

CAREY

THE WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE



Carey Athletics
**A WINNING
TRADITION**

STORY BEGINS ON PAGE 18

LETTERS FROM CAREY



Dear Carey Family,

As I close my third year as your president, I'm grateful every day that God has blessed Denice and me with this role. We have enjoyed connecting with so many of you and look forward to deepening those relationships in the years ahead. We rejoice in the pride you feel for your alma mater. I hope you will always remain connected to William Carey – your prayers mean the world to us as we move forward together.

God has truly blessed WCU this year, especially in the area of enrollment. We have worked to strengthen undergraduate enrollment as a way to build a strong pipeline for our graduate programs and enhance campus life. I am thrilled to say that we have made tremendous progress! In Fall 2024, we welcomed a record number of first-time freshmen, transfer students, and on-campus residents. Over the last two years, our first-time freshmen enrollment has increased by 42 percent! This success is thanks to our dedicated recruiters, admissions team, marketing, media relations, faculty, and staff – all of whom play a vital role in advancing Carey's mission.

In addition to these enrollment milestones, WCU continues to be recognized with state and national rankings you can take pride in as part of the Carey family.

We are once again ranked as the #1 Christian University in Mississippi and among the top 10 in the nation. Our commitment to keeping tuition affordable, expanding scholarship opportunities, and covering undergraduate textbook costs earned us the #1 Best Value ranking in the state. Our athletic programs have soared, achieving the #1 winning percentage among all college athletic programs in Mississippi for 2023-24. Our School of Education is ranked #1 in the state and in the top 15 nationwide of 950 schools offering education degrees. I am incredibly proud of our students, faculty, and staff for these achievements and look forward to even greater accomplishments in the future.

As we grow and build on our reputation as a top Christian university in the nation, we must also think ahead and ensure that scholarships remain available to provide Christian education. Earlier this year, we launched the "Great Things" campaign, a three-year effort to raise \$26.5 million. It is an ambitious goal, but we have already raised \$18 million – more than half-way there! We ask you to pray for the success of this campaign and invite you to connect us with people who share our passion for investing in Christian education.

The future of Carey is bright, but our success would not be possible without the leadership of former Carey presidents and the great work of alumni like you. Thank you for choosing Carey and for your prayers and support.

It's a Great Day to Be a Crusader!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben Burnett".

Ben Burnett
President, William Carey University



CAREY

THE WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE



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We Are Known

John 13:34-35

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William Carey University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award bachelor, master, education specialist, and doctoral degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of William Carey University.



Out of the Shadows, GOING BIG-TIME

By Ben Milam
SuperTalk Mississippi News

IN A WORLD OF NOSE-DIVING STUDENT ENROLLMENT FOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES ACROSS THE U.S., AND INCREASINGLY STINGY COMPETITION AMONG PEERS, WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY IS THRIVING.

The National Center for Education Statistics says enrollment nationwide has dropped more than 15 percent in the last decade, a number that sank 5 percent more from the 2022-23 to 2023-24 school year. The climb for private institutions is even steeper, with less than 30 percent of American undergraduates now attending non-public schools.

But in that same 10-year stretch, Carey has defiantly marched in the opposite direction. It began with a renewed objective of expansion under the late Dr. Tommy King in post-Katrina

south Mississippi. It hit warp speed in the wake of the 2017 tornado that decimated the Hattiesburg campus, sparking a recovery that turned to transformation.

Dr. Ben Burnett has held the reins as president since King's retirement in 2022. As he put it following his inauguration, Burnett isn't filling King's shoes but "standing on the shoulders of a giant."

Since 2015, William Carey has poured more than \$175 million into construction, capital improvements, and a slew of other projects at both its home base in Hattiesburg and its newer Tradition campus in Biloxi.

Accolades, attention, and enrollment have all followed suit.

NATIONAL RANKINGS

William Carey was recently ranked by Niche as Mississippi's top private university, best small college, best Christian college, best college for education, and safest college campus. WCU was also ranked the No. 11 Best College for Education in the entire U.S. among 957 schools that offer education degrees, and the No. 10 Best Christian College in America.

Most other universities – both public and private – are standing on tenuous footing. But Dr. Burnett says Carey's success is a credit to the school's commitment to culture, community, and its founding mission. Because of that trio of factors, the experience is different.

"We know our students," Dr. Burnett told SuperTalk Mississippi News, noting that WCU has retained a small campus feel even as it's grown to more than 5,000 students.

"I think that makes it meaningful to our students and makes our faculty and staff contribute and want to stay here longer," Burnett said.

Retention isn't the only number that's up. The College of Osteopathic Medicine continues to balloon, more than doubling in size over the last 10 years and becoming the largest medical school in the state of Mississippi. And as of late, a previously stagnant undergraduate student body is growing again.

The largest freshman class in Carey history landed on campus to begin the 2024-25 academic year, with early projections hinting that 2026 could shatter that mark.



"We don't think there is a ceiling," Dr. Burnett said of Carey's growth.

"We're not necessarily trying to achieve a 20,000-student population – although I think that's possible. But maybe not during my tenure."

As of now, school leaders have their sights set on the 8,000- to 10,000-student range. The recent purchase of 107 acres adjacent to the

Hattiesburg campus, and abundant expansion space on the Tradition campus, means there's more than enough room to grow.

EXPECT GREAT THINGS FROM GOD; ATTEMPT GREAT THINGS FOR GOD

But as enrollment blooms and the superlatives stack, the mission stays the same.

Dr. Burnett pointed to the school's namesake, Dr. William Carey, as the cornerstone for what the school strives to be. A devotion to service colors the Crusader way, following in step with the legacy left by the "Father of Modern Missions" nearly 200 years ago.

The medical school's burgeoning reputation as a producer of rural physicians is reflective of that commitment. William Carey-trained doctors are steadily chipping away at Mississippi's rural healthcare crisis, with nearly 500 physicians placed in rural health facilities since 2019.

"We've got a lot of high rankings and a lot of accolades, but our heart is to serve. And that's more important than anything else we're doing right now. It's not just our namesake, it's our mission," Burnett said.

That mission is churning forth at a pace never seen before from William Carey, with no signs of the advancement slowing any time soon. A recent economic impact released by the university shows the effect isn't isolated, with Carey's progress supporting more than 1,200 jobs in Mississippi and generating \$131 million for the state.

If the flight path stays true for south Mississippi's oldest but fastest growing higher education institution, William Carey will soon rise to the ranks of a major player. At a press conference in late January, Dr. Burnett gave a succinct summation of the course Carey is now following:

"We are out of the shadows, and we are going big-time."



William Carey University has purchased 107 acres of undeveloped land adjacent to its Hattiesburg campus. The land is located to the south of the baseball and softball fields.

WCU already owned the land directly between the ballfields and the new acquisition — creating a large, unbroken property ready for current and future development.

WCU's campus currently occupies 130 acres, so the purchase nearly doubles the university's acreage.

Dr. Ben Burnett: "This acquisition secures our ability to expand and serve Mississippi for decades to come. It is a transformational moment for William Carey University."

The first building project, when it comes, is expected to be a new, parkway-style entrance to the Hattiesburg campus.



NICHE AWARDS HIGH MARKS

to WCU in State, National Rankings

WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY HAS EMERGED AS THE HIGHEST-RANKED FOUR-YEAR SCHOOL IN CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI IN NICHE'S "2025 BEST COLLEGES IN MISSISSIPPI" LIST.

"I'm proud that decades of hard work by faculty, staff, trustees and alumni is recognized at the state and national levels. For 133 years, William Carey University has educated students through a Christian world view. We find ways to serve the under-served, just as our namesake, Dr. William Carey, did 200 years ago," said WCU President Dr. Ben Burnett.

"People are taking notice of our enrollment growth, campus expansions, and new programs. But the Carey family is not satisfied yet. We're working toward an even bigger

impact on our state and our country."

WCU was ranked No. 3 overall in Niche's "Best Colleges in Mississippi" list. Only two schools, both in the northern part of the state, were ranked higher – the University of Mississippi and Mississippi State.

NO. 1 IN MISSISSIPPI

WCU's report card also includes five No. 1 Mississippi rankings in these specific areas: Top Private University, Best Small College, Best Christian College, Best College for Education and Safest College Campus.

Steve Rosser is WCU's director of public safety.

"Over the past year, William Carey has strengthened its relationships with emergency service providers from the city of Hattiesburg and Forrest County," Rosser said.

"New safety features include more security



cameras on campus and along its perimeter, upgraded LED lighting outside, new sidewalks, two new lighted parking lots with fencing and security, and enhancements to the Emergency Alerts notification system."

NATIONAL RANKINGS

At the national level, WCU paired its "No. 1 in Mississippi" ranking as Best College for Education with a high mark at the national level – No. 11 in the same category out of 957 schools offering education degrees.

"Our mission, every day, is to prepare caring, confident and reflective educators. We work to ensure every classroom, every school, has effective teachers trained in a Christian environment – because their students are an investment in the future. In that, we live William Carey's motto: Expect great things from God;

attempt great things for God," said Dr. Teresa Poole, dean of the WCU School of Education.

Finally, William Carey cracked the Top 10 nationally in the Best Christian College category – mirroring another No. 1 Mississippi ranking.

Founded in 2002, Niche uses data from the U.S. Department of Education to rank education providers from individual K-12 schools and school districts to four-year colleges and universities. Included in Niche's analysis are factors like academic strength, professors, value for cost, campus life, athletics, diversity, student life, dorms, dining and location. For more information, visit www.Niche.com.

NICHE

#1 SAFEST CAMPUS

NICHE AWARDED A TOTAL OF FIVE "NO. 1 IN MISSISSIPPI" RANKINGS TO WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY — AMONG THEM "SAFEST COLLEGE CAMPUS." LED BY SECURITY CHIEF STEVE ROSSER, 2024-25 IMPROVEMENTS INCLUDE:

Strengthened relationships with Hattiesburg Police Department, Hattiesburg Fire Department, Forrest County Sheriff's Department, Mississippi Highway Patrol, Forrest County Emergency Management and AAA Ambulance.

Improved security camera system and installed more cameras on campus. Additional cameras are being added on the perimeter of campus.

Upgraded LED lighting on William Carey Parkway and Tommy King drive.

Added sidewalks along William Carey Parkway for students and staff.

Worked with City of Hattiesburg to improve traffic and pedestrian flow at high pedestrian traffic-count intersections outside the main campus.

Built two additional parking lots with LED lighting and fencing.

Enhanced Emergency Alerts system to notify students and employees in the event of an emergency.

Conducted fire and weather drills and tested Threat Drill Alert System.

Added more Automated External Defibrillators on WCU campuses.

Developed safety presentations for the security staff on protocols during emergencies.

WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY DEDICATES Fordham Place



Gary Fordham

**WILLIAM CAREY
UNIVERSITY
SUPPORTERS
GATHERED JAN.
27 FOR THE
DEDICATION OF
THE SCHOOL'S
LATEST BUILDING
PROJECT,
FORDHAM
PLACE – NEW TOWNHOUSES FOR
MEDICAL STUDENTS NAMED IN
HONOR OF LONGTIME TRUSTEE
GARY FORDHAM, WHO PASSED
AWAY IN MAY 2023.**

"Great men seldom rise to greatness by lifting themselves up. They rise by lifting those around them. It's impossible to overstate the energy Gary brought to a meeting – his ability to listen, to analyze with passion and wisdom," said Dr. Jimmy Stewart, WCU trustee and pastor of First Baptist Church Gulfport.

Fordham's daughter, Haley Fordham McCool, spoke on behalf of her family.

"Dad didn't like the spotlight. He liked to work behind the scenes. He might have shied away from seeing his name on a building, but as a family, we are incredibly honored to have his work recognized in this way," McCool said.

The Fordham family has deep ties to William Carey University.

In 1953, Mississippi Woman's College became a co-educational school with a new name, William Carey College. Gary Fordham's father, W.A., newly returned from service in World War II, was the first male student to enroll. While W.A. pursued a degree in theological studies, he and his bride, Ethel, lived in a little apartment above a grocery store just off campus. In time, they welcomed a son, Gary Fordham.

Gary grew up to become a successful businessman, first in manufactured housing, where he took his company public, then in real estate development – building homes and communities. He found his passion in faith, family and service to his church. He was also a trustee for New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and William Carey University, where he served for 17 years.

"While Dad did not follow in his father's footsteps when it came to a career, he always thought it was a great honor to serve the church his father pastored for more than 30 years and where he pursued his education – William Carey and the seminary," McCool said.

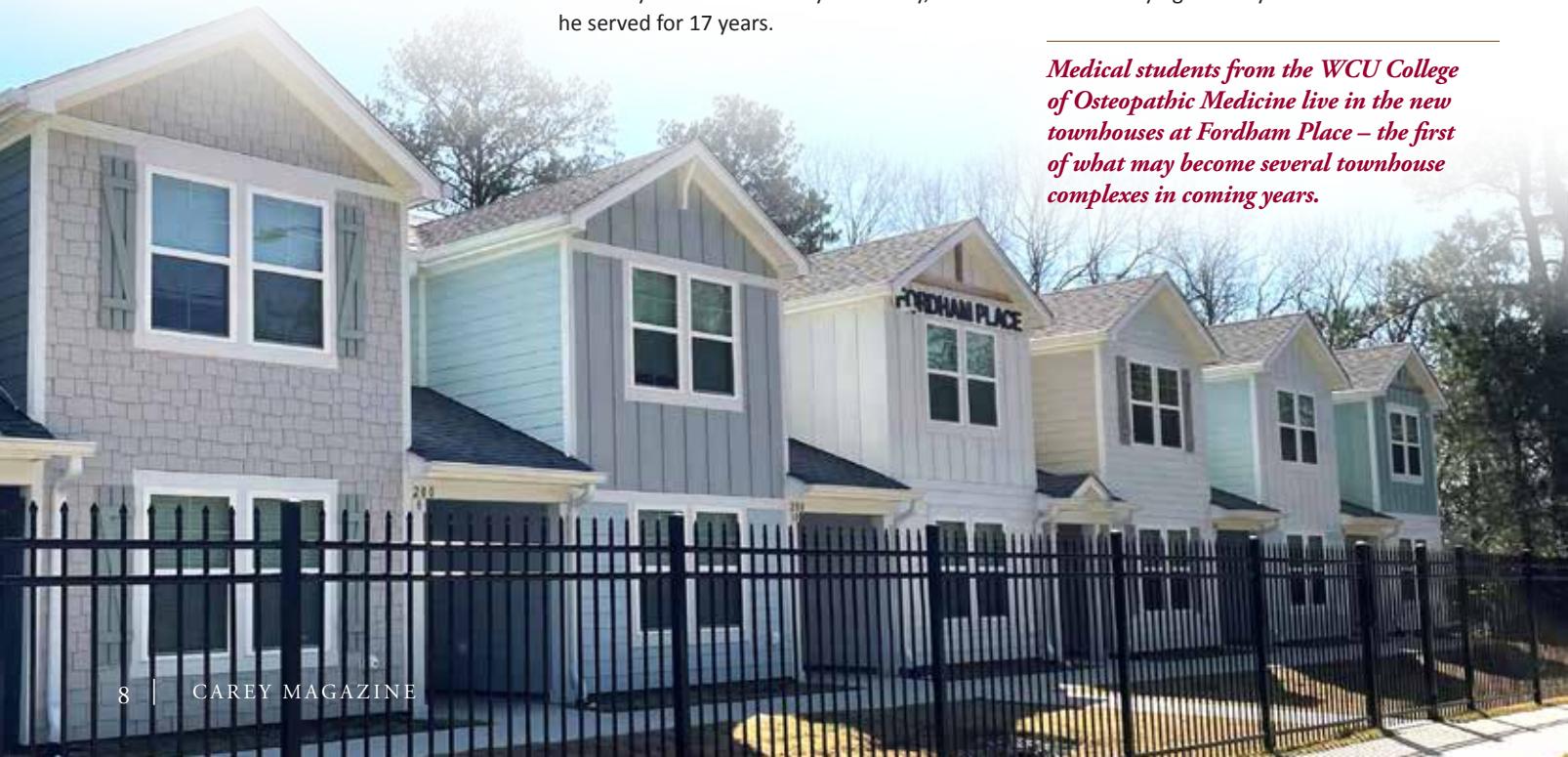
WCU President Dr. Ben Burnett said Fordham helped guide the university through pivotal changes.

"As a trustee, he was key in the development and expansion of the College of Osteopathic Medicine. That was something many people thought we couldn't do – now it's the largest medical school in the state," Burnett said.

"In 2017, he helped steer the university's recovery after a tornado destroyed or damaged almost every building on the Hattiesburg campus. His deep commitment helped William Carey become what it is today."

Over the years, Gary Fordham's family has been well-represented in WCU's student body by his wife, who earned bachelor's and master's degrees in education at WCU, his daughter, who holds a master's degree in business administration, his brother, and a niece studying at Carey now.

Medical students from the WCU College of Osteopathic Medicine live in the new townhouses at Fordham Place – the first of what may become several townhouse complexes in coming years.



CAREY INSTITUTE *for* EXCELLENCE



THE CAREY INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE LAUNCHED IN 2024 TO SERVE AS A HUB FOR TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT. OUR MISSION IS TO DELIVER INNOVATIVE, EXECUTIVE-LEVEL TRAINING AND CUSTOMIZED EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES, EQUIPPING PROFESSIONALS AND ORGANIZATIONS TO THRIVE IN TODAY'S DYNAMIC WORLD.

Our vision is to be a catalyst for community and organizational growth by fostering professional development and connecting leaders with meaningful learning opportunities.

Cutting edge opportunities: Innovative training with focus on micro-credentialing and digital badging offers learners modern, accessible ways to showcase their expertise and advance their careers.

2025-26 LINE-UP:

Healthcare Hospitality
Creating Exceptional Customer Experiences
Small Business & Entrepreneurial Start-up
Special Education Administration
Special Education Law
Strategic Leadership Seminars (military focus)
Artificial Intelligence in the Workplace
Non-profit Executive Training
Spanish

To get in touch with the Carey Institute for Excellence, email excellence@wmcarey.edu.



**WILLIAM CAREY
UNIVERSITY**

CAREY INSTITUTE *for* EXCELLENCE

WCU Receives ADP Chairman's AWARD of EXCELLENCE



The Area Development Partnership presented its "2024 Chairman's Award of Excellence" to William Carey University on Dec. 6 during its annual meeting at Thad Cochran Center. The award honors a community leader and/or business that has exceeded expectations for time and effort devoted to the ADP during the previous year.

"It was my pleasure to select William Carey University as the recipient of the 2024 ADP Chairman's Award of Excellence. Dr. Burnett and his team have been extremely dedicated to helping the ADP carry out its vision and mission," said ADP Board Chairman Roman Galey.

"They are dedicated ADP members and Partnership Foundation Investors, and they have sponsored an array of events on campus at Carey and throughout the community. We can always count on Dr. Burnett for his unwavering support of the ADP – including serving on our board of directors."

Chad Newell, left, president of the Area Development Partnership, visits with WCU President Ben Burnett after the ADP's annual meeting.

"Dr. Burnett and his team have been extremely dedicated to helping the ADP carry out its vision and mission"

- ROMAN GALEY,
ADP BOARD CHAIRMAN

SACSCOC
Board of Trustees

Welcomes
DR. NOAL COCHRAN

**WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY
PROVOST DR. NOAL COCHRAN HAS
BEEN ELECTED AS A TRUSTEE OF
SACSCOC, ONE OF THE LARGEST
ACCREDITING ORGANIZATIONS IN
THE COUNTRY.**

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges is the accrediting body for about 800 higher education entities that award degrees in Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia. Its main purpose is to improve educational quality and assure the public that its member institutions meet approved standards.

"Dr. Cochran has a wealth of experience, not only in educational circles, but specifically in the area of accreditation. We are pleased that he will be able to utilize that experience to serve other SACSCOC schools and represent William Carey on a regional and national level," said WCU President Dr. Ben Burnett.

As part of the 77-member SACSCOC Board

of Trustees, Cochran will serve on a standing committee on Compliance and Reports (C&R) – evaluating a variety of institutional reports and formulating recommendations about

institutions' accreditation status with SACSCOC. C&R Committees meet twice a year, along with an executive session of the full board.

Cochran's three-year term ends Dec. 31, 2027.

*Noal and Laura
Cochran with Janet
Williams at the
Carey Carnival.*





Nursing Profile

TISHANDRE MONTGOMERY

TISHANDRE MONTGOMERY EARNED A MASTER'S DEGREE IN NURSING AT WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY IN FEBRUARY 2022. TODAY, SHE'S A FULL-TIME FACULTY MEMBER TEACHING ADULT HEALTH II, PATHOPHYSIOLOGY, AND TRANSITION TO PRECEPTORSHIP IN THE WCU SCHOOL OF NURSING. SHE RECENTLY PASSED THE RIGOROUS EXAM TO BECOME A CERTIFIED HEALTHCARE SIMULATION EDUCATOR (CHSE).



WHAT'S YOUR HOMETOWN?

I am from a little town called Woodville. My sister and I are five years apart, but we are very close. It was just the two of us, so we did everything together.

We loved spending time at both grandmothers' houses. At my grandmother Cynthia's house, we would spend weekends dressing up in her church hats and styling her hair. When we visited my late grandmother, Virginia, we would gather with our cousins, drink coffee, eat grits, and watch "The Price is Right" or "The Young and the Restless."

My mother, Tishi, has been in education for 23 years. She's a fifth-grade school teacher in Natchez. My father, Kevin, has been an equipment operator for more than 30 years.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE NURSING?

I've always loved helping people, even as a little girl. My grandmother Virginia was diabetic, and she would sit at her dining room table to check her blood sugar. She would let me help, even if it was just holding the cotton ball on her finger to stop the bleeding. As I grew older, I made it a priority to help others. I'm the first nurse in either my mom's or dad's family – and I'm working on my PhD in nursing now.

WHAT WAS THE CHSE EXAM LIKE?

It was very challenging. You have two hours to complete 115 questions. The questions are about applying what you've learned, not the usual knowledge-based questions, so they require you to think beyond what you already know.



WHAT DOES A CERTIFIED HEALTHCARE SIMULATION EDUCATOR DO?

I help nursing students use our simulation labs to practice their skills in real time. In the sim labs, we use manikins that can replicate features such as blood pressure, heart rate and breath sounds. They're sort of like "mannequins" used for other purposes – but these are high-tech, human figures capable of realistically displaying a wide range of medical conditions. The manikins can also "talk" to the students.

During a simulation, I'm in the next room, watching behind one-way glass. I can control the vital signs of the manikin, introduce changes to the scenario, challenge them to apply what they've learned.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A SIMULATION SESSION?

After the simulation, we gather for a debriefing – a conversation about the simulation the students just completed. Debriefing is the longest part of the process because it's where all the learning and takeaways occur.

COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Currently, about 400 nursing students are enrolled at WCU's Hattiesburg, Tradition, and Baton Rouge campuses. Highly-qualified nurses can specialize in medical surgical, critical care, emergency care, telemetry, orthopedic, pediatrics, labor and delivery, surgery, etc. WCU also offers degrees in Health Administration and Education, Health Information Management, Pharmacy and Physical Therapy – and an Occupational Therapy program is in development.

Carey Shines

at State-Level Competitions



THEATRE, COMMUNICATION, VISUAL ART & EDUCATION

WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY LIBERAL ARTS STUDENTS WERE BUSY THIS WINTER. A COMBINATION OF CURRENT CRUSADERS, ALUMNI, AND STAFF WERE HONORED AT MISSISSIPPI FESTIVALS AND CONFERENCES – AND REACHED OUT TO HELP YOUNGER STUDENTS.



Tim Matheny

“Our university’s namesake once said, ‘Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God.’ This fuels our drive to produce great work. We take great pride in the accomplishments of both our current and past students, whose impact on the world

is truly profound,” said Tim Matheny, chair of theatre and communication.

“The liberal arts play a vital role in today’s education landscape. In a world increasingly defined by specialization, the liberal arts cultivate essential skills in creativity, communication, and critical thinking – skills that drive innovation, foster understanding, and shape a brighter future.”

DECEMBER 6-7

WCU hosted Mississippi Theatre Association’s DramaFest 2024 for South Mississippi. Matheny and a crew of Carey theatre students kept things running smoothly as 12 troupes from South Mississippi high schools performed one-act plays, competing for a spot in the MTA statewide finals.

Senior theatre major Malayna Knapp was one of the WCU volunteers: “There were 16-hour days, but it’s worth it. As a theatre major, I understand the importance of contributing to a positive experience for younger artists.”

JANUARY 19

Matheny won the 2025 Stephen Cunetto Award during Mississippi Theatre Association’s Statewide Festival. MTA presents the award to only one person each year. The honoree is a person who has “added significantly to the successful operation of MTA through actions that are noteworthy for their positive image, regional recognition, long tenure, program establishment, and administrative service.”

FEBRUARY 4

WCU Director of Bands Travis Coakley was emcee for the Mississippi Alliance for Arts Education’s 2025 “Breakfast of Champions.” Three WCU alums won awards – including two of the four Cochran Awards.

- Superintendent **LaMarlon Wilson** accepted the School District of Excellence Award on behalf of Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and Blind. Wilson earned a master’s degree in music education in 2011.

- **Mackenzie Charles**, who graduated in 2024 with a bachelor of fine arts degree in theatre for young audiences, won a Thad Cochran Distinguished Educator Award for Theater.

- **Amber West** won a Thad Cochran Distinguished Educator Award for Visual Art. West graduated from WCU with a bachelor of fine arts degree in theatre – and earned a master's in education in 2018.

FEBRUARY 7

Four William Carey students were invited to present papers at the Mississippi Communication Association's annual conference.

- **Logan Brady**'s paper was titled, "Matt Chandler and the Advent of Peace." It was about a pastor's successful efforts to reconcile himself to his family and church after he was suspended for messaging a woman who was not his wife. Brady is majoring in strategic communication and leadership.
- **Jason Gaston**'s paper looked at several kinds of historic Christian rhetoric – preaching, apologetic, polemic – and how they correlate with historical figures. Gaston is majoring in strategic communication and leadership.

- **Scarlett Leake**'s paper, "From Touchdown to Stage," proposed more funding at the high school level for theatre because of its ability to benefit a larger percentage of students. Her work attracted the attention of a state legislator, who has requested a meeting. Leake is a double major in theatre and strategic communication and leadership, and is interested in attending law school.

- **Maegan Putnam** is a graduate student in Christian theology and a full-time WCU employee in the Cooper School of Missions & Ministry. Her paper examined how feminism has transitioned over time, from conservative Christian roots to modern secularism.



Dr. Brandon Knight

- During the conference, **Dr. Brandon Knight** was elected president of the MCA. Brandon is an assistant professor of strategic communication and leadership and director of WCU's speech and debate program.



MISSISSIPPI COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION (MCA)

Four Carey students were invited to present papers at the MCA conference, from left, Samantha Leake, Jason Gaston, Maegan Putnam, and Logan Brady.



MISSISSIPPI ALLIANCE FOR ARTS EDUCATION

Three WCU alumni won awards at the Mississippi Alliance for Arts Education's annual award ceremony, from left, Amber West, LaMarlon Wilson, and Mackenzie Charles.

WILLIAM CAREY RECEIVES \$1 MILLION GIFT

for Thomas J. Richardson Endowed Chair

WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY ANNOUNCES THE THOMAS J. RICHARDSON ENDOWED CHAIR IN LITERARY STUDIES – MADE POSSIBLE BY A \$1 MILLION GIFT FROM AN ANONYMOUS DONOR.

The gift honors Dr. Richardson's impact on the academic community and decades of dedication to literary scholarship at Hattiesburg's universities. Richardson has served as chair of William Carey University's Department of Language and Literature since 2005. Before that, he taught for more than 30 years at the University of Southern Mississippi, where he was chair of the Department of English.

Family, friends and colleagues gathered Dec. 5 for a reception to mark the occasion.

"I am so very grateful for this gift and notice in my honor, but the real credit should and must go to the anonymous

donor. The gift is directed entirely to support and develop our programs in language and literature, and it comes at a time when both enrollment and curriculum can benefit from this significant attention," Richardson said.

"Our programs in English and Spanish have a rich history at Carey, and we applaud the faculty, alumni and great students who are – and have been – our best evidence of strength and promise. Thanks to this gift, we look forward to an even brighter future."

WCU President Dr. Ben Burnett reflected on the past as he looked toward that bright future.

"I think I can say I've known Dr. Richardson longer than anyone in this room. My father was a campus minister at USM. We moved to mid-town in 1973 and attended church with Dr. Richardson's family," Burnett said.

"And today, William Carey University is deeply grateful to the anonymous

donor who honored Dr. Richardson in this profound way. His extraordinary influence on generations of students has enriched not only our university, but also the larger field of American literary scholarship. This gift will carry his legacy forward, ensuring that future Carey students will benefit from the high standards he has set."

The Thomas J. Richardson Endowed Chair in Literary Studies will provide vital resources for WCU's Department of Language and Literature – including support for faculty research, curriculum innovation, and new programming that enhances the academic experience of WCU students.

Dr. Richardson is known for his deep expertise in American literature, particularly the works of Mark Twain, southern literature, and literary theory. He has authored significant scholarly articles in publications such as "The History of Southern Literature," "The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture," "Companion to Southern Literature" and "A Literary History of Mississippi."

In addition to teaching a broad range of undergraduate and graduate courses in literature and writing at William Carey University, Dr. Richardson's leadership includes 10 years as co-editor of the "Mississippi Folklore Register" and nearly 25 years as an advisory editor for the "Southern Quarterly." Dr. Richardson has also presented scholarly papers and lectures at prestigious literary gatherings across the country.

For information, call the William Carey University Office of Advancement at (601) 318-6192.

Dr. Ben Burnett, left, visits with Dr. Thomas Richardson, whose dedication to literary scholarship at Hattiesburg's two universities spans more than 50 years.



WCU's David Weldon Wins NATIONAL PHARMACY AWARD

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES OF PHARMACY (AAPC) HAS ANNOUNCED THE RECIPIENTS OF ITS TOP AWARDS FOR 2025.



Dr. David Weldon

Dr. David Weldon, dean of the William Carey University School of Pharmacy, received the 2025 AAPC Rufus A. Lyman Award, which recognizes the best paper published in the American Journal of Pharmaceutical

Education during the previous year. The honor comes for a paper he co-authored titled, "A National Survey of Perceptions Around Conditions Associated with Pharmacy Faculty Workload Equity."

"The Lyman Award Committee selects one paper a year that it feels will have a great impact on the field of pharmacy education," Weldon said.

"I'm really honored and blessed to be part of a group of collaborators from across the nation who are passionate about workload issues and improving the outcomes for students. The award selection does not rely on a formal application or nomination process, so it's even more special to me."

AACP CEO Lee Vermeulen said he is proud to recognize outstanding achievements of this year's award recipients, whose exceptional contributions to education, research, service and scholarly publishing inspire the next generation of pharmacists, educators, scholars and thought leaders.

Recipients will be honored in July at AAPC's annual meeting in Chicago, Illinois.



LINDSAY COLYER Rural Teacher of the Year



DR. LINDSAY COLYER WAS NAMED "2025 MISSISSIPPI RURAL TEACHER OF THE YEAR" DURING AN AWARD CEREMONY ON FEB. 28. THE CEREMONY WAS PART OF AN ANNUAL CONFERENCE FOR K-12 EDUCATORS CO-HOSTED BY PREPS—PROGRAM FOR RESEARCH AND EVALUATION FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Colyer teaches science at Mississippi School of the Arts – a passion that began in childhood, fueled by curiosity and nurtured by mentors.

"Now, as a teacher, she engages students with hands-on activities, reflection journals

and active learning strategies to make science come alive. Whether it's 'Would you rather be a proton, neutron, or electron?' or exploring cephalopods, her students develop critical thinking skills," said Dr. Chuck Benigno, executive director of PREPS.

Colyer said the approach makes sense: "It may seem like a strange question, but you can't tell me whether you want to be a proton, neutron, or electron without learning something about them. That's the beginning of knowing how to research."

ABOVE: Dr. Lindsay Colyer and her mother, Suzette Harrigal, pause for a moment before heading home after the award ceremony.



WILLIAM CAREY CRUSADE

Lead Mississippi in Winning Percentage

WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY'S ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT TOPPED ALL FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES IN MISSISSIPPI WITH A 68% OVERALL WINNING PERCENTAGE FOR THE 2023-2024 ATHLETIC YEAR. SEVERAL SPORTS STOOD OUT WITH EXCEPTIONAL SEASONS:

BASEBALL: SSAC Champions with a 37-16 record and back-to-back NAIA World Series appearances.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL: Co-champions of the SSAC regular season with a 22-5 record.

MEN'S SOCCER: Reached the NAIA tournament's opening round with a 16-5-1 record.

WOMEN'S SOCCER: Finished 24-1 after reaching the NAIA national championship final.

In the SSAC, Carey won the Commissioner's Cup for the 8th consecutive year. The Crusaders won the overall cup along with the men's and women's divisions by significant margins.

Nationally, Carey was recognized as a top-five NAIA athletic department in the Learfield Cup standings, driven by standout performances in women's soccer, indoor track & field, baseball, and more.



WOMEN'S SOCCER
Finishes 24-1



BASEBALL
2024 NAIA Opening Round Champions



MEN'S SOCCER
Reaches NAIA Opening Round



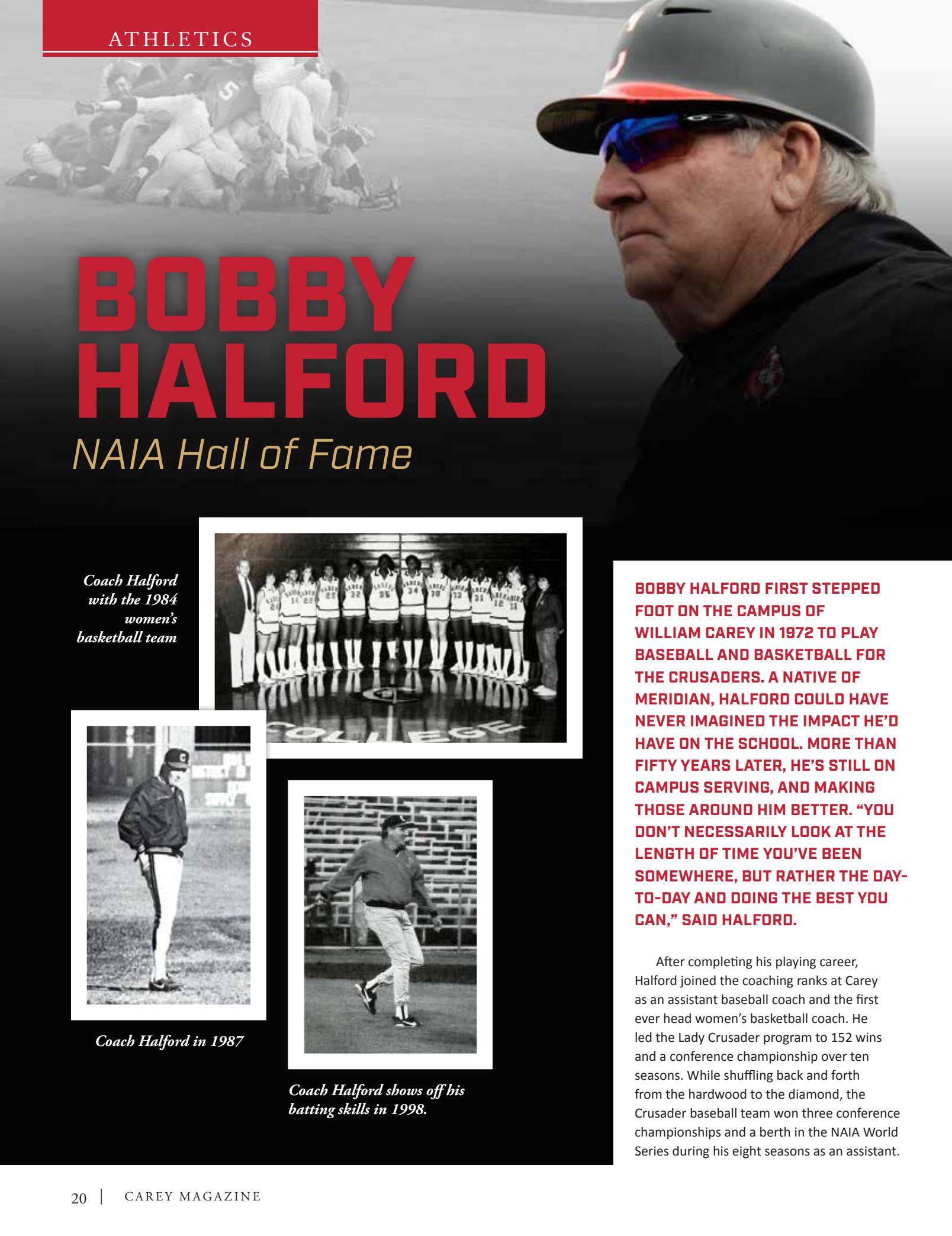
**THE CRUSADERS HAVE
CONTINUED THEIR SUCCESS IN
THE 2024-2025 SEASON.**

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL set a school record with 29 wins and their first trip to the NAIA Final Site.

MEN'S SOCCER reached the NAIA Final Four for the sixth time.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL remained undefeated throughout the regular season with a 24-0 record, finally falling to Blue Mountain in the quarterfinals of the SSAC tournament. The Lady Crusaders received an automatic bid to the NAIA opening round.

MEN'S BASKETBALL finished the regular season with a 19-10 record and advanced to the quarterfinals of the SSAC tournament.



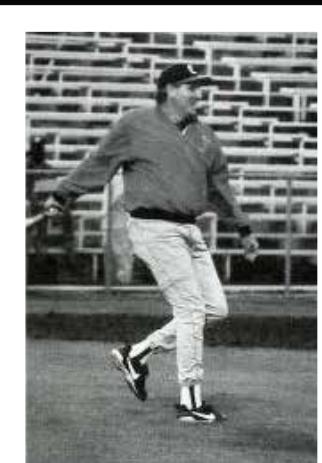
BOBBY HALFORD

NAIA Hall of Fame

Coach Halford with the 1984 women's basketball team



Coach Halford in 1987



Coach Halford shows off his batting skills in 1998.

BOBBY HALFORD FIRST STEPPED FOOT ON THE CAMPUS OF WILLIAM CAREY IN 1972 TO PLAY BASEBALL AND BASKETBALL FOR THE CRUSADERS. A NATIVE OF MERIDIAN, HALFORD COULD HAVE NEVER IMAGINED THE IMPACT HE'D HAVE ON THE SCHOOL. MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS LATER, HE'S STILL ON CAMPUS SERVING, AND MAKING THOSE AROUND HIM BETTER. "YOU DON'T NECESSARILY LOOK AT THE LENGTH OF TIME YOU'VE BEEN SOMEWHERE, BUT RATHER THE DAY-TO-DAY AND DOING THE BEST YOU CAN," SAID HALFORD.

After completing his playing career, Halford joined the coaching ranks at Carey as an assistant baseball coach and the first ever head women's basketball coach. He led the Lady Crusader program to 152 wins and a conference championship over ten seasons. While shuffling back and forth from the hardwood to the diamond, the Crusader baseball team won three conference championships and a berth in the NAIA World Series during his eight seasons as an assistant.

Halford moved into an administration role after being named William Carey's Athletic Director in 1984. He served in that role until 1987. When asked about the different roles through the years, Halford said, "I've been really fortunate to be in a place with such a supportive administration. And not only that, but to be able to coach in an area that has a history of producing great athletes in a lot of different sports. It's made it that much easier to always have great talent around me."

In 1986, Halford returned to William Carey Baseball and a dynasty was born. Entering the 2025 season, Halford's 40th as skipper, the legendary coach has amassed 20 conference championships, 27 trips to the NAIA postseason, 1,337 victories, and three trips to the NAIA World Series including two semi-finalist finishes. To put that into perspective, William Carey Baseball has been to the NAIA World Series a total of five times; Halford has been there for four of them. His impact on the success of the team is undeniable, but his impact on individual players is also remarkable. During his time as head coach, William Carey has had over 50 players move on to play professionally.

Halford's success as a coach hasn't been a secret hidden away on the campus of William Carey. He's been named a conference and regional coach of the year by his peers 13 times. To add to that, he was named the NAIA

National Coach of the Year in 2017 and the Small College National Coach of the Year in 2021. He's currently the winningest active coach in the NAIA and sixth in the history of NAIA Baseball. Entering the 2025 season, Halford is 37 wins shy of becoming the winningest baseball coach in Mississippi history. In the fall of 2024, Halford became the first ever inductee from William Carey into the NAIA Hall of Fame. "All of this success comes on the backs of a lot of people before and around me. I had great coaches when I was coming up: people like Don Evans and Bill Marchant at Meridian High School and John O'Keefe and John Stephenson when I got to William Carey. Those guys all paved the way for what we are able to do today," said Halford.

Halford was inducted into the WCU Athletic Hall of Fame in 2015 and received the Legacy of Leadership Award in 2018. This year he is slated

to enter the WCU Alumni Hall of Fame as he celebrates the 50th anniversary of his graduation from Carey in 1975. If you ask him about all of the accolades and success, his response is always the same. He'll cut you a grin and tell you about all of the people around him that made it possible. Never one to take credit, but always one to give credit to others, "The most important people that I can thank for all of these years is my family. They've always been incredibly understanding and supportive of what I was doing here. Without them none of this is possible."

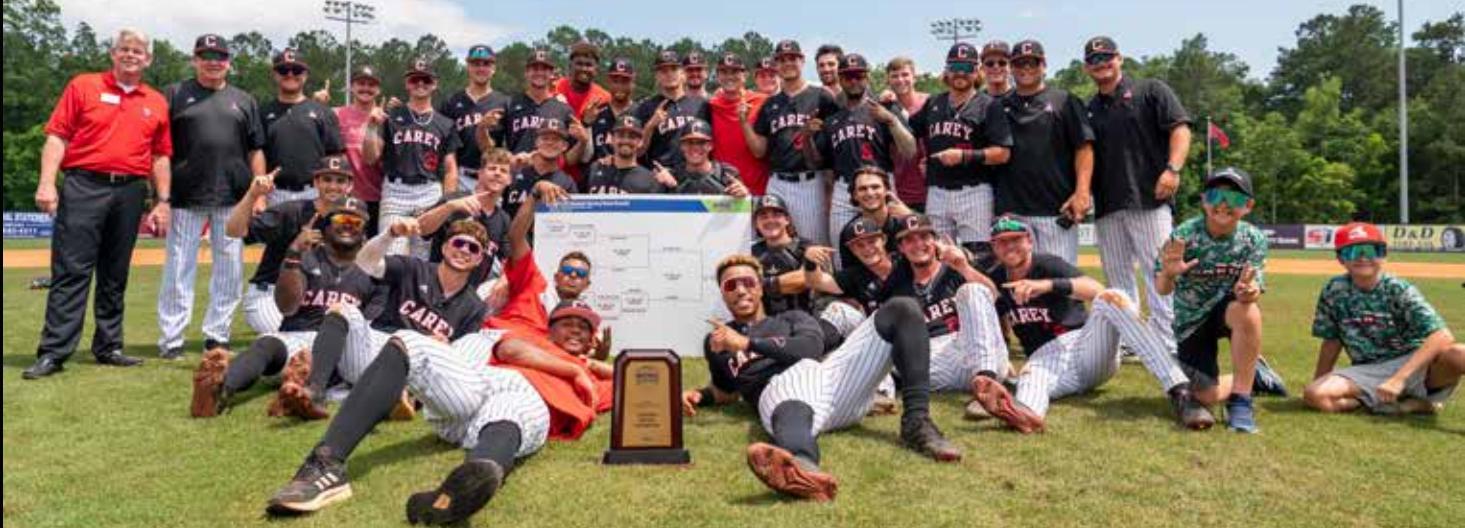


ABOVE Coach Halford offers pitching advice in 2003.



LEFT Halford was selected junior class favorite in 1974 and senior class favorite in 1975.

Halford with the 2023 NAIA opening round championship team



Tracy English

From Standout Guard to Stand-Up Athletic Director

1981-83: standout guard for the Crusaders with two District 30 championships, one GCAC championship, and two trips to the NAIA national tournament

1984: earned B.S. in physical education at Carey

1984-87: graduate assistant for men's basketball

1990: earned Master of Education at Carey

1988-2018: full-time assistant coach for men's basketball with GCAC championships, four District 30 championships, two SSAC championships, and eight NAIA national tournament appearances

1990-2024: head coach for women's basketball with three GCAC championships, two SSAC championships, and six NAIA national tournament appearances

2023-24: interim athletic director

2024: full time athletic director



Lady Crusaders Win HALBROOK AWARD



In November, William Carey University's Lady Crusaders won a Halbrook Award for female student-athletes in the Independent College and University Division. Halbrook Awards are presented by the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning to schools whose student athletes post the highest graduation rates. Women's sports at Carey boasted an overall graduation rate of more than 80 percent – led by the volleyball team's 93.75 percent. William Carey's individual Halbrook awards for excellence in academics, leadership and service went to Alex Beeler in the men's division and Kinley Hogue in the women's division.

Athletic Director Tracy English: "We are excited and extremely proud of our programs, both on the field and in the classroom. I know how much time and effort it takes to be a student-athlete. For our kids to achieve this honor is awesome."

WCU President Dr. Ben Burnett presents the Halbrook trophy to Assistant Athletic Director Lauren Broom and Athletic Director Tracy English.

Cheer Team

COMPETES IN FIRST-EVER COMPETITION



William Carey's Competitive Cheer Team competed in its first competition on Feb. 13, taking part in the Ram Showdown, hosted by the University of Mobile. The day started with a head-to-head, featuring WCU and Mobile, with both teams performing one routine. The afternoon session was a three-team competition, featuring Mobile, Loyola University and WCU. The Lady Crusaders didn't prevail in either session – but steadily improved their score. Head Coach Laura Lightsey: "Wearing the WCU across their chest for the first time in history at cheer competition and I couldn't be more proud of the performances they gave today. After last-minute changes, they fought hard and persevered to represent their university. Today was a great day to 'get to' be a William Carey Cheerleader." The Lady Crusaders' season also included appearances as at the Life University Classic and the SSAC Championship.

SWIM TEAM

Hosts First Meet

WCU Men's and Women's Swim Teams hosted their first-ever meet Jan. 11 at Biloxi Natatorium. The men took care of business against Loyola (La.) beating them 137–86. Against Loyola, the men opened the day with a win in the Medley Relay. Mate Miszlai, Millen Fehr, Braedan Jacobs, & Balazs Bansagi claimed first place to open the meet. Miszlai claimed 1st place in the 100- and 200-yard backstroke and 200-yard individual medley. Janos Szabo earned three 1st place finishes in 100-yard freestyle and the 100- and 200-yard butterfly. Jacobs picked up 1st place wins of his own in the two longest races of the day – the 500- and 1,000-yard freestyle. Josiah Blankenship added another 1st place in the 200-yard freestyle. The women also knocked off Loyola 142–72 but fell to West Florida 169–65.



Daniel Ibrahimov speaks at a Holiday Club, similar to Vacation Bible School, while doing summer missions at a church in Australia.

IMB PHOTO

Ukrainian College Student
RELIES
on FAITH
While in Different Cultures





“We didn’t have many options. I couldn’t go back to Ukraine because of war circumstances, so I decided to go to Mississippi. I believe God led me here”

- DANIEL IBRAHIMOV

By Chris Doyle
International Mission Board

HE STOOD IN FRONT OF A GROUP OF CHILDREN SHARING A BIBLE LESSON DURING HOLIDAY CLUB. CHURCHES IN AUSTRALIA HAVE HOLIDAY CLUBS INSTEAD OF VACATION BIBLE SCHOOLS, AND THIS WAS ONE OF THE ACTIVITIES DANYLO “DANIEL” IBRAHIMOV LED AS A SUMMER MISSIONARY WITH THE INTERNATIONAL MISSION BOARD AT A CHURCH IN ALBANY, WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

His other duties with the church included discipling students in small groups and playing guitar with the worship team. Ibrahimov and other college students were hosted by IMB missionaries Ken and Kathy Woods who host summer missionaries every year. But what makes Ibrahimov unique compared to other summer missionaries is his journey getting to Australia.

Ibrahimov is the son of a Ukrainian pastor. His family evacuated their home in Kyiv when war broke out in 2022, and they lived briefly in western Ukraine. Eventually, they moved to Germany where a new church of Ukrainian refugees was planted. Ibrahimov credits much

of his spiritual growth to his parents who helped him grow in his faith in Jesus Christ.

Living in Germany helped Ibrahimov realize God’s plans for him were not limited by culture or country borders. He was considering options for college and received a recommendation from IMB missionary Michael Domke who has worked with his father in church planting work over the years. Domke made it possible for Ibrahimov to attend William Carey University in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and be roommates with Domke’s son, Michael Jr.

“We didn’t have many options. I couldn’t go back to Ukraine because of war circumstances, so I decided to go to Mississippi. I believe God led me here,” Ibrahimov said.

In August 2022, Ibrahimov enrolled at William Carey, and became more dependent on God. He was in a completely different culture and learning a new language, but it didn’t take long for Ibrahimov to fit in.

He got a job working in the campus post office, and he made friends easily. One of his co-workers, also an international student, is not a Christian. Ibrahimov has frequent conversations with her, often sharing the gospel.

The Baptist Student Union on campus has been a great support for Ibrahimov. Landon Adams, BSU director at William Carey, has seen Ibrahimov handle many high-pressure situations with calmness and grace.

“Everybody loves Daniel,” Adams said. “He thrives in small group settings where he can

invest in people. He is a dedicated kingdom servant who does not care about status or being seen and heard by everyone. He never seeks attention, but he always seeks ways to serve and invest in others.”

Because he is an international student, Ibrahimov has limited opportunities about what to do during summer breaks. He has a student visa, which allows him to live and work on William Carey’s campus.

His passion for missions led him to become a BSU summer missionary through the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, but there were challenges. Being from Ukraine raised concerns, given the country’s war-torn condition. Many of the countries where he wanted to go for the summer would not permit Ibrahimov to come.

One opportunity that drew Ibrahimov’s interest was serving in Australia. He went through the process to pursue a visa, which was denied in his first attempt.

Jennie Taylor, MBCB associate director of collegiate ministries, was a liaison for Ibrahimov, trying to keep communication going between him and those involved in the visa process.

Ibrahimov had a plane ticket and other arrangements in place for him to serve in Australia for the summer. Taylor helped him in Mississippi; Kathy Woods helped him in Australia. Three days before departure, Ibrahimov got his visa.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Ukrainian College Student RELIES on FAITH

While in Different Cultures

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

"That was a huge lesson of trusting God," he said. Ibrahimov spent nine weeks serving at the Western Australia church.

"Daniel fit in well at the church he served," Woods said. "He seems to adapt in all environments. God has opened doors for him, and he makes the most of every opportunity."

Currently a junior at William Carey, Ibrahimov is majoring in business management with a Christian studies minor. He plans to pursue full-time ministry after he graduates, possibly in church planting. What is important for Ibrahimov is to see people grow in their relationship with God.

Intense situations have happened in Ibrahimov's life, but none of these experiences has caused his faith in Jesus Christ to waiver. Instead, he found ways to share the gospel with people in various cultures.

The IMB works with Baptist state conventions to send summer missionaries every year. Just as Taylor helped Ibrahimov get to Australia last summer, she works with other college students who serve with the IMB in mission work all over the world. Last summer, 54 of the 120 summer missionaries sent out by Mississippi Baptists served IMB assignments.

Thousands of college students use their summer break to reach the lost with IMB missionary teams. In 2023, nearly 250 IMB summer missionaries served in Europe. The IMB offers numerous, inexpensive ways for students to serve each summer in Europe, Africa, Asia, the Americas, and many other places all over the world, including Australia.

Carey will have 25 students going out across the world this summer. If you're interested in supporting summer missions, visit wcugreatthings.org and designate your gift to summer missions.



IMB PHOTO

ABOVE *Carey became Daniel Ibrahimov's home away from home. Flanked by his friends, Jason Gaston and James Ford, Ibrahimov walks through campus after class.*

BETWEEN *Daniel Ibrahimov, a junior at Carey spent his summer working with IMB missionaries in Australia.*



IMB PHOTO



2024 Pine Belt Heart Walk Executive Committee.

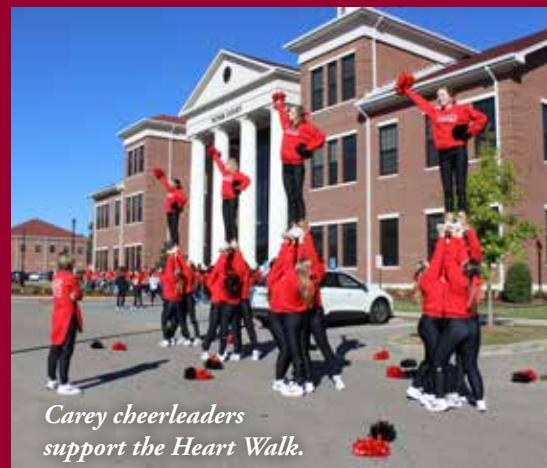
**WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY
HOSTED THE PINE BELT HEART
WALK ON NOV. 16. THE WEATHER
WAS PERFECT AND THERE WAS A
GREAT TURNOUT – 375 WALKERS
REPRESENTING 22 LOCAL
COMPANIES. TOGETHER, THEY
EXCEEDED THEIR GOAL, RAISING
\$101,342 TO FIGHT HEART DISEASE.**

The focus of this year's Heart Walk fundraisers is CPR education. Nine people out 10 who suffer cardiac arrests outside of a hospital die, yet immediate CPR can double or even triple the chances of survival. The AHA's goal is to give people the training they need to act during a cardiac emergency.

WCU President Ben Burnett was chairman of the 2024 Pine Belt Heart Walk: "We envision a future where at least one person in every household knows CPR. The walkers here today are helping transform our community from bystanders into life-savers."



HEART *Walk*



*Carey cheerleaders –
support the Heart Walk.*

Faculty PUBLISHING & PRESENTATIONS

BAKER, EMMONS, FISHER

Dr. Judy Baker, Ms. Kim Emmons, and Dr. Carolyn Fisher presented at the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's national conference in December 2024, in New Orleans. The poster presentation was titled, "Using Technology to Overcome Barriers to Attend Nursing School."

Dr. Baker is an adjunct professor of nursing; Ms. Emmons is an assistant professor of nursing; and Dr. Fisher is a professor of nursing.

Carolyn Fisher, Judy Baker and Kim Emmons



BENTON

Dr. Kim Benton's Community of Practice work was featured in "Close Gaps, Unlock Student Potential," published in the winter 2024 issue of "School Focus." Dr. Benton facilitated the Community of Practice in collaboration with three state, regional, and national organizations to improve educational outcomes for students in Mississippi.

Dr. Benton is an assistant professor of education.



Teams: The Art of Leadership Coaching for Nursing Excellence."

Ms. Brumfield is a nursing faculty member.

BRUMFIELD

Latonya Brumfield presented at the 2024 American Association of Critical-Care Nurses National Teaching Institute. Her presentation was titled "Elevating Healthcare



BURMEISTER

Dr. Melissa Burmeister co-authored two scholarly articles: "Sugammadex Safely Reduces Total Intubation Time in the Intensive Care Unit Following Coronary

Artery Bypass Grafting (CABG) at a Real-world Community Hospital," in the "Journal of Clinical Medicine" special issue: "Surgical Treatment and Postoperative Recovery of Heart and Lung Disease," and "Performance in Organic Chemistry at Either a Four-year University or Community College Predicts Academic Performance in an Accelerated School of Pharmacy," in "Frontiers in Education." She co-authored three abstracts related to accelerated pharmacy programs and presented "Historical Analysis of Anti-obesity Medications over the Past Century: From Amphetamines to Incretin-based Drugs" at the MD Health Summit, National Diabetes & Obesity Research Institute in Biloxi.

Dr. Burmeister is an associate professor of pharmaceutical sciences.



BURNS AND DOLBOW

Dr. Ron Burns and Dr. David Dolbow co-authored "Running Cadence and the Influence on Frontal Plane Knee Deviations," published in "Clinics and Practice."

Dr. Burns is an associate professor of physical therapy. Dr. Dolbow is a professor of physical therapy.

BURNS, KENNEDY, AND PARKER

Dr. Ron Burns, Dr. Jennifer Kennedy, and Dr. Amy Parker published "Patellofemoral Pain: Correlations between Hip Strength, Pain Severity, and Function" in the August 2024 edition of "Philippine Journal of Physical Therapy."

Dr. Burns and Dr. Kennedy are assistant professors of physical therapy, and Dr. Parker is an associate professor of physical therapy.



DOLBOW

Dr. David Dolbow co-authored the following peer reviewed papers:

"Changes in Pain, Spasticity, and Quality of Life after Use of Counterstrain Osteopathic

Manipulative Treatment in individuals with Spinal Cord Injuries," in "The Journal of Bodywork and Movement Therapies."

"Neurogenic Aging after Spinal Cord Injury: Highlighting the Unique Characteristics of Aging after Spinal Cord Injury," in "The Journal of Clinical Medicine."

"Cross-Lagged Assessment between Indices of Leisure Time Physical Activity and Domains of Quality of Life after Electrical Stimulation Training in Persons with Spinal Cord Injury: An Exploratory Trial," in "The Journal of Injury, Function and Rehabilitation."

"The Clinical Management of Electrical Stimulation Therapies in the Rehabilitation of Individuals with Spinal Cord Injuries," in "The Journal of Clinical Medicine."

"Counterstrain Manual Therapy Reduces Muscle Spasticity and Neuropathic Pain in Individual with Chronic Spinal Cord Injury: Case Report," in "The Journal of Clinical Case Reports."

"The Comparison of Total Energy and Protein Intake Relative to Estimated Requirements in Chronic Spinal Cord Injury," in "The British Journal of Nutrition."

He co-authored a textbook chapter in "Techniques and Technologies in Electrical Stimulation for Neuromuscular Rehabilitation: A Practical Clinical Guide." The chapter's title is "Health, Fitness, and Physiological Adaptations

after Functional Electrical Stimulation Exercise."

He also conducted four workshops at national and international conferences.

Dr. Dolbow is a professor of physical therapy and research professor in the WCU College of Osteopathic Medicine.

FILLINGANE

Dr. Sam Fillingane gave the following presentations:

"The CV Breakthrough that We All Have Been Waiting For," at the International Conference of Integrative Medicine in New Orleans.

"Detecting Cardiovascular Disease Using Artificial Intelligence (AI)," at HeartFit Canada, in Calgary, Alberta.

"The Multifunctional Cardiogram (MCG) AI Technology Capable of Saving Lives," at the Biomed Expo in Los Angeles.

"The Diet that Leads to CV Success," at the Low Carb USA Metabolic Health Conference in San Diego.

Dr. Fillingane is an associate professor of clinical medicine.



GONZALES

Dr. Ashley Gonzales presented at the American Physical Therapy Association Mississippi chapter fall conference in Tupelo. Her presentation covered

burnout in the physical therapy profession.

Dr. Gonzales is an assistant professor of physical therapy.



HALL

Dr. David Hall co-authored "A Model for Developing Emergency Medical Services Instructor Knowledge" in the October 2024 issue of "Journal of Public Health in the Deep South."

Dr. Hall is an assistant professor of preclinical sciences.



KNIGHT

Dr. Brandon Knight published "Freedom to Save the Body (of Christ): False Wisdom, True Wisdom, and the Rhetorical Chemotherapy of Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone" in issue 15 of "Contemporary Rhetoric Review."

Dr. Brandon Knight is an assistant professor of strategic communication & leadership and director of speech & debate.

LOWERY

Dr. David Lowery published "The Lack of SEL with African American Male Students: Why and What Needs to Change." He co-authored the article with Carey student, Endia Dees. The article was published in "Aletheia," Alpha Chi's journal of Undergraduate Scholarship.

Dr. Lowery is an associate professor of English.



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Faculty

PUBLISHING & PRESENTATIONS

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

**MFOAFO**

Dr. Kwadwo Mfoafo published two pharmaceutical articles: "Three-dimensional Printing Strategies for Enhanced Hydrogel Applications" in "Gels," an Open Access Journal, and "Abuse Potential of Fentanyl and Fentanyl Analgesics" in "BiolImpacts:Bl." Dr. Mfoafo also presented at the AAPS PharmSci360 Conference in Salt Lake City.

Dr. Mfoafo is an assistant professor of pharmaceutical sciences.

**SMITH**

Dr. Troy Smith presented "Update on Anticoagulation and Reversal Agents" at the Mississippi Society of Health Systems Pharmacists in July 2024. He also

authored "Performance in Organic Chemistry at either a Four-Year University or Community College Predicts Academic Performance in an Accelerated School of Pharmacy." The article was published in the February 2025 edition of "Frontiers in Education."

Dr. Smith is an assistant professor of pharmacy practice.

**NICOVICH**

Dr. Mark Nicovich published "The Rage of the Dog Star: Spatio-Temporal Risk of Malaria in the Eastern Mediterranean During the Crusader Period (c. 100-c. 1250)." The peer-reviewed article appeared in the February edition of "Histories 2025."

Dr. Nicovich is a professor of history & geography.

**THOMPSON**

Dr. Robert Thompson authored a chapter in "Global Sustainable Practices in Gastronomic Tourism." His chapter is titled, "A Melting Pot of Taste and Heritage: Culinary

Tourism in New Orleans, Louisiana." IGI Global Scientific is the textbook publisher.

Dr. Thompson is an assistant professor of business administration.

**ODEM**

Dr. Samantha Odem co-authored "Perceptions and Utility of Course Evaluations in US Pharmacy Schools," in "The American Journal of Pharmacy Education."

She presented at six conferences in Louisiana and Mississippi on the topics of opioid abuse, tobacco use, and HIV treatment.

Dr. Odem is an assistant professor of pharmacy practice.

**WELDON**

Dr. Abby Weldon co-authored two scholarly articles: "Emerging Therapies for Ulcerative Colitis-induced Pain," in "U.S. Pharmacist," and "Differential Effects of Cannabis Constituents

on Schizophrenia-related Psychosis: A Rationale for Incorporating Cannabidiol (CBD) into a Schizophrenia Therapeutic Regimen," in "Frontiers in Psychiatry." She co-authored a textbook chapter in "Foye's Principles of Medicinal Chemistry." The chapter title is "Drugs Used to Treat Pain: Peripherally Acting Agents." She also gave three presentations at the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy Annual Meeting.

Dr. Weldon is an assistant professor of pharmaceutical sciences.

**WELDON**

Dr. David Weldon published three peer reviewed articles and co-authored a textbook chapter with Dr. Abby Weldon. "A Scoping Review of

Calls to Action in Pharmacy Education" and "A National Survey of Perceptions around Conditions Associated with Pharmacy Faculty Workload Equity" appeared in the "American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education." "A Longitudinal Exploration of Perceptions of Pharmacy Practice Preparedness among Graduating Pharmacy Students and Preceptors" appeared in "Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning."

Dr. Weldon is dean of the school of pharmacy and professor of medicinal chemistry.

**WILLIAMS**

Dr. Cara Williams presented "Rehabilitation for Singers Following Pregnancy and Childbirth," at the National Association of Teachers of Singing Southern Region Fall Conference at Mississippi College.

Dr. Williams is an instructor of music.

1st Annual
CAREY CARNIVAL



Homecoming at Carey will become a fall event beginning this fall!

*We will Celebrate
Homecoming at the
Carey Carnival on
October 18th!*

SAVE THE DATE NOW

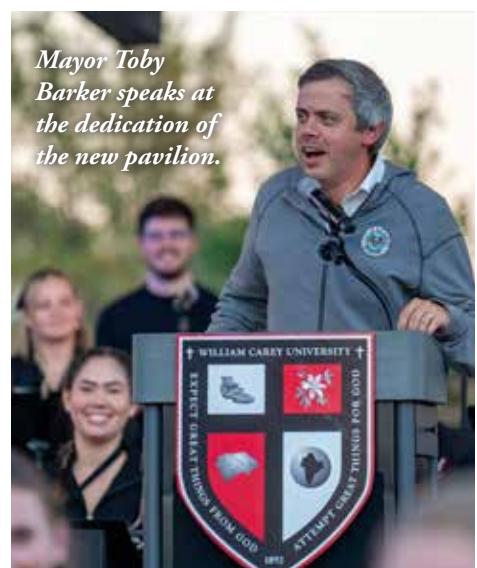
and don't miss out on our fall
homecoming activities!



William Carey University hosted the 1st Annual Carey Carnival on Oct. 21. More than 2,500 people from the community enjoyed a free, family fun night with great food, fair rides, and live music from Carey Big Band and Thomas Hall. Carnival-goers helped paint a monumental mural honoring the life of William Carey, the Father of Modern Missions. WCU President Dr. Ben Burnett announced the “Great Things Campaign” and cut the ribbon on a new outdoor stage – supported by a generous gift from Mississippi Power Foundation.

The second annual Carey Carnival will be held October 18, 2025, in conjunction with our fall homecoming celebration.

*Mayor Toby
Barker speaks at
the dedication of
the new pavilion.*



William Carey University Launches

“GREAT THINGS CAMPAIGN”



Willie Robertson of “Duck Dynasty” was the guest speaker at WCU’s Scholarship Gala. He started his company, Duck Commander, in his living room. But over time, he built it into a national brand known for its duck calls, apparel and hunting gear. Robertson spoke to gala guests about his dedication to faith, family and ducks – in that order. He was introduced by Ben Smith of WCU, left, an assistant athletic director and award-winning outdoors columnist.

**WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY
LAUNCHED ITS “GREAT THINGS
CAMPAIGN” DURING THE ANNUAL
SCHOLARSHIP GALA AT LAKE
TERRACE CONVENTION CENTER ON
OCTOBER 15, 2024. GREAT THINGS
IS A FAR-REACHING INITIATIVE TO
RAISE \$26.5 MILLION OVER THE
NEXT THREE YEARS TO ENHANCE
THE CAREY EXPERIENCE FOR
CURRENT AND FUTURE STUDENTS.**

“Looking out at the faces of our guests at this year’s scholarship gala, I see so many friends – old friends, new friends, alumni, community supporters, Carey faculty and staff members. I see students who are here to lift up God with music. I am grateful for your unwavering support,” WCU President Dr. Ben Burnett said.

“Every aspect of the Great Things Campaign centers on our students. By investing in their future, we ensure that they are better prepared to receive God’s calling in their lives. We ensure that William Carey University remains a beacon of hope and opportunity. We ensure that we follow in footsteps of our namesake, Dr. William Carey.”

**THE “GREAT THINGS CAMPAIGN”
HAS FOUR PILLARS:**

1 Academic Affordability

Raising \$10 million to invest in scholarships, maintain WCU’s status as the “#1 Best Value” university in Mississippi, and ensure that quality education remains accessible.

2 University Life

Seeking \$7 million to cover renovation of the Hattiesburg cafeteria and build new residence halls on the Tradition campus to enrich the campus experience for students.

3 Program Excellence

Committing \$8 million to improve campus facilities, including renovating Thomas Fine Arts auditorium and building a new fieldhouse for our nationally ranked tennis teams.

4 Carey Fund

Securing \$1.5 million for unrestricted gifts that will support student needs and new initiatives, reinforcing our commitment to all aspects of a student’s development.

Odean Busby is chairman of the WCU Board of Trustees.

“The ‘Great Things’ campaign is a wonderful opportunity for you to invest in the tremendous success of William Carey, an outstanding Christian university. By God’s grace, we have already secured \$15.2 million toward our \$26.5 million goal – more than half of our target in just the first year,” Busby said.

WCU invites the community, including more than 40,000 alumni and supporters, to join in this transformative journey.

“Two hundred years ago, Dr. William Carey inspired us all to, ‘Expect great things from God and attempt great things for God.’ Together, we can empower the next generation of leaders – doctors, teachers, musicians, and community servants – who will positively influence our state and nation,” Burnett said.

For more information about the Great Things Campaign, visit www.wcugreatthings.org or call (601) 318-6192.



The biggest news of the evening came when WCU President Dr. Ben Burnett unveiled the “Great Things” campaign, a far-reaching initiative to raise \$26.5 million over the next three years to enhance the Carey experience for students.

70s

HAROLD GERMANY '73



Harold currently works for FEMA as a grants manager. He retired from the Corps of Engineers in 2004, and was assigned to a 24-man team performing a temporary change of station audit for the Secretary of the Army, Controllers Office in Washington, DC, and was awarded the US Army Achievement Medal for Hurricane Katrina Deployment. He is married to Beth Leggett and lives in Richland, Miss.

00s

ROCHELLE DAHMER '03



Rochelle has published a new book titled, "If You Don't Vote, You Don't Count: Vernon Dahmer's Fight for Equality." This picture book tells the inspiring story of Vernon Dahmer, a civil rights leader who fought for voting rights in Mississippi. Through vivid illustrations and engaging storytelling, the book highlights Dahmer's bravery and dedication

to equality, emphasizing the importance of voting and civic engagement.

Rochelle devoted 25 years to teaching K-12 and college English. She earned the Master of Education from Carey in 2003 and was inducted into Carey's Alumni Hall of Fame in 2020.

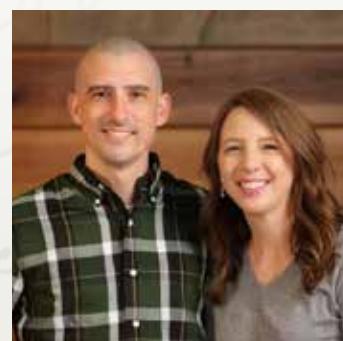
KATRINA CHANTELL GRIFFIN '06



KaTrina was elected to the Orleans Parish School Board in November 2024. She will represent Algiers and parts of the Marigny, Bywater, and French Quarter on New Orleans' school board.

Katrina earned a degree in business administration from Carey in 2006 and currently works as an accountant.

GARETH BONNER '07



Gareth was appointed as the Head of School at Lamar Christian School. He earned his bachelor's degree from Carey in 2007 and his master's degree from Delta State University. He worked for more than 17 years at Presbyterian Christian School in Hattiesburg as a classroom teacher and administrator. Gareth is originally from Waynesboro and resides in Petal with his wife Kimberly and their three children: Matthew, Vivian, and Annie Kate.

10s

WYN MIMS '11



Wyn Mims has begun a new role as federal programs and school transition coordinator for the Petal School District. She previously served as principal of Petal Elementary. Wyn earned the master of education degree in 2011.

JANA CHAO '07



Jana was awarded the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. This award is presented to only 336 educators across the nation and recognizes their significant contributions to the teaching profession. The award is administered by the National Science Foundation on behalf of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. Jana earned the B.S. in elementary education from Carey and holds a doctorate degree in education.

AMBER MAULDIN WEST '11, '18



Amber received the prestigious Thad Cochran Distinguished Educator Award for Visual Art at the Mississippi Alliance for Arts Education awards day. Amber teaches art at Magnolia Park Elementary School in Ocean Springs. Amber earned the B.A. in theatre from Carey in 2011 and the Master of Education in 2018. She is married to Jordan West.

Class NOTES



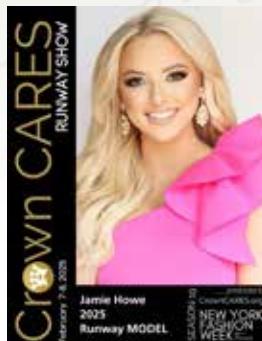
LAMARLON WILSON '11

LaMarlon received the award for School District of Excellence from the Mississippi Alliance for Arts Education. He is the superintendent of the Mississippi Schools for the Deaf & the Blind.

LaMarlon is a native of Newport News, Virginia, and earned the BA degree in music in 2009 from Mississippi Valley State. He attended Carey and graduated with a Master of Music Degree in music education in 2011. He earned the Specialist in Education from Arkansas State in 2018. In 2023, he was named a fellow of the Racial Equity Leadership Network with the Southern Education Foundation, where he collaborates and learns alongside superintendents and other district leaders from Georgia, Texas, South Carolina, Tennessee, Louisiana, and Wisconsin.

SETH BROWN '16

Seth has joined the providers at Hattiesburg Clinic Gastroenterology in McComb. Seth earned the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree at Carey in 2016.

JAMIE DAVIS HOWE '18, '21

Jamie participated in New York's Fashion Week 2025. In addition to walking the runway, she also competed in the World Top Model competition. She placed third and won most photogenic. Jamie earned the Bachelor of Music in music education at Carey in 2018 and the Master of Music Education in 2021. She has been accepted into the Doctor of Arts in Music program. Jamie is married to Morgan Howe.

20s**KAMRY BREAZEALE '21**

Kamry co-founded Destination CEU to offer CEU training on cruise ships. The training will focus on mental health professionals, including LPC, LMSW, LMFT, LMHC. Kamry earned the M.S. in counseling psychology from Carey in 2021.

CLAY '23 AND HALEY '21 GRAVES

Clay and Haley announce the birth of their daughter Noah Madison Graves on January 21, 2025.

Noah is the next generation of a family with several Carey Graduates: the late Jerry '73 and Jackie '70 '82 McRaney; Gayla McRaney Darden '98; Michelle Reynolds Dykes '13 '14; Kristen McRaney Graves '16; Leah Graves Boren '17; Kyle Dykes '17; Jessica Dykes '23; and Jarrett Darden '25.

ANNA GRACIE EASLEY CONLEY '23

Gracie earned the certification in Neurologic Music Therapy (NMT). This certification comes from the Neurologic Music Therapy Academy and represents an advanced, science-based approach to using music as a powerful tool to address challenges in cognition, sensory processing, and motor functions caused by neurological conditions. She is one of only three music therapists in the state of Mississippi with this

rigorous advanced training and certification. Gracie works at Southern Pediatric Therapy. She earned the Bachelor of Music in Music Therapy at Carey in 2023.

MACKENZIE CHARLES '24

Mackenzie received the prestigious 2025 Thad Cochran Distinguished Educator Award for Theatre. She founded Open Doors Theatre in McComb in 2023. Open Doors' core belief is simple but powerful: the arts are for everyone. Their mission is to provide an accessible and inclusive theatre space for disabled individuals both on-stage and off.

Mackenzie earned the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre for Young Audiences in 2024.

Alumni & Faculty Passings

CAROLYN CLINTON

LOTT ADAMS '68

July 22, 1941 - October 11, 2024

JENNIFER LYNN GONSOULIN
ANDRUS '17

October 14, 1983 - November 13, 2024

DORRANCE AULTMAN

Carey Wall of Honor

November 17, 1933 - June 17, 2024

JOY KEENUM BISSONNETTE '01

January 14, 1949 - June 9, 2024

MARY LOIS BURKETT

Friend of the University

January 2, 1914 - September 14, 2024

KENNETH EKEOGU '82

November 10, 1953 - September 7, 2024

LAWANDA R. FORMISANO-HORN '05

October 14, 1947 - November 10, 2024

KENNETH LEVON GARNER '21

July 17, 1975 - January 9, 2025

WALLY DAVID HARTEL '75

June 11, 1952 - September 10, 2024

WANDA JEAN WILSON

HENDERSON '72

May 6, 1950 - January 25, 2025

EARLINE HERRIN

School of Education Support Staff

September 13, 1944 - March 5, 2025

FRED T. HURST '56

June 22, 1937 - January 11, 2025

ALISSA DAWN THRASH KING '89

November 1, 1967 - October 9, 2024

WAYNE THOMAS LENOIR '72

August 7, 1951 - October 27, 2024

WILDA UDEAN MCCULLUM '81

September 25, 1957 - September 30, 2024

NELL DREW HERRIN PHILLIPS '59

August 29, 1937 - October 27, 2024

ROBERT EARL SHOOK '66

July 13, 1933 - October 8, 2024

DAVID HALES TAYLOR '12

March 18, 1982 - July 13, 2024

BOBBY RAY THOMPSON '65

June 3, 1939 - July 15, 2024

JUNE ARLEN PETTUS TYSON '59

June 3, 1937 - October 30, 2024

LAURA JANE CLARK

VAN SCHAIK '05

May 5, 1964 - January 9, 2025

CHARLES SCIANNNA

Carey Wall of Honor

June 22, 1953 - January 14, 2025

BENNIE SELLERS

Friend of the University

March 6, 1934 - July 11, 2024

QUINTUS EARL WEBB '64

Died June 24, 2024

SAUNDRA WHITFIELD '79

November 16, 1952 - June 28, 2024

CHARLES J. BROWN '73

July 11, 1938 - February 6, 2025

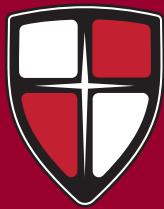
Charles J. Brown was born in Hattiesburg in 1938 and graduated from Rowan High School in 1958, where he served as class president. He enlisted in the United States Army

and served for 11 years. He was a jump school instructor and Platoon Sergeant in the 173rd Airborne Brigade. After returning from Vietnam with injuries, he enrolled at Carey in 1969.

His lifetime of hard work and service earned him many honors and awards, including induction into the William Carey University Alumni Hall of Fame. A scholarship in his name was endowed at Carey in 2024.

WCU President Dr. Ben Burnett said, "Charles J. Brown was exactly the kind of graduate we want from William Carey University. He served his country, his family, his community for decades, and his legacy will live on to serve this university for generations to come. One of the many times I was honored to be able to hear Mr. Brown speaking in public, he talked about his journey that brought him to William Carey University. He stated that he attended William Carey because it was somewhere he could pray. This is something that's been true of William Carey for our 133-year existence. We are proud that it brought Charles J. Brown to Carey, and we hope it will attract others like him for the next generation."





Single & Recurring Gifts

Gifts of any amount are crucial to the growth and development of scholarships. Donors may make single gifts by mail or through our online giving page at any time. To schedule recurring gifts, contact the Office for Advancement.

Planned Gifts

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Send information to alumni@wmcarey.edu



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Volume 35, No. 2

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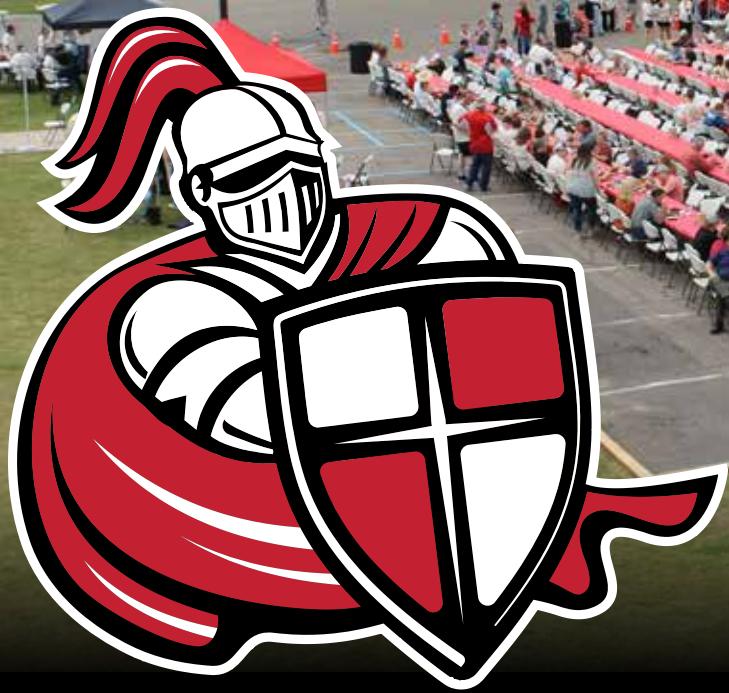
CAREY

The William Carey University magazine is available online to all alumni and friends at www.wmcarey.edu/alumni and is published periodically and mailed to alumni association members and donors.

Also available online at www.wmcarey.edu/alumni

WCU works in friendly cooperation with the Mississippi Baptist Convention and is supported by churches that contribute to the Cooperative Program.





HOMECOMING

MOVES TO FALL

CAREY STUDENTS AND ALUMNI WILL ENJOY A FALL HOMECOMING CELEBRATION IN OCTOBER 2025. FOR MANY YEARS, HOMECOMING HAS BEEN CELEBRATED IN THE SPRING.

WITH THE MOVE TO A SEMESTER SYSTEM, THE TIME IS RIGHT TO SWITCH TO A FALL HOMECOMING. PUT OCTOBER 18, 2025, ON YOUR CALENDARS NOW TO SAVE THE DATE.

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THE WCU ALUMNI HALL OF FAME?

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