Armour has zest for success

When studying the life of Marine Corps Capt. Vernice Armour (B.S. ’97), it’s best to ask, “What has she not accomplished?” Armour, of Stafford, Va., was the first African-American female pilot in the Marine Corps and first African-American female combat pilot in U.S. military history.

Armour’s resume includes being the second woman on the Metro Nashville Police Department’s motorcycle squad, 2003 Camp Pendleton Female Athlete of the Year and running back for the San Diego Sunfire pro football team. Armour, who was among those honored at the African-American Alumni Awards Ceremony (story, Page 4), plans a June exit from the Corps.

Manyok receives national award

Mabior Manyok (B.Univ.S. ’05), one of the “Lost Boys of Sudan,” was given the President’s Volunteer Service Award April 19 in Washington, D.C., for his work with the government of Southern Sudan. Manyok received the Gold Award, the highest honor. He was 9 when the civil war pitting the Islamic regime of Omar al-Bashir against the mostly Christian and tribal black African natives began in 1983. After fleeing to refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya, Manyok applied to the United Nations for refugee status, which enabled him to come to the U.S. in 1994. In October, Manyok, a naturalized American citizen, began helping the Government of Southern Sudan’s Ministry of Environment, Wildlife and Conservation set up a computer database with equipment donated by the U.N. in the capital city of Juba.

Breaking ground on new Health and Wellness Center

Dignitaries join in the ceremonial groundbreaking for the Campus Recreation Center expansion and new Student Health and Wellness Center Feb. 23. From left are project architect Larry Hart of Thomas, Miller and Partners LLC; Jerry Preston, executive director for the Office of Facilities Development, Tennessee Board of Regents; Dr. Bob Glenn, MTSU vice president for student affairs and provost for enrollment and academic services; Dr. Pat Spangler, Student Health Services physician; Charlie Gregory (B.S. ’83, M.S. ’86), director, Campus Recreation; 48th District State Rep. John Hood (B.S. ’54, M.Ed. ’74), D-Murfreesboro; 13th District State Sen. Bill Ketron (B.S. ’76), R-Murfreesboro; MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee; 16th District State Sen. Jim Tracy, R-Shelbyville; and Rick Chapman, director, Student Health Services. Story, Page 3.

‘Alumni House’

Painting adds pizzazz to office

By Randy Weiler jweiler@mtsu.edu

Recent MTSU graduate Denise Johnson spent four to five months during the 2006-07 academic year on a special project that is now in the reception room of the MTSU Alumni House.

It’s an oil and acrylic painting of what Johnson sim-

Breaking ground on new Health and Wellness Center

New grads stroll down memory lane

May grad Denise Johnson’s “Alumni House” painting sits above the mantel and fireplace in the Office of Alumni Relations.

New grads stroll down memory lane

May grads Jennifer Holder, left, Jose Becton and Cristol Camacho view an old yearbook while attending the Commencement Reception May 4. Story, Page 4.
Alumni contribute $36,000 to freshman scholarships fund

T he MTSU Alumni Association Chapter Scholarship Program had another great year. Because of the generosity of alumni from Tennessee and across the country, the Alumni Association will be awarding $36,000 worth of scholarships to incoming MTSU freshmen this fall. Each recipient will receive $1,000 for the 2007-08 academic year to help cover college costs. Scholarships were awarded in Davidson, Lincoln, Rutherford, Montgomery, Williamson, Coffee and Wilson counties. Incoming freshmen from the states of Texas, Virginia and Georgia received scholarships, as well.

“We have the most supportive alumni around,” said Paul Wydra, assistant director for Alumni Relations. “Our alumni know the importance of scholarships and what they can give to a new college student from their own area.”

The Alumni Scholarship Program gives alumni the opportunity to present scholarships to the winners each year. This creates a personal approach to the scholarship program, as alumni can actually meet the students who are awarded the scholarships in their areas or counties. For more information on contributing to the Alumni Scholarship Program or to be a presenter in your area, contact Wydra by calling 615-904-8199.

Foundation Graduate Student Scholarships awarded from Senior Gifts Campaign

MTSU graduate students Rachel Fuqua (B.S. ‘05), second from left, of Nashville and Matt Kilian (B.S. ’05) of Morrison, Tenn., received the first MTSU Foundation Graduate Student Scholarship. “Scholarships ($1,000 and $550, respectively) to further their educations. They are shown with Dr. Jim Rust, professor of psychology and their advisee, and Alumni Relations Director Ginger Freeman. These scholarships were funded through gifts from graduating seniors in 2005-06.

4th generation alumnus

Matthew “Matt” Reed is a May 2007 MTSU graduate. He graduated in three years with a 4.0 GPA, at 20 years of age. Reed entered MTSU as a Presidential Scholarship recipient; was a member of Beta Gamma Sigma, a Jennings A. Jones College of Business honor society; and a member of The National Exchange Club. Reed follows in footsteps of family members.

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mtalumni.com

Alumnus earns $336K for Vandy postgrad work

Matthew Bullington, a 20-year-old recent graduate of Middle Tennessee State University was awarded a full scholarship to attend Vanderbilt University, where he will simultaneously earn a Ph.D. and a J.D. In addition to being one of only three students enrolled in the program, Bullington’s scholarship is $336,000 for six years. He has been awarded $36,000 per year to cover tuition and fees and an $18,000 per year stipend.

“I have been very blessed,” said Bullington. Bullington, a Murfreesboro resident of 10 years, graduated from MTSU in December of 2006 with an honors degree in economics. He received offers from both the law and graduate schools at other universities, including the University of Tennessee and George Mason University in Virginia. The program at Vanderbilt, however, will allow him to complete both a Ph.D. in economics and a law degree in only six years. Bullington earned his bachelor’s degree in 3 1/2 years. He also completed more than 30 additional credit hours and was actively involved on campus.

“I’ve taken two years of Mandarin just for fun,” said Bullington. “I have really pursued my education wholeheartedly.”

In his spare time, Bullington was a Student Government Association senator, served on the SGA traffic court, and was actively involved in three honor societies, among several other extracurricular activities. He also worked as a tutor for Disabled Student Services and the MTSU athletic department.

Bullington says he plans to stay in the Nashville area to pursue a career and eventually wants to teach at the university level.

From staff reports

Reed follows in footsteps of family members

Contributors: Gina Fann, Gina Logue, John Lynch, Lisa Rollins, Paula Morton and MTSU Office of Alumni Relations staff
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Rwandan hero will be Convocation speaker; book continues summer reading program

From staff reports

MTSU’s 2007 Summer Reading selection is An Ordinary Man by Paul Rusesabagina, who is scheduled to be the guest speaker during Fall Convocation.

An Ordinary Man is the autobiography of the Rwandan hotel manager who saved the lives of 1,268 of his countrymen during the 100-day genocidal madness in 1994 that left nearly 1 million people dead. Rusesabagina turned the luxurious Hotel Milles Collines into a refuge for Tutsi and moderate Hutu refugees while fending off their would-be killers with diplomacy and deception.

The rest of the world learned more about Rusesabagina in the 2004 film “Hotel Rwanda,” which was nominated for three Academy Awards, including one for actor Don Cheadle, who portrayed him. In An Ordinary Man, Rusesabagina tells the story of his childhood, retaces his accidental path to heroism, revisits the 100 days in which he was the only thing standing between his “guests” and a hideous death, and recounts his subsequent life as a refugee and activist, working to uphold his vow, “Never again.” A recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the National Civil Rights Museum’s 2005 Freedom Award, he now lives in Brussels, Belgium.

Incoming freshmen will be expected to have read the book before fall classes start Aug. 27. All University 1010 classes will discuss An Ordinary Man.

Academic Support Director Laurie Witherow is actively recruiting faculty from other academic departments to use the text. She’s eager to hear suggestions now from professors on the best use for the book in their classes; she can be reached at liblib@mtsu.edu or at 615-898-2339.

Rising seniors from eight Rutherford County high schools also will write essays on the book, which then will be read in the amphitheater of the Paul W. Martin Sr. University Honors Building.

Rusesabagina is scheduled to address attendees at Convocation on Sunday, Aug. 26, at 2 p.m. in Murphy Center. He also will sign copies of the book the night before, Saturday, Aug. 25, beginning at 7 at Linebaugh Library, 105 W. Vine St., Murfreesboro.

An Ordinary Man may be purchased on campus and at local bookstores. It’s available in hardback and paperback, and online sellers also may have used copies. Faculty interested in using An Ordinary Man in their classrooms this fall may contact Sammer Patterson at the Academic Support Center (615-898-2339 or spatter@mtsu.edu) to receive a review copy for evaluation.

Rec Center expansion plans unveiled

From staff reports

University officials broke ground Feb. 23 on the $17 million, 18-month expansion project to better serve students, faculty, staff and the surrounding community. Located on Blue Raider Drive the expansion will add 22,000 square feet of workout and meeting space to the Rec Center’s footprint and create a brand-new, 17,000-square-foot Student Health and Wellness Center at the west side of the existing facility.

When completed in fall 2008, the Rec Center expansion will include a new entrance lobby, additional weight-room space, a sport club/dance room, an expanded cardio area, an outdoor recreation equipment room, a group meeting room, a health-assessment room, a family changing room and a new first-floor office suite.

The new Student Health and Wellness Center, which will replace the existing 10,000-square-foot McFarland Health Services Building constructed in 1969, will include 22 exam rooms; administrative and provider offices; a pharmacy with remote drive-up access; X-ray and expanded lab services; an allergy, immunization and travel clinic to support International Experiential Learning Programs, observation and procedure rooms; and more.

4th Excellence in Aviation Party set June 16

The fourth annual Excellence in Aviation Scholarship Party will take place Saturday, June 16, at the home of Bruce Thomas (B.S.’87), 421 Beacon Hill Drive, Mt. Juliet, Tenn. The party, which starts at 4 p.m. and costs $10 per person at the door, includes live entertainment, food, a silent auction and much more. Last year, the event raised more than $20,000 in scholarships for MTSU students. To register, please call 800-533-MTSU (6878) or visit mtaalumni.com.
Some 1,998 new alumni crossed the graduation stage this spring, and the MTSU National Alumni Association welcomed them May 4 with its first Commencement Reception. Graduating seniors and their families were invited to the MTSU Alumni House to be welcomed as new members of the alumni association. Students also had the opportunity to introduce their families to their favorite professors, advisers and staff members.

“This is a way for the university community to come together and congratulate these students on their accomplishments,” said Ginger Freeman (B.B.A. ‘89, M.Ed. ‘92), director of Alumni Relations. It also gives us the opportunity to show the graduates that they will always be a part of MTSU and have a home at the Alumni House.”

The new MTSU Alumni House on Middle Tennessee Boulevard has been open for just over a year. Graduates and their families had the opportunity to tour the house and take pictures on the grounds.

All university faculty and staff members were invited and encouraged to attend.

“We know students have a bond with the faculty and staff members that they work with on campus, and they want to share these connections with their families,” said Freeman.

“For many students, this is their first interaction with the alumni association, and we want them to become familiar with us, so that they will feel welcome to participate in future alumni activities,” added Marla Frisby (B.S. ’95), chair of the young alumni committee.

“This reception was a great introduction to the alumni association for the new graduates. We hope this tradition grows with each commencement and each new alumni member and their families will continue to be active participants in MTSU events,” Freeman said.

African-American Awards Ceremony

2 students, 3 alumni recognized

April 20 was an exciting evening for the MTSU African-American Alumni Society. Not only did two current students, Julie Paige and Catherine White, receive $1,000 each from the Al Wilkerson Memorial Scholarship Fund, but notable African-American alumni also were celebrated for their outstanding contributions to their respective professions at the annual African-American Alumni Awards Ceremony.

Many MTSU notables, including President Sidney A. McPhee, were on hand to support the occasion. Sibling alumni Victor and Cedric Caldwell were honored for their considerable success in the music industry. Marine Capt. Vernice Armour, whose military success has been featured on national television, was feted as well. (See Page 1 for more about Armour.)

Lastly, the leadership baton of the society was formally passed from Mary “Beanie” Secrest to Vincent Windrow, who will serve a two-year term as president of the African-American Alumni Council.

MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee, left, 2007-08 Al Wilkerson Memorial Scholarship recipients Julie Paige and Catherine White, and alumni Vincent Windrow and Mary Secrest enjoy the festivities. Paige and White were awarded $1,000 scholarships.
Young left MTSU for country music career

By Randy Weiler randy@mtsu.edu

Chris Young appears to have what it takes to be a country music star: ruggedly handsome good looks, a great voice to go with great lyrics for several hit tunes, and a wholesome, refreshing attitude that’s mature beyond his 21 years of age.

Several years ago, Young, a Murfreesboro native and son of MTSU alumna Becky Harris (B.S. ’84), spent a semester in MTSU’s recording industry program, just as he did at Belmont University.

 Fate would have it that he would not finish course requirements at either university. Instead, Young kept singing and playing his guitar until he competed in and won the nationally televised “Nashville Star,” which led to an RCA recording contract. Then he hit the road, playing large and small venues all across the United States (200 to 250 show dates), including the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville.

“Obviously, there is a reason he keeps returning to perform on the Opry stage,” said alumnus Pete Fisher (B.S. ’97), vice president and general manager of the Opry and a 2004 MTSU Distinguished Alumnus honoree. “I’m very proud of Chris and all he has accomplished. He is truly a special artist whom we enjoy having on the Opry from time to time.

“Chris, like so many great country music stars, is the sixth annual Chris Young Fan Club Party June 9. (View his upcoming appearances at chrisyoungcountry.com or myspace.com/chrisyoungmusic.) His summer a series of fairs and festivals.

Young, who has had several hit songs including “Drinkin’ Me Lonely,” said his rise to stardom came from “doing a lot of free shows” and appearances.

“I would play in front of 30 people in coffee shops or get in with a house band,” he said, adding that financially he was “either in the hole or breaking even” while “creating a loyal fan base” that has grown tremendously.

Sporting a black cowboy hat and cowboy boots, the 6-foot-4, Young said the “kind of person that I am” is what drives him. “Doing something better than what I did last week” has become his mantra.

His advice to current students: “Going to every event you can. Commit to yourself to do as much as possible.”
assurelengen Corp.

Roy Vaughan (B.S. ’82, Brentwood, Tenn., founding partner of Katcher Vaughan PC, Building Relationships), has been elected chair of the executive committee of the Counselors Academy section of the Public Relations Society of America for 2007.

Karen Austin (B.S. ’96, M.A. ’05), Murfreesboro, is the associate director for the MTSU Career and Employment Center.

Shane Berryhill (B.S.’98), Chattanooga, Tenn., has had his novel, Chincie Fortune and the Outlaws, selected for inclusion in the New York Public Library’s Books for the Teen Age 2007. Amy Allen Evans (B.S.N. ’07), Alexandria, Va., has been a registered nurse for 10 years and is working on a master of nursing degree.

Joey Free (B.S. ’96), Irving, Texas, has published his book, Two Sides of a Cyprus Hill, a novel for 11th-grade students. He works in the Dallas/Fort Worth-based public relations office of Travelocity.


Lindsay Howell (B.S. ’98), Fletcher, N.C., is the director of community relations for Pardee Hospital in Hendersonville, N.C.

Robert F. Mattis (M.B.A. ’93), Old Hickory, Tenn., has moved his office to Middle Tennessee.

Juana Donlan (B.A. ’98), Midlothian, Va., has started her own aromatherapy products company called Botanical Buddies (botanicalbuddies.com).

Marcelo Pennell (B.S. ’97), Franklin, Tenn., has been nominated for Grammy Award as an engineer in the “Best Engineered Album, Non-Classical” category.

Woody Ratterman III (B.B.A. ’95), Nashville, Tenn., has been elected president for Titan Lending Group.

Ken Youngstead (B.S. ’94), Franklin, Tenn., has been named to the Special Olympics Tennessee board of directors.

Rebecca Belcher (D.A. ’08), Kankakee, Ill., was named a Fullbright Scholar for the 2005-06 academic year and was a visiting professor for the University of Chiangdaogou in Burkina Faso, West Africa. She serves as a professor of English at Olivet Nazarene University in Bourbonnais, Ill.

Jill Roberson-Blatt, PA-C (B.S. ’03), Murfreesboro, is working with Pfizer Corp. to develop vaccines for African-American women with HIV. Her goal is to open a women’s and children’s HIV clinic.

April Booten (B.S. ’04), Murfreesboro, received her master of physical therapy degree from the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in May 2006 and is employed at Baptist Hospital in Nashville, Tenn.

Brandon Boulton (B.S. ’02), Murfreesboro, received his master degree from the Cecil C. Humphrey School of Law at the University of Memphis and now practices with the Eric L. Bush Law Firm in Manchester, Tenn.

B. Curt Brackin (B.A. ’03), Knoxville, Tenn., is a staff accountant at Clayton Mobile Homes corporate office in Maryville, Tenn.

Lynn Cautherns (Ed.S. ’06), Pulaski, Tenn., has been elected president-elect of the Tennessee Association of School Librarians.

Scott Gardner (B.A. ’05), Bloomington, Ind., is attending law school at Indiana University School of Public Relations for America for 2007.

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Middle Tennessee's future will continue to be exciting, and our alumni are a vital part of that success. Please use the resources available to stay informed. Visit our beautiful campus often. Join us for campus events, be it a football game or a dedication ceremony for one of our new buildings. Your participation and involvement will help keep us “Tennessee's Best.”

MTSU National Alumni Association President Bob Lamb received his B.S. in 1969 and his M.S. in 1977. He is a former president of the Blue Raider Club and Blue Raider Athletic Association and an MTSU Foundation board member. He received the Distinguished Alumni Award in 2000. He is a managing broker with Bob Parks Realty, and he and his wife, Jan, live in Murfreesboro, where Bob serves as chairman of the Murfreesboro planning commission.

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MTSU Alumni Association Board 2006-07
Allen assumes dual role

Dr. Michael D. Allen assumed the duties of vice provost for research and dean of the College of Graduate Studies on March 1, MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee announced. Allen had served as associate vice president for Research at Texas Tech University since 2010.

“Dr. Allen brings a wealth of experience in strategic planning to help us reach even greater heights and fortify our research infrastructure,” McPhee said. “Additionally, I want MTSU to be a destination of choice for the discerning learner who is seeking high-quality graduate programs and unique educational opportunities unavailable anywhere else in the state. Dr. Allen is coming to MTSU to lead a team of dedicated professionals to achieve that end.”

Allen succeeds Dr. Robert F. Carlton, chair of the Department of Physics and Astronomy, who served as interim vice provost for graduate studies for the past year.

“MTSU is in a period of dynamic change, transitioning from a university that has focused primarily on undergraduate education to one that also supports graduate education to one that also supports research and education,” Allen said. “I look forward to working with President McPhee and Provost (Kaylene) Gebert during this dynamic change.”

Next graduation: Aug. 11

Summer commencement will be held starting at 10 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 11, in Murphy Center, officials in the Office of Executive Vice President and Provost said. Faculty Senate President Tony Johnston will be the commencement speaker.

Grad studies finds new home

The College of Graduate Studies and Office of Research and Sponsored Programs have a new home. They have relocated to the Sam H. Ingram Building, 2269 Middle Tennessee Blvd. For more information, call 615-898-2840.

MTSU unveils sports complex

Just in time for the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association BlueCross Spring Fling, MTSU held a ribbon-cutting for the $4 million Middle Tennessee Track and Soccer Complex. It is located at the corner of Greenland Drive and Champion Way on the north end of campus.

In addition to the state high school competition, it will be home to the MTSU track and field and soccer programs.

MTSU will serve as host for the 2009 Sun Belt Conference Track championships, the league announced.

Hayes, alum Insell earn coaching honors

Veteran coaches Dean Hayes (track and field) and Rick Insell (women’s basketball) continue to gain professional accolades.

Hayes, whose team earned its second successive Sun Belt Conference Outdoor Track and Field championship May 13 in Lafayette, La., was voted Sun Belt Coach of the Year for the 14th time.

Insell (B.S. ‘77) learned March 16 that he would be inducted into the National Federation of State High School Associations National Hall of Fame July 4 at the Desert Springs Marriott Hotel in Palm Desert, Calif.

Before coming to coach the MTSU Lady Raiders, Insell led Shelbyville Central High School to a record 10 state championships and 775-148 record (an .840 winning percentage).

By Randy Weiler     photos@mtalumni.com

Adding luster to Hall of Fame

A long with lots of sports memorabilia, a $325,000 cash prize has turned the Kennon Sports Hall of Fame into a venue where one can wax nostalgic about MTSU’s rich athletic history.

The building is off to a great start for exhibiting sports memories dating to 1911, when the then-Middle Tennessee State Normal School was beginning the ascent to take it to the nearly 23,000 student body enrollment that MTSU boasts today.

At the forefront is an exhibit recognizing all 94 members in the hall of fame. A touch-screen kiosk highlights 206 inductees Vince Hall, Dione Rose and the late Jack Yearwood. Later this year, it will be updated with the 2007 inductees, who will be recognized Sept. 28-29.

Visitors must look up to see the major cost of the project: a big-screen TV. It can show live sporting events or videotaped programs. An affordable 75-minute photo and video presentation, edited by MT Media Relations’ Bradley Lambert, can stop visitors in their tracks.

“There’s no particular order (of photos),” said Jim Simpson, director of the Varsity Club. “It’s just the history of MTSU athletics in pictures. A lot of athletes through the years are pictured here.”

And video … like the game-ending blocked field goal by the Raiders’ defense to beat Vanderbilt, 17-15, in 2005; … MTSU’s 50-44 NCAA Tournament triumph against Kentucky in 1982; … Mike Buck’s perfect shooting night against Florida State; … the Lady Raiders’ recent NCAA Tournament appearances.

You can find history by decades and an area that’s pros and Olympic athletes; and much more.

The building is used for hall of fame induction ceremonies, news conferences and athletic alumni gatherings, Simpson said.

The Kennon Sports Hall of Fame usually is open during normal business hours Monday through Friday, except holidays, when MTSU staff are present, and for special events. For more information, call 615-898-5632.

Blue Raiders’ 2007 football schedule

Robin Quackenbush/MTSU Athletics

Legend track and field Coach Dean Hayes stands near a display case honoring both him and former athlete/coach/athletic director James “Boots” Donnelly (B.S. ’65, M.Ed. ’67).

MTSU staff, alumni, players’ parents and fans mingled and mingle during the Lady Raiders’ trip to the Sun Belt Conference women’s basketball tournament. Later, in the NCAA Tournament, the Lady Raiders fell 73-59 to Marist to see their season end.

Following the Lady Raiders’ tourney quests

MTSU’s blue athletic jerseys: #14, worn by baseball player Danny Moore in ’77, and #25, worn by basketball player Kim Webb in ’87.

Also to be found: the 1960s golf legacy; the well-documented MTSU-Tennessee Tech totem pole; “Harriers,” areas for pros and Olympic athletes; and much more.

The building houses the four Blue Raiders’ retired jerseys: #14, worn by quarterback Teddy Morris from the 1965 season; #40, worn by basketball player George Sorrell in ’75, 2007; and #25, worn by basketball player Kim Webb in ’87.

MTSU unveils sports complex

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