



SPRING 2009

Clieftain

Life's Hurdles
and the people who overcome them

McMURRY
UNIVERSITY

THE MCMURRY UNIVERSITY
MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI & FRIENDS

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear McMurry Alumni and Friends:

As I introduce this issue of the *Chieftain*, I am reminded of a verse from the book of Isaiah:

“Though the Lord gave you adversity for food and affliction for drink, he will still be with you to teach you. You will see your teacher with your own eyes, and you will hear a voice say, “This is the way; turn around and walk here.” Isaiah 30:20-21 (NLV)

No person or institution willingly seeks out adversity, but most would agree that our reaction to adversity helps define our character and strengthen our resolve to succeed. And as the verse from Isaiah promises, we will not be alone.

In this *Chieftain*, you will meet three individuals—a McMurry student, a professor and a longtime coach—who have faced adversity and come out stronger for the experience. Whether their battle was against a physical illness or a life changing problem, these individuals persevered through the storm and emerged stronger. We also will be introduced to Dr. David Blackburn, who helped many of his students overcome difficulties while here and prepared them to succeed after moving on from McMurry. I think you will be inspired by their stories.

The current world economic situation has caused many individuals and institutions to deal with financial adversity and McMurry University is not exempt from these trying economic times.

This is not the first time McMurry has faced difficult trials. *Pride of Our Western Prairies*, the book outlining McMurry’s past, relates a number of instances when McMurry faced difficult times—from the sudden

passing of our first president Dr. J.W. Hunt, to surviving the Depression years and the loss of students during World War II. But with the help of the McMurry family, the University has always come through the difficulties stronger than before. McMurry will face and conquer these

trying economic times as well and we will come out on the other side stronger and more prepared for the future.


Despite the current economic turmoil, McMurry University must continue to fulfill its role among today’s colleges and universities by offering a unique experience to its students. We accept our challenge to enable McMurry to remain skilled in its mission of educating students and sincere in its passion for nurturing and shaping students.

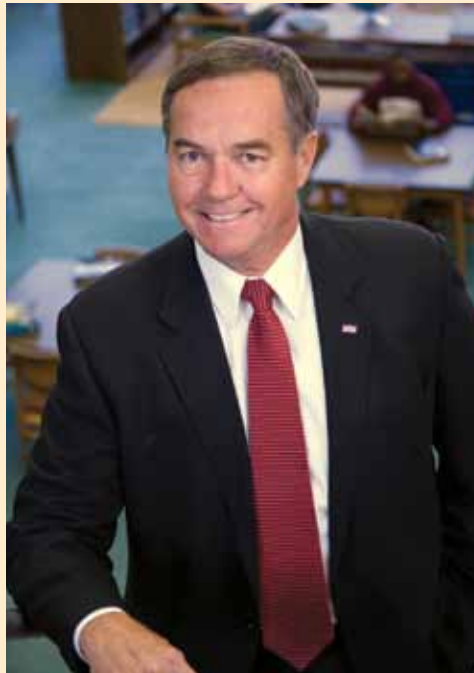
Our efforts today will prepare us as an institution for the 21st century. We will be offering more distinctive educational experiences that will prepare our students for a challenging world. They will have the skills they

need to gain and apply new knowledge throughout their lifetimes. The progress that we are making today will have an impact that will span the entire century.

I will close with a quote from Dr. Barbara de Angelis: *We don’t develop courage by being happy every day. We develop it by surviving difficult times and challenging adversity.*

With Warm Regards,


John H. Russell, President





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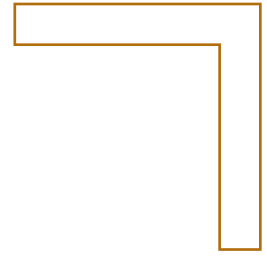


The Measure of GREATNESS

Inborn in every member of the human species is a vision of greatness, a desire to be the best, and a dream of winning the gold medal. Do we all achieve greatness? Of course not—if we measure according to society’s standards. But true greatness is not only associated with individuals who score the winning goal or who cross the finish line first. Greatness can also be identified with outstanding

displays of personal courage, self-sacrifice, team effort, and perseverance. In other words, in the race called life, we measure greatness by how the race is run as much as the final outcome.

In the world of athletic competition, there exist countless examples of a “race well run.” Kerri Strug, gymnast for Team USA in the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, suffered a leg injury during the vault competition and



“Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed...” BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

was faced with a monumental decision. She could sit out her final jump and avoid worse injury that might eliminate her from individual competition the following week. Or, she could put pain aside as well as her personal dreams, and sacrifice all for her team. With flawless skill and unwavering concentration, she gave the performance of her life. Her near-perfect effort gave Team USA the gold medal in the women’s team gymnastics competition—for the first time in Olympic history. Sacrificing personal goals for one’s team is the stuff that heroes are made of, and in the pages ahead, you will read of other individuals whose stories epitomize the same courage and personal sacrifice that leads to great accomplishment.

Another sports icon, Kurt Warner, was considered a “nobody” before his 1999 season when he eventually led the St. Louis Rams to a Super Bowl championship. He had played only one year of college football at a small college, but he dreamed of playing in the NFL. He never gave up his dream, even while living with his parents and working in a hometown grocery store. His stint in arena football and then European football only served to deepen his resolve. The Rams organization decided to take a chance on this unknown, and his chance at stardom was made possible after the starting quarterback suffered an injury. In the end, 1999 was a year in which Warner generated the second-finest statistical season by a quarterback in NFL history. His perseverance and belief in himself is a trait shared by many achievers, including those showcased in this issue—individuals who refused to give up in the

face of adversity and whose strength of will and purpose propelled them onward and upward.

In the annals of track and field, Derek Redmond will always be remembered for his courageous performance in the 1996 Olympics in Barcelona, Spain. In the middle of his 400 meter semi-final race, he fell to the ground in a crumpled heap. With excruciating pain caused by a torn hamstring, he refused to quit. He rose and began to hobble agonizingly to the finish line. Within moments, Redmond’s father jumped out of the stands and made his way to the track. He draped his arm around his son and walked with him to the finish line. Through courage, and a remarkable display of teamwork, he inspired millions. As you read the stories in this publication, you will sense the same courage and applaud the selflessness and teamwork of a campus community who has rallied around their own.

Whether in athletic competition, artistic expression, scientific discovery, or medical research, we applaud the “common runner” for grand achievement. But what inspires us and empowers us is their “uncommon race.” Booker T. Washington once said, “Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed...” As you read the pages of this *Chieftain*, our desire is that you will be inspired to greater heights and will be reminded that life’s hurdles can either cause us to fall, or they can most certainly provide us with the opportunity to soar. ■

John Austin Tatum '09

IT'S OFTEN BEEN SAID that the measure of a man is best revealed in how he handles adversity. So often, anger and self-pity can cause one to remain imprisoned by his circumstances. We are both amazed and inspired when we see someone whose behavior, attitude and actions demonstrate the best of the human spirit—a real-life hero who shares his story of medical devastation and recovery with a thankful heart and a positive attitude.

John Austin Tatum was a 19-year-old college student living in Midland, Texas. During his sophomore year, he was playing baseball with friends and his vision began to blur. The symptoms persisted, and he was quickly referred to an ophthalmologist and then to a neurologist. The neurologist found pressure behind his eyes, a condition known as hydrocephalus. A CT Scan was performed and John was diagnosed with a brain tumor. He was flown to Parkland Hospital in Dallas. While waiting in the Intensive Care Unit, he developed

an aneurysm. Surgery was performed to remove the aneurysm and the fluid behind his eyes. Three months after the first surgery, on Christmas Day in 2005, doctors operated again to remove the tumor.

After a successful surgery, he returned to Abilene for a couple of months and went to the West Texas Rehabilitation Center (WTRC) daily to treat for the paralysis on his left side caused by the aneurysm. In addition, his rehab helped to build his strength so he would be able to endure the six weeks of radiation. He lived in an apartment in Dallas and made the daily trek to UT Southwestern for his treatments. His parents, Deonna Galbraith and Larry Tatum, alternated travel from Abilene to Dallas to be with him during those treatments and in the days following when he became extremely ill from the radiation.

Through the emotional turmoil that was his constant companion during those days, John faced his fears openly and honestly. "I wasn't really afraid of the tumor. The paralysis scared me more because I just wanted to be able to live a normal life." Yet even in the midst of his fear and uncertainty, one emotion he didn't experience was anger—"In my 'alone' time before my surgery, I got to know God. I guess you really don't know God is all you need until God is all you've got. I made a decision not to be bitter and to do everything I could to get past my situation." With God's help and his family's support, he began to actively affect his own recovery.

John attacked his rehabilitation process with gusto. While in Dallas for his radiation treatments, he used a pedometer and set walking goals for himself. Initially he was only able to walk a few steps with the assistance of his physical therapists. He worked hard and built up to 2500 steps and then to 5000 steps. Upon returning to Abilene, he lived with his mom and step-father and went

"I can do anything that anyone else can, but I might have to go about it differently."



for daily therapy at the WTRC. He was slowly regaining a semblance of a normal life. However, two years after his diagnosis, John's college career was uncertain. After an extensive testing process, the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) agreed to provide financial assistance for him to return to the classroom. He registered for 12 semester hours at McMurry in the fall of 2007.

Under the most normal of circumstances, the rigors of college academics can be overwhelming for many young scholars. The prospect becomes even more daunting when an individual faces physical and mental challenges. Though doctors pronounced him cancer-free, John faced daily reminders of the disease that he so bravely battled. Once a southpaw, he was forced to learn to write with his right hand because of the slight paralysis that still exists on his left side. The aneurysm led to attacks of anxiety. Similar to post-traumatic stress disorder, which is generally experienced by soldiers returning from battle, his anxiety was often triggered by sudden and unexpected loud noises. A further complication for him was the dizziness that accompanied his anxiety, which had to be treated with medication. Perhaps the greatest concern to John as a college student was that math computation, once a strong suit, had become an extremely difficult cognitive process.

Never one to use his challenges as a crutch, John was determined to excel. He vowed "not to make excuses or have regrets. I needed to know that I gave 100 percent." He incorporated alternate study methods and utilized well-developed people skills and a strong work ethic to his advantage. According to John, "I can do anything that anyone else can, but I might have to go about it differently." He visited with every teacher before the first day of class to assure them that he would make no excuses and would do whatever was necessary for success. He quickly made friends with the staff of the on-campus Academic Enrichment Center (AEC) where he became a daily fixture. Academic enrichment counselors in the AEC, impressed and inspired by his drive to succeed, became his mentors. Unable to write quickly enough for traditional classroom note-taking, he purchased a voice recorder to capture important lecture topics.

Because math classes posed a particularly difficult challenge for him, he wasted no time in establishing a

relationship with Amy Riordan, Developmental Math Instructor, who patiently and thoroughly guided him through the myriad of equations and formulas. John was quick to lavish appreciation by stating, "Mrs. Riordan would stay after work to help me. She encouraged me and told me I could do it. She has a heart of gold." Several other faculty members were cited for their influence, including Dr. K.O. Long, Dean of the School of Business and Ann Spence, Assistant Professor of Business. In turn, Mrs. Spence voiced praise for John's work ethic—"He is unbelievably dedicated to reaching his goals. John never asks for special consideration and is determined to learn material and not just receive a grade. He is a dream student and a true inspiration."

While we are impressed by any story of a "David" who bravely faces his "Goliath," we glean hope in our own circumstances when the giant is faced and overcome. John faced his Goliath, in the form of a hideous disease and its after-effects, and he is emerging from battle victorious. Staying true to his commitment to being the best he can be, his grades are exemplary and he tutors other students in the AEC. Scheduled to graduate with honors in December 2009, John hopes to attend Dosimetry School, a one-year program resulting in a specialization in the application of radiation to cancer patients. He believes his experience as a cancer survivor will help him to relate and respond more effectively to patients going through similar circumstances. Prior to his life-changing experience, John admitted to always looking down the road, but not really enjoying the journey—

“Nothing was ever enough, and I didn’t appreciate what I had. Now I want to experience life to the fullest.”

Does John have any advice for others facing difficult circumstances? You bet he does: "Give 100 percent regardless of what you've been through, and make a decision to be positive." That's good advice for anyone at any age from a giant slayer, who is wise beyond his years. We salute you, John, and we're proud to have been a small chapter in your story. ■

Dr. José Gómez

LIFE CAN CERTAINLY TAKE unexpected turns. Dr. Jose Gómez knows all too well how quickly a person's apparent life plans can be turned upside-down. He also knows how persistence and hard work can reverse those downturns.

Dr. Gómez, a retired Lieutenant Colonel, served as a Group Commander in the Ecuadorian Air Force. He was at the apex of his career when he and his wife, Itzel, discovered that their youngest child, José, had speech difficulties which would negatively affect his school performance if left untreated. Having served as an exchange officer at Dyess Air Force Base in 1994 for two years, Dr. Gómez had some experience with Abilene and West Texas. His wife also was familiar with Abilene, and she traveled back to the city in 1998 to visit with their children's godparents. It was during her trip to Abilene that she took her son to the doctor and found out he would need speech therapy. Even though there were resources available in Ecuador, they would not be adequate to meet their son's needs.

"It was terrible news to us," said Dr. Gómez. "We had planned to stay in Ecuador after I retired. Although we were doing fine in Ecuador, we had to make a decision. We didn't have to think too much. We decided to do what was best for our son. We knew that moving to this location was the best decision for us." The Gómez family inquired and found out that Abilene Independent School District offered speech therapy services that would help their son succeed. "In Ecuador, my son could only receive the kind of help he needed about 30 minutes once a week in private sessions," said Dr. Gómez. "Here, he would receive help through the school all the time."

After meeting the requirements for retirement from his military career in 2001, Dr. Gómez and his family made the journey to Abilene, Texas. "Our son was five years old at that time. We got to the (Abilene) airport with just some money and some clothes," said Dr. Gómez. "We started looking for work in order to live. It was hard for us to adjust after the kind of lifestyle we were used to in Ecuador. There were no friends, no job, nothing. We had to start over." Dr. Gómez took jobs ranging from working at McDonald's to Comp USA, a local computer

store. Then he obtained employment as a clerk and later as a store manager at a local convenience store. "Those kind of jobs were something that I never thought I would do – from Group Commander to store manager," said Dr. Gómez. "It was really a huge change in our lives."

Then providence stepped in and lent a hand. Dr. Gómez's wife, anxious to improve her language skills, saw an advertisement in 2003 for English language help, which initially brought her into contact with Dr. Bill Short of the McMurry Languages Department, who connected her with Mary Foster, a student from Abilene Christian University. The two met at the Abilene Public Library to work on English language skills. Mary's boyfriend, Derek Riedel, was an assistant coach for the McMurry football team. Derek began working with Dr. Gómez in improving his English language skills and perceiving Dr. Gómez's potential benefit to the University, he introduced him to Dr. Short.

Dr. Short realized that Dr. Gómez had the qualifications to teach college level courses, having taught in the military academy in Ecuador and having experience both in cross-cultural learning and teaching. Dr. Short invited Gómez to participate in several classes and, after consulting with Dr. Beverly Lenoir, decided to give him the opportunity to serve as a visiting professor during Dr. Short's sabbatical. "For somebody to give me the opportunity to demonstrate what I am able to do was a wonderful thing," said Dr. Gómez. "In our society it is important not only to have the qualifications, but also to



Dr. José Gómez and his family pose for a photo with his command, Materials Group 112, on the occasion of his promotion to Lieutenant Colonel in the Ecuador Air Force.

know the right people. A door had opened for me.”

In 2005, Dr. Perry Kay Haley-Brown, Dean of the School of Education, helped Dr. Gómez qualify for his certification to teach in public schools and in 2006, he joined the faculty at Cisco High School. He taught there until 2007 when his friend, Danny Brunette-Lopez, left his teaching position at McMurry. “They had an opening here and fortunately they knew me. They called and gave me the opportunity to be a part of

this (McMurry) family.”

As for his son, José, Dr. Gómez said the effort and sacrifice his family made has paid off. “He is a fine student and is doing very well with the speech therapy.” And to those who face challenges in life, Dr. Gómez would offer the following advice: “Focus on the goals. Don’t look behind. Think positively. Nothing is forever. Your opportunity will come, so don’t let it pass you by.” ■

“Nothing is forever. Your opportunity will come, so don’t let it pass you by.”



Jimmy Allen '75

IN 1953, JIMMY ALLEN, a small boy with big challenges, forged a relationship with McMurry football that would set the course for his life. Forty-seven years later, that relationship, combined with his strong faith and a dogged determination to succeed, would be called on to save his life.

Jimmy suffered a brain injury during birth and has been challenged with overcoming Cerebral Palsy since that time. He has never walked and has very limited use of his arms and hands. Jimmy, now 66, remembers as a small child sitting in his yard a few blocks from the campus and looking toward the football field. “My thoughts and my vision focused on the same point—the rock fence that enclosed Indian Stadium. I had a dream of someday entering McMurry.” He had no idea at that time what God had planned for him behind that rock wall.

When Jimmy was 11 years old he received physical therapy at the newly formed West Texas Rehabilitation Center. There he met several members of the McMurry football team. Among them were Joe Bill Fox '56, Billy Atkins '55 and Elroy Payne '56. They volunteered their time to help the physical therapists give exercises and administer physical therapy to the children. They chauffeured kids to and from treatment and even helped raise funds to provide wheelchairs and other items of equipment needed in their therapy. A strong bond developed between Jimmy and the McMurry players. He soon knew more statistics regarding the McMurry football team than most of the coaches did. Years later, that desire to know and analyze McMurry statistics would become his life's work.

It was at Cooper High School where he received his first opportunity to help coach football. He began as a “whistle blower.” He blew the whistle to start and stop workout drills. What began with the sound of the whistle on the Cooper football field grew and developed beyond graduation. After seven years of dedication to those young men, Jimmy was inducted into the Cooper Cougars Hall of Fame in 1994.

By the fall of 1970 Jimmy entered his first class at what was then McMurry College. At that time McMurry was not wheelchair accessible. Before he could get to the



elevator in the building where his class was held, he had to climb four steps. Each day he had to rely on others to lift him in his wheelchair over the stairs to get into the building. The first semester he took one class—college algebra; the second semester—trigonometry and English; and the third semester—he took a full load.

Jimmy brought carbon paper to different members of his class. They used it when they took their notes and shared the copies with him. Because he couldn't hold a pencil in his hand, he had to come up with another way to do his homework. He used an electric typewriter and a pencil clinched firmly between his teeth. He tediously located and typed each letter by mouth. “I used a lot of correction tape. The computer has made my typing much easier!” McMurry professors had to be creative in teaching gifted and challenged students like Jimmy. “Dr. Moore, my biology teacher...took me to his office, put the test in front of me, turned on a tape recorder and returned to the class. That was one heck of a surprise!”

It was fulfilling to have overcome the challenges of the stairs and the classroom, but

“A goal starts

since his earliest memories as a child, he felt his calling lay beyond the rock fence that surrounded Indian Stadium. So, in the spring of 1971, mustering all his courage, he pushed himself in his wheelchair across campus with his right foot to the field house to speak with head football coach, Buddy Fornes. Looking back at that moment Jimmy said, “It’s funny how moments of opportunity come racing across our lives as if wearing track shoes, and if we don’t recognize them or don’t have enough courage to reach out and seize them, they’ll be lost forever, and we wouldn’t ever know what we could have become or whose lives we could have influenced.”

When asked by Coach Fornes what he wanted to do, Jimmy answered, “I want to work with your wide receivers.” The rest is history. Jimmy began his 30-year coaching career as a McMurry Indian. “The equipment manager, Bob Patty, would set up my drills and throw to my receivers until the quarterbacks were finished with their drills; then one would be sent to me.” It was the hardest and most fulfilling work he had ever done. After practice he headed home in his wheelchair, using his right foot to push himself two blocks down the street to his house. At least once a week he made this journey in the dark. In 1972, the McMurry football team took up donations from the student body and bought him a three-wheeled electric cart. That cart gave him new independence—and speed. For the next 28 years that cart became his feet, and his right foot was given a rest.

When asked, “What does McMurry mean to you?” he answered without hesitation, “My life.” In 2000, Jimmy had a serious health crisis. His doctor told him he must find a way to exercise his legs to reduce swelling. His life was literally at stake. His thoughts went immediately to the pool at McMurry. His dad had taken him there for recreation years earlier, but his dad had since passed away. For the second time in his life, McMurry football players were about to play a major role in Jimmy’s future. For the next 4 years, McMurry created work-study positions for several football players to take Jimmy to the pool where



A young Jimmy Allen sits with Joe Bill Fox '56 and Billy Atkins '55

with a dream.”

he was able to workout. He was very weak at first but after a few months he increased in strength and returned to the picture of health. “If it hadn’t been for my competitive spirit—that was made stronger by McMurry football—and the young men who helped me, I don’t know if I would be here today.”

Though physically challenged, Jimmy’s spirit is well intact. Most people with his disability do not live beyond their early 40s. He attributes his longevity to his real hero, his mother. “I have been truly blessed by having my Mom, who always has seen that my needs have been met, while setting a great Christian example and giving me enough slack to try some things with humility. It made no difference to her if I was handicapped when it came to discipline. The respect and love that I grew to have for her came from that discipline.”

If you look in the foyer on the north end of Kimbrell Arena, you will find the McMurry University Athletic Hall of Honor. It pays tribute to great athletes who have crossed the thresholds of our University. It recognizes outstanding achievement on and off the field of play. Many of the players who helped Jimmy along the way are honored there. Hanging between Bernard “Boxie” Weems and Donnie Ray Cruse, you will find Hall of Honor inductee Jimmy Allen. For Jimmy it was an award that he began earning from his sand box at home as he dreamed of what was behind the rock fence that surrounded Indian Stadium. “A goal starts with a dream,” Jimmy said. “It will remain just that until a person has enough courage, self-confidence, desire, determination, and passion to start pursuing his or her dream. At that moment the dream turns into a goal—you make a ‘self-commitment’ and then the work begins.” When looking at the pictures of the inductees, they all stand the same height. You see no one’s disability. You don’t see what challenges they overcame to get on that wall. There is one represented there who wore out a lot of right shoes, and rumor has it that he was not a bad swimmer. He has overcome much and earned his place in McMurry’s history. ■

Dr. David Blackburn

AS STUDENTS PROGRESS through their college experience, many are faced with challenges and struggles. During these challenges they often come in contact with professors who offer them the encouragement and support they need to meet and exceed their goals. Not only are they encouragers, but these individuals invest in the lives of their students and challenge them to be successful. This is certainly the case for many alumni of McMurry who were in school in the 1970s and were influenced by Dr. David Blackburn. “David Blackburn



was the focal point for what became a very magical time for those of us lucky enough to be his students in the 70s at McMurry University,” states Patricia Guinn Rutland ex ’77. Dr. Blackburn, former professor

and Chair of Music and Fine Arts at McMurry, passed away September 28, 2008. After his passing, many former McMurry students have taken the time and opportunity to reflect on the profound influence that he had on their lives.

David Blackburn served as the Chair of Music and Fine Arts at McMurry from 1973 to 1978. During this short tenure, Dr. Blackburn’s influence extended outside the classroom. “Dr. B was more than a teacher to many of us. He was our inspiration, our mentor, and our friend,” says Steve Harter ’78, who currently serves as Minister of Music and Arts at First United Methodist Church of Colorado Springs, Colorado. Harter first came in contact with Dr. Blackburn during his senior year in high school in the fall of 1973. “I remember being impressed with his demeanor and with the ‘aura’ that seemed to surround him.” In his first year at McMurry, Dr. Blackburn revitalized the choral program and turned it into an

exciting and vibrant program. According to Harter, “During that year I became convinced that McMurry was the right place for me.”

Dr. Blackburn recognized that his students had a love for music, and regardless of musical ability, he always brought out the best in everybody. Derrell Patterson ’77 reiterated that point by recalling his own experience: “Dr. Blackburn knew that I loved music, but he recognized that I did not have good vocal technique.” Through his work with Dr. Blackburn and also his work with other music majors, Derrell’s technique and performance improved. Patterson continues, “Not only did he want to make us better vocalists, he wanted us to be successful. He was able to take a mediocre talent and make that person believe he could excel.” Steve Harter also recalls the strong encouragement that Dr. Blackburn provided to him. “Certainly he modeled musical excellence; however, he also taught me to be more self-confident and strong. After each voice lesson, I walked away feeling like I could do so much more than I ever thought possible.”

Not only did Dr. Blackburn challenge individuals to become better, he placed lofty expectations on his choir. However, according to Derrell Patterson, those expectations did not scare people off. “Those who sang under him were not discouraged by his huge expectations; rather, we wanted to perform our best.” Patricia Guinn Rutland reiterates that point by stating, “He brought us together, molded us into a fine choir and instilled the philosophy of ‘Just Do It’ long before anyone ever heard of Nike.” Randy Stevens ’78 shares the same feeling regarding the influence that Dr. Blackburn had on him: “His influence on my life led me to graduate school at Indiana University and later to Texas Tech’s doctoral program. He modeled for all of us effective conducting and to always strive for the highest quality in all that we do.”

Under Blackburn’s guidance, the music program, and the choir program in particular, excelled. In addition to the Chanters, another musical performing group was formed during the Blackburn years called Morning Star. This group specialized in performing hymn arrangements, as well as contemporary and Christian music of the time. During Dr. Blackburn’s tenure at McMurry, Morning

“Dr. B was more than a teacher to many of us.
He was our inspiration, our mentor, and our friend.”

STEVE HARTER '78

Star recorded four albums and, along with Chanters, they were on the road nearly every weekend performing and representing McMurry. “At that time we were the best ambassadors McMurry had, and much of that can be attributed to Dr. Blackburn,” says Derrell Patterson.

After leaving McMurry, Blackburn went on to become the chairman of the graduate program of church music at Scarritt College in Nashville, Tennessee. He later had vocal studios in Philadelphia and New York and coached singers at the Curtis Institute of Music and the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia. Since 2001,

Dr. Blackburn had served as the professor of voice and choral music at Alcorn State University and was also the founding artistic director of the Natchez Festival of Music in Natchez, Mississippi. Under his direction, the festival earned national acclaim because of its high degree of excellence.

Dr. David Blackburn was truly a gifted musician and educator, and McMurry proudly salutes him for his tremendous and far-reaching contributions to the University’s music program and to countless students who were influenced by his example. ■





DEVELOPMENT CORNER

THIS EDITION of the *Chieftain* is a very special one. It is special because it includes inspirational stories of the triumphs of McMurry “family members” over adversity. These individuals have positively influenced many others despite the challenges they have had to overcome. “Overcoming Life’s Hurdles” is also an appropriate theme for us as a university. The suddenness of the country’s economic crisis means that McMurry is facing financial obstacles that have not been experienced for decades.

There is a picture in my office. The picture is of a golf course hole in Arizona with a green fairway that is narrow and surrounded by huge rock formations. The inscription on the picture reads: *“Great work is not accomplished by strength, but through perseverance.”*

Perseverance is an appropriate word to describe the University’s strategic commitment in the face of tough economic challenges. McMurry University is overcoming challenges in continuing to meet student enrollment growth. To date, we have received more fall 2009 applications and deposits than ever before. Our recruitment message remains the same—in tough economic times, a college education is the best investment for the future. McMurry will be fiscally responsible in ensuring that all endowed scholarships are awarded while protecting the endowment corpus—a promise that we will keep despite overall endowment reductions. Though many of our peer institutions are imposing large tuition increases, we will hold tuition to a modest growth to help offset the impact on students and parents. Most importantly, we will persevere in our mission to prepare and educate excellent students for the future.

We will persevere in our goal to “shape the future” of McMurry students for generations to come by continuing our capital campaign. We have already set new records for campaign contributions as we near \$30 million, but more is to be done. The campaign is targeting projects that have an important and immediate impact on student education and development. One of these projects is continuing to build our endowment. Providing financial assistance for student scholarships is a great investment opportunity for today and tomorrow, and in the near future, you will receive

information on how groups of alumni are combining their gifts to create endowments to honor or memorialize professors from the past.

Many of you already support McMurry, and we are proud to recognize you on the following pages for your generosity. We are extremely grateful for your generous support this past year. Your contributions have helped sustain and grow McMurry to a record enrollment and have played an important role in gaining national recognition for many of our programs. I hope that you will continue to support the University in order to preserve the McMurry experience that was so special to you in your life’s journey.

How else can you help McMurry students persevere in this economic uncertainty? Consider how *connected, involved and engaged* you are with McMurry right now. Is there an opportunity to recruit and retain students? Do you demonstrate and voice pride to others about your McMurry experience? Do you support financially the programs that were influential to you? In addition to an outright gift, there are many ways you can support us in these uncertain times. Check out the McMurry Nation website at <http://nation.mcm.edu> for volunteer ideas. There may also be opportunities for gifts to offset tax liabilities through life insurance, securities, IRAs and a legacy (estate) designation. These gifts provide huge benefits to McMurry as well as to you.

You are important to McMurry’s mission of educating students who will “shape the future.” Hopefully, it will be a future that will not be impacted by the dramatic financial change and uncertainty that we experience today. Regardless of outside influences, it will be a bright future for a great university—a McMurry that has persevered and thrived! ■



STEVE CRISMAN
Vice President for Advancement



IMAGINE



Honor Roll of Donors

Honor Roll of Donors

January 1, 2008 through December 31, 2008

McMurry University gratefully acknowledges the generous support of our donors through inclusion in the annual Honor Roll of Donors. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information included is accurate and reflects the wishes of the donor. If you note an error or omission, please accept our sincere apologies and inform Blythe Pritchett, Associate Director of Advancement Services, at (325) 793-4750 (email: pritchett.blythe@mcm.edu) so that we may correct our records.

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Mrs. Reta Patterson Scholarship
Paylor-Dorton Endowed Scholarship
Nonnie and Frances Phy Scholarship
Bob and Ruth Potter Scholarship for Education
Marilyn Potter Scholarship for Religion
KIVA/Don Ramsey/Morris LeMay Endowed Scholarship
J.L. and Virginia Rhoades Scholarship
Cora Roberts Scholarship
Dora Roberts Scholarship
Christopher (Carl) Robertson Memorial Scholarship
H.I. Robinson Memorial Scholarship
Roberta and Dewitt Seago Endowed Scholarship
Eleanor Schacht Scholarship
Frank and Mollie Sears Scholarship
Herbert Arthur and Emma Bell Seidel Scholarship for Phys. Ed.
Herbert Arthur and Emma Bell Seidel Scholarship for Elem. Ed.
Herbert Arthur and Emma Bell Seidel Scholarship for Music
Bess and J.E. Shewbert Endowed Scholarship
E. F. Shotwell Scholarship
P.E. Shotwell Chanters Scholarship
Tom and Mary Sivley Scholarship
Mr. and Mrs. Ahira V. Smith Scholarship
Emma Jean Smith Scholarship
Omega Nutt Smith Memorial Scholarship
Henry and Mabel Solomon Scholarship
Wilma Jeanette "Wilnette" Spencer Memorial Scholarship
Mr. and Mrs. D. D. Stalder Scholarship
Dr. George Steinman Ministerial Scholarship
C. H. Stith Scholarship
Cyril & Mary Stone Endowed Scholarship
Herbert M. and Mary Lou Straughan Scholarship
W. Alan Swagerty Endowed Scholarship
T.I.P. Scholarship

Jennie Tate Memorial Math Scholarship
T. E. and Juanita Rice Temple Band Scholarship
Hubert D. and Carmen Thomson Memorial Scholarship
O. P. Thrane Scholarship
Throckmorton United Methodist Church Scholarship
Mary Jane Trammell Memorial Scholarship
Clifford and Irene Trotter Scholarship
Frank L. and Ruth Turner Scholarship
Mansfield Tweedy Accounting Scholarship
Bob Uselton-Ko Sari Biology/Chemistry Scholarship
Margaret Teague Vaughan Endowed Scholarship
Tracey Diane Waterfield-Neilson Scholarship
A.G. and Ethel B. Waugh Memorial Scholarship
Bill, Helen and Tony Way Family Fine Arts Endowed Scholarship
Lance and Elizabeth Webb Scholarship
Robert and Jerry Weir Scholarship for Religion/Christian Service
Gaston and Ruth Wells Endowed Scholarship
West-Kirk Scholarship
Carla Elizabeth White Memorial Scholarship
Whonsetler-Key Scholarship
Ada C. Wilkins Endowed Scholarship
Arthur R. and Evie Jo Wilson Scholarship
Stanley P. and Claudie Park Wilson Scholarship
Mabel Winsler Scholarship
Dr. Arthur H. and Andrea Woods, Jr. Endowed Scholarship
Everett and Orabeth Woods Scholarship
Lee J. and Billie B. Woods Business Administration Scholarship
Rev. Cal C. Wright Ministerial Scholarship
Thomas Lawrence and Mary Chenoweth Wright Endowed Scholarship
Gypsy Ted Sullivan Wylie Scholarship
Martin and Frank W. Yates Scholarship Endowment
Margaret Young Scholarship
Helen Jo Hundley Young and J.P. Young Memorial Scholarship
Reverend Richard & Sarah Herrera Hernandez Scholarship
Geraldine Banks Endowed Scholarship
Roy "Shorty" & Mary Phillips Miers Endowed Scholarship
Frank E. Smith Endowed Scholarship
Windjammer Endowed Scholarship
Maroon Pride Scholarship
Grady & Hope Adcock Endowed Scholarship
George Coats Endowed Scholarship
Dodge Jones Foundation Endowed Honors Scholarship
Betty Gilbert Student Ambassador Board Endowed Scholarship
Iva Libby Gray Endowed Scholarship
William (Bill) "Doc" Hadley Memorial Scholarship
Dick and Elton Hailey Scholarship
LaVerne Edwards Howard Endowed Scholarship
KIVA/D.L. Ramsey/M.L. Lemay Scholarship
Jim Pierce Endowed Scholarship
J.H. & Mary F. Rucker Family Endowed Scholarship

C. Lee Smith Endowed Scholarship
Mr. and Mrs. Joe T. Smith Endowed Scholarship
Juanita B. Stephens Memorial Student Scholarship
Bill & Ann Stokes Endowed Fund
Marianna Strickland Strayhorn Memorial Scholarship
Ralph & Margaret Sundby Endowed Scholarship
United Methodist Church Sylvester Texas Scholarship
Dr. Victor Tsang Endowed Scholarship
John Oliver Wallace Memorial Scholarship
Mary and Donald Wineinger Scholarship

NON-ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIPS

Bolinger, Segars, Gilbert and Moss Accounting Scholarship
Esma Morris Cash Scholarship
Winford and Thelma J. Cole Scholarship
Community Foundation of Abilene Scholarship
Morgan Jones, Jr. Family Scholarship
Martin Trust Distribution
Dr. Gordon McMillan Scholarship
Vernie Newman Textbook Scholarship
Panhandle Plains Scholarship
Mozelle Rushing Endowed Scholarship
Ann B. Stokes Foundation Scholarship
Mariana Stricklin Strayhorn Scholarship
Joan Stribling Scholarship
Rev. Clarence and Louise Walton Scholarship
Ward-Bottom Physics Scholarship
Royal C. Young Scholarship
Clara Brown Scholarship
Ruth and Joe Williamson Music Scholarship
Bynum & Barbara Miers Scholarship
M. Lynn Varner Yearwood Scholarship

PENDING ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIPS (Not Fully Funded)

Class of 1956 Endowed Scholarship
Dunn-Buford Methodist Church Scholarship
Jack and Bettie Holden Endowed Scholarship
Payden & Pierce LoPachin Endowed Scholarship
Dr. Robert "Bob" Monk Scholarship
Frank L. Turner, Jr. Scholarship

CURRENT HONOREES:

Dr. Richard Dana Moore, *Biology*

Dr. W. Norton Jones, *Chemistry*

Dr. Virgil Bottom, *Physics*

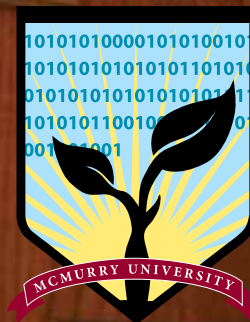
Dr. Bill Dulin, *Mathematics*

Dr. A.C. Sharp, *Physics*

Dr. Roy Sonntag, *Chemistry*

Mr. Roger Ward, *Physics*

SCHOOL OF
NATURAL AND
COMPUTATIONAL
SCIENCES



WALL OF HONOR



Dr. Gary Wilson, *Dean, School of Natural and Computational Sciences*

All of us are touched by stories of humble people from modest backgrounds who go forward to do world-changing things. By our very nature we are inclined to pull for the underdog, to cheer for the success of those who seem most unlikely. Support, encouragement and hard work go into every success story. Invariably, one other key ingredient also goes into their recipe for success – opportunity. Though sometimes circumstance itself can provide opportunity, more often than not opportunity is a gift provided by an unselfish individual whose satisfaction comes from helping others achieve beyond their dreams.

The selfless individuals who have been involved with McMurry's science programs have for many years provided exceptional opportunities for our students. Whether it was Dr. Virgil Bottom meeting with students on Saturdays to train them in the art and science of making quartz crystals for electronics, or Dr. Bill Dulin supporting student travel to research meetings, or countless other similar stories, our faculty have made a McMurry education more than books and tests and glassware and formulas. They have provided life-changing opportunities for our students. The beneficiaries have grown to lead technology and telecommunications industries around the world, to become outstanding healthcare professionals, and to become educators and scientists and citizens who give back

in the same way McMurry gave to them.

Some exceptional alumni like Roger Ward have acknowledged the special care that went into their education and have given back generously, contributing resources needed to provide those special opportunities to a new generation of students. The fruits of their labor are students who build turbojets for their senior projects, participate in cancer research, build new software applications, develop improved science teaching approaches for rural schools, and conduct environmental impact studies for regional landowners. Opportunities seized become opportunities offered.

McMurry's Science and Math Advisory Board has established a "Wall of Honor" to share the stories of pioneers, legends and servants. Located in the main entrance to the Finch-Gray Science Center, the achievements of seven exceptional individuals are displayed for all passersby. Many more stories wait to be told. In November 2009, the number will grow as the Advisory Board inducts a new class of honorees. You are invited to submit nominations by visiting the following web page: www.mcm.edu/newsite/web/academics/ncs/index.htm. We celebrate the lives of these outstanding individuals and invite you to join in the celebration of their achievements and contributions to McMurry's science and math programs. ■

ATHLETICS UPDATE

FALL BRIEFS

Football While the 2008 McMurry football campaign wasn't a success in terms of the win-loss total, it did provide the future of the program with a lot of experience. Many underclassmen received significant playing time as the season progressed and that experience could prove to be essential for getting wins in the future. Two McMurry players garnered all-conference recognition in juniors Joe Alexander and Josh Clements. Alexander was a second-team all-conference selection at linebacker as he finished fifth in the conference with 78 tackles, and Clements was an honorable mention all-ASC pick at center after the coaches in the conference voted him as one of the toughest and most consistent offensive linemen in the league. The great news for McMurry is that both all-conference players are slated to return for the 2009 season!

Volleyball Cammie Petree returned at the helm of the McMurry volleyball team and the winningest coach in program history guided McMurry to a 19-8 overall mark and an appearance in the American Southwest Conference Championship Tournament. A highlight of the season occurred on Sept. 21, 2008, when McMurry swept Concordia Texas to give Petree her 200th victory as head coach of McMurry. Five players earned all-conference recognition. Junior middle blocker Terah Brown won her second-consecutive ASC West Division MVP and was also the offensive player of the year. Sarah Anding won the defensive player of the year, while senior hitter Erica English and setter Shannon Higgins made the second team. Junior outside hitter Danielle Kelton was an honorable mention selection.



Terah Brown

Cross Country Both the McMurry men's and women's cross country teams had successful seasons in 2008 as the men finished second at the conference meet and the women finished third. On the women's side, freshman Alaisha Guerra garnered ASC Freshman Runner of the Year honors. Karlie Dieterich joined Guerra on the all-ASC first team as she placed fourth at the conference meet. On the men's side, McMurry placed four runners on the all-conference team. Ken Wheeler, Brad Mullins and Daniel Rudd were first-team all-conference runners and Steven



Cantwell was a second-team runner. Wheeler and Mullins later made the all-region team for the third-straight year, which set a school record for the most all-region team appearances. Wheeler also was the second McMurry runner ever (Josh Hufstedler, 1999) to compete in the NCAA National Championship Meet and he had the best finish at nationals as he finished 153rd out of 280 runners with his personal-best time and school record in the 8,000-meter of 25:54.31.

Men's and Women's Soccer

The future of the McMurry men's and women's soccer programs is now under the direction of one coach as men's coach, Tim Grove, added the women's soccer head-coaching responsibilities to his duties after the 2008 season concluded. Both soccer programs are looking for improvement in 2009 and some slated returners to the men's team could help the McMurry men achieve that. Freshman goalkeeper Leeland Karpf highlighted the group of McMurry all-conference selections as he was one of only two freshmen to make the conference's first team. Sophomore midfielder Nathan Perschke was a third-team all-conference selection, while sophomore defender Kyle Kallin was an all-conference honorable mention.

For the full athletics update, please visit us on the web at <http://athletics.mcm.edu>.

ATHLETICS UPDATE

WINTER SPORTS

Men's Basketball McMurry's men regained dominance in the ASC West Division, claiming their seventh American Southwest Conference West Division title and their first since the 2006-07 campaign.

McMurry posted a regular-season record of 18-7 overall and 17-4 in conference play and they played as the first seed in the ASC Men's Basketball Championship Tournament hosted by UT-Dallas in Richardson on Feb. 27-March 1. In addition, McMurry claimed its first outright West Division title since the 2001-02 season.

Women's Basketball The McMurry women's basketball team, under the direction of second-year head coach Veronica Snow, won its third American Southwest Conference West Division title in program history. The women posted a regular-season record of 20-5 overall and a 17-4 record in conference play.

It is the first West Division title for the McMurry women since the 2005-06 campaign. McMurry was also co-champs of the West Division with Hardin-Simmons in 1999-00. McMurry hosted the ASC Women's Basketball Championship Tournament, Feb. 27-March 1 at Kimbrell Arena, and they were defeated in the second round by Howard Payne University.

Swimming Coach Bev Ball's swim teams recently returned from the Independent Conference meet in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and the women placed fourth among 11 teams, competing with 10 athletes. Senior Marlee Hager won both the 100-meter backstroke and the 200-meter backstroke and set a McMurry school and meet record at Cedar Rapids. Freshman Erin Johnson, with

her win in the 100-meter butterfly, broke school records and was also second in the 200-meter butterfly. The relays finished third and fourth.

A young, mostly freshmen men's team came in fifth with only 11 athletes. Craig Ostermann won the 100-meter butterfly at Cedar Rapids. Ball then took four men—Ostermann, Ethan Price, Scott Eakin and Daniel Harber to Emory in Atlanta. Ostermann broke McMurry's school record for the 100-meter butterfly and 100-meter freestyle, and the men's team broke the school record in the 400-meter freestyle relay. Ethan Price broke a school record in the 200-meter backstroke and Scott Eakin claimed a record in the the 200-meter butterfly.

Both Hager and Ostermann have provisionally qualified for the national swim meet.

Track The McMurry men's track team is coming off a dream season, bringing home the NCAA Division III Track and Field title, the first team title in McMurry's history. Many of those same athletes are back this season. Han Ollison, who won the 400-meter title last year, returns to defend his title.

McMurry track coach Barbara Crousen is excited about how the teams are performing during the indoor track season. Just four meets into the indoor season, four McMurry track and field athletes have already provisionally qualified for the national indoor national championship in Terre Haute, Indiana.

Ollison provisionally qualified in the 400-meter by virtue of his 48:49 finish at the first Texas Tech meet on Jan. 17.

Also, sophomore Charisma Tucker provisionally qualified for the indoor national championship by vaulting 11 feet 3.75 inches at the second Tech meet on Jan. 24.



For the full athletics update, please visit us on the web at <http://athletics.mcm.edu>.



ATHLETICS UPDATE

Baseball Defending ASC champion McMurry is the favorite to win the ASC West Division again this year, according to ASC coaches and sports information directors.

McMurry, which went 29-19 en route to winning the conference championship last season, will be under the direction of first-year head coach John Byington, who takes over after serving for 10 seasons under the departed Lee Driggers. McMurry, which also won ASC crowns in 1998, 2001 and 2004, led the conference in home runs (76), doubles (117) and total bases (970) last season. Its pitching staff's ERA of 4.94 was best in the division. McMurry opened its 2009 campaign on Feb. 6, losing a series to No. 2 Chapman University at Driggers Field. However, they have bounced back with five straight wins and have taken the early lead in the ASC.

Tennis After an impressive fall season, the McMurry men's and women's tennis teams opened up their 2009 team seasons by competing in three matches Saturday, Feb. 7. Both McMurry teams faced Division I Prairie View A&M in the morning at the Seidel-Swagerty Tennis Center before also hosting the highly-ranked Collin County Community College in the afternoon and NCAA Division II Abilene Christian that night.

The highlight of the day came early for McMurry when the men's team knocked off Division I Prairie View A&M, 7-2, to kickoff the spring season. McMurry swept all three doubles matches before winning four of the six singles matches to take the match.

McMurry is coming off a fall season that saw the men's doubles team of Brandon Armour-Brent Abilez win the fourth-flight championship at the ACU Wal-Mart Open. Also, Daniel Olivares and Jordan Nokes advanced to the championship match of their respective singles flights at the Wilson/Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA) Division III Southwest Region Men's Championship.

Golf Head Coach Russ Evans expects big things from his men's and women's golf teams again this year. Last year's women's team made it to the NCAA Division III national tournament and finished 15th. The women's team started out well this year with a solid fall, and Evans is looking for a better spring season. Evans said he is seeing some solid individual play, but is looking for more consistent team play.

The men's team has started off the spring semester with a second-place finish behind an NCAA Division I school. They finished third in their second tournament with strong individual play. Evans expects to win soon with a little more team continuity. ■

2009
HALL OF HONOR
INDUCTION
CEREMONY & DINNER

25th YEAR

Saturday, May 16, 2009

7:00 p.m.

Mabee Room,
Garrison Campus Center

Tickets are \$25.00 each

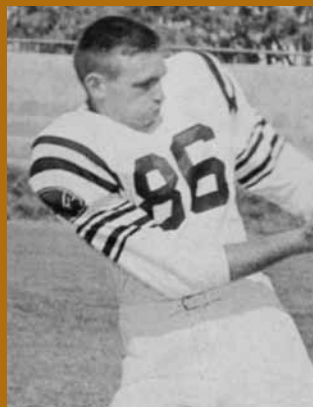
and may NOT be
purchased at the door.

Call our office for ticket
information (325) 793-4631.

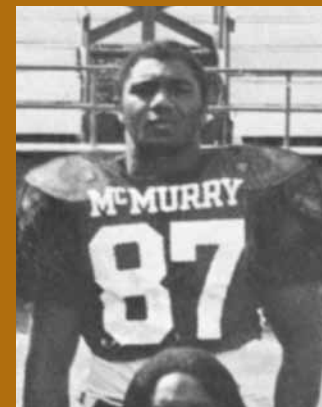
2009 INDUCTEES:



Clayton Brooks '65



Wylie Wise '59



Rickie Williams '80

BOB AND CLARA BROWN INDIAN AWARD:

The Louis & Eugenia Pittard Family

Dear Alumni and Friends,

Greetings from McMurry University and the Office of Alumni Relations. In this issue of the *Chieftain*, we have read about the courage of McMurry students, faculty, and alumni who have overcome certain obstacles in their lives to reach new heights. Not only can we find inspiration from these individuals, but we can look to McMurry and be proud of all our alumni who exhibit that same strength and resolve.

As we all know, these are uncertain times that we live in and we have all faced the difficulties that have presented themselves in the last few months. Despite those challenges, there is a sense of optimism on our campus demonstrated by the support of our alumni and friends. Recently, the Office of Alumni Relations adopted three key words to summarize our efforts. Those words are: *Connect, Engage, and Involve*.

McMurry alumni and friends have connected and continued their engagement with the University in a variety of ways. In October, we launched McMurry Nation, our new alumni website and online community. In a few short months, we have registered over 800 alumni and friends for the community. For those of you who have registered, stay tuned because new upgrades will be rolling out shortly that will improve our community and the ways in which you will be able to utilize it. For those of you who haven't joined McMurry Nation yet, log in to <http://nation.mcm.edu> and see what we have to offer.

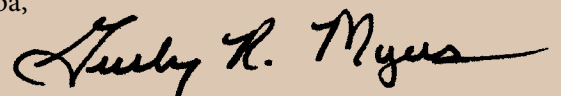
McMurry alumni have also connected with the University through alumni gatherings we have hosted around the state. In the last three years, attendance

at alumni gatherings has increased and participation from you has been fantastic. Alumni volunteers in their respective towns and cities have volunteered to help organize, plan and implement gatherings. As the Director of Alumni Relations, it is so much fun to attend these gatherings and reconnect people with their McMurry Experience by seeing friends and classmates, some of whom they have not seen in years.

The involvement of our alumni has also been exemplified through the service of your Alumni Board of Directors. In the past year, they have reorganized and restructured the Board, resulting in an increased sense of pride, ownership and effectiveness. Committees of the Alumni Board of Directors meet on a regular basis to work on projects that help increase awareness of McMurry by its alumni base and to discuss issues which are important to the alumni of McMurry University. I want to thank Dale Evers, who recently completed his service as President of the Alumni Board of Directors. Dale has been a committed and dedicated servant on your behalf for many years, and we will miss his service. We look forward to welcoming Chris Montoya as the new President of the Alumni Board.

Thanks to all of you for your commitment and dedication to our McMurry. We look forward to the next year as we continue to *Connect, Engage and Involve*.

Ala Cumba,



FRIENDS & FAMILY

2008 *distinguished* alumni

Dr. Gene Tucker and Joe Bill Fox were honored as McMurry University Distinguished Alumni for 2008 at the Distinguished Alumni Dinner on Thursday, Oct. 23, as part of McMurry's Homecoming festivities.

During an academic career spanning more than five decades, Dr. Gene M. Tucker has contributed greatly to the study of the Bible and to the education of young men and women preparing for the ministry.

Dr. Tucker received a Bachelor of Arts degree (cum laude) from McMurry in 1957. He earned a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Yale Divinity School in 1960, a Master of Arts degree in 1961 and his Doctor of Philosophy degree in 1963 from Yale.

Dr. Tucker joined the University of Southern California faculty in 1963 as Assistant Professor of Religion (Old Testament). He served at Duke Divinity School from 1966 to 1970 as Assistant and Associate Professor of Old Testament. From 1970 to 2005, Dr. Tucker served as Associate Professor and Professor of Old Testament at Candler School of Theology at Emory University. During that time, he also served as Associate Dean at Candler from 1978 until 1983. He retired from Candler in 2005 and was named Professor of Old Testament Emeritus by the school.

For more than fifty years, Joe Bill Fox molded the lives of young men and women as a coach, teacher and school administrator. McMurry University has been blessed by his service as a University Trustee since 2006 and as a coach and faculty member in 1960-61.

Mr. Fox received a Bachelor of Science degree in education from McMurry in 1956 and a Master of Arts degree in education from McMurry in 1958. He completed

post graduate studies at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio in 1974.

While at McMurry, Mr. Fox was an all-conference quarterback and was elected Chief McMurry. He was inducted into the McMurry Athletic Hall of Honor in 1987.

He began his career in the public schools as Head Football Coach in the Birdville Independent School District in Fort Worth, Texas from 1956 to 1960. He returned to McMurry to serve as a coach and history teacher from 1960 to 1961 and then moved to the Northeast Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas, where he served as Head Football Coach from 1961 to 1968. In 1968, he was promoted to Athletic Director and served

in that position until 1974. In 1975, he served as Director of Operations for the San Antonio Wings of the World Football League.

Mr. Fox moved into school administration from 1975 to 1979 as Assistant Principal at MacArthur High School in San Antonio, Texas. He was named the Director of Athletics at Irving Independent School District from 1979 to 1980 and returned to Birdville to serve as Athletic Director from 1980 to 1982. Mr. Fox served as Deputy Superintendent for the Birdville Independent School District from 1982 to 1984 when he was elevated to Superintendent. He retired from the Birdville District in 1992. ■



Dr. Gene Tucker

Joe Bill Fox



**CROSS
&
FLAME**
AWARD

FRIENDS & FAMILY

Established in 2000 by the McMurry Alumni Association, this award is given to strengthen the relationship between McMurry University and the United Methodist Church by recognizing individuals for service to their churches and to the University.



Bob Gillette

Robert S. “Bob” Gillette, Jr. ’72 and ’76, past president of the McMurry University Alumni Association and an active participant in McMurry life for many years, has been named the McMurry University Cross & Flame

winner for the Northwest Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church.

After graduating from McMurry, Bob served as a dorm director in Gold Star Residence Hall. He also worked as a dorm director for Martin and taught as an instructor of media technologies in the mid-1990s. Bob worked for many years with the Abilene Library Consortium before taking over as Head Librarian at Jay-Rollins Library at McMurry, where he served for three years. He left McMurry to return to the Consortium in 2008. In addition to his regular work as Executive Director of the Abilene Library Consortium, he is an Associate Pastor at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Abilene. He has served on many boards at McMurry and continues to take an active role in the alumni board and the McMurry Band.

Bob is one of the founding members of HEI men’s social club and has been a longtime sponsor for the organization. Last year he set up the Gillette Family Scholarship for theatre students. ■



Kathy Johnson

Through her work and devotion to the United Methodist Church and to McMurry University, Kathy Johnson has been named the 2008-2009 recipient of the Cross & Flame Award for the New Mexico Annual

Conference.

Kathy joined St. Mark’s United Methodist Church in 1983 and became active in the United Methodist Women. Kathy later became the director of the then “Mother’s Day Out” program which operated 3 days a week. The program flourished, and as a result, was out of space and experiencing long waiting lists. She took this dilemma to their then new pastor, Tom Nagle. His solution was to add Tuesday and Thursday. In 1992 they expanded programming to 5 days a week, and continued to grow. The program experienced a change from a Mother’s Day Out environment to a preschool environment by adding curriculum, schedules and a more experienced staff. The name changed to Early Education Program. This program exposes children to Christian education on a daily basis. Through her work with this program, Kathy helps coordinate efforts with the church on joint projects/ bible studies to connect young families to the word of God. Presently the program has 160 children and 34 staff members. In addition, Kathy taught Sunday School during her first seven years at St. Mark’s.

Kathy’s affiliation with McMurry began when their son David graduated from high school in 1998 and was looking for a Christian college he would not get lost in. Through St. Mark’s they discovered McMurry University. She served as the McMurry Ambassador for St. Mark’s until 2005. ■





FRIENDS & FAMILY



Dr. John Russell visits with Don and Gaynelle Riffe at the Alumni gathering in Amarillo on January 15, 2009. ▲

Dr. Russell and Board of Trustee Chairman Holland Evans '66 cut the ribbon at the dedication of the newly renovated Bynum Band Hall during the Homecoming Festivities. ►



Dr. Ralph Turner '74 & '76 visits with Rodney Brown '64 and Byron Calcote '64 at the Austin Area Alumni Gathering on January 31, 2009. ▲



David Nelson '78 visits with Clark Williams during the McMurry on the R.O.A.D. event in Midland/Odessa on November 18th. ▲



Recently graduated Kimberly Patterson Encarnacion '08 poses with family and friends after receiving her diploma on December 13, 2008. ▲



Capital Campaign Co-Chair Dian Stai visits with Ted Johnson during the "Evening at the Willows" in Midland/Odessa. ▲

Know an outstanding alum?

Nominate them for the Distinguished Alumni Award!

Achievement in Profession

Achievement beyond what is normally considered successful in their particular field

Service to Community

Service in leadership roles that truly make their communities a better place

Service to McMurry

Support the University financially within their means, service in various capacities on boards, recruiting efforts, attendance at events, volunteer leadership

Service to Church

Active beyond regular attendance, taking on leadership/volunteer roles

If you know a McMurry alum who fits the above criteria, please fill out the form below and send to:

McMurry Alumni Association, Box 938 McMurry Station, Abilene, Texas 79697.

Your Name _____

Phone Number _____

Name of Nominee _____

Address of Nominee _____

Phone Number of Nominee _____

Please attach an explanation of why you nominated this person for the Distinguished Alumni Award.

Please refer to the criteria above when writing your reasons.

Thank you for your nomination!

FRIENDS & FAMILY

classnotes

1970

Peggy Parrott Aguirre '70 reports that last fall she and her husband moved to Australia. Gus is a safety consultant for Rio Tinto/Alcan and she is an audiologist for the Northern Territory government. They live in a small community, Nhulunbuy. Part of her job includes visiting remote aboriginal communities. It has been a wonderful adventure.

1976

Pat Frosch '76 lives in Grapevine, Texas and is Director of Programs at GRACE, a nonprofit emergency assistance agency. Pat took the lead in starting a community clinic at GRACE which is now in its sixth year of operation. Pat serves as President of the Greater Dallas/Ft. Worth Association of Charitable Clinics, the Chairperson of the Tarrant County Indigent Clinic Forum, and is a board member of the Lone Star Association of Charitable Clinics. After 30+ years of collecting, Pat still enjoys antiques even though her house AND garage are full!



1978

Cliff Odenwald '78 was recently appointed Athletic Director for the University Interscholastic League. Odenwald, who has been the UIL's Associate Athletic Director since 2007, took over the spot vacated by new UIL Executive Director Dr. Charles Breithaupt. Odenwald has been with the UIL since June 2007 and his most significant task during his time has been overseeing the league's state-wide steroid testing program. 🏆

1983

Larry Beville was elected Taylor County Clerk and has been serving since January 1, 2007.

FRIENDS & FAMILY

1984

Andrea “Tina” Haley-Canto '84 reports that she and her family recently moved from Richmond, Virginia, to the St. Louis area. They actually live in a small town in Illinois named Swansea across the river from St. Louis. Her husband works for Wachovia Securities. She also states that her job continues to be stable as long as she gets the kids to school on time and the laundry done.

1985

Lorna Potter Taylor graduated from McMurry twice—the first time in 1985 with a BBA in Accounting and the second time ten years later in 1995 with a BSN in Nursing. She is currently employed at Abilene Regional Medical Center in the Surgical Services Department and is nationally certified in perianesthesia nursing. She was also named employee of the year in February 2008. She serves as Nursing Leadership Group Co-Chairperson and Clinical Ladder Committee Chairperson.



1995

Major Allen Gradnigo '95 is among more than 1,000 Air Force lieutenant colonels, majors, captains and civilians heading off in a few months to attend in-residence intermediate and senior education courses during the 2009-

10 academic year. Specifically, Allen will hit the books at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California to study strategic political and military affairs, earning his third masters degree in the process. 📖

Russell Vanlandingham '95 was recently appointed the Head Men's Basketball Coach at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio. Russell and his wife **Amber Fausett Vanlandingham '99** currently reside in New Braunfels, Texas, and they have three children.



1996

Cynthia Macko May '96 and her husband, Lieutenant Commander Stephen May, USN have been stationed at NAF Atsugi in Japan (near Tokyo) since December 2007, where Stephen is continuing his career

as a Naval Aviator flying the EA6-B Prowler. They will be in Japan for approximately 2 more years. Cynthia had to temporarily leave her career as a research scientist for the move, but is enjoying a busy life running after their two boys, Logan (5 yrs) and Kevin (1 yr). Cynthia recently climbed Mt. Fuji and has participated in several Japanese festivals while wearing the traditional kimono. 📖

1999

Amber Justus Redman '99 is currently living in Fort Worth, Texas with her husband, Chris, and their identical twin boys, Takoda and Montana, who are 7 months old.



FRIENDS & FAMILY

2000

Jason and Katie Burgess would like to announce the realization of a life-long dream to own their own business. They opened Burgess Insurance in January '09 in Tyler, Texas.



David Chandler '00 and **Janet Bohling Chandler '00** welcomed a new son, Michael, to their family on June 1, 2008. David currently serves as the Head Cross Country and Assistant Track and Field coach at McMurry, and Janet works as Assistant Registrar. 📖

2001

Domingo "Marty" Martinez Jr. '00 was recently named Director of Bands for Mexia ISD after seven years as Assistant Band Director.

2003

George Brown '03 and his wife, **Brandie Powell Brown '06**, welcomed Wesley Harper Brown to their family on December 25, 2008. The couple moved back to Abilene in December 2005, where George works at Hendrick Medical Center as the Director of Physician Services and Brandie works as a physical therapist at Hendrick Center for Rehabilitation. 📖



Bo Kilpatrick '03 and **Katie Haley Kilpatrick '04** were blessed with a new daughter on October 30, 2008. Her name is Cameron Haley Kilpatrick. 📖

2004

Graham Bloodworth '04 reports that he and his new wife, Laura, reside in The Colony, Texas where he is employed with the Police Department.

Kira Chumbly is engaged to Matthew Rose and will be getting married on March 21, 2009 in her hometown of Pampa, Texas at St. Paul United Methodist Church. Matt is from Yukon, Oklahoma. 📖

Rachel Brown Allen '04 and her husband Kensey Allen '05 are pleased to announce the birth of their son, Riley Jackson Allen, on June 15, 2008.



Brady (Nichols) Sloane '04 and Samuel Sloane were married June 7, 2008 in Valera, Texas. They live in Abilene, Texas, where Brady is currently working towards a master's degree in Museum Studies and is a freelance curator. Sam is a financial advisor with Morgan Stanley. Brady is the daughter of **Roger Nichols '73** and **Jennifer Nelson Nichols**

'73 and she has an extensive "McMurry family." 📖

2005

Kendra Benedict '05 received her RN license on May 29, 2008 and currently works at United Regional in Wichita Falls, Texas.

FRIENDS & FAMILY

2006

Erin Stevens '06 worked for McMurry as the Associate Director of Alumni Relations from June 2006 until March 2008. In March, she started working as a Resident Consultant for Ketchum Inc., a fundraising firm that consults for nonprofit organizations. Since starting with Ketchum, she has lived in West Palm Beach, Florida, working for Jupiter Medical Center, and is currently consulting at Cottey College in Nevada, Missouri.

2007

Frances Arias '07 and her fiance Corporal Dennis Tibbs, Jr. (USMC) are set to wed in Abilene on September 5, 2009. Frances and Dennis are living in Fredericksburg, Virginia, where Dennis is stationed at Marine Corps Base Quantico at The Basic School as an instructor in his specialty, Combat Engineering. They will be living in Fredericksburg for the following two years. They will then move closer to the D.C. area where Frances works for George Washington University's Law School. Frances is currently working towards her Master's in Strategic Intelligence from American Military University. ■

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classnotes

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 Alumni Relations Office, Box 938 McMurry Station, Abilene, Texas 79697.

Name _____ Maiden Name _____

Address _____ Graduation Year _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email Address _____

Notes of Interest: _____

FRIENDS WE'LL MISS

Mr. Sammy Baugh of Rotan, Texas, died December 17, 2008.

Mrs. Sally A. Baber Beam of Big Spring, Texas, died November 15, 2008.

Dr. Nathan Alexander Bickley '38 of Dallas, Texas, died October 3, 2008.

Dr. David Stuart Blackburn of Natchez, Mississippi, died September 28, 2008.

Mrs. Vona Mae Abbott Cade '43 of Aspermont, Texas, died December 14, 2008.

Mrs. Pauline Linn Marlin Caffey '37 of Clovis, New Mexico, died October 14, 2008.

Mr. Billy Callaway of Sweetwater, Texas, died September 18, 2004.

Mr. Jarvis C. Carter '91 died November 2, 2008.

Mrs. Susanne H. Hudson Chalcraft ex '53 of Abilene, Texas, died August 24, 2008.

Mrs. Doris Jean Church of Abilene, Texas, died January 19, 2009.

Mrs. Andrea Claman died September 30, 2008.

Mrs. Margie Laverne Lowery Clonts '49 of Knox City, Texas, died January 29, 2009.

Mr. Walter Danko of Abilene, Texas, died November 23, 2008.

Dr. J. Henry Doscher of Abilene, Texas, died October 3, 2008.

Mr. George W. Dupree of Amarillo, Texas, died December 31, 2008.

Mrs. Brenda Franklin of Pleasanton, Texas, died January 6, 2009.

Mr. William W. Getts '73 of Abilene, Texas, died August 20, 2008.

Mrs. Lillie Hagar died September 24, 2008.

Mr. Rudy Haile '50 of Fort Worth, Texas, died October 20, 2008.

Ms. Virginia L. Hamm ex '69 died December 25, 2008.

Mrs. Terri M. Guy Hartmann of Abilene, Texas, died November 6, 2008.

Mrs. Mary Sue Henry '62 of Haskell, Texas, died January 11, 2009.

Mrs. Virginia Johnson of Shreveport, Louisiana, died October 4, 2008.

Dr. Dale Franklin Johnson '38 of Abilene, Texas, died September 27, 2008.

Mr. Billy Brian Latta of Abilene, Texas, died December 21, 2008.

Ms. Edith Lineweaver ex '68 of Abilene, Texas, died September 4, 2008.

Mr. A. Clyde Lowther of Abilene, Texas, died September 22, 2008.

Dr. Alvin R. Mauldin '56 of Austin, Texas, died January 26, 2009.

Mrs. Barbara McClellan '51 of Roswell, New Mexico died February 13, 2009.

Mr. Aaron Michael Parrott died December 7, 2008.

Rev. J. V. Patterson '43 of Lufkin, Texas, died October 6, 2008.

Mrs. Peggy Payne of Anson, Texas, died October 31, 2008.

Rev. William E. Perkins '72 of Clyde, Texas, died November 4, 2008.

Ms. Jennye Ruth Ready '47 of Goldthwaite, Texas, died December 28, 2008.

Ms. Joy Solomon '57 of Goldthwaite, Texas, died February 19, 2009.

Mrs. Mary Nelda Vaughter Rice '35 of Grand Prairie, Texas, died January 5, 2009.

Mr. Jesse Scifres died November 29, 2008.

Mr. Glade Terry of Albuquerque, New Mexico, died November 27, 2008.

Rev. Paul W. Wiseman '51 of Hillsboro, Texas, died November 24, 2008.

Mr. Clyde Wood '40 died November 21, 2008.

Obituaries

Pauline L. Caffey '37

Pauline L. Caffey '37 died in Clovis, New Mexico, Oct. 14, 2008 following several years of declining health. Born Pauline Linn Marlin in 1914 in Fayette, Missouri, she grew up in a parsonage, the daughter of a Methodist minister who served congregations in Missouri, Colorado, West Texas and New Mexico.

After attending Texas Wesleyan College in Fort Worth for three years, she transferred to McMurry College (now University) in Abilene, attending school on a scholarship for children of Methodist clergy and

graduating in 1937. A music education major, she was accompanist for the college's touring choir, the Chanters.

In 1938, she married Wiley L. Caffey (McMurry ex 1924), a prominent Abilene lawyer who served as Abilene's City Attorney, Taylor County Judge, and for eleven years as District Attorney for the 42nd Judicial District. Mr. Caffey died in 1977.

Mrs. Caffey became organist at St. Paul Church in Abilene in the early 1940s, serving under the leadership of more than a half-dozen pastors and working with more than a dozen choir directors—four of whom were also

FRIENDS WE'LL MISS

directors of McMurry's Chanters. She retired in 1984. During her tenure, she accompanied literally thousands of worship services and choir rehearsals and played for hundreds of weddings and funerals.

Primarily a church musician rather than a recitalist, Mrs. Caffey gave two formal recitals at St. Paul, one for a session of the Northwest Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church in the 1980s. After retirement, she continued to serve as a substitute organist, filling in for vacationing organists in Methodist, Presbyterian, Disciples of Christ, Episcopal and Southern Baptist congregations.

Mrs. Caffey lived in Abilene until 2005, when she moved to a retirement home in Clovis, New Mexico.

Dr. Nathan Alexander "Alex" Bickley '38

Dr. Nathan Alexander "Alex" Bickley, former member of the McMurry University Board of Trustees, died October 3, 2008.

Dr. Bickley was one of the most influential men in Dallas, first with the city attorney's office and later as leader of the Dallas Citizens Council. His influence ranged from day-to-day discussions with City Council members to projects that included the creation of Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport and Lake Ray Hubbard.

Dr. Bickley was born and raised in Abilene, where he earned a bachelor's degree from McMurry College. He worked his way through law school at the University of Texas by coaching athletics at the state school for deaf children. Dr. Bickley was decorated for his Navy submarine service in the North Atlantic during World War II. He received a Bronze Star and a Silver Submarine with two stars, signifying multiple combat missions. He continued to serve with the Navy, retiring from the Naval Reserves as a captain in 1974. After the war, Dr. Bickley returned to Abilene, where he entered private practice before becoming city attorney of the West Texas town.

In January 1958, he went to Dallas, where he joined Dallas City Attorney Henry Kucera's staff as the first assistant attorney, and he became city attorney when Mr. Kucera retired in 1965.

Dr. Bickley's name is among 23 inscribed at Founders' Plaza at D/FW International Airport for his role in forging the alliance that created the airport. Dr. Bickley retired as city attorney in 1976 and became Executive Vice President of the Dallas Citizens Council, a group of business leaders who had a powerful influence over much of city government.

Barbara McClellan '51

Barbara Ann Walden McClellan '51 and former member of the McMurry University Board of Trustees, passed away on Feb. 13, 2009 at Eastern New Mexico Medical Center. She was born in Forsan, Texas on June 23, 1933 to Clarence Walden and Gladys Watts Walden. She and Jack McClellan were married on April 3, 1953 in Midland, Texas and enjoyed 50 years of marriage until his death in 2003. She graduated from Abilene High School and attended McMurry College, where she later served as a trustee for nine years. Jack and Barbara moved to Roswell from Hobbs in 1956, where they spent the rest of their lives together and raised a family.

Barbara was active in the community and enjoyed her affiliation with the Garden Club, Petroleum Club, and Dance Club. Her civic and volunteer services included Mental Health Crisis Line, Hospital Auxiliary, Cancer Society, Community League, Republican Party, and PTA. She was also active in the Methodist Church teaching Bible School and serving on numerous committees, including the Cowboy Bell Scholarship Fund Committee. She cherished her time and involvement with Teen Community Bible Study, as she loved mentoring and sharing her enthusiasm with the youth. Barbara and Jack traveled all over the world with Campus Crusade for Christ in the 1970s and 1980s, spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. They were actively

FRIENDS WE'LL MISS

involved in the distribution of a film called "Jesus." They also enjoyed traveling and spent many happy times with family and friends on various trips.

Florence West Williams '55

Florence Evelyn Williams '55 a retired English teacher and florist, passed away February 15, 2009 in Boyd, Texas. She lived her first years on a farm in Hamilton County. In 1945, the family moved to Hawley, where she graduated from high school in 1951. Evelyn enrolled in McMurry College and graduated in the spring of 1955. She married Royce Wayne Williams on March 21, 1959 in Handley Methodist Church in Fort Worth.

She taught English at Handley junior and senior high schools in Fort Worth for five years and at Boyd junior and senior high schools for 11 years. After retiring from teaching, she created and operated Village Flowers and Gifts in Boyd for 10 years until again retiring. Evelyn was a member of the First United Methodist Church.

Evelyn and Royce enjoyed traveling over the United States, visiting several Canadian provinces and enjoyed a special trip to England, Scotland and Ireland. Evelyn traveled with her sister, Clarita, to Europe four times and made one cruise of the Aegean Sea following the journeys of St. Paul.

Left behind to cherish her memory are her husband of 49 years, Royce; her son, Rafe Williams and his wife, Annette, of Boyd; her daughter, Mary Lewis and her husband, Keith, of Keller; grandchildren, Amanda and Travis Williams, and Kyle and Matthew Lewis; her sister, Clarita Dennis and her husband, Robert, of Bedford; sister-in-law, Shirley Hutcherson and her husband, Jim, of Arlington; brother-in-law, Charles Williams of Burleson; several nieces and nephews; other relatives; and a host of friends.

Doris Church

Doris Jean Dudley Church, a long-time friend of McMurry University, passed away January 19, 2009. Doris Jean Dudley was born to Lemuel Albert Dudley and Alice Elizabeth Fuller Dudley in Inkum, Texas south of Merkel on August 24, 1927. She was raised in the Merkel area and in 1946, she married Marvel Charles Church from Stith, Texas. Doris and M.C. farmed in Hale County between Plainview and Olton. In 1973, they moved to Abilene where they farmed in Taylor and Jones Counties. She was a faithful member of Aldersgate United Methodist Church and an avid supporter of McMurry University.

Doris is survived by her two children, Marvel Charles Church, Jr. DVM and wife, Judy, of Snyder, and Sue Church Pond of Abilene; four grandchildren, Dayla Merritt and husband, Bert, of Lubbock, Clark Church of Arlington, Virginia, Amy Wilson and husband, David, of Lubbock, and J. Pond of Abilene; three great-grandchildren, Dylan Merritt, Kyla Merritt and Macey Wilson; two brothers, Don Dudley and wife, Pat, of Granbury, and Dale Dudley and wife, Beth, of Tama, Iowa; as well as a host of friends and extended family. She was preceded in death by her husband and her parents. ■



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