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Winter 2021: A Light to the Mountains

[Morehead Normal School, 1887](#)



Morehead State University has a 133-year history of educating students and was seen by its founders Frank and Phebe Button as “a light to the mountains.” Morehead Normal School was founded in 1887 to train teachers, and that mission continued when it became a public college in 1922, Morehead State Normal School. The state institution accepted its first students in 1923 and graduated its first class in 1927. Name changes occurred in 1926 when “and Teachers College” was added, again in 1930 when it became Morehead State Teachers College, and in 1948 as it became Morehead State College. MSU earned university status in 1966.

Preparing teachers has always been a critical part of MSU’s mission. This STATEMENT magazine issue highlights the work of faculty and students in MSU’s Ernst and Sara Lane Volgenau College of Education, outstanding alumni who are educators, and generous donors who make this work possible. Morehead State continues to be a “light to the mountains” and well beyond.



[1945 Senior Class](#)
[graduates of Morehead](#)
[State Teachers College.](#)

For more
information about
programs in

the Volgenau College of Education, visit www.moreheadstate.edu/education.

To learn more about MSU's history, visit www.moreheadstate.edu/About/History.

Volgenau College of Education receives KDE special education grant funds

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Morehead State's Ernst & Sara Lane Volgenau College of Education will benefit from a federal grant awarded to the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) to support special education programs.

The funding comes from the KDE's Office of Special Education and Early Learning, which was awarded a competitive grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs. The Kentucky LEADS (Leading, Educating, Advocating for Directors of Special Education) Academy is a five-year, \$1 million federal grant designed to facilitate system change by increasing the number and capacity of certified directors of special education (DoSEs) and early intervention service leaders to improve services and results for children with disabilities.

"It is a great opportunity for MSU to be involved in the Kentucky LEADS Academy. We look forward to assisting more students to go into leadership roles for Special Education and Early Intervention," said Dr. April Miller, professor of education and chair of the Department of Early Childhood, Elementary, and Special Education.

In partnership with Kentucky's Part C Early Intervention Services, Morehead State University, Western Kentucky University, Murray State University and the Kentucky Parent Training and Information Center, the Kentucky LEADS Academy will work toward achieving three goals: to recruit more students to earn the director of special education certification; to increase the number of people whose job description includes supervising, directing, administering or coordinating special education programs who have attained the certification, and; to expand and enhance the existing state network to ensure that state, regional and local leaders have the knowledge, skills and access necessary to improve early childhood and educational outcomes for children with disabilities and their families through the systems that serve them.

"We in the Volgenau College of Education are excited about the opportunity to collaborate with our University

and state education partners as we seek to support P-12 schools' ability to serve their students with special needs," said Dr. Tony Norman, dean of the Volgenau College of Education. "Although each of us may be doing well in our own sphere, all of us, and certainly our P-12 partners, will benefit as we share our knowledge and expertise to better prepare and increase the number of directors of special education."

For more information about programs in the Volgenau College of Education, visit www.moreheadstate.edu/education, email Norman at adnorman@moreheadstate.edu or call 606-783-2162.

MSU alumnus Dr. Michael Melton fulfills his calling to change the lives of rural students through education

Dr. Michael Melton (96, 16) is an athletic administrator at Letcher County Central High School and a proud rural school teacher.

When **Dr. Michael Melton (96, 16)** decided to pursue a career in education, he knew he wanted to make a significant impact. However, that dream didn't require a big move. He didn't even have to change his zip code.

"I am teaching in my chosen content area and I am teaching from my home county," said Melton, who serves as the athletic administrator at Letcher County Central High School. "It was the first place I was fortunate enough to be hired as an educator. I have been offered other positions in other districts but so far, I have stayed here. I am fortunate to live less than three miles roundtrip from Letcher County Central High School and am blessed to live in a nice community."



Melton's enthusiasm for teaching is only enhanced by the fact he gets to do it not just in his home county, but in a rural community where he can see his efforts making a tangible difference that has the potential to be felt for generations.

He grew up in Whitesburg, Kentucky, in a family that valued hard work and faith. Both of his grandfathers, Henry Melton and Edley Hampton, were coal miners and his "Papaw Henry" was an Old Regular Baptist minister, a calling Melton would fulfill later in his life. His mother and father, Margarett and Gale, never attended college but both worked hard to make sure their children were afforded greater opportunities.

"I was raised with a tradition of serving others before myself. That it was better to give than to receive. It was more important to do the right thing than to do what was convenient or what benefitted me most," Melton said. "My mom always has told me no matter how good I have completed some project that I could always do better. I hated it as a young boy, but it drives me as a mantra as a man."

After initially attending college to become a mechanical engineer, he decided to pursue his love of history and social studies and major in education, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Social Studies, Secondary Education, grades 7-12, in 1991 from Alice Lloyd College in Pippa Passes. Following graduation, he continued his education at MSU, initially enrolling part-time in the fall of 1991 before enrolling full-time in 1995 to earn a Master of Arts in Secondary Education in 1996. During this timeframe, Melton also pursued his sports interests, attending the Harry Wendlestedt's Umpire School in Ormond Beach, Florida, graduating in 1992 and becoming a Minor League Baseball umpire for two seasons in 1992 and 1993.

On the way to earning his master's degree, Melton applied for a graduate assistant (GA) position with the [Department of Foundational Studies in Graduate Education \(FGSE\)](#) and received the 1996 FGSE Graduate

Assistant of the Year award. The more time Melton spent at MSU, the more education he wanted to pursue and he earned the Doctor of Education, P-12 Educational Leadership, in 2016.

“The one thing that I have always appreciated about MSU was the compassion of the professors,” he said. “One of the things that has always stayed with me from my multiple years on and off-campus at MSU has been the thoroughness of the professors in the classes I have taken and the compassion they have had for their students.”

Since starting his education career in Letcher County, Melton has held positions ranging from an elementary school principal and high school assistant principal to school bus driver and either a coach or assistant coach for sports like girls’ basketball, football, baseball and volleyball. In addition to his current role as the county’s athletic administrator, he is also the Kentucky High School Athletic Director’s Association (KHSADA) education program director and a KHSADA public relations committee member.

“A lot of people in various positions ask my advice on a multitude of issues because they either expect me to know the answers or to know where to find the answers quickly,” Melton said. “I have always had a desire to know as much as I can know, and I have placed myself in positions to gain as much varied experience that I can.”

Regardless of what hat Melton has worn over the course of a more than 20-year career, the hat he consistently and most proudly wears is that of a rural schoolteacher.

In these underserved communities, he faces unique challenges, but they are ones Melton will happily tackle if it results in a significant change in a student’s life.

“Teachers are among the most educated individuals in a rural community and they are expected to behave in a manner that befits that level of learning. They are also responsible for being a positive role model for very impressionable children,” Melton said. “Whether that is fair or not is insignificant, it is just the way it is. It is also the way I believe it should be. There should be an expectation that those that are responsible for the nurturing and development of our future leaders should be held to a higher standard.”

Like Melton, MSU continues to demonstrate its dedication to helping rural schools succeed. The Ernst & Sara Lane Volgenau College of Education is partnering with the National Rural Education Association to create a new Appalachian Hub. As part of the Rural Schools Collaborative (RSC) mission, this hub will assist rural schools and teachers from a four-state Appalachian region (Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia and North Carolina). These RSC hubs, established in various states and territories across the U.S., help RSC and partners exchange stories and information, collaborate on projects and seek funding opportunities to support rural schools. Melton recently appeared on the RSC's "I Am A Rural School Teacher Podcast" to discuss his experience as a rural teacher.

When it comes to helping improve education in a rural community, Melton feels he gets the greatest fulfillment out of the unique bond he forms with students and their families. Many of the students he teaches today may have a parent or family member he taught in the past. While there are a lot of positions Melton could have taken or places he could have gone with his education from MSU, there is no place he would rather be.

"The role of rural teachers and the close relationships they build with students from challenged backgrounds and upbringings is at the very center the most lasting positive impact of being a rural teacher. I have so many former students that I consider family. They come to my house, they call me for advice, they bring and share their children with me and my wife. We have been blessed beyond measure with such a wonderful extended family because I was called to be a teacher," he said. "Teaching cannot be a job; it has to be a calling, especially in a rural community."

Morehead State University's Ernst & Sara Lane Volgenau College of Education offers a reduced tuition rate to all Kentucky schoolteachers and other educators enrolled in graduate courses within our College of Education. For more details on the reduced tuition offer, visit www.moreheadstate.edu/kyeducators.

For more information about MSU's Volgenau College of Education and its programs, call 606-783-2162 or visit www.moreheadstate.edu/education.

Dr. Fujuan Tan shares her love of learning with students

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Dr. Fujuan Tan, associate professor of adult and higher education at Morehead State, is preparing future English as a Second Language (ESL) educators for career fulfillment and success.



Tan earned her bachelor's degree at Lu Dong University and her master's degree at China Ocean University, both in China, and her Ph.D. at the University of Wyoming. She began her career as an ESL teacher in China and started teaching ESL adult and higher education courses at MSU in 2012. She has authored and co-authored several books and academic articles about adult ESL education and has presented at numerous regional, national and international academic conferences. She is currently co-editing a book of autobiographies of the 20 most influential adult educators as chosen by their peers. She said the book is meant to inspire fledgling educators who are just starting out.

"The journeys to and through the field they share are invaluable for encouraging and guiding junior adult educators at the beginning of their professional careers," Tan said.

Throughout her career, Tan has strived to continue to learn and hone her skills, earning numerous certifications in ESL education. She said she strives to pass her love of learning on to her students.

"Being a lifelong learner myself, the belief and passion of lifelong learning attracted me into the field of adult education," Tan said. "I enjoy devoting myself to helping adults learn and promoting their personal growth, as well as inspiring adults to become lifelong learners."

Tan's research primarily involves transformative learning, which involves developing an individual's ability for critical reflection upon his or her experiences, resulting in a transformation of perspective that plays a fundamentally important role in the individual's personal development and growth.

Tan said she enjoys the supportive environment in the Department of Foundational and Graduate Studies in Education (FGSE) but said the most rewarding part of working at MSU is learning more about Appalachia's unique culture through the eyes of her students. She added learning more about Appalachian culture allows her to better relate to her students and facilitate their learning.

"It is a great pleasure and reward that I get to know the Eastern Kentucky Appalachian culture and the people here through working at MSU. Through teaching, I learn from my students," Tan said. "The trust and willingness that my students have in sharing with me their expertise and experiences make me thrilled, and I am grateful for that."

To learn more about programs in MSU's Department of Foundational and Graduate Studies in Education, visit www.moreheadstate.edu/fgse, email fgse@moreheadstate.edu or call 606-783-2261.

Sawning works to promote diversity in medical education and training

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Susan Sawning (96) is working to improve health care for marginalized groups by ensuring medical students receive training to help them deliver better treatment.



A graduate of MSU's social work program, Sawning is the co-director of the Introduction to Clinical Medicine course at the University of Louisville School of Medicine. The course is required for all first-year and second-year medical students and Sawning is working with a team of instructors to revise the curriculum to include content about anti-racism, disparities in health care, environmental injustice and compassion cultivation. The goal is to provide better health care to people of color and LGBTQI+ patients. She said treatment disparities are a big problem in the medical field. "Many people do not know that there are significant health disparities in many patient populations and lack of healthcare provider knowledge, as well as discrimination and bias contribute greatly to these disparities," Sawning said. "In the LGBTQI+ patient community, some of these disparities include higher cancer rates and poorer outcomes due to a lack of early detection often due to patients dropping out of the health system because of lack of inclusion or discrimination. Racism permeates every area of medicine, from admissions to leadership positions, to our learning and clinical environments. There is a lot of unlearning and learning that is happening in medical education and that is a very necessary thing to improve patient care and medical training."

Sawning plays an active role in facilitating that learning and unlearning. In 2014, while working as director of medical education research and development, she collaborated with her colleagues to create an educational model called eQuality: Leading Medical Education to Deliver Equitable Quality Care for all People, Inclusive of Identity, Development, or Expression of Gender/Sex/Sexuality, and the eQuality Toolkit, a clinical skills primer for healthcare professionals.

In addition to her work to improve the content for the introductory course, Sawning is also creating content for the medical school's humanism and compassion in medicine small groups, where groups of students and faculty members meet regularly to discuss topics related to personal and professional identity development. She said the work she's doing to improve health care education is important to her and hopes it positively impacts students.

"For me, research is very personal. I am not one to do a project solely for publication. I have to believe that what I am doing will make a difference in some greater way," she said. "I believe meaningful research will come out of the teaching content we are creating, but for now, I am focused on making sure the content I develop is something that the students will feel changed by in some way."

"I LOVE WHAT I DO BECAUSE I BELIEVE WHOLEHEARTEDLY THAT HEALTHCARE CAN BE IMPROVED BY EDUCATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF PHYSICIANS ON VARIOUS CONTENT THAT THEY OFTEN HAVE NOT BEEN EXPOSED TO PRIOR TO MEDICAL SCHOOL. I ALSO LOVE THAT I GET THE OPPORTUNITY TO INVESTIGATE HOW MUCH STUDENTS ARE REFLECTING ON AND APPLYING CURRICULUM INITIATIVES. ADDITIONALLY, I LOVE HELPING STUDENTS DEVELOP BOTH PROFESSIONALLY AND PERSONALLY."

Susan Sawning

As a first-generation college student, Sawning said she flourished at MSU because the social work program fosters a sense of community, which she has carried over into her professional life.

"MSU's social work program was top-notch. I felt the care of each professor," she said. "The MSU community, both students and faculty, was so supportive and it was not a teardown, competitive culture," she said.

Sawning was mentored by Dr. Mary Carney, former MSU assistant professor of social work, who helped her acquire an internship at Coppin State University, a historically black university in Baltimore. Sawning said she took the internship because she wanted to experience life in a place that was different from where she grew up. She said the experience broadened her worldview and made her more aware of racial injustices.

"I realize now things that I unfortunately had no awareness of at the time. I went to Baltimore because I wanted to experience the world outside of Appalachia and that is where things fell in place, however, I now understand that me attending an HBCU (Historically Black Colleges or Universities), even for a semester, was not the best for the students at Coppin State. I did not go with a spirit to save or fix, and I did not have awareness at the time that I could be perceived in this way. Rather, I saw Baltimore as a community close to my own, with many similar, though not exact, systemic and structural barriers. We shared an understanding of the importance of community, justice and showing up for each other and that understanding lead to beautiful relationships."

When Sawning visited New York City, she decided she wanted to pursue a graduate degree at Columbia University. When she returned to MSU, Sawning said Carney gave her the confidence to apply.

"I thought she would laugh and tell me I'd never get in there. Instead, she encouraged me to go for it and really nurtured this idea that I had something more to offer this world than securing a paycheck to live on. That was the very first time that someone had said to me that they (Columbia) would be lucky to have me, instead of the other way around. I had never thought about myself in that way before," she said. "Coming from a working-class family, dreams were not really a thing; it was more of making sure you secured basic needs for yourself and your family as an adult. A few years later, I applied to Columbia and was not only accepted, but they also offered to pay for some of my tuition and offered me an amazing, life-changing

internship opportunity with the Social Intervention Group. I have Dr. Carney to thank. Without her mentorship, I never would have applied.”

For information on MSU’s social work programs, visit www.moreheadstate.edu/sswc.

MSU Volleyball's Olivia Lohmeier and MSU Men's Golf Joe Muschong receive 2020-21 OVC Scholar-Athlete Awards

MSU volleyball player Olivia Lohmeier (20) and member of men's golf team Joe Muschong were selected as OVC Scholar-Athlete Award winners.



Since the introduction of the Scholar-Athlete Award following the 1980-81 academic and athletic year by the Ohio Valley Conference (OVC), Morehead State University has had a long and illustrious history connected to the award. This season, MSU added to it.

This year, both of MSU's nominees, volleyball player **Olivia Lohmeier (20)** and men's golf team member **Joe Muschong** garnered recognition from the OVC for their efforts in the classroom, community and competition. Their selection marks

the sixth time in the award's history and first since 1990-91 that MSU has had two OVC Scholar-Athlete Award

winners. The selections of Lohmeier and Muschong also mark the third consecutive year MSU has had a Scholar-Athlete Award winner, the longest streak since having an award winner for 10 straight seasons from 1984-85 to 1993-94.

Overall, Lohmeier and Muschong represent the 26th and 27th recipients of the OVC Scholar-Athlete Award for Morehead State, marking the 27th and 28th overall times the University has claimed a Scholar-Athlete Award.

Awarded each fall and based on the prior year's achievements, the OVC Scholar-Athlete Award is the highest individual honor earned by OVC student-athletes. The recognition is given annually to three men and three women of junior or senior status who have accomplishments in both the classroom and athletic arena, as well as leadership qualities.

The winners are selected from a group of nominees, one male and one female athlete per institution, nominated by OVC Faculty Athletics Representatives. To be eligible, honorees must have at least a 3.5 GPA and conduct themselves in a manner that has brought credit to the student-athlete, his or her institution, intercollegiate athletics, and the Ohio Valley Conference.

Lohmeier is a native from Cincinnati, Ohio, who graduated with a 3.94 cumulative GPA and earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in Information Systems Area. She was also honored as the 2019-20 MSU College of Business and Technology Outstanding Computer Information Systems Student of the Year. She has been a multi-year selection to the OVC's Commissioner's Honor Roll and the MSU's Dean's List while also earning multiple OVC Medals of Honor.

Off the court and in the community, Lohmeier is a member of the Morehead State volleyball leadership team and a member of Athletes in Action. She's also volunteered for numerous off and on-campus events, including Better Life Church, College Night, Freshman Move-in and multiple youth clinics.

On the court, Lohmeier was named American Volleyball Coaches Association All-Midwest Region and a VolleyballMag.com Honorable Mention All-American. A First Team All-OVC selection, she ranked in the Top 25 in the NCAA in five statistical categories, including ranking seventh in the country in total points (620.5) and

eighth in total kills (564). Her 564 kills marked an MSU junior class record and tallied the fourth-highest single-season total in program history.

Muschong, a senior sport management major with a general business minor, holds a 3.93 GPA. He earned a Srixon/Cleveland Golf All-American for his classroom efforts during the 2019-20 academic year. A multi-time OVC Medal of Honor winner, he also has earned multiple selections to the OVC's Commissioner's Honor Roll and the MSU College of Business and Technology Dean's List.

Off the course, the Lexington native is a member of the MSU Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, volunteering with the organization's Shop with a Cop initiative while also volunteering with numerous junior golf programs throughout Kentucky.

On the course, Muschong captured a pair of top-five finishes, including a season-best fourth-place finish at the Eastern Kentucky University Raising Cane's Intercollegiate to open the 2019-20 season. He also earned All-OVC honors after finishing sixth in the conference with a 71.8 stroke average, with his lowest round total coming in the Elon Phoenix Invitational opening round. In that round, he fired a season-low 64, the lowest round for an Eagle since 2014.

Jim E. Dotson Memorial Education Endowment established to help education students from Kentucky and Ohio succeed

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Front Row, left to right: Jim E. Dotson (69, 73), sons Chad Dotson and Jonathan Dotson (00, 01) Back Row, left to right: wife Sue James Dotson (66), mother-in-law Faye Burton, brother-in-law Clyde I. James (65) and Jennifer Mack Dotson (02)

While **Jim E. Dotson (69, 73)** graduated with bachelor's and master's degrees in education from Morehead State University, he went on to help generations of students graduate from high school in Kentucky and Ohio over his nearly four-decade career.

When Jim passed away in 2012, the family requested memorial contributions in lieu of flowers. Multiple family and friends made contributions in his memory. Jim's wife, Marilyn, his children and a host of others have

continued to make annual contributions to grow the fund to endowment level. With the Jim E. Dotson Memorial Education Endowment established through the MSU Foundation, his legacy will include helping MSU education students for generations to come.

"Morehead State had a significant impact on my father's commitment to education for over 35 years and he was so proud to be an Eagle. He always said, 'You have to look at the child first and let kids know you care in order for them to be successful,'" said **Jonathan Dotson (00, 01)**, son of the scholarship's namesake. "Our father believed that students are at the heart of everything we do."

Scholarship criteria include being a full-time student majoring in education with preference given to students from Pike County, Kentucky, or Franklin County, Ohio. Recipients must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.3 and maintain overall satisfactory scholastic standing.

Students interested in applying for this scholarship, along with other privately funded scholarships managed by the MSU Foundation, should visit the online scholarship application at moreheadstate.awardspring.com.

For more information on this scholarship, or to establish your own, contact MSU's Office of Alumni Relations and Development at 606-783-2033, email giving@moreheadstate.edu or visit alumni.moreheadstate.edu.

MSU student-athletes earn school record 35 OVC Medal of Honor accolades

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Morehead State University student-athletes set a school record by earning 35 Ohio Valley Conference (OVC) Academic Medals of Honor for the 2019-20 seasons.

The OVC Academic Medal of Honor is given annually to the student-athletes who achieve the highest grade point average (GPA) in a conference-sponsored sport. Every Academic Medal of Honor recipient for the 2019-20 academic year carried a perfect 4.0 GPA.

The MSU total bests the previous department record of 31 earned in 2018. Soccer and beach volleyball tied for the highest total of athletes receiving medals at five each.

Listed below are the 2019-20 Morehead State Medals of Honor.

Beach Volleyball

- Andrea Grimes, sophomore, Lebanon, Ohio
- Peyton Kennedy, sophomore, Cincinnati, Ohio,
- **Olivia Lohmeier (20)**, Cincinnati, Ohio
- Trinity Miller, sophomore, Fairfield, Ohio
- Margaret Musselman, junior, Pataskala, Ohio

Men's Cross Country

- Josh Grogan, senior, Paducah
- Richard Knupp, sophomore, Russell
- Jarrett Mattingly, senior, New Haven

Women's Cross Country

- Riliegh Owens, sophomore, Owensboro
- Carrie Staviski, junior, Owingsville

Men's Golf

- Ryan Gillum, senior, Grayson

Women's Golf

- Gypsie Hutchinson, senior, Lexington
- Alina-Sophie Koch, sophomore, Metzingen, Germany
- Mackenzie Neal, sophomore, Richmond
- Isabella Washka, junior, Argyle, Texas

Rifle

- Erin Diehl, junior, East Earl, Pennsylvania
- **Alexa Potts (20)**, Ephrata, Pennsylvania
- **Karly Potts (20)**, Ephrata, Pennsylvania

Soccer

- **Katie Kiolbassa (20)**, Palatine, Illinois
- Lauryn Kunz, senior, Imperial, Missouri
- Nicole Palmer, junior, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Katelynn Setters, sophomore, Liberty Township, Ohio
- **Ellie Weber (19)**, Hillard, Ohio

Softball

- Adeline Nicholson, redshirt junior, Scottdale, Pennsylvania
- Kaylin Silcox, freshman, Walton, Indiana
- Alexis Strother, senior, Lebanon, Ohio

Men's Track and Field

- Josh Grogan, junior, Paducah
- Richard Knupp, freshman, Russell
- Jarrett Mattingly, senior, New Haven
- Women's Track and Field
- Emma Gundler, junior, Blanchester, Ohio
- Riliegh Owens, freshman, Owensboro
- Carrie Staviski, junior, Owingsville

Volleyball

- Andrea Grimes, sophomore, Lebanon, Ohio
- Peyton Kennedy, sophomore, Cincinnati, Ohio,
- **Olivia Lohmeier (20)**, Cincinnati, Ohio

Special education teacher Shawntasia Butler finds joy and positivity in her job and her students

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Shawntasia Butler

Whether it is her friends, former MSU professors or current colleagues, **Shawntasia Butler (19)**, fourth- and fifth-grade Functional Mental Disability (FMD) teacher at Rodburn Elementary School in Morehead, is known for having a positive attitude. While she said that disposition is something she has had from a young age, she said her students always give her a boost.

"Every day working in special education, I have learned to find the little joys in everything. Anyone who has taught special education knows that our students find joy in anything," Butler said. "They radiate happiness even when they have a bad day. I try to do the same."

Growing up in Louisville, Butler always enjoyed school and found it a source of confidence and pride. She always wanted to go to college and while she considered pursuing a career in nursing or law, she still leaned toward becoming a teacher.

This direction became even more apparent in high school when she became a peer tutor and later started working with special needs children.

Butler's best friend told her about Morehead State and she initially enrolled because of its small class sizes and affordability. After spending time at MSU, she found there was much more to love.

"I appreciated how the 'Once an Eagle, Always an Eagle' was more than just a saying. My professors cared about me outside the classroom. They really supported me and helped me be as successful as they could," Butler said. "Even now that I'm in graduate school, I still communicate with some of my undergraduate professors regularly."

One of those professors was education instructor Suzannah Chapman-Johnson (12). Whether she joined her for yearly Kentucky Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) conferences or her daily interactions with her in the classroom, she said she was a considerable influence on her passion and direction.

"Chapman-Johnson and her classes shaped me into the person I am in and out of the classroom. She gave me real tools to use in the classroom. Everything she taught me had a reason and applied to multiple aspects of my life," Butler said. "Most importantly, she challenged me as a person. She made me work harder than I ever had, she forced me out of my comfort zone, and she accepted nothing but my absolute best. She was always direct and honest. I don't think I'd be half the teacher or person I am had I not taken her classes."

Butler earned a Bachelor of Arts in Special Education Moderate to Severe Disabilities and Elementary Education in 2019. She ended up at Rodburn Elementary School, the same school she observed for field experience while earning her education degree at MSU.

"I was thinking that I would apply to jobs all over Kentucky and I would accept the one I got in the place I liked the most. When the opportunity came to apply for the job I have now, I didn't apply for anything else after because I wanted to work here more than anything," she said. "I knew my students through observations and the school and district were filled with people I had grown to enjoy being around."

Butler has enjoyed teaching in a small-town environment versus her larger Louisville hometown due to the community bonds and the impact she sees firsthand. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, she is also witnessing the challenges of teaching in a smaller community, which only fuels her desire to make a difference where she can.

"The challenges that come with rural areas are the lack of opportunities and resources. COVID has really exposed how much rural areas lack resources and opportunities. Many students don't have access to the

internet, electronics to do work, food, etc.," she said. "We are working around the clock to be able to support students whose parents are working during the day and don't have the ability to get schoolwork done during school hours."

Butler takes her role in helping rural schools seriously. She was recently selected to be a part of the Rural Schools Collaborative's (RSC) inaugural Young Educator's Advisory (YEA) Council in conjunction with its I Am A Rural Teacher Campaign. These educators will help strengthen the RSC's mission for recruitment, preparation and retention of rural teachers.

"I felt that it was somewhere to start making an impact. As a new teacher, there's so much that you experience," Butler said. "It is nice to have a group of people who are working to help support young rural teachers. I felt that being a part of this group would be a chance to help other young teachers like me feel more confident and make an impact in the community that they work in."

Due to her dedication to her field and her passion for helping others, Butler believes she will acquire many more titles and ways to grow as an educator. That being said, no title will ever capture the most rewarding part of her job: making a difference in her students and their families' lives.

"THE MOST FULFILLING PART OF BEING A TEACHER IS WHEN THE STUDENTS THINK OF YOU, EVEN OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM. THEY BRING YOU PICTURES THEY'VE DRAWN FOR YOU OR THEY WANT TO SHARE SOMETHING THEY HAVE AND ENJOY. THEIR PARENTS TALK ABOUT HOW MUCH THEY LOVE COMING TO SCHOOL BECAUSE OF YOU. MOMENTS LIKE THOSE ARE WHAT REASSURES ME THAT I CAN DO THIS FOR A LONG TIME."

Shawntasia Butler

For more information about MSU's Volgenau College of Education and its programs, call 606-783-2162 or visit www.moreheadstate.edu/education.

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Morehead State University earns national recognition for academic excellence and COVID-19 response



Morehead State University quickly adapted and made changes to how it educated MSU students due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The University moved up in overall national rankings and our academic programs continue to earn national recognition. This year MSU was also recognized for its COVID-19 response.

For the 17th consecutive year, MSU was recognized as one of the top public universities in the South in the 2021 edition of "America's Best Colleges" by U.S. News & World Report. MSU became a Top 20 institution after ranking 19th in the

Top Public Regional Universities-South division in 2020. For 2021, MSU moved up two spots, ranking 17th on that list. MSU also made the publication's list as one of the top public regional universities in the South for social mobility.

Educate To Career (ETC) ranked MSU in its College Rankings Results for the COVID-19 Economic Crisis. The University earned the distinction of being declared a Tier 1 institution and is among 1,200 institutions ranked by their ability to offer a quality education under any conceivable scenario, including in-classroom, online and hybrid instruction formats. To view MSU's COVID-19 planning and information, visit www.moreheadstate.edu/healthyatmsu.

MSU has long been nationally recognized for its commitment to student-veterans and putting them on a path to success by publications like Military Times. In 2020, the University earned high marks as an employer of veterans after the publication named MSU to its Best for Vets: Employers 2020 list. Learn more about MSU resources for student veterans and military families at www.moreheadstate.edu/veterans.

This year MSU's RN to BSN program was nationally ranked by NursingProcess.org, earning a top 5 (#4) ranking out of 169 accredited programs in the Southeast Region (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia). MSU's RN to BSN program trains students with the knowledge, skills and professional attitude to take nursing careers to the next level. Students who possess an unrestricted RN license are eligible, and the curriculum is delivered entirely online in an interactive web-based platform. For more information about MSU's nursing programs, visit www.moreheadstate.edu/nursing.

For the second consecutive year, Morehead State University's Master of Arts in Sport Management program has garnered a national ranking after being named one of the 25 Best Online Master's in Sports Management programs for 2021 by Best Masters Programs (BestMastersPrograms.org). Visit www.moreheadstate.edu/study/MA-sportmgmt for more details.

For a full list of MSU rankings, visit www.moreheadstate.edu/rankings.

Eight MSU alumni earn Teacher Achievement Awards

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Morehead State University is well represented on the list of recipients of the 2021 Valvoline™ Teacher Achievement Awards (TAA). The recipients were selected by the Kentucky Department of Education and Valvoline Inc. These educators now qualify to compete for the 2021 Kentucky Teacher of the Year, which will be announced in October.

Of the list of 24 teachers, eight are graduates of MSU:



Jared Criswell (19), Wayne County High School

Stephanie Groathouse (14), New Haven Elementary (Boone County)

Toni Mullins (13, 16), Carr Creek Elementary (Knott County)

Samuel Northern (11), Simpson Elementary (Simpson County)

Scott Osborn (99), Lawrence County High School





Steffanie Skiles (17), McKell Middle School (Greenup County)

Mary Slone (94), Floyd County High School

Amanda White (03, 08), Charles Straub Elementary (Mason County)

Valvoline is providing the 24 recipients with cash awards. From there, three finalists will be selected as Kentucky Teachers of the Year and will receive custom designed glassware commemorating their accomplishments.

This year's program set a new record with nearly 3,000 nominations and more than 200 applications submitted.

To learn more about programs in MSU's Ernst and Sara Lane Volgenau College of Education, call 606-783-2162 or visit www.moreheadstate.edu/education.

MSU Commencement honors spring and fall 2020 graduates

Even with the unique challenges and changes in the spring and fall semesters of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many Morehead State University students completed an academic milestone.

MSU honored more than 1,500 degree candidates at the virtual 2020 Spring and Fall Commencement ceremonies held on Saturday, Dec. 5. There was a total of 1,028 degrees handed out for the spring and summer 2020 graduates and 515 for the graduates from fall and winter 2020.

Supporters of these graduates were able to visit www.moreheadstate.edu/graduation to view virtual graduation ceremony videos. Each graduate's name was read as part of the ceremony.

Morehead State continues to serve Kentucky's educators through tuition discount

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Morehead State has made significant changes this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, throughout MSU's more than 130-year history, one thing has never changed: being an institution that trains and prepares future educators to go out and make an indelible impact on people's lives in the service region and beyond.

For the next five years, MSU is discounting graduate tuition on all 600-level courses within the Ernst & Sara Lane Volgenau College of Education. The rate for the next five years will be the same as the University's undergraduate tuition rate, which is currently \$374 per credit hour.

MSU offers easy admission and transfer of credit, as well as online courses and programs for ease of completion.

"As part of our Commitment to the Commonwealth, MSU is proud to honor Kentucky's educators for their service," said MSU President Dr. Jay Morgan. "We recognize that these times are unprecedented and challenging for all of us, and we remain steadfast in our commitment to providing affordable access to high-quality academic programs. MSU has a long, proud history of educating teachers. We were founded as Morehead Normal School and later became Morehead Teachers College before earning university status. We are educators, and we celebrate educators at all levels."

For more details on the reduced tuition, as well as information on graduate and certification programs offered by the Volgenau College of Education, visit www.moreheadstate.edu/kyeducators.

Joyce and Roy Spaulding provide legacy gift to support MSU education students

Creating a legacy for future generations ...



Roy and Joyce Spaulding

Once **Joyce (60)** and **Roy (60) Spaulding** came to Morehead State University, they made a few different commitments. They married in 1959, committed to earning their degrees from MSU in 1960 and dedicated their careers to changing student lives through education.

Joyce and Roy retired as elementary/junior high reading teachers and band directors, respectively, before spending their remaining years in Sun City, Arizona. Both Joyce and Roy passed away in 2018 but their gift to MSU ensures they will continue to make a positive impact in the field of education.

In collaboration with the Morehead State University Foundation, the Joyce and Roy Spaulding Scholarship Endowment was established to benefit MSU students studying to become teachers in the Ernst & Sara Lane Volgenau College of Education.

Recipients of the annual scholarship must be full-time undergraduate students majoring in a program within the Ernst and Sara Lane Volgenau College of Education. The scholarship value is \$8,000 annually (\$4,000 per

semester) and is renewable for one additional year if a 2.8 GPA and full-time status are maintained. A new recipient will be selected every other year, pending the current year recipient maintains eligibility.

“They were incredible people with huge hearts,” said **Russell Scott Spaulding (89)**, trustee for the Spaulding Family Trust. “I hope they will be remembered in many different ways through this charity.”



The MSU Visionary Society is a recognition society for those who remember MSU through planned gifts.

To learn more about planned gifts or other ways to support your favorite MSU program, contact the Office of Alumni Relations and Development at 606-783-2033, email giving@moreheadstate.edu or visit alumni.moreheadstate.edu/give.

Alumna Lexie Centers recognized for financial literacy education

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Morehead State alumna **Lexie Butler Centers (09)** earned the distinction of Financial Literacy Educator of the Month in October 2020 for her efforts to teach money management skills to her students at Gregg Middle School in Summerville, South Carolina.

The award was presented to Centers by the South Carolina Financial Literacy Master Teacher Program. The program provides incentives to K-12 teachers who are experts in financial literacy and have a desire to teach professional development workshops to other educators in their schools and districts. Through the program, participating teachers have access to specialized training and financial literacy curriculum resources to promote financial literacy education in K-12 schools better. South Carolina State Auditor Curtis Loftis started the program in 2018.

“We originally started financial literacy in the seventh grade to supplement the seventh-grade math standards which include percentages, interest rates and other rate of change math problems. We thought that adding a course that would coincide with social studies and math would be a great elective for students,” Centers said. “Giving students a ‘hook’ for learning math is always a

plus! Every kid on the planet needs to understand real-world math, and I feel like it is such an important skill set and the sooner we start the education, the better. Middle school has been a great place to introduce many of the concepts I teach.”

Centers earned her master's degree in teaching from MSU in 2006 and her RANK-I certification in 2009. She is a third-generation teacher and a third-generation MSU graduate. Her grandparents, Raymond Butler and Lexie Holton Butler, both attended MSU, as did her mother, **Mary Lois Manley Butler (85)**. Her husband **Jeffrey Centers (95)** also attended MSU, graduating with a business degree.

"It fills me with pride being a third-generation teacher and attending the same college as my grandparents and mother...but honestly, God made me a teacher," she said. "I love being a part of the Morehead family. I grew up in Ashland attending camps at Morehead, watched my mom graduate from Morehead and now am married to a Morehead graduate as well. It is an honor to be a Morehead Eagle."

She added studying at MSU has given her the tools to have a career she's passionate about.

"Morehead was just an equipping toolbox for my passion, education. I use the tools I learned in the classroom at Morehead every single day in my classroom. And as education is evolving through this pandemic, we are having to dig deep in our toolbox to adapt and pivot! I can't help but think that education is going to be better on the other side," Centers said. "I loved the community of people who get life in Eastern Kentucky, love education and the lifelong learning that occurs there, and the support you get."

For more information about education programs at MSU, visit www.moreheadstate.edu/education, email Dr. Antony Norman, dean of the Volgenau College of Education at adnorman@moreheadstate.edu or call 606-783-2162.

Bringing education into the 21st Century: CeCe Best helps teachers integrate technology

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One Morehead State doctoral student is helping other teachers make the switch to virtual education by teaching them about instructional technology.

CeCe Best (17), who will complete the Doctor of Education program next year, is a mathematics teacher at Henderson North Middle School. She earned a Master of Arts in Teaching with an endorsement in Instructional Technology P-12 in 2017.

In addition to teaching her students, Best offers professional development training about technology tools that can be used in the virtual and physical classroom. She is currently working with another MSU Ed.D. program graduate, **Leah Simpson (16)**, to create a Google Classroom guide for teachers that provides video tutorials and step-by-step instructions to help educators create an accessible Google Classroom for their students. The guide will be used by area teachers and faculty in the Kentucky Community and Technical College System.

Best is incorporating new technology into her own classroom as well. She was recently awarded a grant from the Kentucky Society for

Technology in Education to purchase MakerBot 3D printing technology to use with her students.

“Our world is continually progressing and technology is an essential part of that change. It is necessary to incorporate digital learning into our curriculum to prepare our students better to meet and exceed our society’s

expectations,” Best said. “Digital learning is key to forming innovative ideas to create new products, to design ingenious solutions to problems, to provide a global perspective and so much more. Education should not have limitations and digital learning is the passport to broadening horizons to help make the world a more accessible place.”

Best said the Ed.D. program challenges her to expand her skill set beyond what she thought was possible.

“As a student, MSU has provided opportunities for me to take risks, such as applying for the Ed.D. program, applying for a technology grant, gaining an instructional design internship and writing proposals for conventions. All opportunities and risks that I wouldn’t have thought were possible as a K-12 teacher,” she said. “The MSU Ed.D. program has boosted my confidence and skill level to take the necessary risks to further my career and help other educators.”

The Ed.D. program is offered online, but Best said she still feels a connection to the faculty and her fellow students, even if they never meet face-to-face.

“The best part of being an Eagle is the opportunity to stay connected with the campus, faculty, and staff from a distance. As a graduate student and an online learner, I still feel connected to my faculty, advisors and campus community through various support, communications and events,” Best said. “The sense of community, support and friendship is truly remarkable. It is great to have a sense of community during an Ed.D. program; to have peers with perspectives from various fields to bounce off ideas, provide feedback, advice and encouragement is necessary to network and find success.”

For information on MSU’s Ed.D. program, visit www.moreheadstate.edu/study/edd, email fgse@moreheadstate.edu or call 606-783-2261.

Alumni write Spanish textbook for Appalachian students

January 15, 2021
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Two Morehead State alumni, **Dr. Chris (16)** and **Dr. Emmanuel (11) Anama-Green**, saw a need to make the curriculum in their Spanish classes more relatable to their students at Harlan County High School. So, the two put their heads together to create a textbook designed specifically for students in rural areas.

The textbook, "Viajes desde Appalachia," is a level one book written for students who are just beginning to learn Spanish. The book makes references to several locations in Harlan County and Eastern Kentucky.

Emmanuel, a native of Owsley County who lived in Ecuador for two years doing missionary work, said he saw many similarities in culture between the parts of Ecuador where he served and his hometown. He said that's when the idea came to him to create a Spanish text specifically for rural students.

"Many of the textbooks and curriculum that we previewed often have a focus toward metropolitan areas. As an Eastern Kentucky native, having lived in the rural areas of Ecuador, I felt it was important that our students see connections between the culture that they were learning about and their own culture," he said.

Emmanuel and Chris have traveled extensively to Mexico, the Dominican Republic and Colombia, and included photos from their travels in the textbook. Chris, who primarily teaches Spanish I, took the lead on the book.

"Because I have primarily been able to focus on teaching beginners, I have created and accumulated a lot of resources over the years that are ideal for level one students. However, we both contributed content, photography and editing time," Chris said.

The two are currently working on a Spanish II textbook, this time with Emmanuel taking the lead. The book will build on the first book's content, with state and national standards for best practices world languages instruction being used in its development.

They expect the book to be available for classroom use in fall 2022.

"As with the Spanish I textbook, the Spanish II textbook will focus on what students 'can do' with the language, instead of simply studying grammatical points," Emmanuel said. Both Chris and Emmanuel earned their Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT), Spanish P-12, degrees from MSU, and said what they learned here has shaped their careers as educators.

"MSU truly helped me to mature as a young adult. My professors in my undergrad helped me to deal with challenges and develop an appreciation for Spanish and world languages in general," Emmanuel said. "The experiences that I had in my undergraduate and graduate degrees at Morehead helped me grow as an individual and be successful in life."

"The MAT program at MSU was very practical. While some coursework focused on theory, the majority of my time in the program was spent learning and practicing different teaching methodologies," Chris said. "Because of this, I felt very prepared and supported when I started teaching Spanish."

To learn more about MSU's MAT programs, visit www.moreheadstate.edu/study/mat.

Long-time educator Pinkie Moore's mission is to help underserved children and families succeed

Pinkie Moore (69) pictured with her husband of 52 years, Lee Moore.

January 15, 2021

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In her nearly five decades working in early childhood education and at age 73, **Pinkie Sparks Moore (69)** continues to help give young people a better chance of becoming successful students.

Named after the title of a painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence, Pinkie Moore has spent the bulk of her career working in Craven County, North Carolina. She retired as the daycare services coordinator for the Craven County Department of Social Services before continuing her career as the community outreach coordinator for Craven Smart Start Inc., a role she has held for more than 17 years.

Pinkie Moore, seen here as a senior, graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Education in 1969 and a Master of Arts in Education in 1970.

Moore grew up on a small tobacco farm in Robertson County, which she said was one of the smallest populated counties in the state at the time. She entered first grade in a one-room school for three years until she transferred to finish out her remaining schooling at Deming High School, a high school that also included students in grades 1-8. Neither of her parents attended college but they still made educating their children a priority.

"Although the family budget was limited, they splurged to buy a set of encyclopedias before they bought a television," Moore said.

Moore, the oldest of three children, and her two younger siblings would all earn bachelor's and master's degrees (her youngest brother, **Tom Sparks (75)**, earned a Bachelor of Science from MSU). She first learned about MSU from her school's librarian, Lucille Sandifer, who encouraged her to participate in the Regional Speech Festival for area high schools held on campus. Her high school principal, Herman Hale, referred her to MSU as a high-achieving student and indicated she needed financial assistance.

Moore attended MSU on an academic scholarship and her time at MSU included many defining moments that greatly influenced her life's direction. She was a work-study with Alumni Affairs, was a tutor counselor with Upward Bound for two summers and worked as a graduate assistant under sociology professor Dr. Richard Reser. She was also selected for the Society of Cwens (now Lambda Sigma National Honor Society) and Cardinal Key. Moore also joined Kappa Delta Pi sorority and the Political Science Club, where she served as secretary. She also met and married her husband of 52 years, Lee, who was a residence hall director of Wilson Hall for two years and went on to serve in the U.S. Air Force.

Moore's experience in Upward Bound helped to steer her toward a career in social work. She also credits then-MSU First Lady Mignon Doran's Personal Development Institute in helping her "refine my social skills and manners" and giving her more confidence in business and social settings.

"I greatly admired Dr. and Mrs. Doran for the way they welcomed MSU students to the university and made us feel like 'one big family,'" Moore said. "I was never able to have a job when I was in high school with only one vehicle in the home, so I found the experience of working in an office at MSU a great learning experience, as I have always worked in an office throughout my 49-year career."

On the way to graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Education in 1969, she completed student-teaching at Rowan County Senior High School and began preparing herself to be a high school studies teacher or a guidance counselor. When she returned to MSU to earn a Master of Arts in Education in 1970, she said enrolling in the course Human Growth and Development changed her entire outlook and direction.

“By this time, I had been married for several years and was expecting my first child. Perhaps it was my maternal instinct kicking in, but this class was instrumental in steering me to the field of early childhood development,” she said.

While Craven County, North Carolina, has a much larger population than the one she grew up in, she said her experience growing up in a rural area instilled in her principles she applies to children in families from rural and urban areas.

“COLLABORATING WITH OTHER COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS THAT FOCUS ON FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN TO SHARE RESOURCE INFORMATION, SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES THAT BENEFIT FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN LIVING IN OUR COUNTY...TO BUILD A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR OUR YOUNG CHILDREN.”

Pinkie Moore

“From my experience of growing up in rural Robertson County in the 50s and 60s, I always felt there was a great deal of community support for families and looking out for each other. I think that children who live in rural areas and come from homes where there is limited transportation are at a real disadvantage. I know what that’s like, and I can identify with those students from rural communities,” she said. “However, you can’t assume that children in large cities have access to lots of resources. I have known children who lived in the low-income housing project of our town who have never traveled that much out of the city limits and who never visited a library until they were enrolled in a Smart Start program.”

From her upbringing and her MSU experience to the positive work she is doing today, Pinkie Moore believes she owes it to herself to keep going in her field as long as it keeps making a difference.



Pinkie Moore currently spends her time helping children and families as the community outreach coordinator for Craven Smart Start Inc., a role she still happily holds at age 73.

“Helping others...especially parents or caregivers with young children. Helping them find resources and services they need and helping them to understand their role ‘as their child’s first and important teacher,’” Moore said when discussing the most fulfilling part of her job.

To learn more about programs in the Ernst and Sara Lane Volgenau College of Education, call 606-783-2162 or visit www.moreheadstate.edu/education.

For the next five years, MSU is discounting graduate tuition on all 600-level courses within the Volgenau College of Education. The rate for the next five years is the same as the University’s undergraduate tuition rate, which is currently \$374 per credit hour.

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Dr. Antony Norman brings proven track-record and a servant's heart to role as dean of Volgenau College of Education

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Dr. Antony "Tony" Norman is the dean of the Ernst & Sara Lane Volgenau College of Education at Morehead State University. In the past, there were popular ad campaigns telling people to "stay in school." Whether he saw these or not, Dr. Antony "Tony" Norman seemed to take that to heart.

"For me personally, I was drawn to education because I was a 'good student,'" he said. "I often joke that I kept going to school 'til I was told I had accumulated all the degrees available — and then found out I could actually stay and work at the University."

Norman currently serves as a professor of education and dean of Morehead State University's Ernst & Sara Lane Volgenau College of Education. Before that, he spent 24 years as an administrator and faculty member at Western Kentucky University (WKU). From his upbringing to his role of leading the Volgenau College of Education, Norman's faith, family and focus have moved his career forward and fueled his mission to use education to create positive change.

Born in Charlotte, North Carolina, but raised in Lynchburg, Virginia, Norman was the second of six children. His father worked in church administration and his mother was a stay-at-home mom. His second sister, April, was born with what Norman describes as "profound mental

retardation,” resulting in Norman’s mother and his other siblings growing up fast and putting others’ needs before themselves.

“As you might expect, my Christian faith was central to my family, and it still is for me. I think my faith, April, and being a first-generation college student all aligned to direct me toward the field of education – a place where you can make a difference,” Norman said.

Norman went on to earn both a Bachelor of Science in Psychology (1984) and a Master of Arts in Counseling (1986) from Liberty University before earning a Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Philosophy from the University of Virginia.

“I have always had a strong interest in people, which is why my first focus was on psychology. But as I moved into counseling, I began to recognize the foundational role parents, caregivers and teachers play in healthy development of children,” he said. “This led to my eventual focus on educational and developmental psychology.”

Early on as a college professor, Norman enjoyed teaching foundational courses for future teachers ranging from educational psychology and concepts of learning to child and adolescent psychology. However, despite being an admitted introvert and reluctant leader, his services on college committees and task forces revealed a knack for working with others and organizing and improving processes. These skills were solidified when he “took the plunge” by volunteering to serve as assessment coordinator in the U.S. Department of Education Teacher Quality grant, leading to the development of the Teacher Work Sample process adopted by many educator preparation programs across the country.

Norman’s assessment coordinator role was the self-described “baby step” that changes his career trajectory. He supported National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) accreditation efforts initially at Longwood University as the assistant dean for assessment and accountability and later at WKU as the associate dean for accountability and research at the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences (CEBS). His efforts at WKU led to being fully prepared one year ahead of the scheduled accreditation visit and WKU earning the 2009 Christa McAuliffe Award for Excellence in Teacher Education due to the university developing a web-based electronic assessment system.

At WKU, Norman was tasked with greater administrative responsibilities before taking on his longest-standing and most significant role as director of the Educational Leadership Doctoral Program. His duty to launch this program and move it from “paper to concept” in 2011 was not without its set of challenges, or as Norman referred to them, “messy problems.” The program lacked concrete processes and procedures to guide students, faculty teaching courses on a predictably scheduled basis, or a strategic plan to demonstrate what students should know and be able to do by the program’s completion. Norman collaborated with faculty, staff and WKU’s Graduate School to overcome these issues.

“This program was important because it was the first terminal degree the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) allowed regional universities to offer,” he said. “We needed more terminally degreed leaders in our state. Without these programs, many Kentuckians wanting terminal degrees in educational leadership were having to look outside the state for such programs. We provided leaders the ability to stay closer to home as they further their studies.”

Norman said one of the aspects of MSU that led him to apply for his current role was its long-standing dedication to serving the region of Eastern Kentucky. He said while he is still formulating his ideas for the Volgenau College of Education’s goals and vision, he has already fostered fruitful partnerships. The college is partnering with the National Rural Education Association and the Rural Schools Collaborative (RSC). Through this collaboration, MSU will serve as an RSC Appalachian Hub (for the region of Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia and North Carolina) to assist rural schools and teachers. The newly formed Appalachian Rural Education – MSU Hub Council in the Volgenau College of Education will also help emphasize advocacy, education, connection and awareness related to rural education issues.

Norman said the importance of his role isn’t lost on him. He said the Volgenau College of Education will always promote MSU’s core mission by preparing its graduates to succeed and do their part to help students and schools in Eastern Kentucky and beyond flourish.

“We must challenge them to embrace perspectives and viewpoints that prepare them to not only be successful ‘back home’ but successful anywhere life might take them. It is my goal, and I believe that of all Volgenau and Morehead State faculty, to prepare our students to be able to choose to live, work and thrive anywhere, so serving in our region is their choice rather than their only option,” he said. “It is my hope that Morehead State

will continue to stay true to and protect our core mission as 'a light to the mountains.' After all, if we don't improve the lives and support the dreams of those in Eastern Kentucky, who will?"

For more information about MSU's Volgenau College of Education and its programs, call 606-783-2162 or visit www.moreheadstate.edu/education.

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STEM coach empowers students with creative teaching methods

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Josh Rayburn (20), graduate from MSU's Doctor of Education in Educational Technology program and district STEM learning coach for Fayette County Public Schools, earned the 2020 ISTE Arts and Technology Network Creativity Award. Fayette County Public Schools District STEM Learning Coach **Josh Rayburn (20)** is all about sparking a passion for science, technology, engineering and mathematics...and he has found some creative ways to do it. The most notable would be his work on the STEM Bus, a mobile learning lab that travels to elementary schools across Fayette County.

For his work, Rayburn, a 2020 graduate of Morehead State University's Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Educational Technology program, was honored with the 2020 International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Arts and Technology Network Creativity Award.

"I feel like this award represents me as a whole," Rayburn said. "I am a member of ISTE and submitted my material, not thinking I would win. I am very excited about this award and proud to be one of the few that have won the awards."

Originally from Dry Ridge, now a resident of Lexington, Rayburn said he knew from an early age he wanted to be someone who shapes people the same way his favorite teachers shaped him.

“I had great teachers growing up that made a huge impact on me and my life,” he said. “I knew I wanted to have an impact on other people, as well.”

Rayburn’s interests in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) overlapped as he figured out ways to incorporate music and the arts into other classrooms. His passion for music led him to earn bachelor’s and master’s degrees in music before earning an education specialist degree, all from Eastern Kentucky University. He said he was sitting in a Kentucky Society for Technology in Education session led by MSU Associate Professor of Education Technology Dr. Jeannie Justice, who mentioned the Doctor of Education in Educational Technology program.

“I liked that the program was all online and I could still work and complete this program,” Rayburn said.

Rayburn earned his doctorate while working for Fayette County Public Schools for the past 10 years. For the last two years, he has served as a district STEM learning coach.

“My job now helps teachers see that you can provide hands-on instructions through design thinking and engineering and STEM,” he said. “My degree has helped me design better instruction using technology. I have also been provided with different tools to access technology and provide help for teachers and my district when looking at different technology tools.”

Rayburn was honored to receive the ISTE Arts and Technology Network Creativity Award last year and wants to continue to use technology to help both students and teachers.

“My favorite part about my job is seeing students shine and light up when they are successful,” he said. “I also love seeing teachers smile when their students shine on the bus and using STEM in their class.”

Volgenau College of Education receives KDE special education grant funds

January 15, 2021

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Morehead State's Ernst & Sara Lane Volgenau College of Education will benefit from a federal grant awarded to the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) to support special education programs.

The funding comes from the KDE's Office of Special Education and Early Learning, which was awarded a competitive grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs. The Kentucky LEADS (Leading, Educating, Advocating for Directors of Special Education) Academy is a five-year, \$1 million federal grant designed to facilitate system change by increasing the number and capacity of certified directors of special education (DoSEs) and early intervention service leaders to improve services and results for children with disabilities.

"It is a great opportunity for MSU to be involved in the Kentucky LEADS Academy. We look forward to assisting more students to go into leadership roles for Special Education and Early Intervention," said Dr. April Miller, professor of education and chair of the Department of Early Childhood, Elementary, and Special Education.

In partnership with Kentucky's Part C Early Intervention Services, Morehead State University, Western Kentucky University, Murray State University and the Kentucky Parent Training and Information Center, the Kentucky LEADS Academy will work toward achieving three goals: to recruit more students to earn the director of special education certification; to increase the number of people whose job description includes supervising, directing, administering or coordinating special education programs who have attained the certification, and; to expand and enhance the existing state network to ensure that state, regional and local leaders have the knowledge, skills and access necessary to improve early childhood and educational outcomes for children with disabilities and their families through the systems that serve them.

"We in the Volgenau College of Education are excited about the opportunity to collaborate with our University

and state education partners as we seek to support P-12 schools' ability to serve their students with special needs," said Dr. Tony Norman, dean of the Volgenau College of Education. "Although each of us may be doing well in our own sphere, all of us, and certainly our P-12 partners, will benefit as we share our knowledge and expertise to better prepare and increase the number of directors of special education."

For more information about programs in the Volgenau College of Education, visit www.moreheadstate.edu/education, email Norman at adnorman@moreheadstate.edu or call 606-783-2162.