



Communications & Marketing
Morehead State University
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Email: news@moreheadstate.edu
Web: moreheadstate.edu

NEWS RELEASE

July 5, 2023
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MOREHEAD, Ky.---

Dr. Ben Malphrus makes list of admired leaders

Dr. Ben Malphrus, executive director of Morehead State's Space Science Center and professor of space science at Morehead State, has been named a Top Ten Admired Leader by trade publication [Industry Era](#) magazine.

According to the magazine, Malphrus is being recognized for his involvement in establishing Morehead State's Space Science Center, which has evolved into a leader in designing, constructing, and monitoring nanosatellites and CubeSats.

"In effect, we became a one stop shop for CubeSats, being able to go from concept to design to fabrication and testing and finally to operations after launch," Malphrus told the magazine.

Most recently, a cubesat built at MSU, the Lunar IceCube, was launched as a secondary payload as part of the Artemis Space Mission. The device will search for evidence of water on the moon

In addition to the honor from Industry Era, Malphrus was inducted into the International Academy of Astronautics (IAA) and was honored by the Morehead/Rowan County Chamber of Commerce with their Educator of the Year Award late last year.

To learn more about [space systems engineering programs](#) at MSU, email phes@moreheadstate.edu or call 606-783-2381.

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empower students to succeed. Serving Eastern Kentucky for more than 135 years, MSU is ranked among the top public universities in the South by U.S. News & World Report and boasts more than 70,000 proud alumni.

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NEWS RELEASE

July 7, 2023
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MSU Alumni Association announces 2023 Alumni Award recipients

The MSU Alumni Association has announced the remaining 2023 Alumni Award recipients. These honorees will be recognized during the 2023 Homecoming festivities Nov. 2-4 and will join the previously announced recipients of the Alumni Hall of Fame and the Founders Award for University Service.

“We are thrilled to be recognizing these outstanding Eagles,” said Allison Caudill (Class of 2005, 2009), executive director of Alumni Relations and Development. “We have an amazing class of honorees that we look forward to celebrating at Homecoming.”

NOTABLE ALUMNI AWARD – ROBERT MOORE (CLASS OF 1998, 2007)

The Notable Alumni Award is given to alumni who have demonstrated success in their career fields and/or are going above and beyond in their communities or profession.

Robert Moore is the chief of schools for the Jefferson County Public Schools. This is the largest school system in Kentucky and the 30th largest in the United States.

RISING EAGLE AWARD – SHANNON CALLIHAN (CLASS OF 2015)

The Rising Eagle Award is given to a recent graduate of the last 10 years who has demonstrated early career and/or community service achievement.

Shannon Callihan is the director of operations for the Nashville Predators National Hockey League team. She also tours as an up-and-coming pop/soul/R&B singer and songwriter. She released her first album, “One Sided,” in September 2021.

EAGLE SPIRIT AWARD – PEGGY OSBORNE (CLASS OF 1979) AND MADONNA WEATHERS (CLASS OF 1971, 1972)

The Eagle Spirit Award is given to an alum who is an exceptionally proud and active Eagle.

For the first time, this year's award goes to a pair of recipients. Peggy Osborne and Madonna Weathers are both retirees of MSU after decades of service. They continue to be passionate supporters of the University, especially MSU Athletics. They rarely miss a home game and regularly travel together to games to cheer on the Eagles.

For more information on these honorees, as well as Alumni Hall of Fame and Morehead State University Founders Award honorees, visit alumni.moreheadstate.edu/alumniawards.

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Presidential Community Engaged Eagles list honors MSU students for community service

Morehead State University was founded on the principle of service to others as the "light to the mountains." Today, its students continue that tradition, and many are honored for their contributions.

MSU named more than 350 students to its inaugural Presidential Community Engaged Eagles. During the Spring 2023 semester, these participated in service projects throughout MSU's service region, including dozens of activities as part of the March to Service initiative.

"This is an excellent opportunity for students to get recognition for participating in meaningful service for the communities that make up our service region and beyond," said Andrew Sexton (Class of 2020, 2022), coordinator of service learning. "This helps students understand that their contributions are important and necessary, and it should motivate them to continue doing service in their personal and professional lives."

MSU President Dr. Jay Morgan endorsed the Presidential Community Engaged Eagles list. To qualify for the Presidential Community Engaged Eagles list, students must first participate in a service project that mutually benefits MSU and the respective community partner, then submit a reflection on their experience.

[View Spring 2023 Engaged Eagles](#)

For more information about the Presidential Community Engaged Eagles list, contact Andrew Sexton at [606-783-5493](tel:606-783-5493) or servicelearning@moreheadstate.edu.

To learn more about MSU's Center for Career Development and Experiential Education, visit moreheadstate.edu/career.

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NEWS RELEASE

July 11, 2023
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Ahmad Zargari named dean of the College of Science

Dr. Ahmad Zargari has been named the new dean of Morehead State's College of Science.

Zargari began his career at MSU in 1994. Previously, he was chair of the Department of Engineering and Technology Management (formerly the Applied Engineering & Technology Department) from 1994 to 2015. He also served as the School of Engineering & Computer Science associate dean from 2015 to 2023.

In 2022, Zargari received the Association of Technology, Management, and Applied Engineering (ATMAE) Charles W. Keith Award. He was awarded the ATMAE Senior Fellowship at the 2019 Annual Conference and is a lifetime member of the association. Zargari earned the Outstanding Faculty Award from the Kentucky Association of Colleges and Employers in 2018.

"I am honored and excited to return to the College of Science as dean and have the opportunity to join and collaborate with the team of STEM faculty and staff to assure our students' academic and career success," Zargari said.

"It is my hope the college will develop a strategic plan to modify the existing programs and develop new program opportunities in order to meet the demand of contemporary and future workforce for advanced scientific, engineering, and technological skills. I am enthusiastically looking forward to ensuring that the science, engineering, and technology programs remain on the cutting edge of the STEM profession."

Learn more about Morehead State's [College of Science](#) by emailing dsci@moreheadstate.edu or calling [606-783-2626](tel:606-783-2626).

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NEWS RELEASE

July 14, 2023
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MOREHEAD, Ky.---

Center for STEM+eXcellence to host Robot Gladiator Melee competition

The Center for STEM+eXcellence at Morehead State will host a Robot Gladiator League Melee competition Friday, June 21, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., on the lawn of the Laughlin Health Building.

The event concludes the center's Robot Gladiator League Training Camp—a two-week residential camp for students interested in engineering in ninth or tenth grade. The program combines science, mathematics, engineering, and convergent media elements as participants plan, design and build their own fighting robots. Camp participants will battle their custom-built robots, with a champion being named at the end of the elimination competition. The camp is a collaboration between the Center and Newton's Attic, an engineering education program based in Lexington.

Twenty-four students attended the camp, representing six Kentucky high schools. Once they return to school in the fall, the students will work with coaches leading them in a season of robot battle competitions throughout the school year. Dr. Leeann Akers, assistant director of the Center for STEM+eXcellence, said students gain a wealth of skills from the camp.

"The students are learning teamwork, engineering, robotics construction and design, strategic planning, video editing and production, marketing, and branding," she said, adding the event will be fun to watch.

"The event will feature a huge arena constructed inside the Laughlin gymnasium. Lights, fog, sparks, a professional emcee, think live studio audience for a battle competition. It's unlike anything seen in Morehead in quite some time. This event will showcase STEM+X outcomes that represent the potential right here at MSU."

Free concessions will be available, and the event is free and open to the public.

The [Center for STEM+eXcellence](#), a program within the Craft Academy for Excellence in Science and Mathematics, offers informal STEM+X education opportunities for Kentucky students in grades K-12. Programs are offered during the summer and throughout the year.

Learn more by emailing Program Coordinator Brenda Porter at b.porter@moreheadstate.edu or calling 606-783-2300.

Photo caption: Participants in the Robot Gladiator League Training Camp will battle their custom-built robots at a melee event on Friday.

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July 24, 2023
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Bet Ison quilt exhibit opens Aug. 1 at KFAC

An exhibition featuring the work of folk artist Bet Ison will open Aug. 1 at the [Kentucky Folk Art Center \(KFAC\)](#).

The exhibit contains ten quilts from self-taught quilt maker Bet Ison and 20 adjunct pieces that inspired the quilts.

Ison started quilting as a teenager in the 1970s. Living in rural Rowan County, Kentucky, Ison continues the Appalachian tradition of quilting with scrap material.

"After I married and came to Rowan County to live, I was surrounded by people who made quilts, and it just seemed like a natural thing to do. I've always liked to use scraps to make something new," she said. "When I was in my 40s, I started to make quilts differently, to tell stories, to say the things I wanted to say."

An opening reception will be on Thursday, Aug. 3, from 5 to 7 p.m. The exhibit runs through Oct. 20.

The Kentucky Folk Art Center (KFAC) is one of Kentucky's unique places. Located in the historic Union Grocery, the Center offers much more than a typical museum experience. KFAC houses a permanent collection of nearly 1,400 pieces of self-taught art. Dozens of works from the collection are displayed on a rotating basis in the Center's first-floor gallery, and visiting exhibits are hosted throughout the year in the second-floor gallery.

"My experience with these quilts is that people find their own lives and questions, their own history and heritage in these quilts and their stories," Ison said. "The extra pictures and writings exhibited with the quilts let people explore those stories more deeply, maybe think about some of these topics a little differently. I hope this exhibit expands people's thinking about quilts. Lots of folks are used to thinking about quilts as common homemade things that are not art. So, it's good to see quilts and understand that they can be art. You definitely don't have to be a quilt maker to enjoy this exhibit."

For additional information, contact KFAC Administrative Coordinator Tammy Stone at 606-783-2204 or email t.stone@moreheadstate.edu.

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NEWS RELEASE

July 25, 2023
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Dr. González-Espada participates in Air Force fellowship program

Dr. Wilson González-Espada, professor of physics and science education at Morehead State, was selected to participate in the 2023 Summer Faculty Fellowship Program (SFFP) at the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA).

This is the fifth year González -Espada has participated in the fellowship. Under the topic of Improving Performance and Retention in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), González-Espada worked on two projects in collaboration with Maj. Daniel O'Keefe, Ph.D., Maj. Louis J. Cascino, Maj. Christopher M. Francis, Lt. Col. David Meier, Ph.D., and Dr. Kimberly de La Harpe from the Department of Physics & Meteorology at the USAFA.

González-Espada is one of 240 faculty and graduate students representing 122 academic institutions nationwide in research topics relevant to the Air Force Office of Scientific Research interests (AFOSR).

The first project González -Espada was involved in was the statistical analysis of surveys completed by 136 cadets interested in STEM majors in high school or as first-year students but who eventually declared non-STEM majors. The second project is the development of the Survey of Meteorology Concepts (SMC), a valid and reliable instrument for identifying persistent misconceptions in meteorology among USAFA cadets and pre-service teachers completing an earth and space course required for Praxis II and teacher certification.

"I have been able to contribute to STEM education as a discipline through publications, professional presentations, advising young physics faculty at USAFA, and providing the Academy with data-driven recommendations to improve cadet education from the viewpoint of someone who is not in the military," González-Espada said.

"I feel fortunate that I could assist them in improving the education and training of future Air Force officers through my expertise in STEM education. It is a personal satisfaction that they want to continue collaborating with me. I encourage MSU faculty, especially tenure-track colleagues, to explore research opportunities with the Air Force Research Lab Summer Faculty Fellowship Program."

- [View the complete list of awardees](#)
- [Learn more about the USAFA Fellowship Program](#)

To learn more about González-Espada's work, email w.gonzalez-espada@moreheadstate.edu or call 606-783-2927.

For information about MSU's Department of Physics, [Earth Science and Space Systems Engineering](#), email phes@moreheadstate.edu or call 606-783-2381.

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MSU alums receive 2024 Teacher Achievement Awards

Two Morehead State University alumni earned 2024 Teacher Achievement Awards from the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE).

Katie Hale (Class of 2011), a third-grade teacher at Ponderosa Elementary School in Boyd County, was an Elementary School Teacher Achievement Award winner. **Samuel Whitehead (Class of 2010)**, a 12th-grade math teacher at Rowan County Senior High School and a dual-credit instructor at MSU, was a recipient of the High School Teacher Achievement Award.

Hale has been an educator for 12 years in Boyd County and has taught at Ponderosa Elementary School for the last five years. She graduated from MSU with a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education, K-5, and earned a master's degree in teaching leadership, K-12, from the University of the Cumberlands.

Hale serves in additional roles as a teacher leader, a mentor teacher to first-year educators, and a digital learning coach. She is in the process of obtaining her National Board certification as a middle childhood generalist.

Whitehead teaches 12th-grade advanced math topics at Rowan County Senior High School and dual-credit math courses through MSU's Eagle Scholars program. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics from MSU and a master's degree in applied mathematics at Eastern Kentucky University.

Whitehead serves on the Kentucky Teacher Retirement System Nomination Committee and is a chemical intelligence officer for the 149th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade in the Kentucky Army National Guard. He was the first Dr. Stephen Pruitt Innovative and Inspirational Educator of the Year recipient in 2021. Whitehead also earned the LEX18 Extra Credit Award for Teacher of the Week in March 2020.

The KDE selected 22 Kentucky educators at the elementary, middle school and high school levels as recipients of the 2024 Kentucky Teacher Achievement Awards on July 5. These teachers qualify for the 2024 Kentucky Teacher of the Year Award, which will be announced in September.

"Mrs. Katie Hale and Mr. Samuel Whitehead were selected from a pool of nearly 1,400 nominees from across the state. Our alumni have received recognition and represent MSU's teacher education programs well. Many of our alumni have received Teacher of the Year recognitions from their school districts and professions," said Dr. April Miller, dean of the Ernst and Sara Lane Volgenau College of Education. "Our teachers in the field are making a positive impact in the lives of children and youth every day."

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

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