

TENNESSEE TECH UNIVERSITY

2025

VISIONS



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Engineering the Future: The Ashraf Islam Engineering Building and Wings Sculpture

This past fall ushered in a new era for engineering on campus with the grand opening of the state-of-the-art Ashraf Islam Engineering Building and the inspiring Wings sculpture, symbolizing innovation and growth. These new additions redefine Tennessee Tech's campus and provide advanced spaces for student success.

PIONEERING AI EDUCATION: TENNESSEE TECH'S MINDS CENTER

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Discover how the new Machine Intelligence and Data Science (MInDS) Center is positioning Tennessee Tech at the forefront of artificial intelligence education and workforce readiness through innovative collaboration and research opportunities.

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Tennessee Tech's partnership with Averitt creates real-world opportunities for students with a logistics and supply chain management minor, addressing growing industry demands with cutting-edge curriculum and mentorship.

GOLDEN EAGLES: A CENTURY OF SOARING SPIRIT

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Celebrate 100 years of the Golden Eagles, tracing the history of Tennessee Tech's iconic mascot and the enduring pride of its campus community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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TENNESSEE TECH UNIVERSITY VISIONS

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

When the doors open to a new facility, Tennessee Tech University begins the most important construction phase: helping students build knowledge, memories and futures.

As Tennessee Tech continues to grow, our commitment to putting students first remains unwavering. Recent campus developments are transforming the student experience because they are designed with student needs, expectations and inspirations in mind.

President Phil Oldham said it just right when he said providing inspiring spaces "lifts the spirit and challenges us all to think beyond the norm."

The Ashraf Islam Engineering Building, our first new engineering facility in over 50 years, is a testament to this mission. This 100,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility provides cutting-edge laboratories and flexible learning spaces designed to prepare students for the modern workforce.

Another exciting addition is the creation of a pedestrian pathway through the heart of campus. This pathway enhances safety, reduces traffic and promotes a more connected environment. It is a space that prioritizes student well-being while adding to the beauty of our campus.

The transformation of Tucker Stadium marks a new era for Golden Eagle athletics. This modern facility will provide an improved experience for athletes, fans and our community. It represents more than athletic competition; it's about fostering school spirit and unity.

These projects are more than just physical structures—they are investments in our students' futures.

We are deeply grateful to our alumni, donors and community partners for making these advancements possible. We invite you to visit campus, see these changes firsthand and celebrate the bright future of Tennessee Tech with us.

Enjoy the magazine, and continue to live Wings Up!



- Karen Lykins

Vice President for Enrollment & Communication

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From left: Tech students Jamie Boyd and Kashaina Nucum, members of MInDS AI corps, Doug Talbert, Ph.D., and William Eberle, Ph.D, MInDS co-directors, and Tech students Jared Scott and Ethan Owens, also members of MInDS AI corps.

TENNESSEE TECH'S MINDS CENTER:

PIONEERING AI EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE READINESS

A new center created at Tennessee Tech University in 2023 was a meeting of the minds – both real and artificial.

The Machine Intelligence and Data Science (MInDS) Center is envisioned by co-directors William Eberle and Doug Talbert as a hub on campus and beyond to foster knowledge and workforce development in artificial intelligence through education, research and service.

The groundbreaking initiative's mission is to work both within and outside the university to drive

innovation and empower faculty and students to thrive in the world of AI, say the directors, who are both computer science professors at the university.

"AI is going to revolutionize the workplace the same way the Internet did about 30 years ago," said Talbert. Eberle added, "Every major is being exposed to AI in one way or another already."

One key motivation behind the creation of the MInDS Center, modeled in part after Tech's successful Cybersecurity Education, Research and Outreach Center (CEROC),

William Eberle works with students Jamie Boyd and Kashiana Nucum in Tech's MInDS Center.



was the need for a coordinated effort in AI education and research across campus academic departments.

Eberle noted that while departments had been implementing AI technology independently, the center would serve as a unifying force to facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration.

"We can be a lot more effective if we coordinate our efforts," Talbert agreed.

That's not limited to campus. In fact, the MInDS Center has showcased its commitment to collaboration with two recent events: attending the Florida Artificial Intelligence Research Society (FLAIRS) conference in Miami in May 2024 and co-hosting a hybrid in-person and online AI Across Tennessee Symposium that July.

FLAIRS is the second oldest conference in the U.S. dedicated to AI research, and Tech's MInDS Center representation was strong at the most recent. Eleven students and faculty from the university attended, and a National Science Foundation grant helped the center send nine other students from across the country.

"FLAIRS has been hosting an annual conference for nearly 40 years, and it's a great event for introducing students to AI research," Eberle said.

The recent AI Across Tennessee Symposium further underscored the importance of

collaboration in AI research and education.

That event brought together nearly 70 representatives from 10 public universities, all focused on advancing AI research and application. It highlighted the need for a secure statewide data repository and explored potential opportunities for collaborative projects.

As the MInDS Center looks to the future, events like the conference and symposium will position it as a key player in the broader AI academic community.

As it grows, the directors say they aim for the MInDS Center to serve as an inspiration for other institutions. In that spirit of partnership, it can help other institutions integrate AI education seamlessly into their curricula and together explore greater opportunities for research, infrastructure, outreach and more.

With guidance from an advisory board that includes alumni and industry leaders, the MInDS Center is well-positioned to ensure that Tech students are workforce-ready – and Eberle and Talbert are confident that readiness, combined with the center's collaborative research, will contribute to the state's economic development.

But how did the MInDS Center get its name? In a nod to the power of AI, Eberle said, "We used ChatGPT to give us ideas for center names, and MInDS came out of that session. So, AI created the name for its own center." ▽

“
**AI IS GOING TO
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THE SAME WAY
THE INTERNET
DID ABOUT 30
YEARS AGO.**
”

Mick Williams, lecturer in Tech's College of Business, teaches a course in the college's new operations, logistics and supply chain management minor.

Rates



TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS:
TECH TEAMS UP WITH INDUSTRY LEADER
AVERITT TO MEET WORKFORCE NEEDS

What happens when a nationally ranked College of Business teams up with a top transportation and supply-chain leader? Just ask the students enrolled in Tennessee Tech's new operations, logistics and supply chain management minor.

Tech partnered with Averitt, the Cookeville-based freight transportation titan with international reach to more than 100 countries, to begin offering the courses in fall 2023.

Leaders at Averitt provide input and support to ensure coursework reflects real-world industry dynamics and equips students to meet workforce needs. Likewise, Tech College of Business faculty make sure classes meet the high academic standards that have consistently earned the college a spot at the top of the ratings lists and a coveted accreditation from the AACSB.

"We've been able to actually build coursework around what local employers who hire supply chain graduates are looking for," explained Mick Williams, lecturer in the College of Business. "These same companies have let our students do everything from taking quick tours, to working with them on their capstone projects. Averitt was the first company I reached out to, and they were great to let me come out and show me exactly what they were looking for."

A 30-year business and industry veteran, Williams had previously led supply chain and information technology departments for a multinational pharmaceutical company, among other top roles. When the opportunity called to teach students from his own wealth of expertise, Williams jumped at the chance.

"I was to the point in my career where I had accomplished what I set out to do and, the last several years, I've been more focused on mentoring. That's where my passion is right now," said Williams. "To be able to do that at a university

setting as my full-time job – I got really excited about that."

Williams notes that demand for workers in the operations, logistics and supply chain fields is expected to snowball over the coming years. Estimates show that, in Tennessee alone, there could be nearly 20,000 new jobs in this sector created over the next five years, carrying average salaries of more than \$80,000.

Tech students, according to Williams, are uniquely equipped to seize these looming career opportunities.

"The students here have great attitudes, a lot of energy, and are ready to make their mark on the world," he said. "There are those in my generation who look at the latest generation and say, 'They don't work like we did.' I don't see that. I see so many positives here."

Gary Sasser, chairman and CEO of Averitt, lauded the new program's focus on aligning curriculum with emerging workforce needs.

"Tennessee Tech is not just our neighbor and partner, it is also the training ground for our workforce of tomorrow," he said in a fall 2023 statement. "We see an important opportunity to help cultivate a generation of logistics and supply chain leaders with the talent and skills to impact our region far into the future."

Averitt's work with Tech's College of Business is one among many ways that the locally based transportation giant has invested in Tech students. Among other ventures,

Averitt is the namesake for the home of the Golden Eagles baseball team: the Averitt Express Baseball Complex.

Most recently, the company made a generous gift to the university's new west-side football stadium, which is expected to be completed in 2026. **V**

**TENNESSEE
TECH IS NOT
JUST OUR
NEIGHBOR AND
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IS ALSO THE
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FOR OUR
WORKFORCE OF
TOMORROW.**

Incoming Fall 2024 Freshmen participated in the annual Class Photo tradition following Convocation, led to Tucker Stadium by the Golden Eagle Marching Band.



TENNESSEE TECH SOARS:

UNIVERSITY SEES HIGHEST ENROLLMENT IN NEARLY A DECADE

THE final numbers are in: Tennessee Tech University reached its highest total headcount in nearly a decade and enrolled the fourth-largest freshman class in its 109-year history, according to the university's fall 2024 census.

Records show that Tech kicked off the fall semester with 10,511 students – the largest student population since 2015 – and welcomed more than 3,000 new students to campus, including 2,006 freshmen, 586 transfer students and 417 graduate students. Tech's population of returning students was boosted by another increase in the university's year-to-year retention rate.

Census data also show that Tech continues to attract high-performing students. The new freshman class holds an average

high school GPA of 3.67 and a median ACT score of just over 24. More than a third of the new student class maintained a perfect 4.0 GPA throughout their high school career.

The university saw additional growth from the increase in dual enrollment students taking courses from Tech while still in high school. Tech offers a variety of dual enrollment options including English, French, engineering, cybersecurity, history and social sciences, as well as a much-anticipated new dual enrollment course in American Sign Language, which began last fall.


"Students and parents see the growth and success happening on Tech's campus, and they want to be a part of it," said Karen Lykins, vice president for enrollment and communication

TECH KICKED OFF THE FALL SEMESTER WITH 10,511 STUDENTS – THE LARGEST STUDENT POPULATION SINCE 2015

at Tech. “From our beautiful new Ashraf Islam Engineering Building and pedestrian walkway and plaza, to added degree programs, continued recognition at the top of state and national college rankings and our vibrant community feel, the word is out that Tech is the place to be. We look forward to seeing all that the class of 2028 will accomplish during their time here in Tennessee’s College Town.”

According to Tech’s fall 2024 census, the student population is also increasingly diverse. Roughly 21 percent of Tech students are students of color, a figure driven in part by a marked increase in Hispanic students among the new freshman class.

Tech’s top five undergraduate degree programs by enrollment are mechanical engineering, computer science, nursing, biology and business management – highlighting the university’s diverse course offerings. The College of Engineering remains Tech’s top college by enrollment and swelled to its largest size in university history at 3,121 students. It is followed by the College of Education with 1,815 students, the College of Business at 1,402 students and the College of Arts and Sciences at 1,232 students. The university’s Whitson-Hester School of Nursing rounds out the top five with 822 students. ▼

A photograph showing a large group of students at a convocation ceremony. In the foreground, two young women are prominently featured, both wearing purple Tennessee Tech University t-shirts and raising their right hands in a gesture of taking an oath. The woman on the left is Black with long braids and glasses, wearing a lanyard that says "LIVE WINGS UP!!!". The woman on the right is white with blonde hair. They are both looking upwards with expressions of joy and anticipation. In the background, other students in similar purple shirts are also visible, some with their hands raised. The setting appears to be an indoor arena or large hall with tiered seating.

Members of the 2024 incoming freshman class celebrated the beginning of their academic journey at Tech by taking the Oath of Academic Integrity at convocation.

TRAILBLAZERS:

LEADING THE WAY TO TECH FOR NEW GOLDEN EAGLES

BRINGING together some of the top students at Tennessee Tech University, Trailblazers are taking Tech's campus visits and student recruitment to a personal level. Partnering with the Office of Admissions and Campus Visits, the Tennessee Tech Trailblazers program is in its fourth year. These students offer personal, one-on-one

campus tours to prospective students and their families while also fostering genuine connections between current Trailblazer students and future Golden Eagles. ▽

Let's meet a Trailblazer! Check out a video tour with one of our campus trailblazers here!



Ella and her mom Angela Sullivan from Livingston, Tennessee, meet with Trailblazer and Tennessee Tech SGA President Kelsey Hewitt for a personalized tour of the university.



Trailblazers show prospective students some of the places on campus they will spend much of their time, like the ground floor of the Roaden University Center where the university bookstore, food options and more are located.



Trailblazers have the opportunity to show off their favorite parts of campus.



Tours also visit campus academic buildings to offer a look at where students spend their class time.



Because Trailblazers are students themselves, they can offer prospective students and their families authentic insight on campus life.

Highlighting various resources on campus, Trailblazers are often paired with prospective students in their same major or with common interests.



These personalized tours show off not only the state-of-the-art facilities Tech offers, like the newly opened Ashraf Islam Engineering Building, but also the personal experiences and genuine connections that students find at Tech.

GOLDEN EAGLES:

A CENTURY OF
SOARING SPIRIT

Students flock to Tennessee Tech University's mascot Awesome Eagle for a photo opportunity any time the eagle is seen on campus.



IN 1925, Tennessee Tech made a decision that would shape its identity for the next century: the naming of its student body. At a meeting of the Athletic Association, options like Tech Warriors, Mountaineers, Mountain Eagles and Lions went through three rounds of voting before Golden Eagles was ultimately chosen with a resounding vote of 139 to 18.

The name was suggested due to four eagles who were said to have soared over campus on clear afternoons for many years. In his 1957 history book of Tennessee Tech, Austin Wheeler Smith wrote, "From some cranny in the cliffs of the Cumberlands they sailed forth each day to gather food and flaunt defiance at the wiles of man in the azure above his busy streets."

In 1988, the university newspaper, The Oracle, while recounting the naming process from 1925, said that, "... it was rumored one of those Cumberland Mountain Eagles ventured close enough to land on the library tower, leaving no doubt about the choice of a name." This pivotal moment not only gave our students a new identity but also inspired the renaming of the yearbook from "Tech Dynamo" to "The Eagle."



THE EVOLUTION OF AN ICON

While the Golden Eagle name has remained constant, the mascot itself has undergone a transformation over the decades. In the early years, the “mascot” wasn’t a costumed character at all, but rather spirited students like Frank Hudgens, Guy Boyd and Maxie L. Alderson, who rallied crowds with their enthusiasm.

The 1960s saw the debut of Tech’s first costumed mascot – a golden-clad figure with feathered pants, a beak, and raptor feet. By 1972, the costume had evolved to include a head with short feathers and an oversized feathered shirt, earning the nickname “Tech Eagle.”

In 1975, the mascot took a daring turn, becoming “Evil Eagle” (or sometimes “Evel Eagle”). Inspired by the famous stuntman Evel Knievel, this iteration thrilled crowds with motorcycle jumps and basketball court antics. The Evil Eagle era also saw a milestone when Elayne Hayes became the first woman to don the costume in 1982, earning the title “Evil Eaglette.”

◀ In this University Archives and Special Collections photo from 1971, two young fans check out the university’s eagle mascot.

▼ “Evel Eagle” rides his signature motorcycle in this University Archives and Special Collections photo.





Awesome Eagle is at home among other spirited Golden Eagles on the university Spirit Squad.

THE BIRTH OF AWESOME

The modern era of Tennessee Tech's mascot began in 1984 with the introduction of "Awesome Eagle." Designed by chemistry major Olan Kemp as part of a student contest, this new incarnation featured hands for more interactive performances. Awesome Eagle made a dramatic debut, emerging from a box delivered by truck onto the football field during a game in the fall of 1990.

Since then, Awesome Eagle has become a true campus celebrity, even winning multiple Cheerleaders Association Mascot National Championships. Today, Awesome continues to rally crowds and embody the spirit of Tennessee Tech. As Tennessee Tech celebrates a century of Golden Eagle pride, the campus community reflects on the enduring legacy of its winged namesake. From the early days of enthusiastic student mascots to the high-flying antics of Awesome Eagle, the Golden Eagles have united generations of Tech students, faculty, and fans. Here's to another hundred years of soaring spirits and golden memories at Tennessee Tech University.

Wings up! V





Oracle staff, from left, Chris Cantrell, Frankie Hendrixson, Sue Haste, Diane Hartnett and Janice Rogers work on an edition of the publication. Photo source: Eagle 1959

TECH CELEBRATES 100 YEARS OF THE ORACLE

TENNESSEE Tech Golden Eagles have flocked to The Oracle for news about their campus, community and world for 100 years. The independent, student-led media source first published on April 25, 1924.

A full century later, in spring 2024, Tech hosted a centennial-worthy reunion with students, faculty, staff and alumni from as far back as the 1950s.

"I've been looking forward to this day for a couple of years," said Bee Goodman, editor of The Oracle and senior communication major at Tech. "The Oracle is a part of history. There are 100 years of voices that we get to hear."

Brenda Wilson, a longtime professor in the Department of Communication, former faculty advisor for The Oracle and former student journalist at Tech, served as emcee and kicked off the event by reflecting on her own experiences with the newspaper.

"Everyone here understands the important role that student media play and the milestone it is to have our student newspaper turn 100," said Wilson. "Before I became a journalism professor here at Tech, I was on The Oracle staff. I've seen it from many vantage points ... From my office, I still hear the buzz of the newsroom and it's a special thing."

Kelly Chambers, assistant director of the Crawford Alumni Center and a Tech journalism alumna who contributed stories for The Oracle as a student, said that helping to plan the gathering was both "personal and professional."

"The Oracle is such an important part of Tennessee Tech's history. Every edition since 1924 is preserved in University Archives, and it's hard to think of a better campus record than that," added Chambers. "By reading those newspapers, you see how the campus responded to historic events like John F. Kennedy's assassination, September 11, 2001 or COVID-19, and suddenly you're back in 1963, 2001 or 2020, remembering what those days were like."



Alumni of The Oracle pore over previous issues of the newspaper and other memorabilia.

Thomas Corhern, a 2005 Tech graduate now working as Tech's sports information coordinator, was among those Oracle alumni to serve at the newspaper during a pivotal time in history.

Corhern was in The Oracle's workspace atop the Roaden University Center when news of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack first hit the airwaves. Immediately, he and his colleagues got to work on reconfiguring the newspaper's next edition to reflect the tragic news.

"It's not easy to cover something like this," Corhern recalled. "There are so many emotions in play, but as journalists, we have a duty to perform and that's to tell the story fairly and free from bias. Everyone came together as a team that day to tell the story."

Corhern is among many Oracle alumni who draw upon their years at the student newspaper in their careers today – a list that even includes notable journalists like former New York Times assistant managing editor Carolyn Lee, the first woman to ever be named on the storied newspaper's masthead-worked with at The Oracle. "It's something that becomes a part of you. There's a special family bond that gets created. It's a family like no other."

Today, Teddy Burch, assistant professor of communication at Tech, serves as The Oracle's faculty advisor. The newspaper publishes throughout the fall and spring semesters and is distributed on Fridays. ✓



Brenda Wilson, Tech communication professor, former Oracle faculty advisor and former Oracle student writer, emcees The Oracle's 100th anniversary event.

PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY FOR THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY

PHOTO ESSAY



Check out a
video flyover
of the new
pathway!

Students enjoy a morning walk along Tennessee Tech's new Pedestrian Walkway, surrounded by vibrant fall colors and campus charm. The wide brick pathway connects key campus buildings, creating a welcoming and convenient space for the campus community.

The Pedestrian Walkway's wide paths highlight green spaces in the heart of campus.



The walkway's clean lines and green spaces are both practical and peaceful. It's a mix of function and style, giving everyone plenty of room to walk and enjoy the view.



Open design and landscaping make the new walkway a great place to walk, hang out or just enjoy the outdoors.



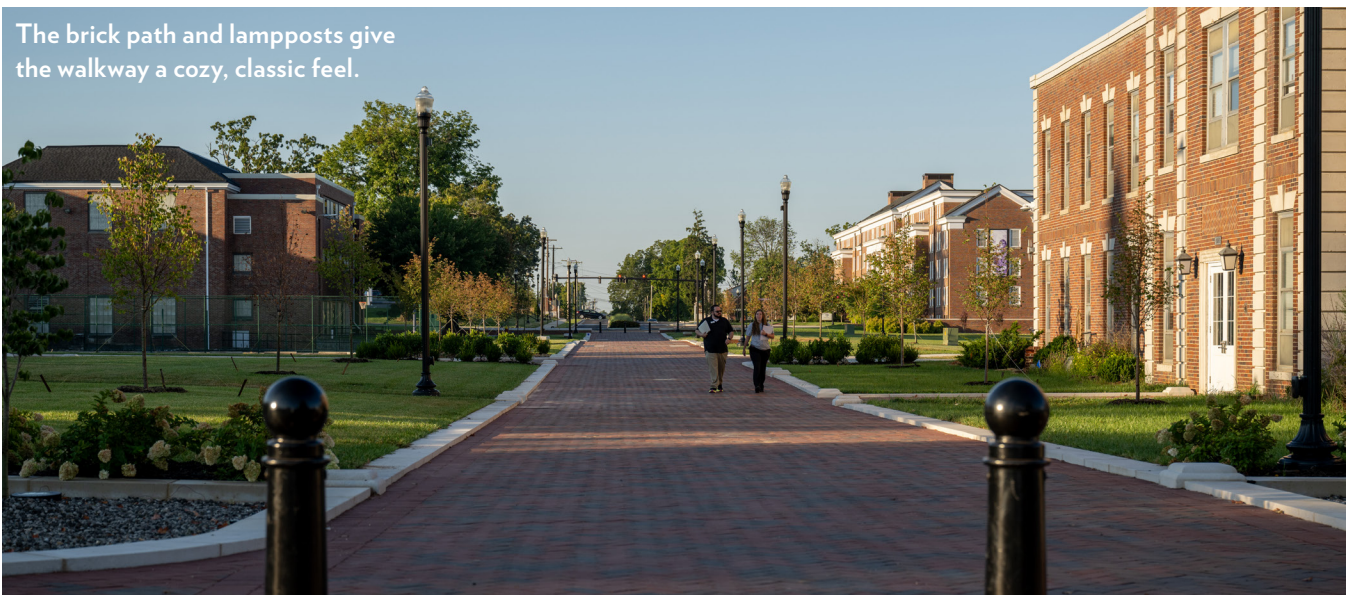
Students take a break, using the benches to relax or chat between classes. It's the perfect spot to enjoy some fresh air and catch up with friends.



Two students walk along the Pedestrian Walkway, framed by the classic campus buildings and trees. This path is a central hangout, connecting everything on campus and making it easy to get around.



The brick path and lampposts give the walkway a cozy, classic feel.



OUT OF THIS WORLD:

TECH TRUSTEE BARRY WILMORE PART OF HISTORIC SPACE FLIGHT

Tennessee Tech has long challenged students to reach for the stars, but alumnus and trustee Barry “Butch” Wilmore has taken that advice quite literally.

The two-time graduate of Tech’s College of Engineering and decorated NASA astronaut blasted off from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida on June 5, 2024, bound for the International Space Station as part of the historic maiden manned voyage of the Boeing Starliner.

The trip marked Wilmore’s third interstellar mission, having accumulated 178 days in space before the Starliner’s blastoff.

While docked at the International Space Station, Wilmore showed off his Tech pride by hosting a question-and-answer session with the children of Tech faculty and staff.

Wearing Tech’s signature purple and gold colors and proudly displaying a Tennessee flag and Tech athletics decal, Wilmore kicked off the event by joking that he had declared it “Tennessee Tech Day” at the space station.

He went on to answer a broad range of questions ranging from “Where does space begin?” to “What does space food taste like?” and “How do you sleep in space?”

During the chat, Wilmore encouraged students who wish to pursue future careers with NASA to “study, study, study.”

“If you’re interested in space and want to work for NASA, then STEM – science, technology, engineering and math – is the route you have to take,” Wilmore explained in response to a student’s question. “Study hard. Math and sciences, it will get you to that place if that’s what you desire to do.”





Brannigan Browning, son of Tech assistant professor of nursing Stacey Browning, asks Barry Wilmore a question during a video chat hosted by the university in June 2024.

Wilmore had previewed the event days earlier in a pre-flight conversation with reporters, calling Tech “the finest university in the nation.”

As the Starliner’s mission stretched beyond its original eight-day timeframe while Wilmore and fellow astronaut Suni Williams helped test and troubleshoot the new spacecraft, the duo found other ways to stay connected to Tennessee, too.

In late July, Wilmore served as a guest announcer from space for the Grand Ole Opry. He also continued to correspond with Tech President Phil Oldham throughout the mission, even placing an unexpected phone call from space at one point to check on the latest campus happenings.

“I didn’t recognize the number, and I didn’t pick up,” recalled Oldham with a laugh. Thankfully, Wilmore left a voicemail and the two were able to speak by phone a short time later. Last fall, Wilmore even placed a surprise call to Tech’s Sept. 26 Board of Trustees meeting, teasing his colleagues by saying,

“I can’t believe you all are having this meeting without me!” He went on to express gratitude for the Tech community’s outpouring of support during his extended stay in space.

For Wilmore, the mission – even with its unexpected changes and delayed return to Earth – is another challenge that he meets with a tenacity and resilience forged from his early years as a Tech walk-on football player to his time as a U.S. Navy fighter pilot and captain.

It was those very qualities that earned Wilmore an induction into Tech’s Sports Hall of Fame and the university’s 2010 Outstanding Alumni Award, among other honors.

“He inspires our students to understand and realize the greatness they have within them,” said Joseph Slater, dean of Tech’s College of Engineering.

Oldham offers an even simpler summation: “Barry is Buzz Lightyear in real life,” he concluded. ✓

TENNESSEE TECH MARKS A DECADE OF EMPOWERING WOMEN IN CYBERSECURITY



Tech student Mimi Vertrees speaks at the WiCyS conference.

AS technology becomes the pulse of modern life, Tennessee Tech University's support is helping to put more women at the heart of the ever-evolving cybersecurity field.

The groundbreaking moment happened in April 2014, when Ambareen Siraj, then a professor at Tech and founder of the university's Cybersecurity Education, Research and Outreach Center (CEROC), was awarded a National Science Foundation grant that helped create an organization that would change the cybersecurity landscape.

Women in Cybersecurity (WiCyS) was born from that vision and has since grown into a global nonprofit that draws thousands of participants from around the world to its annual conference. The 2024 conference returned to Nashville, the city where it began a decade ago, and Tech stood proudly as the local host, reaffirming its commitment to supporting women in this critical field.

"Tennessee Tech will always be recognized as the 'founding institution' of WiCyS," Siraj said.

STUDENT EXPERIENCES

At the milestone conference, a testament to Siraj's vision, Tech students and faculty played an active role, sharing their knowledge, passion and commitment to the future of cybersecurity.

One of those students was Lopamudra Praharaj, who joined

Professor Maanak Gupta and fellow student Kshitiz Aryal to discuss the future of generative AI and ChatGPT.

"Engaging in machine learning and cybersecurity classes has been incredibly enlightening, fueling my enthusiasm to explore new concepts and technologies," Praharaj said. "One of the most valuable aspects of the conference is its promotion of diversity. It highlights numerous successful women in the cybersecurity field, showcasing inspiring journeys."

NEED FOR DIVERSITY

Siraj also highlighted the need for diversity in the welcome statement she wrote for the conference program.

"Cybersecurity is not just a career; it's a calling for societal impact in a time when modern technology drives almost every aspect of our lives. Now more than ever, diversity in the cyber workforce is critical because differences are our greatest assets to address complex, multi-faceted problems," she said.

How has the landscape of cybersecurity changed for women in the decade since the inception of WiCyS?

Siraj notes that women's representation in the cybersecurity field has more than doubled since 2014, from 11% to 24% – but the need to continue empowering women to pursue positions in this ever growing and evolving still present.

"Let us envision a near future where the persistent shortage of cybersecurity professional disappears,



Tennessee Tech students and faculty are pictured at the 10th annual Women in Cybersecurity (WiCyS) conference in Nashville, Tenn.

with women fearlessly at the forefront of this field,” she urged in her welcome statement.

OTHER STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Another Tech student, Mimi Vertrees, demonstrated the power of ethical hacking with her session introducing the audience to a device called Flipper Zero, an all-in-one technological tool favored by gamers. Her presentation underscored the importance for business owners, CEOs and managers to understand and be able to protect against security breaches – a crucial skill in today’s digital world.

For first-time conference attendees, Tech student Warren Proctor offered insights on how to maximize the experience. “WiCyS was really a launching platform for me to find my community,” Proctor said, emphasizing the sense of belonging and support the conference offers.

LOOKING AHEAD

Siraj now serves as a program director at the National Science Foundation, but she remains deeply supportive and connected to the organizations she founded, Tech’s CEROC and WiCyS. Because of her dedication, the global influence of women in cybersecurity is intertwined with the university.

As Tech looks to the future, the university’s role in nurturing the next generation of cybersecurity professionals remains as strong as ever.

Likewise, the 10th anniversary of WiCyS was not just a

celebration of the past decade but a beacon of hope for the future – one where Tech continues to lead the way in creating a diverse and inclusive cyber workforce.

This milestone is also a reminder of the profound impact that visionary leadership, dedicated faculty and passionate students can have on the world. As the cybersecurity landscape evolves, Tech will undoubtedly remain at the forefront, empowering women and all students to pursue professional excellence. ▽

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**TENNESSEE TECH
WILL ALWAYS BE
RECOGNIZED AS
THE ‘FOUNDING
INSTITUTION’
OF WICYS.**

”

THE DERRYBERRY DIFFERENCE:

FOUR SUCCESS STORIES FROM TENNESSEE TECH

THE Derryberry Award at Tennessee Tech University has been recognizing outstanding graduating seniors since 1975. Named after past university president Everett Derryberry, the award celebrates a student who combines academic excellence, moral integrity,

campus leadership and athletic vigor, demonstrating potential for future service and effective leadership.

Visions caught up with four of these past award winners to see where they are now in their lives and careers. **V**

Aaron Thomas Lay *Agriculture Communications – 2022*

Aaron Thomas Lay earned his degree in agriculture from Tech in 2022, where he intended to pursue a career in agriculture policy. However, Lay's political science minor sparked a passion for law that redirected his path to Harvard Law School.

"I have found it incredibly fascinating that the legal system touches every aspect of our society," he said. "There is a ton of room in the profession to use the skill sets we develop as lawyers for positive change in our communities, and that is what excites me the most."

Lay received the Derryberry Award at the recommendation of his professors, who praised the high caliber of his work while at Tech, as well as his willingness to donate his time and energy to local, state and national organizations and institutions.

Now in his second year at Harvard, Lay has quickly distinguished himself there as well, serving as the deputy managing editor, per curium, of the Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy.

Looking ahead, Lay plans to graduate from Harvard in May 2026. He hopes to join a large full-service law firm with an international presence while also using his training to support his hometown community in Madisonville, Tenn.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to study at such a storied institution that has produced presidents, Nobel Peace prize winners, Supreme Court justices, and countless other individuals of influence," Lay said. "It is an experience that I do not take for granted, and I have found myself fully embracing the journey that lies ahead."



Cristina Carbajo *Biology – 2006*

Cristina Carbajo's love of environmental biology was inspired by her high school science teachers who were former researchers at Oak Ridge National Laboratory. At Tech, she pursued a biology degree while minoring in geology, wildlife and fisheries sciences, and music performance.

"The professors at Tennessee Tech are top-notch. They are dedicated to their students, and they propelled me into graduate school," she said. "Besides Dr. Daniel Combs, who served as a mentor my entire four years at Tech, I had several other wonderful professors. Dr. Michael Harrison and Dr. Evan Hart in the Earth Science Department introduced me to hydrogeology and water resources, which launched me into my graduate work and now my current career."

After earning a master's in earth and atmospheric science, Carbajo worked in environmental consulting before discovering her true passion: teaching. She taught geology at Pellissippi State Community College in Knoxville before being named the program coordinator for the new Water Quality Technology degree program in 2019.

"I love teaching, but I also value the relationships I make with the students," she explains. "A career in the water sector is truly life-changing for my students. It has transformed so many of their lives and given them opportunities previously out of reach."

"Tennessee Tech is a treasure in Tennessee," she added. The smaller size allowed me to form personal relationships with professors in multiple departments across campus. I am proud to have earned my degree from Tech and value the time and experiences gained while I was there."

Ali Lannom

Exercise Science / Physical Wellness – 2018

When Ali Lannom first stepped onto the Tennessee Tech University campus to major in exercise science/physical wellness, she felt an immediate connection.

“Tech felt like home,” she recalls. “I was drawn to Tech because of its academic programs and the opportunities the university provided to students. Tennessee Tech truly supports student development professionally, socially and personally. I never wanted to leave!”

Lannom became a student orientation assistant and student coordinator in the New Student and Family Programs, welcoming and guiding new students. She also found community as a member of Kappa Delta sorority.

After graduation, Lannom started Tennessee’s first comprehensive prosthetic rehabilitation program which allowed her to train and manage clinics across the state and contribute to nationally adopted methods and protocols.

Today, Lannom works for Abbott Laboratories in Gallatin, Tenn., where she specializes in neurostimulation, which involves using electrical signals to change how nerves send pain messages to the brain. Her exceptional work has earned her recognition as Clinical Specialist of the Year for the South Region and, in 2023, as the Territory Manager of the Year nationally.

“Tennessee Tech provided me with the education to excel within my career, and I would not be where I am today without it,” she said. “It’s been amazing to see the impact I’ve been able to have on the community, and I absolutely love what I do!”



Jonathan Channell

Mechanical Engineering – 1998

Jonathan Channell (pictured in middle) arrived at Tech with dreams of space exploration, majoring in mechanical engineering as a stepping-stone to a future in space. However, after joining the Navy, he discovered a deep passion for military service.

“My grandfathers were proud members of the Greatest Generation and veterans of World War II,” he says. “I loved to listen to their stories and was inspired to honor their legacy. I had no idea that I’d become a veteran 25 years and 8 months later.”

After graduating in 1998, Channell entered Officer Candidate School, quickly earning his commission as an ensign, his Wings of Gold, and qualifying to fly the F/A-18 Hornet. He accumulated 2,855 flight hours, 455 carrier landings and 1,000 hours as a T-34 flight instructor. His service included five combat deployments and leadership roles.

“My favorite part of my job was connecting with and having a direct, positive impact in the lives of my sailors,” he said. “And knowing that my sailors were always there for me, even when I did not know that I needed them.”

Now retired from the Navy and transitioning to civilian life in Virginia, Channell offers advice to those starting their careers: prioritize mental health, create your own opportunities, and never stop learning.

“Someone once told me, ‘You graduate with a few basics...and then the real learning begins,’” he said. “I’d add that the learning never stops. Twenty-six years after earning a B.S., I’m still learning new things every day.”

“TENNESSEE
TECH IS A
TREASURE IN
TENNESSEE.”

TECH MARCHING BAND & COLOR GUARD

A PHOTO ESSAY



When fans see the Golden Eagle Marching Band performing at football games, its size isn't the only thing they notice.

Photo Above: Tennessee Tech University's Golden Eagle Marching Band topped 2023's all-time record to again reach its largest size in university history. The ensemble, led by Director of Bands Jeffrey Miller, kicked off the fall 2024 semester with 221 members.





The ever-growing roster includes more than 100 new students, something Miller says brings renewed “energy and excitement” to campus.



This year, the band also debuted new uniforms for the first time in 13 years.



Tech also welcomed the return of the color guard in 2023 for the first time in more than a decade.

RECORD-SETTING RESEARCH:

TECH TAKES UNIVERSITY RESEARCH TO NEW HEIGHTS IN 2024



Zhanjiang (John) Liu, Ph.D.,
is vice president for research
at Tennessee Tech University.

TENNESSEE

Tech is known for setting – and breaking – records, from the pace of new construction and campus improvements to its high marks for academics and continued enrollment gains.

In fiscal year 2024, the university notched another win: it set an all-time record for externally funded research for the fourth year in a row, topping \$46 million.

The unprecedented total was supported by nearly 200 research activations and surpassed Tech's previous record by \$10 million. It also marked the achievement of one of the university's long-held strategic goals a year ahead of schedule.

"The trend of growth in research at Tennessee Tech is almost exponential," said John Liu, vice president for research. "A culture of research excellence and scholarship is emerging. I am very proud of our faculty for their hard work and grateful for the support of university leadership."

In 2018, Tech approved its "Tech Tomorrow" strategic plan, outlining a series of goals for 2025. Among those goals was a vision for increasing Tech's annual externally funded research to \$40 million – an amount that was roughly double Tech's yearly research total at the time.

"This was a 'stretch goal' that we thought to be very ambitious, but our faculty, staff and students rose to the challenge, allowing us to exceed this goal by some \$6 million and do it a year early," said Tech President Phil Oldham. "There is nothing that Golden Eagles cannot do."

For Liu, the record-setting research haul was the perfect way to celebrate his first year at the university. Liu was appointed to his role in fall 2023, bringing decades of research and academic experience, including leadership posts at Syracuse University and Auburn University, among others.

But Liu's passion for problem solving was forged even earlier, through firsthand experiences in his native China. "I was born and raised in a very poor, mountainous area of China," he recalled. "Food was a big problem back then. Working so hard but still without enough food, I was thinking how we can change that situation with science and technology. That led me going to college and pursuing agricultural research, which I've continued over the last 30 years."

Among the projects supporting Tech's research haul over the past year is a \$10 million grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission to help rural electric utilities and energy supply companies deploy smart grid technologies to better serve their communities. It marks the single largest research grant in Tech history.

"Smart grids are crucial for rural and distressed economies because they provide more reliable electricity to homes and businesses, drastically improving the quality of life," explained Liu. "By ensuring a steady, dependable power supply, energy costs will be reduced, making living and operating costs more affordable for residents and entrepreneurs alike."

Most recently, the university received a \$3 million National Science Foundation grant for a research traineeship program focused on the convergence of artificial intelligence, energy and cybersecurity.

Liu is quick to share credit for Tech's research success, pointing to the university's

best-in-class faculty, supportive culture and commitment to providing hands-on opportunities to students.

"Research is all about providing answers to significant questions and solving societal problems. Therefore, it is natural that our faculty are strong with research," said Liu. "Providing hands-on, experiential learning through research for our students is one of the highest motivations of growing research at Tech." ▼

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Tennessee Tech student and United Cleanup Oak Ridge (UCOR) intern Avery Newman, Tech Director of Nuclear Engineering Jeffrey King, Strata-G intern Noah Oakes, and UCOR Community Outreach and Workforce Development Coordinator and Tech alumna Shannon Potter are pictured at the 2024 Nuclear Opportunities Workshop.



TECH GOES NUCLEAR

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING'S NEW DEGREE PROGRAM PREPARES STUDENTS FOR THE NUCLEAR RENAISSANCE

THE largest college on Tennessee Tech University's campus just got bigger.

Tech's College of Engineering officially launched a new degree program in nuclear engineering in 2024, becoming only the second institution in the state to offer the sought-after field of study.

The new program is deeply rooted in emerging workforce needs and student interest. In 2021, the Center for Energy Workforce Development projected a need for 15,000 nuclear industry employees by 2026 – a figure compounded by the fact that the average age of nuclear reactor engineers in the workforce is just over 50 years old. Student surveys conducted prior to the program's launch found that 65 percent of respondents in Tech's College of Engineering would have been very or extremely likely to have considered enrolling in the major had it been available when they were starting their college career.

The new program comes roughly one year after Tennessee Governor Bill Lee signed an executive order setting aside \$50 million to establish a nuclear development and manufacturing ecosystem in the state.

"No other state in the country comes close to Tennessee's legacy, resources, and potential to be a leader in nuclear energy. And there is no long-term national strategy that doesn't include nuclear energy," Governor Lee said at the time.

Tech is moving quickly to scale up its program and expects to enroll nearly 50 nuclear engineering majors by the fifth year, which would increase the number of nuclear engineering graduates in the state by 25 to 30 percent. As the university works toward that goal, it has received key support from policymakers including U.S. Representatives John Rose and Chuck Fleischmann.



Tennessee Tech engineering student and UCOR intern Avery Newman is pictured at UCOR's worksite at the Oak Ridge Reservation. UCOR's partnership has helped drive Tech's nuclear engineering degree program forward.

"Nuclear power is vital in the transition to clean energy," said Joseph C. Slater, dean of Tech's College of Engineering. "The nuclear engineering degree program is a tremendous opportunity for students to join the next generation of engineers leading the nation into a sustainable energy future."

To lead the new effort, Slater tapped Jeffrey King to be the university's founding director of nuclear engineering. King holds a doctorate in nuclear engineering from the University of New Mexico's Institute for Space and Nuclear Power Studies and most recently served at the Colorado School of Mines, where he helped build out the university's nuclear science and engineering program.

"Tennessee Tech presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build a modern nuclear engineering program from the ground up around the needs of the future, especially with outstanding support from congressional, state and industry leaders to advance Tennessee as a national leader in nuclear energy," King said in a summer 2024 message announcing his new role.

Slater, King and the College of Engineering faculty are focusing on a program curriculum that includes principles of nuclear energy production, reactor systems design, spent fuel reprocessing, nuclear safety and nuclear cybersecurity.

The university is also partnering with nuclear industry

firms to provide students in the program with hands-on experience, career opportunities, research collaboration, scholarships and other supports.

One such partnership is with United Cleanup Oak Ridge, or "UCOR," the Department of Energy's lead environmental cleanup contractor at the 32,000-acre Oak Ridge Reservation in East Tennessee. The company is already delivering internship, mentoring, educational and career opportunities to Tech's engineering students and alumni while offering a front-row seat to the scientific research and discovery happening every day at one of the country's most consequential laboratory sites.

The launch of the nuclear engineering degree program is just the latest sign of the College of Engineering's continued vibrancy on Tech's campus.

In late 2024, the college held a grand opening for its state-of-the-art, 100,000-square-foot Ashraf Islam Engineering Building, while a new Advanced Construction and Manufacturing Engineering (ACME) Building is currently in the design phase.

As for the nuclear engineering students, they have good reason to look forward to earning their Tech degree: the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the median pay for nuclear engineers in 2023 was more than \$125,000 per year. ▽

CLASS NOTES



1974

David K. Morgan (*'74 accounting*) received the Tennessee Society of Certified Public Accountants (TSCPA) 2024 TSCPApex Lifetime Achievement Award. He is chairman of LBMC Financial Services, LLC, the largest professional solutions provider in Tennessee.



1978

Gary Knox (*'78 engineering science and mechanics*) has been named an Arnold Engineering Development Complex (AEDC) Lifetime Achievement Fellow. Knox was selected for his work as a senior staff engineer where he led the integration of systems across contractual, customer and facility interfaces.



1979

Dr. Adedeji Badiru (*'79 industrial engineering, '81 M.S. and '82 M.S.*) received the 2024 Donald G. Newnan National Engineering Economy Teaching Excellence Award from the American Society for Engineering Education's Engineering Economy Division. Badiru is a dean emeritus of the Graduate School of Engineering and Management at the Air Force Institute of Technology.



1985

Brice Bible (*'85 mechanical engineering*) is the new vice president for Information Technology and the Chief Information Officer at the University of South Carolina.

Dr. Dale Blair (*'85 electrical engineering and '87 M.S.*) received the Warren D. White Award for Excellence in Radar Engineering from the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Aerospace and Electronic Systems Society. Blair is a principal research engineer at Georgia Tech Research Institute's Sensors and Electromagnetic Applications Laboratory.



Tina Francis-Hodges (*'85 curriculum and instruction, '86 M.S., '04 Ed.S. and '13 Ed.S.*) was named 2023-24 Principal of the Year for the State of Tennessee. She is the principal at Jere Whitson Elementary School in Cookeville.



1987

Jim Garrick (*'87 MBA*) joined Ford Motor Blue Oval City in Stanton, Tenn., as a quality engineering specialist with the Quality Performance Delivery Inspection Team. This team focuses on integrating groundbreaking quality practices technology into the manufacturing process of the electric vehicle.



1989

James Hird (*'89 psychology*) was selected to speak at the 2024 National Wellbeing & Resilience Conference. Hird is an alternative school principal in Bradenton, Fla.



1990

Dr. Arnetta Thompson (*'90 secondary education*) was selected to lead Godfrey-Lee, Mich. schools as superintendent.



Steve Walker (*'90 electrical engineering*) has been promoted to owner at Gresham Smith. His project portfolio includes several electric vehicle battery manufacturing plants including the Honda/LGES Electric Vehicle Battery Plant and the Envision AESC Electric Vehicle Battery Plant.



1991

Christy Vermillion (*'91 technical communication*) was named associate director of gift and donor services at Vanderbilt University.



1992

Valerie Hale (*'92 human ecology*) was appointed Crossville, Tenn.'s first female city manager.



Charles Smith (*'92 industrial technology*) received the 2024 Brick Industry Association Lifetime Achievement Award. The award is designed to honor outstanding individuals who have, for a minimum of 25 years, given substantially to the advancement and betterment of the clay brick industry. Smith is the chief executive officer of General Shale.



1993

Jay Albrecht (*'93 marketing and '95 MBA*) was named 2024 board chair of the Cookeville-Putnam County Chamber of Commerce and was appointed to the Putnam County 911 Board. He also helped start a new organization serving local businesses called the Cookeville Downtown Development Group, of which he was chair for 2024. Jay is the owner of Seven Senses Food and Cheer in Cookeville.

Bryant C. Dunaway (*'93 criminal justice*) is the elected district attorney general for the 13th Judicial District of Tennessee. He was selected by the 32 elected district attorneys general from across the state to serve as president of the Tennessee District Attorneys General Conference.



1994

Eric Ingram (*'94 MBA*) is the chief financial officer for Magaya, a logistics and supply chain automation software provider.



1995

Kevin Hines (*'95 mechanical engineering and '06 MBA*) was named vice president of Production Engineering and New Model Quality at Nissan.



Laura Travis (*'95 nursing and '09 M.S.*) was named president of the Tennessee College of Applied Technology at Dickson.



1997

Master Sgt. Jeremy Martin (*'97 music education*) completed a music composition to honor the 80th anniversary of D-Day on June 6. The composition, titled "Normandy, 1944", was performed live on May 22, 2024. Master Sgt. Martin has been with the United States Air Force Bands since 2000.



1998

Dr. Robert Owens (*'98 industrial engineering, '00 MBA, '03 Ed.S. and '09 Ph.D.*) was named to Cookeville Lifestyle's "Most Influential People" list.



Tommy Young (*'98 agriculture*) received the John J. Harris Surveyor of the Year Award at the 2024 Tennessee Association of Professional Surveyors (TAPS) conference last month. He is the vice president of Surveying at L.I. Smith & Associates.



2001

Yvette Clark (*'01 M.S. civil engineering*) was recognized at the 2024 Tennessee Orbie Awards as one of Tennessee's top information technology leaders. She currently serves as vice president for information technology and chief information officer at Middle Tennessee State University.



Dr. Julie Myatt (*'01 secondary education and '03 M.A.*) received a National Women's History Month Trailblazer Award. The awards are presented annually and honor women who positively impact the Middle Tennessee State University campus community. Myatt is a professor of English at MTSU.



2002

Dr. Janey Camp (*'02 civil engineering and '04 M.S.*) has been nominated to serve on the National Institute of Building Sciences Lifelines Advisory Panel. She currently serves as the associate director of adaptation and resilience for the Center for Applied Earth Science and Engineering Research (CAESER).



Curt Russell (*'02 finance and '03 MBA*) was named Tidal Basin Group's new chief financial officer. Tidal Basin is a management consulting and technology solutions firm.



2003

Dr. Abbye Solis (*'03 nursing*) is an assistant professor at Georgetown University's School of Nursing.



2004

Tim Fritch (*'04 electrical engineering*) was named Tennessee Valley Authority's Engineer of the Year, TVA's highest engineering honor.



Dr. Trisha Pinckney (*'04 mechanical engineering*) was selected for inclusion in Marquis Who's Who for her expertise in management consulting services. Individuals are selected based on position, noteworthy accomplishments, visibility and prominence in their field. Pinckney has held the position of president at Dantli Corporation since 2006.



Dr. Alexis Pope (*'04 elementary education and '08 M.A.*) is the new vice president for student affairs and enrollment management at Nashville State Community College. He previously served as associate vice president of enrollment management at Augusta University and director of undergraduate admissions for Tennessee Tech.



Brent Waugh (*'04 psychology*) has been named assistant vice chancellor for communications at Vanderbilt University.



2007

Dr. Samantha Hutson (*'07 human ecology, '17 M.A. and '17 Ph.D.*) won the Outstanding Dietetic Educator Award. She is an assistant professor and dietetics graduate program director at Tennessee Tech.

2008

Trae Crowder (*'08 psychology and '09 MBA*) co-authored a book titled "Round Here and Over Yonder: A Front Porch Travel Guide by Two Progressive Hillbillies (Yes, that's a thing)."

Michael Jones (*'08 biology*) received the 2023 Research Support Award from the Environmental Sciences Division at Oak Ridge National Laboratory. The award is presented "for excellence in supporting field research operations across ESD with a constant focus on the safety and wellbeing of team members."



2010

Mary Beth Elrod (*'10 civil and environmental engineering*) is the new director of public works for the City of Cookeville. Elrod has been with Cookeville Public Works since May 2022 and has more than 13 years of professional experience as an engineer and project manager.



Dr. E. Brian Welch (*'10 MBA*) was appointed vice president of clinical partnerships at InkSpace Imaging.

2012

Tre Lamb (*`12 interdisciplinary studies*) was named head football coach at East Tennessee State University. He is a former member of the Golden Eagle football team.



Lamar Moore (*`12 finance and `13 MBA*) was featured in the Spring 2024 edition of The Torch from Nashville School of Law. This edition features alumni and students who have made an impact on Nashville's music industry. Moore serves as vice president and senior credit officer within the entertainment division for City National Bank.



2013

Ashley Ayub (*`13 communication*) is the new client relations specialist with structural engineering firm Bennett & Pless, Inc.

Taylor Hennigan (*`13 exercise science, physical education and wellness*) was named Region 4-6A Coach of the Year. He is the head football coach at Cookeville High School and a former member of the Golden Eagle football team.

2014

Matt Brown (*`14 finance*) of Raymond James Financial Services in Cookeville was named to the 2024 AdvisorHub "100 Fastest-Growing Advisors to Watch" list.



2015

Dr. Milad Rabbani Esfahani (*`15 Ph.D. engineering*) won the University of Alabama College of Engineering's annual Faculty Excellence in Professional Service Award.

2016

Anthony Morse (*`16 interdisciplinary studies*) joined Turkey's Esenler Erokspor professional basketball team. Morse is a former member of the Golden Eagle basketball team.



2018

Michael Stooksbury (*`18 economics*) passed the Tennessee bar exam and was sworn in on Nov. 13, 2023. He accepted a position as an associate attorney at Davis Law Firm in Kingston, Tenn.

2019

Miles Anderson (*`19 Master of Accountancy*) joined Alexander Thompson Arnold (ATA) advisory firm as a partner.

Mason Hilliard (*`19 political science and `22 M.P.S.*) is a research analyst in the Office of Research and Education Accountability for the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury.



Ezra Pinzur (*`19 exercise science, physical education and wellness and `21 M.A.*) was named assistant men's basketball coach at the University of Central Arkansas. Pinzur previously served as a graduate assistant and played for the Tennessee Tech men's basketball team.



2022

Sydney Hildebrand (*`22 foreign language*) is a new reference librarian at North Fort Myers Public Library in Florida. She is a former Tennessee Tech University Archives intern and recently completed her master's in information studies from McGill University in Montreal, Canada.



2023

Rob Frazier (*`23 professional studies and `24 M.P.S.*) was named director of development for This is Living Ministries, Inc., a faith-based Tennessee Department of Correction-approved re-entry program in Cookeville, serving justice-involved adult females from prison systems.



2024

Addison Dorris (*`24 business management and marketing*) is a field human resources coordinator at Dollar General.

FRIENDS REMEMBERED

Alumni and friends of Tech who have passed away since the last Visions Publication.

Agnes M. Adams, 1952, Bachelor of Science, 2/3/24, Tullahoma, TN
Renay Adams, Non-Degree Alum, 2/9/24, Gallatin, TN
Bobby G. Adams, 2015, Bachelor of Science, 2019, Master of Science, 5/9/24, Cookeville, TN
Damon W. Agee, Jr., 1959, Bachelor of Science, 4/11/24, Tallahassee, FL
Virginia Lester Agee, 1975, Bachelor of Science, 1981, Master of Arts, 3/18/24, Gordonsville, TN
Marilyn Aitken, 1992, Bachelor of Science, 12/21/23, Cookeville, TN
David B. Allen, 1952, Bachelor of Science, 4/10/24, Oak Ridge, TN
Nancy J. Allen, 1960, Bachelor of Science, 3/5/24, Dixon Springs, TN
Keith Alred, 12/14/23, Cookeville, TN
Barbara Taber Amber, 1961, Bachelor of Science, 1/22/24, Jacksonville, FL
Dean C. Anderson, 1966, Bachelor of Science, 9/11/23, Oviedo, FL
Carl Anderson, 1954, Bachelor of Science, 1991, Specialist in Education, 10/31/23, Gainesboro, TN
Jane Armistead, 8/21/23, Athens, GA
Beth Atchley, 2000, Bachelor of Arts, 8/21/23, McMinnville, TN
Barbara P. Baier, 1/26/24, Cookeville, TN
Terry F. Barrett, 1969, Bachelor of Science, 7/4/24, Dickson, TN
Lula Wall Bartholomew, 1946, Bachelor of Science, 3/29/24, Oak Ridge, TN
Henry Barton, 1968, Bachelor of Science, 10/13/23, Greenville, PA
Lemuel R. Beene, 1964, Bachelor of Science, 3/24/24, Cleveland, TN
LeBron Bell, 9/15/23, Cookeville, TN
Vicki Bennett, 1974, Bachelor of Science, 11/10/23, Spring City, TN
Connie Johnson Bilbrey, 1965, Bachelor of Science, 4/11/24, Hendersonville, TN
David L. Bilbrey, 4/12/24, Crossville, TN
Bobby C. Billingsley, 1964, Bachelor of Science, 10/1/23, Cookeville, TN
Bobby T. Birdwell, 1956, Bachelor of Science, 10/19/23, Stillwater, OK
Bobbie B. Blackshear, 12/12/23, Chattanooga, TN
Charles E. Boardman, 1959, Bachelor of Science, 3/4/24, Severna Park, MD
Paul Bonner, 4/20/24, Cookeville, TN
Jack Borden, Jr., 4/19/24, Cookeville, TN
Sue G. Boyd, 1968, Bachelor of Science, 1992, Master of Arts, 10/6/23, Cookeville, TN
Mrs. Diana G. Brady Davis, 12/27/23, Tallahassee, FL
Gary E. Brewer, 1990, Bachelor of Science, 3/16/24, Crossville, TN
Robert D. Brotherton, 1957, Bachelor of Science, 7/2/24, Cookeville, TN
Frank F. Buck, 1965, Bachelor of Science, 1/24/24, Smithville, TN
Rick H. Bullock, 1973, Bachelor of Science, 9/28/23, Chattanooga, TN
Cathy L. Cantrell, 1996, Bachelor of Science, 10/13/23, Cookeville, TN
Harris P. Cantrell, 1962, Bachelor of Science, 11/10/23, Kingsport, TN
Joann Carver, 9/11/23, Gainesboro, TN
Dennis R. Caudill, 1992, Bachelor of Science, 9/18/23, Franklin, TN
Lorene A. Chance, 1974, Master of Arts, 8/22/23, Talbott, TN
Charles W. Chastain III, 8/21/23, Appleton, WI
Charles R. Cheatham, 1959, Bachelor of Science, 3/29/24, Wilmington, NC
Fred N. Childress, 1972, Master of Arts, 5/3/24, Knoxville, TN
Virginia Broyles Clay, 1952, Bachelor of Science, 1/18/24, Braselton, GA
Raydean Witt Clevenger, 9/22/23, Knoxville, TN
Larry S. Click, 3/4/24, Knoxville, TN
Ronald E. Coonce, 8/26/23, Lake Forest, IL
Marshall Cranford, 1959, Bachelor of Arts, 4/5/24, Nashville, TN
George A. Crawford, 1989, Bachelor of Science, 10/31/23, Knoxville, TN
John H. Crook III, 1968, Bachelor of Science, 12/20/23, Ooltewah, TN
Richard Cupp, 1969, Bachelor of Science, 3/29/24, Dumfries, VA

Gary Curbow, 1963, Bachelor of Science, 2/4/24, Bend, OR
William N. Daniel, Jr., 1957, Bachelor of Science, 6/19/24, Thompsons Station, TN
Brenda Whittemore Davis, 1963, Bachelor of Science, 7/8/24, Maryville, TN
Philip C. Davis, 3/28/24, Asheville, NC
Donald E. Downey, 1968, Bachelor of Science, 10/29/23, Cookeville, TN
Larry Dudley, 1969, Bachelor of Science, 12/27/23, Gainesboro, TN
Linda C. Dunaway, 1972, Bachelor of Science, 9/8/23, Waynesboro, GA
Richard G. Duncan, 5/25/24, Sherwood, MI
Margaret A. Emmett, 1960, Bachelor of Science, 7/2/24, Oak Ridge, TN
Myrna B. Estes, 1/29/24, Marietta, GA
Michael T. Evans, 10/8/23, Sparta, TN
Printes W. Evans, 1974, Bachelor of Science, 12/27/23, Grovetown, GA
Jesse G. Filoteo, 2021, Bachelor of Fine Arts, 7/4/24, Cookeville, TN
James M. Fitts, Jr., 1959, Bachelor of Science, 7/4/24, Murfreesboro, TN
Frank M. Flynn, 2/15/24, Gallatin, TN
Rebecca D. Foster, 1990, Bachelor of Science, 2014, Master of Science, 4/24/24, Crossville, TN
Shanna S. Frasier, 2001, Bachelor of Science, 6/4/24, Cookeville, TN
Harold D. Freeman, 1965, Bachelor of Science, 6/22/24, Louisville, KY
Bob Freeman, 5/24/24, Cookeville, TN
James D. Frost, 1976, Bachelor of Science, 7/4/24, Knoxville, TN
Tom Furtsch, 3/8/24, Cookeville, TN
Mike Galloway, 1962, Bachelor of Science, 5/8/24, Simpsonville, SC
Faith Garner, 1966, Bachelor of Science, 10/17/23, Cookeville, TN
Billy Gene Gaw, 1956, Bachelor of Science, 1969, Master of Arts, 3/5/24, Livingston, TN
Eddie H. Gaw II, 3/20/24, Cookeville, TN
George Gebhardt IV, 1965, Bachelor of Science, 1/28/24, Lebanon, TN
Jim H. Geer, 1961, Bachelor of Science, 5/22/24, Parkland, FL
Ruth Gibbons, 9/29/23, Baxter, TN
Eben N. Gilbert, Jr., 1981, Master of Arts, 8/17/23, McMinnville, TN
Shirley A. Given, 4/4/24, Buffalo Valley, TN
Connie Goethel, 1976, Bachelor of Science, 3/25/24, Florence, SC
Olive E. Golley, 8/16/23, St Stephen,
Charles Goolsby, 5/13/24, Greenville, TN
Bill Gray, 6/18/24, Brentwood, TN
Kaye Green, 9/9/23, Gallatin, TN
Patsy Gregory, 1965, Bachelor of Science, 7/2/24, Hillsboro, TN
Windell Grider, 7/20/24, Lexington, KY
Marvin E. Hall, 1970, Bachelor of Science, 6/20/24, Dayton, TN
Tom Hamilton, 11/24/23, Bryan, TX
Patsy G. Hammontree, 1954, Bachelor of Science, 1/18/24, Lenoir City, TN
Iordanka Haralambiev, 1/2/24, Rouse, AL
Gene L. Hardin, 1973, Bachelor of Science, 11/18/23, Huntsville, AL
Joel B. Hardison, 1966, Bachelor of Science, 9/30/23, Hixson, TN
Jim S. Harper, 1959, Bachelor of Science, 12/5/23, Lebanon, TN
Bruce Harris, 1956, Bachelor of Science, 10/26/23, Augusta, GA
Chad L. Harris, 1995, Bachelor of Science, 2/28/24, Kingsport, TN
Julie B. Harrison, 2007, Specialist in Education, 8/25/23, Watertown, TN
William A. Hayes, 1990, Bachelor of Science, 1/22/24, Hendersonville, TN
Donald E. Haynes, Non-Degree Alum, 7/7/24, Cookeville, TN
Carl M. Hellman, 10/12/23, Hendersonville, TN
Roy W. Henkel, 1962, Bachelor of Science, 8/20/23, Lawrenceburg, TN
Jenny B. Hibbett, 1958, Bachelor of Science, 10/28/23, Mount Juliet, TN
Donald B. Holloway, Jr., 1979, Bachelor of Science, 12/22/23, Cookeville, TN

John P. Holt, 1966, Bachelor of Science, 9/27/23, Lewes, DE
 L. D. Hopson, 9/9/23, Cookeville, TN
 Ric Howse, 2000, Bachelor of Science, 9/17/23, Murfreesboro, TN
 Leonard R. Huddleston, 1959, Bachelor of Science, 1/25/24, Hanceville, AL
 Michelle Dawn Huddleston, 2009, Bachelor of Science, 2017, Master of Professional Studies, 10/21/23, Cookeville, TN
 Claudia A. Hughes, 1973, Bachelor of Science, 4/10/24, Gainesboro, TN
 Ronnie J. Humphrey, 1976, Bachelor of Science, 6/2/24, Fayetteville, TN
 Brenda Hunter, 1963, Bachelor of Science, 5/9/24, Cookeville, TN
 Charles A. Isham, 1952, Bachelor of Science, 1/13/24, Jennings, LA
 James I. Ison, 10/28/23, Knoxville, TN
 Harold Jackson, 9/11/23, Cookeville, TN
 Willene Jackson, 9/29/23, Cookeville, TN
 Michael Jaquish, 1959, Bachelor of Science, 11/23/23, Athens, TN
 Walter R. Jarman, 1963, Bachelor of Science, 1/3/24, Plainfield, IN
 Raymond L. Jensen, 12/10/23, Cookeville, TN
 Harold W. Johnson, 1975, Bachelor of Science, 3/12/24, Knoxville, TN
 Howard V. Johnson, 10/26/23, Germantown, TN
 Lisa Johnson, 10/10/23, Cookeville, TN
 Charles B. Johnston, 1/17/24, Cookeville, TN
 John W. Jones, 8/30/23, Cookeville, TN
 Ray Jordan, 1956, Bachelor of Science, 12/11/23, Cookeville, TN
 Joseph T. Judd, 1956, Bachelor of Science, 9/18/23, New Bern, NC
 Bettye R. Kash, 1973, Master of Arts, 3/17/24, Cookeville, TN
 Christopher D. Keever, 1991, Bachelor of Science, 8/30/23, Oak Ridge, TN
 Mr. James W. Kidd, Bachelor of Science, 6/30/24, Cookeville, TN
 David M. Killeffer, 2020, Bachelor of Science, 9/18/23, Cookeville, TN
 Kenneth King, 3/26/24, Rickman, TN
 Mary B. King, 1973, Master of Arts, 10/24/23, Franklin, TN
 Benny Kirksey, 1976, Bachelor of Science, 6/19/24, Cleveland, TN
 Ronald C. Klein, 1963, Bachelor of Science, 5/16/24, Newark, DE
 Jane D. Knight, 1965, Bachelor of Science, 7/6/24, Hartselle, AL
 Patsy C. Kovacs, 1963, Bachelor of Science, 10/11/23, Huntersville, NC
 Raymond L. Kozub, 2/23/24, Sparta, TN
 James Lacy, 10/4/23, Cookeville, TN
 David M. Lafever, 1981, Bachelor of Science, 12/10/23, Chattanooga, TN
 Emily A. Lannom, 2020, Bachelor of Science, 2023, Master of Science, 9/25/23, Friendsville, TN
 Jimmy G. Lay, 1960, Bachelor of Science, 4/6/24, Chattanooga, TN
 Frank D. Layne, 1961, Bachelor of Science, 2/2/24, Eaton Rapids, MI
 Cecil Lemons, 12/23/23, Cookeville, TN
 Arthur L. Lewis, 1973, Bachelor of Science, 1/19/24, Monterey, TN
 Jimmy Lewis, 8/22/23, Cookeville, TN
 Buck Locke, 1961, Bachelor of Science, 4/14/24, Columbia, TN
 Winona Locke, 1958, Bachelor of Science, 6/16/24, Columbia, TN
 Don Long, 1960, Bachelor of Science, 3/19/24, Rockford, IL
 Freda L. Long, 1971, Bachelor of Science, 10/13/23, Cookeville, TN
 Ron Lovell, 1973, Bachelor of Science, 6/28/24, Huntsville, AL
 James B. Lusk, 1969, Bachelor of Science, 4/5/24, Hixson, TN
 Robert A. Lynch, 8/16/23, Cookeville, TN
 Hoyt Maberry, 11/6/23, Cookeville, TN
 Lee G. Mack, 11/6/23, Defiance, OH
 Peggy Apple Mackie, 9/11/23, Cookeville, TN
 John Z. Maddox, 1968, Bachelor of Science, 10/1/23, Crossville, TN
 Ronald D. Malone, 1954, Bachelor of Science, 4/27/24, Bloomington, IN
 Amber Manus, 2009, Bachelor of Science, 11/18/23, Indianapolis, IN
 Judd E. Matheny, 4/2/24, Tullahoma, TN
 Melba J. Maxwell, 1973, Bachelor of Science, 12/10/23, Cookeville, TN
 Paul R. Maxwell, 1965, Bachelor of Science, 8/31/23, Brentwood, TN
 Chase McAllister, 8/23/23, Blackfoot, ID
 Albert B. McCall, 1950, Bachelor of Science, 9/13/23, Carthage, TN
 Mary A. McClellan, 2004, Bachelor of Science, 7/4/24, Cookeville, TN
 Jo Ann R. McCracken, 1960, Bachelor of Science, 1/19/24, Midlothian, VA
 Mary A. McRaven, 2022, Bachelor of Science, 2024, Master of Arts, 12/27/23, Lenoir City, TN
 Lem L. McSpadden, Jr., 1971, Bachelor of Science, 1/2/24, Cookeville, TN
 Charles E. McSween, 1951, Bachelor of Science, 9/15/23, Kingston, TN
 Archie L. Meyers, Jr., 1959, Bachelor of Science, 8/30/23, Knoxville, TN
 Christopher T. Miller, 1998, Bachelor of Science, 5/23/24, Manchester, TN
 Jimmy L. Miller, 1959, Bachelor of Science, 8/21/23, Huntsville, AL
 Joanne Parks Mills, 1956, Bachelor of Arts, 3/29/24, Hixson, TN

Charles Moore, 3/6/24, Lexington, KY
 Tom Moran, 1958, Bachelor of Science, 4/28/24, Saint Louis, MO
 Rebecca I. Moss, Non-Degree Alum, 6/8/24, Knoxville, TN
 James F. Muhlig III, 1956, Bachelor of Science, 3/2/24, Murfreesboro, TN
 John N. Nash, 1956, Bachelor of Science, 6/17/24, Simpsonville, SC
 Tom H. Neal, Jr., 1953, Bachelor of Science, 6/1/24, Gallatin, TN
 Billy B. Neely, 1959, Bachelor of Science, 9/9/23, Knoxville, TN
 George E. Newman III, Non-Degree Alum, 8/29/23, McMinnville, TN
 John F. Noel, Jr., 1966, Bachelor of Science, 3/14/24, Titusville, PA
 Charlie F. Nokes, 1956, Bachelor of Science, 11/28/23, Tullahoma, TN
 Wanda G. Norrod, 2/14/24
 J. J. Oakley, 11/30/23, Livingston, TN
 Bobby G. Oglesby, 1962, Bachelor of Science, 11/1/23, Evansville, IN
 Steve Pearson, 1972, Bachelor of Science, 4/4/24, Cowan, TN
 Robert J. Peters, 1960, Bachelor of Science, 2/18/24, Cleveland, TN
 Jimmy N. Porter, 1968, Bachelor of Science, 7/16/24, Lebanon, TN
 Thomas R. Quillen, 1958, Bachelor of Science, 2/15/24, Lander, WY
 George Regitko, 6/14/24, Cookeville, TN
 Peggy Nichols Rennell, 11/19/23, Cookeville, TN
 Joshua Ridley, 2017, Bachelor of Science, 8/11/23, Crossville, TN
 James T. Robbins, 2009, Bachelor of Science, 5/1/24, Madison, AL
 William T. Roberts, 1962, Bachelor of Science, 8/25/23, Huntsville, AL
 Mrs. Pearl Robinson, 4/30/24, Cookeville, TN
 Lolaine M. Rodes, 9/3/23, Fayetteville, TN
 Galen L. Romine, 1973, Bachelor of Science, 1/16/24, Brentwood, TN
 James R. Rose, 6/25/24, Cookeville, TN
 Bill R. Rowland, 1984, Bachelor of Science, 1/1/24, Benton, TN
 Paul L. Scarlett, 1959, Bachelor of Science, 10/29/23, Murfreesboro, TN
 Steven W. Schultz, 1978, Bachelor of Science, 8/11/23, Carrollton, TX
 Edward M. Scott, 1954, Bachelor of Science, 1966, Master of Arts, 4/8/24, Cookeville, TN
 Miriam E. Scott, 1954, Bachelor of Science, 4/2/24, Cookeville, TN
 Angelo J. Sembiente, 1/23/24, Bonita Springs, FL
 Don W. Shockley, 10/11/23, Cookeville, TN
 Virginia E. Sliger, 1980, Master of Science, 2/3/24, Gainesboro, TN
 Charles M. Smith, 1969, Bachelor of Science, 12/20/23, Murfreesboro, TN
 Chester D. Smith, 9/24/23, Prospect, KY
 Dorothy A. Smith, 1955, Bachelor of Science, 8/17/23, Nashville, TN
 Margaret Smith, 3/11/24, Cookeville, TN
 Winfred L. Smith, 1960, Bachelor of Science, 3/2/24, Greenbrier, TN
 Michael K. Sorrels, 1982, Bachelor of Arts, 1987, Bachelor of Science, 5/10/24, Knoxville, TN
 Debbie Sparks, 1998, Bachelor of Science, 10/8/23, Cookeville, TN
 Thomas L. Squires, Jr., 1990, Bachelor of Science, 1/26/24, Kings Mills, OH
 David L. Stockton, 1972, Bachelor of Science, 9/10/23, Winchester, TN
 Ron Stokes, 1968, Bachelor of Science, 3/2/24, Buford, GA
 Carolyn Taylor, 1957, Bachelor of Science, 2/19/24, Fairview, TN
 David O. Thomas, 1/12/24, Sparta, TN
 Roland E. Thomas, 1953, Bachelor of Science, 1/31/24, Chattanooga, TN
 Steve Thomas, 2004, Bachelor of Science, 7/11/24, Knoxville, TN
 Carolyn L. Tiemeyer, 9/18/23, Cookeville, TN
 Larry K. Tittle, 1961, Bachelor of Science, 5/16/24, Port Saint Lucie, FL
 Ronald Toms, Jr., 1995, Bachelor of Science, 6/14/24, Hoover, AL
 Jonathan K. Tramell, 1987, Bachelor of Science, 9/27/23, Orlando, FL
 Greear G. Trew, 1968, Bachelor of Science, 10/15/23, Nashville, TN
 Rose Leigh Vines, Ph.D., 1966, Bachelor of Science, 1968, Bachelor of Science, 8/21/23, Cookeville, TN
 John T. Walker, 1955, Bachelor of Science, 10/10/23, Madison, AL
 Doris Ward, 8/13/23, Cookeville, TN
 Davis Watts, 1969, Bachelor of Science, 6/18/24, Cookeville, TN
 Jane E. Wheeler, 1991, Bachelor of Science, 5/3/24, Cookeville, TN
 Carolyn V. Whitaker, 2/9/24, Red Boiling Springs, TN
 Deuel White, 2/20/24, Cookeville, TN
 Maylene E. Whitefield, 1970, Bachelor of Science, 1977, Master of Arts, 10/28/23, Cookeville, TN
 Elaine T. Williams, 10/8/23, Indianapolis, IN
 Richard Wilmoth, 1963, Bachelor of Science, 9/4/23, Williamsburg, VA
 Danny L. Wilson, 2/29/24, Rockland, ME
 Sam K. Winfree, 1966, Bachelor of Science, 12/22/23, Cookeville, TN
 James A. Wyatt, 1964, Bachelor of Science, 8/10/23, Lebanon, TN
 Bobby Young, 1964, Bachelor of Science, 6/27/24, Adolphus, KY



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“Evel Eagle” (Steve “Gilligan” Long) gets ready to make a lap around the football field in this photo from the 1981 Eagle yearbook. This year marks 100 years as Golden Eagles at Tennessee Tech!