

The Owl's Hoot

Wisdom Unfolds Here



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Spring Sports Accomplishments
Owls close the spring sports seasons with accomplishments on the track, field, and court.
Photo: Gerald Gallik



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Sports, studies, and service fill the summer months.
Photo: MUS Communications



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Breaking ground pushes legacy forward.
Photo: Jackson Halpern '27

'The Most Significant Memphian in History' Lives On

A Look into the Life and Legacy of Fred Smith '62

Brady Ehrhart
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

In a black-and-white photograph, three class officers pose around a wooden table. Seated farthest to the right is Honor Council President Fred Smith '62, resting his right arm on the tabletop, the cuff of his white button-down peeking out from beneath his jacket. The year is 1962. In only 11 more years, he would go on to establish one of the greatest companies in the history of the transportation and shipping industry: Federal Express, known now as FedEx. Founder and longtime CEO of FedEx Frederick Wallace Smith passed away on June 21, 2025, at 80 years old. Smith began life at Memphis University School as Freddy, depicted smiling in his yearbook photo in the 7th grade. Born in Marks, Miss. in 1944, Smith attended MUS through graduation, competing on the football and basketball teams and serving as president of the Honor Council. His senior class voted him "Best All-Around." Smith went on to Yale

University, where alongside his study in economics, he worked as a charter pilot, conceptualizing the idea for a massive air shipping system that could allow for overnight delivery. After Yale, Smith served for four years in the United States Marine Corps (USMC), where he served two tours in Vietnam as a rifle platoon leader, company commander, and aerial observer/tactical controller in the OV-10 Bronco, a turboprop light attack and surveillance aircraft. He left the USMC in 1970 as a captain, adorned with the Silver Star, Bronze Star, and two Purple Hearts. In 1973 Smith founded Federal Express, taking his company from a fleet of 14 Dassault Falcon Jets to the largest express transportation company in the world, employing over 500,000 team members and connecting over 200 countries and territories. Until his death, Smith upheld values of honor and integrity, pioneering an industry while also promoting extensive philanthropy. Smith was a co-chairman of



Fred Smith poses next to a FedEx airplane. Photo: FedEx.

the U.S. World War II Memorial project and the campaign for the National Museum of the Marine Corps. Smith also gave the single largest gift, \$65 million, to the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation, an organization that provides need-based scholarships for military children. "Relentless, innovative, and humble" were the three words that Richard W. Smith, COO of FedEx International and CEO of

FedEx Airline, used to describe his father. In both his personal and business relationships with his dad, Richard Smith

"My father was never concerned about his legacy or being great. He just focused on doing good."

-Richard Smith

saw all sides of the brilliance of Fred Smith. In the context of working alongside him, Richard said, "[He was] certainly intimidating, being such a knowledgeable and brilliant systems thinker ... but he was always open to discussion and debate and knew that it made him sharper as well as those around him."

(Continued on Page 2...)

Hyde Library Final Checkout Concludes a Legacy

Ike Emmert
EDITOR

After over five decades, the Hyde Library—heart of studiers and socializers alike—has officially checked out for the final time. Students, faculty, alumni and friends gathered this summer to honor the legacy of the beloved library before its demolition. Headmaster Pete Sanders opened the ceremony with remarks reflecting on the building's impact and the vision that made it possible. "We deeply appreciate the library and the Hyde family who made it possible," Sanders

said. "And at the same time, we look forward to the future of learning and technology at Memphis University School." Construction on the Hyde Library began in 1970 and was completed the following year. It was funded by a \$250,000 challenge gift from Joseph R. Hyde Jr., the benefactor of the Hyde Chapel and the Sue H. Hyde Sports and Physical Education Center. At its farewell celebration, Mr. Sanders described the library as "a place where students may continue their search for knowledge, a place to store knowledge for future

generations." Over time, the building became a resource center, a gathering space for club meetings, a host for city library groups, and even the studio for student-run CCTV broadcasts. "The resources were impressive," Sanders said, referring to the soundproof study rooms, early audiovisual equipment, and the school's first smart classroom. "Although the library had a modest beginning, it was and continues to be superior in comparison to our peers." The farewell event also marked the kickoff of Bold

Vision Bright Future, the school's \$200 million capital and endowment campaign. Demolition of the library is part of Phase 1, which includes construction of a new arts and sciences building featuring an 820-seat Hyde Chapel, a new Park Avenue entrance and an admission office. Later phases will bring a new library and technology center, Lower School, and athletic upgrades. Ms. Trenthem, director of the Hyde Library, closed the ceremony with brief remarks and introduced a "final checkout," inviting the crowd to take home

yearbooks, textbooks, and other memorabilia. "Even though we're losing space, we're gaining this opportunity to really focus on what students need in student services," Trenthem said in an interview that evening. "I truly think that's the heart of the library; we can do library work in a big building, in a small building, and then as we move along, we get to decide what our final destination's going to look like based on all these interactions with students every day."

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Lloyd the Owl...
"Was the Owls' Summer productive or
reductive..."

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One of his father's methods of teaching and creation was "kaleidoscope thinking," in which collaborative iteration allows a concept to come into clear focus. "My favorite part of the job was being his co-collaborator and sometimes sparring partner on these ideas he had, as he was truly an idea factory. We made one another better ... in more recent years he became my best friend. We spoke every day."

Fred Smith's life lessons were just as impactful as his business decisions. Richard Smith explained that his father imbued in him values of "humility, prior preparation,

leading from the front (not from the bunker)." His resilient outlook on life was among his dad's most valuable attributes.

"[80 years of experiences] gave him an amazing perspective, and he often told me when things were hard or I had suffered some loss or defeat, 'Bub, if that's the worst thing that ever happens to you, you'll be alright.'"

When asked what his father would say to MUS students, Richard Smith, father of MUS student Logan Smith '27 said, "Fred Smith was not a man to sit on the sidelines and let life pass him by. Engage in the act of doing. Don't be afraid to try new things or take risks. Be curious about the world around you. Remember that

the only dumb question is the one you're too afraid to ask."

Logan Smith described his grandfather as selfless and humble.

"With all the money he had, he still drove this old 2002 Chevy. He always wore this cheap watch ... he never let money get to his head." Fred Smith's frugality and desire to spend money only when it most benefited others was reflected in one of his mantras, Logan Smith said. It was inscribed on the back of his watch. "Waste Not a Moment.' He never wasted a moment. If he had time, he was going to get something done."

Logan Smith recollected some of his fondest moments with his grandfather, including

"Waste Not a Moment.' He never wasted a moment. If he had time, he was going to get something done."

-Logan Smith '27

when visiting him at work.

"[He would always] mute [his phone] and come down to say hi to me ... step out of the most important board meetings no matter how busy he was." He spoke about his grandfather's humility, commending him for teaching him how to correctly prepare for studies and gamedays. In providing closing remarks, Logan said that his

grandfather would want MUS students to "just focus on your path ... help others when they need it. Just keep your head down and be a hard worker."

Sixty-three years after his graduation from MUS, Fred Smith's legacy still travels through these halls. Pictured perfectly frozen in time, a younger version of him looks down from his position in his class composite to the countless students going to class, studying, and growing as he did.

Fred Smith - "the most significant Memphian in history," as former mayor Jim Strickland titled him- was a man who truly never wasted a moment. He likely would hope the future leaders at MUS will do the same.

MUS in Europe Takes Owls to England

Advay Iyer
EDITOR

\$6.86 for a water bottle? This sounds awfully like a trip abroad to the colony capital, England. And indeed, it was. The 2025 MUS in Europe trip took three chaperones and Greenwich. The Owls departed from Memphis on Monday May 26 and arrived in Atlanta for a quick layover. The true haul began on the Virgin Atlantic flight to London Heathrow. A quick 8 hours and 14 minutes placed students in London at 6:30 a.m., filled with energy.

The first day went by as a jet-lagged blur, the tired Owls walking behind their tour guide, visiting locations such as Trafalgar Square, Buckingham Palace, and of course, a fish and chips restaurant.

Day two was much easier to recall as the newly refreshed owls proceeded, though slightly late, to the Tower of London. There the students had the opportunity to see where the Crown Jewels were stored as well as the Medieval Weaponry Museum, followed by the disturbing site of many former beheadings. Next, the travelers left for the Shard, London's tallest building, where they saw a skyscraper's eye view of the city. Moreover, they had the chance to witness the rare raising of the Tower Bridge, often confused with the London Bridge, where a replica Spanish Galleon crossed. The



Owls stand in front of Big Ben on day one of their visit. Photo: MUS Communications Department

day ended with a walk along the River Thames, seeing an exact model of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre with a straw-thatched roof and the HMS Belfast.

Day three found Owls strolling through a multitude of museums in Kensington, just west of central London. Institutions such as the Science Museum and Faraday Museum occupied our morning while a visit to the John Snow water pump amused the Owls before dinner. The post-dinner entertainment was spectacular as Owls were treated to a showing of "Wicked" at the Apollo Theatre, which has been showing the same play for over 20 years.

Day four placed students in Westminster Abbey, receiving a guided tour of the famous church. Subsequently, the Owls walked south along the

Thames to the world-famous British Museum. Although jammed with artifacts from every corner of the earth, MUS students found refuge in the space next to the refreshment stall after a grueling four-hour time slot to explore.

Day five consisted of a trip to the city of Cambridge where we visited the Wren Library, Trinity College, and Kings College. The Wren Library, named after famous architect Chistopher Wren, who designed St. Paul's Cathedral, contained rows of manuscripts illuminated by the large windows adorned with stained glass. Inside covered glass tables were documents such as Shakespeare's first folio and Sir Issac Newton's cane. After another consecutive day of vigorous walking, averaging around 17,000 steps daily, the Owls were punted down the

River Cam; or rather, they got to go punting on the River Cam (riding on a gondola-like boat up and down the river).

Day six entailed a trip to Bletchley Park, home of codebreakers like Alan Turing who worked during World War II and the National Computing Museum. Allowed to explore the entire complex, the students were given the opportunity to visit the buildings where German encryption machines were decoded, specifically by Turing's Bombe machine.

Later, on day seven, the Owls were presented with a wonderful tour of Christ Church College in the city of Oxford, noting its link to C.S Lewis and his story, "Alice in Wonderland". Furthermore, students also received a tour of the Bodleian Library, one of the few libraries in the world

to receive every form of media published in Britain, for free.

Traveling back to London on day eight let MUS students visit Windsor Castle and later the Natural History Museum, chock full off fossils and other intriguing exhibits about the natural world. Another brilliant play entertained the Owls that night, that being "The Lion King" at Lyceum Theatre.

The last day in London was spent traveling along the Thames, on an Uber Boat. The river bus service took the students to Greenwich and the Royal Observatory. Taking in the marvelous charting equipment as well as the telescope opened our eyes to the importance of timekeeping in historical and modern contexts. There was no shortage of clocks, especially ones that took more than five years of detailed work and research to make! Our last attraction was the famous Ferris wheel, the London Eye. Though not quite as thrilling as the Shard, it was a pleasant end to the trip with light rain and a great view.

As the weary travelers boarded their flight for their 7,026-kilometer trip back to the land of miles and feet, they appreciated the opportunity to visit so many fantastic sites in England. The Owls thank chaperons Dr. Dalle, Dr. Gadbois, Ms. McCullough, and tour guide Mr. John Lionet, for such a calm and enjoyable trip.

Mock Trial Leaps into the Future

Jackson Halpern
EDITOR

Following last season's hallmark region victory over the SMS Turkeys, the MUS Mock Trial team now has to face what many student organizations fear most: what to do when seniors graduate.

Comprised of entirely seniors, the 2024-25 region-winning Owl Red team set high expectations for the coming season. Under the new leadership of Captain Henry Phan '26, the mock trial team has been working diligently all summer to rebuild the program.

Former captain Wills Frazer '25 expects

amazing things under the new leadership: "Phan did a phenomenal job stepping up at the state tournament last season. He was willing and ready to jump in when I could not be there. In just a week and a half, he memorized both questioning and an opening statement that were not his own. Having been a witness and an attorney in past seasons, he is ready to lead the team, and I expect that he will keep the Turkeys at bay for another year, further solidifying an MUS mock trial dynasty."

Already working to create this dynasty, Phan has recruited a large swath of underclassmen, which will prove vital to continuing a strong legacy of legal Owls.

Phan thinks this recruitment is paramount to the survival of the program, remarking that "recruiting underclassmen, especially rising freshmen, is essential for the success of our school's mock trial team. By introducing them to law early on, we hope to ignite in them the passion and skills they need to win the regional competition in the future." While many of these new witnesses and lawyers-to-be had next to no knowledge of mock trial before summer, Phan has been hosting workshops and information meetings to get the team into competition shape. The Owls' future counsel table is looking brighter than ever.

by the numbers

at the district championship...

17 years since district championship win

4/4 rounds won

100% ballot win rate

Owl Football Gears Up



Owl linemen, pre-snap, lock eyes with their opponents in the trenches (Bartlett, 2024). Photo: Gerald Gallik

Ashwin Subramaniam
EDITOR

As the final school bells rang in late May, most students eagerly anticipated a calm, uneventful summer away from the demands of school. For the MUS football team, however, summer was anything but quiet. The newly named Stokes-Alston Stadium has become a training ground for the dedicated football players, who have spent long hours preparing for one goal: to honor the

red and blue and win the TSSAA Championship. Through demanding summer practices and Organized Team Activities (OTAs), it has become clear that this year's team is focused and determined to achieve that mission. After leading the Owls to the playoffs last year, Head Coach Mark Chubb looks to build on that foundation with a new roster. While the team must replace experienced, veteran players from the class of 2025—including starters at quarterback, offensive line, and linebacker—

opportunities abound for younger athletes to step up, gain experience, and leave their mark on MUS football. The Owls expect many new leaders to emerge under the bright lights of Stokes-Alston Stadium as the starting roles begin to fill. Despite all the key departures from MUS football, the 2025-26 varsity football team is poised and ready to bring back a championship to 6191 Park Ave. The Owls open their season on the road against Bartlett on August 22, followed by another away matchup at Northpoint Christian. After returning home to face Kirby and Lipscomb Academy, they will travel to Nashville to challenge Father Ryan. The midseason stretch includes a home contest against White Station and a road trip to Brentwood Academy. It concludes with three straight home games against Memphis Central, rival Christian Brothers, and Briarcrest. The Victory Dance will be held on September 5, following the home opener matchup against Kirby, and the Football Homecoming Dance will take place on October 18, after the homecoming game against Kirby.

2025 Football Schedule

All games start at 7:00 P.M.

- AUG. 22 Bartlett @ Bartlett
- AUG. 29 Northpoint Christian @ Northpoint Christian
- SEPT. 5 Kirby
- SEPT. 12 Lipscomb Academy
- SEPT. 19 Father Ryan @ Father Ryan
- SEPT. 25 White Station
- OCT. 3 Brentwood Academy @ Brentwood Academy
- OCT. 17 Memphis Central (HOMECOMING)
- OCT. 24 CBHS @ CBHS
- OCT. 31 Briarcrest (SENIOR NIGHT)

Gatere Dominates Decathlon

Jackson Halpern
EDITOR

Following in the footsteps of former MUS student and Olympian Harrison Williams '14, Gavin Gatere '26 claimed a dominating victory at the state decathlon late last school year. For those unaware, decathlon is a track and field event consisting of ten separate competitions (called "multis," which also include pentathlon, heptathlon and decathlon). In terms of preparation for decathlon, these separate and seemingly unrelated events require much more time to get an athlete familiarized and proficient in each event, making it the most difficult event in track.

Coach Drew Hinote describes coaching Gatere as "extremely easy" and emphasizes how his "hard work ethic and ability to push those around him to work harder...as long as he remembers to bring his shoes" as what makes Gatere so formidable on the track. When asked what he does to prepare for his events, Gatere responded "it's all mental, if your head is somewhere other than the track, it won't go well. Even if you prepared like an Olympian, that won't matter if your head isn't in the right place." Such a victory has set a high precedent for athletes following Gatere and sets high expectations for his senior campaign in the Spring.

Schroerlucke Awarded Tennis Accolades



Samuel Schroerlucke '25 gets behind the ball. Photo: Gerald Gallik

Drew Knighton
EDITOR

Samuel Schroerlucke '25 is set to carry out his competitive tennis career at Sewanee, The University of the South, but his final season with the Owls was nothing short of spectacular. He was chosen to be on both the TN Sports Writers' All-State Team for his stellar performance and was awarded the Daily Memphian Player of the Year, demonstrating how dominant Schroerlucke was in the Memphis area. Schroerlucke dedicates his impressive season to his teammates. He said, "[MUS] had a really strong and deep team. Everyone

was good ... It didn't matter who I hit with, I could always get good practice in." Schroerlucke had a strong connection with the rest of the team, so he was able to escape the individuality of tennis because the team was very "tight knitted." Schroerlucke loved being on such a deep team and was able to form strong relationships with all his teammates, and he plans on keeping the same energy as he relocates his game to Sewanee. Schroerlucke spent his summer practicing with his former MUS teammates as well as playing in Intercollegiate Tennis Association tournaments with other collegiate players to prep for the next level.

The Owl's Hoot

Published by the Students of Memphis University School
6191 Park Avenue
Printed by The Union City Daily Messenger

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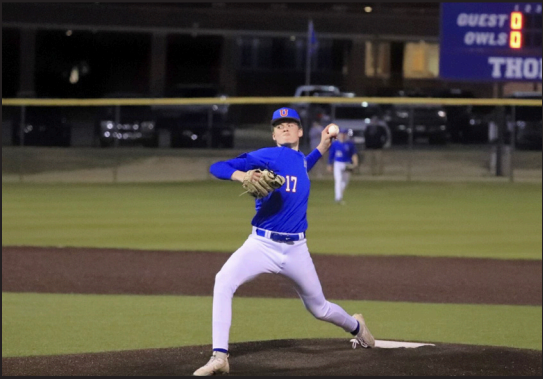


Suggestions, Corrections, Letter to the Editor

Spring Sports Accomplishments

Coleman Russell
EDITOR

As the 2024-25 sports season winds to a close, it is important to look back and acknowledge the achievements and hard work of all the Owls. However, a few have raised themselves above the rest of the field through a combination of grit and skill, earning either the honor of being named apart of the All-Region, All-Metro, or the All-State team in their respective sports, and, in some cases, being named athletes of both All-Metro and All-State teams.



Baseball
Louis Brundick '25, Reid McKnett '26, Carter Sayle '26, Henry Moak '26 and Gray Nevels '26 were all named in the All-Region team. Brundick also earned the unique distinction of being placed onto the All-State team, with a .330 batting average, leading the team in hits (38), nine doubles, three triples, and 33 runs.

Henry Moak '26 pitches. Photo: Gerald Gallik



Soccer
John Logan Godwin '25, Jacob Pyndell '25, Kyle Sneed '25 and Bradley Snider '25 all made the Daily Memphian All-Metro Team for soccer, and Kyle Sneed was named 1st team All-Metro by the Commercial Appeal, along with leading the team with 20 goals and 10 assists throughout their season. Bradley Snider was also named 2nd team All-Metro.

Bradley Snider '25 shoots. Photo: Gerald Gallik



Lacrosse
Thomas Davis '25, Tucker Davis '25, Joel Hobson '27, James Hanlon '28 and Thomas Levy '28 were named for the All-State lacrosse team.

Davis Rudd '25 runs downfield. Photo: Gerald Gallik



Track and Field
Harry Alexander '26 in pole vault, Gavin Gatere '26 in 100m, 200m, 110m hurdles, discus, and decathlon, Jackson Halpern '27 in triple jump and decathlon, Palmer Hinote '25 in decathlon, Dylan Taylor '27 in discus and shot put, and the 4x800m relay team of Declan Lonergan '25, Marcus McCullers '25, Kade McCracken '28 and Carson Alexander '27 made The Daily Memphian All-Metro Team.

Jackson Halpern '27 leaps. Photo: Gerald Gallik



Tennis
The Commercial Appeal named Samuel Schroerlucke '25 and Cole Evans '28 for the All-Metro tennis team. Cole Evans, Will Knighton '25, Aidan Lightman '25, Bo Schroerlucke '27, Samuel Schroerlucke, and Gabe Ungab '25 made the Daily Memphian All-Metro Team.

Cole Evans '28 strikes the ball. Photo: Gerald Gallik



Trapshooting
In the West Regional Tournament, the Owls placed 10th, with their top five scorers being Hyde Crabtree '25 (96), Carson Smith '25 (96), Foster Houseal '25 (94), Luke Russell (80) '27, Hamilton Eggers, Jr. '27 (74). At the State Tournament, they similarly did well, with Hyde Crabtree '25 (98), and Foster Houseal '25 (96) leading the Owls, with Luke Russell '27 (89), William Nunn '26 (87), Porter Hays '28 (86), and Maddux Benitone '28 (72) following closely behind. Hyde Crabtree also tied for ninth place in the state.

Nat Harris '28 fires. Photo: Gerald Gallik

Cross-Country Team Prepares for Upcoming Season

Carter Wildrick
EDITOR

In the early days of June after the ruckus of exams, the track and pavement of Memphis University School rumbled from the sound of running shoes; the MUS cross-country team began their 10-week stretch of 6:30 a.m. summer training. Armed with determination and discipline, the Owls have dutifully accomplished their workouts and continued their prep for the season. With upcoming meets only weeks away, the cross-country team is excited to

showcase their ability and see their hard work pay off. The influx of strong lower-school and freshmen runners, along with the addition of the sixth grade, has excited and invigorated the team for the bright future ahead of them this season and the next. As veteran upperclassmen runners continue to encourage and mentor new Owls, the strengthening bond of the cross-country team has grown further into a brotherhood of respect and passion for running, and the team is excited to leave a permanent impact on the legacy of MUS cross country

this upcoming season. Now that the summer training regimen is over, the Owls can concentrate on the local and invitational meets ahead of them. "We're really excited to showcase the work we've put in," one rising senior said. "Placing second regionally to CBHS for the past several years has been really tough, and we can't wait to show them how much we've all improved." With the first meet fast approaching, the MUS cross-country team is ecstatic to see the results of their hard work. In the words of Coach Tyler, "summer miles bring fall



Joshua Gramm '26 puts in the miles. Photo: Gerald Gallik
smiles," and the entire team cannot wait for that. Until then, the Owl runners will continue to hit the course, lacing

Golf Team Tees Off

Drew Knighton
EDITOR

The Memphis University School golf team is coming off a hot season that featured three tournament wins and a

runner-up finish at the state tournament. Having lost three seniors out of the top six starting players, the 2025-26 team is rather young, as it features four juniors, three freshmen, one sophomore, and just two

seniors. Three returning players, Drew Knighton '27, Brantley Moore '27, and Charles Snider '27 were recognized by the Commercial Appeal as the Memphis area's top TSSAA golf players entering the 2025 season. Although the team is young, there are many great players with good talent looking to score well for the Owls in 2025. The Owl golfers have already cranked out two competitions this year, playing at the Baylor Preview Tournament at Black Creek Club on August 4-5, and



Brantley Moore '27 swings. Photo: Gerald Gallik

the Battle of the Border Tournament at Tunica National on August 11. The rest of the season will take the golf team all across

Memphis and the state, competing at courses such as Timber Truss, Memphis Country Club, Audubon, and others.

SUMMERTIME BLUES

THIS SUMMER, OWLS OF ALL AGES SPREAD THEIR WINGS, ESCAPING THE MEMPHIS HEAT TO COMPETE, LEARN, AND GROW.

Graphic: Brady Ehrhart '26

A Week in Ireland Changes the Classroom



English teachers practice their Harkness skills. Photo: Elizabeth Colbeck

Ike Emmert
EDITOR

This summer, the MUS English Department left behind the halls of Humphreys and the humidity of Memphis for the windswept coast of western Ireland. Nestled on the edge of the North Atlantic near the small village of Schull, they gathered in two remote houses perched above the sea—equal parts classroom and retreat. Funded by the John M. Nail Outstanding Teacher Award, the trip focused on learning discussion-based teaching techniques and brought together nearly the entire department for a week of hands-on collaborative learning. The award, presented in 2024 to English teacher Chris Colbeck, provided a chance to benefit the department. Chris Colbeck and Department Chair Elizabeth Colbeck, who played the role of “Travel Agent” for the trip, chose to focus the retreat on the Harkness method, a student-led discussion approach taught at the Phillips Exeter Academy’s Humanities Institute. Both Colbecks had attended the Exeter Humanities Institute in recent years. “It really changed the way we thought about the pedagogy of our classroom,” Chris Colbeck said, “and we wanted to

share that with the rest of the department.” Since bringing everyone to New Hampshire wasn’t feasible, they decided to bring the training to Ireland. “We sort of dreamt up this idea of what if we could bring Exeter to us and go to a remote place that everyone would enjoy,” Chris Colbeck said. With funding from the award, they invited Ralph Sneed, a longtime Exeter faculty member and Harkness mentor, to lead the workshop in person. The group settled into two houses overlooking the water near Schull, a quiet fishing village on Ireland’s southwestern coast. Reaching the location meant navigating winding one-lane roads to what Chris Colbeck described as “the middle of nowhere.” While the setting was scenic, the work was serious. “We did workshops every day from, I guess, about 8:30 in the morning until four in the afternoon,” he said. Each day began with a group discussion led by Sneed, where MUS faculty acted as students, preparing readings, annotating texts, and engaging in seminars. “You’re basically learning how to do the Harkness method by being a student,” Chris Colbeck said. “And then at the end, one of our faculty would end up being the facilitator and Ralph would sort

of get outside the group and observe how it was all going.” Elizabeth Colbeck described the experience as “transformative for the department.” She emphasized the benefits of discussion-based classrooms, including “critical thinking skills, confidence in their own ideas, a collaborative mindset, responsibility to a group, active listening, and empathy.” “MUS Students will see a conscious shift towards discussion in their English classes this fall.” —Elizabeth Colbeck She added specifically that, with new recent additions to the English department, like Ginny McCarley and Shawn Swain, the trip also lent an eye to building a community. “We have some new people in the department,” Chris Colbeck said, “and it ended up really being what we hoped—transformative for the program.” Reflecting on the experience, Chris Colbeck said, “I can’t be more grateful for the Nail Award and the class of 2024, because without that sort of funding



Photo: Adams Feild '27

Adams Feild '27

Salamanca, Spain

IN HIS WORDS:

“I spent two weeks this summer staying with a host family in Salamanca, a small city in the rolling hills of Western Spain. I attended Spanish classes during the day and an activity in the afternoon, all of which were instructed in Spanish. On the weekends, I went on excursions to Segovia and Zamora, two towns in Spain that are rich with history. I had a great experience and sharpened my Spanish skills along the way.”

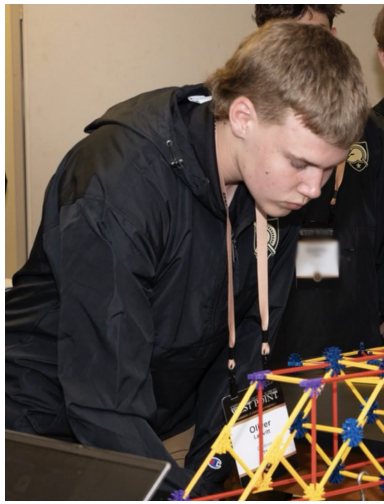


Photo: Oliver Leavitt '26

Oliver Leavitt '26

Naval Academy Summer Seminar (Annapolis, Md.)

Military Academy at West Point Summer Leadership Experience (West Point, N.Y.)

Air Force Academy Summer Seminar (Colorado Springs, Colo.)

IN HIS WORDS:

“Attending these Seminars exposed me to creating connections that I still find important even after attending the Seminars and furthered my desire to pursue military service.”



Photo: Ryan Sellers

Ryan Sellers

American Classical League Institute (Loyola University, Chicago)

IN HIS WORDS:

“This summer, I’ve been doing a lot of work in preparation for the revised Advanced Placement Latin curriculum. As part of this preparation, I attended some training sessions at the American Classical League Institute, which was held this year at Loyola University in Chicago. At this same conference, I also delivered a presentation entitled ‘Show Me the Money: Pliny, Trajan, and the Olympic Games.’”

for professional development, you just can’t do things like that.” He also credited his wife, Elizabeth Colbeck, for handling logistics. “She did all the travel arrangements, all of the hotels, all of the everything,” he said. “It was an immense amount of work,

and that’s not my forte.” Back in his office, Chris Colbeck leaned back in his chair, one leg casually crossed the other, stacks of papers around him. Reflecting on Harkness, he said, “When it goes well, I don’t know if there’s a better approach.”

McCarley Assumes Role as Adviser

Wilson Pace
EDITOR

With the summer now behind us, a fresh new school year lies ahead. Nonetheless, the 2025 school year brings with it much more than a new set of classes and an added row to the transcript.

Within this newspaper, the long-held seat of faculty adviser has experienced its first transition of power in decades. Following the retirement of English teacher Norman S. Thompson, Ginny McCarley will take the reins of our school's most established outlet for student journalism, The Owl's Hoot. McCarley, an Upper School English teacher and a longtime journalist herself, brings with her a

wide variety of skills that will invariably help The Hoot usher in a new era of excellence.

McCarley, who holds a BA in English literature from the University of Alabama ("Roll Tide!!!" she commented) and an MA in literature from the University of Mississippi, came to MUS during the 2024 school year, teaching several sections of English to our freshman class.

Despite her fairly recent arrival at MUS, McCarley's skill set in the field of journalism has been in the making for several years. During her high school years, McCarley first entered the world of journalism through her school's newspaper. After attending Alabama, McCarley worked at the Over the Mountain Journal and the Shelby County Reporter, covering stories as

unorthodox as a record-setting 10-foot tomato plant and as serious as one individual's recovery from a violent crime.

While McCarley's time in journalism was certainly well-spent, her desire for teaching led her back to graduate school. During her time in Oxford, Miss., however, McCarley continued to pursue journalistic projects on occasion, most notably through her work with The Washington Post in covering a tornado which hit the town of Rolling Fork, Miss. in the spring of 2023.

In her second year at MUS, McCarley now stands at the start of yet another chapter in her passion for writing. As the new adviser for The Owl's Hoot, McCarley will serve in a variety of capacities to facilitate the maintenance



Mrs. Ginny McCarley. Photo: MUS Communications

and professionalism of our paper, along with reinforcing dialogue between the paper's student editors and the school administration.

As both a teacher and writer, McCarley believes "the power of stories" to be the source of passion in her professional ventures. Truly, the ability to recount events—whether

trivial or troubling—is one that has captivated both writer and reader alike in The Hoot for decades. In the efforts of The Owl's Hoot to truly represent the voices of our student body and to accurately document ongoing campus events, this passion aligns with the very founding principles of our paper.

By bringing her unique journalistic experience to the table and holding the power of the pen in great regard, it is safe to assume that McCarley's tenure as faculty adviser for MUS's newspaper will be one defined by deeper student involvement, improved faculty-student collaboration, and a paper which ultimately achieves its mission to a higher degree than ever before.

Opinion: Mississippi's TANF Abomination Handicaps Welfare

George Willmott
CO-EDITOR

I spent the 2025 spring semester at a program in Washington, D.C., the School for Ethics and Global Leadership (SEGL). Each member of my 24-person SEGL cohort did a social venture project (SVP). Each of us chose an issue in a community we are a part of (or at least near geographically) and researched possible solutions to the problem. I chose the state of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Mississippi for my SVP, and today I want to share with you all what I learned and what I believe needs to be done.

TANF is a welfare program that gives cash to poor families with children. It began in the 1930s as Aid for Families with Dependent Children, but it was overhauled as part of the sweeping welfare reform during the Clinton administration. The key change was that TANF consists of block grants to each state to run its own version of the program. Today, its goals are multi-

faceted: to help poor children, to push people away from welfare dependency, and to strengthen the nuclear family.

Mississippi, entrusted with a block grant of money to help poor families and move them towards self-sufficiency, has taken advantage of lax federal oversight and a conservative voting population to run TANF into the ground. Starting with the rampant fraud and abuse of funds that occurred for years, millions of dollars were given to subgrantees that did not keep track of the money, with some funds even being directed to the construction of a new volleyball facility for the University of Southern Mississippi. For years, TANF was a cesspool of corruption and greed.

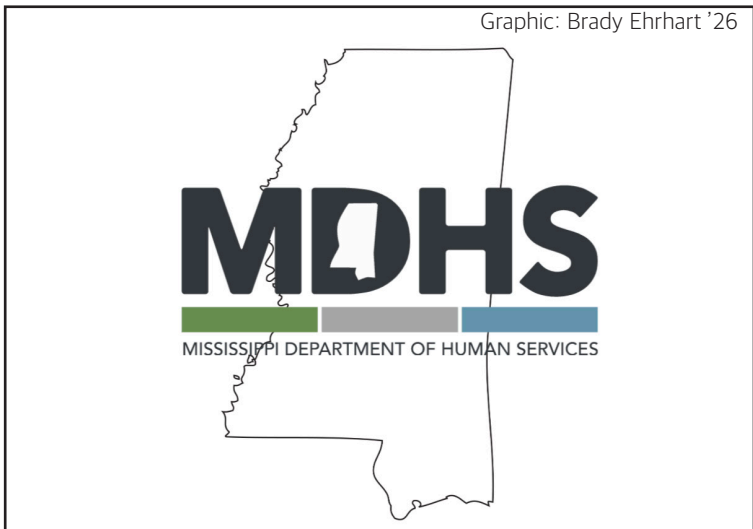
In recent years, much of the blatant corruption in the program has been eliminated. Unfortunately, this exposed a fact that is arguably even worse than fraud: TANF in Mississippi serves practically no one. In a state where nearly a fifth of the population lives below the poverty line, on average, only 307 adults received monthly checks in 2023. According

to Pulitzer Prize-winning Mississippi Today reporter Anna Wolfe, "Only about 5% of families experiencing poverty in Mississippi receive cash assistance compared to almost 40% of those families in 1996 at the start of the program."

Why does a state with so many poor families have so few people on the rolls of a program designed for poor families? The answer is a collection of utterly terrible public policy choices by the state of Mississippi.

Perhaps the worst piece of legislation Mississippi has passed in the 21st century was the HOPE Act. This law created exactly what one would imagine small government conservatives would hate: excessive paperwork and bureaucracy. It made applying for TANF assistance incredibly difficult. I try not to assume malice when assessing policy problems, but I have a really hard time believing the people who passed this bill didn't know the consequences would be almost no one receiving TANF benefits.

The coup de grâce of all this is that the monthly TANF benefit isn't very large anyway



Graphic: Brady Ehrhart '26

The Mississippi Department of Human Services administers TANF in the state.

(the maximum is \$260 for a three-person family), all while Mississippi has \$145 million in reserve TANF funds. The cherry on top? The Mississippi Department of Human Services (whose director has asked for the HOPE Act to be repealed, to no avail), which administers TANF in Mississippi, did not even have a TANF expert on staff as of October 2024.

The fixes for these problems are somewhat obvious; the two basic things that must happen are repealing the HOPE Act and increasing the amount of the monthly check

(no, that will not create any kind of budget deficit for the state because of the massive amount of reserve TANF funds they have accumulated).

I sympathize with those who decry welfare programs on philosophical grounds. I would love if everyone in the Mississippi was self-sufficient right now. However, they are not, and the state has adopted a laissez-faire attitude of "let them eat cake" for a long time with no success. It's time to give poor families some assistance and make TANF in Mississippi work for the people.

Ehrhart Receives Thompson Fellowship



Brady Ehrhart '26 stands in front of The New York Times headquarters. Photo: Brady Ehrhart

Brady Ehrhart
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

"By the end of the year, we're going to be a whole new staff with a whole new culture and a revamped paper," was what I typed to my staff from my single on the seventh floor of the green-roofed Wallach Hall. Seated at the wooden desk, a glance to my right would reveal the dimly lit South Fields of Columbia University, my home for a week this June.

As editor-in-chief of The Owl's Hoot, I was given a unique opportunity to be the recipient of an endowed trip to travel to New York City and study editorial leadership at the Columbia Scholastic Press Association (CPSA) Summer Journalism Workshop.

Founded in 2008 by former editors and staff members, the Norman S. Thompson Journalism Fellowship Endowment covers full tuition and travel expenses for The Owl's Hoot editor to attend the workshop annually.

With students representing a variety of U.S. states, Korea, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and India, this program placed me among some of the brightest minds in high school journalism. Within the week, I and my peers were treated to classroom sessions detailing editorial processes and newspaper design, information sessions with students at Harvard and Case Western Reserve University, a tour of The New York Times headquarters, and the opportunity to give a press conference to Broadway actors and actresses in a talkback

after a showing of "Hell's Kitchen." This experience with CSPA was an action-packed week full of formative discussions and instruction from nationally recognized journalism teachers; in fact, the firehose of information didn't cease until I was on the plane heading home at the conclusion of the week.

In speaking about this fellowship, Thompson gave his utmost approval and support of continuing such summer programs to further journalism at MUS. "The knowledge gleaned by participants in the Fellowship seminars results in tangible improvements in The Owl's Hoot and consequently in Memphis University School."

MUS Breaks Ground on Campus Upgrades

Ike Emmert
EDITOR

This summer marks the start of the Bold Vision Bright Future, a \$200 million capital and endowment campaign set to reshape our campus. With new buildings, modernized learning spaces and a major boost to the endowment, the campaign focuses on two goals: build a bright future and sustain the mission.

Phase 1 went underway with the demolition of Hyde Library making way for a new arts and sciences building featuring an 820-seat Hyde Chapel. Also included in this phase are a new admissions office and Park Avenue entrance with a guard house. Future phases will introduce a library, new

Lower School, upgraded athletic facilities, an indoor turf field and a baseball field house.

See our coverage: "Hyde Library Final Checkout Concludes a Legacy" (Page 1).

Many school leaders see these upgrades as long overdue. Even without dedicated arts facilities in the past, students and faculty have achieved major milestones. From school concerts and albums to Scholastic and BRACE Art Awards, the arts department has established itself as one of the most notable up-and-coming programs in the Memphis area. The new spaces are expected to energize the campus community and better reflect the school's academic and artistic priorities, allowing MUS students to take full advantage of their

opportunities. Faculty also hope current students will have a voice in shaping the experience, according to Mr. Zach Hansen, Head of Upper School.

At the same time, the transformation goes beyond physicality. Changes to curriculum, programs, and classes are in discussion—work that may have an even greater impact than construction. Mr. Zach Hansen emphasized that the core values of MUS will be unchanged, but the ways in which the staff deliver these values will adapt over time.

According to the Bold Vision Bright Future webpage, MUS has also secured \$50 million in endowment commitments, bringing the total to over \$100 million. This will make MUS one of the most financially stable independent

schools in the region.

The endowment supports key areas like need-based financial aid, faculty recruitment

“Endowment is an engine for creativity and growth, not just a financial backstop. It gives us freedom to take on challenges”

—Headmaster Pete Sanders

and innovation in academics, and student life. MUS made the conscious decision to begin the campaign by initially focusing on endowment rather than buildings, reflecting MUS's dedication to long-term stability. Headmaster Pete Sanders believes that,

“endowment is an engine for creativity and growth, not just a financial backstop. It gives us freedom to take on challenges.”

The Bold Vision Bright Future campaign is the centerpiece of Legacy Forward, the school's strategic plan launched in 2020 to guide MUS into the coming decades. By investing in modern facilities and expanding the endowment, the campaign aims to preserve what makes MUS distinctive while preparing students for the future.

“This institution and its alumni have had a profound influence on their communities,” Sanders said. “Now is the time to assure that the campus, its teachers, and its programs continue to serve as a beacon of excellence for future generations.”

Photo Gallery

June - July, 2025



Wreckage of the Hyde Library. Photo: Watts Liebenow '26



The new library front desk. Photo: Jackson Halpern '27



Down go the pillars. Photo: Jackson Halpern '27

Jackson Halpern
EDITOR

Watts Liebenow
PHOTOGRAPHER

See the fall of the Hyde Library, July construction on Hyde Chapel, and new library developments.

The Owl's Hoot Gets a Makeover; Relocates

The Owl's Hoot Editors

Jackson Halpern '27 Contributed the Interview

New campus developments are not the only things breaking ground this school year. Over the summer, staff members of The Owl's Hoot worked diligently to improve the paper for this school year. Whether by attending national conferences, holding summer workdays, moving offices, or facilitating a designated journalism training day, The Owl's Hoot is ready to run into this school year at full capacity.

Sharp eyes might have spotted that The Owl's Hoot now lives in a different hallway than it used to be. Located now in the 200s hallway, one can find the box of The Owl's Hoot at room 205B to submit any letters to the editor, applications,

corrections, or suggestions.

Design-wise, The Owl's Hoot has embraced a more modernized design, blending some of the classic elements of last year's paper with improved formatting. Among these changes include a new masthead, decks (the subheadings under headlines), a new colophon (the credits: See Page 3), new font choices, and updated graphic design. The Owl's Hoot is prepared to use this more professional format to open the doors for more complex articles and fresh graphics to allow readers to get the most out of their reading.

Logistically, The Owl's Hoot is entering one of the ripest years for creativity we have been exposed to for nearly a decade. Having facilitated the joining of three national



Before and after: The Masthead. Photo: Brady Ehrhart '26

organizations and one state-wide organization, The Owl's Hoot invites writers to join and use their talents to allow their names to be seen. Furthermore, new staff writer, photographer, and graphic designer positions are now available to interested

students. The addition of Ginny McCarley (See: "McCarley Assumes Role as Adviser" Page 6) as faculty adviser will bolster this transition.

Editor-in-Chief Brady Ehrhart '26 spoke highly of the paper when asked about these

changes and the next steps The Hoot will take. "I am incredibly excited to see where The Owl's Hoot can go this year. I have seen the hard work my staff has put into this paper just over the summer, and I can't wait to see where that drive will take us. This year will be a huge opportunity for The Owl's Hoot, especially given our support from our new adviser and the administration."

“This year will be a huge opportunity for The Owl's Hoot, especially given our support from our new adviser and the administration.”

—Editor-in-Chief
Brady Ehrhart '26

What is: Construction?

The Construction section is a specialty section designed to provide our readers with unique student perspectives on the new changes on campus. Whether it be the demolition of Hyde Library, student opinions on new ideas, or featured photographs of the new campus, the Construction section will cover it.



Former Adviser Norman S. Thompson's empty office. Photo: Wills Frazer '25

GAMES

Crossword

Advay Iyer & Coleman Russell

EDITORS

1	2	3	4	5	6
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					

ACROSS

1 To eat or drink quickly
7 Kidney-shaped nut
8 What one has to do when one screws up the flooring the first time
9 Condition defined by lower-than-normal red blood cell count
10 What one must do to a misbehaving child
11 For once in your life, come to your ____

DOWN

1 Food best left for the family pet
2 Watch me whelp, now watch me ____
3 Toward the rear of a vessel
4 Now obsolete spelling of the literary device that causes something to be catchy
5 What man's second best friend is usually called scientifically
6 To cool off something by evaporating water of its surface

MadLib: “The Fall of The Hyde”

From the journal of _____,

Brady Ehrhart
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

MUS Teacher

It was a _____ and _____ June day, and I was _____ my pet

Adjective Adjective Verb ending in -ing

_____. Due to my _____ curiosity, my feet _____ me to just

Noun Adjective Past-Tense Verb

outside of the Hyde Library. To my _____, I saw a/an _____

Noun Adjective

_____, tearing down the walls with his/her _____. Within two

Other MUS Teacher Gardening tool

seconds, I _____ away from the scene of the destruction, all the while

Past-Tense Verb

screaming in _____. I hope tomorrow doesn't bring the same horrors.

Noun

Best, _____

Original Teacher

“Retaliation to Previous Cartoons”

Jackson Halpern
RESIDENT CARTOONIST

Wordle

Coleman Russell

EDITOR

Connections

Coleman Russell

EDITOR

Back-to-School Search

Jackson Halpern

EDITOR

H	S	R	B	M	V	E	J	M	A	T	H	P	A	C	K	E	T	S	O
Z	U	D	S	I	R	G	S	G	N	I	B	U	T	Q	Q	H	F	V	
B	A	J	M	P	S	M	E	M	Q	J	A	J	B	D	K	W	G	A	V
Y	K	Q	D	P	M	X	Y	G	H	Q	N	X	W	O	S	E	L	E	G
X	A	V	S	T	V	A	O	H	F	U	O	C	U	O	U	O	M	C	N
M	O	U	U	V	H	H	C	I	E	I	X	T	Z	M	D	D	F	I	I
K	Y	A	M	C	L	O	S	R	R	D	K	N	U	S	O	V	I	T	D
U	E	J	M	A	Z	H	M	G	E	B	B	S	D	C	T	H	S	C	R
B	L	L	E	M	I	H	N	P	S	M	T	H	T	R	N	R	N	A	A
U	R	I	R	N	R	I	Q	A	S	W	M	P	B	O	W	P	R	R	U
B	A	B	G	Q	K	K	U	R	U	O	D	U	T	L	A	E	U	P	G
A	C	R	C	I	P	T	Y	H	S	Y	N	Z	S	L	D	P	B	A	E
L	C	A	H	S	U	M	M	E	R	R	E	A	D	I	N	G	N	C	F
Y	M	R	L	Q	U	K	W	U	S	M	D	Z	D	N	B	Y	U	E	I
S	R	Y	D	T	K	Y	F	H	H	B	K	Y	J	G	D	V	S	D	L
B	G	J	U	O	M	H	Q	R	L	T	G	O	Q	O	Z	M	D	X	B
C	O	L	L	E	G	E	S	S	A	Y	S	T	P	H	G	U	B	Z	
V	A	T	G	E	S	Q	S	I	B	P	K	J	E	K	Y	U	T	L	Z
R	H	G	N	I	H	H	Q	S	I	K	A	H	K	Z	I	E	W	G	B
I	G	Z	Y	M	T	V	X	V	R	E	E	L	S	S	Y	T	G	P	U

1. Summer

2. Thompson

3. Library

4. Doomscrolling

5. Reels

6. McCarley

7. TikTok

8. Dawn to Dusk

9. Fishing

10. Tubing

11. Math Packets

12. Summer Reading

13. Sunburns

14. DECA Practice

15. Lifeguarding

16. College Essays

17. Labubu

18. Khakis

19. Hiking

20. Summer Camps