

TENNESSEE TECH UNIVERSITY

2026

# VISIONS

*Wilmore Way*



TENNESSEE

TECH

UNIVERSITY

## CONTENTS

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### FEATURES

IDENTITY FOUND TECH AT 110 AND COUNTING	4
WALKING THE WILMORE WAY	8
WINGS OVER TENNESSEE: A CENTURY OF GOLDEN EAGLES	10
CASEY FOX: BUILDING CHAMPIONS ON AND OFF THE FIELD	12
TENNESSEE TECH'S COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ADOPTS BROADER NAME TO REFLECT EXPANDED PROGRAMS	16
RENAMED COLLEGE REFLECTS FOCUS ON INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION	17
GROWING TOGETHER: COOKEVILLE AND TENNESSEE TECH BUILD COMMUNITY	19
FUTURE ATTRACTIONS & PROGRAMS	20
ALL ABOARD: NEW VOICES JOIN TENNESSEE TECH BOARD OF TRUSTEES	24
REMEMBERING DR. GRAHAM KASH: MENTOR, STORYTELLER AND TENNESSEE TECH LEGEND	26
STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES	28

## CLASS NOTES 30

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## ON THE COVER

Wilmore Way, a walkway through the heart of Tennessee Tech University's campus, is a tribute to Tennessee Tech alumnus, U.S. Navy Captain and NASA astronaut Barry "Butch" Wilmore and includes an inlay of the university name. The walkway begins at Wings Up Way and stretches to the Volpe Library and around to Stadium Drive, offering a scenic pedestrian pathway through campus.

## IDENTITY FOUND: TECH AT 110 AND COUNTING

4



Tennessee Tech's journey from uncertain beginnings to a clearly defined identity reveals a university that has always met the moment. Today, that identity is stronger than ever.

## WALKING THE WILMORE WAY

8



From the ISS to the heart of campus, astronaut Barry "Butch" Wilmore's journey comes full circle in a homecoming marked by rare honors and deep emotion. "Wilmore Way" now stands as a daily reminder of the character and courage he represents.

## CASEY FOX: BUILDING CHAMPIONS ON AND OFF THE FIELD

12



Casey Fox arrives at Tennessee Tech with decades of experience and a clear mission: elevate the student-athlete experience in every direction. His vision blends grit, unity and purpose to shape the next era of Golden Eagle athletics.

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# TENNESSEE TECH UNIVERSITY VISIONS

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

As I anticipate you holding this magazine, I'm thinking about why we still love a printed publication. It's a sensory experience that can't be replicated by scrolling and clicking. Readers tend to linger and read more slowly and deeply. The printed piece is like a mini art exhibit in your hand, a complete work that tells a story.

A printed piece is a traditional package that has the power to communicate fresh, innovative and relevant stories, images and ideas. Tennessee Tech is a traditional university that leverages its strengths to embrace innovation and pursue relevance. This issue shows you how the traditional and transformative meet in the work, buildings and hearts on campus.

As you turn the pages, look for the balance and sureness in the steps taken that have led Tennessee Tech to be the #1 Public University in the state. Feel pride in the past and confidence in the future.

And most of all, understand it's all about living Wings Up.



Karen Lykins  
Vice President for Enrollment & Communication

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# IDENTITY FOUND

TENNESSEE TECH AT **110** & COUNTING





Opposite: President Phil Oldham has served as Tennessee Tech president since 2012.

Above: View of Tennessee Tech University's campus circa 1940. Photo courtesy of Tennessee Tech Archives & Special Collections.

**I**N 2025, Tennessee Tech University celebrated its largest total enrollment in a decade, the highest freshman retention rate on record, another all-time high for externally funded research and 11 straight years as a nationally ranked institution by U.S. News & World Report, among other milestones. The road to that success, however, was longer than many realize.

In *The Search for Identity: A History of Tennessee Technological University, 1915–1985*, authors and former Tech faculty members Harvey G. Neufeldt and W. Calvin Dickinson chronicled the university's humble beginnings and early challenges—a story worth revisiting as Tech cements its place as a statewide higher education leader today.

As the book explains, Tech's story began with a group of visionaries from the local Church of Christ who dreamed of building a college in the rolling hills of Cookeville. With little more than determination and faith, they secured a charter in 1909 for what would be called Dixie College—a school that pledged daily Bible instruction and a board composed solely of church members.

Money was scarce, and progress was slow. By 1914, the school had only one completed building and struggled to stay afloat. That year, Dixie College agreed to serve as a four-year high school for the city—a temporary measure that couldn't stave off financial collapse. When its doors closed, many feared

the dream of a college in Cookeville had closed with it. But the idea of higher education in the Upper Cumberland proved too powerful to die. Within a year, the state legislature approved a new institution to take its place: Tennessee Polytechnic Institute.

The new school faced the same question Dixie College's founders had wrestled with from the beginning—what exactly was it meant to be?

Its earliest years were uncertain. "Its identity was not clear, its need doubtful and its legitimacy within educational circles questionable," wrote Neufeldt and Dickinson. For its first decade, the state board viewed TPI "more as a high school than as a college." During World War I, President Thomas Alva Early even proposed transforming it into a military training school, requiring all male students to wear uniforms on campus and whenever they were within five miles of the grounds.

Through the 1920s, the school slowly evolved. High school courses were phased out, college programs were added, and by 1928, TPI could finally claim full collegiate status. Even then, its purpose was up for debate. Should it focus on agriculture, teacher training or engineering and the applied sciences? The tug-of-war over identity continued for decades. When accreditation arrived in 1939, the milestone was cause for celebration—a parade even—but also a signal that Tennessee Tech had finally earned a lasting foothold in higher

An early view of the administration building — later partially demolished, renovated and known as Derryberry Hall — on Tennessee Tech's campus. Photo courtesy of Tennessee Tech Archives & Special Collections.



education. Still, as Neufeldt and Dickinson observed, “During the 1930s, TPI also had to deal with the crisis brought on by the depression and at the same time define its mission.”

Four decades later, when the two historians published *The Search for Identity*, Tennessee Tech had matured but was still solidifying its place in higher education. Today, that search is over.

“We know who we are,” said Tech President Phil Oldham. “We appreciate it, we celebrate it, we own it—and we work really hard to be the best we can be, now and well into the future.”

Oldham describes Tech's character as “rooted and grounded in common sense and practicality”—traits that have guided the university since its earliest days. “Tennessee Tech always responded to the need,” he said. “Whether that was teaching high school courses, offering associate degrees or opening the campus to military training, it always met the need.”

With more than 225 programs of study, Tech continues to meet needs across disciplines. Today, the university offers one of only two baccalaureate-level nuclear engineering programs in the state, is Tennessee's top producer of teachers and its nursing graduates earn some of the highest licensure exam pass rates statewide.

Tech's College of Business is home to the top-ranked finance degree program among public universities in Tennessee, according to University HQ, while the College of Fine Arts has grown enrollment by 36 percent over the past four years. “Tennessee Tech's identity has evolved,” Oldham said. “We've learned that we can do more, and we can be better.”

He credits past leaders, especially President Everett Derryberry, for laying the foundation of Tech's enduring strength. “His fingerprints are still all over this campus,” Oldham said. “A lot of the identity of Tennessee Tech is rooted in his personality and character.”

But today's Tennessee Tech, he added, is writing its own chapter—one that builds on that legacy while looking confidently ahead.

“We've seen what we're capable of. We know we can keep pushing that identity to new heights,” said Oldham. If someone were to write a sequel to *The Search for Identity*, Oldham already knows what his chapter would be called.

“I would lead with ‘Identity Found,’” he said. “We still have more to learn and more to grow. But we're secure in who we are, and we work hard to be the best we can be, now and well into the future.” ▽

Scan the QR code to learn more about Tennessee Tech through an interview with President Phil Oldham.





As the university has grown and evolved, longstanding traditions like the annual homecoming parade at Tennessee Tech remain.



Graduates at December 2024 ceremonies joined tens of thousands of university alumni with Tennessee Tech degrees.



Barry Wilmore, Deanna Wilmore, President Phil Oldham, First Lady Kari Oldham, Marc Burnett and Putnam County Mayor Randy Porter celebrate the ribbon cutting at a ceremony held for Wilmore Way.

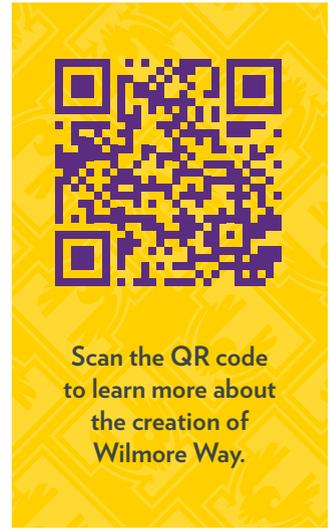
# WALKING THE WILMORE WAY

**W**hen retired NASA astronaut Barry “Butch” Wilmore returned to Tennessee Tech University after a whirlwind nine-month stay at the International Space Station, he wasn’t just coming home—he was seeing his story become part of the campus itself.

The two-time Tech graduate, trustee and Golden Eagle football alumnus was honored by his alma mater with two rare distinctions: the Order of the Eagle Award, the university’s highest honor, and the naming of a new pedestrian walkway and plaza in the heart of campus as “Wilmore Way.”

Together, the honors mark a homecoming that recognizes not only Wilmore’s achievements in space but also his enduring impact on the university and the example he sets for generations of Tech students to come.

“  
**THIS FEELS LIKE FAMILY—  
IT REALLY DOES. MY  
FAVORITE COLORS ARE  
PURPLE AND GOLD AND  
HAVE BEEN FOR DECADES  
BECAUSE OF THIS PLACE.  
I LOVE THIS UNIVERSITY.  
THIS PLACE IS SPECIAL.**  
”



President Phil Oldham presents Barry Wilmore with the Order of the Eagle award.

Wilmore's first visit back to campus came in June, when he resumed his seat on Tech's Board of Trustees for the first time in more than a year. It was a reunion filled with emotion—and surprise.

President Phil Oldham presented Wilmore with the Order of the Eagle, a distinction reserved for individuals whose influence on the university and its reputation is unparalleled. The award has been given only once before, when it was presented posthumously to former President Everett Derryberry and First Lady Joan Derryberry during Tech's centennial in 2015. Trustee Trudy Harper followed by reading a resolution recommending that the university name its newly built walkway in Wilmore's honor. The motion passed unanimously, with trustees citing Wilmore's courage, humility and embodiment of the Tech spirit —“bold, fearless, confident and kind.”

“I have rarely been without words in my life,” Wilmore said that day. “I'm touched, grateful. Who would have thought, a couple decades ago, walking around this campus, that a day like this would happen?”

The ceremony took a heartfelt turn when Wilmore's colleagues introduced a special guest: Pam Inman, a Special Olympian and cancer survivor who had written to the university expressing her admiration for Wilmore and a wish to give him one of her gold medals. Inman presented the medal to Wilmore, who in turn surprised her with a baseball cap he had worn aboard the International Space Station. Oldham and First Lady Kari Oldham then honored Inman with the university's “Wings of Kindness” award for her act of generosity.

Wilmore was celebrated again in October, when students, faculty, alumni and community members gathered for the official dedication of Wilmore Way. The new pedestrian

walkway and plaza extends through the heart of campus, offering a daily reminder of Wilmore's journey from Golden Eagle student-athlete to world renowned astronaut.

“I think the three-letter word that comes out of my mouth is ‘wow,’” Wilmore said during the dedication. “This feels like family—it really does. My favorite colors are purple and gold and have been for decades because of this place. I love this university. This place is special.”

Wilmore first enrolled at Tech in 1981, following in the footsteps of his father, Eugene, a 1958 Tech graduate. A walk-on for the Golden Eagle football team, Wilmore played from 1982 to 1985 before embarking on a career that took him from the U.S. Navy to the stars. He was inducted into Tech's Sports Hall of Fame in 2003, received an honorary doctorate in 2012 and joined the Board of Trustees in 2017.

For Oldham, the walkway's name captures more than just a physical route across campus.

“It's the way we're going to get around on campus, but even more importantly, it points us back to Barry's life, his career and his character,” said Oldham. “The ‘Wilmore Way’ is a great way to live, to set an example and to give back.”

Wilmore's example of perseverance and purpose was also on display during Tech's annual homecoming parade, where he served as grand marshal before cheering on the Golden Eagles alongside fellow alumni.

As students and visitors now cross the brick walkway bearing his name, they are reminded that the path to greatness often begins in small steps—perhaps even the same ones Wilmore once took on his way to class, long before he reached for the stars. ▽

# WINGS OVER TENNESSEE:

## A CENTURY OF GOLDEN EAGLES

**P**ainted by Tennessee Tech alumnae Abby Ramaker and Millie Hall, and commissioned in honor of the 2025 centennial anniversary of Tennessee Tech's beloved Golden Eagles, this mural commemorates the proud history of the university and state.

From the mural's depiction of majestic Golden Eagles known to soar above campus to the native wildflowers, goldenrod and ironweed, that inspired the school's colors, each paint stroke pays homage to Tennessee Tech's rich heritage and traditions.

The university's strong ties to the Upper Cumberland and the rest of the state are shown in depictions of Burgess Falls, musical instruments and Tennessee's iconic tri-star seal. The artists' goal was to create a space that provides "joy, inspiration and an appreciation for the university's roots for many generations to come." ▽

**Below:** The mural features the university's Golden Eagle mascot.

**Right:** Students enjoy the mural as a vibrant photo opportunity on campus.

**Opposite top:** The new mural spans a wall located outside the ground level of the Roaden University Center.

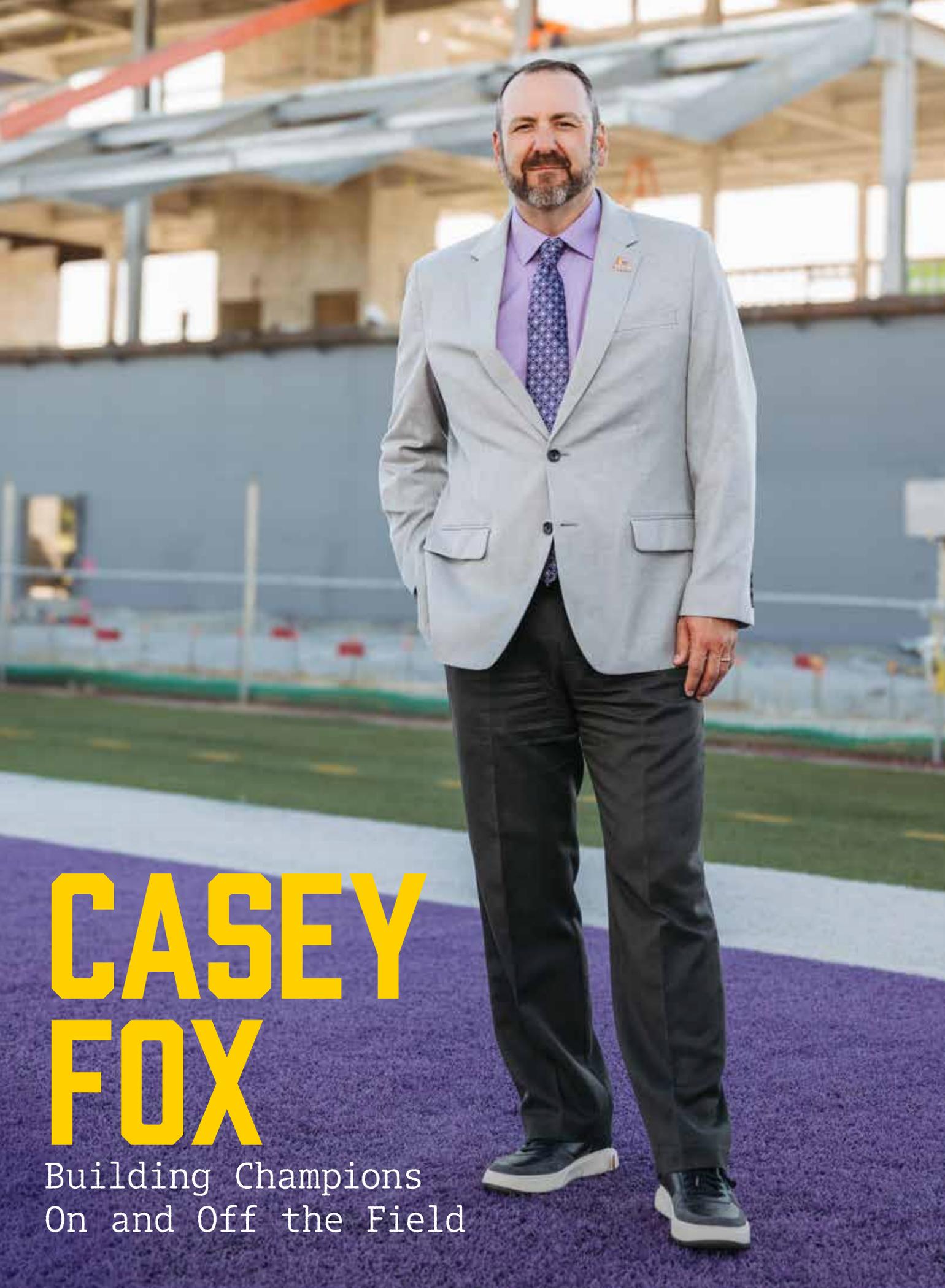
**Opposite center left:** The flowers goldenrod and iron weed, from which the university draws its purple and gold colors, are featured throughout.

**Opposite center right:** Golden Eagles in flight give a sense of movement to the art piece.

**Opposite below:** Musical instruments featured in the mural speak to the university and the state's history with the arts.







# CASEY FOX

Building Champions  
On and Off the Field

**W**hen Casey Fox first stepped onto Tennessee Tech's campus as the university's new director of athletics, he wasn't thinking about trophies, titles or the pressure that comes with leading a Division I program. He was thinking about people: the student-athletes, coaches and staff who pour their hearts into representing the purple and gold every day.

"I saw right away there was a want-to spirit here," Fox said, recalling his initial visit to Cookeville. "There's this drive to succeed, a passion for excellence and strong institutional support. That combination of the people and purpose made it an easy decision for me to come here."

With more than 25 years of experience across college athletics, Fox has built a career that spans nearly every aspect of athletic administration. His journey, which includes leadership posts at Montana State, Washington State, the University of Utah, Eastern Washington University and the U.S. Naval Academy, reflects a steady, purpose-driven rise shaped by mentors, grit and a belief that athletics can transform lives. Now, at Tennessee Tech, he's ready to channel that experience into a new era of growth, unity and competitive excellence.

### **A PURPOSE-DRIVEN PATH INTO COLLEGE ATHLETICS**

Fox's career didn't begin in an athletic department. After graduating with a degree in business and finance, he started out as a financial planner in the San Francisco Bay Area. It didn't take long for him to realize that the corporate world wasn't where he wanted to spend his career.

"I kind of fell into athletics," he said with a laugh. "I realized pretty quickly that I wanted something that connected purpose with people."

That realization set him on a new course, one rooted in the belief that athletics is as much about human development as it is about competition. Fox transitioned into marketing and game operations and later gained experience in fundraising, external relations and sport administration. Each new role broadened his perspective and deepened

his understanding of the student-athlete experience.

"I've been fortunate to work at a variety of institutions," he says. "And at every stop, I've had incredible mentors who helped shape how I lead and how I see the broader mission of athletics."

Among those mentors were some of the most respected leaders in the field, including Boo Corrigan at NC State, Jim Sterk at Missouri and Leon Costello at Montana State. From them, Fox learned the fundamentals that anchor his leadership philosophy today: listen first, empower people, communicate a clear vision and hold yourself accountable.

"Leadership isn't about being the loudest voice in the room," Fox said. "It's about empowering others to succeed."

**“WINNING IS GREAT, BUT IT'S ONLY ONE MEASURE OF SUCCESS — WE ARE PREPARING OUR STUDENT-ATHLETES FOR LIFE, WHICH ENCOMPASSES EVERYTHING ACADEMICALLY, MENTALLY AND EMOTIONALLY.”**

### **A VISION ROOTED IN GROWTH, GRIT AND BELONGING**

When President Phil Oldham announced Fox's appointment, he called him "a leader of high integrity with a clear understanding of the role athletics plays in the life of a university." For Fox, that role extends far beyond wins and losses. "I want Tennessee Tech to be competitive in everything we do," he explained. "That means winning on the field, yes, but also winning in the classroom, in the community and in how we support and develop our student-athletes."

Fox sees athletics, academics and community as interconnected forces that shape the student-athlete experience.

"When we talk about success, it's about the total experience," he said. "It's about preparing young people for life."

He describes Tennessee Tech as being "in the right place at the right time," pointing to the university's rising enrollment, strong academic profile and growing facilities as momentum builders. Tech, he believes, has the ingredients needed for a major step forward, and athletics can help accelerate that momentum.

A significant part of Fox's vision involves strengthening Tech's infrastructure. The university is already investing in transformative projects, including a new west



Awesome Eagle, CJ Fox, Bo Fox, Heidi Fox and Casey Fox celebrate at a reception held for the family as Casey Fox was named director of Athletics at Tech.

side football stadium that will modernize the game-day environment for athletes, fans and visitors.

“These facilities are more than just buildings,” he said. “They’re statements about who we are and where we’re headed.”

Fox’s experience at Montana State, where he helped lead fundraising for a state-of-the-art indoor practice facility, gives him insight into how strategic investments can energize a program and deepen community pride.

“The Upper Cumberland takes tremendous pride in this university,” he said. “Our facilities should reflect that pride and serve as places that bring people together.”

He emphasizes that smart stewardship is key.

“Every dollar should create opportunities for student-athletes, enhance the fan experience and strengthen the connection between Tech and its supporters.”

### **LEADING WITH VALUES**

Ask Fox what drives him, and he answers without hesitation: integrity, accountability and relationships.

“I believe in giving people the space to do their jobs,” he said. “If you hire good people, you trust them. You support them. And you hold everyone, including yourself, accountable.”

Since arriving at Tech, Fox has spent much of his time meeting individually with coaches, staff and student-athletes, and not to talk to them, but to listen. “Communication is everything,” he said. “People need to understand not just what we’re doing, but why we’re doing it. That transparency builds trust.”

His approach aligns naturally with President Oldham’s collaborative leadership style, which emphasizes unity and shared purpose. “President Oldham has built an environment where athletics and academics complement each other,” Fox says. “That allows us to think big and to not just keep up, but to lead.”

College athletics today is evolving at a rapid pace, from name-image-likeness changes to transfer portal rules to rising expectations for mental health support. Fox views these challenges not as hurdles, but as opportunities. “It’s changed immensely in the last 10 years,” he explained. “The key is adaptability. You have to stay grounded in your values but flexible enough to navigate change.”

One constant for Fox is the priority he places on student-athlete well-being. “Winning is great, but it’s only one measure of success,” he says. “We are preparing our student-athletes for life, which encompasses everything academically, mentally and emotionally.”

That commitment extends to his staff as well. “When your team knows you care about their growth, they’ll give you everything they have,” he said.

## CREATING A CULTURE OF CONNECTION

Fox knows that filling stadiums and arenas is about more than what happens on the scoreboard. “People don’t just come to games because of the score,” he says. “They come because they feel connected to the team, to the campus, to the community.” He envisions student-focused game-day traditions, family-friendly community events, youth sports clinics, alumni engagement opportunities and activities that build pride across the Upper Cumberland.

“Athletics is often the front porch of a university,” Fox explained. “When people see passionate fans, great facilities and student-athletes who represent Tech with class and enthusiasm, that reflects on the entire institution.”

Fox certainly wants Tennessee Tech competing for championships and he expects to. But when he talks about how he will measure success, he doesn’t start with wins.

“I want Tennessee Tech to be known for doing things the right way. I want us to be known for how we treat people, for how we represent the university and for the pride we bring to the community.” In five years, he hopes to see a program that’s not only winning more but winning with purpose. “A culture that’s stronger. Fans who are more engaged. Student-athletes who are thriving in every aspect of their lives. That’s what success looks like.”

Despite the public nature of his role, Fox describes himself as something of a homebody. “I’m more than happy to just be at home and binge-watch a show,” he laughed. He has two sons with his wife, and family time is his grounding force. “Any time we can be together whether traveling, watching games or just relaxing at home is what matters most.” Given the chance, he’ll choose a beach vacation, a book and sunshine to recharge.

## LOOKING AHEAD: A COMMUNITY READY TO SOAR

Fox’s arrival at Tennessee Tech comes at a pivotal moment, with new facilities rising, enrollment climbing and renewed energy surrounding the university’s mission. But Fox is clear that the future of Tech Athletics is a shared project.

“It’s not just my vision,” he said. “It’s going to take the entire Tennessee Tech community of alumni, donors, students, faculty and fans — all of us believing in what we can build together.”

That unity, he believes, is what will define the next chapter of Golden Eagle athletics. “Programs with sustained success have one thing in common: everyone is rowing in the same direction.”

He pauses, then adds with conviction: “Five years from now, I want people to look at Tennessee Tech and say, ‘They built something special there.’ Not just because we won games, but because we built a culture that lasts.” ▽



## GOLDEN EAGLES SOAR A Historic Season Takes Flight



### OVC-Big South Champions

First Division I league title



### 11-1 Regular Season

Best season ever in 104-year history of Tech football



### 10-0 Start

First undefeated start in program history



### 15-Game Winning Streak

Longest in school history



### 8-0 Conference Record

Undefeated in league play



### FCS Playoff Appearance

- First since 2011
- Second in program history



### 21 Conference Honors

Including Coach of the Year



### Leadership

**Phil Oldham** President  
**Casey Fox** Athletics Director  
**Bobby Wilder** Head Coach

## MORE THAN A SEASON

*Reignited pride  
Raised expectations  
Built momentum*

Follow the Golden Eagles to see what’s next at [ttusports.com](https://ttusports.com).

# TENNESSEE TECH'S COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ADOPTS BROADER NAME TO REFLECT EXPANDED PROGRAMS

Tennessee Tech University's College of Education is now the College of Education & Human Sciences, a change that took effect January 1, 2025 to better represent its wide range of programs and career paths.

"Our college encompasses a number of different units and has for a long time," said Lisa Zagumny, dean of the College of Education & Human Sciences. "We have this really big footprint, and our programs were not fully represented by the College of Education name."

The college includes the Department of Curriculum & Instruction, which focuses on teacher education; the Department of Counseling and Psychology, home to a large undergraduate psychology program and counseling-based graduate programs; and the Department of Exercise Science, offering 10 undergraduate concentrations from pre-occupational and physical therapies to sports administration.

It also houses the Millard Oakley STEM Center, which provides interactive science, technology, engineering and math programming for educators and students from pre-kindergarten through college, as well as Tech's Child Development Lab, which serves both the community and students in early childhood education and related majors.

As Tech's second-largest college by enrollment, it also includes a student success center, testing center, Office of Teacher Education and the newly remodeled Jeffers Learning Resource Center—a space where students can create classroom materials with laser engravers, sewing machines and 3D printers or practice teaching through virtual reality.

Zagumny said the need for a new name became clear while preparing for the June 2024 Board of Trustees meeting. "Preparing for that presentation and rolling out all that we are – it made it even more obvious that 'College of Ed' just isn't capturing who we are and who we've been for a while," she said. "In looking at our programs and our areas of expertise, it makes sense for us to shift from College of Education to College of Education & Human Sciences."

The college remains firmly committed to teacher preparation. "We're very proud that we graduate the most teachers in the state and that more districts hire our graduates than any others," Zagumny said.

"There's also this very dynamic human sciences piece that can better reflect counseling and psychology and exercise science. It's just a more inclusive name."

Zagumny added that counseling, psychology and exercise science are now the college's fastest-growing programs, reflecting "current contexts."

"This better demonstrates who we already are," she said. "We should have done it sooner!"



The newly renamed College of Education & Human Sciences reflects the college's diverse academic programs.

# RENAMED COLLEGE REFLECTS FOCUS ON INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION



Focused on emerging fields, the College of Emerging and Integrative Studies allows students to collaborate across disciplines.

When Tennessee Tech renamed the College of Interdisciplinary Studies to the College of Emerging and Integrative Studies in 2025, the goal was to better reflect the college's mission.

"It identifies what the college does because we are very much engaged in focusing on emerging programs, new programs and integrating our programs with others across campus," explained Mike Gotcher, dean of the renamed college.

The college itself strives to emphasize collaboration across disciplines, a focus recently demonstrated with a new interdisciplinary computing degree developed with the engineering and computer science programs. The program gives students a foundation in computer science while allowing them to pursue interests in other fields, incorporating elements of teaching, entrepreneurship, problem-solving, communication skills and negotiation.

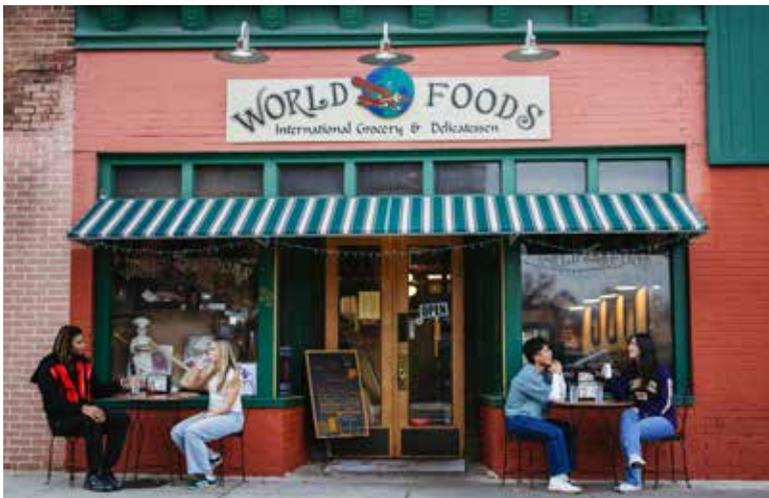
The name change also eliminates confusion that previously existed when the university had both a College of Interdisciplinary Studies and a School of

Interdisciplinary Studies within that college. The College of Emerging and Integrative Studies houses the School of Professional Studies, the School of Environmental Studies, the Department of Communication and Media, as well as the School of Interdisciplinary Studies.

Gotcher says he believes students who understand the value of collaboration will thrive in the renamed college.

"To be successful, you have to be able to work well with others," he said, adding that the college helps students "expose themselves to new ideas and new concepts and look at different ways that a task can be done."

Gotcher added that the college works to help students avoid "functional fixedness," which is the tendency to see things as having only one purpose or application. "What we try to do is provide some level of illumination," he said. "There are a variety of different ways to do things, and if we get stuck in doing it just one particular way, then we may not see the advancement."▼



Above: Less than a mile from Tech's campus, Cookeville's downtown area is an easy destination for students.

Center left: Cookeville's businesses welcome Tech students, many offering discounts through the Perks Partners program.

Below: Students enjoy Bee Rock Overlook, one of the many outdoor destinations that draw students interested in enjoying the outdoors.

Center right: Burgess Falls State Park is one of the many Cookeville locations where students find opportunities to experience the beauty of the Upper Cumberland region.

Opposite: Students enjoy a classic Cookeville treat at Ralph's Donut Shop.

# GROWING TOGETHER:

## COOKEVILLE AND TENNESSEE TECH BUILD COMMUNITY



Nestled along Interstate 40 in the Upper Cumberland region, Cookeville has mastered something many growing communities struggle with: maintaining a welcoming, small-town character while meeting the needs of a thriving university and an influx of new businesses. At the heart of this balance is the relationship between the city and Tennessee Tech University, a partnership that Amy New, president and CEO of the Cookeville-Putnam County Chamber of Commerce, describes as deeply personal.

“The community is not only excited about your experience while you get here, but they want to make sure that you’re set up for a future that is very successful,” New explains. As a Tech graduate herself, she understands both sides of the relationship. “It’s so encouraging when we see all of our Tennessee Tech students coming in and becoming part of the fabric that makes Cookeville so special.”

That fabric has been woven over decades. The partnership between Tennessee Tech’s School of Music and the Bryan Symphony Orchestra has thrived for more than 60 years, offering a professional symphony uncommon in communities of Cookeville’s size. Newer traditions, such as the annual College Town Kickoff and Wings Up Wednesdays, strengthen that connection, bringing students downtown for live music, local shopping and dining discounts that benefit both residents and businesses.

“We see businesses of all sizes, whether it’s our mom and pop, small shops or very large industries in the area,

supporting our students,” New says. The Chamber represents thousands of businesses that connect with students through internships, job shadowing and campus job fairs, building a bridge between education and career.

Even as major new stores like Target arrive, Cookeville has preserved its charm through a historic downtown filled with boutiques, restaurants and a thriving arts scene. “We consider Tennessee Tech an anchor, not only for Cookeville, but for the region,” New says. Within walking distance of campus, students find coffee shops, donut shops and ice cream parlors. New gateway signs around the city read, “Cookeville: Home of Tennessee Tech University.” The university has even trademarked the phrase “Tennessee’s College Town.”

The partnership is paying off. Tennessee Tech began fall 2025 with its highest enrollment in nearly a decade. “Choosing Tennessee Tech means joining a community that is absolutely invested in not only your experience here in Cookeville, but also your experience and your future as you grow and succeed,” New says.

In one word, New describes the Tennessee Tech-Cookeville relationship as “encouraging.” In an era when many college towns struggle with tensions between students and residents, Cookeville stands apart. “It doesn’t matter where you go, you’re going to see familiar faces who are always willing to say hello or find ways to get you involved,” she says. “Cookeville is here to help Tennessee Tech students become bold, fearless, confident and, most importantly, kind.” ▽

# FUTURE ATTRACTIONS & PROGRAMS

Tennessee Tech University is continuing a dynamic era of growth, expanding both physical spaces and academic offerings to meet the evolving needs of today's students.

New and renovated campus spaces are creating modern environments for learning, collaboration and innovation, while emerging academic programs ensure that Tech remains responsive to industry trends and workforce demands. Together, these advancements strengthen the university's ability to stay relevant, competitive and student-focused.



## TUCKER STADIUM

Tucker Stadium has stood tall as the home of Golden Eagle football on Tech's campus since 1966, but the aging facility is getting a new lease on life. In early fall 2024, demolition began on the west side of the stadium, with plans for the all-new stadium to open in its place by the start of the 2026 season. A "topping off" ceremony for the stadium, where the final piece of structural steel was placed, was celebrated in November, marking a significant moment in the facility's reconstruction.

Once complete, the state-of-the-art west-side stadium will offer new amenities, suites, upgraded seating and expanded concessions, among other improvements – reimagining the gameday experience for student-athletes and fans alike.

Tech's rebuilt stadium will be the Upper Cumberland's place to gather – putting our region on the map for bowl games, conferences and live entertainment events.



## JOHNSON HALL

The longtime home of Tech's College of Business, Johnson Hall, is undergoing a major renovation. The reimagined facility will feature bright, collaborative spaces, expanded labs and modern technology to elevate the learning experience for future Golden Eagles. While the transformation takes shape, the college is thriving in its temporary home at Foundation Hall.



### **J.J. OAKLEY INNOVATION CENTER & RESIDENCE HALL**

This past fall also brought the groundbreaking of a new residence hall for the university with kickoff of construction on the J.J. Oakley Innovation Center & Residence Hall.

The 102,000-square-foot state-of-the-art residence hall will provide accommodations for 400 students, featuring a mix of double occupancy rooms and pod-style semi-suites. Amenities will include an activity room, community kitchen and lounge, study areas, quiet rooms and laundry facilities.

A nearly 12,000-square-foot innovation center attached to the residence hall will include fabrication spaces, multipurpose event and presentation facilities, a podcast studio, meeting rooms and other functionalities – all designed to spark creativity and collaboration among students. A dining space will also offer convenience items such as coffee, snacks and prepared foods.

University leaders aim to have the J.J. Oakley Innovation Center & Residence Hall ready for student occupancy by the start of the fall 2027 semester.

### **ADVANCED CONSTRUCTION AND MANUFACTURING ENGINEERING BUILDING**

Tennessee Tech University officials and the campus community broke ground on its Advanced Construction and Manufacturing Engineering (ACME) Building this past fall, celebrating the second building in the College of Engineering’s recent expansion of facilities designed to support interdisciplinary collaboration and hands-on learning.



The ACME Building will be devoted to “making” on a grand scale, featuring industry-grade instructional labs to provide students with experience in real-world practices in advanced manufacturing and construction, fabrication, machine learning and cyber-physical systems, industrial robotics, mechatronics and concrete and steel manufacturing and testing.

The building will be cross-disciplinary within the College of Engineering and will provide Tech students with practical, applied engineering skills that manufacturing and construction employers need.

The ACME building construction is anticipated to be completed in fall 2028.



Tech is the first university in Tennessee to offer a degree in artificial intelligence.

## INVESTMENT IN ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

As the university's physical spaces grow to meet the needs of students, so do the academic offerings.

With an eye to programs that meet industry need and student demand, additional new programs are being added by the university, set to begin enrolling students in fall 2026.

The university will launch a new Bachelor of Science in artificial intelligence, becoming the first institution in the state to offer a baccalaureate-level degree in the theories, systems and development behind the emerging technology.

The new major, housed in Tech's Department of Computer Science, further positions the university as a statewide leader in AI. The program was approved by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission in October. It builds upon what was formerly the data science and artificial intelligence concentration within the computer science major.

The new degree will complement the work of the Machine Intelligence and Data Science (MInDS) Center, an on-campus hub launched in 2024 to address a national focus on AI education and workforce development. The center brings together faculty, students and industry partners to advance machine learning, data science and ethical AI applications.

A Bachelor of Science in interdisciplinary computing will be housed in Tech's College of Emerging and Integrative Studies and would prescribe 30 hours of computing, along with 25 credit hours in a cognate area – such as agribusiness, biology, criminal justice, environmental science, journalism or project management. The program's unique structure would allow students to bring a computer science-infused expertise to a broad range of industries.



Transitioning the child life program to a graduate-level degree provides graduates advanced opportunities.

A Master of Science in child life will replace the university's undergraduate degree in the field, focused on preparing graduates to support the emotional, developmental and psychosocial needs of children and adults, as well as their families, who are facing medical or traumatic experiences. Bolstered with letters of support from St. Jude Children's Hospital, Vanderbilt University's Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital, East Tennessee Children's Hospital and others, it will be the only program of its kind at a public institution in Tennessee.

A new Master of Science in agriscience technology is designed to train highly skilled workers in the agricultural field who will play a vital role in helping the state transition from conventional agricultural systems to innovative smart systems being adopted around the world.

While there are currently 10 agriculture-focused master's degree programs in the state, Tech's curriculum will stand out in key ways, as the only program in the state to focus specifically on technology in agriculture.

Students seeking an advanced degree in computer science at Tech can now earn a Ph.D. in computer science as well. Doctoral candidates with an interest in computer science previously earned a Ph.D. in engineering with a concentration in computer science.

Find the latest in campus news and developments at [tntech.edu/news](https://tntech.edu/news). ▾

See the full list of Tech's academic programs by visiting [tntech.edu/majors](https://tntech.edu/majors).





# EXPLORE GRADUATE OPPORTUNITIES AT TENNESSEE TECH!

Take the next step in your educational journey at Tennessee Tech University! As an alum, you already know the value of a Tech education. Our graduate programs offer advanced learning, innovative research opportunities and the chance to sharpen your skills in a supportive community. Many programs are available online and in formats designed to meet you where you are.

Whether you're looking to advance your career or pursue your passion, there's a program designed to help you take your learning and your career to the next level.

Ready to elevate your future? Explore our graduate programs today: [www.tntech.edu/gradstudies](http://www.tntech.edu/gradstudies).

Come back to where it all started. *Tech is ready for you!*

# ALL ABOARD:

## NEW VOICES JOIN TENNESSEE TECH BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Tennessee Tech University's Board of Trustees is entering a new chapter with five new members added over the past year, and a newly elected chair at the helm.



At its September 2025 meeting, the board elected **Rhedona Rose**, a 1984 Tech graduate and longtime agricultural leader, to serve as chair through June 2027. She is known across the state for her nearly four decades with Tennessee Farm Bureau, rising to the role of executive vice president before her recent retirement.

For Rose, stepping into this role is deeply personal. "Tennessee Tech has held a special place in my life since I arrived on this campus as a freshman agriculture major more than 40 years ago," Rose said. "It is not just my alma mater, it is home."

Trustees also elected **Fred Lowery** as vice chair. A 1994 Tech graduate, Lowery serves as executive vice president and president of laboratory products and bioproduction at Thermo Fisher Scientific.

Trustee **Tom Jones**, a 1986 Tech graduate and the president of the Cookeville-based Research Electronics International (REI), was elected chair of the board's Audit & Business Committee.

**Camron Rudd**, a 2005 Tech graduate serving as chief operating officer at Hörmann North America, will lead the Academic & Student Affairs Committee.

New trustees bringing their expertise and passion for the purple and gold to Tech's board include **Garry McNabb**, a 1979 Tech graduate, the CEO of Cash Express, LLC, and a longtime Cookeville entrepreneur and civic leader. He previously served on the Tennessee Tech Foundation Board of Directors and the Tennessee Lottery Board, among other roles in public service.



Joining him is **Teresa Chasteen-Dunn**, the president and CEO of WIN Learning. Chasteen-Dunn joins the board with decades of experience in education and workforce development. A former professor and published author, she has dedicated her career to helping students graduate with the skills and confidence to succeed. In 2016, Chasteen-Dunn and her husband, Lanny, generously gifted the university with the golf course now known as the Golden Eagle Golf Club.



**Allen Foster**, the mayor of nearby Cumberland County, was also appointed to a term on the board. Foster is a two-time Tennessee Tech University graduate who has led Cumberland County since 2018. His late wife, Rebecca, was also a Tech alumna who served on the Whitson-Hester School of Nursing's advisory board.



Faculty representative **Michael Allen**, a three-time Tech graduate and chair of the Department of Mathematics, brings an educator's perspective to the boardroom. A Cookeville native and son of a former Tech faculty member, Allen has been part of the extended Tech community since childhood and has served on the faculty since 1999.

Representing students on the board is graduate student **Braxton Westbrook**, a Johnson City native pursuing his master's in computer science. Westbrook has been deeply involved in campus leadership and statewide student organizations and plans a future career in cybersecurity and public service.



Other trustees continuing to serve on Tech's board include immediate past chair **Trudy Harper**, a two-time graduate of Tech's College of Engineering, generous philanthropist and titan of the energy industry. She retired in 2012 as president of Tenaska Power Services Co.

Also remaining on the board is **Thomas Lynn**, a 1976 and 1979 Tech graduate serving as chairman of the board for First National Bank of Tennessee, and **Barry "Butch" Wilmore**, a retired NASA astronaut who became a household name over the last two years during his historic nine-month stay at the International Space Station.

The Board of Trustees is the governing body of Tennessee Tech University. It meets four times a year at regularly scheduled meetings, and additional meetings as needed. √



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# REMEMBERING GRAHAM KASH:

MENTOR, STORYTELLER AND TENNESSEE TECH LEGEND



Graham Kash pictured with Alumna Jennifer Osburn Schabert ('03 English-journalism and '04 Sociology) Students remember Kash as a gifted storyteller and staple at Tennessee Tech for decades.

**THE** Tennessee Tech community is remembering Graham S. Kash, Ph.D, a beloved professor whose wisdom, kindness and storytelling shaped the university for more than six decades. Kash passed away Jan. 4, 2025, at the age of 87, leaving behind a legacy of teaching, mentoring and friendship that touched generations of Golden Eagles.

Kash joined Tech in 1963 and retired in July 2024 as a professor of English after teaching for 61 years. During his tenure, he taught literature, composition, folklore and public speaking, and directed the university's Speech and Debate Team. For countless students, he was more than an instructor — he was a mentor who inspired confidence and a love of learning.

"Graham epitomized Tennessee Tech during the 30-plus years I worked with him," said former colleague Russ Witcher. "I can think of no other person who was a better representative of Tech."

A Nashville native, Kash earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in English at Vanderbilt University before completing his Ph.D. in folklore at Indiana University. He also studied

debate and American dialects and spent a Fulbright year teaching literature at the University of Bordeaux. Fluent in French, Kash often brought a global perspective and sense of humor into his classrooms.

Tennessee Tech President Phil Oldham described him as "one of the most consequential and enduring figures in Tennessee Tech's history."

For alumni, Kash's lessons extended well beyond the classroom.

"Graham was much more than a professor to me — he was a mentor, a friend and a role model in many ways," said former debate team member Mik Davis-Bryant. "That class and my time on the team profoundly shaped my life. I'm now nearing the end of my Ph.D. at The University of Georgia, where I get to teach public speaking because I first took Graham's public speaking class as a student."

Alumna Jennifer Osburn Schabert ('03, English-journalism and '04, Sociology) remembered his tireless support of the debate team.



With more than 60 years of teaching experience at Tech, Kash's legacy runs deep at the university.



Graham, pictured with his wife Bettye Kash, both used their musical talents to engage with the campus community.

“ **GRAHAM WAS MUCH MORE THAN A PROFESSOR TO ME — HE WAS A MENTOR, A FRIEND AND A ROLE MODEL IN MANY WAYS,** ”

“Dr. Kash poured his heart, soul and finances into supporting the TTU Speech and Debate Team,” she said. “When we traveled to other schools for tournaments, he always insisted on counting everyone on the bus three times — once in English, once in French, and once in German — to make sure we were all there.”

Former student Andrew Chaney said Kash changed the course of his career.

“I absolutely loved Dr. Kash! I took all of his folklore classes, and he was my thesis director,” Chaney said. “It was because of him that I became an instructor of English. One of the greatest honors of my life was when the English department asked me to teach his folklore classes when he became unwell. In teaching his classes, I felt like I was continuing his legacy — and that is something I will never forget.”

Brenda Wilson, former student, longtime colleague and friend, called his passing “a great loss for the Tech family. He was a constant source of positivity, encouragement, kindness and wisdom,” Wilson said. “It seems trite to say how irreplaceable and unique he was, but it is true. Dr. Kash’s devotion to his students is a legacy we can all aspire to emulate. He was a supportive colleague who sought to bring out the best in people.”

Folklore was Kash’s greatest passion, and he lived it fully. He often introduced students to the stories and songs that connect people across cultures — from Appalachian ballads to Bigfoot legends. He and his wife, Bettye, also a professor at Tech, performed together at folk festivals, bringing their love of storytelling and music to wider audiences.

Even outside the classroom, Kash was known for his curiosity and joy in life. He hiked sections of the Appalachian Trail, carried a harmonica in his pocket and never missed an opportunity to share a story.

After Bettye’s passing in 2024, Kash followed less than a year later. To honor their lives, friends and family created an endowed scholarship in their names, ensuring that their love of students and commitment to Tech lives on.

Kash often reminded his students to “tell it true, tell it well.” For the Tennessee Tech community, that’s exactly how he lived — day after day, year after year. His story, and the countless stories he inspired in others will continue to be part of Tech’s legacy for years to come. ▽

# STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES



Tennessee Tech chemistry student Sydney Decatur is pictured at the 2025 ACS Leadership Institute in Houston, Texas.

## **TECH CHEMISTRY STUDENT AMONG 15 GLOBALLY TO RECEIVE 2025 AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARD**

Tennessee Tech junior Sydney Decatur of Maryville, Tenn., was among only 15 students selected from more than 200 global applicants to receive the 2025 American Chemical Society Student Leadership Award, earning her an all-expenses-paid trip to the ACS Leadership Institute in Houston.

Decatur said she was “speechless” upon learning she’d won. At the conference, she stepped outside her comfort zone, met numerous professionals and reinforced her commitment to staying involved in ACS and her future in chemistry.

She credits her early love for chemistry to her mother – also a chemist turned regulatory analyst – and describes chemistry as “a mystery you’re trying to solve.” At Tech, mentors like Dr. Amanda Carroll have supported her since freshman orientation, she says.

After her expected graduation this year, Decatur plans to pursue graduate study and is considering roles at national laboratories or in academia. ▽

## TECH GOLDEN EAGLE FOOTBALL PLAYER BALANCES ATHLETICS, ACADEMICS AND PHILANTHROPY

Tennessee Tech junior Jameson Wharton is a Golden Eagle football player, but off the field, he's more than a student athlete; he's also a philanthropist.

Wharton launched Football for the Cure when he was just 10 years old, determined to turn grief into action after his Aunt Susie died of ovarian cancer. Now in its 12th year, the event has grown from a small flag-football gathering into a community staple, drawing hundreds and raising thousands in support of the American Cancer Society and Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center.



Tennessee Tech student Jameson Wharton speaks to the crowd at his annual Football for the Cure, an annual event he started to raise money for cancer research.

So far in 2025, he's hosted a children's flag football game with 102 participants and raised more than \$4,400.

Although it's typical for his teammates to attend, because of Tech's undefeated season in 2025, they were unable to participate, but many bought Football for the Cure t-shirts to show their support for their teammate and make a donation toward the organization's cause.

Wharton says he felt immediately welcomed at Tech, with Cookeville and the Golden Eagles football program embracing him and his mission. He's balancing his philanthropic work with an interdisciplinary studies degree emphasizing coaching, and he credits his faith for guiding his path. ▽



Tennessee Tech's men's rugby club is pictured at the Bluff City 7s Challenge in early 2025. The club's win at the tournament has secured their first-ever bid to the National Championship.

## TECH MEN'S RUGBY MAKES FIRST EVER BID TO COLLEGIATE RUGBY NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Tennessee Tech's men's rugby club made history: for the first time since its founding in 1977, the team earned a bid to the 2025 Collegiate Rugby National Championship tournament, held in Boyds, Md. – and now the team is looking to replicate that success over the 2026 season.

Their entry came via a gritty victory at the Bluff City 7s Challenge on March 29 in Memphis. Battling rain and mud, the Golden Eagles erased a 14-point deficit versus Ole Miss, executed a comeback over DePaul, then shut out Mississippi State in the semi-finals. In the final, an overtime win avenged a blowout loss from last season (77-10 vs. Memphis).

Standout performances included sophomore Lane Travis, who led the scoring with seven tries – including the overtime win on an 80-meter run, Todd Harris – five tries, Troy Glecker, and defensive surprise P.J. Truax, in his first rugby game.

All four made the All-Tournament team. Tech's club competed as a Division II team in National Collegiate Rugby and is coached by Siaoisi "Mo" Moleni. ▽

# CLASS NOTES



**1955**

**Sonny Allen, Jr.** ('55 health and physical education) was featured in an article titled "The Godfather of Tech Football" in The Oracle student newspaper. Allen is the oldest living former Tech football player and was a member of back-to-back conference championship football teams in 1952 and 1953.



**1956**

**Howard Whitaker** ('56 agricultural science) received the Robert Sparks Walker Lifetime Achievement Award, the top honor in the Governor's Environmental Stewardship Awards. Whitaker has devoted more than 70 years to advancing conservation practices and public education and is known for creating two mascots to teach children about the environment: Sammy Soil and Ruby Raindrop.

**1957**

**The Honorable Clarence Shattuck, Jr.** ('57 accounting) was featured in an article in The Chattanooga titled "Judge Shattuck, still playing basketball as he approaches 90, is national free throw champ." Shattuck sank 19 of 25 free throws to come out in first place at the National Senior Olympics.

**1967**

**Glen Stewart** ('67 mathematics) competed in the National Senior Olympics Finals in Des Moines, Iowa, last year. He has competed in 350 races, run 49,110 miles and raced in 30 states and 15 foreign countries, completed seven marathons and holds six Tennessee state records.



**1977**

**Gary H. McDonald** ('77 mechanical engineering, '79 M.S. and '84 Ph.D.) received the Lifetime of Excellence in Teaching Award from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. McDonald, now retired, served as the University of Chattanooga Foundation Associate professor of mechanical engineering.



**1978**

**Mary Ruth Beckham** ('78 science medical technology) was honored by the Baylor Scott & White Medical Center Medical Laboratory Science Program in Texas, where they named a new student laboratory in her honor. Mary Ruth retired from the program in 2023 after 35 years of service.



**Steven L. Bolden** ('78 biology) received the U.S. Poultry & Egg Association's Lamplighter Award which pays tribute to individuals for sustained and exemplary service to the poultry and egg industry. He is the vice president of live operations for Wayne-Sanderson Farms.



**1980**

**Becky Magura** ('80 curriculum and instruction and '81 M.A.) is a 2025 National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (NATAS) MidSouth Silver Circle inductee. She also received the first-ever Patrick Butler National Advocacy Award from America's Public Television Stations. Magura is the president and chief executive officer of Nashville Public Television.



**1982**

**Randy Wilmore** ('82 business management) received the Martha Johnson Lifetime Achievement Award from the Tennessee Medical Group Management Association (TMGMA) and the Lucille Queener Courtney Award for his service to the community. Wilmore is a chief relationship officer with Farm Bureau and serves on the Tennessee Tech University Foundation Board of Directors.



**1983**

**Fred Khosravi** ('83 mechanical engineering and '86 M.S.) was inducted into the National Academy of Science, Engineering and Medicine.



**Allison M. Weaver** ('83 English-journalism) was named senior manuscript editor for the New England Journal of Medicine in Boston, Mass.



**1984**

**Gary M. Huddleston** ('84 agribusiness and technology) was named to the Kansas State University Department of Grain Science and Industry's external advisory board. He is the director of Feed Manufacturing and Regulatory Affairs for the American Feed Industry Association (AFIA).



**1985**

**Captain Barry E. Wilmore** ('85 electrical engineering, '94 M.S. and '12 honorary doctorate of engineering) was named Tennessean of the Year. He also received Tennessee Tech's Order of the Eagle, the university's highest distinction, and was honored with two roads bearing his name: Wilmore Way on Tech's campus and Barry Wilmore Way in Mt. Juliet, Tenn. In addition, Wilmore continues to serve his alma mater as a member of Tennessee Tech's Board of Trustees.



**1989**

**Marjorie A. Jenkins** ('89 chemical engineering) was named vice president for Health Affairs and dean of the School of Medicine & Health Sciences at the University of North Dakota.



**1990**

**John A. Blevins** ('90 mechanical engineering) received the Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medal, which is considered the highest honor for career federal employees. Blevins is the chief engineer for the NASA Space Launch System.



**The Honorable Doug Jenkins** ('90 business management) was elected president of the Tennessee Judicial Conference. He is chancellor of the 3rd Judicial District which includes Green, Hamblen, Hancock and Hawkins counties.



**Justin L. Neece** ('90 business management) was appointed chief growth officer for MedeAnalytics, a leading provider of healthcare data management and analytics solutions.



**1991**

**Rob Blackburn** ('91 business management) joined Edgewater Federal Solutions as vice president of Enterprise Solutions.



**Melody A. Peace** ('91 accounting) was named director of finance at Rappahannock Electric Cooperative.



### 1992

**Sherrie H. Cannon** ('92 sociology and '95 M.A.) received the Lifesaver Award from the Putnam County Commission for performing CPR on a person suffering a heart attack on Tennessee Tech's campus.



### 1994

**Fred Lowery** ('94 mechanical engineering) was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Knoxville Area Urban League. Lowery is the executive vice president and president of Laboratory Products and Bioproduction for Thermo Fisher Scientific and serves on Tennessee Tech's Board of Trustees.



### 1995

**Jamie S. Cooper** ('95 psychology and '96 M.A.) was named provost of Academic Affairs at Salt Lake Community College.

**Keith Shannon** ('95 secondary education and '06 M.A.) was named director of the Morgan County Career and Technical Center.



**Steve Smith** ('95 electrical engineering) was promoted to director of Nissan Americas I.S./I.T., responsible for manufacturing and supply chain management.

### 1996

**Nicole A. Cobb** ('96 multidisciplinary studies, '98 M.A. and '99 Ed.S.) was promoted to associate dean for Academic Affairs and Professional Education at Vanderbilt University.

**Jason Matson** ('96 civil engineering) of Kimley-Horn was named 2025-2026 president of the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) of California.



### 1998

**Robert L. Owens II** ('98 industrial engineering, '00 MBA, '03 Ed.S. and '09 Ph.D.) was named to the 12th annual Leadership Tennessee class, a handpicked collective of individuals who travel throughout the state with a mission of fostering nonpartisan dialogue on issues of state importance. Owens is Tennessee Tech's senior executive for Access, Belonging and Community Outreach.



**Maria E. Price** ('98 civil and environmental engineering) received the Daniel B. Barge, Jr. Award for Distinguished Service from the Tennessee Section of American Society of Civil Engineers.



### 2000

**Amy B. Brown** ('00 M.A. instructional leadership and '12 Ed.S.) was named to The Tennessean's "all legends" girls basketball team – a who's who of middle Tennessee's all-time greatest female basketball players since 1960. Brown serves as director of teacher education in Tennessee Tech's College of Education & Human Sciences.

**Joe Deering** ('00 civil engineering) was named 2025 Government Engineer of the Year by the Nashville Chapter of the Tennessee Society of Professional Engineers.



**Phaneendra Kondapi** (‘00 Ph.D. engineering) received the DeGolyer Distinguished Service Medal from the Society of Petroleum Engineers. The medal is presented to SPE members who demonstrate service to the society, the professionals of engineering or geology and the petroleum industry. Kondapi is an affiliate professor at the Colorado School of Mines and president of Jaajitech Digital, a company providing digital solutions for the manufacturing and process industries.



**2001**

**Erin L. Curry** (‘01 civil engineering) received the inaugural Community Service Award from American Council of Engineering Companies of Tennessee. She is a senior project manager/associate at Sain Associates in Pulaski, Tenn.



**2002**

**Kevin M. Michael** (‘02 mechanical engineering) is the new site vice president of Tennessee Valley Authority’s Sequoyah Nuclear Plant.



**Brent L. Young** (‘02 agriculture) was named president of the Sparta-White County Chamber of Commerce.

**2004**

**Ryan Greer** (‘04 finance) won the 2025 Tennessee Mid-Amateur Championship. His victory is his second Tennessee Mid-Amateur title and fourth Tennessee Golf Association title. Greer is a former member of the Tennessee Tech men’s golf team.



**2005**

**Willie Jenkins Jr.** (‘05 interdisciplinary studies) was named assistant coach for men’s basketball at the University at Albany. A former Tennessee Tech and Ohio Valley Conference standout from 2002-2005, Jenkins was named OVC Player of the Year during his senior season. He was inducted into Tennessee Tech’s Sports Hall of Fame in 2015.



**2006**

**Dora England** (‘06 economics and ‘12 MBA) received Discovery Financial Services’ 2025 President’s Award for fair banking data quality enhancements. She is the senior manager of fair banking at Discovery Financial Services.



**2007**

**Kyle Clayton** (‘07 economics) was named to Sports Business Journal’s “Forty under 40.” He is the chief strategy officer for the Nashville Predators.



**2008**

**Matthew D. Bauer** (‘08 chemistry and biology) was named chief medical officer for Texas Health Action.



**Jana B. Underwood** (‘08 marketing and ‘10 M.A.) was crowned United States of America’s Ms. Tennessee 2025.



**2009**

**Anne Hewitt** (‘09 finance) was promoted to senior vice president, chief retail officer at UT Federal Credit Union. She also serves on the Tennessee Tech Alumni Association Board of Directors.



**Lance M. Mason** (‘09 accounting and ‘10 MBA) was named chief executive officer for Livingston Regional Hospital.



### 2010

**Stephanie L. Boshears** ('10 multidisciplinary studies) received a national Milken Educator Award.



**Amanda L. O'Dell** ('10 marketing and '11 MBA) was promoted to vice president of investor development and experience at the Knoxville Chamber of Commerce.



### 2011

**Bret M. Stock** ('11 civil engineering) was named director of the Public Works Department for the City of Dickson.



**Spencer Tidwell** ('11 chemical engineering) has been named to the 2025 Notable Leaders in Sustainability List by Plastic News. He is the director of the Polyester Renewal Technology Development Division at Eastman.



### 2012

**Jamere Hogue** ('12 interdisciplinary studies) was named defensive line coach at East Tennessee State University. Hogue was a member of Tennessee Tech's 2011 OVC Championship football team.



**Tre Lamb** ('12 interdisciplinary studies) was named the 35th head football coach for the University of Tulsa. Lamb played quarterback at Tennessee Tech from 2009 to 2012, served as team captain for his final three seasons and led the Golden Eagles to an OVC title in 2011.



### 2014

**Tyler S. Asher** ('14 business management) is the new assistant commissioner for the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development. He is also a member of the Tennessee Tech Alumni Association Board of Directors.



**Emily Ann McDonald** ('14 secondary education and '15 M.A.) received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, the top honor bestowed by the U.S. Government to K-12 STEM teachers, and was selected as a winner in the Atomic Learning Lesson Plan Competition hosted by the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education. McDonald is a mathematics teacher for Hamilton County Schools at University High.

### 2015

**Rocio del Pilar Tijaro Rojas** ('15 Ph.D. engineering) was appointed dean of the School of Engineering at the Universidad de Magdalena in Santa Marta, Colombia.



**Jonathan E. Schoolcraft** ('15 M.A. curriculum and instruction) was named director of Middle College at Roane State Community College.



### 2016

**Prem Kumar Akula** ('16 M.S. electrical and computer engineering) joined SambaNova Systems as senior principal engineer.



### 2017

**Alex Martin** ('17 economics and '22 MBA) was named chief operating officer at Sacoma Specialty Products.



**2019**

**Chelsea Carpenter** (‘19 agriculture) was named executive director of the Tennessee Future Farmers of America Foundation.



**Kristin H. Tilton** (‘19 chemical engineering) was named product engineering supervisor at Y-12 National Security Complex.



**2020**

**Juliet Ohemeng-Ntiamoah** (‘20 Ph.D. engineering) completed the Water Professionals Leadership Academy for Tennessee and Kentucky. She is a wastewater process engineer at Jacobs.

**2022**

**Justin M. Freeman** (‘22 business management) was named executive director for Life Care Center of Sparta in Tennessee.



**Caitlyn Wilson** (‘22 M.A. exercise science, physical education and wellness) joined the Human Performance and Wellness staff of Miami University as an assistant athletic trainer.



**2025**

**Muinat Zubair** (‘25 M.S. chemistry) developed a method for predicting protein structure and protein-protein interactions using a combination of experimental and computational approaches. She made this discovery during her time as a graduate teaching and research assistant at Tennessee Tech and was recently featured in a Nigerian Tribune article.

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# FRIENDS REMEMBERED

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

Gary D. Abel, 1976, Bachelor of Science, 2/17/25, Washington, PA

Jerry Allen, 1977, Bachelor of Science, 2/14/25, Cookeville, TN

Ronald Allison, 8/23/25, Sparta, TN

Ethel E. Anderson, 1989, Bachelor of Science, 3/16/25, Cookeville, TN

Margaret Stewart Anderton, 1976, Bachelor of Science, 3/24/25, Sparta, TN

Richard A. Aquilini, 1968, Bachelor of Science, 2/5/25, Wilmington, NC

Steve Arnold, 1977, Bachelor of Science, 9/2/24, Clearwater, FL

Donald B. Atnip, 1974, Bachelor of Science, 5/5/25, Livingston, TN

Mrs. Judith Auger, 2/14/25

Lieutenant Colonel Bob Aylward, 1973

Bachelor of Science, 9/14/25, Columbus, GA

Phoebe F. Bacon, 1/15/25, Towson, MD

Mr. Dale E. Baese, 1975, Bachelor of Science, 7/31/25, Chattanooga, TN

Larry L. Bain, Non-Degree Alum, 12/21/24, Brandon, MS

Emily K. Ballinger, 2006, Bachelor of Science, 4/20/25, Cookeville, TN

Jeff Ballinger, 1982, Bachelor of Science, 5/28/25, Grovetown, GA

John W. Barker, 1992, Bachelor of Science, 1997

Master of Business Administration, 10/2/24, Raymore, MO

Marvin W. Barker, 10/13/24, Cookeville, TN

James L. Bean, 1950, Bachelor of Science, 6/19/25, Williamsburg, VA

Sandra Bennett, 9/11/25, Cookeville, TN

Henry N. Benninghoff Jr., 1969, Bachelor of Science, 6/21/25, Knoxville, TN

Mrs. Helen W. Birdwell, 1978, Master of Arts, 2/26/25, Carthage, TN

Mr. Walter G. Birdwell Jr., 2/21/25, Carthage, TN

Steve Bivens, 1969, Bachelor of Science, 6/22/25, Nashville, TN

Mr. Charlie Black, 1962, Bachelor of Science, 10/20/24, Lilburn, GA

Katherine N. Boles, 1963, Bachelor of Science, 9/25/24, Silver Point, TN

J. Lee Bonnet, 1/14/25

Michael D. Boswell, 1987, Bachelor of Science, 9/10/25, Cookeville, TN

Tommy G. Bradford, 1970, Bachelor of Science, 12/23/24, Cookeville, TN

James H. Brock, 1979, Bachelor of Science, 11/15/24, McDonough, GA

Dorothea Brodhag, 1954, Bachelor of Science, 5/9/25, Lorton, VA

James T. Broyles, 1966, Bachelor of Science, 5/25/25, Carthage, TN

Martha Sue Broyles, 9/20/24, Sparta, TN

Lawrence R. Buckley, 1969, Bachelor of Science, 2/17/25, Natchez, MS

Robert G. Burton, 1964, Master of Arts, 3/21/25, Greenwich, CT

Clint Camp, 2004, Bachelor of Science, 5/21/25, Nashville, TN

Mr. John Campbell, 9/8/24

Perri L. Capps, 1987, Bachelor of Science, 6/21/25, Spring City, TN

Jo Ruth Carr, 10/18/24, Cookeville, TN

Max R. Carroll, 1960, Bachelor of Science, 5/28/25, Calhoun, TN

Jonas D. Carter, Non-Degree Alum, 8/13/25, Brighton, TN

Kenneth W. Castleman, 1959, Bachelor of Science, 3/24/25, Livingston, TN

James V. Christian, 1967, Bachelor of Science, 1/5/25, Church Hill, TN

Rose Marie Clark, 11/8/24, Shelbyville, TN

Sherry McGugin Clark, 1982, Bachelor of Science

1994, Master of Arts, 1/31/25, Cookeville, TN

Lois M. Clinton, 8/12/25, Cookeville, TN

Patsy A. Cobb, 1969, Bachelor of Science, 1971, Master of Arts

1974, Specialist in Education, 8/22/25, Cookeville, TN

Linda Collier, 2/6/25, Lebanon, TN

Kenneth G. Cook, 9/25/24, Cookeville, TN

Ed Copeland, 1973, Bachelor of Science, 8/10/25, Cookeville, TN

Richard Corn, 1956, Bachelor of Science, 11/9/24, Hixson, TN

Peter A. Countryman, 1990, Bachelor of Science, 12/5/24, Cookeville, TN

James H. Crabtree Jr., 2/22/25, Cookeville, TN

Jonathan E. Craig, 2018, Bachelor of Science, 3/21/25, Cookeville, TN

Mr. Christopher Crockett, 2006, Bachelor of Science

4/5/25, Jamestown, TN

Ellen D. Crouse, 1990, Specialist in Education, 5/28/25, Cookeville, TN

Mr. James L. Cunningham, 12/3/24, Clarksville, TN

William F. Cuthbert III, 1966, Bachelor of Science

1/15/25, New Smyrna Beach, FL

Judith A. Dean, 1967, Bachelor of Science, 8/21/24, Lexington, KY

Jeanette Denton, 9/4/24, Sparta, TN

Mary J. Denton, 1972, Master of Arts, 8/15/24, Cookeville, TN

Pitt Derryberry, 1995, Master of Arts, 1997

Specialist in Education, 2/13/25, Bowling Green, KY

**Phillip D. Dickerson**, 1976, Bachelor of Science, 7/16/25, Hartsville, TN

**Virginia Sutton Dillon**, 1964, Bachelor of Science,  
1972, Master of Arts, 3/3/25, Cleveland, TN

**Danny L. Dodd**, 1974, Bachelor of Science, 12/6/24, Soddy Daisy, TN

**David Dodson**, 2005, Bachelor of Science, 2007  
Master of Science, 5/15/25, Livingston, TN

**Randy B. Dodson**, 1982, Bachelor of Science, 2011  
Master of Science, 2/28/25, Baxter, TN

**Steve Doremus**, 1990, Bachelor of Science, 2/3/25, Cottontown, TN

**Katrina L. Dorsey**, 1991, Master of Arts, 4/2/25, Anniston, AL

**James L. Douthat**, 1973, Master of Arts, 11/17/24, Signal Mountain, TN

**Beryl Lerch Dowling**, 1965, Bachelor of Science, 4/22/25, Knoxville, TN

**Daniel D. Drab**, 11/3/24, Nashville, TN

**James A. Drake**, 4/20/25, Cookeville, TN

**Thomas H. Duffer**, 1963, Bachelor of Science, 5/30/25, Casablanca,

**Bob Duncan Jr.**, 1969, Bachelor of Science, 12/1/24, Cookeville, TN

**Lee Dunn**, 1971, Bachelor of Science, 5/27/25, Memphis, TN

**Mary J. Dunn**, 5/13/25, Cookeville, TN

**Gary J. Dutton**, 1972, Master of Arts, 5/19/25, Loudon, TN

**Richard W. Dycus**, 1983, Bachelor of Science, 1987  
Master of Science, 10/6/24, Cookeville, TN

**Rickey Elliott**, 1985, Specialist in Education, 8/12/25, Maryville, TN

**Larry Elmore**, 1976, Bachelor of Science, 3/2/25, Knoxville, TN

**Linda B. England**, 1974, Bachelor of Science, 1989, Master of Arts, 1995  
Specialist in Education, 8/20/24, Clarkrange, TN

**C. Kaye Evans**, 1/24/25, Rockford, TN

**Mr. Joe Evans**, 1975, Bachelor of Science, 8/20/25, Byhalia, MS

**Elizabeth Denning Everett**, 1965, Bachelor of Science, 4/8/25, Nashville, TN

**William C. Farler**, 1980, Master of Arts, 1989, Specialist in Education  
3/8/25, Farragut, TN

**Marie C. Ferran**, 1980, Bachelor of Science, 2/19/25, Cookeville, TN

**James M. Fitts III**, 1986, Bachelor of Science, 4/24/25, Franklin, TN

**Kathryn Blakeman Flatt**, 1984, Bachelor of Science, 4/2/25, Sparta, TN

**Grace W. Forest**, 4/11/25, Cookeville, TN

**B. R. Freeman**, 1967, Bachelor of Science, 9/26/24, Del Rio, TN

**Terry L. Frye**, 1973, Bachelor of Science, 5/26/25, Woodbury, TN

**Bob Fusarini**, 1966, Bachelor of Science, 8/31/24, Fort Mill, SC

**Mr. Vincent S. Galbraith**, 1972, Bachelor of Science, 3/9/25, Monrovia, MD

**John E. Gant**, 1961, Bachelor of Science, 10/7/24, Crossville, TN

**Mrs. Gianna Garofalo**, 5/17/25

**Dolores C. Garrick**, 1/11/25, Henrietta, NY

**Don Gaumont**, 2008, Bachelor of Science, 12/12/24, Cookeville, TN

**Brenda G. Gay**, 1964, Bachelor of Science, 1983, Master of Arts  
1985, Specialist in Education, 3/1/25, Wildwood, MO

**Mr. Kyle L. Gearhart**, Non-Degree Alum, 6/12/25, Spring Hill, TN

**Ricky G. Gentry**, 1980, Bachelor of Science, 1994  
Master of Business Administration, 11/8/24, Cookeville, TN

**Sue Gernt**, 1966, Bachelor of Science, 1971, Master of Arts  
1983, Specialist in Education, 8/4/25, Cookeville, TN

**Cary A. Goode**, 1990, Bachelor of Science, 4/9/25, Knoxville, TN

**Mrs. Vera Goolsby**, 2/27/25

**Timothy P. Goryl**, 1994, Bachelor of Science, 8/21/24, Cookeville, TN

**Lanny C. Graham**, 1971, Bachelor of Science, 4/6/25, Charleston, TN

**Ralph T. Graham**, Non-Degree Alum, 5/7/25, Loganville, GA

**Olin R. Granthum**, 8/19/24

**Janet K. Green**, 11/3/24

**Gwen Greene**, 1996, Bachelor of Science, 8/17/24, Franklin, TN

**Betty L. Grogg**, 1987, Bachelor of Science, 3/18/25, Rydal, GA

**Paul B. Gross**, 1959, Bachelor of Science, 1/30/25, Pineville, NC

**Bobby N. Haile**, 1970, Bachelor of Science, 3/4/25, Murfreesboro, TN

**Delbert W. Hale Jr.**, 1966, Bachelor of Science, 1970, Master of Arts  
9/18/24, Chattanooga, TN

**Caleb J. Hall**, 11/15/24

**Brenda Joe Hampton**, 6/11/25, Sparta, TN

**Franklin M. Haney**, 1966, Bachelor of Science, 3/27/25, Cleveland, TN

**Deborah S. Hannah**, 1978, Bachelor of Science, 1980, Bachelor of Science  
1988, Master of Arts, 1/15/25, Cookeville, TN

**James D. Hannah**, 2012, Bachelor of Science, 8/13/25, McMinnville, TN

**June Harbison**, 1946, Bachelor of Science, 4/16/25, Knoxville, TN

**Gary R. Harrell**, 1967, Bachelor of Science, 1973, Master of Arts,  
1976, Specialist in Education, 8/14/25, McMinnville, TN

**Mr. Steve Hashe**, 3/28/25, Kingsport, TN

**Donna Sparks Haskins**, 1969, Bachelor of Science  
12/18/24, Old Hickory, TN

**Mr. Tommy A. Haskins**, 1974, Bachelor of Science, 11/13/24, Hohenwald, TN

**Phillip E. Haynes**, 11/2/24, Nashville, TN

**Barbara J. Headrick**, 1953, Bachelor of Science, 10/9/24, Oak Ridge, TN

**Lyman O. Heidtke Jr.**, 1965, Bachelor of Science, 12/15/24, Nashville, TN

**Ronnie D. Hembree**, 1971, Bachelor of Science, 9/9/25, Cookeville, TN

**Mrs. Mary Faith Henderson**, 1953, Bachelor of Science  
9/25/25, Galveston, TX

**Ed Henley**, 1958, Bachelor of Science, 11/30/24, Manchester, TN

**Perry Henry**, 1956, Bachelor of Science, 3/30/25, Nolensville, TN

**Greg Hensley**, 1990, Bachelor of Science, 12/20/24, Fairview, TN

**Mr. William Hewett**, 3/6/25

**David A. Higgs**, 1977, Bachelor of Science, 4/7/25, Savannah, GA

**Roger L. Holt**, 1/10/25, Cookeville, TN

**Tony G. Honeycutt**, 1975, Bachelor of Science, 8/23/25, Asheville, NC

**Ms. Dean Howard**, 3/11/25

**James E. Howard**, 1965, Bachelor of Science, 1/2/25, Ocoee, TN

**Elena F. Huddleston**, 1969, Bachelor of Science, 2/15/25, Oak Ridge, TN

**Michael A. Hudson**, 1973, Bachelor of Science, 4/21/25, Knoxville, TN

**John C. Hurst**, 1967, Bachelor of Science, 2/17/25, Shepherdsville, KY

**Janie Strange Ingram**, 1971, Bachelor of Science  
1989, Master of Arts, 6/25/25, Ooltewah, TN

**James R. Inman**, 1950, Bachelor of Science, 10/11/24, Kingston, TN

**Lorella Breeden Jennings**, 1995, Bachelor of Science, 12/15/24, Grimsley, TN

**Barbara Ann-Saylors Jett**, 3/1/25, Hendersonville, TN

**Chandler Johns**, 2006, Bachelor of Science, 5/17/25, Cookeville, TN

**Joe R. Johnson**, 1949, Bachelor of Science, 11/16/24, Gainesboro, TN

**Mrs. Mary Johnson**, 3/24/25, Wellington, TX

**Ms. Mary B. Jones**, 4/5/25, Fort Walton Beach, FL

**Billy G. Jonston**, 1954, Bachelor of Science, 1971, Master of Arts  
8/15/24, Cookeville, TN

**John Jouett**, 1953, Bachelor of Science, 9/10/24, Manchester, TN

**John W. Joyce**, 1/28/25, Cookeville, TN

**Lauren F. Kardatzke**, 8/13/24, Maryville, TN

**Graham S. Kash**, 1/4/25, Cookeville, TN

**Donna S. Kidd**, 1954, Bachelor of Science, 4/25/25, Cookeville, TN

**Mr. Joe K. Kilgore II**, 1988, Bachelor of Science, 12/12/24, Columbia, TN

**Joanne Kimsey**, 1956, Bachelor of Science, 5/22/25, Dickson, TN

**Hubert B. Kinsler**, 1961, Bachelor of Science, 1/5/25, Oak Ridge, TN

**Nancy G. Knowlton**, 1980, Bachelor of Science, 2/23/25, Cookeville, TN

**Claudine Lacy**, 11/20/24, Cookeville, TN

**Tom N. Lacy**, 1963, Bachelor of Science, 6/6/25, Winchester, TN

**Mark Lanctot**, Non-Degree Alum, 2/12/25, Pleasant Valley, CT

**Joseph K. Lesko**, 11/13/24

**Sam D. Loftis**, 1967, Bachelor of Science, 6/3/25, Rocky Point, NC

**Ray Lollar**, 1962, Bachelor of Science, 5/29/25, Cookeville, TN

**William Love**, 6/7/25, Cookeville, TN

**Shirley Mackie**, 4/16/25, Cookeville, TN

**Dorothy J. Madewell**, 1958, Bachelor of Science, 1/22/25, Charlotte, NC

**Brian D. Maffett**, 1986, Bachelor of Science, 10/23/24, Cookeville, TN

**Bettye Jo Manning**, 1951, Bachelor of Science, 2/2/25, Alexandria, TN

**Ms. Doris W. Marlow**, 7/2/25, Kokomo, IN

**Kathleen B. Marshall**, 8/16/24, Blackwood, NJ

**Larry C. Marter**, 11/24/24

**Jim H. Martin**, 1968, Bachelor of Science, 12/28/24, Clarkrange, TN

**Kay Martin**, 1960, Bachelor of Science, 2/1/25, Spartanburg, SC

**Mrs. Gaynell Mason**, 10/31/24

**Mary B. Matthews**, 10/17/24, Cookeville, TN

**Jerry S. McCall**, 1965, Bachelor of Science, 2/2/25, Kingston Springs, TN

**Sarah McClard**, 10/9/24, Lafayette, TN

**Melisa R. McCollough**, 1987, Bachelor of Science, 4/23/25, Cookeville, TN

**Gloria S. McCrary**, 1983, Master of Arts, 1/31/25, Cookeville, TN

**Mr. David P. McCulley, Sr.**, 1964, Bachelor of Science, 1976, Master of Arts  
1978, Specialist in Education, 3/22/25, Sparta, TN

**James E. McNabb**, 1953, Bachelor of Science, 12/4/24, Oak Ridge, TN

**Ben McNew**, 1973, Bachelor of Science, 5/27/25, Cookeville, TN

**Bradford D. McNew**, 1994, Bachelor of Science, 10/12/24, Atlantic Beach, FL

**Zachary T. Medley**, Non-Degree Alum, 10/26/24, Cookeville, TN

**Charles Menoche**, 1988, Bachelor of Science, 9/3/24, Newington, CT

**Mike Migliore**, 1970, Bachelor of Science, 6/29/25, Cookeville, TN

**Delores Miklaszewicz**, 9/9/25, Greenfield, WI

**Ronnie W. Miller**, Non-Degree Alum, 6/19/25, Chattanooga, TN

**Hubart T. Milton**, 1950, Bachelor of Science, 4/14/25, Knoxville, TN

**Bennie S. Montgomery**, 1965, Bachelor of Science, 2/6/25, Cookeville, TN

**John Morgan**, 1970, Bachelor of Science, 5/1/25, Collinsville, AL

**Elise B. Morris**, 10/27/24, Sparta, TN

**Carolyn S. Moyers**, 1972, Bachelor of Science, 5/29/25, Tazewell, TN

**Susan E. Muniz**, 1969, Bachelor of Science, 7/20/25, Franklin, TN

**William R. Mutchie**, 1984, Bachelor of Science, 2/1/25, Palatka, FL

**Mary R. Myatt**, 9/26/25, Baxter, TN

**Hollie R. Myers**, 1962, Bachelor of Science, 2/20/25, Hartsville, TN

**Linda Nabors**, Non-Degree Alum, 2/5/25, Cookeville, TN

**Luther Neal Jr.**, 1960, Bachelor of Science, 3/21/25, Manchester, TN

**Patricia L. Netherton**, 1973, Bachelor of Science, 6/18/25, Antioch, TN

**Wayne Nichols**, 4/6/25, Cookeville, TN

**Gary L. Nixon**, 1971, Bachelor of Science, 1978, Master of Arts,  
1985, Specialist in Education, 4/6/25, Murfreesboro, TN

**Richard E. Norman**, 1982, Bachelor of Science, 2/5/25, Huntsville, AL

**Gene North**, 1967, Bachelor of Science, 5/25/25, Morristown, TN

**Argie L. Norwood**, 1990, Bachelor of Science, 1/18/25, Hendersonville, TN

**Jon Pace**, 1989, Bachelor of Science, 3/20/25, Germantown, TN

**Mr. Dick Pack**, 1972, Bachelor of Science, 3/12/25, Tullahoma, TN

**Gary Palmer**, 6/25/25, Cookeville, TN

**B.T. Parham**, 1951, Bachelor of Science, 11/28/24, Cookeville, TN

**Joel D. Paris**, 1971, Bachelor of Science, 10/2/24, Cleveland, TN

**Craig Parker**, 1980, Bachelor of Science, 6/10/25, Harriman, TN

**William R. Parker**, 1970, Bachelor of Science, 8/24/24, Hillsboro, TN

**John C. Parks Jr.**, Non-Degree, Basic Program, 7/23/25, Clarksville, TN

**Fred Parsons**, 1981, Bachelor of Science, 2/28/25, Cookeville, TN

**Martin Paskov**, 4/19/25, Sparta, TN

**Rebecca C. Patterson**, 1956, Bachelor of Arts, 5/4/25, Clarksville, TN

**Ralph Austin Pedigo**, 1962, Bachelor of Science, 9/20/25, Chattanooga, TN

**Lyna F. Pennycuff**, 1983, Master of Arts, 1994, Specialist in Education  
8/25/24, Jamestown, TN

**Petya L. Perkins**, 4/18/25, Shelby, NC

**Bill Perkins**, 1970, Bachelor of Science, 10/24/24, Myrtle Beach, SC

**Carol Pharris**, 1963, Bachelor of Science, 1975, Master of Arts, 1/30/25, Lebanon, TN

**Ruth Phipps**, 1999, Bachelor of Fine Arts, 9/3/24, Maryville, TN

**Jim A. Pippin**, 1989, Associate of Science, 6/5/25, Baxter, TN

**Jerry V. Pistole**, 1964, Bachelor of Science, 2/14/25, Cookeville, TN

**Frank Pointer**, 1956, Bachelor of Science, 2/11/25, Nashville, TN

**Mr. Charles Poland Jr.**, 5/15/25, Lovettsville, VA

**Elmer Porter**, 1964, Bachelor of Science, 1/28/25, Dayton, OH

**James B. Porterfield**, 1963, Bachelor of Science, 5/15/25, Milton, TN

**Verna M. Posey**, 2008, Bachelor of Science, 11/28/24, Oneida, TN

**Jim Proffitt**, 1965, Bachelor of Science, 2/22/25, Stone Mountain, GA

**Larry E. Puckett**, 1978, Bachelor of Science, 3/3/25, Jakarta Selatan, Eunetta Randolph, 5/22/25, Baxter, TN

**Terry Rector**, 1965, Bachelor of Science, 1973, Master of Arts 8/29/24, Cookeville, TN

**Justin Richardson**, 1998, Bachelor of Science, 3/17/25, Cookeville, TN

**Leonard Riggio**, 8/27/24, New York, NY

**William F. Roberson**, 1967, Bachelor of Science, 9/26/25, Cookeville, TN

**Edythe L. Roberts**, 1/16/25, Murfreesboro, TN

**Laura Bacon Rose**, 1988, Bachelor of Science, 1994, Master of Arts 8/15/25, Knoxville, TN

**Elizabeth C. Rose**, 8/17/24, Cookeville, TN

**Lynda F. Ryan**, 1965, Bachelor of Science, 8/8/25, Hendersonville, TN

**Roger Ryburn**, 1959, Bachelor of Science, 6/30/25, Oak Ridge, TN

**Jack C. Sallee III**, 1963, Bachelor of Science, 8/23/24, Cookeville, TN

**Evan K. Sampsel**, 2021, Bachelor of Science, 9/13/24, Powell, TN

**Grant W. Sartin**, 2024, Bachelor of Science, 9/4/25, Lenoir City, TN

**Mr. Frank Schmitt**, 7/1/25, Cookeville, TN

**Louise Bell Sealy**, 1953, Bachelor of Science, 12/28/24, Cookeville, TN

**Mr. Frank A. Seifert**, 4/20/25

**Beth Selewski**, 1981, Bachelor of Science, 2/27/25, Nashville, TN

**Gregory P. Shaffer**, 2004, Master of Science, 8/14/24, Knoxville, TN

**Thomas H. Shepherd**, 1969, Bachelor of Science, 8/26/25, Lake Saint Louis, MO

**Mr. Haywood H. Sherrod**, 1961, Bachelor of Science, 10/16/24, Franklin, TN

**Dava Shoffner**, 1/24/25, Knoxville, TN

**Robert A. Shubert**, 1967, Bachelor of Science, 3/19/25, Rougemont, NC

**Frank H. Skold Jr.**, 10/11/24, Cookeville, TN

**Ann Smith**, 1963, Bachelor of Science, 6/26/25, Antioch, TN

**Hunter B. Smith**, 2021, Bachelor of Science, 8/24/24, Grandview, TN

**Camilla K. Sparkman**, 1966, Bachelor of Science, 10/29/24, Old Hickory, TN

**John W. Sparkman**, 1985, Bachelor of Science, 5/26/25, McMinnville, TN

**Judy Stafford**, 6/9/25, Baxter, TN

**Gretta G. Stanger**, 4/3/25, Cookeville, TN

**Lucy J. Stanton**, 1952, Bachelor of Science, 8/17/25, Cookeville, TN

**Randall K. Stoops**, 7/23/25, Cookeville, TN

**Marjorie Meadows Sumner**, 1954, Bachelor of Science 8/13/24, Newnan, GA

**Dan J. Swartling**, 11/21/24, Cookeville, TN

**Justin M. Sweatman-Weaver**, 2020, Bachelor of Science 12/3/24, Chattanooga, TN

**George M. Swisher**, 9/23/25, Kingsport, TN

**June P. Tallent**, 1955, Bachelor of Science, 6/23/25, Spring City, TN

**James D. Townsend**, 1959, Bachelor of Science, 6/16/25, Brentwood, TN

**Doris C. Trimble**, 9/7/24, Fayetteville, TN

**Mrs. Stephanie C. Upson**, 6/30/25, Manhattan, KS

**Jack M. Van Hooser, Sr.**, 1955, Bachelor of Science, 2/27/25, Nashville, TN

**Jonathan VanDoran**, 11/21/24, Pulaski, TN

**Georgia R. Varga**, 1980, Master of Arts, 3/13/25, Mount Juliet, TN

**Jim Waddell**, 1972, Bachelor of Science, 6/3/25, Brownsville, TN

**Charlotte A. Walker**, 4/19/25

**Opless Walker**, 7/14/25, Cookeville, TN

**Connie Wallace**, 1984, Bachelor of Science, 2/17/25, Cookeville, TN

**Lonnie P. Warwick**, 1968, Bachelor of Science, 10/29/24, Mount Hope, WV

**Arthur H. Watson**, 1975, Master of Arts, 8/14/25, Harrogate, TN

**Elaine C. Weatherford**, 10/26/24, Moweaqua, IL

**Dr. Kenneth D. Webster**, 3/22/25, Gainesville, FL

**Mr. Don Welch**, 1963, Bachelor of Science, 2/25/25, Johns Creek, GA

**Gayle T. Welch**, 12/1/24, Nashville, TN

**Larry Whiteaker**, 1968, Bachelor of Science, 3/23/25, Cookeville, TN

**Gail L. Wilkinson**, 1977, Bachelor of Science, 5/16/25, Livingston, TN

**Ross Williams**, 12/14/24, Cookeville, TN

**Dow E. Williamson Jr.**, Non-Degree Alum, 2/27/25, Cookeville, TN

**Cecil Wilmoth**, 6/28/25, Cookeville, TN

**Robert E. Wood**, 1960, Bachelor of Arts, 8/16/24, Kansas City, MO

**Ray B. Woods**, Non-Degree Alum, 9/24/24, Huntsville, AL

**Carroll C. Wright Jr.**, 1960, Bachelor of Science, 1/17/25, Clyde, NC

**Dr. Nick S. Wright**, 1968, Bachelor of Science, 1972, Master of Science 2/7/25, Knoxville, TN

**Gary P. Wyatt**, 1967, Bachelor of Science, 12/25/24, Cookeville, TN

**Robert W. Yahola**, Bachelor of Science, 11/13/24

**Jack Zimmerman**, 8/30/25, Cookeville, TN



## FROM THE ARCHIVES

**Oct. 28, 1986 —**

Tennessee Tech celebrated a cockroach named **Watergate** after he won first place in the Great American Bug Race in West Palm Beach, Florida, though his victory was short-lived when he was eaten by a lizard. The university held a memorial ceremony for the bug, with students, faculty and staff honoring him with music, a balloon release and awards, including the “Extinguished Alumni Award.” President Wallace Prescott declared October 28 as **Watergate Day** and praised the cockroach’s achievement as a symbol of Tech tradition and spirit. In 2025, University Archives and Special Collections revived **Watergate Day** with a special event held in Tucker Stadium in October.