has already taken a very hands-on approach with the students,” said Dr. Alicia McCullar, Dean of Student Engagement and Development.

In their first meeting, President Greenwald chatted with students about his journey to MACU and God’s path for him. He was able to teach students the importance of preparing and researching prior to job interviews and hear from them on who has impacted their life and journey to MACU thus far.

President Greenwald has big plans for future meetings, including topics on Wesleyan theology, financial literacy, marriage and parenting, spiritual growth, leadership strategies and values of MACU.

"The President's Leadership Class has yet again been another great way to get plugged in on campus at MACU. I appreciate the time taken to cover our history and 'the why' of our great university. I come expectant as the new 'PG5LC' builds upon and evolves programs of the past. I look forward to discussions to come as we tackle key topics, teaching us about leadership in a professional, well-rounded, and ultimately Christian environment," says Gabriel Renda, Student Body President.

For the incoming Class of 2023, stay tuned this spring President's Leadership Class application details.

PG5LC Goals and Topics for Exploration:



Discover the history and traditions of MACU in the larger context of Christian higher education



Learn the leadership style, guiding principles and values that guide PG5 and other MACU leaders



Explore the world of etiquette, networking and interaction within the larger community



Have fun, create memories, laugh, love and build new relationships among students, faculty, staff and administrators



Think about stewardship, philanthropy and a lifetime of giving back



Consider spiritual disciplines of prayer, Scripture reading, fasting, meditation and exercise



Participate in service leadership on and off campus



Rev. Todd Braschler Leads Spiritual Transformation Week

By Whitney Knight

When he was a little boy, Rev. Todd Braschler loved to dig in the yard and uncover buried treasures. Little did he know, it was a prelude to a call.

“I have a call on my life to help people uncover the things that God has given to us that sometimes aren’t so obvious,” said Braschler, who led the MACU Family this fall with Spiritual Transformation Week, a four-part sermon series.

“I have a call on my life to help people uncover the things that God has given to us that sometimes aren’t so obvious,”

Braschler, who serves as vice-chairman of the MACU Board of Trustees, has spent 37 years in ministry, filling various roles in worship and youth ministry, as well as leading as an executive pastor.

In 2001, Braschler founded Todd Braschler Ministries, a full-time ministry dedicated to his life’s passion of excavating the potential God has placed in people, specifically in leaders, that has perhaps remained hidden.

During his week-long stay on campus, Braschler enjoyed cheering the Evangs on to victory during soccer matches and enjoying fellowship with students in Cafe 1412. He led chapel services Tuesday through Friday, delivering a powerful message that inspired – and challenged – students, faculty and staff to dig past their preconceptions and unearth the calling within.

“God’s identity and true image are found within your soul, not in any extrinsic pursuit, identity or hobby,” said Braschler. “Knowing your identity in Christ was always designed to be an excavation of what God wants you to see in His nature and image and aligning your life with that, not in creation.”

We hope you will join us next spring for our next Spiritual Transformation Week!

April 3-6, 2023

You can join us on campus in the JASCO Chapel or online at www.facebook.com/MidAmericaChristianUniversity



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"Donating to help students like me is worth more than you will ever know. You may never see a fraction of the harvest of what was done with your donations, but I assure you, you can rest easy knowing that lives were changed and the Kingdom was impacted. I encourage you to come by campus and have a look for yourself. Student after student, testimony after testimony, is proof that this university is a beacon of light and stands out. MACU is worth the investment; it invested in me."

Gabriel Renda
Junior | Marion, IL | Ministry Leadership



"Donating to student scholarships helps students like me to further our education without going into debt. Without scholarships, there was no way that I would have been able to go to college. The scholarships I've received have helped alleviate the financial stress and allowed me to focus on obtaining my degree. I believe that scholarships are blessings to those who receive them and who provide them."

Lissette Taylor
Freshman | Miami, FL | Digital Marketing

MACU Celebrates National Hispanic Heritage Month

By Anna-Kate Weichel

Each year, the U.S. observes National Hispanic Heritage Month from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15, by celebrating the histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America.

That includes many members of MACU's own diverse student body. To recognize them and other Hispanic Americans, MACU celebrated the annual event by representing many different aspects of Hispanic culture with a special week on campus.

The festivities began with Futbol Fiesta, held throughout the MACU men's and women's soccer games in late September. During the games, fans could treat themselves to authentic tacos from the El Buen Sazon food truck, watch a performance from the Ballet Folklorio Xochipilli, participate in giveaways, axe throwing and even a dunk tank.

Later that week, MACU opened its doors to more than 250 high school students from around the state for the annual Latino Youth Conference. Throughout the event, young men and women heard from inspiring leaders from the Hispanic community.



"It gives me great joy to host events on campus which allow students to celebrate their heritage," said Erica Alvarez-Stanton, Executive Director of Community Outreach and Services. "I was overwhelmed by the response for our Latino Youth Conference and hope to keep that momentum for future conferences."

During a home volleyball game, MACU put on Celebrate Colombia, a night to specifically focus on Colombian culture while enjoying a win from the Evangels! The night featured a performance by Clips & Hips and authentic Colombian coffee from Not Your Average Joe.

MACU wrapped up National Hispanic Heritage Month with an opportunity to walk with a decorated float in the Fiestas de las Americans parade in Oklahoma City. Students and staff marched for over a mile to commemorate all of the different Hispanic cultures represented within the Oklahoma City community and the MACU family.

"I am appreciative of MACU and honored to work for a campus which acknowledges and promotes diversity and inclusion," said Alvarez-Stanton.



Staff Spotlight

Erica Alvarez-Stanton

Executive Director of Community Outreach and Services

By Anna-Kate Weichel

It was a busy August day when Erica Alvarez-Stanton received a life-changing email.

"You don't think about the work you do. You get so caught up in 'I have to do this' or 'I have to do that.' It's really nice to take a step back and reflect on the fact that someone out there in the community thinks that you're doing a good job," said Alvarez-Stanton, MACU's Executive Director of Community Outreach and Services.

As it turns out, it was more than just one person who recognized Alvarez-Stanton's hard work. In the email, she learned that she had been nominated and chosen as a top '20 Under 40' professional by the Jóvenes Emprendedores y Profesionales en OK.

On the night of the awards banquet, she was joined by her husband and MACU's head baseball coach, Brett Stanton, and her daughter, Alexa. The evening was opened by dancing and performances by local, Latino bands and followed up with authentic (and delicious) Mexican food. The recipients were among distinguished professionals working in marketing, public relations, education, entrepreneurship and more – including the parents of a MACU student, who were awarded for their landscaping business.

After the awards were presented, the mother came over to see Alvarez-Stanton. She told her: "Thank you for all you do. I see why you received this award, because you do so much good. I appreciate everything you have done for my student."

Alvarez-Stanton said she will never forget the powerful moment.

"Being nominated and selected for this award means that the Latino community has recognized my commitment to empowering not only our next generation, but also their caregivers who came here with a dream for their family to prosper," she said. "I want to express my gratitude to our leadership at Mid-America Christian University for allowing me to do His work."

Alvarez-Stanton continues to fight for the highest good for potential and current students at MACU. Her goal is to provide support and resources to all students, but especially underrepresented communities.



"Our mission is to be in the community, which is why this award is so special. I believe that we are really helping to empower the community and future MACU students," she said.

Erica Alvarez-Stanton and the Admissions team invite you to join MACU's float for the MLK Jr. Day Parade on Jan. 16, 2023, and the African-American Empowerment Conference in February to commemorate Black History Month.



2022

"Dream" Scholarship Gala

Thanks to the support of our faithful donors, MACU's seventh annual Dream Scholarship Gala raised more than \$118,000 for student scholarships! It was an incredible evening spent at the Petroleum Club in downtown Oklahoma City with our students, staff, faculty, alumni, sponsors, donors and friends!



Proud MACU alumni, Joseph "Flash" and Jaidan Carter, shared their testimony and spoke on how scholarships not only helped them earn their education, but put them in a place to find one another, and most importantly to grow in their faith.



Dr. Bill McDowell, who served as MACU's first Executive Vice President from 2012 to 2016 received the 2022 Dream Maker Award for his profound impact on MACU and Christian higher education.



President Rev. Phil Greenwald Greenwald, joined by his wife and daughters, delivered the evening's keynote address, recalling how scholarships made his own education possible.

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Alumni Spotlight

Harlee Kowals

By Whitney Knight

Since she was 12 years old, Harlee Kowals dreamed of working at the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation (OSBI). Today, the 2020 graduate is fulfilling her childhood wish at OSBI's Forensic Science Center, a state-of-the-art crime laboratory in Edmond, Okla.

There, Kowals works as a criminalist in the lab's specialized biology unit, where she uses forensic science to investigate crimes and examine evidence through DNA and bodily fluids.

"I was a part of MACU's first group of biology majors," explained Kowals. "A lot of people, when they think of biology, they think of medical sciences and research, whereas I was hoping to be more focused in forensic science."

Kowals said her professors, including Dr. Harold Kihega and Dr. Deshani Fernando, went above and beyond to help tailor her degree plan to her interests. They collaborated with other universities to add additional classes, including biochemistry, and filled some of her elective space with courses in criminal justice.

"I had experience with other universities before coming to MACU and they never took the time to get to know me and my interests and dreams," Kowals said. "My professors at MACU were genuinely invested in me and because of that, I was able to get a more tailored, customized education that's enabled me to pursue my dreams."

She said one of the most important facets of her degree was the faith woven throughout the program. Sometimes, she said, she garners some funny looks when she shares that she graduated with a science degree from a Christian university – but Kowals takes that as an opportunity to share about MACU, her beliefs and how science and faith intertwine.

"I don't see how you can believe in science and not believe there is a higher power behind it," she said, adding that one of her most enjoyable classes at MACU was Evolution.

"A lot of Christians dance around the subject of evolution, they're too nervous to talk about it," said Kowals. "I can confidently defend how evolution and Christianity coexist."

"One of the most important things about my education at MACU was being able to have science and faith coexist with each other."



That faith has served as the foundation for her career, she said.

"I'm in a field where I get to see the worst of humanity and deal with everything that comes with that," Kowals said. "To work on a murder case, to think of who could be capable of doing something like that is insane."

"I don't know what I would do if I didn't have that background of faith; I don't know if I could continue on and be able to mentally power through this. I don't know how someone could do this job without knowing the love of God."

Kowals said she's fortunate to be able to go to work every single day knowing she's making a difference in the lives of others.

"Being able to use science to find truth and using that truth to get answers for the people – women, men, parents, children and families – who need it. It's the most rewarding career I could imagine. I'm able to use everything I learned and worked for and apply that in a way that's changing the world."

Program Updates

MACU Launches Veterans Policy Certificate

By Whitney Knight

The U.S. is home to more than 2 million military retirees, a number that continues to grow each year. To support these heroes, there is a great need for professionals who support military veterans through non-profit, private and government organizations.

To help meet that need, MACU has launched a new, 24-credit hour certificate program. The Veterans’ Policy Certificate is an interdisciplinary academic program that focuses on understanding the policies associated with the military veteran population in the U.S. VPC graduates will have the basic knowledge needed to work within various organizations that support military veterans.

“Veterans Studies is a developing field in higher education,” said Dr. Ray Dillman, Director of Institutional Effectiveness. “By offering this certificate program, MACU is positioned to become just the seventh institution of higher learning in the country to offer an academic program focusing specifically on the U.S. military population.”

Dillman, a retired military officer himself, spearheaded development of the certificate program. He said that when paired with a degree from MACU, the certificate can help job applicants stand out when pursuing a career in veteran support.

Although he anticipates the program will especially appeal to veterans, Dillman said anyone with an interest in veterans or the military can earn the certificate.

Courses are held in a 5-week, online format and can be taken as a part of an undergraduate program at MACU or as a standalone certificate program. The program combines four general education courses with four brand new courses: Veterans in Media; Researching Veterans; Veterans Policy, before 9/11; and Veterans Policy, after 9/11.

Enrollment for the Veterans’ Policy Certificate is currently open. For more information or to enroll, visit www.macu.edu or call 888-888-2341.



Dr. Ray Dillman

Christian Ministries Degree Adds New Emphases

By Whitney Knight

To better meet the needs of students pursuing a career in ministry, MACU’s Christian Ministries program is expanding with four exciting new emphases in Business Administration, Digital Marketing, Psychology and Criminal Justice.

Likewise, students pursuing a degree in one of these studies can now add an emphasis in Christian Ministries to their degree program.

It’s all a part of MACU’s mission to prepare students to follow God’s call for their life, said Dr. Julie Nance, Program Director of MACU’s Adult School of Ministry.

“Our whole desire with these additional options for ministry students is to meet their needs and prepare them for the career God has called them to,” Nance said. “That may be someone who is looking to launch their own nonprofit organization or someone who is looking to provide mental healthcare, especially in a post-pandemic world.”

She said with the new options available to students, an individual can receive the knowledge they need to pursue the career of their choosing while being exposed to core ministry skills.

For instance, a student who wants to become a chaplain for first responders may benefit from an emphasis in Criminal Justice, while a student looking to launch his or her own nonprofit needs the means to promote it in today’s digital world, necessitating knowledge of Digital Marketing.

“These emphases are specifically ones we saw students wanting and we believe we have come up with a program to best address those needs,” Nance said.

If you or someone you know is interested in pursuing a degree in Christian Ministries from MACU, visit www.macu.edu or call 888-888-2341.



Dr. Julie Nance

Board of Trustees Dedicated to MACU’s Success

By Whitney Knight

At MACU, our mission is carried out by all of our constituents, from our faculty and staff to our students and alumni. As the governing body of the University, the MACU Board of Trustees is an integral piece of this population.

These dedicated men and women, each with their own successful ministries and businesses, serve MACU faithfully by adhering to the University mission and protecting its best interests through decisions made on its behalf.

This year, several members of the Board of Trustees were re-elected or elected for the first time. Please join us in welcoming them!

Mrs. Rosanna Lucero-Torrez

Mrs. Lucero-Torrez has faithfully served on the MACU Board of Trustees for 15 years and was recently re-elected for another term. She has a successful career as a financial adviser at an Albuquerque branch of Merrill Lynch, where she focuses on developing strategies and recommendations for high-net-worth individuals, their families and their businesses to help them meet their short and long-term financial goals. Lucero-Torrez also recently served on MACU’s Presidential Search Committee.

“I am deeply invested in MACU and want to see this University succeed,” she said. “I love the experience of being on campus and feeling the Spirit there. All of the Trustees feel the same way. This is a special place for us; it is our place to protect and guide for the next generation. I am fortunate to be a part of it.”

Rev. Andrew Rehbein

Rev. Rehbein is a new member of the Board of Trustees, but he is certainly not new to MACU! Rehbein earned his Bachelor’s degree in Worship and Ministry from MACU, and his parents are both proud graduates of Gulf Coast Bible College. Since 2008, Rehbein has served at First Church of God in Pryor, Okla., where he now serves as lead pastor.

“I remember when I was a student at MACU there were banners hanging in the chapel that said, ‘The Spirit is the Difference.’ While it might sound cliché, that is a beautiful expression of the Spirit’s leadership work at MACU! The faculty are warm and caring and the relationships that are forged can last a lifetime. I have friends I made at MACU who are still a big part of my life and ministry. I am elated to serve the University that gave so much to me in this new capacity. After attending my first board meeting, I left encouraged – I believe the brightest days of MACU are still ahead!”

Rev. Bill Search

If you happen across a Trustee wearing a MACU baseball hat, you’ll know you found Rev. Search! It’s his new favorite fashion accessory after he was gifted one of the Evangels’ tournament hats. Search, a new Trustee who currently serves as the Executive Pastor of Education at Crossings Community Church in Oklahoma City, carries that passion for MACU and the Lord everywhere he goes.

“After moving to Oklahoma City, I joined a church that is blessed with many amazing MACU alumni! Serving with those who have benefited from all MACU offers told me so much about the University before I ever stepped foot on campus. I forged friendships with a number of staff and faculty and have spoken in chapel. Earlier this year, I was asked to join the Board of Trustees – which I gladly accepted! I am absolutely thrilled witnessing all God is doing in and through MACU!”



Mrs. Rosanna Lucero-Torrez



Rev. Andrew Rehbein



Rev. Bill Search

MACU Faculty Members Advance in Rank

By Whitney Knight

In academia, faculty members are marked by four distinct academic titles denoting their job responsibilities and tenure, as well as their professional and academic achievements. Over the last year, six members of MACU’s distinguished faculty have had a change in their rank.



Dr. Justin Key, Ministry
Associate Professor → Professor

Dr. Justin Key felt his heart being drawn toward teaching when he was a student at Mid-America Christian University from 2001 to 2004. He found that teaching and preaching, along with pastoral care, were parts of ministry he truly enjoyed.

“When the opportunity came to teach in higher education, I found that those translated well toward working with students, teaching and training and caring for them,” said Key.

Since 2012, Key has taught in MACU’s School of Ministry. He deeply values his relationships with his students and is committed to helping them pursue God’s call – no matter where their career may take them.

“MACU maintains its tradition of training everyone in Scripture. We extend the call of ministry to everyone. We say that no matter what your profession is going to be, you need to be equipped in your faith to lead and guide with character.”



Dr. Garret Castleberry,
Communication, Media and Ethics
Associate Professor → Professor

Since 2014, Dr. Garret Castleberry has helped shape and reform MACU’s Communication, Media and Ethics program. Beginning as an adjunct professor in 2014, he stepped into the role of Interim Program Director two years later, where he spent time researching and preparing a program identity that could match the need of on-ground and online students alike.

Now, the program remains one of MACU’s most dynamic, with multiple emphases options and partnerships with other programs. This year, a graduate-level emphasis in Communication was added to MACU’s MBA and ML programs, further diversifying the curriculum Castleberry has poured his heart into.

“Being able to apply creativity into infinitely updatable subject matter plays a significant role in renewing my passion for students and learning every year,” said Castleberry. “This is what makes teaching special, but it doesn’t happen like this everywhere. And that is what makes MACU a special place to teach at and invest in.”



Marvin Akers, Criminal Justice
Associate Professor → Professor

After spending 30 years in law enforcement at the federal, state and local level, Marvin Akers chose to bring his passion for criminal justice to the classroom. He began adjunct teaching at MACU in 2011, moving into a full-time position in 2017.

“Because the student to professor ratio at MACU is manageable, it allows me to make a connection with my students not just on an educational level, but on a spiritual level. I have freedom to talk about faith and Christ while applying my trade.”

He said that being able to teach law enforcement from a Christian perspective helps give future officers, investigators and forensic specialists a solid foundation to lean on when dealing with the dark side of criminal justice.

“In my career, I saw things that people have nightmares about. PTSD and trauma are real and I see it in my students. I have the unique perspective in that I’ve seen it too and I know what they’re dealing with on a very deep and personal level and I can walk with them through it.”



Rachel Bailey, Management and Ethics
Instructor → Assistant Professor

Ever since she was a little girl, Rachel Bailey knew she wanted to be a teacher. Growing up, she watched her grandmother and her love of teaching and desired to be like her from a young age.

Bailey’s career at MACU began in the Business Office in 2007, where she worked her way from an entry-level position to the assistant director. She began teaching as an adjunct in 2017 and was so excited to get into the classroom that she began a full-time instructor last August.

“My favorite part is when the student just ‘gets it’ while we are in class. Let’s take accounting for example: I’ve seen students come in with large eyes, scared that they will never get it. We discuss it and there is this invisible lightbulb that goes off and you can see their demeanor just change. They are relieved and excited to learn. That’s my love right there.”



Jayme Hayes, Biology
Instructor → Assistant Professor

With a lifelong love for science, there is little that Jayme Hayes loves more than being able to share her passion with her students.

While working at the University of Oklahoma as a teaching assistant for upper division microbiology courses, Hayes discovered her passion for laboratory-based science classes and began teaching at MACU in 2021.

“Hands-on learning is essential to help students fully grasp concepts,” she said. “It helps them gain experience and confidence within the lab setting which can potentially be applied later in their career.”

Her only greater passion is her love for Christ. Hayes said she is blessed to be able to teach science from a biblical perspective and share her faith with her students.

“I love that I can be open about my faith. I have been able to share both my love of Christ and science with my students.”



Triston Herron, Data Analytics
Instructor → Assistant Professor

Triston Herron is new to the MACU Family as a faculty member, but he’s no stranger to the University. Herron graduated from MACU in 2019 with his Bachelor’s degree in Mathematics.

“Teaching has always been something that was in the back of my mind. God really made it apparent when I decided to leave engineering at another four-year school and come to MACU,” he said.

Herron said he loves being able to help others discover what they want to do in life.

“People are the number one thing that makes MACU special. Everyone I know has your best interests in mind and wants you to succeed in God’s plan for your life.”

MACU is richly blessed with outstanding faculty members who are deeply committed to our core values. We hope you will join us in celebrating them, and we look forward to sharing future faculty accomplishments with you!

Men’s Soccer Wins Second Consecutive SAC Title

The No. 2 MACU men’s soccer team earned its second consecutive Sooner Athletic Conference regular season championship on Oct. 25. Senior defender Mason Gonzalez scored a pair of goals to lead the Evangels to a 3-2 victory over Southwestern Christian.



MACU Selected as NAIA Championship Site

For the first time in any sport, Mid-America Christian University was chosen to host an NAIA Championship. MACU was selected as one of 10 host sites for the opening round of the NAIA Men’s Soccer National Championship. The selection committee, composed of head coaches and administrators from around the country, take geographical location, facilities and host qualifications into account when selecting host sites.



Remembering Coach Anthony Nero

On July 22, MACU men’s basketball assistant coach Anthony Nero joined his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ after a long and arduous battle with multiple health complications.

Nero, one of MACU’s winningest coaches, first came to the University as a student-athlete in 1992. In 2007, Nero would return to his alma mater to serve as the basketball team’s assistant coach under his former coach and mentor, Willie Holley. In his 14 years on the Evangels coaching staff, Nero saw 11 winning seasons, two SAC titles and the 2016 NAIA National Championship.

The life and legacy of Coach Nero is one that will never be forgotten. Coach Nero touched the lives of thousands of people, as a player, as a coach, as a pastor and a mentor. We ask that you keep Coach Nero’s family and loved ones in your prayers during this difficult time.



Eternal Investment

By MaKailee George

There comes a time when you will examine your life and the legacy that you want to leave. Many people take the personal route when pondering what their legacy will look like, while others may choose to leave a legacy on behalf of a loved one.

That is exactly what Dr. John and Mrs. Brenda Fozard decided to do when they established the **Humphreys Teacher Education Scholarship**. This scholarship was established to honor some of the most influential women in Dr. Fozard’s life.

This scholarship honors his mother, Lenor Fozard, and his two aunts, Leora and Eva. These influential ladies taught in public schools for a combined 95 years. Even though they had to overcome many social adversities, they continued to pour their hearts into teaching their students.

These ladies sacrificed countless hours outside the classroom to truly be the educators the Lord wanted them to be. They were going to change the world, one student at a time. Dr. Fozard recalled how his mother, Lenor, continued to work over the summer break to prepare for the new school year.

"Growing up in a teacher’s home creates a love for learning," said Fozard. As he grew up, he had his mother and aunts who helped shape how he viewed education and the world. For example, he watched his mother come home after a long day of teaching and continue to grade and work on new preparations. "My appreciation for her grew as I watched all she did."

Soon, Lenor decided she was going to continue her education.

"I remember my father putting us to bed at night while mom traveled to the university for her master’s program, which was about 20 miles away," said Fozard. Even though Lenor had to leave for class in the evening, she continued educating her children around the dinner

table. "Those dinner conversations helped shape me into the man I am today."

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that more than 62 percent of parents work outside the home, which means teachers’ influence on their students has grown exponentially. In our fast-paced world, students are often shaped more by their teachers in the classroom than they are around the dinner table.

As the education sector has shifted with teachers building the foundational truths students will grow up with, the Fozards knew that this was a time to start the **Humphreys Teacher Education Scholarship**.

"Brenda and I see the value of having Christian educators in the classroom," Fozard said. We specifically like elementary education because those are the formative years of students. Those years help set the foundational trajectory for their life. All of us can remember the teachers who built us up and made us love learning."

The Fozards established this scholarship in honor of the ladies that created his educational foundation. Teachers don’t go into teaching for the money – they go into it for the purpose of significance. They know there is more to life than themselves, and God has entrusted them to steward their time on earth well.

MACU is eternally grateful for people such as Dr. John and Mrs. Brenda Fozard, who saw the need for more Christian educators. This scholarship will help alleviate some of the financial burdens so many students face as they head into the workforce.

If you are interested in leaving a legacy on behalf of yourself or a loved one, please call the MACU Advancement Office at 405-692-3191, or to give to the **Humphreys Teacher Education Scholarship**, visit give.macu.edu.

Year-End Giving Makes a Difference

GIVE.MACU.EDU | TEXT EVANGELS TO 41444



What's Next?

- JAN. 11-14** Welcome Week
- JAN. 12** Traditional Classes Begin
- FEB. 15-17** Black History Celebration Week
- FEB. 23-24** Evangel Experience
- MARCH 13-17** Spring Break
- APRIL 3-6** Spiritual Transformation Week
- MAY 3** Academic Awards Chapel
- MAY 6** Commencement