Prichard answering call to retirement

Steve Prichard’s career at Middle Tennessee State University has been all about upgrading, repairing, and improving telecommunications systems.

But nine years ago he faced the unexpected challenge of rebuilding his own body after a terrible motorcycle crash.

All his life Prichard, MTSU director of Telecommunication Services, has loved anything with wheels—from riding dirt bikes with his sons, to enjoying his brand new Ford Mustang.

“I have two sons and they love everything motorized, they love anything with wheels and an engine,” he said. “We’ve had most every kind of motorized vehicle from a go-kart, to a moped, to three-wheelers, and four-wheelers, and dirt bikes and street bikes and I had a street bike.”

While riding it in Murfreesboro one night in August 2007, he was struck by a truck. He spent a month in the hospital with a crushed ankle and leg, and a fractured and dislocated hip. He emerged with a new set of wheels—a wheelchair.

What he remembers most is the response of colleagues, employees, and others in the MTSU family.

“I was overwhelmed by the support that was shown to me and my family when I was experiencing that event,” Prichard said.

That sense of community was foremost on his mind as he prepared to retire June 30 after 31 years with MTSU.

“I very much have enjoyed the environment here at MTSU, being around young people,” Prichard said. “That is one of the great advantages of working on a college campus—all around you are young peo-
Prichard continued from page 1

ple and other people that are working to provide services and experiences for young people.

“That is a very exciting environment to be in. To be around so many young people who have optimism and potential and desire to learn and to accomplish things. They want to work on developing themselves. It has been a great place to be all these years,” he said.

Growing up in East Tennessee, Prichard moved to Jacksonville, Alabama, and later graduated from Jacksonville State University with a double major in Accounting and Economics. His first job took him back to Tennessee, working as an auditor with the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury from 1976 to 1985.

That year, he was hired by MTSU as an assistant director of finance in the Business Office. One of his main projects there was implementing new administrative systems for financial, human resources, student, and other information.

In 1994, he transferred to the MTSU Telecommunications Services, where he began overseeing design and construction of the Telecommunications Building.

“It has worked well for 20 years now,” he said of the facility on Champion Way.

Other accomplishments have included the first voice mail system, a process that allowed students to register for courses by phone and an upgrade and eventual replacement of the University’s telecommunications switch system to the current Avaya provider (now being replaced by Skype for Business).

“He’s really built that department into a well-functioning and well-oiled machine,” said Brian Holley, assistant vice president of the Information Technology Division. “He’s seen the introduction of a lot of new technology and had to help his department adapt to it—and he’s done so successfully.”

As amazing as the exponential tech advancements have been during his tenure at MTSU, Prichard said the basic goal has remained the same.

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Prichard legacy: Critical Notification System

Steve Prichard, retiring MTSU director of Telecommunication Services, said he is “extremely proud” of his department’s MTSU Emergency Response system, Alert4U.

“One more significant project I was in charge of was the purchase of the emergency alerting system, Rave Mobile Safety,” Prichard said. “On April 16, 2007 the mass shooting took place at Virginia Tech; we issued our RFP (request for proposals) for a text-messaging solution the week before the shooting. The system was installed in the summer of 2007 and has been in place since.”

The Critical Notification System is used only under circumstances that pose a threat of imminent danger and/or when it is vital to contact members of the campus community as quickly as possible.

This also includes (but may not be limited to) notification of an imminent purge of a student’s courses due to incompleteness of the registration confirmation step. The system is also used to send MTSU Advisories via email only. When inclement weather affects the University’s daily operations, the MTSU community is notified via Alert4U.

All MTSU staff, faculty, and student email addresses are automatically entered into the MTSU Critical Notification System. If you wish to add phone numbers for texting and/or voicemail, or additional email addresses, please log in at getrave.com/login/mtsu with your PipelineMT username and password.

You may also access your account through your PipelineMT account by clicking on the Alert4U tab.

If you are new to MTSU, you will receive an email with instructions on how to access your account. You are responsible for keeping account information up to date.

For more information, visit mtsu.edu/alert4u/faqs.php or contact Alana Johnson at 615-898-2677. The system does not charge subscribers to send or receive SMS messages. Standard or other charges apply depending on your wireless plan and subscription. You can opt out of SMS messages by texting STOP to 67283 or 226787.

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Degree Works update

Degree Works is a new product that will replace the RaiderNet Degree Evaluation menu option.

Degree Works will provide MTSU with a comprehensive set of web-based academic advising, degree audit, and transfer articulation tools to enhance advising, better inform students about degree planning, and reduce time to degree.

This system will enable academic advisors to provide “real time” advice and counsel to students. Degree Works will also allow advisors and students to create interactive scenarios for degree completion.

The first phase of the project, which consisted of the scribing step, has been mostly completed. Scribing is building the myriad rules that sit in the background of the Degree Works system controlling and evaluating what courses are and are not acceptable for the completion of each MTSU degree program. That work started at the beginning of April 2015 and lasted until the end of 2015.

Next, Records Office staff, graduation coordinators from each of MTSU's colleges, staff and graduation analysts from Graduate Studies, and a few select advisors will participate in testing the system, validating the rules, and training for 4-5 months. Due to other projects, this part of the project did not start in spring 2016 as originally planned. However, this testing phase is scheduled to start in summer 2016.

The projected “go live” for a limited number of beta advising staff members will be fall 2016, with a release to the general student population a few months later.

SSC Campus now live at MTSU

The new Education Advisory Board platform, called Student Success Collaborative (SSC) Campus, went live in March 2016 and advisors all over campus have been working with the new system since.

All student photos are now in the new system. Notes from the original EAB SSC platform are now in RaiderNet for advisors and, where appropriate, for students as well. Notes from the new SSC Campus platform will be brought into RaiderNet as soon as the programming has been completed, which will be this summer.

Also, integration between the SSC Campus calendar and MTSU’s Exchange calendar (used with Outlook/OWA) will be activated this summer as well. Phase 2, which includes advisor scheduling of student appointments, will start July 2016. Phase 3 will involve tutoring appointment scheduling and is slated for spring 2017.

Coming Soon … Lynda.com

The University has successfully negotiated a contract to make all of the materials provided by [Lynda.com](http://lynda.com) accessible to faculty, staff, and students.

Lynda.com is an online learning platform that helps anyone learn business, software, technology, and creative skills to achieve personal and professional goals.

ITD is currently working to implement the needed authorization procedures, with a goal of having materials available this fall to support instruction, professional development, and coursework.

IT Tips & Tricks

Most new Mac keyboards are fairly simplified compared to their PC counterparts, and you'll find that some of the extraneous keys like “Home” and “End” are nowhere to be found on any keyboard included with a MacBook Pro or MacBook Air.

But even without dedicated buttons on a Mac keyboard you can perform the same function in OS X as what “Home” and “End” buttons offer in Windows.

Instead of pressing a single key, though, on the Mac keyboard you use keyboard shortcuts to achieve the same desired effect.

Telephone Tidbits

ITD is continuing the building-by-building migration of all current Avaya users to Skype for Business.

Skype for Business training dates have been scheduled and are posted on the ITD workshop website.

Registration is first-come, first-served, but with a semester full of training opportunities, we hope there is a day that will work for you!

For more information, please visit [mtsu.edu/itd/workshops.php](http://mtsu.edu/itd/workshops.php). ITD's Deployment Plan for Skype for Business may be found on its Skype for Business website at [mtsu.edu/itdtele/Skype.php](http://mtsu.edu/itdtele/Skype.php).
Faculty Profile: Dawn McCormack

Egyptologist uses ePortfolio to uncover learning ‘artifacts’

Dawn McCormack

Professor Dawn McCormack has traveled to Egypt dozens of times with students to help uncover artifacts of its ancient culture.

Now she is helping students discover valuable “artifacts” here at MTSU that will demonstrate their learned skills for prospective employers or graduate schools.

This past spring McCormack, associate dean of the College of Liberal Arts, asked students in her Topics in World History: Reacting to the Past class to become part of a pilot for ePortfolio, the presentation tool of the Desire to Learn (D2L) Brightspace platform.

The early results have been amazing, she said, and they are ready to dig deeper.

“It is an extremely valuable tool,” she said of D2L and its ePortfolio feature. “If people have not looked at it in a while, they should go back and look at it and consider using it in the future.”

At the start of the spring semester, she had students set goals for their education and professional development and write “reflective essays” about their progress toward reaching them. Goals included improving at research, time management, and public speaking.

“What we did with ePortfolio is put all that together all in one place,” she said. “The idea is sort of the MT Engage thing where we get students to realize they can get a lot out of the class, more than just checking off a box that they finished the class—that they can achieve goals and develop skills that are important either in grad school or to employees. And to get them to see those things as they are happening.”

Reacting to the Past is an intensive, unscripted role-playing class in which students use their lessons to bring ancient history to life by portraying real or representative historical characters. The spring class focused on ancient Egyptian history during the reign of Akhenaten, Roman history just after the death of Julius Caesar, and the Second Crusade.

“They are given an identity and objectives they have to achieve, and those objectives are opposed by other people,” McCormack said. “They do work in teams, called factions, and there are some people who are in factions who have secret missions. And then there are always some people who are not in factions who the factions are trying to pull to their side.”

In her eight years at MTSU, she had tried numerous classroom strategies to engage students, but it always seemed a few slipped through the cracks.

“I had always been frustrated about how there were always a few students I never could reach,” she said. “I could never get them engaged in the material no matter what I tried. I am a pretty good lecturer . . . but it bothered me even if I had three people who were asleep in the back of the room. I couldn’t accept that was happening. I was really seeking some way to reach everyone.”

In summer 2013, McCormack went to a conference where the role-playing method was taught and she began using it the following fall. While she admittedly wasn’t a great game participant, she fell in love with the method.

“I was like, ‘I think this is it—this is what I am looking for,’ ” McCormack said. “I cannot deprive my students of this.”

The Reacting method gives students the opportunity to develop not only historical knowledge but learn to work in

And so we want students to think about their work and preserving their artifacts from Day One. And then as time goes on they are able to really support that they have skills and they can do things. They can make a much better case for who they are and what they have to offer an employer.
“Well, in many ways the end-user experience is very much the same. Back then we had a handset and a coiled-up cord. You hear a sound and pick up a receiver and talk,” he said. “But the way that it is delivered, the way the call gets to your phone, is totally different. It used to be an analog system—old-fashioned copper-based.”

“Now all the way through the systems they are IP-based ... which is a much more efficient and capable way.”

A lifelong athlete, Prichard has remained very active in sports and recreation. He was a fixture at the pickup basketball games at the Rec Center. That lifetime of sports and fitness helped him bounce back from the accident. After a few weeks in the wheelchair, he was walking around with the help of a boot.

“Four months after my accident, I was released to go back to normal activities. No doubt, had I not been in excellent health I most likely would have lost my foot,” he said.

Since the accident, he’s switched over to tennis, but recently had ankle replacement surgery. Now he’s eager to try out that personal “upgrade.”

“I plan to live it up, live well,” he said of retirement plans with his wife Linda and sons Bryan and Jonathan. There will be some home improvement projects and travel and continuation of his lifelong passions—sports and vehicles.

“I’ll be trying out my new ankle,” he said. “I’ll still be working. I will be very active. My plan is to play lots of tennis, lots of golf, lots of basketball, bicycle riding, dirt bike riding. And have time for other projects to help the people around me.

“I’m just very lucky and fortunate that I’m reaching the stage where I am still healthy and I don’t need the care of someone and I am going to be able to help other people.”

And despite the accident, he’ll still be riding motorcycles. Once or twice a year he and his sons still get away to ride dirt bikes.

As he prepared to ride off to retirement—in that 50th anniversary black Mustang GT, of course—it’s not the ever-improving technology that he will miss the most, but those who made it work for the good of students and faculty.

“I will miss the people, the environment. The work has been fun,” he said.
teams, do public speaking and practice persuasive writing. “So I set up a D2L group page, and they can see each other’s papers and the discussion boards allow them to communicate all day and all night, and they also spend a lot of time doing library research,” she said. “I don’t assign it to them, they do it because they need it to play the game.” “Because it is a competition, they become very motivated.” Students helped each other learn ePortfolio and write papers in a true collaborative effort. “I am there for support but they stopped relying on me to tell them how to get an A. They became very close to each other, and we had some just amazing, life-changing things happen,” she said. “I had one student who had his life changed. He came from a background where people were not very supportive of him. His self-esteem was very low. But by the end of the semester he was one of the leaders in the class. Now he can say he has leadership qualities and he can prove it because we’ve got the evidence locked into the ePortfolio.” For the past two years, she has been incorporating D2L tools for internal classroom use. But ePortfolio allows students to organize and present their learning to the world outside in “mini-websites.”

To prepare to use ePortfolio, McCormack attended one of the training workshops regularly offered by Information Technology Division staff. The pilot program had five students produce simple ePortfolio pages for prospective employers or graduate schools. “If they move it over to the ePortfolio part, then they actually have all their work—‘artifacts’ is what they call it. Then they can decide later what they want to include or not include in ePortfolio based on who their audience is,” she said. “If their audience is a prospective employer, they can tailor that ePortfolio to include the things that might be pertinent to that prospective employer.”

Now she is planning to use it more extensively and wants to help students incorporate more video along with other “artifacts” in building the ePortfolio.

Often, college students approaching graduation put together resumes and presentations of their work in a rushed and unorganized way. “They would say, ‘OK I need to get a job so I am going to throw something together.’ But now because of these tools we have available to us, we can get students to start thinking about this from Day One. And so we want students to think about their work and preserving their artifacts from Day One. And then as time goes on, they are able to really support that they have skills and they can do things. “They can make a much better case for who they are and what they have to offer an employer.”

Students can even graduate from college without understanding what they really got out of it. “We want them to be able to verbalize the skills they have and be able to support that with evidence,” she said. “And D2L and the ePortfolio allow us to give them the tools to be able to do that.”

“They can say, ‘I have experience in public speaking and this is where I got that from. I did this weird Reacting to the Past thing and I did speeches as an ancient Roman and I learned how to work with people and collaborate.’ And those are the things that are really important, especially to the newer model of employers.”

ITD Staff News

Craig R. Myers joined the Information Technology Division on June 1 as editorial assistant.

Myers will be producing and editing content for ITD publications including Communicator, Tech Xpress, webpages, and student and faculty/staff handbooks, with a goal of increasing understanding and usage.

A 1987 graduate of Troy University with a B.A. in journalism, he worked nearly 25 years for newspapers in Florida and Alabama. At the Pensacola News Journal, he won awards for investigating and debunking the infamous Gulf Breeze UFO case. At the Mobile Register he was an assistant editor for a special section covering Baldwin County.

"College for me was a ‘greenhouse’ time of growth for spirit, soul and mind," Myers said. "I am so excited to be back in that environment. I am very impressed with the technological tools available for MTSU students and faculty, but even more so with the people behind the scenes who keep it cutting-edge, user-friendly and working for the rest of us at the click of a mouse."

Myers has traveled to Eastern Europe several times to work with local churches and plans to study foreign language at MTSU.

He and his wife, Julie, live in Murfreesboro with their son, Cade. They are members of 3BC and involved in The Community college/career fellowship. He enjoys "playing at" golf and guitar and trying to catch more fish than his son.

Craig can be reached at Craig.Myers@mtsu.edu or 615-904-8392.

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Qualls worked two years as a process control engineer at Packaging Corporation of America (PCA) in Counce, Tennessee, where she managed and provided ongoing support for the facility’s roll-tracking system. She then took a job with Weyerhaeuser Pulp and Paper Complex in Columbus, Mississippi, as a senior systems specialist for 10 years before parlaying her proclivity for numbers into a teaching career.

After teaching math in both middle and high school for five years, Qualls decided to reconnect with her computer science roots and joined ITD in 2014.

Qualls said she plans to continue using her extensive IT experience and skills to provide fast and accurate Argos dashboards and reports to enable staff, faculty, and administrators to track student performance and identify those who need extra assistance or tutoring.

When she’s not creating innovative applications, Qualls enjoys traveling, running, and shopping. She lives in Walter Hill with her husband Eric and two children, Grant, 15, and Rachel, 14.

One primary use for digital signage is to provide timely information to viewers. MTSU’s digital signage network has multiple displays of just-in-time information such as events in the building or across campus, upcoming deadlines for registration or fees, today’s special menus in the dining halls, or even whom to congratulate for winning an award.

In these examples, the Walker Library uses signage to share the latest @mtslibrary Twitter postings and alert users to available computers.