The Time is Now —New Space for Student Engagement

Four 2019 Graduates Tell Their Success Stories

Liberal Arts for the Professions
Success, God’s Way

A wealth of books, podcasts and motivational speakers preach a particular definition of success. For some, it’s how to accumulate wealth and for others, it’s about finding the path to position, power and prestige. Perhaps it’s a trophy or plaque on the wall, or the applause of a crowd. Regardless of the shape or form, many will go to extremes to achieve their ideal of success.

Some say success is about finding happiness, discovering one’s true inner self or even checking off a “bucket list” goal. Regardless of the path pursued, in most instances success appears to be both elusive and intangible. A popular television show about inherited wealth and possessions closes each episode with the reminder that “you can’t take it with you.”

In the midst of the pressure to achieve success, God has a formula that might provide another definition. Joshua 1:7-9 records these words from the Lord to Joshua, “Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.” In this passage the Lord commanded Joshua to listen, think, meditate, speak and then act on God’s words as he persistently pursued the journey to the promised land. God’s definition of success is daily awareness of and obedience to the path set before us with trust and confidence in the One who knows the way.

Jesus said, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:19-20)

True success can never be found in what we strive to achieve on our own, but it comes as evidence of the peace of God and the overflow of His joy. And remember, “You can take that with you.”

Dr. David J. Spittal
President
Breanna Barney grew up in Olathe and lives near campus. Growing up in a Christian home, the university environment is what she expected—a great school, centered on Christian living.

She loves the small campus and the one-on-one relationships it allows her to build with professors.

Breanna’s goal is to teach math to young people. She’s been challenged and “pushed along” by her professors. Dr. Mark Brown, professor of mathematics, has been particularly inspiring.

“Just seeing how he works with people, how he conducts his classes, and how he gets along with his students is inspiring to me,” she says. “It is nice having good Christian role models.”

Breanna chose her major because teaching is her passion.

“I have a big heart for the youth, especially for middle school,” she says. “I like math, but more importantly, I like how young students view math. It is not an easy thing to teach middle schoolers, but I love seeing them learn and grow.”

She believes the purpose of teaching is to make lifelong learners.

“Teaching and coaching are very important to me because you’re raising the next generation and encouraging them to have an even greater impact on society,” she says. “That’s what I want to do, impact them because I know they will do great things.”

Malique Taylor was recruited to play defensive back in football at MNU from San Diego, California. He says MNU is his home away from home because of the people he has met here—friends and professors alike. He also thinks Kansas is very friendly compared to California.

Being on the football team at MNU has taught Malique important life skills and provided the opportunity to serve others. Majoring in psychology has opened his eyes to some of the reasons behind human behavior.

“One thing I have discovered recently is there are many reasons for a person’s behavior at our age and because of that, wanting to learn more about different people has become more intriguing to me than before,” he says.

Malique interned with KidsTLC, an Olathe organization that fulfills the need for emergency shelter for abused and neglected children.

“The kids that I work with have traumatic pasts and behavioral issues, and I’m able to come alongside of them and help guide them in the right direction,” he says. “It’s very rewarding.”

Malique plans to pursue his Master of Arts in Counseling at MNU this fall. He credits his undergraduate professors for helping him realize his passion for working with children.

“If I’m able to help provide them with a healthy and positive way of thinking early on in life, then I think that’s an investment worth making,” he says.
Shaterra Strong says she chose MNU in part for its size, and she enjoys the welcoming environment on campus. The California native delights in how open students and faculty are and in learning how everyone is different.

Passionate about fitness and health, Shaterra wants to help people be more active and live a better lifestyle.

“I would love to host health and fitness events in the future to get people moving and embracing their health,” she says.

Being involved in cheerleading along with encouragement from family and friends helped her persevere in college.

“They really inspire me to keep going and they support me in everything I do,” she says.

Microbiology with Dr. Rion Taylor was one of her favorite classes. She especially enjoyed learning about and testing for bacteria.

Her goal in life is not only to be successful and enjoy her work, but to help others along the way.

“It is important to not only better myself as a person, but also to help others along the way,” she says.

Carlos Guzman transferred to MNU after a rather unhappy semester at another university.

“I just felt very alone and kind of lost,” he says. “I reached out to MNU because I wanted to be in a smaller community, and I felt empty not playing sports.”

Coaches at MNU welcomed Carlos with open arms. He’s spent his Pioneer college career as a student athlete on both the Track & Field and Cross-Country squads.

“MNU gave me the best of both worlds with an amazing college academic and athletic experience as well as opportunities to be close to my family and see them grow,” says the Overland Park, Kansas, resident. “I discovered that sometimes you have to take a step back from everything and take life into perspective.”

Carlos has exciting plans. In fact, he was just accepted into medical school at the University of Kansas.

Inspired by his late grandfather who was a psychiatrist, Carlos chose medicine because he felt called to help people heal. He is anxious to explore medicine from pediatrics to geriatrics to see where he might fit in best and he feels well prepared with his MNU education.

“I learned how to balance the rigors of academics and athletics, my relationships, and my faith,” Carlos says. “Most importantly, I learned—and continue to discover—how to find God in everything I do.”

Special thanks to students Dywon Byrd, Alesia Jackson and AJ Stephens who contributed to this feature.

Want to read about more MNU students? Visit Neer News on Instagram.
Academy Award Winner Visits MNU


Willmott’s documentary is about William Allen White, the Emporia Gazette newspaper editor credited with blocking the Ku Klux Klan in Kansas. The film recounts White’s legacy, including his campaign for governor of Kansas in 1924, to spread his anti-Klan message to a broader state and national audience.

Willmott, Spike Lee and two other screenwriters won an Oscar for Best Adapted Screenplay for “BlacKkKlansman,” a 2018 movie about a real-life cop in the 1970s who went undercover to infiltrate the Ku Klux Klan. The film has won numerous awards and nominations and received international acclaim.

Willmott is also professor of film and media studies at University of Kansas and is known for his work surrounding black issues, writing prolifically for film and television. He earned his BA in drama from Marymount College in Salina, Kan., and attended New York University, Tisch School of the Arts, receiving several writing awards and his MFA in dramatic writing.

[Vice President for Academic Affairs]

Dr. Nancy L. Damron (’95, MED ’98) is MNU’s new vice president for academic affairs. She has served in this role in an interim capacity since February 1. Prior to that, Dr. Damron was dean of the College of Arts and Sciences after serving as dean of the School of Education.

“Dr. Damron is an outstanding educator and leader who brings a wealth of expertise and experience to this new role,” MNU President David Spittal said. “Her commitment to high standards of excellence, quality teaching and learning and innovative programs will support and enhance our university’s strategic goals.”

Dr. Damron began her career teaching social studies at Blue Valley North High School, Blue Valley West High School and later as district coordinating teacher for social studies and diversity programs.

In 2017 she was recognized at MNU as Administrator of the Year having gained numerous awards and honors throughout her career including Blue Valley North High School Teacher of the Year in 1999. Dr. Damron is active professionally and has served as a consultant and presenter for many professional organizations and schools.

In addition to her degrees from MNU, Damron holds a Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction from the University of Kansas.
Students in the criminal justice program got to see the results of Giving Tuesday gifts as they assisted the Ivanhoe Neighborhood Association in Kansas City with anti-human trafficking signage. The funds paid for the neighborhood watch signs and accompanying literature to educate the community on the issue.

CAMPUS NEWS

Nursing News

The School of Nursing is proud to announce its 2018 NCLEX-RN® BSN Pass Rate is 95.68% for first-time test takers. The NCLEX-RN® is the test that must be passed to become a registered nurse. Out of 139 test takers, 133 passed the first time. Congratulations to the graduates and the faculty who prepare them!

Simplicity and Value in New Textbook Plan

The days of going to the campus bookstore to buy textbooks are over. Students order their books online now and while a quick Internet search can provide the least expensive options, students sometimes purchase the wrong edition or experience shipment delays. This leads to frustration and perhaps even falling behind in class. Additionally, more students are choosing digital textbooks. Now MNU’s college store, The Merc, is offering new solutions to help students get the right textbooks on time and for the best price.

Easy Text, a convenient option for students that provides the correct digital textbook on the first day of class, launches this fall and allows students to use financial aid to pay for the books. The digital textbooks will be electronically linked in students’ electronic course modules, for hassle-free use.

Easy Text ensures MNU is offering course materials at the best price possible via a digital platform. Additionally, these materials are conveniently payable through the student’s account. The student may still opt out of the program if they want to acquire the text through other means.

“This solution adds immediate value to the students,” says Nikos Kellepouris, Merc manager. “Among many benefits, students will have a trusted source for low-cost course materials, options to choose what they want and be prepared for academic success on the first day of class.”

The Merc will maintain its current online bookstore solution for students who prefer physical textbooks and want to use financial aid dollars.
Momentum Building in Campaign for Cunningham Student Center

In January 2019, the Mabee Foundation granted MNU $1 million contingent on the university’s ability to raise the remaining $11 million needed to build the Center by the end of the year. And progress is strong!

“We’ve raised more than $3 million since then,” says Dr. Jon North, vice president for university advancement. “The challenge has propelled us forward by giving more donors the inspiration to join us in the effort.”

Recent $3 Million Gift Adds Energy to Campaign

The Kansas City-based Sunderland Foundation recently increased its support for the new Cunningham Student Center, by $2.4 million, bringing its total gift to $3 million for the university’s Bright Futures campaign.

“The Foundation’s support gives us tremendous momentum toward our goal,” says Dr. David Spittal, MNU president. “We are grateful for this incredible gift.”

The Sunderland family and Foundation are known for supporting visionary projects that result in places where young minds grow and thrive, and where communities come together for celebration and inspiration. The Cunningham Student Center will join those kinds of projects by providing spaces for MNU students to gather, learn, eat and fellowship during their college experience.

“We believe this gift will help transform the student experience at MNU,” says Dr. Jon North, vice president for university advancement. “Young people want modern spaces designed for collaboration, technology and community needs. This building will increase MNU’s ability to support that for all students.”

The Sunderland Foundation’s gift is providing motivation for others to join the campaign resulting in new donors and first-time donations.

“It’s exciting to see the energy build,” says North. “The Sunderland Foundation is helping make that happen.”

The Sunderland Foundation supported two previous capital projects at MNU: Cook Center (1996-1997) and Bell Cultural Events Center (2005-2006).

Follow campaign progress at brightfutures.mnu.edu.
How Can You Help Make it Happen?

Gifts of all sizes and types are needed to meet the $1 million Mabee Challenge to fund the Cunningham Student Center by the end of 2019. Make your gift or pledge, payable over five years, at brightfutures.mnu.edu.

What’s In a Building?

Accent asked alumni and friends what difference they think the Cunningham Student Center will make for students.

Recently Professor Neil Friesland (’92) made a campaign appeal to fellow faculty and staff at MNU. Through a payroll deduction gift, he and his wife Amy (Weathers ’93) are pledging their support.

“I have a lot of fun memories of times as a student in the Campus Center,” says Friesland. “Now as a professor, I can say with certainty that the relationships that are formed in a place—not a dorm or a classroom, but spaces that allow a cross-section of the community to engage, those are vital to a positive college experience.”

A recent study of public and private university graduates showed that campus life activities were among the top three factors in shaping satisfaction about one’s college choice. The Cunningham Student Center will put MNU on the leading edge of student amenities.

“Students and alums alike constantly tell me that the community and relationships built at MNU are what make it so special,” Alumni Director Pete Brumbaugh (’90) says. “While MNU has done a great job at providing that, we lack a space designed for all students—commuters, on-campus undergrads, evening or graduate students to gather informally, have flexible dining options and more.”

Dennis Troyer (’76), director of retention, has worked at MNU for 32 years. He finds it fitting that a building designed to benefit students will be named after Drs. Paul and Connie Cunningham.

“Students need to sense they belong here,” he says. “The Cunningham’s love our students. So, I think it honors their legacy to provide better spaces for our students to find their sense of belonging and to know how much they are cared for at MNU.”

Lisa Busch is an MNU mom whose sons, Tim and Jacob, are students. She is impressed with the plans for the new student center and, among its other benefits, the convenience it will bring for parents and students alike.

“To have financial aid, admissions and other services all under one roof would be perfect,” she says. “The plans are beautiful, current and much needed on campus.”

Inspired to Help

When Brad Bergman, CEO of Midwest Trust, heard about the campaign to build the Cunningham Student Center, he knew he not only wanted to be part of it, but he also wanted to take its message to other philanthropic organizations. Midwest Trust manages funds for numerous foundations, including the MNU Foundation, which gives Bergman an open door to many influential individuals and organizations.

“The stewardship exemplified by leaders at MNU makes me very comfortable talking to others about the university,” he says. “I’m confident that these values will continue at MNU for generations to come.”

Beyond the economic development benefits the campaign will have on the local community, Bergman is interested in preparing students to face the world upon graduation.

“What’s impressed me is how MNU is educating people who will lead and influence others in the world,” he says. “What MNU stands for should align with anyone’s values. We should absolutely appreciate graduates that are disciplined, caring and have committed to living a certain lifestyle. We need more people who aspire to live a better life, who can be an example for others.”

Bergman’s quest to tell MNU’s story recently resulted in a $500,000 first-time gift from a local charitable foundation.

“We are so grateful to Brad for facilitating this amazing gift,” says Dr. Jon North, vice president for university advancement. “His work is encouraging others to introduce us to their networks as well.”

Like Bergman, other campaign volunteers have presented the campaign to their contacts, and so far, these meetings have generated a total of $1.3 million in first-time donations.

“I hope that hearing this will inspire others to contact their associates about the campaign,” Bergman adds. “We all should be trying to make things better in our world. It’s a great way to live.”
PRESIDENT'S HONORS 2019

A total of $611,366 was raised this year at President’s Honors bringing the eight-year total to more than $4.5 million. Allen and Madeline Tollefson were honored with MNU's Lifetime Achievement Award. Honorary Co-Chairs for the event were Drs. Frank ('73) and Sue (Potter '75) Moore. The evening ended with the President’s Scholarship Challenge when brisk bidding provided additional scholarship dollars for students. Save the date now for President’s Honors on Friday, April 3, 2020.
Here are two examples of students following that path -- one at the end of his MNU career, and one just beginning. Maybe you know a high school student who should consider MNU's pre-professional education. If so, contact admissions at admissions@mnu.edu.

PATHWAY TO PROFESSION GROWS CLEAR

By Carol (Knight ’81, MA ’08) Best

Esmerelda Reyes (’22) is just beginning her collegiate career at MNU, but she discovers more about herself and her passions daily. The freshman kinesiology and pre-physical therapy major intends to specialize in pediatrics.

Her interest in physical therapy began after Esmerelda was injured and tore her ACL, the major ligament in the knee, in eighth grade. Throughout her six months of therapy, she enjoyed being able to connect with the physical therapist and become “friends” throughout a difficult time in her life.

Several jobs interacting with children have also influenced her choice. One that impacted her most was her position as a tech at Preferred Physical Therapy where she observed how the physical therapists interact with children and their families.

But it wasn’t until Esmerelda got to college that she discovered a passion for missions.

“MNU has taught me to not be ashamed of my beliefs. I have always known of God, but never felt connected with Him,” she says. “Now I want to continue to see all of the amazing ways God moves through people’s lives throughout different cultures.”

Choosing to intentionally listen to God’s will for one’s life is not always an easy task, but Esmerelda says she feels so welcomed in her faith, that she can explore this at MNU.

“I feel like I can go to anyone at any time just to talk about faith without feeling pressured by the world,” she adds. “Everyone I meet here seems like they are part of a bigger family.”

Giving many examples of why MNU feels like a big family, Esmerelda says she especially loves the small class sizes, community feeling and welcoming professors.

“The professors are eager to share their wisdom with students and do everything in their power to help us with life,” she says.

MNU continues to help Esmerelda stay grounded in her faith while growing relationally and in the classroom.

“For the future, my life is only going to get clearer as God lays out the path in front of me,” she declares. “I am not afraid of what is to come as I know God has the plan already made.”

TAKING HOLD OF NEW OPPORTUNITIES

By Kristen (Perry ’06) Johnson

A new partnership between MNU and Washington University in St. Louis (WashU) recently allowed Alex Goertz (’19) to become the first student to graduate from the university’s new dual degree engineering program.

Through the program, students earn a bachelor’s degree in physics or chemistry from MNU, and then transfer to WashU to earn a bachelor’s or a master’s degree in engineering.

“The dual degree partnership program allows students from affiliate schools to get the best of a liberal arts education with the values and experiences of a small teaching-oriented school as well as the excellent technical training of a world-class research institution,” explains Dr. Jordan Mantha, a professor instrumental in bringing the program to MNU.

Alex will combine his MNU degree in both math and physics with three years at WashU, to earn a master’s in engineering.

The oldest of three boys, Alex comes from a family with a predisposition for math and science. His father works in IT and his mother minored in math. You could say math and science are in his blood.

“As a kid I always gravitated toward anything where I was making things or solving problems,” he explains.

In choosing a college, the Lawrence, Kansas, native chose to research MNU because of the athletic opportunities it offered. He ran cross country and track for four years and played basketball for two years. He was also assured that MNU could offer him what he was looking for academically.

“With this program, we offer students a quality liberal arts and technical education in a Christian environment,” Mantha says. “We prepare students to not only be employable, but also adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing and increasingly technical society.”

Alex agrees that MNU provided the best of both worlds.

“What sets MNU apart is the faculty. The way they invest in the students and the university is not something you find everywhere,” he says.

The professors in math and science also gave Alex the chance to explore different career paths because they all come from diverse backgrounds. The small classes allowed him opportunities he would not have had at a larger school, such as working with Mantha to build a muon detector. A muon is a sub-atomic particle in the same class as an electron, but with a mass 200 times greater.

Alex’s muon detector will be on display in Osborne Hall once it’s finished and calibrated.

While Alex contemplates specializing in mechanical or aerospace engineering at WashU, his future looks bright.

“I’m excited about the unknown challenges in my future,” he says. “MNU has prepared me to understand that I don’t have to shy away from challenges, but that I’m ready to tackle them.”

Typical pre-professional programs at MNU

- Actuarial Science
- Art Therapy
- Athletic Training
- Chiropractic
- Dentistry
- Engineering
- Law
- Medicine
- Occupational Therapy
- Optometry
- Pharmacy
- Physical Therapy
- Physician Assistant
- Podiatry
- Mental Health
- Public Safety
- Sports Medicine
- Veterinary Medicine

Visit mnu.edu/pre-professional
MNU’s 48th annual Commencement was May 4, 2019 and hosted more than 600 graduates with their families and friends.

Among them was Ryshen Spean-Austin (lower-left corner), the first student to enroll at MNU from a partnership with Native American Christian Academy in Arizona. Rocky (‘76) and Dr. Jo (MED ‘91) Lamar first met Ryshen when she was in eighth grade and have mentored her since then.

Tammie Jo Shults (‘83) (upper-right corner), gave the address. She mesmerized the audience as she spoke about landing Southwest Air Flight 1380 after its engine blew up in April 2018. Her positive message of hope, habits and values was inspirational.
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UPCOMING EVENTS

2019 EVENTS

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<td>AUG 17</td>
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<td>AUG 22</td>
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2020 EVENTS

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<td>President’s Honors</td>
<td>Cook Center, Olathe, Kansas</td>
<td>More info to come soon!</td>
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For more event details, visit www.mnu.edu/alumni
Pioneers’ Season Wrap Ups

by Sports Information Director Chad Jenkins

Baseball
Coach Ryan Thompson’s 2019 baseball team finished 19-16 and in fifth place in the Heart of America Conference. Catcher Joshua Sandoval and outfielder Jeremie Gonzalez were named 1st Team All-Conference, and DH Joshua Crispin and pitcher Jhon Vargas were honorable mention All-Conference. Third Baseman Cristian Rivera earned a Gold Glove honor for his defense.

Softball
MNU softball team finished 19-26 and had an eighth-place finish in the Heart of America Conference under the leadership of Coach Rob Wade. Freshman outfielder Kaleigh Bayless had one of the best seasons in MNU history, leading the Heart with an all-time MNU best .525 batting average to go along with 18 doubles, 14 homers, 37 RBIs, 25 steals and a 1.566 OPS. She was named Conference Player of the Year. DP Emily Robinson and UTL Cassidy Berry were named 2nd Team All-Conference, and Tessa Ward and Audrey Denges were Honorable Mentions.

Women’s Basketball
The MNU women’s basketball program finished 25-6 under Head Coach Jon Lewis and second place in the Heart of America Conference. They qualified for the NAIA National Tournament for the eighth-straight season and earned a Sweet 16 appearance. Jovana Jovovic led the conference in scoring with 18.5 points per game and was named 1st Team All-Conference and 1st Team All-America. Whitney Moia ranked third in the nation in blocks per game (3.5) and eighth in rebounds per game (11.0). She was named 2nd Team All-Conference and Conference Defensive Player of the Year.

Men’s Basketball
Coach Rocky Lamar’s men’s basketball team finished with a 16-14 record and a seventh-place finish in the Heart of America Conference. Jonathan Green was third in the Heart with 19.9 points per game and was named 1st Team All-Conference and 1st Team All-America. Keekelle Figueroa led the Heart with 5.3 assists per game while averaging 16.6 points and 2.0 steals per game. She was named 1st Team All-Conference and Honorable Mention All-America. Whitney Moia ranked third in the nation in blocks per game (3.5) and eighth in rebounds per game (11.0). She was named 2nd Team All-Conference and Conference Defensive Player of the Year.

PAA Revitalized This Year
The Pioneer Athletic Association Board was reformed this year under Athletic Director Todd Garrett’s leadership. Membership grew by 11% and funds were raised for new soccer and Cook Center scoreboards which will be in place for students this fall. The board tees off their inaugural Pioneer Athletic Association Golf Classic September 30, 2019, at Sycamore Ridge. Proceeds will benefit MNU athletic programs and scholarships. Individuals: $150. Foursomes: $600. Sign up today at connect.mnu.edu/golf.
Former All-American Returns to MNU

By Wyatt Stark

Molly (Brewster ’13) Karagyaurov (Coach K) is no stranger to the MNU volleyball program. She played all four years of her college eligibility for the Pioneers from 2009-2013, earning numerous accolades along the way, including multiple Conference Player of the Week awards and two All-Conference team awards, as well as a Scholar-Athlete honor, Conference Player of the Year, and 3rd team All-American in her senior season. Molly is the only player in program history to record 1,000 digs and 1,000 kills in a career. She was inducted into the MNU Athletics Hall of Fame in 2018.

After earning her Bachelor of Arts degree in physical education with a minor in coaching, Molly played professional volleyball in Europe for the 2013-2014 season. She returned to MNU in fall 2014 to pursue her Master of Science in Management and served as a graduate assistant volleyball coach. She was named Conference Assistant Coach of the Year for two seasons, then returned to Europe to play professionally.

Now back as MNU’s head coach, Coach K sees the university with a fresh perspective. “I have so many visions for this team,” Coach K says, “but the scripture verse that connects all of those is Psalm 115:1. That verse says, ‘Not to us Lord, not to us, but to your Name be the glory because of your love and faithfulness.’ Teams and awards and honors come and go, but ultimately, we’re all here to serve a bigger purpose. That’s why God gives athletes their ability: to bring glory to His name.”
Bill (’76) and Theresa (Maynard ’76) Grigory are serving as missionaries in Bulgaria with the Church of the Nazarene.

Dean Nelson (’76), Point Loma Nazarene University’s journalism program founder and director, recently published, Talk to Me: How to Ask Better Questions, Get Better Answers, and Interview Anyone Like a Pro. Nelson has won several awards from the Society of Professional Journalists for his reporting, and has written or co-written 15 books.

Steve (‘81) and Peggy (Denny ’84) Cecil moved to Manning, South Carolina, where he is senior pastor of New Start Community Church of the Nazarene.

Carolyn (Cooper ’84) Doolittle recently accepted a new position as a reading specialist/instructional coach at USD 231 (Gardner-Edgerton).

Melinda (Wright ’85) Madden is a reading specialist with the Kansas City, Missouri, School District. She is working to become nationally certified to teach dyslexic scholars.

Jack Hansen (’92, MBA ’99), a veteran financial advisor with Edward Jones, was promoted to regional leader. He is responsible for nearly 70 of the firm’s branch offices in northeast Kansas, west of the Kansas City metro, while continuing to serve clients in Olathe, Kansas.

Gregory Hager (’94) signed a four-album recording contract with MFG Records. State of Mind, the first album under this label, was released in March 2019.

Ron Ryckman, Jr. (’94) was re-elected as the Speaker of the House for the Kansas House of Representatives.

Shelley Hayes (’76) was promoted to chief development officer at Community Health Charities in Washington, D.C.

Jolene (Tate ’64) Ibarra was recognized with the 2018 Class 1A Assistant Track and Field Coach of the Year Award by the Kansas Cross Country Track and Field Coaches Association.

Steve Menke (’01), Olathe Chief of Police, retired this spring after serving 31 years with the Olathe, Kansas, Police Department.

Kristen (Bohi ’04) Gore was honored with the MNU Department of Education’s 2019 Teacher who Inspires award.

Adam Hooker (’08), former MNU assistant basketball coach, is now the head men’s basketball coach at Sterling College.

Christina (O’Dell ’08) West has become an ambassador for Smart Bottoms cloth diapers.

Duane Buchanan (’09, MA ’10), adjunct professor in the School of Professional and Graduate Studies at MNU, earned his PhD in Organizational Development and Leadership at Ashford University.

Julian Vaughn (’10), Kansas City jazz bassist, will release his fifth album, Supreme, on June 28, 2019. Vaughn has two No. 1 Billboard hits and three top-5 Billboard singles. He has performed across the U.S. and in six foreign countries.

Tim Purdin (’11), Johnson County Sheriff’s deputy, recently became the handler of Bono, a seven-year-old German Shepherd. Bono is a trained narcotics detection dog and is certified in the detection of methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, and marijuana. Bono and Purdin have been certified together as a Narcotic Detection Dog Team through the National Police Canine Association.

Tanya (Khvitsko ’12) Trimborn was awarded the Lockton Courage Award at Lockton Companies’ Win for KC luncheon. The award recognizes women who redefine barriers notwithstanding physical or mental challenges in sport.

Sara Prigel (MAOA ’13) is now philanthropist and special events director for Heartland Soccer, the largest youth soccer league in the U.S. From recreational to premier, 1,300 teams participate each season in league play and 2,500 teams participate annually in its tournaments.

Trey Cooper (FS ’20), former MNU quarterback, signed with the professional Salina Liberty indoor football team.

Cody (’18) and Jessica (Alvord ’17) Covert, Aug. 18, 2018.

Nick and McKenzie (Foster ’12) Burdge, September 18, 2018.

Alex and Hanah (Kingrey FS ’16) Elston, November 10, 2018.

Brandon (’15) and Halie Harvey, March 9, 2019.


Jonny (’18) and Mattie (Bell ’20) Melton, November 17, 2018.


Nick (’16) and Navia (Palu ’14) Syrie, May 4, 2019.

Do you have news? Please send to alumni@mnu.edu or connect with us on social media. It doesn’t matter how you connect with us, we just want to hear from you!


3) Mark '10 and Alexandra (Cox '11) Ball, a daughter: Evelyn Elaine, November 15, 2018.

4) Caleb '14 and Lauren (Jenner '12) Curtis, a son: Brayden Patrick, March 6, 2019.


6) Daniel '10 and Lisa (Koehn '05) Berg, twin daughters: Rowan Carys and Reese Emerson, August 7, 2018.

7) Tyler '09 and Elissa Bottles, a daughter: Cora Josephine, January 25, 2019.


9) Nathan '10 and Taylor (Howell '12, MA '17) Curtis, a son: Brayden Patrick, March 6, 2019.


12) Nathan '08 and Robyn Eick, a son: Brannon James, April 11, 2019.


14) Justin '07 and Tarah (Kirksey '05) Fricke, a daughter: Paisley Rose, November 5, 2018.

15) Andrew and Jessica (Gee '13) Gregory, a son: Jacob Drake, January 21, 2019.

16) James (FS '18) and Paula (Valente Rosa MSM '18) Guerrero, a son: Jacob Drake, January 21, 2019.

17) Keely Hammontree '06 and Nick Baum, a daughter: Emersyn Mae, February 20, 2019.

18) Josh '06 and Dawn (Ellis '09) Hankey, a son: Elijah Ellis, December 26, 2018.

19) Zach '07 and Nicole (Hannon '08) Harris, a son: Layton John Alan, December 18, 2018.


21) Lynn '08 and Melissa (Weidert '07) Hoffman, a daughter: Grace Elizabeth, January 16, 2019.

22) Jonathan '10 and Saundra (Boehm '10) Hooker, a son: Isaiah, April 9, 2019.


24) Josh and Ashley (Braaten '18) Jablonski, a son: Brooks Naismith, December 1, 2018.


29) Mike (FS '13) and Mindy (FS '11) Lee, a son: Jude Micheal, April 8, 2019.

30) Joshua and Jenni (Campbell '09) Limback, a son: Brayden James, April 26, 2019.

31) Brad '17 and Lauren (Smith '12) Loyd, a daughter: Emma Frances, April 11, 2019.


33) Brett and Lori (O'Bryan '01) O'Neill, a daughter: Jami Grace, January 21, 2019.


35) Michael '13 and Brianna (Davis '13) Morrison, a daughter: Brylynn Elizabeth, November 30, 2018.


37) Kyle '08 and Abby (King '08) O’Neill, a son and a daughter: Grigsby Richard and Evelyn Vera, March 7, 2019.

38) Jonathan and Alicia (Godwin '05) Parker, a son: Logan Charles, January 28, 2019.


40) Terrance '17 and Janelle (Ostry '14) Steinhart, a daughter: Eden Grace, February 17, 2019.


42) Jacob and Amber (Brown '16) Tefft, a daughter: Brooklyn Grace, April 12, 2019.

43) James (FS '14) and Dajah Tillman, twin daughters: Jordyn Rose and Skye Lynn, April 4, 2019.

44) Casey '06 and Nicole Thrasher, a daughter: Raelynn Hope, January 7, 2019.

45) Ashley '09 and Sarah (Wortington '09) Thompson, a son: Graham Elias, July 13, 2018.

46) Josh '08 and Rashele (Powell '08) Veach, a son: Milo Price, November 17, 2018.


If you receive more than one Accent Magazine at your home, or if you are the parent of an alum and you are also receiving their copy, please call 877-496-8668 or email accent@mnu.edu.

October 25-27, 2019

HOMECOMING AND FAMILY WEEKEND

- MNU Homecoming Chapel
- Athletics Hall of Fame Luncheon
- Friday Night Bonfire & Buck Night
- BBQ Competition
- Pioneer Pathways 5K
- Pancake Bonanza
- Tailgate Lunch
- Pioneer Football / Soccer Games
- Alumni Talent Showcase
- And much more!

www.mnu.edu/homecoming