Robin Jones provided steady leadership of the Information Technology Division during a time of rapid University growth and constant IT changes, former colleagues said.

Jones retired May 16, 2022, after 29 years at MTSU, including seven years as ITD assistant vice president for Client Services & IT Business Operations.

A native of Murfreesboro, Jones came to MTSU in 1993 as administrative secretary for the Office of Information Technology. In 1997 she became manager of Administrative Planning. In October 2014 she was promoted to director of communication support, then became assistant vice president for Client Services & IT Business Operations in 2015.

Upon her retirement, that position's previous job description was divided between Michael Barton, interim assistant vice president for Client Services over the technical side, and Emily Harper, director of IT Business Operations, responsible for the business side.

"A testament to the role one plays is apparent when it takes two to fill her shoes, and I'm not sure anyone could have worn those shoes any better than Robin," Harper said. “My early memo-

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‘Mr. Nutcracker’ Senior retired after 40 years

help the University fulfill its mission by adapting the telecommunications system to the needs of faculty, staff, and students.

But another reason is you may have seen him using his talent and creativity to spread Christmas cheer and just didn't realize it was Senior.

Senior, who retired June 30, began working at MTSU as a student in 1980 and other than four years he left to work in Miami from 1989 to 1994, he has been here his entire career.

"I started back when I was in college getting my undergrad. I was the only technician in this whole campus," he said. "Actually, I was one of the pioneers of telecommunication here on campus. When I came here it was just a small university and today I'm leaving and now it is a city. I love this University, I love this campus—it goes with me."

Senior had started studying at UT-
Professor uses available tech to mix distance, in-class methods

For Professor Stuart Bernstein, the move last year from distance learning back to the classroom has not been an either-or proposition. In psychology, the subject he teaches, that is called a “false dichotomy.”

Instead, Bernstein decided it was the perfect time to draw from the best of both worlds—online tools and in-person teaching techniques—for his PSY 3070 Research Methods in Psychology course and PSY 3071 Research Methods in Psychology Lab.

Bernstein is a nominee for the Outstanding Achievement in Instructional Technology Award presented each year to faculty members who demonstrate excellence in the development of technology-based teaching materials and successfully integrate them into the classroom.

The process started in 2018 when his wife, psychology Prof. Catherine Crooks, developed an online interactive version of introductory psychology with help from ITD’s Learning, Teaching, and Innovative Technologies Center (LT&ITC).

“I was inspired by what they produced and taught myself to make interactive HTML5 presentations using H5P for an online version of another psychology course, Sensation & Perception,” Bernstein said.

“The fundamentals of research design and measurement are essential knowledge for students who are going on to pursue graduate study. Despite its importance, it is not engaging lecture material.

“I’ve taught this course in its traditional form since 1998; sitting through lectures, even with activities and discussions, is painful for students. So, I’ve always wanted to find a better way to help students engage with this content.”

That led to creating lectures in this format for research methods during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I felt strongly that since students were forced to take a difficult course online, one they really would rather do in person, during the disruption of the pandemic, that they would appreciate something fresh and innovative,” he said.

When in-person classes resumed, he decided to continue using these formats.

“Students are now more comfortable taking online lectures, which in a blended class allows us to spend classroom time having groups of students apply what they have learned to answer questions, analyze data, interpret findings, and create presentations,” he said.

“The blended/hybrid format also improves student preparation for in-class discussions, because students have a benchmark and feedback when studying content that is required each week. Finally, it is rewarding to work in small groups solving problems together. Everyone missed that while isolated at home during the pandemic.”

The apps he has used are not specialized, but readily available for use on faculty computers including:

- H5P—The online interactive content authoring system used to create 14 lecture/quiz assignments
- Panopto—The online video recording and editing system used to create brief videos embedded throughout the H5P HTML5 lectures and quizzes.
- YouTube—Used for introductory videos in each lesson.
- Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI)—An online research ethics training course that lets student earn a certification valid for three years that is required for behavioral research
- PsyToolkit—A free-to-use website is used for demonstrating, programming, and running cognitive-psychological experiments and surveys, including personality tests.
- Jamovi—An open-source platform is used by students to learn to perform statistical tests on multiple data sets in the course.
- SPSS—Software utilized for conducting statistics.
- The Open-Source Psychometrics Project—Interactive

See Bernstein, page 8
Her family life and career connect to all three Tennessee regions

All three main regions of Tennessee have been a big part of Jennifer Brigham’s family and career history, but she is enjoying being back in the “middle.” Brigham joined ITD in April 2021 as a technical clerk for Telecommunications. She grew up in Lafayette, Tennessee, and attended Macon County High School.

“We are huge UT fans, so we watched all of the football games. We attended tons of concerts at Starwood (Amphi-theatre) and loved paying $20 for a ticket to see our favorite band,” she said.

Her first job was working for an attorney in Nashville as a legal assistant. In 2006 her husband Jason’s job relocated them to Memphis, and at that time Brigham continued her career as a paralegal.

“Memphis is a wonderful city. The zoo was probably one of our favorite places to go. We had yearly passes. I highly suggest visiting if you ever visit Memphis,” she said.

After about nine years, Jason had the opportunity to move back to middle Tennessee and they chose Murfreesboro, she said.

“My daughter attended McFadden and Central Magnet, and with her scheduled I decided to work for the school system,” she said. “I started out as a substitute, which was different from anything I had ever done. It was wonderful, I met so many amazing students and teachers.”

After a few years as a substitute teacher, Brigham went to work as an educational assistant and later accepted a bookkeeper position.

“When my daughter was able to drive, I decided I could grow my career, so I decided to look for a position at MTSU,” she said. Working in the telecom department involves helping start communication service or troubleshoot issues.

“My days are different every day, from answering emails, completing work orders, and helping anyone with challenges they have with their phones, I stay very busy throughout the day. I really enjoy working with my co-workers and helping people with any of their issues,” she said.

“I try resolve the issue as soon as I receive an email or a phone call. My supervisor Emily (Harper) has been wonderful in every step since I started in April of 2021, so if there ever is a challenge Emily helps me through the process, she has been wonderful to work with.”

Things were different on campus when Brigham came to MTSU at the height of the COVID pandemic.

“When I started in 2021, I really didn’t see many students, so when they returned in the fall it was wonderful to see the student life. MTSU has so many wonderful things to offer and it’s been great to experience the atmosphere,” she said.

She and Jason have been married for 19 years.

“We met in downtown Nashville on the first day he moved to Nashville from Memphis. We talked and decided to go out the next day, from then we married in 2003,” she said.

Their daughter, Taylor graduated, from Central Magnet in May and will attend the University of Tennessee.

“Taylor cheered in high school but has decided to dedicate her time to school, instead of sports. She has decided to go the pre-med path and one day become a neonatologist. She hopes to join a sorority and be a huge part of the student life,” she said.

The family enjoys traveling and she and Jason just recently returned from a cruise.

“We love to cruise but haven’t been able to travel since 2019 because of COVID, so when I was able to travel this year, I was very excited. We recently traveled to Aruba on a cruise, and it was so nice to see the beautiful blue water. We’ve traveled to almost every island in the Caribbean, so our next trip will be a European cruise,” Brigham said.

But one of the most enjoyable things they do as a family is a simple one.

“When Taylor was younger, we always sat and ate dinner together. The older she got, the activities were more frequent, and it was hard to sit as a family every night for dinner, so when we can sit down and eat dinner as a family is probably my favorite thing to do as a family.”
EAS executive director Maas is focused on campuswide initiatives

Lisa Maas joined ITD in April 2022 as executive director of Enterprise Application Services.

“We are facing many challenges in higher education information technology. Business process analysis, collaboration, communication, and training will be key to our success,” said Maas.

“There are always opportunities to improve efficiency, agility, and the overall user experience. I’m excited to work with the accomplished ITD team and campus community.”

Originally from Dyersburg, Maas earned a bachelor’s degree in Computer Science from Union University in Jackson, Tennessee.

Her IT career started in 1994 at Tennessee Tech University, where she served until 2012 as systems analyst in Enterprise Application Services.

Then from 2012-15 as director of web and digital media, and from 2015-18 as enterprise analyst in Enterprise Application Services.

Maas was promoted in 2018 to director of Enterprise Application Services and served in that role at TTU until moving to MTSU. In ITD, her primary focus is to lead efforts in campuswide Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) initiatives.

“My primary focus is to partner with campus functional users to establish goals and objectives in ERP initiatives,” she said.

“It’s critical that we find ways to modernize and improve the ways our students, faculty, and staff interact with technology. This will involve collaboration with the campus community and other members of ITD to identify needs, opportunities for process improvement, and to develop a project roadmap for the future ERP needs of the University.”

Her husband, Steve, is an IT manager, and in their spare time they enjoy kayaking, camping, biking, and traveling. They have a son, Erik, who lives in Murfreesboro.

MTSU graduate Anteski is new technical clerk in BlueID office

Kyle Anteski joined ITD in November 2021 as BlueID technical clerk.

Anteski, of Murfreesboro, moved to Tennessee in 2013.

“My mom and dad were both military, so moving was nothing big for us, but mom had been out of the military for several years and dad just retired,” he said.

“My dad went back to school and graduated from MTSU to be a P.E. teacher, and my mom used schooling that she did online to work with special needs children.”

He said his brother also attends MTSU. Anteski earned a degree in video and film production from MTSU in 2020 and says he has been “using it for my film and streaming hobbies.”

Other jobs before working at the University have included retail and call center customer service as well as some manual labor in factories and construction sites.

“My longest job was with a call center for consumer customer service on a specific and very popular brand of electronics,” he said.

At the BlueID office, he makes new IDs, replaces lost or stolen ones, and organizes IDs for CUSTOMS sessions and new employees.

“This job allows me to meet many kinds of people and occasionally have interesting conversations,” he said. “However, one of the challenges of this job is one of the things that is good about it—time. Finding a way to use that time in-between doing nothing and everything all at once can be a challenge.”

His hobbies include playing video games and table top games with friends or online.

“I occasionally sit down to play the card game Magic: The Gathering. I occasionally stream these games on Twitch, but when I’m not doing that I like to go out for a hike when it doesn’t feel so hot I’ll melt;” he said.

Students earn and learn as STAs

If you are a student or know a student interested in an opportunity to work on campus and learn IT support skills urge them to check out MTSU’s Student Technology Assistant (STA) program.

The STA program benefits the University by providing staff to meet the campus technical support needs while also benefiting students with a pay check and teaching practical skills they will be able to use regardless of their future endeavors.

The starting point is mtsu.edu/sta/index.php.

Anyone interested can read more about the program then fill out the Application and Skills Assessment if they are ready for the challenge.
Microsoft Authenticator is most reliable MFA option

Since the introduction of single sign-on (SSO) services at MTSU our passwords have been further protected from unauthorized access with multi-factor authentication. By far the most common method of verification our students, staff, and faculty choose is a text message which generates a verification code or a phone call for approval. These methods are fine—they do the job—but they are not ITD’s recommended method.

The Microsoft Authenticator app is by far the best choice for dependability, convenience, and flexibility.

The application is easily downloaded to any Android or iOS (Apple) mobile devices from their respective marketplaces, and it is free.

After installation the app allows you to approve the two-factor authentication with a simple “Approve” button, and the software works from anywhere, making it ideal for anyone traveling outside of the country when U.S. SIM cards fail. International students need only set up the app once and don’t have to switch between their home and U.S. numbers ever again.

Individuals that change numbers or have inconsistent service find the apps works very well for them because all it needs is a Wi-Fi connection.

The app can also generate a verification code that can be used for authentication without any internet connection at all.

If you wish to switch over to the Microsoft Authenticator, I suggest the following steps.

► First download the app to your phone or tablet. When it asks, allow the program to display notifications and give it access to your camera.

► Click “add account.” Then choose work or school account.

► Open your favorite web browser and visit the following web page: https://aka.ms/mfasetup.

► Login just like accessing PipelineMT or email through the web browser. It will ask you to verify the login through your current method of Multi-factor Authentication access.

► You will then be taken to the MFA configurations page.

► You will need to change the primary method of authorization to the mobile app.

► Scroll further down on the page to click on the Microsoft Authenticator setup page.

► Your next step when clicking on the setup button is to scan the QR code provided.

► Once received you will get the standard pop-up to approve the change in your authentication method.

► The notification pop-up will look very much like the sample below:

After set up the verification will be as simple as watching for the notification and approving the access. You will no longer have to scramble to check for and remember a verification code. It is OK to leave other methods in place so just incase something goes wrong you can still use the text messaging or phone call methods.

As always, if you have any questions or problems contact the ITD Help Desk at 615-898-5345 or help@mtsu.edu.
Some lost files could be recovered in Microsoft Teams

Whether you accidentally or intentionally deleted a file or file folder in Microsoft Teams you may be able to recover it.

There are two types of file storage in Microsoft Teams: OneDrive and SharePoint. OneDrive files are associated with your Microsoft 365 account and your OneDrive for Business. Files that you upload to a channel are stored in your team's SharePoint folder.

Deleted files go into either the OneDrive or SharePoint site recycle bins for a period of time or until they are emptied from the recycle bin.

If the file was stored in a Teams channel, you can recover it from SharePoint within 93 days of deletion. Any member of the Teams channel can recover content from the SharePoint bin. You can recover files deleted by other team members, and they can recover files you've deleted.

• Open the channel's “Files” tab and select “Open” in SharePoint at the top of the page.
• In SharePoint, select “Recycle” bin on the left side of the page.
• This will show a list of all files deleted from every channel in the team.

If the file was a OneDrive file, not associated with a Teams Channel, you can recover it within 30 days of deletion.

• Open “Files” on the left side of Teams and then select OneDrive.
• Select “Open” in OneDrive at the top of the page.
• In OneDrive, select “Recycle” bin on the left side of the page, select the file you want to recover, and then select “Restore” at the top of the page.

If you still have the file but just need to find a previous version, you may be able to restore it. Click to learn how to:

• Restore a previous version of a file stored in OneDrive
• Restore a previous version of an item or file in SharePoint

For help consult your departmental IT support staff or the ITD Help Desk at help@mtsu.edu or 615-898-5345.

Use the word ACCESS to help remember how to provide it

Access Success:

It is all about ACCESS...

A common concern I have encountered when discussing content accessibility on campus is that expecting an individual to know how to make things accessible is neither realistic nor reasonable.

There is validity to that concern, and it is important to note that content creators are not expected to automatically know how to make their content accessible, but simply know that it needs to be and then act accordingly.

The strategy I suggest employing to accomplish that can be remembered with the acronym A.C.C.E.S.S.

► Assess Content—Determine who is your target audience and how those individuals are meant to experience the content?

For example, imagine your department hosted a panel discussion, recorded it, and decided to publish the recording on the departmental website.

The target audience for that video is anyone who has access to the internet. The primary way to experience the content is auditorily.

Another example: You are making a recruitment video and interweaving still shots of the campus during different seasons, and the video will be used in recruitment activities.

The target audience is all potential students. It is meant to be experienced visually.

► Collaborate Effectively—Remember that the University has numerous resources to use. Some of the offices that can be contacted to help understand whether the content needs to be made accessible and strategies to accomplish that are:

• Institutional Equity and Compliance—615-898-2185 or iec@mtsu.edu
• Disability and Access Center—615-898-2783 or dacemail@mtsu.edu
• The Faculty Instructional Technology Center—615-904-8189 or itdacad@mtsu.edu

► Systematize Solutions—Once strategies are understood, make them part of the process used when planning and creating future content.

Remember, you are not expected to have expertise in providing accessibility, only an awareness of its importance.

Lance Alexis, director of ADA Compliance in MTSU’s Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance, can be reached at Lance.Alexis@mtsu.edu.
Martin, but after a year moved to MTSU, where he completed a dual degree in marketing management and business administration, and later a master’s degree in marketing. Working out of the “Blue Warehouse” on the north side of the campus, he was instrumental in installing the first campuswide telecommunications system on a NEC switch. Later, he worked on the transition to Avaya network, and more recently to Skype4Business (S4B) and MS Teams.

“I left and went to Miami for almost five years, then came back to the University. We started looking for another PBX (Private Branch Exchange) system because the NEC switch was not actually adequate for the pounding we were getting every semester,” he said. Steve Prichard had come in as the new director of telecommunications, and Senior began working on the transition to a new Avaya PBX system.

It was the start of a busy time for him, as days would begin as early as 2:30 a.m. to commute from Clarksville to Murfreesboro, where he would often start work at 5 a.m. Then about 3:30 p.m. he would go to classes at night for his master’s degree. The technicians were student workers, and he took it upon himself to not only be their supervisor but their mentor.

“You know, I tell the kids now ‘Whatever you need to do, do it now, while you’re still young. I mean now is the time,’” he said. “In fact, ever since I’ve been working for telecommunications I have been like a coach to my technicians. Every technician, every student worker that worked under me graduated. And I was behind them all the time. I can show you the letter that one put together for me, saying ‘Buddy I don’t know what I would have done without you.’ I mean, that’s one of the things I feel so, so proud of—every single one of them graduated.”

The hardware-based telephony system at MTSU grew in the early part of his career as thousands of ports were added. But in more recent years the number of ports has shrunk as cloud-based communication has come to the forefront—first in Skype4Business and now in Teams.

“That was a major, major transition we’re talking about,” he said. “We’re talking about close to 7,000 ports. But today there are places where we don’t have telephony anymore. So the number of ports today is probably closer to 2,000. We’ve gone away from the hard lines to Wi-Fi and fiber.”

Senior is the father of two daughters, Carolina and Ileana, who each have two daughters of their own, and one of them will soon become a third-generation MTSU student. Carolina is a local realtor while Ileana is an educator in Naples, Florida.

“My two daughters graduated from here,” he said. “Ileana is a teacher, and she was teacher of the year for three years... Carolina has a daughter, Juliana, who we call Juju, and she just graduated from high school. And guess what? She’s going to MTSU. She wants to be a lawyer. She wants to come over here for maybe one or two years do that pre-law and then go to somewhere else, you know, in later time, but that’s a third generation of mine going through school here.”

“Mister Nutcracker”

But many people know Senior from his role as “Mr. Nutcracker” from the extravagant and detailed life-sized models of the Nutcracker character from the Tchaikovsky ballet—including one that he would wear during the holidays. Originally from Massachusetts, Senior’s love of the character began on a visit to Boston in his early 20s.

“My parents went to Boston to see my brothers and sisters, and on our way back we stopped in New York, and we saw the Nutcracker ballet on Broadway. And that is the place if you want to see the Nutcracker—Radio City Music Hall,” he said.

Senior builds the frames from wood, metal, and fiberglass, paints them and makes all their clothing on an industrial-size sewing machine.

“If you go to (MTSU President Sidney) McPhee’s house at Christmas, his wife has one on display,” he said. “I used to go around the University bringing the Christmas cheer. Every year on the last date of work here on campus, before we went on to Christmas time, I would go around to the departments and all this stuff. I participated in floats in the city Christmas parade, or go to the Children’s Hospital. I mean, I used to go everywhere.”

Senior’s wearable Nutcracker costume comes equipped with built-in speakers in the headset to play Christmas music, operated by a player that he wore on his belt.

“It was some fun, fun, fun years on this campus here for me,” he said. “Oh yeah, people were calling to me from everywhere—‘Mr. Nutcracker, Mr. Nutcracker’... Yeah, that’s me, buddy. I used to do some crazy things.”

There have also been some sad times including the loss of his father, a Navy man, at the age of 63 while Senior lived in Miami. More recently it has been the loss of colleague Jeremy “Tiko” Simmons, a 22-year employee of the ITD Telecommunications, who died in October 2021. Senior also lost his home to fire in December 2018.

His retirement plans include continuing his hobbies of making Nutcrackers, renovating and customizing Jeeps, riding motorcycles, and gardening. He also plans to visit the important ladies in his life—daughters, granddaughters and his mother, who lives in Caracas, Venezuela.

“That will be my first priority,” he said.
Bernstein, continued from page 2

personality tests with detailed results that can be taken to learn more about personality assessment.

- **Microsoft Office 365**—Word is used to write papers, Excel for some data manipulation and analysis, and PowerPoint for creating research posters.

Bernstein said the hybrid course also allows him to take a “flipped classroom” approach in which students complete the conceptual content at their own pace until they achieve mastery.

“This is a concept where instead of lecturing and then assigning problems for homework, the lectures were assigned for homework and the problems were done in class,” he explained.

Making a true flipped classroom work takes a lot of planning and preparation, he said, but the end result is worth it. “Generic lectures don’t work well—students will engage with material that is from their instructor. Once they master the lecture content in advance of a class session, students then work in small groups solving problems and answering questions—The things they would do for homework in a traditional classroom.”

In a flipped classroom, the instructor serves more as a coach moving from group to group offering elaboration and guidance. The class also gathers each week for a one-hour lab, during which they apply skills that were learned in the online lecture/quiz assignments. His evaluation process combines student engagement, discussion, paper grades, and student learning outcomes.

“As a faculty member, this took a while for me to learn. Old me would answer questions too quickly, because that made me feel good as the expert,” he said. “The mistake I was making was answering instead of letting students try it themselves and learn. It is like having someone watch me eat lunch—when I answer a question, students don’t do anything, they won’t learn, they will still be hungry.”