Centennial celebration
Sept. 9 Gala begins yearlong focus on ‘Pride. Tradition. Excellence.’

From staff reports

It’s an event 100 years in the making, a can’t-miss, once-in-a-lifetime celebration — the MTSU Blue Tie Centennial Gala! The 100-year “Traditions of Excellence” event will be held Friday, Sept. 9, in Murfreesboro.

A 6 p.m. reception will be followed by a 7:30 dinner and dancing at the Embassy Suites Murfreesboro Hotel and Conference Center.

“The Blue Tie Gala will be an exquisite event worthy of honoring such a monumental occasion as 100 years of excellence in education,” said Michelle Stepp, associate director in the Office of Alumni Relations. “MTSU family and friends will come together in celebration while commemorating their place in MTSU’s history and seeing the University into the next 100 years.”

“We have been planning, sorting, listing, pulling people together,” added Hanna Witherspoon, a fellow gala committee member and an alumna of the MTSU Class of 1964.

“We are anticipating this will be a once-in-a-lifetime event. It will be a really exciting time, an event to commemorate the contributions of alumni to this state, the nation and the world,” she added.

The celebration, which will host 1,200 people, will surround the guests with “refined elegance with MTSU blue grandeur” and will feature dual entrée dinner and a few surprises,” Stepp noted.

The MTSU School of Music will provide entertainment for the reception and dinner. Super T and the Tyler Smith Revue will provide dance music, and a wine reception and cash bar will be part of the festivities.

Bob Lamb (’69, ’77), who serves as chair of the all-inclusive Centennial Committee, said organizers who have been “working diligently” for (See ‘Centennial,’ Page 4)

‘Alumni Record’ ends 8-year run

By Randy Weiler  jwelier@mtsu.edu

Alumni and University friends, you are reading the final edition of The Alumni Record.

This eight-page quarterly, award-winning publication is exiting, “sunsetting” if you will, after a successful eight-year, 32-edition run. A reinvented, glossy, 48- to 64-page MTSU Magazine has returned, taking The Alumni Record’s place.

My, how time flies. It has been a rewarding experience working with many creative people across campus and beyond, and developing business relationships (and friendships) with alumni — many of whom carry the MTSU legacy around the world — and others.

Sitting in the editor’s chair has been interesting. Daunting, yes, but it always was a satisfying task to produce a publication mailed to about 70,000 alumni when we launched in September 2003 and grew to the nearly 92,000-member circulation for this final edition. Including spouses and others and faculty and staff, about 100,000 people can touch this printed version. Untold numbers of others can view it online.

With this vehicle, I am proud of the manner in which we have carried the MTSU message forward. You are the sole reason we have strived to bring you an attractive, informative and (See ‘Alumni,’ Page 4)

Distinguished Alumni
4 recognized during Spring Commencement

The Spring 2011 Commencement at MTSU featured five very special graduates as the 2010-11 Distinguished Alumni were presented their awards on May 7.

The Distinguished Alumni Award is the highest award given to an MTSU alumnus with the Young Alumni Achievement Award being the pinnacle award for an (See ‘Distinguished,’ Page 2)
From staff reports

Longtime MTSU supporter James O. Gist Sr. recently joined an elite group of MTSU alumni and friends in the 40-year level of the Signal Society. Gist donated to MTSU for the 40th distinct year during the 2010-11 fiscal year. The Signal Society is the MTSU Foundation’s giving recognition club which honors faithful annual supporters to the University, beginning at 20 years of giving and at five-year increments thereafter. “MTSU’s current and future success rests heavily on the generosity of our alumni and friends,” notes Nick Perlick, director of development. “Mr. Gist’s remarkable loyalty and commitment has spanned more than four decades, and we are extremely grateful.”

MTSU celebrates 40-year donor Gist with Signal Society entry

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The Alumni Record/www.mtalumni.com

Final edition (June 2011)
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Distinguished from Page 1

In the Professional Achievement category, the Distinguished Alumni Award was presented to Mark Coyne (’85). Coyne is the director of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation.
Pete Taylor (’60) was presented the Distinguished Alumni Award in the category of Service to the Community, recognizing the countless hours of his volunteer time devoted to many nonprofit organizations in the Killeen, Texas, area.
The Distinguished Alumni Award in the Service to University category was presented to Don and Hanna Witherspoon (both ’64). Upon retiring in Murfreesboro, the Witherspoons have devoted immeasurable amounts of their time to serving on various MTSU committees and clubs such as the MTSU Foundation, MTSU Alumni Association, Blue Raider Athletic Association and others. They also established the Rutherford County Alumni Scholarship.
The Young Alumni Achievement Award was presented to Michael Lattorre (’03). In his eight years postgraduation, he has opened his own successful audio workstation business. While working with the music industry’s top talent, Lattorre also has won a prestigious Grammy Award.
The Distinguished Alumni and Young Alumni Achievement awards are presented annually by the MTSU Alumni Association. Alumni and friends are encouraged to help recognize the amazing achievements of MTSU graduates by submitting a nomination.
More information about the awards, past recipients and nomination forms can be found online at www.mtalumni.com.
Loud and clear

Two recent surveys boost MTSU’s efforts to keep lines of communication open with its alumni

By Dr. Sidney A. McPhee

I travel around the country, make a point of taking a list of MTSU alumni and their phone numbers to each city I visit. When I call, I like to gauge their opinion of the University and its communication efforts.

On such trips, I can only gather input from a portion of the alumni. That’s what makes MTSU’s electronic surveys so indispensable as we go about the business of serving our multifaceted alumni base.

The results of two recent surveys will help shape interactions and communications with MTSU’s alumni base in the days ahead.

In an effort to better understand how MTSU graduates, both young and old, prefer to engage with the University, opinions and feedback were solicited through a comprehensive alumni attitude survey and also through a smaller survey specific to the re-launched MTSU Magazine.

The surveys represent findings from thousands of people of all ages across the United States about their giving habits and engagement preferences. Based on an early review of the results and the comments, I believe we’ve struck a positive chord with our alumni in regards to some of the changes occurring in MTSU’s marketing and communications efforts. But, not surprisingly given the significant changes occurring, questions remain.

The surveys requested significant feedback on the ways the University communicates with its alumni base and specifically about what methods of communication alumni prefer. Based on that input, we’ll adjust and further develop the content of our newly re-launched MTSU Magazine, which had a strong debut in April.

The next edition of the magazine will be delivered in mid-August, just before the University’s 100th birthday on Sept. 11. It replaces The Alumni Record as the primary print platform for keeping people abreast of the great things happening on campus and in the alumni community. The glossy, full-color magazine also represents the alumni base’s desire for a high-quality, thoughtful publication about Tennessee’s best university — MTSU!

Graduates also told us that they depend heavily on MTSU’s digital offerings to stay informed about news and events happening on the campus.

In an effort to move toward an even more immediate communications strategy, the University soon will unveil the new MTSUNews.com website, a dynamic, content-rich, digital news page regularly updated with key information. The website, set to go live before the fall semester, will replace The Record, MTSU’s twice-monthly faculty and staff newspaper that circulated on campus.

Our MTSUnews.com site will make our news available in real-time in a format as easily accessible to alumni living in Montana as in Murfreesboro. It will work in concert with our existing alumni web portal, Mtalumni.com, which remains the digital home of our alumni association.

The surveys were wide-ranging in scope. A more complete rundown of survey results will be forthcoming. For now, though, here are a few other survey findings:

• While not all alumni are in a position to give back financially to the University, they do regularly back financially to the University, they do regularly

• The alumni base desires more communication regarding University services and benefits; and

• The alumni base desires more effort in the area of career-related programming for students and alumni.

On the eve of celebrating our Centennial, now was the perfect time to evaluate the work we are doing as a University and to explore fresh ways we can serve the MTSU alumni base in the next 100 years. We greatly appreciate the outstanding survey response rate from our alumni.

Rest assured, you have been heard. The survey results will be used as the main tool to gauge the interests of our alumni in the activities and programs we offer going forward, and to shape initiatives — even those beyond our communications processes — as we work to be more responsive to the desires of our alumni to engage more fully with the University.

2011-12 Alumni Legacy Scholarship recipients

The MTSU Alumni Association announces the recipients of the Alumni Legacy Scholarship, created to honor the legacy of an MTSU education and awarded to children of alumni who are sophomores and above at MTSU. The 2011-12 recipients include Samantha Titshaw, left, of Murfreesboro, Forest Bonner of Petersburg, Tenn., David Ezell of Goodlettsville, Tenn., and Tori Craddock of Murfreesboro. Titshaw is the daughter of alumna Susan Allford Titshaw ’80 and input technology major in the College of Business. Bonner is the daughter of alumnus Miriam Bonner ’92 and is an entrepreneurial major. Ezell, the son of alumni Cynthia Moore ’94, is a nursing major. Craddock, the daughter of alumna Jalliana Craddock ’93, is a mathematics major. All four students will receive a $1,000 scholarship for 2011-12.

The scholarship is funded through the annual Alumni Legacy Golf Classic as well as private donations from alumni. For more information about the Alumni Legacy Scholarship or donating to the scholarship, visit www.matalumni.com or call Michelle Stepp at 615-898-2922.
An event of this magnitude and importance requires careful and thoughtful coordination to ensure that it will be a memorable occasion for our University family,” Lamb said. “I dearly appreciate the commitment and efforts of all the committee members who give freely of their time to help ensure that this celebration will be worthy of ‘Tennessee’s Best’ University.”

While reservations for the Gala have moved quickly, those wanting to attend still can add their names to the waiting list. Additional seating is expected to be released soon.

For more information about the Blue Tie Gala, contact the Office of Alumni Relations at 1-800-533-6878.

The Centennial website is www.mtsu.edu/centennial.

It has been a great eight years. Thank you for sharing the journey. These latest developments will allow me to pursue my first love of writing and other assignments.
MTSU’s Spring Commencement degree candidates walk to and across the stage during the May 7 ceremony. Graduates heard alumnus Mark Gwyn (’85), the director of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, deliver the morning commencement address. Alumnus Dr. Hershel “Pat” Wall (’57), special assistant to the president at the University of Tennessee, delivered the afternoon address. A record 2,420 earned degrees in the dual ceremonies.

Record-setting 2,400-plus graduate on May 7

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College of Education building is set to open

The nearly $30 million College of Education Building nears completion. Members of the dean’s office will move in June 6, while faculty will move in during July. A ribbon-cutting ceremony will be held at a later date. For a sneak peek, Dean Lana Seivers (’72), second from right, showed a first-floor lobby area to senior secondary education major Stephen Randolph, left, Womack Family Educational Leadership Professor Aubrey Moseley and May master’s graduate Cori Greenholt.

Byrnes named Liberal Arts dean

MTSU has chosen alumnus, longtime professor, and community leader Dr. Mark Byrnes as the new dean of the College of Liberal Arts. Byrnes (’83), a Murfreesboro native has served as acting and interim dean following the illness and May 2010 death of Dr. John N. McDaniel, who served as MTSU’s dean of liberal arts for 26 years.

“Dr. Byrnes has served with distinction at MTSU as a faculty member, associate dean and interim dean,” said University Provost Dr. Brad Bartel. “The entire University community respects him and looks forward to his upcoming leadership of the College of Liberal Arts.”

Byrnes has taught political science at MTSU since 1991. He was associate dean of from 2006 to 2009.

"Liberal Arts is a large and diverse college, serving 3,600 majors and, through the General Education program, virtually every MTSU student,” said Byrnes. “I’m excited about the opportunity to lead the college and plan to continue its tradition of focusing on students and supporting our faculty and staff. As dean, Byrnes will direct 10 academic departments offering 20 bachelor’s degrees, five master’s degrees and two doctorates, as well as nearly 20 interdisciplinary majors and minors, and 10 different centers and programs; a dean’s office staff of 10; and 315 full-time faculty members and 165 adjunct instructors. The College of Liberal Arts currently grants about 700 degrees annually.

PIGSKIN PRE-GAME

Football Season Kickoff and Scholarship Fundraiser

Saturday, Aug. 20, 2011

Marymont Mansion
1124 Rucker Lane, Murfreesboro
6:30 to 10:30 p.m. (rain or shine)
$35 per person.
Ticket includes dinner from Carrabba’s Italian Grill, beverages, and live entertainment from Shane Barrett.
All proceeds benefit the Rutherford County Scholarship fund.
RSVP by Aug. 15.
To order your tickets call 800-533-MTSU or visit www.mtalumni.com. We look forward to seeing you there!

mtalumni.com
Centennial Scholarship for Honors College

Midgetts’ commitment establishes gift for Ralph and Elizabeth Gwaltney

By Tom Tozer ttazr@mtsu.edu

A family with an extensive and influential history with MTSU has made a commitment to establish the Ralph and Elizabeth Gwaltney Centennial Scholarship for the University Honors College. Don and Carolyn Midgett made the commitment to MTSU for the first Centennial Scholarship earmarked for the University Honors College program. The scholarship is named for Carolyn Midgett’s late parents.

“MTSU is coming up on its 100-year celebration, and our families have been part of MTSU for 80 of those years,” Don Midgett said.

Ralph Gwaltney was born in Murfreesboro to E.W. “Wink” Midgett and Murfreesboro City school systems for 36 years. His family has been part of the history with MTSU has made a commitment to establish the Ralph and Elizabeth Gwaltney Centennial Scholarship for the University Honors College.

Don and Carolyn Midgett made the commitment to MTSU for the first Centennial Scholarship earmarked for the University Honors College program. The scholarship is named for Carolyn Midgett’s late parents.

“MTSU is coming up on its 100-year celebration, and our families have been part of MTSU for 80 of those years,” Don Midgett said. Ralph Gwaltney, originally from Hickman County, was an officer in his senior class and a member of the “T” Club, known today as the Varsity Club. He played basketball, baseball, and tennis and later coached girls’ basketball at Walter Hill High School and worked for many years for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in Murfreesboro.

Elizabeth Travis Gwaltney was born and raised in Murfreesboro. As a college student, she played in the band and was a member of the Clarinet Ladies as well as a part of the “T” Club. She taught in the Rutherford County and Murfreesboro City school systems for 36 years and was a charter member of the Golden Raiders. “We are extremely grateful to Don and Carolyn Midgett for their generosity,” said Joe Bales, vice president for MTSU development and university relations. “For many years, they have been quietly making an impact on our campus with investments that make MTSU better. This latest gift of a Centennial Scholars endowment continues their family legacy of supporting their alma mater and ensuring that the University, as well as our students and faculty, have the resources they need to be successful.”

Don Midgett said his strong connection to the Honors College goes back to the close friendship between his father, E.W. “Wink” Midgett, and Paul Martin Sr., for whom the Honors Building is named. The MTSU Honors Program officially became a college in 1998, and the Honors Building opened in 2003. Since then, their friendship has been sealed in brick and mortar: inside the Paul W. Martin Sr. Honors Building is the E.W. “Wink” Midgett Classroom.

“Don and Carolyn (Midgett) have stepped forward to set an example of university support that is a tribute not only to them, but to the university that has been inspiring students and alumni for 100 years.”

— Dr. John Vile

University Honors College dean

The Centennial Scholarship Program aims to establish 100 such endowments, which, when fully funded, will provide perpetual funds for scholarships for 20 to 25 students each year. When added to the existing Buchanan Fellows and Presidential Scholars programs, the new Gwaltney Scholarship will give MTSU even greater clout to attract the best students to Tennessee’s fastest-growing university.

Each Centennial endowment will be renewable for a maximum of five years while a student pursues his or her degree and remains academically eligible. Recipients also may use funds to pursue an international-study experience related to their degree programs.

“We are seeing more and more people who really understand the importance of education and want to help the next generation of students,” Bales said. “The award will truly make a difference. Our current economy really brings into focus the importance of a college degree. Don and Carolyn understand the importance of helping our young people achieve their potential. It is an investment in the future for all of us.”

Gale and Jonelle Prince kicked off the Centennial Scholarship Program in spring 2010 when they established the Gale and Jonelle Prince Centennial Scholarship to celebrate MTSU’s upcoming 100th anniversary.

Students who are selected as Centennial Scholars will represent the upper 10 to 15 percent of their high-school graduating class and earn a minimum ACT score of 29 (SAT 1300). Criteria will include academic performance, leadership, athletic or extracurricular involvement and recommendations from teachers, faculty and community leaders. A Centennial Scholar at MTSU will have to maintain a 3.5 GPA to continue receiving his or her annual award, officials said.
Timing changes your destiny
Jones bids farewell as MTSU’s National Alumni Association president

How many of you all believe in your everyday lives that timing is everything? Whether you meet a stranger on the street who may turn out to be the love of your life or sit beside a gentleman on a flight who turns out to be a former Blue Raider football player, timing changes your destiny.

MTSU's destiny is becoming a world-recognized institution for its outstanding growth in academic achievements, research and state-of-the-art facilities available to the students on campus. That growth is leading the University to make changes in communication, which benefits our alumni. The time has come to say goodbye to our traditional Alumni Record newspaper and welcome back our MTSU Magazine. I hope each of you have had an opportunity to see this exquisite publication. We are excited that our time as an Alumni Association allows us to have this available to communicate all the outstanding stories our alumni around the world have to tell.

I also would like to extend a big thank-you to the more than 3,000 alumni who responded to our first comprehensive alumni survey. This information provides insight into the needs and opinions of our alumni. I have complete confidence the Alumni Association will use these results to better enhance your experience as an alumnum.

It is my time to say goodbye and to thank you for letting me serve as your national alumni president. Many thanks to the alumni office staff and my executive board for their time and efforts this past year. It has been a privilege for me to represent this University in this capacity. Please take time and visit our fine university, because it will amaze you time after time.

MTSU National Alumni Association President Beth Barber Jones received her B.S. in 1999. She has been a sales rep for Interact Schering-Plough Animal Health since 2004. She and her husband, Andy ('96), live in Columbia, Tenn.

New dairy at MTSU farm continues to take shape

University officials await the completion of the MTSU Experiential Learning and Research Center dairy on the MTSU farm, off Guy James Road east of campus. Construction delays have pushed back completion to July or August, said Dr. Warren Gill, director of the School of Agribusiness and Agriscience. A Centennial-related grand opening and Field Day are planned. "The dairy is being designed not only to provide excellent hands-on opportunities for students to learn about animal production, but also to support the school’s commitment to preparing students as the large food-processing industry continues to grow in Tennessee," Gill said. Total project cost is $4 million.

Dr. Warren Gill/MTSU School of Agribusiness and Agriscience

Pratt, Yarborough earn Fulbright student awards

May 2011 graduate Kim Yarborough of Murfreesboro and 2010 alumnus Patrick Pratt of Tullahoma are MTSU’s most recent recipients of Fulbright Program for U.S. Students awards, University Honors College officials said. Yarborough, 21, was offered a Fulbright for an English-teaching assistantship at a high school in Spain’s Cantabria region.

Pratt, 27, an August 2010 graduate, will spend a year conducting research on poverty reduction in Tanzania at the University of Dar es Salaam’s Institute of Developmental Studies via the Fulbright Program, Honors College Dean John Vile said.

Student’s research tops homeland-security summit

Jeannie Stubblefield, a biology major at MTSU who graduated May 7, earned first place for her poster research at the Fifth Annual U.S. Department of Homeland Security University Network Summit, held in Washington, D.C., March 28-April 3. Her research was conducted under a $161,000 Forensic Institute for Research and Education grant funded by the Department of Homeland Security and managed through Oak Ridge National Laboratory’s Southeast Region Research Initiative.

Dr. Hugh Berryman, MTSU professor of sociology and anthropology and director of FIRE, and Dr. John Haftner, assistant professor of agribusi- ness and agriscience, served as project leaders. Dr. Anthony Newsome, a biology professor, worked with Stubblefield as her faculty adviser.

Stubblefield’s mother, Deane Stem (’94) is an alumnum. Her son, Michael Batby, is a sophomore global-studies major. Stubblefield plans to pursue a doctorate in molecular sciences.

Pace, Albakry capture Fulbright Faculty awards

Two MTSU professors have been awarded Fulbright Scholarships, which will take them across the globe to teach, conduct research and extend the hand of partnership to other universities.

Dr. Mohammed Albakry, an associate professor of English, will prepare for a year’s residence in Morocco starting this fall, where he will teach linguistics at the University of Mohammad the Fifth. The university is one of the largest and the first modern university in the nation, he says. Albakry’s family will join him. Wife Judy is an acadeamic adviser in the College of Liberal Arts. Dr. Richard Pace, professor in sociology and anthropology, will lead to the Brazilian Amazon to teach and conduct research during the 2011-12 academic year. In August, he will begin his teach- ing duties — all in Portuguese — at the Federal University in Belém, which is located at the mouth of the Amazon River. Pace will conduct ethnographic research while there.
Centennial Homecoming

Oct. 1 event will
‘Look to the Future, Remember the Past’

By Rhonda King raking@mtuu.edu

You are invited to “A Centennial Homecoming: Look to the Future, Remember the Past” on Saturday, Oct. 1. Preparations are under way for this special, once-in-a-100-years event. Save the date to reminisce about your days on campus while experiencing MTSU’s 100-year anniversary celebration and become a Golden Raider during its Centennial year.

The Office of Alumni Relations will host its annual Mixer on Middle Homecoming Parade-Watching Party at The Alumni House, located at 2259 Middle Tennessee Blvd. The Alumni House is the best place to watch the parade on campus. Friends, food and fun will be in abundance at the party, which has become a great homecoming tradition. The third annual Baby Raider Ride Contest will take place during Mixer on Middle. Little MT legacies will be showcased as decorated strollers, wagons and tricycles will be featured in the parade.

Homecoming is about reconnecting and visiting with schoolmates, friends and family. Tailgating is a great place to do so, and tailgating sites across campus will be in full swing on Homecoming Day. The alumni office will get you connected with your group through the Homecoming Hookup. Visit www.mtalumni.com for more information and to register your tailgate.

Be in the stands at Floyd Stadium to cheer the Blue Raiders as they take on in-state rival University of Memphis Tigers in the Homecoming Game. The Centennial Homecoming King and Queen will be crowned during the traditional ceremony during halftime.

Other activities will take place during Homecoming Week. For a more detailed schedule, visit www.mtalumni.com or call the alumni office at 800-533-6878.

Reigning King Brandon T. Balts and Queen Ashley Brooks pose in 2010.