

THE MAGAZINE

MOREHEAD STATE UNIVERSITY
A PUBLICATION FOR EAGLE ALUMNI & FRIENDS





Hello, Eagles!

We enjoyed another exciting year of transformational growth and opportunity during 2025!

A top highlight from last year is that we reached our highest-ever ranking as #12 on U.S. News & World Report's list of top public regional universities in the South. Our programs have always been high-quality, and to see our work recognized by one of the nation's leading publications confirms that our reputation is growing.

One of our two new residential halls, Prefontaine Hall, is progressing quickly and we anticipate completing the project later this fall. The replacement of Normal Hall is also underway. Between the two projects, we will provide new and updated residences for nearly 400 of our students.

The Science and Engineering Building is now fully underway and taking shape. It is a massive project that will change the landscape of MSU's campus. Additionally, work has begun on the Multidisciplinary Academic Building, which will replace Combs Building and Baird Music Hall. Excitedly, our new Veterinary Tech Building is near completion.

In addition to all of these major developments, we experienced an increase in our freshman enrollment last fall. We are implementing additional strategies to continue the growth.

Morehead State University is moving forward, and it is a great place to be. Beyond construction, enrollment and high-soaring rankings, our alumni are out in the world doing impactful things. We hope you enjoy reading the updates and stories in the subsequent pages. Eagles are soaring higher every day and as a member of the Eagle family, we hope you are proud.

Thank you for all you do to support MSU. Go Eagles!

Dr. Joseph A. "Jay" Morgan
President

CONTRIBUTING STAFF

Publisher

- Allison Caudill (Class of 2005, 2009), Vice President for University Advancement

Communications & Marketing

- Blake Hannon (Class of 2017), Strategic Communications Writer
- Jordan Hardin, Social Media & Communications Specialist
- Toni Hobbs (Class of 2002, 2009), Director of Digital & Brand Strategy
- Chas Jenkins (Class of 2020), Content Specialist
- Travis Keene (Class of 2004, 2008), Graphic Design & Production Specialist
- David Moore (Class of 2009), Digital Communication & Media Manager
- April Hobbs Nutter (Class of 1997, 2005), Director of Strategic Communications
- Katie Stambaugh (Class of 2020, 2022), Integrated Marketing & Advertising Specialist

Alumni Relations & Development

- Farrah Baldwin (Class of 2001), Director of Alumni Engagement & Cultivation
- Hannah Curreri (Class of 2024, 2025), Outreach Programs Marketing & Events Coordinator
- Jessi Scruggs Ferguson (Class of 2011, 2012), Executive Director of Alumni Relations & Development
- Sharon Fraley (Class of 1999, 2012), Director of Finance
- Mikayla Ray Martin (Class of 2021), Assistant Director, Advancement Events
- Matthew Nutter (Class of 1996, 2018), Advancement Records Specialist
- Allie Rayburn Bush (Class of 2022), Coordinator of Digital Engagement & Annual Giving
- Kelsey Shields (Class of 2019), Assistant Director, Foundation Business Operations
- Sherry Surmont (Class of 2018), Director of Advancement Services
- Leslee Toy (Class of 1990, 2003), Alumni & Donor Experience Officer
- Sydnee Wellman (Class of 2023), Young Alumni & Campus Development Coordinator

Athletics

- Kenna Allen Gauche (Class of 2008, 2009), Senior Associate Director of Athletics For External Affairs & Senior Woman Administrator
- Kelly Wells (Class of 1995), Director of Athletics

CONTENTS



SUPER BOWL MVP INSPIRES FUTURE EAGLES

Alum Phil Simms returns for stadium naming celebration at Homecoming.



FURTHERING THE MISSION

Dr. Christopher Schroeder brings passion and purpose to new role as provost and vice president of academic affairs.



LUCKEY'S LEGACY

The late Dr. Sue Y. Luckey's generosity and commitment to serving students will continue after her passing.

CAMPUS REVITALIZATION SOARS TOWARD COMPLETION

President Dr. Jay Morgan is leading the University to make, in his words, “a generational leap with our facilities that students can enjoy for years to come.”

A campus revitalization plan is underway to provide new and improved academic research, laboratory facilities, student support, and housing.

“Morehead State is making historic investments into our campus infrastructure,” said Morgan. “These new facilities will serve as a critical asset to move MSU forward. Improving our living and learning spaces is part of our strategy as we strive to become the best public regional university in the South.”

RESIDENCE HALLS

The first of two residence halls, Prefontaine Hall, began construction in October 2024 and should be ready for occupancy for the fall 2026 semester. A second new residence hall, which will replace Normal Hall, is currently under construction and will open in Spring 2027.

SCIENCE & ENGINEERING BUILDING

Considerable progress has been made on the new Science & Engineering Building since construction began in March 2025. It will be completed in April 2027, with plans to open classes, labs and offices in Spring 2027.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY ACADEMIC BUILDING

Construction began in Fall 2025 on the new Multidisciplinary Academic Building, which will house music and business programs. The building will be completed in Summer 2028.

VETERINARY TECHNOLOGY RENOVATIONS

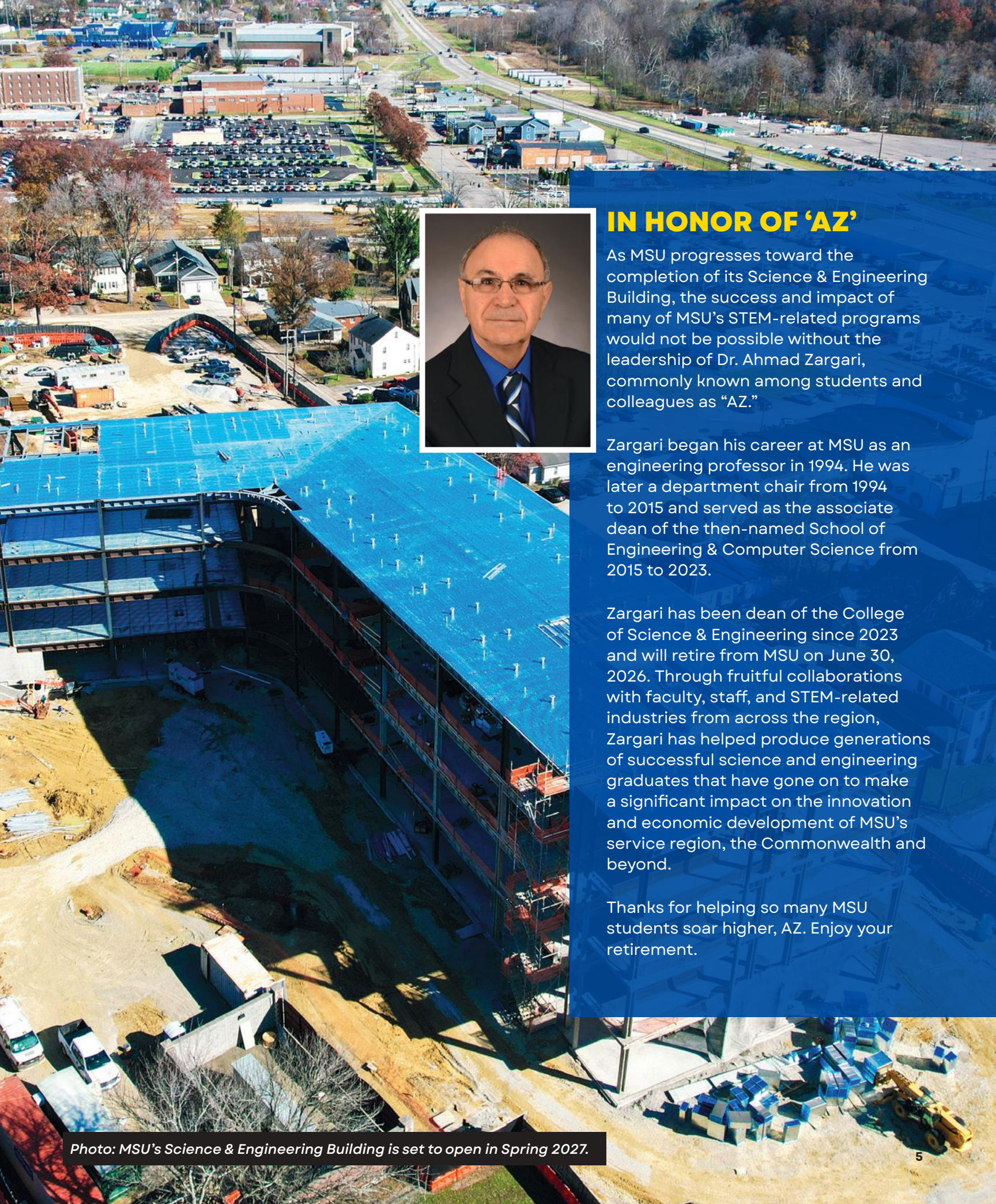
MSU updated facilities at the Derrickson Agricultural Complex for its nationally ranked veterinary technology program. The University expanded the building to improve the laboratory and classroom spaces. The renovations were completed in December 2025.

NEW ENTRANCE

Strategically located at the heart of campus, the new main entrance serves as a vital connector between University Boulevard and Main Street. It will enhance both accessibility and visibility while creating a more unified and welcoming experience for students, families, and visitors arriving on campus.

See how MSU is moving forward! Explore photos and renderings of upcoming campus improvements at www.moreheadstate.edu/forward.





IN HONOR OF 'AZ'

As MSU progresses toward the completion of its Science & Engineering Building, the success and impact of many of MSU's STEM-related programs would not be possible without the leadership of Dr. Ahmad Zargari, commonly known among students and colleagues as "AZ."

Zargari began his career at MSU as an engineering professor in 1994. He was later a department chair from 1994 to 2015 and served as the associate dean of the then-named School of Engineering & Computer Science from 2015 to 2023.

Zargari has been dean of the College of Science & Engineering since 2023 and will retire from MSU on June 30, 2026. Through fruitful collaborations with faculty, staff, and STEM-related industries from across the region, Zargari has helped produce generations of successful science and engineering graduates that have gone on to make a significant impact on the innovation and economic development of MSU's service region, the Commonwealth and beyond.

Thanks for helping so many MSU students soar higher, AZ. Enjoy your retirement.

Photo: MSU's Science & Engineering Building is set to open in Spring 2027.



MSU SOARS EVEN HIGHER

University achieves its best-ever U.S. News & World Report ranking

A year after earning the highest ranking in its history in 2024 at #14, Morehead State is now #12 among all top public regional universities in the South in U.S. News & World Report—a new best-ever ranking for the University.

In the University Regional South Category, U.S. News & World Report also recognized Morehead State as one of the Best Colleges for Veterans, Best Value Schools, Best Undergraduate Teaching and one of the Top Performers on Social Mobility.

“We are proud of the advances in our rankings over the past few years. Reaching the Top 15 last year was remarkable, and now we’ve advanced to #12,” said MSU President Dr. Jay Morgan. “We are moving MSU forward with new and improved

“We are proud of the advances in our rankings over the past few years. Reaching the Top 15 last year was remarkable, and now we’ve advanced to #12.”

—DR. JAY MORGAN

academic and residential facilities while emphasizing our academic quality and affordability. This recognition shows that we are headed in the right direction as we strive to be a great university in the South.”

See why we’re consistently ranked among the best—visit www.moreheadstate.edu/rankings.

MSU APPOINTS FIRST FEMALE POLICE CHIEF



In May 2025, Morehead State University named **Jessica Harris (Class of 2015, 2022)** as chief of police, marking a historic moment for the institution.

Harris, who served as interim chief since September 2024, is the first female police chief in MSU history and one of only a few women to lead a university police department in Kentucky.

“Being the first female chief at MSU is significant,” Harris said. “It shows that women are not only as capable, but we bring a different perspective to leadership.”

Harris began her law enforcement career in 2005 with the Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office. She joined the MSU Police Department in 2011, rising through the ranks to sergeant in 2021.

“I am proud to have been named chief,” Harris said. “I owe a lot to Morehead State University—it has become my home.”

She has a bachelor’s degree in criminology from MSU and has deep campus roots—her mother, Reda, worked in the MSU PD for over a decade. “If it hadn’t been for her, I probably would never have thought of law enforcement as a career,” Harris said.

As chief, Harris aims to maintain MSU’s reputation as one of the safest campuses in Kentucky while empowering officers to provide both security and support for students.

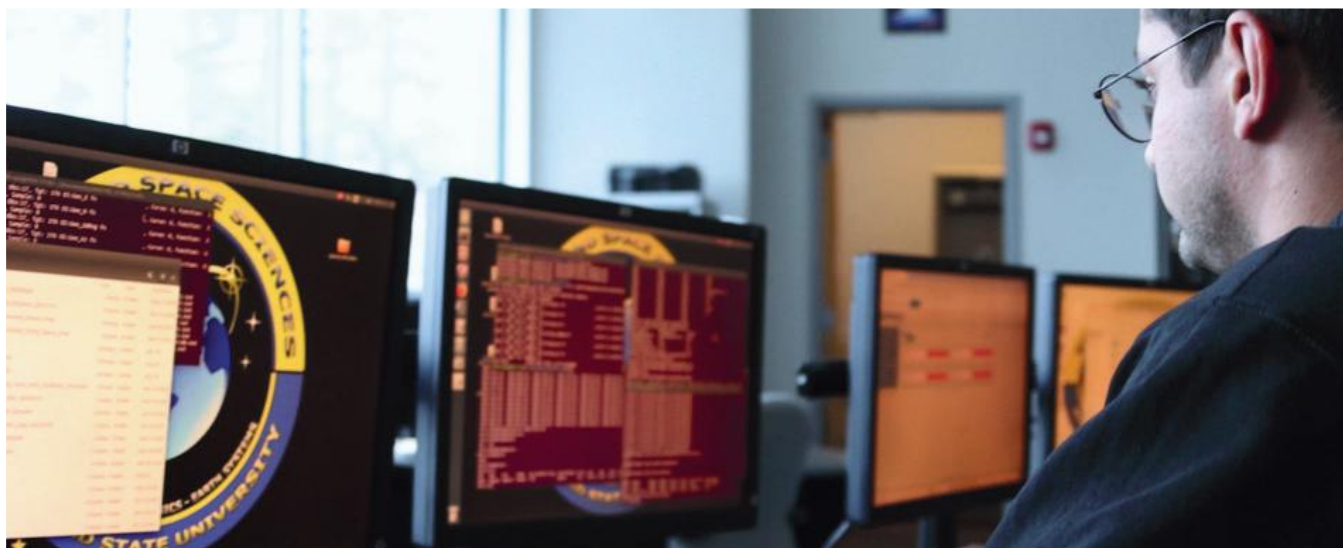
After being nominated by MSU’s Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, she was recently honored by the Ohio Valley Conference’s Hoops for Heroes program, which recognizes first responders who serve their communities.

Harris remains committed to service, mentorship, and positively impacting the MSU community.



SPACE SCIENCE ADDS THIRD ANTENNA

Morehead State is installing a third satellite tracking antenna, which will provide additional training and research opportunities for space systems engineering students. The new antenna, a 13-meter satellite tracking station, will complement the existing 21-meter and 12-meter antennas, improving support for future government-funded and commercial space programs.



DOCTOR OF ENGINEERING PROGRAM ANNOUNCED

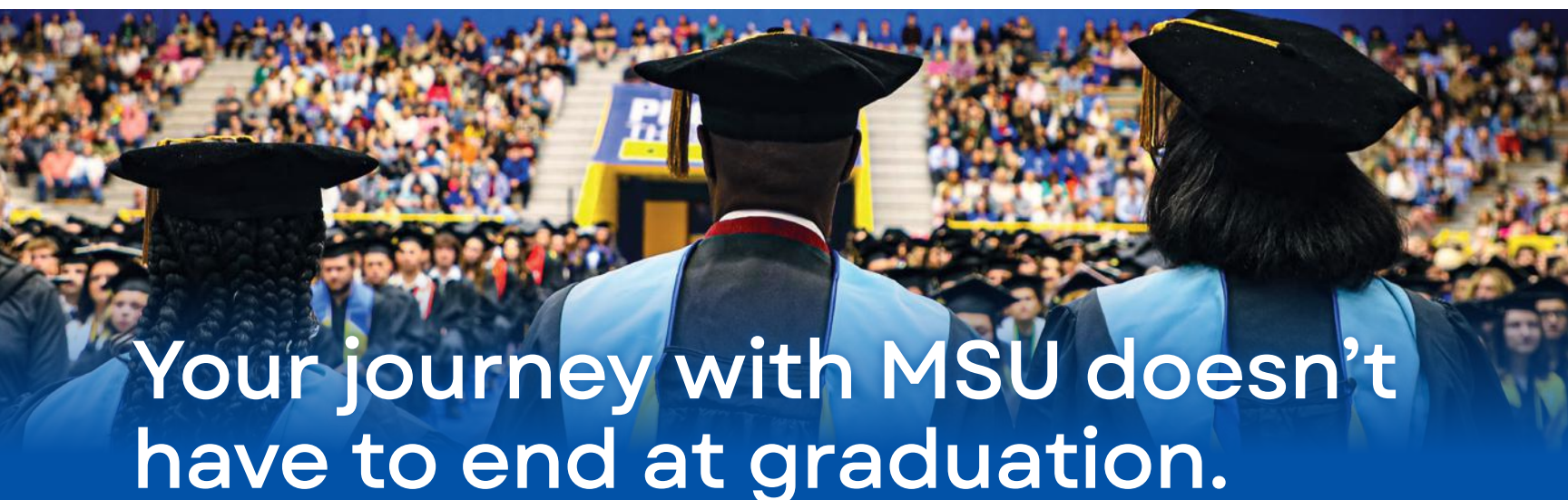
MSU is launching a new Doctor of Engineering (D.Eng.) in systems engineering. This applied research-focused program reflects the University's ongoing commitment to innovation and the region's growing need for highly trained engineers.

The new program offers two focus areas: space systems engineering and integrated systems engineering.

The program is designed to attract students from MSU's Bachelor of Science

in Space Systems Engineering and Master of Science in Space Systems Engineering programs. It is also for professionals and graduates from other institutions looking for a distinctive, career-focused doctoral experience, according to dean of the College of Science & Engineering, Dr. Ahmad Zargari.

"We believe this program will not only enhance our academic reputation but also contribute to the region's economic development by producing highly skilled engineers," Zargari said.



Your journey with MSU doesn't have to end at graduation.

Our advanced degree programs give you the tools to lead, innovate, and make an impact. Whether you're looking to climb the career ladder or change directions, we're here to help you succeed.

Start your next chapter today—visit www.moreheadstate.edu/gradschool.

CLASS OF 2025

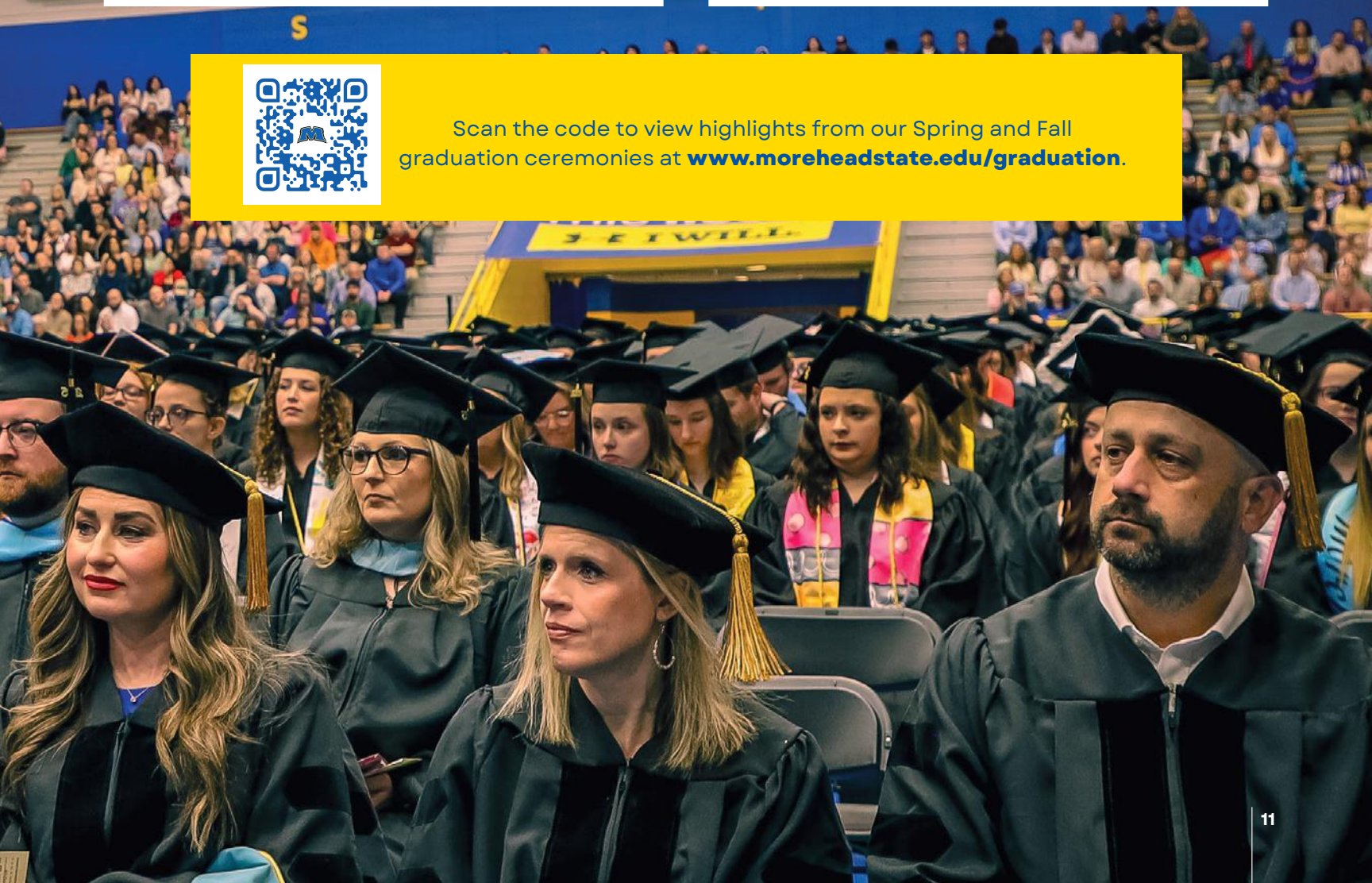
This year, Morehead State celebrated the achievements of more than 1,000 graduates across spring and fall ceremonies. From future leaders to innovators, these milestones mark a year of incredible accomplishments.

1. **Emma Brock (Class of 2025)**, a neuroscience major from Corbin, was the morning speaker for the Spring 2025 commencement.
2. **Hallie Adams (Class of 2025)**, a media production and journalism major from Flemingsburg, was the afternoon speaker for the Spring 2025 commencement.
3. Several students in the ROTC program were commissioned as U.S. Army officers at Spring 2025 Commencement.
4. Dr. Michele Paynter Paise, Distinguished Teacher Award winner and associate professor of music, opens the Fall 2025 Commencement ceremony.
5. Grand Marshall Elizabeth Mesa-Gaido, 2024 Distinguished Teacher and professor of art (retired), opens the Spring 2025 afternoon ceremony.
6. **Macie Vanover (Class of 2025)**, a biomedical sciences major from Lexington, was the Fall 2025 commencement speaker.





Scan the code to view highlights from our Spring and Fall graduation ceremonies at www.moreheadstate.edu/graduation.

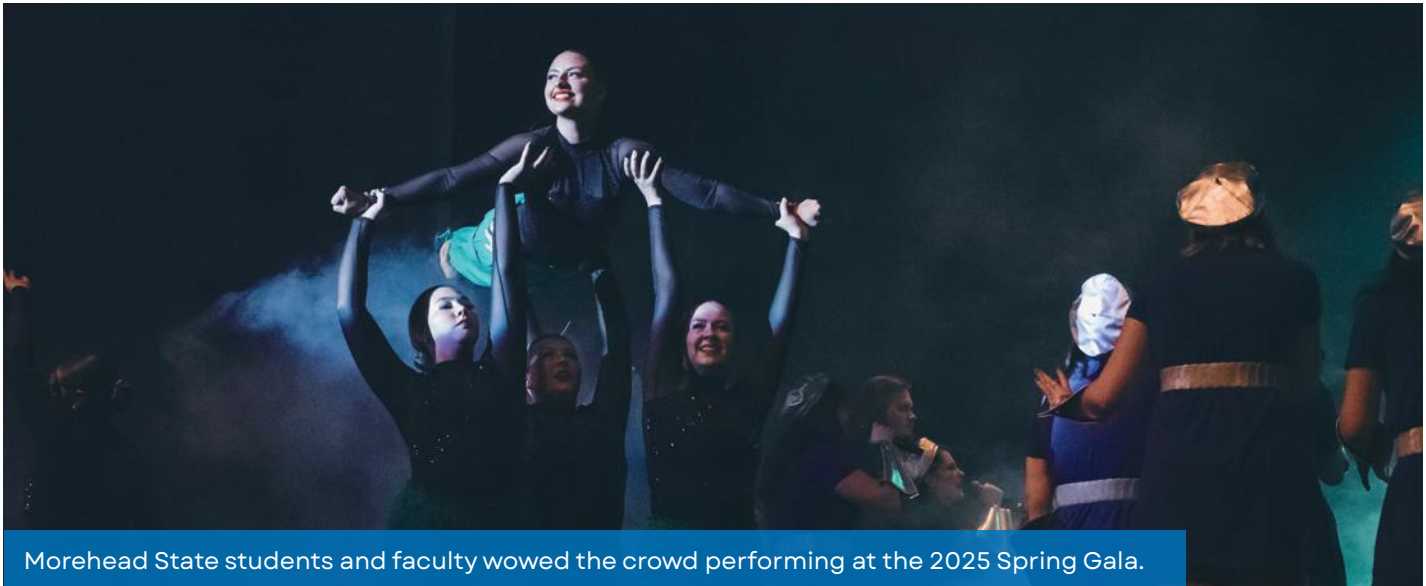




YEAR-IN-REVIEW

Celebrating why it's great to be an Eagle

Stay up-to-date with MSU at
moreheadstate.edu/news.



Morehead State students and faculty wowed the crowd performing at the 2025 Spring Gala.



The campus community left their mark on Prefontaine Hall and the Science & Engineering building at topping ceremonies.



Eagle students networked with potential employers during the Career & Internship Fair.



Loved ones joined their students on campus for a celebratory time during Family Weekend 2025.



Eagles showcased their research at the annual Celebration of Student Scholarship.



Students enjoyed games and prizes while preparing for future classes at the Registration Celebration.



KY First Lady Britainy Beshear visited the Space Science Center and spoke to students at MSU's SpaceTrek program.



Eagle Fest brought students together to celebrate the start of a new school year.



ATHLETICS REVIEW



As I reflect on another incredible year at Morehead State Athletics, I am inspired by the dedication and passion of our student-athletes, coaches, and staff. Our mission remains clear: to provide opportunities that develop champions—not just on the field, but in life.

This past year, we pushed our programs forward through leadership development, strategic facility investments, and commitment to the total growth of our student-athletes. Our teams demonstrated hard work, discipline, and teamwork, while fostering a family atmosphere that defines the Eagle experience.

We are especially proud of how we have expanded fan engagement and strengthened ties with our community and alumni. From developing home games to energized campus initiatives, your support continues to lift our Eagles and inspire excellence. We also built lasting memories with our fans as we celebrated one of our most loyal Eagles, **Phil Simms (Class of 2015)**, with the naming of Phil Simms Stadium during Homecoming 2025.

Looking ahead, we are driven to build momentum and reach new heights. By striving for excellence in athletics, academics, and leadership, Morehead State Athletics will continue to soar—raising the standard for our student-athletes and inspiring all of Eagle Nation.

Thank you for your unwavering support and for being an essential part of our journey. Together, we will keep achieving remarkable things.

SKO EAGS,

Kelly Wells (Class of 1995)

Director of Athletics

Stay up-to-date with Eagle Athletics: follow our teams and latest news at msueagles.com.



A LEGACY OF EAGLE PRIDE

First-generation college student finds a lifetime of success at MSU

Growing up in Martin County, college wasn't necessarily a path **Richard Fletcher (Class of 1992, 2002)** felt was possible. His brother, **Franklin Fletcher (Class of 1986)**, had different thoughts on the matter.

"He told me 'You need to go to college, and you can do it,'" Richard says. "So, I decided during my junior year of high school that I wanted to follow his footsteps to MSU."

At MSU, he met **Keith Webster (Class of 1985)**, MSU's athletic trainer, who invited him to join the program, which began a lifelong career in athletics.

He began his career as an athletic trainer at Rowan County Senior High School, launching its first academic sports medicine program. He later worked with UK Sports Medicine, Kentucky State University, the KY Fillies, Thoroughblades and several high school football teams.

In the summer of 2001, he received a call from the then-MSU athletic director, **Brian Hutchinson (Class of 1996, 2001)**, and was offered a job.

As athletic trainer, he was later encouraged to transition to a director of compliance role and was promoted three more times before retiring in 2025 as deputy director of athletics.

Fletcher is confident he's spent the last 24 years exactly where he needed to be and his career is one he wouldn't have thought possible as a kid in Martin County.

"When you have limited resources, it's hard to focus on the opportunities you can create for yourself," he reflects. "I am the mission of Morehead State University – a first-gen, Pell Grant student, that's me. Morehead State was my 'light to the mountains.'"

His family holds a combined 17 degrees (and counting) from MSU, including his two siblings; his wife and children, **Wendy Fletcher (Class of 1994)**, **Allison Engelbrecht (Class of 2018)** and **Reagan Fraley (Class of 2024)**.

"MSU has been more than a job and I'm proud of what my family and I have accomplished here. I'm grateful."



STUDENT-ATHLETE SPOTLIGHT

HAYDEN BELL

RIFLE

JUNIOR | BIXBY, OK

ACTUARIAL MATHEMATICS

Bell, a junior actuarial mathematics major from Bixby, Oklahoma, is the sixth rifle athlete ever to earn one of the Scholar-Athlete awards and is the 18th male winner in history from Morehead State. He serves as team captain for MSU Rifle and has earned All-OVC honors in each of his seasons with the Eagles, including second-team honors in both air rifle and smallbore last season.

Last year, Bell earned a spot to compete at the NCAA Championships in Air Rifle, shooting a school record 598 in the qualifying event to advance to the championships in Lexington. He also competed for Team USA at the International Shooting Sport Federation's (ISSF) Junior World Championships in Peru.

In the classroom, Bell has a 3.83 GPA. He has been named to the OVC Commissioner's Honor Roll three times, honored as CSC Academic All-District twice, and named to the CRCA Scholastic All-American Team three times.

On campus, Bell has served as a senator in the Student Government Association and as a member of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC). He was awarded the OVC Community Service award last year for his involvement in the community, which included volunteering to work with local elementary schools, a domestic abuse shelter, a local food bank and Athletes in Action.





STUDENT-ATHLETE SPOTLIGHT

M.E. HARGAN **VOLLEYBALL & BEACH VOLLEYBALL** **SENIOR | ELIZABETHTOWN, KY** **VETERINARY SCIENCE/CHEMISTRY**

Hargan, a senior veterinary science major and chemistry minor from Elizabethtown, plays both volleyball and beach volleyball and is the fourth volleyball student-athlete and second from Eagle beach volleyball to ever earn one of the Scholar-Athlete awards. She is the 17th female winner in history from Morehead State.

An outside hitter, Hargan has been a four-year starter and two-time captain during the fall indoor season, and has also started and been a two-time captain in the spring beach season. Indoors, she has earned a pair of First-Team All-OVC honors and was selected to the 2024 OVC All-Tournament squad.

Earlier this season, she became a member of the MSU 1,000 Career Kill Club. In beach volleyball, she has also been selected All-OVC in 2024. In 2025 indoor, Hargan leads the OVC in kills and kills per set.

In the classroom, Hargan has a 3.76 GPA. She has earned the OVC Academic Medal of Honor, been named Academic All-District and to the MSU Dean's List. She is a member of the Pre-Vet Club and the Ceramics Club and serves as a biology lab teacher's assistant.

She was a recipient of the OVC Community Service Award, volunteering thousands of hours at places like the Elizabethtown Animal Hospital, the Kentucky Equine Hospital and MedVet Hospital, among other volunteer activities. She also studied abroad in the Galápagos Islands, Ecuador, in the spring of 2024.



CATCH EVERY SCORE—EVERY STORY.
WWW.MSUEAGLES.COM

ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME

MSU Athletics is honored to announce this year's honorees. They will be recognized during Blue and Gold Alumni Weekend, February 13, 2026.



Brian Hutchinson (Class of 1996, 2001)

Brian Hutchinson served as the director of athletics from 2004 to 2019. Under Hutchinson's guidance, various Eagle teams won 23 conference championships, while teams or individuals made 15 NCAA Tournament appearances. He also helped re-establish the women's golf program in 2007 after a 24-year hiatus. With Hutchinson's vision, Athletics converted the former wellness center into the 7,000-square-foot EAGLE Center (Eagle Athletics Guided Learning and Enhancement), and he achieved increases in fundraising, facility improvements, academic progress, budgets, and targeted marketing and branding campaigns.



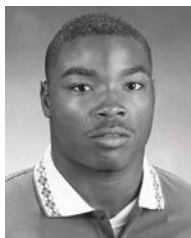
Tasha Gales (Class of 2003)

A member of the Eagle women's basketball program from 1999 to 2003, the late Tasha Gales finished as one of the top scorers, rebounders and shot blockers in program history. She scored 1,602 points as an Eagle, good enough then for fourth in program history (ranked sixth currently). The center still ranks ninth in program history in rebounds (622), third in career blocked shots at MSU (205), sixth in most field goals scored (645) and eighth in free throws made (301). She was also selected to the OVC 75th Anniversary Team in 2023.



Cherelle Lampkins (Class of 2004)

Cherelle Lampkins is still the only volleyball player in Morehead State history to record 1,500+ career kills and 2,000+ career digs. She was the 2003 runner-up for OVC Player of the Year and finished her career fourth all-time in NCAA Division I women's volleyball history with 2,082 digs. During Lampkins' career, she helped the Eagles win 81 matches and claim the 2003 OVC championship. She was the 2004 Kentucky state winner of the NCAA Woman of the Year award and was a Second-Team Academic All-District recipient in 2003.



Anthony Ravizee (Class of 2025)

Anthony Ravizee still ranks second in career rushing yards with 2,930 and holds the second-highest single-season rushing total in program history (210 times, 1218 yards, 13 touchdowns in 1997). During his sophomore campaign, he became the fourth-ever MSU player to gain more than 1,000 rushing yards in a season. He accomplished all this despite being running back for only three seasons. Ravizee is also the only running back in MSU program history to achieve multiple 1,000-yard rushing seasons.



Donte Sawyer (Class of 2012)

Donte Sawyer set MSU career records for catches (199) and yards (2,555); categories he still ranks second in. He was a two-time First-Team All-Pioneer League selection, Third-Team Football Championship Subdivision All-American by Beyond Sports College Network (BCSN), First-Team All-PFL honors from College Sports Madness and national Player of the Week by BSCN and College Football Performance Awards. In his senior season, Sawyer led the PFL in receptions per game (7.4) and all-purpose yards (159.0) per contest, while ranking second in receiving yards (93.1) and kick return average (26.2).

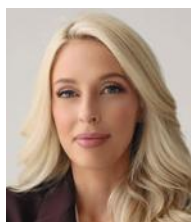
ALUMNI AWARDS

The MSU Alumni Association is honored to announce the 2026 class of alumni award recipients. They will be recognized at Homecoming.



Bill Baldrige (Class of 1968), Eagle Spirit Award

A lifelong Eagle, Bill Baldrige has inspired generations as a high school and MSU football coach and through Team Focus, a national mentorship program for young men without fathers. He brought the program's free summer camp to MSU and continues to support the University, leaving a legacy of leadership, mentorship and Eagle pride.



Whitney Allen (Class of 2022), Rising Eagle Award

Whitney Allen leads marketing and communications for the Appalachian Regional Healthcare Foundation, strengthening community health and philanthropic impact. A former Miss Kentucky United States and Honorable Kentucky Colonel, she empowers others through volunteerism and service, exemplifying leadership, energy and dedication to her community.



Brooke Westling (Class of 2002), Notable Alumni Award

Brooke Westling bridges technology and healthcare as senior developer and instructor at the Mayo Clinic. For over a decade, she has helped develop critical software systems that support laboratory operations, driving innovation, efficiency, and collaboration in clinical care while mentoring colleagues and advancing healthcare IT excellence.



Richard Crowe (Class of 1967, 1970), Hall of Fame Inductee

A lifelong educator and community leader, Richard Crowe taught economics and business management for over four decades and held key leadership roles while securing more than 200 grants, including the first for Morehead State's nursing program. He has worked to expand care for underserved communities and contributed to numerous local and national boards. His impact as a mentor and advocate has left a lasting mark on the Hazard region.



Brian Davis (Class of 2001), Hall of Fame Inductee

Brian Davis is an accomplished NASA aerospace engineer who contributed to the first U.S.-crewed mission to orbit since 2011, helping design and validate the Crew Dragon launch abort system. He has worked on Orion spacecraft missions, SAGE III atmospheric science projects, and environmentally responsible aviation initiatives, combining technical excellence and innovation to advance space exploration and sustainable flight.



Steve Leslie (Class of 1983), Hall of Fame Inductee

Steve Leslie, a Grammy-winning musician, songwriter and educator, has written songs recorded by Kenny Rogers, George Strait, Darius Rucker and others. A seasoned performer at the Grand Ole Opry and Bluebird Café, he also teaches songwriting at Belmont University, Middle Tennessee State and Berklee College of Music, inspiring the next generation of musicians through both performance and mentorship.



SUPER BOWL MVP INSPIRES FUTURE EAGLES

After finding success as a Super Bowl-winning quarterback and NFL broadcaster, Phil Simms returns to the stadium that prepared him for the pros—one that now bears his name.

When **Phil Simms (Class of 2015)** attended Louisville Southern High School, he was faced with two choices to capitalize on his athletic gifts and abilities.

Playing both football and baseball, he decided to enroll at MSU in 1974 after then-Head Coach Roy Terry offered him a full scholarship.

The moment Simms officially came to campus as an Eagle, he was determined for people to remember his name.

“And then when I got to school here, it was on my mind constantly,” Simms said. “I want to play pro football.”

Photo, left to right: Phil Simms with MSU Athletic Director **Kelly Wells (Class of 1995)** and **Andy Prefontaine (Class of 1971)**.



Simms left a sizable impact as a quarterback at MSU before being drafted by the New York Giants in 1979.

After an MSU football career that included being named Ohio Valley Conference Player of the Year, 5,545 passing yards and 32 passing touchdowns, Simms' wish was granted during the 1979 NFL Draft when NFL Commissioner Pete Rozelle announced ...

"New York Giants 1st Round Selection: Quarterback. Phil Simms. Morehead State."

After being drafted seventh overall, Simms went on to have a legendary NFL career. He played 14 seasons with the NFL's New York Giants, earning Super Bowl MVP in 1987. He was also a two-time Pro Bowl quarterback. Simms later joined CBS Sports in 1998 as a lead analyst for the CBS Television

Network's NFL coverage, before becoming a studio analyst and co-host for ESPN and a lead NFL analyst for NBC Sports.

While Simms racked up stats and championship performances on the field and became a familiar face on TV to football fans, he never forgot the "light to the mountains" that he genuinely believes helped him shine in his pro football career.

"I'll never forget the fact that they gave me a football scholarship. I'll never get over that. That was the only way I could go to college. It was the perfect school and the right situation," Simms said. "To come here and start for four years, it did everything for me."



Simms earned his bachelor's degree in 2015.

Simms has demonstrated his gratitude by consistently returning and giving back to his alma mater. His contributions to MSU span decades, including hosting youth football camps, mentoring players and coaches, and supporting fundraising efforts that have significantly advanced the Eagle football program.

Morehead State inducted Simms into the Athletic Hall of Fame in 1995, and his return to campus in 2015 to complete his bachelor's degree and receive an honorary doctorate further cemented his lifelong commitment to the University.

"It always comes around to certain things. Helping the school out. Donations. All that," Simms said. "I really do feel like I owe it to them to come back, and of course, I want to come back and meet the football coach and talk to them and kind of see the quarterbacks workout a few days. I really love doing that."

Even though he has met countless fans, teammates, coaches and colleagues during his time as a player and broadcaster, Simms said many Eagles remain close to his heart.

"If I had to name my 10 to 15 closest friends in life, they would all be from here," Simms said. "I can never get the words that really capture everything I want you to know ... I'm a part of Morehead State, the school, the town and of course the football team."

Now, Simms is a part of that school, town and team more than ever. At Morehead State's 2025 Homecoming, the University officially named the football stadium Phil Simms Stadium at a special dedication ceremony.

"Few people, if anyone, have brought as much recognition to Morehead State University as Phil Simms," said Director of Athletics **Kelly Wells (Class of 1995)**. "Not every school can say they have a Super Bowl MVP in their alumni family, but MSU can. Since his time here, Phil has dedicated time and resources to continuing the support of the Blue and Gold."

"Phil Simms embodies the spirit of Morehead State," MSU President Dr. Jay Morgan said. "His story is one of perseverance, excellence, and loyalty. This stadium naming is a tribute to his impact on our campus and beyond."

The newly named Phil Simms Stadium stands as a symbol of pride for the MSU community and a lasting testament to the University's tradition of excellence in athletics and alumni achievements. For Simms, this honor that he humbly accepts is undoubtedly a milestone. Still, it is far from the last chapter in his relationship with the University that set him up for success.



Phil Simms performed the coin toss before the football game at 2025 Homecoming.

"Everything means a lot to me. It does ... It's a great honor," Simms said. "It keeps my commitment to the school going forward and, hopefully, as time goes by, I can make that commitment a lot better and help the school as much as I can."



Simms spoke with gratitude to a supportive crowd during a renaming ceremony for MSU's Phil Simms Stadium.



Enjoyed Phil's story? Hear more in his own words on the Always an Eagle podcast—scan the code to stream the episode today!



CAMPUS JOINS TURTLE WALK WITH STUDENT-CREATED ART

MSU Art & Design students are leaving their mark on the community as MSU proudly joins the Morehead Turtle Walk, a public art project that celebrates local heritage, tourism, and the enduring symbol of the turtle.

The Morehead Turtle Walk, is more than just a scenic stroll. It is a celebration of history and identity inspired by the legacy of Daniel Boone. In 1778, Boone was adopted into the Shawnee tribe and given the name “Sheltowee,” meaning “Big Turtle,” by Chief Blackfish. Today, that name lives on in the Sheltowee Trace National Recreation Trail, which winds through the Daniel Boone National Forest and runs along Main Street in Morehead.

Local businesses are embracing the initiative, using turtle statues to attract foot traffic and spark conversations. The walk encourages exploration, making each stop a chance to learn something new about Morehead’s culture and hospitality.

The turtle, a symbol of resilience and connection, has become a visual icon throughout the region. Statues, each

uniquely designed and painted by local artists, have been placed around the community, inviting residents and visitors to explore and engage with local landmarks.

In partnership with local tourism leaders, MSU has unveiled custom turtle statues on campus, officially placing the University on the map. These turtles were designed and painted by MSU students enrolled in the Painting II course during Fall 2024, under the guidance of recently retired Department of Communications, Media, Art & Design Professors Gary and Lisa Mesa-Gaido. Dedicated in 2025 in honor of the Mesa-Gaidos' retirement, the statues celebrate their 30+ years of mentoring students through hands-on, collaborative projects.

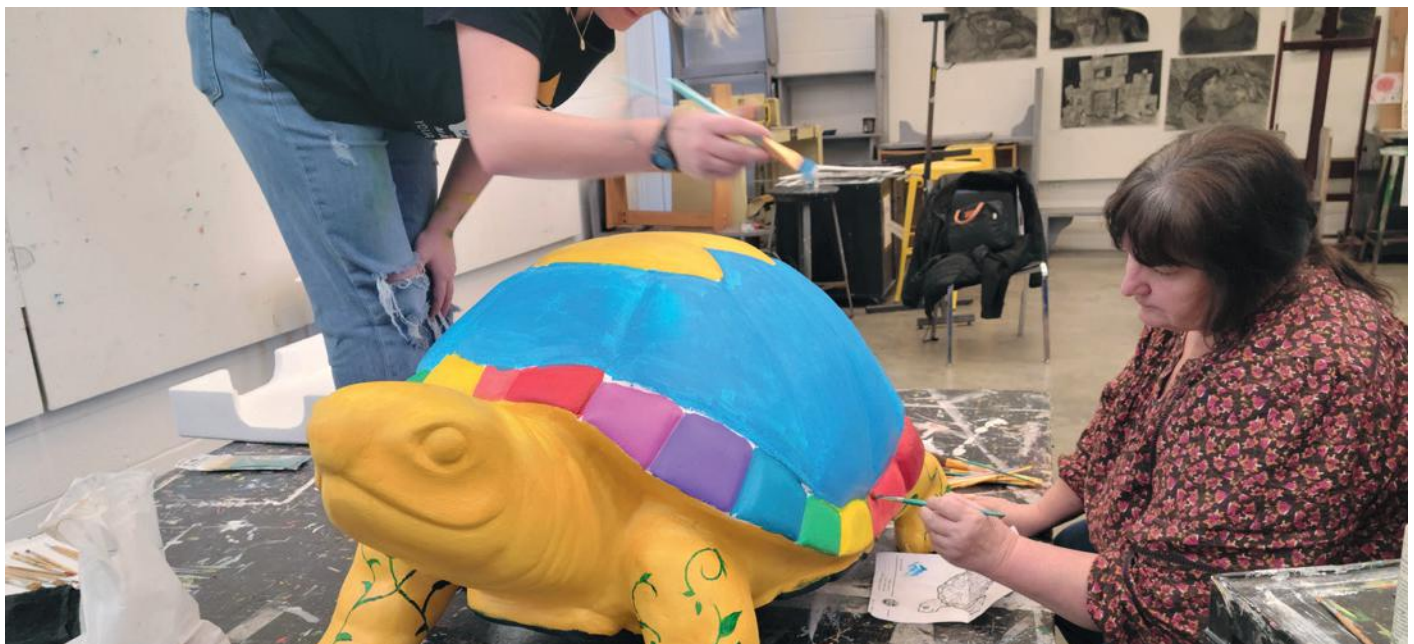
"This is a wonderful opportunity to showcase our campus in a creative and meaningful way," said **Allison Caudill (Class of 2005, 2009)**, vice president for university advancement. "Not only does the Turtle Walk connect us to our heritage and invite people to experience Morehead State's campus as part of this unique community and tourism initiative, but it also highlights the incredible talent of our student artists, who brought these turtles to life through hands-on, collaborative work."

The University's three turtle statues, each located in a distinct area of campus, reflect MSU's



mission and spirit. **Outside the Adron Doran University Center**, a turtle highlights an Eagle soaring above a lake, symbolizing leadership and collaboration among students. **In the athletic complex**, a bold blue-and-gold turtle celebrates MSU sports with imagery representing school pride and athletic excellence. **Near the Claypool-Young Art Building**, the third turtle features replicas of iconic artworks, paying tribute to creativity and the legacy of visual arts at MSU. These vibrant sculptures have quickly become favorite photo spots for students, alumni, and campus visitors, adding a touch of artistic charm to everyday campus life.

So, grab your walking shoes, follow the turtles, and discover the stories waiting to be told.





BROWN CHAMPIONS TRAILS & TOURISM GROWTH IN KENTUCKY

Joy Brown (Class of 1999) earned a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communications with an emphasis in journalism. With over 25 years of experience in marketing and advertising, Brown has extensive expertise in communication, branding, and community engagement. She serves on the Morehead-Rowan County Economic Development Council, the Kentucky Land and Water Conservation Fund Authority, the Kentucky Recreational Trails Authority, Warrior's Path of Kentucky Board, Kentucky Bicycle and Bikeway Commission, Teach Me Outdoors Inc., and Morehead Trail Town.



Come home
to **MOREHEAD, KY**

Reconnect with the place that shaped you.

Morehead-Rowan County is off the beaten path—just a short drive from Lexington, Cincinnati, Pikeville and beyond. Whether you're hiking at Cave Run Lake, sipping coffee downtown, or catching live music on Main Street, there's always something to discover. Scan the code to see what's happening at **visitmorehead.com**.



A NEW PATH

MSU PARTNERS WITH COMMUNITY TO CONNECT CAMPUS & CITY

Morehead State University now offers a new way for students on campus to access the city of Morehead and its amenities easily.

MSU, the City of Morehead, the Morehead-Rowan County Tourism Commission, and Morehead Trail Town Inc. have completed the East Main Connector project, improving connectivity and safety for campus residents and visitors throughout the Morehead area.

Developed as a direct outcome of the Morehead-Rowan County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, the connector extends from East Main Street and crosses state, University, and city property. It serves as a critical link between Morehead State University, Rodburn Hollow Park, nearby housing developments, and the broader hiking and cycling trail network.

Joy Brown (Class of 1999), executive director of Morehead-Rowan County Tourism, noted

that this project, which began in 2019, underscores the community's longstanding goal of creating safe, accessible, and inviting routes for walking, biking, and recreation.

The benefits of the East Main Connector include:

- **Safer and more direct routes** for cyclists, pedestrians, and motorists.
- **Connecting neighborhoods** on East Main Street to recreational spaces.
- **Enhanced access to campus** and downtown amenities, supporting both residents and visitors.
- **Encouraging healthy, outdoor lifestyles** and promoting Morehead's reputation as a Trail Town destination.

Brown said, "Ultimately, the East Main Connector is more than a roadway improvement – it's an investment in community connectivity, recreation, and quality of life for the citizens of Morehead and Rowan County."

***Photo:** Joy Brown (center), executive director of Morehead-Rowan County Tourism, was joined by representatives from Morehead State and the City of Morehead for a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new East Main Connector project. Photo by Eli Loiacono, a sophomore pursuing a BFA in Art from Burnside.*



CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF WMKY

Maggie Kenner working in WMKY's newsroom (1960s) inside the Combs Building.



In June of 2025, Morehead State Public Radio celebrated a significant milestone—60 years of broadcasting to Eastern Kentucky. From its modest start in 1965 with just 10 watts of power and a four-hour broadcast day, WMKY has grown into a 50,000-watt regional voice, providing 24-hour programming to more than 20 counties.

“WMKY is proud to celebrate this milestone in broadcasting and service to the region,” said **Paul Hitchcock (Class of 1988)**, general manager of Morehead State Public Radio. “MSPR is the voice for the people of East Kentucky—keeping them well informed, fully engaged, and deeply connected to their community and the world.”

Based in Breckinridge Hall, WMKY is a public service and educational resource. Since its founding, it has provided academic, entertaining, and informative programming while evolving with the region's needs.

“WMKY's service to the region has extended beyond the classroom,” Hitchcock said. “One of the University's first platforms for distance learning, hands-on student training, and are the flagship station for emergency alerts in rural Eastern Kentucky.”

Nearly 1,000 MSU students have worked at the station over the past six decades, gaining experience as reporters, editors, announcers, and hosts. Many have pursued successful careers in journalism, broadcasting, and media production.

“When I was able to return as the news director in 2018, I was thrilled to offer the same experience to a new generation of students through mentoring and internships,” said **Dr. Leeann Potter (Class of 2006, 2007, and 2022)**, communications director for the Kentucky Arts Council.

An NPR affiliate since 1980, WMKY offers regional news, public affairs, documentaries,



“WMKY’s continued mission is to serve the listeners of Eastern Kentucky, especially rural and underserved communities of our broadcast region.” -PAUL HITCHCOCK

and locally hosted music shows featuring classical, jazz, bluegrass, blues, folk, and old-time music. Coverage includes healthcare, education, agriculture, and the arts.

“WMKY’s continued mission is to serve the listeners of Eastern Kentucky, especially rural and underserved communities of our broadcast region,” Hitchcock said. “We’re committed to providing public safety information during emergencies and to being a reliable, trusted voice in times of need.”

From its first major expansion in 1969—when WMKY became the first station in the nation to receive a Department of Health, Education, and Welfare grant to increase its broadcast power—to its transition to a 24-hour schedule in 1999, WMKY has remained a steady and resilient presence in the region’s media landscape.

“I cannot properly explain how much of an impact working for Morehead State Public Radio has had on my life. I had absolutely



Students Cameron Keysor, and **Carolyn Dorton (Class of 1969)** working in the newsroom.

zero intentions of working in radio, or journalism for that matter,” said WEKU News Director **Stan Ingold (Class of 2008)**. “However, I was hooked from my very first day, and it changed my life forever. It set me on a path to becoming a national and international award-winning journalist.”

As WMKY celebrates its 60th anniversary, its commitment to community, student growth, and public service remains stronger than ever.

HERE FOR THE NEXT 60

Listener support is vital to sustain student training, local programming, and trusted news coverage for Eastern Kentucky. Gifts to either the MSPR Fund or the MSPR Enhancement Fund may be made online at **www.wmky.org**.

You can listen at 90.3FM online, via a smart phone, or through a smart speaker (“Play WMKY”).



ALWAYS AN EAGLE

How a Campus Radio Station Sparked a Career and a Lasting Connection

When **Rick Hesterberg (Class of 1980)** came to campus in 1975, his first stop after unloading at his residence hall was to visit Morehead State Public Radio/WMKY 90.3 FM. With dreams of a broadcasting career, Hesterberg knew that WMKY would be where he would spend much of his time as a student. He was welcomed to the station with open arms and found a mentor in **Larry Netherton (Class of 1967, 1969)**, then the station's general manager.

His work with the radio station as a student led to his first full-time job as sports and special events director at WMKY. He later held a decades-long tenure as manager of external affairs for Toyota Motor Manufacturing. Now in

his "second retirement," Hesterberg is stepping back behind the microphone once again.

After retiring from Toyota in 2021 after 27 years of service, Hesterberg returned to his alma mater, first in communications and marketing and then as vice president for university advancement. While a retirement gig may not be for everyone, for Hesterberg, it was fitting for his professional endeavors to begin, and end, at Morehead State University.

Before his second retirement, he kickstarted a passion project that would put him back on the airwaves - this time in podcast form. "Always an Eagle" is an MSU podcast

where Hesterberg talks with alumni, friends and retirees, hearing their stories and what made their time on campus special. With new episodes hitting the show every two weeks, Hesterberg still gets to promote the message of MSU, but on his own schedule.

“We have over 74,000 alumni,” says Hesterberg. “And each one has a story worth hearing. Through ‘Always an Eagle,’ we want to bring those voices to the forefront and celebrate the lasting connections they have with MSU.”

So far, he’s talked with past MSU administrators and presidents like **Keith Kappes (Class of 1970, 1973)** and former MSU President Dr. Ron Eaglin, notable alumni making a difference in their professions such as **Yvette De La Guardia**

(Class of 2010) and **Jesse Wells (Class of 2008)**, and sports legends like **Phil Simms (Class of 2015)**, **Wayne Martin (Class of 1968, 1972)** and **Donna Murphy (Class of 1980, 1982)**. He knows from experience how personal and life-changing Morehead State is, and through the podcast, he gets to share similar stories from others.

Hesterberg’s career is one that exemplifies, “Once an Eagle, Always an Eagle.” No matter where your journey takes you, you will always have a home at MSU and a good story to tell.

Rick lives in Morehead with his wife **Latonya (Class of 1984)**. They’re parents to three children, **Summer (Class of 2005, 2016)**, **Tanner (Class of 2012)** and **Brooklyn (Class of 2016)**, and grandparents of two grandchildren.



New episodes drop every other Thursday on Spotify and other podcast platforms and at www.wmky.org. If you have suggestions for future podcast guests, email alwaysaneagle@moreheadstate.edu.

FOR CREATIVES & STORYTELLERS

Zander Mack found his creative voice through Morehead State’s Communication, Media, Art & Design programs.

With hands-on projects and real-world experiences, students build the skills to tell stories, design visuals, and communicate ideas that make an impact.

Graduates leave with a degree, a strong portfolio, and the confidence to succeed. From here, they only soar higher.

ZANDER MACK
RADCLIFFE, KY
MEDIA PRODUCTION &
JOURNALISM

Scan the code to
explore Zander’s story.



FROM BRAZIL TO THE BLUEGRASS

Antônio Pires pursued his passions for space and cheerleading at MSU.



Scan the code to hear how Antônio's experience conducting hands-on research with MSU's 12-meter antenna and cheering on the Eagles helped shape his journey.



Ever since **Antônio Pires (Class of 2024)** was a child growing up in Brazil's capital city, Brasília, he has looked up at the sky with wonder and intrigue.

"I was always interested a little bit in space and galaxies and the different kind of physics that we have," Pires said. "That was always an interest ... seeing what is out there."

Pires also had athletic talents, enrolling in gymnastics at age 12 and continuing that through high school.

After earning a bachelor's degree in computational physics in 2022 from Brazil's Universidade de São Paulo and joining their cheerleading team, his goals to compete at the highest level and continue his studies in space led him to the mountains of Morehead State.

Pires enrolled in MSU's Master of Science in Space Systems Engineering and joined the championship MSU Cheerleading squad. He participated in multiple Universal Cheerleaders Association college national championships and was on the team that took home the top prize in 2023.

"I kind of wanted to go to a place that is challenging, and that is one of the best," he said. "The skill level here you don't see anywhere. We're doing things that other teams don't even imagine."

Pires also gained beneficial real-world experience. Focusing on satellites, antennas, and communication in space, Pires gravitated toward

MSU's 12-meter antenna and drafted his thesis on simulating antenna radiation patterns and electromagnetic properties.

This thesis was very well-timed. According to Dr. Elijah Jensen, assistant professor of space systems engineering and astronomical engineering at Morehead State, NASA signed a contract with MSU to upgrade the antenna, and the models in Pires' thesis presented ways to maximize the antenna's capabilities for future missions once upgrades are complete.

"This place helped me a lot with all the hands-on experience," Pires said. "The labs, the antenna that they have here, almost no other place has it."

After successfully defending his thesis, Pires graduated in December 2024 surrounded by family who flew in from Brazil to see him walk the stage. He said he hopes to use the unique knowledge and experience he gained at MSU to design systems that can help with satellite communication.

As he charts his next course, Pires is grateful for the friendly faces, peaceful atmosphere, and opportunities to pursue both his passions as an Eagle.

"My favorite thing about Morehead State is the ability to achieve really good things as a student and really good things as an athlete."



Photo, left to right: Steve Cooley with GRAMMY Award-winning artist Béla Fleck.
Photo courtesy of Ashbourne Farms.

NEW SCHOLARSHIP HONORS MUSIC LEGEND

Traditional music is passed down through generations within the Appalachian region, embodying history and cultural values. Support for the next generation of traditional musicians is being passed on through a gift from an anonymous donor to MSU's Kentucky Center for Traditional Music. The gift also honors a bluegrass legend.

Through the MSU Foundation, the Steve Cooley Bluegrass and Banjo Scholarship was created in honor of musician Steve Cooley. The Kentucky native and Grammy-nominated musician has been a fixture in bluegrass music for over 50 years. Cooley has played at The Grand Ole Opry, Carnegie Hall and has worked with legends like Bill Monroe, Jean Ritchie and Hazel Dickens.

The \$15,000 scholarship was formally announced in January 2025 at an event at Ashbourne Farms celebrating Cooley. Several prominent bluegrass musicians, including Grammy-winning instrumentalist Béla Fleck were in attendance.

The initial donation to establish the scholarship endowment was \$95,000. Scholarship recipients must work toward either a Bachelor of Arts or a Minor in Traditional Music, with preference given to students who play banjo as their primary instrument.

"(Steve) represents the very best of our region, and this scholarship is a perfect way to honor his contributions to the traditional music of our southern mountain region," said **Daxson Lewis (Class of 2016)**, director of KCTM.

"The donor didn't just want it to be a standard scholarship; they wanted it to be a scholarship that would hopefully fund a full ride for a student at Morehead State University, and they wanted it to be an endowment to make sure that it would stick around forever," said **Allison Caudill (Class of 2005, 2009)**, vice president for university advancement and CEO of the MSU Foundation.



Photo courtesy of **Hallie Adams (Class of 2025)**.

At the Spring 2025 KCTM Showcase, Caudill (right) announced the first scholarship recipient: **Peyton Byrns**, a sophomore from Lawrenceburg.

"I was scared of college, low on income, and focused at the time on starting my job at the Tile Factory in my hometown," Byrns said. "Now that I have completed my first year of college ... I can say that I made the right choice. Attending Morehead State University has been the best decision of my life."



RETURNING TO LEAD

Dr. Nicola F. Mason steps into her new role as dean of the Volgenau College of Education, bringing global experience and a passion for giving back.



In July 2025, Morehead State announced **Dr. Nicola F. Mason (Class of 2007)** as the dean of the Ernst & Sara Lane Volgenau College of Education.

Originally from Cape Town, South Africa, Mason was an assistant music teacher at Stellenbosch University in 2004 and served as band director at the Collegiate School for Girls in Port Elizabeth from 2007 to 2008.

With tuba as her primary instrument, Mason came to MSU to study under Dr. Stacy Baker, professor of music-tuba/euphonium.

“I don’t think people realize the significant reach of MSU. Graduates of MSU can be found all over the world, and many students come to MSU from different corners of the globe,” Mason said.

After meeting her husband, MSU Professor of Music and Percussion Coordinator Dr. Brian S. Mason, she returned to South

Africa and spent a year teaching before returning to Kentucky and marrying Brian.

Eastern Kentucky University hired Mason as an assistant professor of education. In addition to becoming a full professor, she took on various leadership roles, including chair for the Department of Teaching, Learning & Educational Leadership and assistant dean of ECU’s College of Education & Applied Human Sciences.

Mason believes the experiences she gained during her career have been in preparation for serving as dean of the Volgenau College of Education.

“It’s almost 20 years to the day that I set foot on Morehead State’s campus for the very first time,” she said. “I am dedicated to spending the next half of my career, the best half of my career, to serving the faculty, staff and students of the Volgenau College and giving back to the institution that I love so dearly.”

HOMECOMING

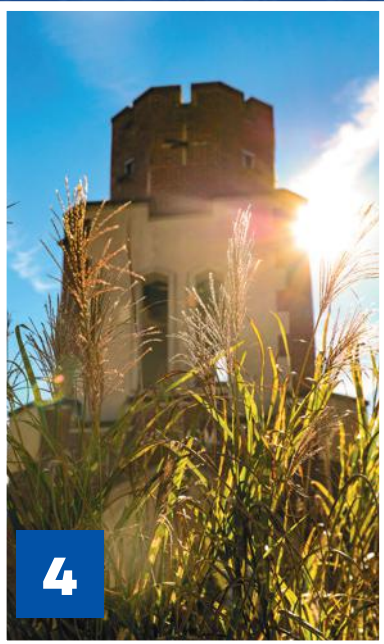


Relive the excitement of Homecoming 2025!

Scan the code to watch video highlights.

1. **Mila Layne Shearer**, a senior from Hebron, and **Ben Piscopink**, a senior from Ripley, Ohio, were crowned as this year's Homecoming Queen and King. They were joined by SGA Vice President **Sami Johnson** and SGA President **Thomas Clem** (pictured far left), and President of the MSU Alumni Association Board **Andrea Faulkner (Class of 2002, 2006)**, (pictured far right) along with MSU President Dr. Jay Morgan, his wife Amber and their children.
2. MSU hosted groundbreaking ceremonies for a new residence hall and new multidisciplinary academic building.
3. The Morehead community gathered on Main Street for the annual homecoming parade.
4. The annual Memorial Brick Ceremony was held at the Little Bell Tower, honoring faculty and staff who passed away in the last year.
5. MSU Cheerleaders and Marching Band kicked off homecoming with a pep rally on University Boulevard.







LEADERSHIP, LEGACY & LIFELONG CONNECTIONS

From campus leaders to thriving entrepreneurs, the Newlands' story spans generations.

Molly Caldwell Newland (Class of 1998)

quickly immersed herself in campus life upon arriving at Morehead State. A business major with an emphasis in finance, Molly became an active member of Delta Gamma Sorority and Student Alumni Ambassadors, eventually serving as president of both.

"My time at MSU was extremely formative," said Molly. "From day one, I had the support I needed to be successful."

After graduation, Molly met and married fellow Eagle, **Jason "Bull" Newland (Class of 1997)**. Jason, a history and marketing major, was president of Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity and the Student Government

Association. He also served six years on the Alumni Association Board of Directors.

Jason and Molly built a life together in Lexington with their daughters Andrea, Izzy, and Lucia. In 2009, Molly was diagnosed with breast cancer. The Newlands were energized after successful surgery and treatment and wanted to embark on a new adventure. With Molly's finance background and Jason's marketing background, they purchased a children's resale franchise, Kid to Kid Lexington, in 2010.

Their experience allowed their business to thrive, and in 2022 they added an adult clothing resale store, Uptown Cheapskate,

which was named Store of the Year at the franchise annual conference in 2024.

“The benefit of building relationships is a valuable lesson we learned at MSU,” Molly said. “As we have entered a new industry, building relationships with other (mostly female) resale business owners has been tremendously helpful in assisting us in navigating this industry.”

Their passion and connection to MSU were elevated when the Newlands’ oldest daughter, **Andrea**, enrolled at MSU in the fall of 2023. Following in her parents’ footsteps, Andrea is majoring in business with an emphasis on entrepreneurship. She has also joined the Student Alumni Ambassadors and Delta Gamma. Andrea is currently working part-time as a manager of Uptown Cheapskate.

“Molly has been a great role model for our daughters in many ways,” Jason said. “Andrea choosing MSU is further evidence of that example. She has seen firsthand the role that MSU can play in a successful career.”

The Newland family’s story is a testament to the lasting impact of an MSU education that can come full circle and carry forward to the next generation.

“It’s rewarding to realize how vital Morehead State University has been to our success,” said Molly. “Jason and I are thankful that MSU is still answering the call to prepare the next generation for success in life.”



Andrea Newland spoke at the groundbreaking for the new multidisciplinary academic building during homecoming. The building will house the Smith College of Business & Technology and the Department of Music & Theatre.



Scan the code to
hear Taylor's story.

A FULL-CIRCLE JOURNEY

For **Taylor Ruark (Class of 2019, 2020, 2024)**, choosing Morehead State University was not just about earning a degree—it was about changing her life.

As a first-generation college student, Ruark arrived at MSU feeling overwhelmed but hopeful.

"I really honestly felt lost," she said. "But Morehead State really provided me and connected me with a lot of resources, supportive staff."

Ruark came to MSU for its top-rated radiology program—a decision inspired by her father's encouragement and hard work.

"He drove a truck all his life and had to do a lot of manual labor," said Ruark. "He always wanted and encouraged me to go on to school and to have a better life."

Since then, Ruark has earned three degrees from MSU—an associate's in 2019, a bachelor's in radiologic science in 2020, and a master's in adult and higher education in 2024.

Today, she works full-time as a retention specialist and academic advisor at MSU and part-time as a radiologic technologist at UK-St. Claire Urgent Care.

"Even if one student feels comfortable coming to me, me being their person, that's why I do the work I do here."

- TAYLOR RUARK

"I not only work with great students but also great coworkers," Ruark said. "It's honestly a really big, full-circle moment for me because I get to work with one of my mentors, **Sara Larson (Class of 2004)**, every day."

Now, moving forward, Ruark helps other first-generation students navigate their own paths.

EVERY BRICK HAS A STORY ... share yours!

Along the brick walk outside the Adron Doran University Center, you see the names of many proud Eagles. Most bricks are purchased on an individual basis, but one fraternity has committed to honoring those who may not have had the opportunity.

The alumni of the Mu Sigma chapter of Tau Kappa Epsilon honor their brothers who passed during the last year by purchasing a Greek brick in their memory. Their efforts ensure that these brothers are forever remembered not just as proud TKEs, but proud Morehead State alumni.

Leave your legacy ...

Commemorate special moments with a personalized brick displayed in MSU Alumni Association's Legacy Plaza. Found at the center of campus at the Adron Doran University Center (ADUC), the brick walkway features alumni and Greek alumni bricks. Scan the code to learn more.



Bricks make great gifts! Purchasing a brick as a gift is a meaningful way to honor someone's time at MSU. You may request a commemorative gift certificate by emailing alumni@moreheadstate.edu.

A close-up photograph of a red brick set in a walkway. The brick is engraved with the name "GARY W. BLYTHE" on the top line and "TKE 1969" on the bottom line in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Other bricks are visible around it, some with partial letters like "K".

GARY W. BLYTHE
TKE 1969



FURTHERING THE MISSION

Schroeder brings passion and purpose to his new role as provost.

THREE TO FIVE YEARS.

When Dr. Christopher Schroeder applied to be a mathematics professor at Morehead State in 2002, that's how long the Nebraska native thought he would be at the University before he decided to return to the Midwest.

"That was the plan," he said. "When I got here, my goal was to go to Lappin Hall. Teach my classes. Hold my office hours. Keep my head down. Go home. Nobody knew who I was.

That was just fine by me. I'll just do the best I can in the classroom and go from there."

Twenty-three years later, Schroeder's three-to-five-year plan has changed quite a bit ... and so have his responsibilities. He is MSU's provost and vice president of academic affairs.

Becoming provost grew out of Schroeder's growing passion for MSU's mission and a realization he could do more to advance it.

Schroeder was first asked to contribute in a larger role outside of the classroom when then-associate provost Dr. Laurie Couch tapped him to chair a general education reform task force in 2017 to redesign the general education curriculum.

“I thought about it some more, and I guess that was when the switch flipped. Do I think the Gen Ed program can be improved? Yeah, I do. So, do I want to just sit and complain about the Gen Ed program and not do anything about it and let other people try to fix it, or, if given the opportunity like I am now, do I want to try to see if I have something to offer and make a positive impact?” he said. “I thought, if I can make a positive impact, I should at least try. I owe it to myself, to the University, to try if others think I might have something to offer.”

ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP

As a professor, Schroeder also established an actuarial sciences program and helped establish the mathematics curriculum for the Craft Academy for Excellence in Science & Mathematics, MSU’s dual-credit, residential STEM+X academy for academically gifted high school students. He was awarded multiple awards from MSU in his department, including the Outstanding Teaching Award in 2007, the Outstanding Service Award in 2009, and again in 2015.

Schroeder took on greater leadership roles as the years went by. He became the chair of the Department of Mathematics, where he established and oversaw the Mathematics Tutoring & Learning Center, expanded the Eagle Scholars dual-credit program, and helped the department surpass the goal of a 70% pass rate for undergraduate students in general education math courses.

When Couch left, Schroeder was encouraged to apply for the job. He initially wanted to say “no,” but the proud husband (of wife Kendra Schroeder, a former MSUTeach master teacher who currently serves as the math and science

instructional coach for the Rowan County School District) and father of three (Annamarie, 17, Luke, 15, and Scarlet, 12) remembered what he told his kids and decided to take his own advice.

“I had started preaching to them about, you need to challenge yourself, you need to do hard things, you need to do the things that scare you and move toward those things,” he said. “I’m thinking internally, am I doing that myself? Maybe I have a skill set that I could do something, and maybe I need to challenge myself and move toward this difficult thing.”

As associate provost, Schroeder spearheaded several successful measures, including helping develop pathways for students transferring from Kentucky Community & Technical College System (KCTCS) to MSU and leading the Complete College Accelerator Initiative to increase student retention and success. He has also been an advocate for MSU’s Level UP program, which provides students with critical career skills through hands-on educational experiences.

Schroeder is taking on this challenging role with more confidence, a track record for proven leadership and, more importantly, more than two decades of witnessing firsthand in and out of the classroom what MSU does for the students and the region.

He knows Morehead State has altered the trajectory of careers and lives, and impacted entire families for generations. He wants to do what he can to benefit students, faculty, staff, and the whole campus community while furthering MSU’s potential impact.

“There’s a lot of universities where, if they went away, it would be sad, but it would be one less choice out of many for the people that they serve. That’s not the case for Morehead State,” Schroeder said. “We have this opportunity and this calling to be this ‘light to the mountains’ to this region. You can see it every day, the impact we make, giving these students opportunities they otherwise would not have.”



CULTIVATING THE FUTURE

Derrickson's vision for agriculture inspires generations

MSU mourns the passing of Dr. Charles Derrickson, a transformative leader whose nearly three decades of service shaped the institution and strengthened its impact on the region. Derrickson, who passed away on Nov. 27, 2025, at the age of 98, left behind a legacy of innovation, leadership and dedication to student success.

He joined MSU in 1965 as a faculty member in the Department of Agriculture. His vision and commitment quickly elevated him to leadership roles, first as department chair and later as dean of the College of Applied Science & Technology, a position he held for more than 15 years. His career at MSU spanned approximately 28 years, with over two decades of administrative leadership.

Among his most enduring contributions was the development of the University Farm, providing students with hands-on agricultural experience. In recognition of his efforts, the facility was named the Derrickson Agricultural Complex, a testament to his belief in experiential learning and its role in preparing graduates for real-world challenges.

Under Derrickson's leadership, MSU expanded its academic offerings with programs such as

radiology and veterinary technology. His strong advocacy for veterinary education inspired the Buffalo Trace Veterinary Medical Association to establish an endowed scholarship through the MSU Foundation, which continues to support students pursuing careers in animal health.

In recognition of his extraordinary service, he received MSU's highest honor, the Founders Award for University Service, for his lasting contributions to the University and its mission.

"Dr. Derrickson's leadership and vision helped shape Morehead State University into the institution it is today," said Dr. Jay Morgan, MSU president. "His work not only advanced academic programs but also created opportunities that have benefited generations of students and the communities we serve."

Today, the Derrickson Agricultural Complex continues to thrive as a cornerstone of MSU's commitment to hands-on learning. The facility is currently undergoing significant renovations to enhance its resources and expand opportunities for students, ensuring that Derrickson's vision for experiential agricultural education remains alive and moving forward for future generations.



EQUINE LEGACY HONORED

Dr. Philip Prater honored with named space at agricultural complex

Professor Emeritus Dr. Philip Prater's extraordinary contributions to Morehead State and the field of veterinary science have led to a named space within the Derrickson Agricultural Complex.

The facility will be designated as the Dr. Phil Prater Equine Health and Education Center, serving as a lasting tribute to his impact on students, colleagues, and the veterinary profession.

This honor follows the successful launch of the Dr. Philip Prater Scholarship Endowment Fund. The fund was announced as a surprise during Prater's retirement reception and has been championed by veterinarians, alumni, and professional organizations, including the Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association (KVMA), ensuring its long-term sustainability.

Prater began his tenure at MSU in 1998 as an assistant professor of veterinary technology. Over his 25-year career, he profoundly shaped the veterinary science program through his teaching, mentorship, and leadership. Alongside Dr. Judy Willard, then director of equine science,

he also secured funding for the Equine Health Education Center and guiding pre-veterinary students as a faculty advisor to the Pre-Vet Club.

Beyond the classroom, Prater held leadership roles in the KVMA, Kentucky Cattleman's Association, and the American College of Theriogenologists. His scholarly contributions include peer-reviewed publications and book chapters on animal reproduction. His distinguished career earned numerous accolades, including the most recent 2025. Public Service Award from the Kentucky Forage and Grasslands Council.

"I am honored and humbled by this recognition," Prater said. "Working at Morehead State was the best job I could have ever dreamed of. Watching students grow into skilled professionals and knowing I played a small part in their success has been the greatest privilege of my career."

The Dr. Phil Prater Equine Health and Education Center is part of a comprehensive pre-veterinary medicine and veterinary technology facility renovation project.

THIRD TIME'S THE

Ten years, three starts, and countless obstacles—Cassie Fawns earns her degree and inspires others.

Cassie Fawns (Class of 2024) graduated from Fleming County High School and enrolled in Maysville Community & Technical College to pursue a degree in early childhood education. After completing an associate's degree, then-transfer counselor **Jen Timmermann (Class of 2003, 2007)** visited MCTC to talk about the availability of transfer scholarships to Morehead State and Fawns enrolled in 2014.

Her first year on campus, she struggled to create roots and took a semester off to enroll at Sagu Bible College in western Texas. Having been raised in a challenging home environment, Fawns found community and a sense of belonging in church.

In 2016, on mission trip to Ecuador, she contracted dengue fever from a mosquito bite. Too sick to return home, she spent a month in the hospital, followed by months of recovery when she returned to the U.S., including stays at the Mayo Clinic, where she was diagnosed with a rare blood disease. She returned home for treatment and finally saw improvement.

In 2021, Fawns decided to re-enroll at MSU. She found a home and community with Chi Alpha ministries but faced another setback. After a medical procedure, she developed sepsis and had to medically withdraw. Her family was even called in to say goodbye, but she didn't give up.

Determined to keep going, Fawns re-enrolled at MSU in the fall of 2022. Majoring in global studies, she volunteered as a student orientation leader, serving alongside Student Alumni Ambassadors (SAA), **Abigail Ratliff**, a junior nursing major from Pikeville, and **Marcella Batubenga**, a

senior healthcare management major from Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.

Withdrawals affected Fawns' scholarship eligibility. In need of aid, she contacted the MSU Foundation and received a student



emergency scholarship to bridge the gap. To repay the generosity, she joined SAA after being recruited by her friends.

She also became a work-study in the international student services office. Originally on track to graduate in May 2025, a full-time job came open there that gave her the chance to complete her degree in December 2024 and be immediately hired.

"Having traveled internationally, I know the kind of uncertainty these students face," Fawns

CHARM



says. “It is so brave of them to take on this challenge, as many do it to better support their families. When you remember why they are here, it helps you take ownership.”

In the fall of 2025, Fawns moved to Arkansas for a campus missionary training program, but she hopes to return to Morehead and work with campus ministries.

Though it took 10 years to earn her degree, Fawns hopes others are inspired by her

journey and encouraged not to give up. While she still faces health challenges from her illness, she remains positive.

“Don’t give up, keep going,” she says. “As I went through my health battle, I started to see school as a privilege. Not everyone has this opportunity! God gave me a second and third chance at life – and MSU did, too! I could not waste these chances.”



EYES ON THE SKY

Photo courtesy of **Katie Pearce (Class of 2025)**.

Mila Shearer has had her eyes on the sky since middle school. Growing up in Hebron, she always felt an interest and wonder about space. The chance to attend a NASA space camp in Huntsville, Alabama, at age 12 sealed the deal. She returned home with a career plan in place.

Shearer first came to MSU to attend camp the summer before high school and quickly learned that she could pursue her celestial dreams in eastern Kentucky.

As a senior space systems engineering major, Shearer experiences hands-on learning opportunities that she knows she could not experience at a larger school.

Through her student employment in the radiofrequency lab, and an undergraduate research project focused on testing procedures with one of MSU's satellite dishes, she left her fingerprints on multiple NASA-sponsored projects that have a global impact.

Shearer has made the most of her educational experience and is the epitome of a student making the most of her time at MSU. She

helped to re-establish the Society of Women in Space Exploration at MSU and is an active member of Chi Omega sorority.

"Space engineering is still a male-dominated field, so I had to take the initiative to build a strong network of women in my life," she said.

Her NASA experience in Huntsville that began nearly a decade ago came full circle in 2025 when she interned at the Marshall Space Flight Center. She worked in propulsion design on a project for a fault management tool to address communication delays that will be used on future space exploration missions.

When the center shared a U.S. map on social media that showed pins across the country representing where their 165 summer interns were studying, Shearer felt a special pride knowing she was the lone dot in eastern Kentucky representing MSU.

"Students from schools in California had to share their dot with other interns," she says. "I didn't have to share mine and that was pretty special."

WHY I GIVE

RUSS MAST VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS



Russ Mast began his career at MSU in 2016, overseeing the MSU Recreation & Wellness Center. A veteran of more than 25 years in higher education, he had previously served in the University System of Georgia and held numerous positions at Valdosta State University.

Mast was tapped to serve as interim vice president for student success in the summer of 2017 and would later assume the role permanently. In that position, he oversaw operations for student activities, dean of students, housing, enrollment services, recreation and wellness, food services, campus safety, student center/event services, and intercollegiate athletics. He retired as vice president for student affairs in December 2025.

When he arrived at MSU, he did not merely invest in his work – he invested in the institution. As his roles progressed, so did his commitment. From day one, he made it a priority to give back to MSU as a regular donor. His cumulative contributions during his nine-year tenure rank him as one of the top employee donors in the MSU Foundation’s history.

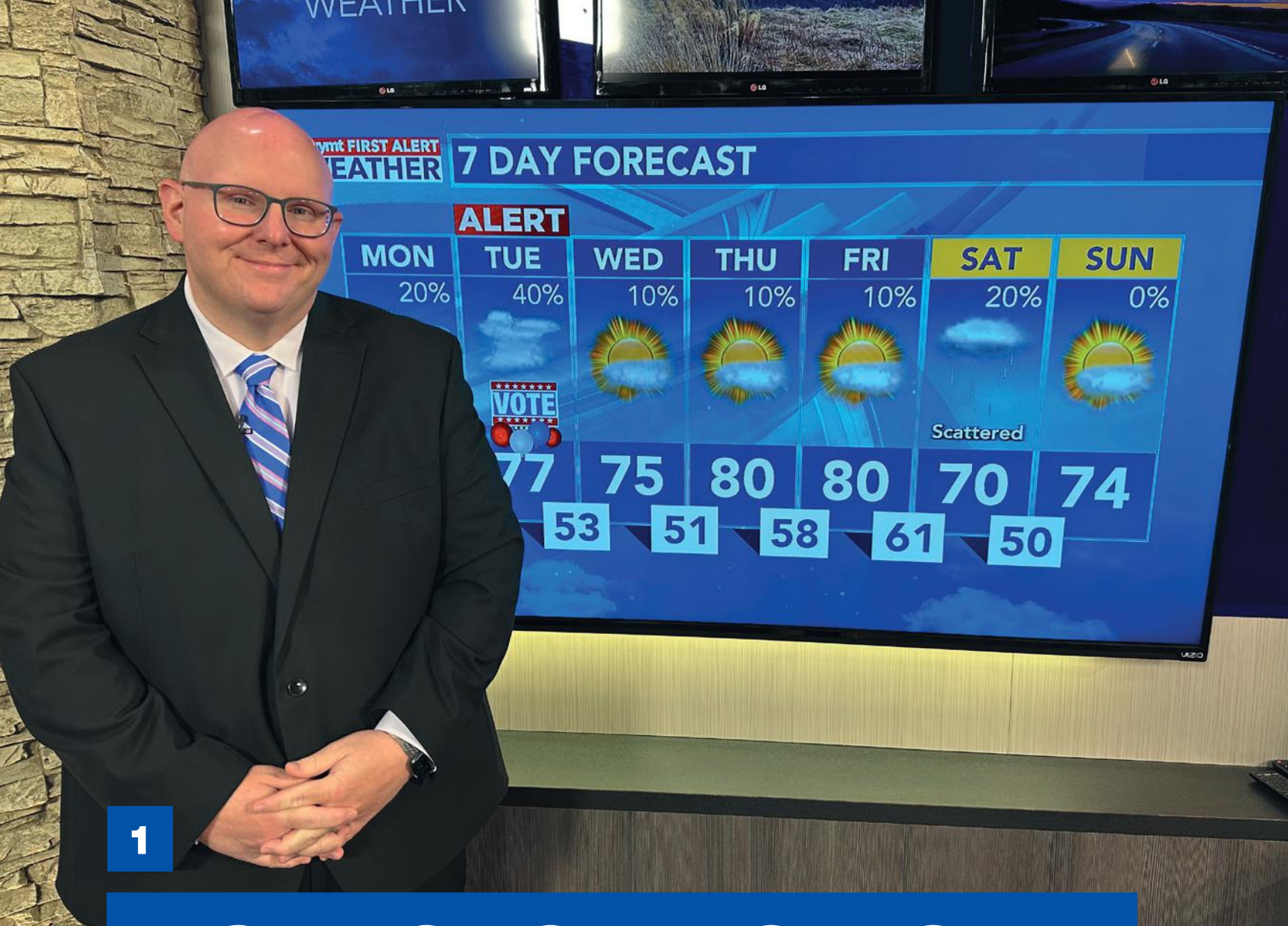
“I believe it is important to show that you are invested in the success of the University, and more importantly, the students,” says Mast. “I hope my contributions have had a positive impact and create opportunities for students to grow and learn in a compassionate and supportive community. Although I did not graduate from MSU, I will always be an Eagle!”

MSU employees give back to MSU and our students through their work but often go above and beyond by donating additional time and resources. For more information on the Gold, Blue & You employee giving campaign, visit alumni.moreheadstate.edu/employee.

To recognize Russ Mast’s commitment to MSU ahead of his retirement, Student Government Association leadership led a charge to establish the Russ Mast SGA Scholarship fund, a scholarship that will be awarded to future members of SGA. The project reached endowment level, ensuring its perpetuity, thanks to the generosity of former students, colleagues and MSU’s generous dining services partner, Aramark.



Are you interested in giving back?
Visit alumni.moreheadstate.edu/waystohelp
to see how you can get started today.



1

FORECASTING HOPE

For **Brandon Robinson (Class of 2006)**, the path from Morehead State University to the mountaintop studios of WYMT wasn't just a career—it was a calling. A calling that, years later, would give rise to something even greater: a mission to inspire, comfort and uplift others through the storm of brain cancer.

"It's how I got my training," Robinson said proudly. "How I got involved with NewsCenter. It's how I got connected with my friends and family."

Robinson's passion for weather began in childhood and carried him to WYMT in Hazard.

There, he became a steady presence for viewers, most notably during the flood of 2022, when he worked more than 40 hours straight to keep his community informed and safe.

A testament to his endurance and unwavering sense of duty, even while privately facing his own storm. In January 2017, Robinson was diagnosed with brain cancer.

He recalled the doctor's words in November 2016: "How about a little contrast?" A phrase he now associates with the moment everything changed. However, Brandon and his wife Stephanie

turned pain into purpose rather than retreat.

“We were looking for a way to give back,” he said. “Steph actually came up with the name: Grey Matters.”

The nonprofit in Whitesburg has become a beacon of hope for brain cancer survivors and their families.

“It’s a way to show our support to brain cancer survivors and their families/friends and the general public that you are not alone in this fight,” Robinson said. “We had almost 200 runners and walkers show up this year alone.”

He endured three battles with cancer, leaning on his faith, family and community, including the MSU family that first nurtured his passion for broadcasting. “Morehead State is home,” he said.

Robinson’s impact extended far beyond the newsroom. In recognition of his service, Southeast Kentucky Community & Technical College dedicated The Brandon Robinson Porch at Falkenstine Hall on the Cumberland Campus in honor.

Robinson passed away in August 2025. Officials with WYMT have ensured his legacy will live on where it all began—by naming the First Alert Weather Center after him.

He is remembered not only as a journalist, husband and friend, but as a man whose resilience inspired countless others to find hope in life’s darkest storms.

Photos: Photos courtesy of WYMT-TV.

1. Brandon Robinson conducting a weather forecast at WYMT-TV.
2. Left to Right: Allison Rogers, Brandon Robinson, **Chris Johnson (Class of 2008)** and Shane Smith of WYMT-TV’s Sky Alert Weather team.
3. Left to Right: Anchor/Managing Editor Steve Hensley with Brandon Robinson winning an Emmy.
4. Left to Right: Former WYMT-TV Employee **Tanner Hesterberg (Class of 2012)** with Brandon Robinson.



WHY I SERVE

DAVID RAY GILLUM

(CLASS OF 2013, 2018, 2023); ALUMNI ASSOC. BOARD MEMBER



WHY I VOLUNTEER

Morehead State is my family. After graduation, I started my career at MSU, working with enrollment services as an enrollment counselor to recruit the next generation of Eagles. I then went on to spend a few years working in the Office of Alumni Relations and Development. I know the work that goes on behind the scenes to make this place so special. Though I am now following my dream as a teacher, I still feel a calling to play a part in the growth of MSU.

WHAT MOTIVATES ME

My time working on campus really did open my eyes to the work that goes into recruiting, educating, and engaging with the students that step onto our campus. Everyone who works on campus believes in the mission of MSU. Their passion and commitment motivate me to continue to give back and stay involved.

WHY I SERVE ON THE ALUMNI BOARD

Though I ventured out into a new career as an educator, it was bittersweet to close that chapter of working so closely with MSU alumni. I loved building those relationships. When I was later given the chance to serve on the board, I knew this was the way to follow my calling as a teacher but continue sharing my passion for MSU. It is a privilege to still get to represent the blue and gold through service on the board.



MSU Alumni Association Board of Directors

The board is a group of alumni volunteers who dedicate their time and energy to making their alma mater an even better place.

Are you interested in serving? Scan the code and apply today!

MSU REMEMBERS THEATRE COSTUMER KOZY HAMILTON

Last year, Morehead State lost an invaluable creative presence and mentor for generations of MSU theatre students.

Kyung Kozy Hamilton, a fixture of MSU's theatre department, passed away in May 2025, at 94.

The Korean-born Hamilton was a theatre costumer for over 30 years until her retirement in 2010. As a pianist and visual artist, her contributions behind the scenes to the success of numerous musicals and plays were only exceeded by her impact. She supported and developed the talent, skills, and knowledge of generations of MSU theatre students, many of which went on to have successful careers nationally and internationally.

"Sometimes I wonder, 'Am I a teacher or am I a counselor?' It's all part of it," Hamilton previously said. "I'm here to help students keep going."

To honor Hamilton's wishes to further develop and improve MSU's Costume Shop before her retirement, alumni and friends of MSU theatre initiated the Kozy Campaign. This led to the establishment of the Kozy Hamilton Endowment Fund in 2000 to raise \$20,000 for purchasing equipment and supplies.

Dr. Denise Watkins (Class of 1996), professor of theatre at MSU, said she will always fondly remember Hamilton both as one of her students, a colleague and a friend who felt like family.

"Kozy cared so deeply about us, and made the costume shop a safe space before that was a trendy phrase. We could be ourselves without



*Kozy Hamilton pictured with **Se Layne (Class of 1992)**, the daughter of MSU theatre professors Dr. William & Sylvia Layne.*

fear or ridicule," Watkins said. "Kozy was such a special and unique person who touched everyone she met, even if they only had a 15-minute exchange. She was a ball of energy. Once you met her, you did not forget her."

To contribute to the Kozy Campaign, visit **alumni.moreheadstate.edu/kozyhamilton**.



SAVING TIGERS & SOARING AS AN EAGLE

Though **Dr. Brett Wright (Class of 1975, 1976)** spent much of his career as a Clemson Tiger, in his heart, he is still a Morehead State Eagle.

Wright came to MSU from Frankfort on a football scholarship and found more than he expected. He found brotherhood in Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity, community in the ROTC program and met his wife, **Julia “Judy” Simpson Wright (Class of 1975, 1976)**, through campus activities.

After college, Wright entered a career in the military as a second lieutenant. He later earned a Ph.D. from Texas A&M and spent 17 years teaching at George Mason University.

With a love for nature and environmental conservation, Wright found a new calling at Clemson University in 2002 as a professor and chair of the Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism Management. In the latter years

of his career, he went on to serve as Dean of the College of Behavioral, Social and Health Sciences. He ended his career fully immersed in the life of Clemson’s mascot – the tiger.

Wright led the creation of the Tigers United University Consortium, a collaborative effort between four SEC schools with a tiger mascot - Clemson, Auburn University, Louisiana State University and the University of Missouri.

Under Wright’s direction, Tigers United began leading efforts in tiger conservation and protection. The group aims to apply training, research, technology transfer and strategic communications to preserving the world’s tiger population, most recently estimated to be only around 5,000 remaining in the wild.

Wright has participated in trips to some of the world’s 13 tiger range countries, including India



where an estimated 70% of the remaining tiger population lives. By observing tigers in their natural habitats, the group gains insight into the environment tigers need to survive and can identify and combat threats to that environment. They also lead awareness efforts here in the United States, creating resources that educators can share with K-12 students. Now retired, Wright remains actively involved in promoting the work of Tigers United.

“We use our mascot as a greeting, saying ‘Go Tigers’ to our peers, but what will we say when they’re gone?” Wright ponders. “With four leading universities working together, we have greater odds for success in contributing to their preservation.”

Though his career has been spent with the tigers, Wright has an equal passion for another beloved mascot and creature – the Morehead State University eagle.

“Mascots are important to the culture and fabric of a university. Just as much

as the tiger, the bald eagle is worthy of our admiration and protection.”

In 2022, Wright was recognized by his alma mater with induction into the MSU Alumni Hall of Fame, an experience that grew his love for MSU even more.

In partnership with Judy, Wright was inspired to take his love for the Eagles to the next step. The couple established the Dr. Brett A. and Julia “Judy” Wright Sigma Alpha Epsilon Enhancement Endowment, a fund that will serve members and affiliates of the Kentucky Gamma Chapter of SAE for years to come.

“MSU laid the foundation for success for Judy and me,” Wright says. “Our involvement with the Greek community created lifelong friendships.”

With a heart for preservation, Wright’s legacy and love for MSU is now preserved and everlasting in its own way.

Photos courtesy of Dr. Wright.



For generations, Morehead State Eagles have shared unforgettable moments at one of our most iconic landmarks: Eagle Lake—Kentucky’s only lake located on a university campus.



DEERSHIP
T LASTS A
VETTIME

The long nights. Too long.
Time stops, frozen in place.
I beg the Frozen Hours
for the Sunrise.
Too many memories
Ice and Death
I'm ready to join my friends.
- A U.S. Marine on Fox Hill



A SALUTE TO SERVICE

MSU Army ROTC unveils a new permanent military history exhibit on campus.

To honor Morehead State University's long-standing ROTC program, MSU's cadets and cadre partnered with the Rowan County Veterans' Museum and American Legion Post 126 to create a permanent exhibit in Button Auditorium.

The project was made possible through local donations, volunteer work and collaboration with community partners. The new exhibit highlights Morehead State's military legacy dating back to World War II, when the campus hosted a Navy Technical School for Electricians known as the "Blue Jackets." During his tenure, former MSU President Adron Doran sought to establish a military training program on campus, eventually securing an Army ROTC charter in 1968. The program commissioned its first class of officers in 1970 and has since produced numerous leaders in both the military and civilian sectors.

The exhibit was curated by MSU alum **David Clinger (Class of 2008)**, cofounder of the Eastern Kentucky Humanities Commission, and features artifacts from the Rowan County Veterans' Museum and MSU archives, offering a detailed look into the evolution of military education at the University. It marks the completion of the first phase of a larger restoration effort in the Department of Military Science, which will include renovations to the classroom space, Cadet Lounge, and the Conference Room/Future Leadership Library.

"We hope to highlight the accomplishments of our predecessors and create a sense of pride for this program," said MAJ Adam Crawford, professor of military science. "It has produced a great deal of general officers and leaders of great impact in the past 57 years, and they deserve to have their story told."

Photo: The exhibition includes a statue of the late **Col. William E. Barber (Class of 1964)**.

WHERE VETS CONTINUE TO SOAR

Morehead State University is consistently proving to be an institution where veterans and active military students feel supported to pursue their academic and professional goals. *U.S. Veterans Magazine* has recognized MSU as a Top Veteran-Friendly School for 2025.

Learn more at www.moreheadstate.edu/veteran.



COL. BARBER'S SERVICE CONTINUES THROUGH SCHOLARSHIP

For decades, the late **Col. William E. Barber (Class of 1964)** served his country proudly and honorably. In 1995, a group of veterans from Morgan County, organized by **Resvie Wheeler (Class of 1946, 1959)**, established the Col. William E. Barber Scholarship with the MSU Foundation to honor his service.

Thanks to a generous gift from his daughter, Sharon Barber, the Col. William E. Barber Scholarship was endowed at the \$25,000 level. The proceeds from this endowment will benefit future generations of MSU students from Eastern Kentucky and further cement his legacy of service.

Born Nov. 30, 1919, in Dehart, Barber attended Morehead State University for two years before joining the Marine Corps in 1940. He was sent to the Pacific during World War II, serving in the Battle of Iwo Jima and earning the Silver Star and Purple Heart Medals.

During the Korean War, he was a captain and commanding officer of Company F, 2nd Battalion,



7th Marines, within the 1st Marine Division. He was a member of "The Chosen Few" who served in the hard-fought Battle of Chosin Reservoir and was one of 17 men who earned the Medal of Honor for his actions. On Aug. 20, 1952, Barber, then a major, received the honor from President Harry S. Truman in a ceremony in the White House Rose Garden.

Barber later returned to MSU to complete his degree and graduated in 1964. He went on to serve as a psychological operations officer in Vietnam before retiring as a colonel in 1970. After he died on April 19, 2002, at his home in Irvine, California, he was buried with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery.

Sharon Barber wanted to ensure the scholarship fund would remain a resource to MSU students for years to come and honor her father.

"As many places as he lived in his life, Kentucky was always home to my dad," she said. "It is fitting that there is an ongoing scholarship in his name in an area that was so important to him and the large extended Barber family."



Photo: In 2008, Col. Barber was honored with a memorial plaque. Pictured, from left: George Marsh, former Navy corpsman who served with Barber on Iwo Jima in WWII; John (Pete) Hamm, chaplain of Morehead American Legion Post 126; Dr. George C. Barber, nephew of the honoree; former MSU President Dr. Wayne D. Andrews; **Dr. Jack Ellis (Class of 1957)**, featured speaker; and Lt. Col. Max Ammons, MSU Dean of Students.



1

LUCKEY LEAVES BEHIND A LEGACY OF SERVICE & GENEROSITY

Dr. Sue Y. Luckey had her eyes set on Morehead State. She inquired about a job opening in late 1962, but none were available at the time. She still left quite an impression and a year later, former MSU President and then Dean of the College of Applied Sciences, Dr. C. Nelson Grote offered her a faculty position.

Accepting the job changed the trajectory of her life. She went on to spend over four decades in service at MSU. Shortly after arriving, she met Dr. George “Mac” Luckey, a fellow faculty member. They were soon married in a ceremony officiated by former MSU President Dr. Adron Doran.

Over the next several decades, the Luckeys left an indelible mark on campus. They supported the academic honors program, which was named in honor of Mac. Sue pioneered the MSU Retirees Association, which received national recognition and became a model for other institutions. Additionally, Sue was chair of the former Department of Information Sciences in the then College of Business and directed MSU’s Master of Business Administration program.

After the couple retired, they remained familiar faces on campus, regularly supporting campus events such as the Spring Gala. When Mac passed away in 2020, Sue took additional steps to demonstrate their commitment to MSU. She established the Dr. Sue Y. Luckey Scholarship for Business and the Dr. George M. Luckey Honors Student Enrichment Endowment. She generously donated the proceeds from selling her childhood home in North Carolina to create the funds and committed to further growth through her estate.

At Homecoming 2024, Sue was honored by the University with the Founder’s Award for University Service, formally recognizing the past, present and future support she committed to MSU. The weekend provided a well-earned opportunity to celebrate one of the University’s most faithful Eagles – and the timing would be a gift that the campus community would cherish.

Sue passed away in February 2025, at age 90. The celebration at Homecoming 2024 just months prior was called “one of the greatest honors of her life.”



Photos:

1. Dr. Luckey was honored during the 2024 Homecoming Football game with the Founder's Award for University Service.
2. On Dec. 17, 1966, Dr. Sue Luckey and Dr. George M. "Mac" Luckey were married by MSU President Dr. Adron Doran. From left: Mrs. Mignon Doran, Dr. George M. "Mac" Luckey, Dr. Sue Y. Luckey, and Dr. Adron Doran. Photo by **Martin Huffman (Class of 1967)**.
3. From left: Dr. George M. "Mac" Luckey, Dr. Sue Y. Luckey, Sharon Jackson and Dr. James Jackson at the 1993 Spring Gala.
4. A ribbon cutting was held at homecoming to unveil the Luckey Ballrooms in the Adron Doran University Center.

To honor Sue and Mac's unwavering love of MSU, future generations will continue to benefit through the growth of their scholarship funds and her estate gift valued at nearly \$1 million.

At MSU's Homecoming 2025, MSU dedicated the newly named Dr. Sue Luckey Ballrooms in the Adron Doran University Center (ADUC). The ballrooms, which recently received an

upgrade with state-of-the-art audiovisual equipment, will serve as a premier space for campus events. The dedication honored Dr. Luckey's decades of service, leadership, and philanthropic commitment to Morehead State.

We can all count ourselves as "Luckey" to have been the beneficiaries of their generosity.



CONCERTS MAKE A COMEBACK AT MSU

Popular touring bands and musical artists are making themselves at home in the Bluegrass State, stopping in various parts of Kentucky thanks to the increased number of venues and large music festivals.

Morehead State has hosted several prominent musical artists in its history, including Stevie Wonder, The Eagles and Alan Jackson. Now, concerts are returning to campus.

In February 2025, MSU hosted the Flatland Cavalry with special guests The Wilder Blue at Johnson Arena inside the Academic-Athletic Center. The Texas-based country group, whose music was featured on “Yellowstone” and recently held prominent spots at

Bonnaroo and Louisville’s Bourbon and Beyond music festivals, drew an excited crowd of approximately 1,500 attendees from campus, Morehead, and the surrounding region.

Russ Mast, former vice president for student affairs, said the idea to bring concerts back came from discussions with students and staff about how fun it was to attend concerts at Johnson Arena in the past. This led to contacting several agencies, determining which bands were touring in the Morehead area and coordinating dates that would not conflict with the spring basketball schedule.

“Flatland Cavalry is a very popular group with the college student market,”



Mast said. “We looked at several artists that were mentioned by students, and Flatland Cavalry was available.”

The campus hosted the Flatland Cavalry performance in coordination with MSU Athletics, and Mast said it was a tremendous success.

“Over 90% of those in attendance were MSU students. We received several positive comments from the campus community, local community and on social media,” he said. “It was great seeing so many students singing along with the band and having their phones out recording the concert and taking pictures.”

Based on the response to this concert, MSU looks to have more in the future. There are plans to bring another headline act to campus during the 2025-26 academic year. Between bringing these events back to campus and prioritizing keeping ticket prices low for students, MSU is giving Eagles a new reason to be energized about student life.

“I believe hosting concerts improves the overall student experience and lets future students know that MSU is not only a great place to get an education, but also a tremendous social experience.” Mast said.

RACONTEUR

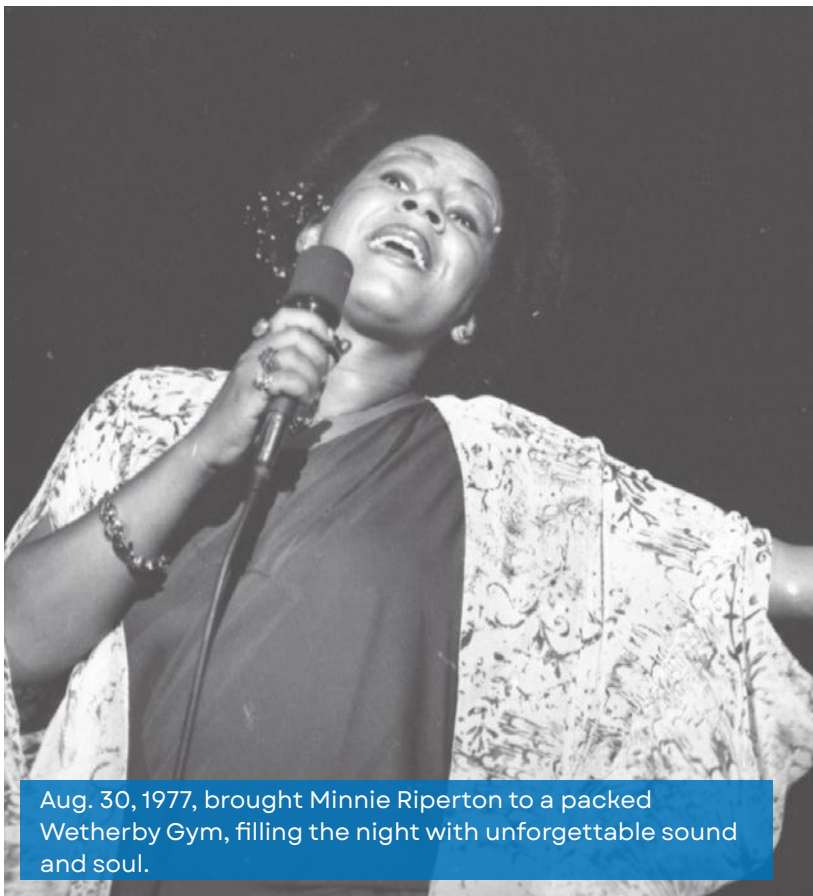
From chart-topping country stars to legendary rock icons, Morehead State University has hosted an impressive lineup of musical talent over the decades. These performances didn't just entertain—they echoed through generations of Eagles. Here's a look back at some unforgettable artists who took the stage and left their mark on MSU.



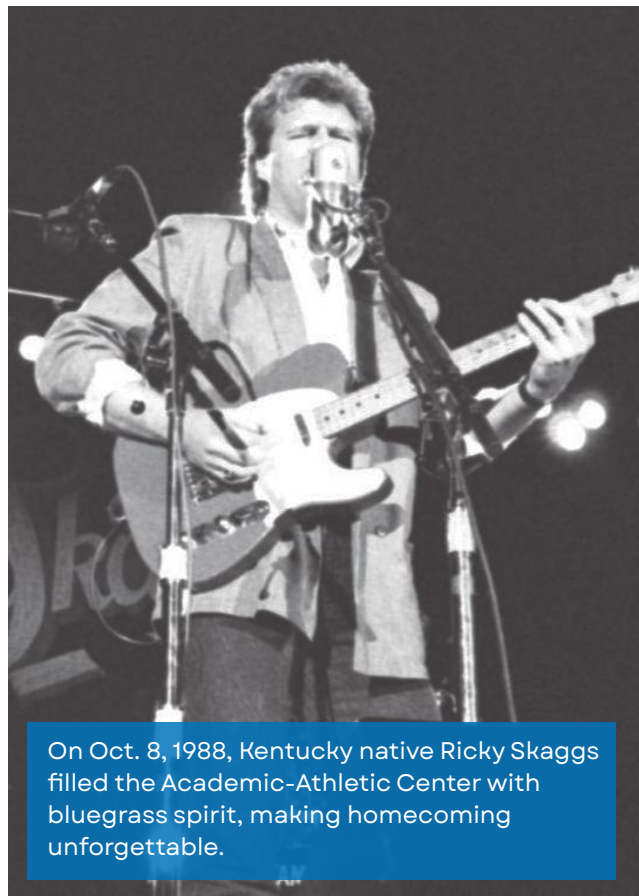
With wild hair, bold fashion, and nonstop energy, Billy Idol lit up MSU on Feb. 15, 1984, and fans brought the attitude. Campus got loud, rebellious, and unforgettable for one electric night.



Soul legend Ray Charles performed at Laughlin Fieldhouse on Aug. 27, 1970, delivering a night filled with his unmistakable sound.



Aug. 30, 1977, brought Minnie Riperton to a packed Wetherby Gym, filling the night with unforgettable sound and soul.



On Oct. 8, 1988, Kentucky native Ricky Skaggs filled the Academic-Athletic Center with bluegrass spirit, making homecoming unforgettable.



Can't get enough of these throwbacks?

Dive into decades of yearbooks and photos online!



MSU turned into a honky-tonk hotspot on March 28, 1984, as Hank Williams Jr. delivered a rowdy, standing-room-only show.

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEB. 13 & 14, BLUE & GOLD WEEKEND

Celebrate the Athletic Hall of Fame Inductees and cheer on Eagle Basketball.

FEB. 14, MSU OPEN HOUSE

Prospective students and families are invited to campus to meet with faculty and staff, tour campus and learn more about Morehead State.

FEB. 25, SPRING CAREER & INTERNSHIP FAIR

Alumni and student job seekers and employers are invited to campus for this annual event.

APRIL 15

CELEBRATION OF STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

Students will present their research to the campus community.

PRESIDENT'S CONCERT ON THE LAWN

Join MSU music faculty and students at our annual concert.

APRIL 25, SPRING GALA

Raise Your Glass: A Toast to MSU: Pop, Fizz, Clink! Mark your calendars for the MSU Spring Gala—a night of champagne, charm, and celebration. Cheers to an evening you won't want to miss! Let's toast!

JUNE 14-19, MSU ALUMNI & RETIREE MACKINAW CITY & MACKINAC ISLAND TRIP

Join us for a getaway to Mackinaw City & Mackinac Island, Michigan. Enjoy 6 days, and 5 nights filled with adventure, history, and pure Michigan magic! Space is limited.

SHOW YOUR EAGLE PRIDE & SAVE!

Enjoy 10% OFF your purchases with our exclusive alumni discount.

Shop a wide selection of MSU gear – from apparel to home and office decor – and represent your Eagle pride wherever you go.

Stay in the loop:

- **Rotating Sales & Specials** online at moreheadstate.bncollege.com.
- **Sign up for our mailing list** and get a **10% welcome coupon** delivered straight to your inbox!
- **Follow us on Instagram @msu_books** for extra discounts, event info, and exclusive updates.



A Barnes & Noble College Bookstore



Questions? Call us at **606-783-2081** or visit moreheadstate.bncollege.com.



HOME COMING 2026

THURSDAY, OCT. 22

- Homecoming Parade
- Student Pep Rally

FRIDAY, OCT. 23

- Memorial Brick Ceremony
- Homecoming Kickoff Reception
- Alumni Awards Ceremony

SATURDAY, OCT. 24

- Breakfast with Beaker
- Tailgate Deck hosted by Alumni Association
- Eagle Football

Stay up-to-date on Homecoming events at
[ALUMNI.MOREHEADSTATE.EDU/HOMECOMING](https://alumni.moreheadstate.edu/homecoming).

To register to attend Homecoming 2026 as a 50th Reunion celebrant, contact the Alumni Association at **606-783-2033**, **1-800-783-ALUM** or **events@moreheadstate.edu**. Advance registration is required.



**MOREHEAD STATE
UNIVERSITY**

DIVISION OF UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT

P.O. BOX 628
MOREHEAD, KY 40351

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
MOREHEAD KY
PERMIT 55



Morehead State University is committed to providing equal educational opportunities to all persons regardless of race, color, national origin, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disabled veterans, recently separated veterans, other protected veterans, and armed forces service medal veterans, disability, or social or political viewpoint in its educational programs, services, activities, employment policies, and admission of students to any program of study. The University condemns religious and ethnic discrimination, including discriminatory acts based on antisemitism. The University is committed to intellectual diversity and viewpoint neutrality. In this regard the University conforms to all the laws, statutes, and regulations concerning equal employment opportunities. This includes: Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Executive Orders 11246 and 11375, Equal Pay Act of 1963, Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Kentucky Revised Statutes 207.130 to 207.240; Chapter 344; Kentucky Senate Joint Resolution 55; and other applicable statutes. Vocational educational programs at Morehead State University supported by federal funds include industrial education, vocational agriculture, business education, and the associate degree program in nursing. Any inquiries should be addressed to: General Counsel, Morehead State University, 305 Howell-McDowell Administration Building, Morehead, KY 40351, 606-783-2053.