



Memphis University School Names Hart Roper as Headmaster

MAY 8, 2026

DEAR MUS COMMUNITY,

ON BEHALF of the Headmaster Search Committee and the Board of Trustees, we are delighted to announce the appointment of Hartwell Heath Roper, Jr. (Hart) as the next headmaster of Memphis University School, beginning in July 2027. The Search Committee enthusiastically recommended Mr. Roper's appointment to the board, which unanimously accepted the recommendation.

MUS selected Carney Sandoe & Associates to conduct a nationwide search that drew inquiries from nearly 200 candidates. Throughout the deliberate and thorough process, Mr. Roper distinguished himself as a principled and deeply relational leader whose steady judgment, moral conviction, and devotion to all-boys education will guide MUS into a promising future. He is committed to academic excellence and the values and traditions that shape the culture and character of our school.

“Throughout my career, I have become convinced of the distinctive and essential role schools for boys play in the flourishing and formation of young men, and MUS clearly lives out that mission. The school holds tightly to the timeless values embodied in *Veritas Honorque*, shaping young men of character, conviction, and purpose whose influence extends beyond the campus and into the broader community. Colleen, our children, and I are grateful for this opportunity and look forward to getting to know the MUS community as we transition to Memphis.”

Mr. Roper expressed his appreciation in accepting the baton from Headmaster Pete Sanders: “I am extremely honored and humbled to join the Memphis University School community as its next headmaster following Pete Sanders, a person I admire and respect. During Pete's tenure, the school has accomplished so much, and I feel fortunate to help steward his and the board's legacy into this next chapter.”

We extend our utmost gratitude to each member of the Search Committee for their numerous hours of service and thoughtful deliberations. We are also grateful to many in the MUS community who participated in our survey and offered feedback and recommendations throughout the process, making this a community-wide endeavor.

Please join the Board of Trustees and Headmaster Search Committee in welcoming Hart, Colleen, and their children to the MUS family.

Veritas Honorque,

MARGARET C. MCLEAN
Headmaster Search Committee Chair

WILLIAM V. THOMPSON III '95
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ABOUT MR. ROPER

A teacher, coach, and administrator with 26 years of experience in independent schools, Hart Roper comes to us from Oak Hill School in Nashville, where he has served as head of school for the pre-K through 6th grade institution since 2018. During his tenure enrollment has increased by 22%, and the annual fund has grown by 70%. In addition, the school launched a capital campaign that has secured more than \$14 million toward an \$18 million goal. He has led strategic and master planning efforts, including a community leadership initiative that connects students to the broader Nashville community.

Mr. Roper's managerial style is distinctly relational and grounded in trust. He prioritizes visibility, meeting regularly with faculty and engaging personally with families throughout the admissions process – a practice he views as foundational to building a strong and aligned community. He also has led significant initiatives to support faculty, including redesigning compensation and evaluation systems to strengthen recruitment, development, and retention.

His broad experience has equipped him to understand the diverse facets of school life. He served as director of Admissions and Financial Aid at St. Albans School in Washington, D.C., where he oversaw a highly selective admissions process and helped lead strategic planning. During his years at St. Albans (2000-2015), he also spent time as head varsity soccer coach, lower school dean of students, and history teacher.

At Montgomery Bell Academy in Nashville (2015-2018), where he was director of Major Gifts and Special Projects and then director of Strategic Initiatives and associate director of Development, he was involved in a \$150 million capital campaign.

He earned a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership at Columbia University's Klingenstein Center and a Bachelor of Arts in History at Davidson College where he played varsity soccer and served as captain of the squad for two years.

He has been married to Colleen Berry Roper for 22 years, and they have four children: Mary, a junior in college; Sarah, a high school senior; and soon-to-be-Owls Daniel and Thomas, now in seventh and ninth grades.

Those who know Hart Roper provided character insight.

“Ethical, moral thinker, focused on doing the right thing for students no matter the difficulty or consequences of the decision. Hart’s moral compass is the strongest of anyone I have ever worked with.”

“Compassionate, disciplined, cares about people, thoughtful, calm, dedicated to family.”

“He’s a reflector and a wonderful strategic thinker. He’s both kind and direct in communication.”

“Everybody looks up to him. People seek Hart out. He’s intentional about being present in the everyday routines of the school.”

“He is a beautiful writer and an effective oral communicator. He listens well and cuts right to the point.”

“He makes sure faculty feel their needs are being heard and addressed.”

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OUR MISSION

Memphis University School is a college-preparatory school dedicated to academic excellence, cultivation of service and leadership, and the development of well-rounded young men of strong moral character, consistent with the school's Christian tradition.

