

BELHAVEN UNIVERSITY

TARTAN

FALL 2024

30 *Years of Dance*



LETTER FROM The President

A multifaceted organization as demanding as Belhaven University requires a team of specialized leaders who can get the most from our enormous mission and finite resources. I am deeply grateful for the experience, wisdom, professionalism, work ethic, and ingenuity of the six Vice Presidents who comprise my “Administrative Team.” Collectively, we have 111 years of service to Belhaven University and 169 years of higher education experience.

Operating Belhaven University is complex.

- This fall our enrollment is 4,100 students, with just under 1,000 students enrolled in undergraduate programs on campus, along with another 600 students completing their baccalaureate degree online, nearly 1,800 students earning a master's or doctoral degree, 600 international students studying at the graduate level in the US, and 100 doctoral students in China.
- Belhaven's operating budget totals \$1 million each week – 52 weeks of the year – with compensation accounting for 56% of the budget. We employ 777 full and part-time faculty and staff. We must meet every federal regulation in handling the over \$70 million in government aid to our students.
- We offer 70 fields of academic study to our campus students. Through sophisticated online delivery systems, we offer 10 undergraduate, 16 master, and 2 doctoral degree programs – business and education.
- Belhaven fields seventeen NCAA Division III athletic teams, employs over 50 coaches and graduate assistants, and operates a variety of athletic venues. We host game-day for more than 100 home games/meets/matches each year.
- We run a 60-acre campus that is a small town itself, our facilities ranging from a brand-new parking garage to our 113-year-old historic halls. We operate science laboratories, arts studios, performance venues, gathering places, convention spaces, classrooms of all shapes and sizes, and an array of administrative offices. Our utility bills are over \$2 million a year.



- The University must meet the demands of the institutional accreditor along with individual program accreditors' requirements. We must adhere precisely to state and federal government regulators, and international higher education laws. We must meet the reporting demands of financial auditors, insurers, and bankers. We must operate within the boundaries of the NCAA, Title IX, and Title IV. We must provide cyber defense for tens of thousands of computer attacks directed at us and other American universities.
- Our standard is Christ, and our highest priority is to build a Christian worldview into every educational, residential, athletic, and extracurricular activity. We hold required weekly chapel services, support a multitude of campus bible study groups, welcome RUF and Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and provide financial assistance for our students participating in short-term mission trips.

In managing the complexity of the University, I rely on the gifts of our six Vice Presidents to provide leadership in their areas of responsibility (see page 27) and to work collaboratively and creatively to solve the challenges facing Christian higher education today.

The LORD has blessed Belhaven with leaders who are top-level professionals and, most importantly, are driven by our mission to honor Christ in all we do.

DR. ROGER PARROTT,
PRESIDENT

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Visit our website at www.belhaven.edu

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BELHAVEN UNVEILS NEW SOFTBALL FIELD

The Jim McLeod Field, home to Belhaven's Softball program, undergoes a transformative renovation, ushering in a new era of excellence and comfort for players and fans alike. From revamped lighting systems illuminating every play to meticulously laid turf enhancing performance, every aspect has been thoroughly upgraded. The addition of state-of-the-art bullpens ensures pitchers are primed for success, while reinforced netting provides enhanced safety for spectators.

Seating has been expanded and improved for an unparalleled viewing experience, while precisely laid landscaping adds a touch of natural beauty to the surroundings. This renovation isn't just about aesthetics; it's about creating an environment

where players can thrive and fans can truly immerse themselves in the game.

As additional gifts are received for this project, multiple phases are set to unfold, promising even more enhancements. Among these exciting plans are new locker rooms, designed to provide athletes with the facilities they need to excel both on and off the field.

With each phase of the renovation, the Belhaven Blazers' softball field is not just being updated; it's being elevated to a standard of excellence befitting one of the region's premier sports programs. From the turf beneath their feet to the lights overhead, every detail has been carefully considered to ensure that the Blazers continue to shine brightly for years to come. 🌟



The Jim McLeod Field was recently named the Netting Professionals Division III **SOFTBALL FIELD OF THE YEAR** by the National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA).



Support the Softball Complex



ONLINE DEGREE PROGRAM ADDS MASTERS IN DATA SCIENCE



Belhaven University has introduced its new Master's in Data Science program, designed to equip students with the skills needed to thrive in one of today's most in-demand fields. This fully online program offers a comprehensive curriculum that covers data analytics, machine learning, statistical modeling, and database management, providing a strong foundation for those looking to advance in data-driven industries.

Belhaven's program emphasizes both the technical and ethical aspects of data science, preparing graduates not only to analyze complex data but also to apply their knowledge responsibly. With the flexibility of online learning, students can balance their studies with professional and personal commitments, making it an ideal fit for working professionals seeking career advancement or a new direction.

One of the program's key features is its focus on real-world application. Students will work on hands-on projects, using the latest tools and technologies to solve practical problems across various industries. Additionally, Belhaven's supportive faculty and collaborative learning environment ensure that students are well-prepared to succeed in this fast-growing field.

Start your journey in data science today with Belhaven University, where cutting-edge education meets a strong ethical foundation for future leaders in the digital world. 🌟



SCAN TO LEARN MORE!

gobelhaven.com/mds

30 Years of Dance

Belhaven University's Dance Department is celebrating a significant milestone—30 years of shaping and inspiring the art of dance.



The story of Belhaven University's Dance Department began in 1994, when the University introduced a dance minor in collaboration with Ballet Magnificat!, a professional Christian ballet company based in Jackson, Mississippi. Belhaven and Ballet Magnificat! shared facilities and faculty for several years. Keith and Kathy Thibodeaux, founders of Ballet Magnificat!, provided encouragement and counsel as Belhaven University developed a premier Christ-centered collegiate dance program. This partnership laid the foundation for what would become a thriving dance major by 1997, supported by the construction of two new dance studios in 2000.

In 2005, Belhaven achieved a prestigious milestone: accreditation from the National Association of Schools for Dance, making it one of only 39 institutions nationwide to hold national accreditation in all four fine arts programs - dance, theatre, music, and visual arts.

The following year saw the opening of the Bitsy Irby Visual Arts and Dance Center, a modern facility that has become a cornerstone of the department's success. The program began with one small dance studio on campus, and students and faculty now enjoy five state-of-the-art studios in the Bitsy Irby Visual Arts and Dance Center.

What started with only a dance minor in 1994 has blossomed into several high-quality degrees

that include a Bachelor of Arts in Dance, Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance, and a Master of Fine Arts in dance, as well as a Pilates Instructor Certification. The introduction of an M.F.A. program in 2013 positioned Belhaven as the only evangelical Christian university in the U.S. to offer this advanced degree.

“*God's faithfulness and blessings have been evident throughout the development of the program. We are eager to share memories while also looking ahead to the bright future of the Dance Department.*”

Top-notch dance instructors from around the country took notice of what Belhaven was doing and wanted to join the burgeoning team.

“Seeing the growth of the faculty and staff who serve and support the Belhaven University Dance

Department has been a joy,” said Krista Bower, Chair and Professor of Dance and Dean of the School of Fine Arts. “While the department launched with a small staff, we are now blessed to have six full-time dance faculty, two specialty instructors, several adjunct instructors, a full-time dance athletic trainer, a director of dance production, a director of dance costuming, an administrative assistant, and a director of music for dance. Almost every dance technique class has live accompaniment by professional musicians.”

Cynthia Newland is currently an Adjunct Instructor of Dance but was the Chair of Dance from 2003-2016. She has seen the dance program change and grow. “As technologies



PHOTOGRAPHY: JHSU MEDIA, UNIVERSITY RELATIONS, AND DANCE ARCHIVES

continue to advance and are utilized globally, the arts are increasingly becoming part of this development,” observed Newland.

The Belhaven Dance Department has evolved with the hiring of faculty specializing in areas such as dance technology and hip-hop. Implementing courses like Dance and Technology and Choreography with the Camera provide the opportunity for dance to be experienced beyond the stage in live settings. Newland adds, “These technologies expand the

dance-making and crafting process and enhance the viewer’s ability to experience dance on demand.” Today, the department continues its tradition of strong training in ballet and modern dance technique and has also expanded offerings to include courses in jazz, tap, hip-hop, and aerial dance. Additionally, various dance styles continue to evolve around the world, and Belhaven provides students the opportunity to train in multiple dance forms and genres, aiming to prepare them to enter the marketplace, ministry, or workforce.

Over the years, Newland has seen many changes but has noticed one aspect that has not changed. “The University’s mission to prepare students academically and spiritually to serve Christ Jesus in their careers, in human relationships, and in the world of ideas has remained constant. By fostering a supportive environment where academic rigor meets spiritual growth, Belhaven encourages students to engage with diverse perspectives, collaborate across disciplines, and develop a holistic understanding of their



calling to impact the world for Christ.”

The department has also garnered national attention by hosting the American College Dance Association’s (ACDA) South Regional Conference in both 2013 and 2024, and by receiving invitations to perform at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., as part of ACDA’s National College Dance Festival in 2016 and 2018.

In addition to these accomplishments, the department launched a Pilates Instructor Training program in 2020, offering students the opportunity to earn Pilates Mat and Reformer teaching certifications alongside their degrees. And in 2023, Belhaven acquired the archives of the International Guild for Musicians in Dance, further solidifying its reputation as a leader in the integration of live music and dance.

Belhaven Dance alumni have made their mark across the

globe, contributing to the dance community as performers, choreographers, educators, administrators, and producers. Many have founded dance companies and studios. Their affiliations with prestigious companies like Texas Ballet Theater, Doug Varone and Dancers, Ballet 5:8, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, and many others stand as a testament to the quality of education and experience they received at Belhaven.





The NEW FACE of BELHAVEN FOOTBALL: COACH CJ NIGHTINGALE



Belhaven Athletics is excited to welcome CJ Nightingale as the eighth Head Football Coach in Blazers' history.

"We are thankful to have CJ, Shanel, and their family join us as CJ leads our football program," said Vice President of Athletics Scott Little. "His love for Christ, commitment to young men's growth, and competitive success align perfectly with our mission."

"CJ is ideally equipped to be an outstanding head coach," added Belhaven President Dr. Roger Parrott. "He has a track record of demonstrating love for his players and preparing young men for life beyond football."

Nightingale has extensive experience at the NCAA Division III level, having played for Wheaton College and coaching at both NCAA Division III and NAIA levels.

"Shanel and I, along with our family, are excited to join the Belhaven community," said Nightingale. "It's rare in college football to combine loving Jesus with championship football, and we get to do that with Blazers Football."

Nightingale arrives after four seasons as Defensive Coordinator at Wheaton College, where the Thunder reached the NCAA Division III playoffs each year and

won the CCIW in 2019.

In 2022, Nightingale participated in the AFCA 35 Under 35 Leadership Institute, aimed at developing young coaches. He has also spoken at AFCA and Glazier Coaching Clinics.

This past season, his defense finished as the #2 defense in points and yards allowed in the CCIW. Nightingale's 2021 defense led the nation in Total Sacks and was ranked second in Rushing Yards Allowed.

In 2019, his unit was the top scoring defense in the country, earning him a finalist spot for FootballScoop.com's NCAA Division III Assistant Coach of the Year Award.

During his tenure at Wheaton, Nightingale coached 24 All-Conference players and seven All-Americans. He also coached CCIW and National Defensive Player of the Year, Dallas McRae.

Prior to Wheaton, Nightingale served as Special Teams Coordinator and Linebackers Coach at Indiana Wesleyan University from 2017-2019. He started his coaching career at Greenville University as Defensive Backs Coach in 2016.

Nightingale was a four-year letter-winner at Wheaton as a defensive back and return

specialist, contributing to a CCIW Championship team in 2012.

With a strong background as both a player and coach, Nightingale is highly regarded by those who have worked with him.

"I had the privilege of coaching CJ at Wheaton," said Mike Swider, former Head Coach. "He is a football guy with an exceptional grasp of the game and a desire to inspire young men."

"CJ Nightingale is a winner," added Ron Sanberg, former Wheaton Defensive Coordinator. "He has a great football mind and deeply cares about his players."

Nightingale takes over a Belhaven program coming off its most successful season, finishing 9-1 and winning the first outright conference championship, along with its first NCAA playoff appearance.



As Belhaven University celebrates 30 years of dance, the department looks forward to reuniting with its alumni, honoring the past, and embracing the future with renewed passion and purpose.

The celebration will be a homecoming of sorts, as the University extends an invitation to its dance alumni and their families for a special reunion on campus November 8-9, 2024. The weekend promises a mix of nostalgia and excitement,

with activities designed to bring together the past, present, and future of Belhaven Dance. Attendees can look forward to open dance classes, social gatherings, an improv jam, a tour of the newly-updated facilities, and complimentary tickets to the highly-anticipated Fall Dance Concert 2024.

Bower shared her enthusiasm for the event and said, "God's

faithfulness and blessings have been evident throughout the development of the program. We are eager to share memories while also looking ahead to the bright future of the Dance Department. We are thrilled to reconnect with dance alumni as we celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Belhaven University Dance Department."

Scan to register for 30 YEARS OF DANCE!



Diamond Dreams

SOFTBALL'S HISTORIC RUN *to the* WORLD SERIES

The Belhaven University Blazers embarked on a historic journey during the 2024 softball season, culminating in a second-place finish at the NCAA Division III Women's College World Series, the best in program history. Their record-breaking 47-10 finish showcased their talent, resilience, and ability to perform under pressure.

The Blazers had a dominant regular season, finishing 34-4 overall and 15-1 in conference play, earning their fourth consecutive NCAA Regional bid. **Kennedy Carruth** led the team with a stellar 19-1 record and a 0.54 ERA, playing a critical role in their success. Her leadership earned her the Collegiate Conference of the South (CCS) Pitcher of the Year award for the second year in a row.

Belhaven's postseason journey reached new heights in the Super-Regionals against Berry College, where they secured a dramatic 3-2 victory with **Anna Caime's** walk-off home run in the ninth inning, sending them to their first-ever NCAA Division III World Series.

In the semi-finals, the Blazers faced the Linfield Wildcats. A three-run home run by **Katie Jo Richardson** and another by **Allie Gordon** helped Belhaven to a 6-0 win in Game One. Game Two was a nail-biter, with **Sarah Stockstill** scoring on Carruth's sacrifice fly to secure a 4-3 walk-off victory, advancing them to the championship series.

Belhaven fought hard against East Texas Baptist University (ETBU) in the championship series, but despite a strong effort, they

fell short, with a 9-5 loss in Game Three. Still, the Blazers' fighting spirit was evident throughout the series.

Carruth's contributions on the mound and at the plate, combined with Gordon's leadership and record-breaking performances, set a new benchmark for the program. **Head Coach Kevin Griffin**, now in his 15th season, earned his 449th career win and expressed his pride in the team's accomplishments: "Our players showed unmatched heart and determination."

"They've set a new standard for this program, and their resilience on the field is a testament to their hard work. I couldn't be more proud of how this team fought through every challenge this season."

Though the Blazers didn't win the championship, their 2024 season will be remembered as a milestone in Belhaven softball history, establishing a strong foundation for future success. ●



Fashion

MERCHANDISING

Forward

Belhaven's Fashion Merchandising Students Explore NYC's Fashion Industry

Belhaven University's Fashion Merchandising students had an exciting opportunity this past spring, as they ventured to New York City to study the intersection of fashion, art, and business. From April 29 to May 4, eight students, accompanied by faculty members, immersed themselves in the fast-paced world of fashion during the program's inaugural study tour.

The trip developed by Emily Blalock, Associate

Professor in the School of Business, and Nate Theisen, Co-Chair of the Art and Design Department, was designed to give students firsthand experience of the interdisciplinary nature of fashion and business in one of the world's largest fashion hubs—New York City's Garment District.

“Our goal was to blend fashion and business in a way that’s relevant and real,” said Blalock. “We wanted to offer students the chance to experience every angle of the fashion industry—from concept to consumer.”

The students’ itinerary was packed with meetings from some of the most influential fashion brands and industry executives. Over the course of the trip, the group engaged with 12 industry leaders, including top executives from renowned companies such as CHANEL, American Eagle Outfitters, FULLBEAUTY Brands, Caleres, Shoshanna, and Nordstrom.

“These executives didn’t just offer insights—they opened doors,” said Blalock. “Many offered internship programs to our students, recognizing the passion and curiosity they brought to every meeting.”

From luxury labels to budget brands, the students witnessed the full scope of fashion production, gaining insights into how products move from the designer’s sketchpad to the retail floor. Each visit showcased the behind-the-scenes strategy of apparel production, including merchandising, purchasing, factory production, marketing, sales, and public relations.

“We wanted our students to not only see but also experience the entire lifecycle of fashion,” said Theisen. “It’s one thing to learn from a textbook, but it’s another to feel the pulse of the Garment District and to speak with the people making these massive brands tick.”

New York City offered more than business lessons. The students immersed themselves in the bustling culture of Manhattan, quickly adapting to the fast pace of city life. They navigated the streets on foot, learned the nuances of the subway system, hailed cabs like seasoned New Yorkers, and took the Staten Island Ferry for a scenic view of the Statue of Liberty.

We wanted to offer students the chance to experience every angle of the fashion industry—from concept to consumer.

Alongside these day-to-day adventures, the group also made cultural stops at some of the city’s most iconic landmarks. Museums such as the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Met), as well

as the New York Public Library, provided valuable artistic and historical context to the fashion trends and business models they studied.

“This trip wasn’t just about the business of fashion,” added Blalock. “It was about understanding the culture and energy that inspires so much of what happens in this industry.” Throughout the trip, the students demonstrated the adaptability and intellectual curiosity that Belhaven University values. Whether asking thoughtful questions during industry leader presentations or embracing the unfamiliar pace of

New York, they stood out as eager learners.

“I was incredibly proud of the students,” Blalock reflected. “They were brave, adaptable, and asked all the right questions, which extended our visits in the best way possible. Every industry leader was impressed by their aptitude and curiosity.”

The Fashion Merchandising study tour to New York City wasn’t just an educational experience—it was a glimpse into the students’ futures. Many returned with internship opportunities in hand, as well as a deeper understanding of the work that goes into fashion production at every level.

As Belhaven continues to foster interdisciplinary learning and hands-on experiences, this first-of-its-kind trip marks the beginning of what the school hopes will become a regular part of the Fashion Merchandising program. With the combination of classroom knowledge and real-world insights, the future for Belhaven’s fashion merchandising students looks incredibly bright. 🌟



HIGHLIGHTS *from* Homecoming & FAMILY WEEKEND

Homecoming and Family Weekend was more than just an event; it was an occasion to celebrate everything unique and incredible about Belhaven University. From September 27-29, 2024, alumni, students, and families returned to campus to enjoy special events, share memories, build new traditions, and reunite. The weekend was filled with joy and camaraderie as everyone came together to honor their shared experiences and create new ones.

The festivities included the 50 Year Club, where alumni who graduated 50+ years ago reunited. The Alumni Awards ceremony celebrated distinguished alumni, highlighting their achievements and contributions. The football game between Belhaven and NC Wesleyan University brought excitement and school spirit to the weekend. Additionally, an art reception showcased the work of Jordan Hess, a 2009 graduate, adding a touch of creativity and inspiration to the event. 🍀



Campus News

MISSISSIPPI ARTS COMMISSION AWARDS BELHAVEN UNIVERSITY ART PROFESSOR GRANT

The Mississippi Arts Commission (MAC) has awarded Nate Theisen, Co-Chair and Professor of Art and Design Department, an Artist Fellowship grant in the area of visual art.



"I plan to use this grant to enhance the conceptualization, articulation, and reach of my three-dimensional work," said Theisen. "This grant will bring an element of freedom to experience the work of other artists directly by traveling to see it and also have the resources to procure quality materials. I also believe this grant will benefit the quality of my students' experience by showcasing to them a broader range of possibilities."

The MAC Artist Fellowship program is funded by MAC and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), a federal agency, with additional support from the Mississippi State Legislature. Awards were made in 104 Mississippi House of Representatives districts and 60 state Senate districts.

Theisen teaches sculpture, two- and three-dimensional design, and painting. He received his B.F.A. with an emphasis in painting from the University of South Dakota and an M.F.A. in painting with a minor

in sculpture from Wichita State University. He also apprenticed in Germany under sculptor Anatol Herzfeld, a student of Joseph Beuys. Previously, Theisen taught at Butler County Community College in Kansas and Wichita State University.

"As an educator, I have the privilege of teaching emerging artists to discover their voice, articulate their vision, and think about what success in their field means," observed Theisen. "In this vein, my work serves as a visual representation of the possibilities of making. It illustrates, hopefully, a way to navigate through the difficult aspects of being an artist such as overcoming fear, iterating concepts, a serious commitment to craftsmanship, and the resolution of a work of art." 🍷

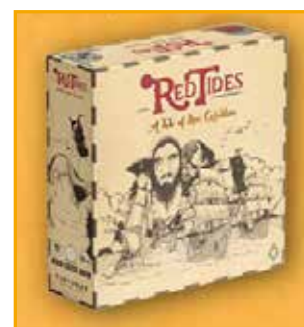
BELHAVEN ART PROFESSOR LAUNCHES NEW BOARD GAME: RED TIDES

Jon Micah Tyson, Co-Chair of the Art and Design Department and Assistant Professor of Art and game designer Nick Raynor have teamed up to create *Red Tides: A Tale of New Caribbea*. This collaboration blends Tyson's artistic vision with Raynor's game design expertise to deliver an immersive experience for board game enthusiasts and art lovers alike.

Red Tides is a 1-4 player cooperative dice battler with rich

RPG elements. Set in the pirate-themed world of New Caribbea, players build and upgrade their ship to challenge Pirate King John Davies. The game combines influences from *World of Warcraft*, *Mega Man*, and *Sid Meier's Pirates!*, with over 100 custom dice and physical ship upgrades. As Professor Tyson says, "It just feels good to roll a ton of dice!"

Tyson has infused the game with personal touches, drawing inspiration



from friends, family, and students. This personal element adds authenticity to the game's vibrant world. Tyson also integrates *Red Tides* into his teaching

at Belhaven University, using it to explore graphic design, character creation, and the creative process.

The game is set to launch a crowdfunding campaign on Backerkit in March 2025. In the pre-launch phase, Tyson and his team are building a community of supporters. Those interested can visit the pre-launch page to sign up for updates.

With engaging gameplay, stunning artwork, and deep strategy, *Red Tides* promises to be a standout in any board game collection. By backing the game, you support a talented artist and educator's creative endeavor. 🍷

BELHAVEN UNIVERSITY JOINS AWS ACADEMY TO EQUIP STUDENTS WITH IN-DEMAND CLOUD COMPUTING SKILLS



Belhaven University announced its participation in AWS Academy, a program built by experts at Amazon Web Services (AWS) that will provide the University with cloud computing curriculum.

This move comes at an opportune time, with AWS initiating a \$10 billion project in Central Mississippi, which is anticipated to generate numerous data science-related job opportunities in the area. Belhaven University aims to equip its students with the necessary skills to fill these roles.

Beginning in Fall 2024, students at Belhaven can enroll in courses focused on cloud computing. These courses are tailored to teach the skills demanded by the industry, enabling students to tackle real-world business challenges and prepare them for AWS Certification exams.

"AWS Academy invests in higher education to bolster the worldwide talent supply chain, building a bridge between industry and academia," said Jess Gilmore, Global Program Lead, AWS Academy. "We're proud to support Belhaven University as it cultivates graduates with the real-world, in-demand skills to pursue cloud careers."

As cloud adoption has accelerated, companies large and small around the world are investing in their future with the cloud and need individuals with

cloud skills to help them achieve their goals. In fact, according to LinkedIn data, cloud computing is one of the top hard skills companies need.

AWS Academy provides higher education institutions with free, ready-to-teach cloud computing curriculum, built by the experts at AWS, that fit into existing course structures and include lectures, hands-on labs, knowledge checks, and projects for in-depth learning experiences.

"The rapid rise of computing is creating a growing number of high-quality jobs at organizations around the world, and the technical skills that students develop through this program will position them well for their careers today and in the future."

"We are proud to make the AWS Academy curriculum available to our students," said Dr. Brett Andrews, Belhaven University's Dean of the School of Business and Program Director for Data Science. "The rapid rise of computing is creating a growing number of high-quality jobs at organizations around the world, and the technical skills that students develop through this program will position them well for their careers today and in the future."

Belhaven University professors will receive complimentary professional development and mentorship to enhance their own research capacity and industry knowledge. Students will acquire the AWS Cloud skills they need to pursue industry-recognized AWS Certification and are ready to put these practical cloud skills to work in entry-level roles. 🍷

BELHAVEN AWARDS MAYA MCFADDEN WINNER OF 2024 ANGIE THOMAS SCHOLARSHIP



Maya McFadden is the winner of Belhaven University's 2024 Angie Thomas Writers Scholarship. Named in honor of best-selling author and Belhaven alumna Angie Thomas '11, the full-ride scholarship covers tuition, room, and board at the University.

McFadden, a talented writer from Jackson, Mississippi, is the fifth student to win the prestigious award. "When I first found out that I had won the Angie Thomas scholarship, I was amazed. I've always wanted to be a writer, so I submitted my works just to try, not really expecting much. Now that I've won, I really hope that I can work more on what I'm passionate about while earning my degree."

Submissions were reviewed by both Thomas and Dr. Randall Smith, chair of Belhaven's Creative Writing Department. "I'm constantly amazed at the level of talent that we see in the submissions," said Thomas. "Maya's work immediately blew me away. She is truly gifted, and I cannot wait to see how Belhaven University further develops her gift."

Smith highlighted her uniquely-imagined narratives which include folkloric, historical, and mythic. "Maya's stories give flesh and voice to characters whose unordinary lives mirror the aspirations and travails of every person. Her commitment to finding and exploring identity and community through writing is an embodiment of the ideal Angie Thomas Scholar," said Smith.

“*Maya's work immediately blew me away. She is truly gifted, and I cannot wait to see how Belhaven University further develops her gift.*”

The scholarship was created to help young aspiring writers who need the extra support to make their dreams of authorship a reality.

"By giving Maya this scholarship, she can focus more on her studies and writing, which will allow her

gift to thrive," observed Thomas. "As someone who was a transfer student myself, it's an extra honor to see this financial blessing go to someone who has decided to continue their education at Belhaven."

The Angie Thomas Writers Scholarship is awarded to only one student each year, but the other applicants receive partial scholarships.

Thomas is the author of New York Times best-selling novels; *Concrete Rose*, *On the Come Up*, *The Hate U Give*, and *Nic Blake and the Remarkables: The Manifestor Prophecy*. *The Hate U Give* and *On the Come Up* were both developed into major motion pictures.●

MISSISSIPPI HUMANITIES COUNCIL HONORS BELHAVEN FACULTY WITH 2024 AWARD

Dr. Elissa Sartwell, Chair and Professor of Theatre at Belhaven, has been awarded the prestigious 2024 Mississippi Humanities Council Teacher Award, recognizing her contributions to humanities education in Mississippi. Provost Dr. Audrey Kelleher praised Sartwell's excellence as an educator and her role in highlighting the strength of humanities faculty across the state.

As part of the award, Sartwell delivered a public lecture titled "Toward a Theatre of Connection" on February 26, 2024, at Belhaven's Student Center Theatre.



Sartwell was also recognized at the Mississippi Humanities Council's annual awards banquet in the spring.

Sartwell holds degrees from George Fox University and Louisiana State University and teaches a variety of theatre courses, including acting, directing, script analysis, and dramaturgy. She also directs for the department's theatre season and serves as the Artistic Director for Belhaven Theatre.

As a director, acting coach, and dramaturg, Sartwell focuses on plays that explore themes of forgiveness and reconciliation. She employs Stanislavski's later action-based acting approach, as articulated by Declan Donnellan, emphasizing the integration of body, breath, and voice in performance. Her work has been recognized by the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival for direction, ensemble devising, and dramaturgy.

Sartwell has worked as a production dramaturg at New Stage Theatre for productions such as *Silent Sky*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Sweat*, and *Morningside*. During her graduate studies, she served as a resident dramaturg at Swine Palace.

As a theatre historian, Sartwell's research explores how history

is written and codified through performance, with a specific focus on ethnicity in 19th-century American theatre. She has presented papers at various conferences, including the Association for Theatre in Higher Education and the Mid-American Theatre Conference. ●

DANCE PROFESSOR NAMED ADJUDICATOR FOR HONG KONG BALLET COMPETITION

Professor of Dance and Director of Ballet Ravenna Wagnon served as an adjudicator for the Hong Kong Ballet Group Stars Award on September 6-11, 2023. This prestigious competition is a major ballet event in Hong Kong, providing an opportunity for local ballet schools to compete. The competitors performed solo and group works in ballet and contemporary styles for both junior and senior age groups.



The Hong Kong Ballet Group, formed in 1964 by local ballet teachers, has dedicated itself to providing an impartial platform for students to perform full-length

works and participate in master classes and seminars. This honor holds special significance to Wagnon, who grew up in Hong Kong and was trained in ballet there from the age of seven to sixteen.

Wagnon reflected, "As a young ballet student in Hong Kong during the 1970s, my summer holidays were spent participating with students from other schools, working with guest artists invited by the Hong Kong Ballet Group. I remember those events as impressionable and inspiring."

Her most recent performance with the Hong Kong Ballet Group was in 2004 when she played the role of The Queen Mother in *Swan Lake*.

During the competition, Wagnon reconnected with ballet colleagues and fellow adjudicators Septime Webre, Artistic Director of the Hong Kong Ballet, and Ou Lu, Head of Ballet at the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts. She also observed how other countries teach dance. Wagnon added, "I was excited to revisit Hong Kong after 19 years (and 45 years since my study there) to see the emerging generation of dancers and reflect on the progress and development of the art form over the past 45 years."

Wagnon plans to share her experiences with her Belhaven dance students, highlighting examples of how ballet is studied and performed in other countries. She also noted the unique styles that reflect students' cultures and backgrounds.●

BELHAVEN WELCOMES NEW CHEER & VOLLEYBALL COACHES

KAITLYN MOORE HEAD CHEERLEADING COACH



Belhaven Athletics welcomes Kaitlyn Moore as the Head Cheerleading Coach.

Moore is dedicated to expanding the program by developing both All Girl and Coed Cheer Teams. As a coach and Director at a local competitive cheer gym,

she aims to prepare teams for Regional and National Cheerleading Championships.

Originally from Lawrence County, Tennessee, Moore has extensive experience in the cheer and dance industry, including roles as a tumbling instructor, choreographer, judge, and gym director. She was a four-year member of the Martin Methodist College competitive cheer team. She currently serves as All Star Director for JAM Athletics, the top-ranked D2 gym in Mississippi.

OLIVIA KILLELEA HEAD VOLLEYBALL COACH



Belhaven Athletics welcomes Olivia Killelea as the 12th Head Volleyball Coach in Blazers' history.

Killelea joins Belhaven from Division III Lynchburg University where she served as the Acting Head Women's Indoor

and Beach Volleyball Coach for the 2023-24 campaign having joined the Hornets' staff in March of 2023.

Prior to Lynchburg, Killelea spent eight seasons as a part of the Covenant College volleyball program as both a player and coach. Killelea served as the assistant coach at Covenant from 2020-22, helping the Scots win the Collegiate Conference of the South and reach an NCAA Regional in 2022.

BRETT SANCHEZ NAMED D3BASEBALL.COM ALL-AMERICAN



Brett Sanchez was named to the D3baseball.com All-America Second Team, following his selection to the All-Region VI First Team. This marks his third All-America recognition, having previously earned Second Team honors in 2022 and First Team in 2023. He was also named National Pitcher of the Year in 2023.

Sanchez, a Slidell, Louisiana native, entered the season as a Preseason All-American and delivered an impressive 2024 campaign, going 7-2 with a 2.52 ERA, 93 strikeouts, and five complete games. He holds multiple career records at Belhaven, including pitching wins (33) and strikeouts (408).

In addition to his national accolades, Sanchez was named Pitcher of the Year in the Collegiate Conference of the South and an All-CCS First Team selection. He was a finalist for the Boo Ferriss Trophy, awarded to Mississippi's top collegiate player.

ASHAUNTI BARNES & KELSEY SINGLETON

MEDAL AT NCAA OUTDOOR TRACK & FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS

#3 NATIONALLY
400 METERS



The final day of the NCAA Division III Outdoor Track & Field Championships marked a historic achievement for Belhaven's Track & Field program. Ashaunti Barnes earned a bronze medal in the Women's 400 Meters with a program-record time of 54.93 seconds, securing the highest-ever finish for the team. Kelsey Singleton

also claimed bronze in the Men's 400 Meters, narrowly missing his record by 0.01 seconds. Neal Terry placed 21st in the Men's Triple Jump, capping off a stellar season. The Blazers made history with a record number of NCAA qualifiers, solidifying their national presence.



GAME ON!

The Belhaven University Gaming Club (BUG) is building a strong community of gamers on campus, led by president Garrison Owens, a film production and visual art major from Vicksburg, Miss. Owens envisions the club as a way for students to forge lasting connections. "Games are an easy way to join a group of people and become a community of friends," Owens shares.

BUG offers a wide range of games, from competitive options like *Rocket League* and *League of Legends* to casual favorites such as *Wii Sports* and *Super Smash Bros*. Additionally, the club welcomes suggestions for new games to keep the experience fresh and diverse.

One standout initiative is Bellcraft, a Minecraft server where the Belhaven campus has been recreated by Owens and other club members. "We utilize Bellcraft to encourage collaboration," says vice president Lily Theisen, who highlights the project's focus on teamwork.

Beyond video games, BUG partners with The Round Table, a tabletop club, to bring board games into the mix, ensuring that all gaming interests are represented. Owens affirms the club's inclusive nature: "We are always looking for new games."

BUG's vision includes attracting new students by showing how gaming fosters community. "You don't need experience—just come and have fun!" Owens says. The club recently hosted its first major event and plans future activities like Nerf wars, video game nights, and more, in partnership with the Belhaven Leadership Council.

With these initiatives, BUG is becoming a key part of student life at Belhaven, offering a unique way to connect and enjoy the world of gaming.



BELHAVEN UNIVERSITY INTRODUCES TWO NEW INNOVATIVE DEGREE PROGRAMS



Belhaven University has recently expanded its academic offerings with the introduction of two innovative degrees: a Bachelor of Science in Applied Chemistry and a Bachelor of Arts in Pre-Law. These new programs reflect the university's commitment to providing career-focused education that integrates academic rigor with a Christian worldview.



BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN APPLIED CHEMISTRY

The Applied Chemistry degree is designed to prepare students for careers as laboratory technicians in fields like environmental testing, pharmaceutical quality control, and medical testing. The program emphasizes hands-on experience, offering enhanced coursework in analytical chemistry and programming to equip graduates with the technical skills needed in today's job market.

Dr. Brandon Magers, Chair of the Department of Chemistry & Physics, emphasized the practical focus of the program, stating, "This degree sets itself apart by providing students with the skills needed for diverse and impactful careers in chemistry." Additionally, students will have access to research opportunities, with the chance to present their work at scientific conferences nationwide.

Belhaven Provost Dr. Audrey Kelleher added, "This program not only equips students with technical skills but also integrates Christian faith, exploring how science is a study of God's creation."

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN PRE-LAW

The Pre-Law program offers students a comprehensive foundation for law school or legal-adjacent careers, combining courses in public relations, intercultural communication, and criminal justice. The curriculum is designed to prepare students for the LSAT and law school admissions while also providing valuable skills for careers in fields like business, criminal justice, and mediation.

Dr. Kelleher noted, "Our Pre-Law program is an investment in a student's future, providing a strong foundation in critical thinking, communication, and ethical reasoning."

Both degree programs are now open for applications, marking an exciting step for Belhaven as it continues to expand its educational offerings and equip students for meaningful, impactful careers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON APPLIED CHEMISTRY & PRE-LAW CONTACT:

ADMISSION@BELHAVEN.EDU | 601-968-5940



Belhaven University
Best Online MBAs In Entrepreneurship

Forbes Names Belhaven University Top 10 for Best Online MBA in Entrepreneurship

Forbes has named Belhaven University among the top 10 institutions for its online MBA in Entrepreneurship for 2024, emphasizing the university's commitment to providing accessible, high-quality education for aspiring entrepreneurs. Dr. Roger Parrott, President of Belhaven University, expressed pride in this recognition, stating, "We are deeply honored to be recognized by Forbes as one of the best online MBA programs in entrepreneurship. This

acknowledgment is a testament to our dedicated faculty, innovative curriculum, and the success of our students. At Belhaven, we strive to empower future business leaders with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in a dynamic entrepreneurial landscape."

Belhaven's partnership with Global Silicon Valley (GSV) further enhances its entrepreneurial offerings, providing students with access to resources and networking opportunities in the

tech and startup ecosystem. Parrott noted that, "GSV's expertise and Belhaven's academic rigor create a robust learning environment that prepares students to excel in the rapidly-evolving business world."

Forbes evaluated 270 accredited, nonprofit colleges, assessing student outcomes, affordability, experience, credibility, and the application process. The top universities achieved a final score of 95% or higher, reflecting their excellence in online MBA education.

COLLEGES OF DISTINCTION



Colleges of Distinction, a national guide for college-bound students, awarded Belhaven University the three major awards for its commitment to higher education. Belhaven University is one of only three universities in Mississippi to earn the prestigious title 2024-2025 College of Distinction. This is the 15th consecutive year Belhaven has earned this national award.

Belhaven was the only Mississippi institution honored as a top Christian university. This is the 14th year the University earned the title Christian College of Distinction. The University was also honored with a third award, the 2024-2025 Mississippi College of Distinction, that recognized its educational impact within the state.

New FULL-TIME FACULTY



DR. CANDACE CARTER, Assistant Professor and Chair of Social Work and Criminal Justice, is a licensed social worker with nearly 20 years of experience. She has worked in child abuse, elder care, and mental health. Dr. Carter has also served as an external evaluator for Delta Thrive and secured Title IV-E funding for child welfare scholarships at the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services (MDCPS).



DR. MARIETTA DUNCAN, Assistant Professor and Director of Public Administration, has 25 years of experience in federal and state government, including roles with DHS, FEMA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Mississippi Development Authority. Dr. Duncan, a Belhaven MPA graduate, believes public administration fulfills the mandate in Matthew 25, serving as a ministry through teaching.



STACEY HENDRIX, CPA, Assistant Professor of Accounting, has 30+ years of experience in public accounting and industry, including 17 years as a corporate financial controller. She dreams of teaching full-time, believing it a privilege to serve at Belhaven University. Professor Hendrix is pursuing a D.B.A. at Belhaven and holds an M.Acc. from Millsaps College and a B.S.B.A. from Mississippi College.



DR. BOBBIE LOVELESS, Dean of the School of Nursing, began her career at Belhaven on April 1, 2024. She previously served as an advisor for the development of the nursing program at Belhaven and served as a member of the School of Nursing Advisory Council from 2014-2018. In her role, Dr. Loveless provides servant leadership to facilitate the overall administration and leadership for the School of Nursing. She works closely with faculty and students to ensure a collaborative approach for program success. Dr. Loveless has been a registered nurse (RN) for 26 years. She has worked in nursing education for 21 of those years and has held leadership positions in nursing education for 17 years.



DR. CHRISTINA MARTIN, Professor of Business and Chair of Sports Management and Hospitality, earned her Ph.D. from the University of Southern Mississippi and an M.S. and B.S. from Mississippi State University. She has been a professor in Sports Management since 2008 and was named to the 2021 COSMA Hall of Fame.



DR. TY MARTIN, Professor of Exercise Science, earned a Ph.D. and M.S. from the University of Southern Mississippi and a B.S. from Mississippi State University. He is a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist with 18 years of teaching experience, including 16 years at Troy University. Dr. Martin was also drafted by the Minnesota Twins and Texas Rangers.



LUKE MITTWEDE, Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies and Christian Ministries, holds B.A.s in Biblical Studies and International Studies from Belhaven and an M.A. from Columbia International University. With over a decade in church ministry, he is passionate about family, sports, movies, and teaching the Bible to help others see and savor Jesus.



KENT MUMMERT, Specialty Instructor of Graphic Design, holds an M.F.A., M.A., and B.A. from Mississippi College. Since 1991, he has been a freelance graphic designer and has taught graphic design and karate at Mississippi College. Active in his church, he also enjoys drawing, photography, and book design.



DR. RACHEL ROLLER, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, earned her Ph.D. from the University of Notre Dame and a B.S. from Azusa Pacific University. She is a contributing author to *A Compass for Deep Heaven*, exploring C. S. Lewis' views on science and faith. Her research focuses on scalable, low-cost paper devices for screening pharmaceuticals in the developing world and creating paper microfluidic devices for lab experiments.



DR. TAMMY SMITH, Assistant Professor of Education and Chair of Undergraduate Education, joined Belhaven after a 32-year career in Mississippi public schools. She led River City Early College High School to impressive student performance metrics. Dr. Smith holds an Ed.D., Ed.S., and M.A. from Mississippi College and a B.S. from Mississippi State University.



DR. DEARON WASHINGTON, Assistant Professor of Counseling, holds a Ph.D., Th.M., and M.A. from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and a B.A. from Delta State University. He has taught at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and worked in private practice and residential addiction facilities. His expertise includes marriage and family counseling, multicultural counseling, and integrating psychology and theology. Dr. Washington leads Belhaven's Master of Arts in Counseling program, focusing on holistic treatment and humility.

BELHAVEN UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

111 YEARS OF SERVICE TO BELHAVEN UNIVERSITY AND 169 YEARS OF HIGHER EDUCATION EXPERIENCE



SUZANNE SULLIVAN
VP for Enrollment & Marketing
24 years with Belhaven
32 years in higher education

JEFF RICKELS
VP for University Advancement
12 years with Belhaven
12 years in higher education

SCOTT LITTLE
VP for Athletics
23 years with Belhaven
29 years in higher education

SHELLEY SMITH
VP for Student Development
4 years with Belhaven
20 years in higher education

ROGER PARROTT
President of the University
29 years with Belhaven
44 years in higher education

AUDREY KELLEHER
Provost, VP for Academic Affairs
16 years with Belhaven
22 years in higher education

SHERYL VITTITOE
CFO, VP for Finance & Operations
3 years with Belhaven
10 years in higher education

BELHAVEN UNIVERSITY NAMED ONE OF MONEY'S 2024 BEST COLLEGES IN AMERICA



Belhaven University has been named one of Money's 2024 Best Colleges in America, a prestigious recognition that underscores its commitment to providing high-quality, affordable education and supporting student success.

"We are honored to be recognized by Money as one of the best colleges in America," said Vice President for University Enrollment and Marketing Dr. Kevin Russell. "This accolade reflects the hard work and dedication of our faculty, staff, and students, who consistently strive for excellence. Our commitment to providing a Christ-centered, affordable, and academically rigorous education remains steadfast, and this recognition is a testament to those efforts."

Belhaven is one of only three private institutions in Mississippi to receive this honor, alongside Millsaps College and William Carey University. Known for offering competitive tuition rates among private universities, Belhaven makes high-quality education accessible through financial aid packages, scholarships, grants, and work-study opportunities.

Additionally, the Belhaven Advantage program allows graduates who complete at least 60 credit hours to earn a free online master's degree, worth up to \$25,000. Combined with the Double Major 5th-Year Free Promise, students can save up to \$54,000, making Belhaven University a leader in delivering exceptional value to its students.

92nd ANNUAL BELHAVEN UNIVERSITY Singing CHRISTMAS TREE

SAVE the DATE!

FRIDAY & SATURDAY
DECEMBER 6 & 7 - 7:30PM
BELHAVEN BOWL STADIUM



ALUMNI NEWS

HOSIK KIM SHOWCASES EXHIBITION AT BITSY IRBY GALLERY

Belhaven University's Art and Design Department hosted the art exhibit, "Engrave," showcasing the work of visiting artist and alumna Hosik Kim.

Kim, a contemporary ceramic artist, pushes the boundaries of traditional ceramics through innovative forms and experimental techniques. His sculptures focus on the abstract representation of human figures and the emotional landscape of memory.



Born and raised in Seoul, South Korea, Kim moved to the United States in the early 2000s after completing his military service to pursue his passion for art. He earned a B.F.A. in Sculpture and Photography from Belhaven University and an M.F.A. in Ceramics from Mississippi State University. During his studies, Kim developed a deep fascination with the tactile and transformative nature of clay as well as and black-and-white photography.

Kim's work explores the intersection of fragility and strength, often using distorted or fragmented figures to convey themes of identity, nostalgia, and transformation. His unique approach has been featured in numerous exhibitions, galleries, and collections internationally, earning recognition for his innovative contributions to the field of ceramics. Embracing

experimentation, Kim incorporates unconventional materials and techniques, allowing the unexpected outcomes of firing and glazing to become integral aspects of his work.

Currently based in Jackson, Miss., Kim has been teaching art classes at a state university for 12 years. He continually pushes the limits of ceramic expression, using the medium to explore and comment on contemporary issues. Through both large-scale installations and intimate sculptures, his work invites viewers to question their assumptions and engage with the complexities of the human experience in profound ways. Kim is dedicated to expanding the narrative of ceramics in the contemporary art world, challenging traditional definitions, and exploring new possibilities within the medium. ●

TRAY HAIRSTON ELECTED TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (IEDC)

COURTESY OF BUTLER SNOW

Butler Snow attorney Tray Hairston ('06) was elected on September 15, 2024, to serve a 2-year term on the Board of Directors for the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) beginning on January 1, 2025. IEDC is the largest membership organization for economic developers in the world and provides services and resources to its members, positioning them for success. IEDC's Board of Directors is comprised of 55 voting members whose duty is to serve as a steward of the organization's vision, mission, values, and resources.



Headquartered in Washington, D.C., IEDC is a non-profit, non-partisan membership organization serving economic developers. With more than 4,500 members, IEDC is the largest organization of its kind. Given the breadth of economic development work, members are employed in a wide variety of settings, including local, state, provincial, and federal governments, public-

Create a Legacy Plan That Takes Care of Your Family

We've partnered with **PhilanthroCorp** to offer their free legacy planning services to any of our alumni who wish to use them. PhilanthroCorp is a Christian organization that empowers believers to maximize their impact in the present and the future. With their help, you can easily provide a secure future for your children.

The team at PhilanthroCorp has devised a new online tool for individuals and couples with simple planning needs to streamline the will and estate planning process in under 30 minutes.

This tool will help you address guardianship needs (including a children's trust) and get your house in order. Not only will you be able to bless your family but it also shows you ways that you can bless ministries that you care about after your children are grown.

The Estate Plan Organizer is available online 24/7 and will walk you through the process at your own pace. If something too complex for the online tool arises, they can easily connect you with an estate specialist- free of charge.

Should you choose to finalize documents through the Estate Plan Organizer, PhilanthroCorp has partnered with a network of attorneys to draft the documents for just \$309 (usually over \$1,000).

To take advantage of this service, please visit:

gobelhaven.com/estate-planning



(Hairston cont.)

private partnerships, chambers of commerce, universities, and a variety of other institutions. IEDC's members create high-quality jobs, develop vibrant communities, and improve the quality of life in their regions.

At Butler Snow, Tray Hairston concentrates on public finance and economic development matters, including all types of municipal bond issues, serving as bond counsel for taxable and tax-exempt financings throughout the country. He has served as bond counsel, lender's counsel, and underwriter's counsel for various cities, counties, and financial institutions and has worked on transactions totaling more than \$2 billion. One of Tray's seminal legal publications is *The Future of Economic Development*, 35 Miss. C.L. Rev. 370 (2017). He is also a Certified Economic Developer (CEcD) through the International Economic Development Council.

Before joining Butler Snow, Tray served as Counsel and Economic Development Advisor to Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant. He has been recognized by Best Lawyers in America® for Economic Development Law, Mississippi College School of Law as "Young Lawyer of the Year" (2013), and the Mississippi Business Journal as one of its "Top 40 under 40" (2012-2013). In addition, *The Bond Buyer*, a century-old daily national newspaper based in New York City focused on covering the municipal bond industry, previously recognized Tray as one of the 28 "Rising Stars" within the public finance field throughout the country.

Tray is a member of the National Association of Bond Lawyers, International Economic Development Council, Southern Economic Development Council, the American Bar Association, Capital Area Bar Association, and Mississippi Bar Association.

He received his undergraduate degree from Tougaloo College, MBA from Belhaven University, and his Juris Doctor from the Mississippi College School of Law. 🍷



BELHAVEN ATHLETICS ANNOUNCES 2024 HALL OF FAME CLASS

The Belhaven Athletics Department is proud to announce the Blazers' 2024 Hall of Fame class. This year's class is comprised of two former student-athletes and one former coach representing three of Belhaven's 17 intercollegiate athletics programs. The honorees were inducted into the Belhaven Athletics Hall of Fame on Saturday, September 28th, as part of this year's Homecoming festivities.



DOMINIQUE CORONA, SOFTBALL

Dominique Corona was a standout performer for the Belhaven Softball program from 2013-15, helping to establish the Blazers as one of the premier programs in the NAIA. Corona's career was highlighted by a stellar 2014 season in which she was named the Southern States Athletic Conference (SSAC) Player of the Year and an NAIA First Team All-American. She was twice named an SSAC First Team All-Conference player and named to the SSAC Gold Glove team while also earning a pair of NFCA All-East Region First Team nods. Corona ranks inside the Top 10 in career Batting Average, Doubles, Walks, and On-Base Percentage while also leading the Blazers to three straight NAIA Tournament appearances during her career.



RICKY OWENS, BASEBALL

Ricky Owens was a star player for the Belhaven Baseball program from 2003-07 where he helped lead the Blazers to some of the program's most successful seasons. Owens was a four-time GCAC All-Conference player while playing a pivotal role in the Blazers winning the GCAC Championship in 2004, 2006 and 2007. Owens and the Blazers also earned a spot in three NAIA National Tournaments during those conference championship years. Owens still ranks as the Blazers' all-time career leader in hits, doubles, RBI, and at-bats while also ranking 2nd all-time in home runs.

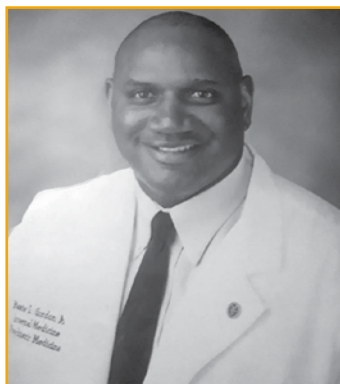


TOM KELSEY, MEN'S BASKETBALL

A legendary coach in the world of collegiate basketball and one of the most impactful leaders of the Belhaven Men's Basketball program, Tom Kelsey was the Head Coach of the Blazers from 2005-12. Kelsey led the Blazers to a pair of NAIA National Tournament Appearances in 2010 and 2012. During his tenure, Kelsey amassed the 2nd most wins in program history with 121, trailing only Hall of Famer Charles Rugg. Kelsey also holds the program's highest career win percentage among coaches with over 100 games coached at .548. In the 2009-10 season, Kelsey led the Blazers to the most wins in a single campaign in program history, 24, and was named the GCAC Coach of the Year.

A LIFELONG COMMITMENT TO HEALING: DR. MAXIE GORDON'S JOURNEY FROM BELHAVEN TO MEDICAL LEADERSHIP

Dr. Maxie Gordon's journey to becoming a nationally-recognized medical leader reflects his perseverance, faith, and dedication to service.



"I grew up in the city of Jackson and in a community that was under privileged; therefore, many people did not have access to healthcare. I saw people use lots of home remedies in order to take care of themselves. When I went to medical school, I decided to invest in an education that would help me fill in the gaps I saw. The reasons had to do with my Christian experience at Belhaven and that led me to having a heart for the needs of less fortunate people. One of the main

points of our clinic is that we don't restrict access. We try and help people regardless of their financial means; therefore, we donate a lot of work. There are some who believe that healthcare is a right. In fact, a civil right. I believe that has been my mission from the start," said Gordon.

Today, Gordon serves as medical director of Gordon Medical Arts Clinic in Clinton, Mississippi, and as a faculty member at the University of Mississippi School of Medicine. His contributions to medical education have earned him multiple awards, including "Best On-Call Attending" and "Teacher of the Year." He remains active in professional and community organizations, including the Mississippi Psychiatric Association and 100 Black Men of America, Jackson chapter, where he received the President's Award for outstanding service.

Gordon's story is a remarkable example of a life dedicated to service, reflecting his impact in medicine, education, and his community. His journey demonstrates the lasting influence Belhaven alumni can have on the world.

His time at Belhaven University, beginning in 1979, was marked by leadership on and off the soccer field. Whether serving as a resident assistant, in student government, or as president of both the Belhaven Science Organization and Students for Cultural Awareness, Gordon's commitment to service was clear. His time at Belhaven also shaped his Christian faith, drawing inspiration from Matthew 25:34-40.

After earning a degree in biology in 1983, Gordon continued his studies at Jackson State University and was inducted into the Beta Beta Beta Biological Honor Society. He also served his community through political consulting, hospital management, and as an election commissioner for Jackson, Mississippi.

Gordon's medical career took shape at Meharry Medical College, where he graduated with honors in 1995. He completed a combined residency in internal medicine and psychiatry at the Brody School of Medicine in North Carolina, where he served as chief resident for both programs and founded the medical/psychiatry unit. His work in rural North Carolina and northeast Mississippi as a medical director focused on improving care in underserved areas and addressing health disparities.

BELHAVEN ONLINE INTRODUCES Master's in COUNSELING

Belhaven University is excited to announce the launch of its new online Master's in Counseling program, designed to prepare students for meaningful careers as Licensed Professional Counselors. With specializations in Clinical Mental Health Counseling, Marriage and Family Therapy, and General Counseling, this innovative program offers the flexibility of online learning while providing hands-on experience through in-person residencies.

While the coursework is primarily online, Belhaven provides opportunities for personal interaction through in-person residencies, where you can collaborate with classmates, seek mentorship from experienced faculty, and build a supportive network of peers and professionals. These residencies are pivotal in helping students apply classroom knowledge to practical, hands-on experiences, enhancing both their learning and professional development.

The program's flexible format is ideal for those balancing work, family, or other commitments. Belhaven's accessible approach ensures that you can pursue your passion for helping others while maintaining a healthy work-life balance. If you're ready to take the next step in your career and make a meaningful impact in people's lives, Belhaven University's Master's in Counseling is the perfect path forward. Join a supportive community and start your journey today.



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BELHAVEN UNIVERSITY ALUMNI *Award* RECIPIENTS



ALUMNI HONORED AT AWARDS CEREMONY

The University honored this year's Alumni Award recipients during the Alumni Awards Ceremony on Friday, September 27th at the Dr. Billy Kim International Center. This event was part of Belhaven University's Homecoming and Family Weekend 2024 and highlighted alumni who are successfully living out the University's mission, "To serve, not to be served." Dr. Roger Parrott and The Office of Advancement presented a total of nine awards highlighting alumni who are thriving in their careers, life, and service.



CHRISTINA (BOMGAARS) DENT - ALUMNA OF THE YEAR
To a recent graduate of the past decade who pursues excellence in their field and has achieved success as a younger leader.

GUILLERMO SANTIAGO SALINAS - YOUNG ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR
To a graduate who has been influential in their pastoral or service-ministry, building the Kingdom through their work.

RACHEL (KURTZ) CALDWELL - SPIRIT OF BELHAVEN
To a distinguished alumnus who has achieved excellence in their field of service and embodies Belhaven University's mission in their life and work.

DR. JAY LEVY - BETTYE QUINN EDUCATION
To a Belhaven School of Education graduate who reflects Ms. Quinn's dedication, commitment, and loyalty to teaching and service to their community.

BRIANA MCELROY - BUSINESS SUCCESS
To a graduate of the Belhaven School of Business who integrates Christian values and ethics in the marketplace. A servant leader committed to excellence and dedication to serving others.

DR. SOMTOCHUKWU NGWUDIKE - STEM DISTINCTION
To a science, technology, engineering, or mathematics graduate who has achieved significant success in their professional role and encourages a Christian worldview while discovering innovations and best practices in their field.

GREG SWEATT - ENTREPRENEURIAL EXCELLENCE
To a servant leader entrepreneur who has proven success in business – profit or non-profit – and demonstrates a commitment to ethical leadership in the marketplace.

KERRI (COURTNEY) SANDERS - ARTS EXCELLENCE
To a graduate who has achieved excellence in the Arts professionally and honors the Lord through their creativity.

DR. FRED HALL - COMMUNITY SERVICE
To an alumnus who exemplifies the heart of Belhaven University's mission "to serve and not be served." This designation honors a servant leader of distinction who embraces Belhaven's mission and serves Christ Jesus in their career, in human relationships, and in the world of ideas.



SCAN TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS!



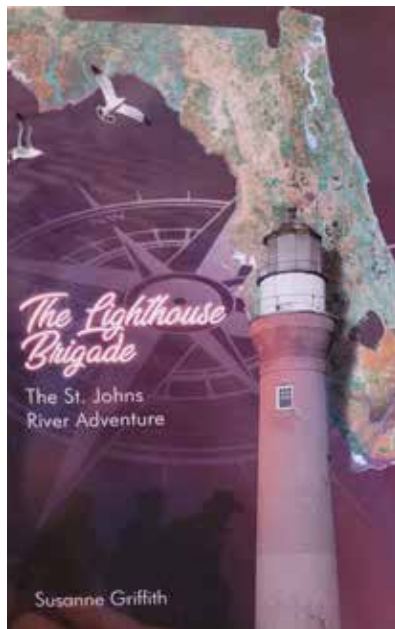
ALUMNI UPDATES

1960

Dr. Charles Fincher, ('69) is now retired. He resides in Lawrenceburg, TN.

1970

Susanne Griffith, ('70) in 2020 published *The Lighthouse Brigade: The St. Marks Adventure*. The second book in the series,



Lighthouse Brigade: The St. Johns River Adventure was recently published. Susanne resides in Oxford, MS, with her husband, Jack.

Mr. Bruce Baughman, ('71) retired Federal Senior Executive Service. He served as Director of the Office of National Preparedness at FEMA/DHS. After retiring from the Federal Government, he was a member of the Governor of Alabama's Cabinet, where he served as

the Director of the Alabama Emergency Management Agency.

Dr. Michael "Woody" Woodham, ('71) is the President and Missionary Pastor of Alive Again Ministries. He resides in Miami, FL.



Henry "Lynn" Phillips, ('73) and wife **Georgie Moseley**, ('73) have relocated to Freeport, FL.

Rev. John Boles ('75) retired from fulltime pastoral ministry in September 2023. He is living near Thomasville, Alabama, with his beloved wife of 41 years, Jan. They have two grown sons and two growing grandsons.

John Eichelberger ('76) retired as the VP of Sales with Sysco Food Services and has moved back home to Madison, MS, from Peachtree City, GA.

Rev. Roger Collins ('79) is serving as the Associate Pastor at Chattanooga Valley Presbyterian Church. He resides in Chickamauga, GA.

1980

Dr. Michael Plunket, ('80) was elected to the Board of Directors of the Christian and Missionary Alliance denomination in June 2023. He is the lead pastor at Risen King Church in New City, NY. Recently he also started a position as professor of doctoral studies at Seminario Teologico de Puerto Rico / Alliance University of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Rev. Stephen "Tom" Edwards, ('85) resides in Lutz, FL. He has been serving as the Director of Lifebuilders Christian Counseling Center since May 2022 with 13 therapists on staff.

Dr. Robert "Gary" Holmes, ('88) and **Catherine (Doolittle) Holmes**, ('90) recently celebrated their 33rd anniversary. Gary also transitioned from the Dental Department Head of the USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN-71) to his new position as Director of Dental Services at Naval Hospital Yokosuka, Japan. He oversees the dental care of 6,000 active duty members and their families.

2000

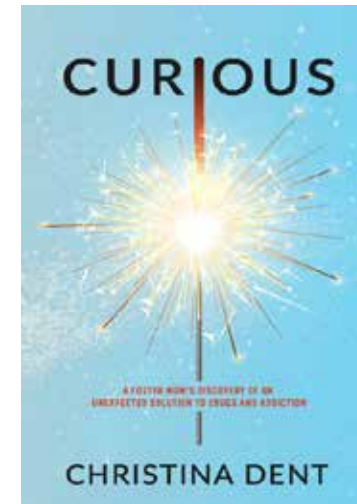
Dr. Brad Bailey, ('00) was recently named Associate Vice President for Enrollment Strategy and Communication at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College.



Vanessa (Carr) Trammell, ('03) was promoted to Senior Project Manager with UMMC Center for Telehealth. Vanessa has been in project management for over 13 years. She is the founder of the WT3 Foundation, an educational non-profit that was established in 2017 in honor of her husband, William Trammell III, who passed away in 2016.

Alaena (Goodlett) Ramsey, ('04) recently accepted the position of Digital Media and Events Coordinator at The MIND Center at the University of Mississippi Medical Center.

Christina Bomgaars Dent, ('05) is the Founder & President of the nonprofit End It For Good and just published her first book, a combination of memoir and



learning journey called *Curious: A Foster Mom's Discovery of an Unexpected Solution to Drugs and Addiction*. She and her husband, **Thomas Dent** ('03), have been married for 19 years after they met at RUF at Belhaven, and they have three sons. Thomas works in constituent services for Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith and helps lead a community resource center at their church.

Bethany Jones, ('08) joined the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) as an adjunct research associate in the Joint Advanced Warfighting Division of IDA's Systems and Analyses Center. Jones earned her bachelors degree in international studies from Belhaven in 2008 and her masters degree in human rights from Cornell University in 2021. She is currently working towards her juris doctor in national security and international studies from the University of Richmond School of

Law. Jones is a student member of the Virginia Bar Association. IDA is a nonprofit corporation that operates three federally-funded research and development centers in the public interest. IDA answers the most challenging U.S. security and science policy questions with objective analysis leveraging extraordinary scientific, technical, and analytic expertise.

Brittany (Nunes) Walker, ('09) founded Evolve Dance Company in 2021 in Southern Colorado with the mission to enhance Southern Colorado culture through movement, connection, and outreach.

2010

Dr. Mioshi (Marshall) Smith, ('15) recently completed her DBA from Walden University (2022). Her dissertation was entitled, "Strategies for Improving Companies Productivity and Profitability." She now is an adjunct professor for BU teaching graduate leadership courses. She was selected as an honoree for Jackson State University 40 under 40 Alpha Cohort 2023-2024. She is married and welcomed her 3rd daughter, Melani, on Feb. 14, 2023.



Lauren (Small) Messina, ('10 and '17) was selected to be part of the New Orleans Museum of Art Creative Assembly Cohort. She is a dance instructor and choreographer and host of The Parent Artist Podcast on YouTube. She recently published *ChatGPT Prompts for Dancers: A Creativity*

Journal and ChatGPT Prompts for Dancers: The College Edition both available on Amazon. Lauren was a 2022 recipient of the Andy Warhol Foundation Platforms Fund grant for research & development and a 2022 Performing Artist in Residence at the Contemporary Arts Center of New Orleans.

Lawrence N. Overbey, Jr., ('18) was so inspired by the marketing class he took as part of his MBA studies at Belhaven that he wrote a book, *Marketing for the Modern Mindset: A Definitive Guide to Church Marketing*.



2020

Youlander Garner, ('20) is now an instructor at Gupton-Jones College of Funeral Service in Atlanta, GA. She is a licensed funeral director and embalmer and received her certification in grief counseling.

Martha Tallent ('21) was selected as the Buncombe County Teacher of the Year in 2025 in Asheville, NC. Ms. Tallent has taught science at Enka Middle School since 2022.



Ronald Turner II, ('23) is pursuing a doctoral degree in Health Administration from the Morehouse School of Medicine.



To submit alumni updates for the next Tartan Magazine, scan the code and follow the link.

IN MEMORIAM

THE PASSING OF BELHAVEN ALUMNI, FACULTY, & FRIENDS

Kathryn Williams Wasson '44
11/19/2023

Doris Mills McKnight '44
3/24/2024

Fran Amacker Austin '45
6/17/2024

Edith Covington Cox '46
1/8/2024

Carolyn Beckman Waltman '46
4/7/2024

Sadie Heard Wright '47
5/16/2024

Lambryne Stavropoulos Angelo '49 8/26/2023

June Praytor Lawrence '50
8/6/2023

Betty Rodgers Pearce '51
11/16/2023

Lila Ponder Friday '51
1/20/2024

Martha Elizabeth Smith '52
8/23/2023

Joyce White Williford '53
7/16/2023

Patsy Walker King '54
1/5/2024

Rebecca Howard Laine '54
1/17/2024

Dorothy Beckman Clegg '54
1/27/2024

Betty Eloise Monette White '55 | 10/25/2023

Dorothy Kenna Brasfield '55
6/29/2024

Jodie Garner Martin '56
12/17/2023

Mary Helen Dettor Nettleton '57 | 3/9/2024

Wilna Rigby Rogers '58
7/30/2023

Nita Majure Roseveare '58
5/10/2024

Anna McAuley Mitchell '58
6/30/2024

John F. Horn '60
6/2/2024

William Lamar Hooker '61
10/29/2023

Thora Cooper Westervelt '61
1/21/2024

Kaye Batchelor '61
3/20/2024

Charlotte A. Craig '62
2/25/2024

Aurelia Huffman Bagwell '64
10/6/2023

Suzanne McRae Clay '65
10/13/2023

Eugene W. Dickey Jr. '65
3/21/2024

James R. Lanier '67
8/18/2023

Marianne Hoolsema Tolsma '68 | 1/7/2024

Paul Wright '68
1/16/2024

Kay Morris Rupp '71
6/10/2024

Arthur Benjamin Egger Jr. '72 | 6/29/2024

Peter D. Maloney '73
9/15/2023

Cindy Summer Wray '74
1/31/2024

Jules Verne Hudson Jr. '75
2/28/2024

Alice Beasley Lewallen '75
4/4/2024

James E. Yelverton Jr. '78
8/11/2023

Charles F. Edgerton '78
5/3/2024

Leslie Clark Rimmer '79
11/6/2023

E J Grisham '83
12/31/2023

Tyra L. Small '99
6/23/2024

Lee Ann Elliott '00
5/3/2024

Stanley S. House '02
8/1/2023

Lisa T. Hartman Smith '03
4/15/2024

Christa M. Smith '04
4/10/2024

Lyndsey Autumn Moore '06
7/7/2024

William Tilleux Hagen '07
9/4/2023

Cheryl Yvonne Brown '07
11/3/2023

Brittany L. Webb '07
12/16/2023

Tina Michele Wood Gatewood '09 | 11/3/2023

Caroline Stowell Taylor '12
6/24/2024

Minnie M. Mazique '18
3/29/2024

Daniel Anthony Reynolds '22
2/4/2024

FACULTY

Dr. Westley Floyd Busbee
7/20/2024



Dr. Westley Floyd Busbee passed away peacefully at age 84 on July 20, 2024, in Alpharetta, Georgia, surrounded by his family.

Wes Busbee was born on August 15, 1939, in Meridian, MS. He thrived in school and sports, graduating from high school with honors in 1957 and attending Meridian Community College before accepting a scholarship to Rhodes College in 1958. At Rhodes, he again excelled in academics and athletics, majoring in History and leading the track team to conference titles.

In 1968, after holding a position at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, Wes and Carol returned to Mississippi when Wes accepted a position at Belhaven University. For 48 years, he served as Chair of the History Department and held several college-level leadership roles, including, for a time in the 1980s, Belhaven Athletic Director.

Wes continued to be an active scholar late into his career, writing *Mississippi: A History*, in 2005 (2nd ed, 2014). Upon retirement in 2016, Wes was awarded the title of Professor Emeritus.

Paul E. Moyers
3/6/2024



Paul Edward Moyers of Jackson, MS, died March 6, 2024, after a brief illness. Paul was born on February 3, 1958, in Vicksburg. He graduated from Reidland High School in Paducah, Kentucky, and earned a bachelor's degree from Murray State University in Murray. He continued his education at the University of Arkansas, earning a Master of Business Administration, and at the University of Mississippi School of Law, where he earned the Juris Doctorate.

If you would like to honor the memory of the passing of an alum by way of a monetary gift, please scan the QR Code to give online, or mail your gift to the address.

Paul worked for Gulf National Bank in Gulfport and was an officer at MidSouth Rail Corporation in Jackson. He was a practicing attorney and for many years was an Associate Professor of Business Administration at Belhaven University.

Bewey Bowden
5/20/2024



Bewey Dean Mott Bowden was born August 23, 1927, to Ollie Bewey Mott and Lessie Lois Mott. She left this broken, fallen, grammarless world on May 20, 2024, and took her first breath in a world of grace, incomprehensible love, and perfect syntax! She is now united with Jesus, her Savior, and her Joe, whom she has missed terribly since his exit from this world in October.

Bewey was a strong, highly-influential lady who loved God and loved His word. In her early years, she taught English at Hardy Jr. High. Later, she taught speech and drama at Belhaven University for many years and directed many plays. She was and is dearly loved by her students. She also taught pulpit speech at Reformed Theological Seminary and was also the Dean of Women there.

Dr. Dorothy Stokes-Gentry
4/19/2024



Dr. Dorothy Jean Boyd Stokes-Gentry, 77, was born on June 7, 1946, to John Boyd, Sr. & Mary Holts-Boyd in Crystal Springs, MS. Dr. Stokes-Gentry passed away peacefully on April 19, 2024.

She served as Professor and Chair of Undergraduate Teacher Education Program at Belhaven University for many years until her retirement in 2012. She will be remembered as a very classy, intelligent, and dedicated Christian educator. She loved to laugh and genuinely cared about her students.



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