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NEWS BRIEF



(Photo courtesy of Melissa Coleman) Sarah Townsend was a senior pre-veterinary major and Residential Advisor at College Courts.

Sotomayor set to serve 40 years in state prison

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After pleading guilty to the murder of Murray State student Sarah Townsend, Julius Sotomayor was sentenced to serve 40 years behind bars on three separate charges.

Townsend was a senior pre-veterinary major from Farmville, Virginia, and a residential adviser at College Courts. Her body was found with multiple bullet wounds in the Cherry Corner area on March 26, 2021.

For the murder of Townsend alone, a class A felony, Sotomayor was sentenced to 40 years in prison. For two additional class D felonies, theft by unlawful taking (more than \$500 but less than \$10,000) and tampering with evidence, Sotomayor will serve two concurrent five-year sentences.

Assistant Commonwealth Attorney James Burkeen said Sotomayor would not be eligible for probation because he has a prior criminal history.

Burkeen said the deputies working on the case say it was the most senseless act they have seen.

Sotomayor said he was sorry for what he did to his friend and how he impacted Townsend's family, and that he is praying for them.

Calloway County Circuit Court Judge David Buckingham responded regarding Sotomayor's crime.

"If there's any decency in you at all, you would wish you had not have done this," Buckingham said. "You understand the hurt you caused that will never leave this family? You understand this?"

Buckingham asked Townsend's family, who appeared by phone, if they had anything they wished to say. The family said no.



After an act of violence toward women on campus on Sept. 10 the GEC published a statement on Sept. 13 standing in solidarity with the women attacked (Source: ncadv.org).

Gender Equity Caucus highlights violence toward women in campus community

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Gender-based violence and intimate partner violence have been thrust into the spotlight after an act of violence toward women has affected the Murray State community, garnering a response from the Gender Equity Caucus.

Murray State student Jack Epperson allegedly attempted an attack on female students gathered outside of Sorority Row for Lambda Chi Alpha's Watermelon Bust on Sept. 10. Epperson attempted attacking the students with a Molotov cocktail-style weapon and then a knife.

None of the students were physically injured, but the GEC made note of the mental scars the attack could leave on those affected. The GEC published a statement on Sept. 13 sharing what happened

on Sept. 10, extending solidarity to those affected and highlighting the recent violence against women in the Murray State community.

The Nation Coalition Against Domestic Violence reported in 2020 that around 45% of Kentucky women have experienced domestic abuse or rape from an intimate partner.

The GEC recalls past instances of gender-based violence that have affected campus, but also calls for better clarity when campus is alerted of these occurrences.

"Greater transparency beyond meeting minimal reporting requirements and concrete actions to address the needs of vulnerable populations are essential for combating violence already shrouded in silence, secrecy and shame," the statement reads.

Assistant Philosophy Professor and GEC

member Michelle Panchuk played a role in drafting the statement.

"Myself and some of the other members of the GEC were together when we saw the original update, but we didn't know what it was about, of course, and when we read *The Murray Ledger & Times*," Panchuk said. "Immediately the attack stood out to me as a case of violence against women, at least from the testimony of other students."

Panchuk noted that this form of violence is not something for which everyone is equally at risk. Gender-based violence occurs based on one's gender, sexuality or race.

Fellow GEC member and Associate History Professor Christine Lidner said highlighting violence against women has been on the GEC's radar for the last few years.

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Easley lecture sheds light on women's suffrage

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Visiting lecturer Melanie Beals Goan spoke about her book, "A Simple Justice: Kentucky Women Fight for the Vote."

The lecture, held in the Curris Center Ballroom on Thursday, Sept. 22, introduced attendees to some of the lesser-known figures who made suffrage possible.

The event marked the fifth annual Sid Easley Lecture. Easley, a late alumnus of the University, served as Board of Regents chairman and was the first recipient of the Golden Horseshoe Award.

Upon Easley's passing in 2016, his family established the free guest lecture series to honor his legacy of supporting the Department of History.

In her lecture, Goan said a wave of scholarship has emerged following the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment.

"What role did Kentucky women play in the fight for the vote?" Goan said. "Why does Kentucky matter in this national story? It matters more than you might think." Kentucky



Goan focused Kentucky women's fight for the vote at the annual Sid Easley lecture on Thursday, Sept. 22.

women were some of the first to vote in the nation, with some participating in school elections as early as 1838. Though this right was later revoked in 1902 over fears that Black women would sway results, the national struggle for suffrage often looked to Kentucky for guidance.

Goan said we should celebrate the 19th Amendment while remaining mindful of its limitations.

"Not all women are going to vote after 1920, especially African American women in Southern states...but also Asian women, immigrant women, Native American women," Goan said.

Nevertheless, Goan said it is important to focus on local stories about the fight for suffrage.

see LECTURE, page 2

Mental Health Highlight: The Pride Center

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The Pride Center is offering students new services and programs this semester aimed at supporting LGBTQ+ students.

The mission statement of the Pride Center is to provide a space for students to grow, connect and engage with the LGBTQ+ community through services, activities, support, training and social events.

Abigail Cox, director of the Pride Center, said it's important for students to have a space on campus where they feel comfortable. "It is a space for individuals to find belonging and experience community within our larger campus community," Cox said. "We hope that this not only helps them be successful here at Murray State but that it also increases their wellbeing and personal growth."

One new initiative that began this fall is First Year Pride (FYP), which is a semester-long program for first-time LGBTQ+ freshmen to connect with a support system at Murray State.

"FYP supports the transition from high school to campus by providing academic mentoring, monthly social opportunities and campus connections to resources and allies from across campus," according to the Pride Center website.

Cox said this new initiative will help students adjust to campus life.

"In general, FYP gets students connected to the Pride Center early so that they know they have someone to talk to when they need assistance," Cox said. "It also helps us reach out to see how students are doing and see what resources they may need to be successful."

To address a need she saw on campus, Cox started a chest binder service during the spring 2022 semester.

A chest binder is a compression undergarment individuals, often transgender or nonbinary, use to flatten their breasts.

Cox said that while the center does not provide chest binders, they provide assistance with sizing and allow students to try different sizes on.

The center accepts gift cards to help students who need financial assistance to buy a chest binder.

Students in need of this service can fill out a form on the Pride Center's website.

Starting in 2021, the Pride List is a way for the campus community to show their support for LGBTQ+ students.

"Individuals who sign are given the opportunity to share a message of pride or allyship, which they share on social media to share support for our students," Cox said. "The publication will be released annually on Oct. 1 as a kickoff to LGBTQ+ History Month."

Over 150 campus affiliated individuals have signed the Pride List with 35% of those individuals being students and 25.5% being staff.

The Campus Pride Index is a national benchmark tool for universities to create a more inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ students.

The Pride Center uses the Campus Pride Index tool to show the University's commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusive policies and programs.

Murray State scored a 3.5 out of 5 on the Campus Pride Index, with recruitment and retention scoring the lowest at 2.5 stars.

Cox said the Pride Advisory team, composed of campus leaders, is working together to prioritize goals to improve this score.

The goals for this year focus on transparency across the campus community. With their goals outlined, the Advisory Team is working toward a plan to approach them.



Dionte Berry/The News

The Pride Center is located in Blackburn Science Building Room 243.

The Pride Advisory Team plans to create an evaluation of how the campus collects, shares and stores identity information and a best practice toolkit to share broadly on campus.

Faculty and staff can participate in Ally Hour, a collaborative effort to discuss strategies for creating a safe space on campus. The next session will be Oct. 7 and registration can be completed through the Racer Pride Press newsletter.

The Pride Center offers Safe Zone training, which provides students, faculty and staff with the tools needed to explore their own understanding and perceptions of the LGBTQ+ community.

Individuals can sign up for Safe Zone training by visiting the Pride Center's website and clicking on the "Safe Zone" tab.

There are several LGBTQ+ organizations on campus: Alliance, Students for Cultivating Change, oStem and Tea Party.

Alliance is Murray State's LGBTQ+ organization on campus. To receive updates, follow them on Instagram at [msu_alliance](https://www.instagram.com/msu_alliance) or email them at msualliance28@gmail.com.

Students for Cultivating Changes is a professional development organization for LGBTQ+ agriculture students.

oStem is a professional development organization for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math students, according to the Pride Center Website.

Tea Party is a new peer group on campus for non-binary and transgender students. For more information, email msu.pridecenter@murraystate.edu.

The Pride Center holds a Lavender Graduation ceremony every winter and spring term for graduating seniors who are a member of the LGBTQ+ community. Each participant will receive a rainbow cord to be worn at their graduation ceremony.

The Pride Center is located in Room 243 in the Blackburn Science Building. For updates, follow the Pride Center on Instagram at [msu_lgbt](https://www.instagram.com/msu_lgbt) or sign up for their monthly newsletter, the Racer Pride Press, on the Pride Center website at murraystate.edu/lgbt.

New program aims to address teacher shortage

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Dean of Education and Human Services Dave Whaley said he plans to bring an expedited bachelor's degree and teaching program to campus, the Option 9 Alternative Teaching Certification program to Murray State's College of Education and Human Services, if approved.

The Option 9 Alternative Certification Program is an expedited route to obtain a bachelor's degree and initial certification in teaching within three school years, according to the Kentucky Department of Education website.

This program, from House Bill 277 introduced by Rep. Walker Thomas, went into effect July 14.

This program still has to be approved by the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) *The Northern Kentucky Tribune reports*. Last year, 1,800 teaching positions went unfilled in Kentucky, which maintains an average turnover rate of 17%.



Dionte Berry/The News

Option 9 was approved by the Kentucky House of Representatives in April 2022.

As a board member of the Western Kentucky Educational Co-op, Whaley said this program will help school districts in the region fill these teaching positions. The board meets monthly with superintendents in the region.

"I think the most troubling discussions that we get into have to do with teacher shortages," Whaley said.

The program is designed for classified employees who currently hold a position in a school system that doesn't require certification, according to the Kentucky Department of Education website.

During his Sept. 9 Board of Regents presentation on this program, Whaley said approximately 33% of teachers quit

teaching within the first three years and 50% quit within the first five years.

"Teaching is a very complex task," Whaley said. "Not only does a teacher need to know how to teach, but they need to know how to work with a class, how to deal with 20 or 30 individuals."

The Christian County School District reached out to Whaley about this program after some of their employees showed interest in earning their degree in education.

With this program, classified employees are still required to work while earning their certification. To avoid conflicts, Whaley is exploring online classes for those enrolled in the Option 9 program.

Currently no Option 9 programs that been approved for the state. Whaley said Murray State, as the only university to take advantage of this new certification program, is ahead of other universities in Kentucky when it comes to researching Option 9.

see **OPTION 9**, page 3

LECTURE, from page 1

"Understanding it on the state and local level helps us get in the trenches with women," Goan said.

The lecture shed light on some of Kentucky's most influential figures in the movement, including Laura Clay, Josephine Henry and Mary Britton. These women emerged from different backgrounds and advocated various approaches, with the more conservative Clay opposing federal action and the latter two supporting it.

Goan is a professor at the University of Kentucky, where she specializes in 20th century U.S. history with specific interests in gender, Kentucky, the region of Appalachia and history of medical practices. She earned her

doctorate and master's degrees from the University of Kentucky and her bachelor's degree from Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania.

In addition to her recent book, Goan is the author of "Mary Breckenridge: The Frontier Nursing Service and Rural Health in Appalachia," as well as numerous articles, essays and other publications. She received the Teachers Who Made a Difference Award in 2018 and the University of Kentucky Provost's Outstanding Teaching Award in 2017, among other honors.

Olga Koullis, assistant professor who specializes in U.S. history, said she found the lecture fascinating.

"I teach this stuff, and it was really nice to hear some more details about women's suffrage in

Kentucky and hearing some of the key players," Koullis said.

Koullis said the talk also spoke on how racism has played a role in preventing politics from moving forward.

"Now, we tend to like intersectional feminism and trying to get all women internationally to work toward greater rights," Koullis said.

Marjorie Hilton, professor of history who focuses on Russia and the Soviet Union, said she was less familiar with the subject matter.

"In one of my world history classes the other day, we were talking about the Haitian Revolution, and in the Constitution, it says a man will lose his citizenship for various reasons [like bankruptcy or emigration]," Hilton said. "They were just appalled, so I can't wait to go back and

tell them that right here in the United States, there was a similar kind of suspicion of foreigners... It helps me understand even the world better."

At the end of the lecture, Goan provided some takeaway lessons from the given historical context.

"It reminds us that the vote is not guaranteed," Goan said. "We have to be vigilant today in 2022... Limiting voting hours, efforts to clean up the voting rules, all of these things still threaten to silence American voters today."

Donations to support the Sid Easley Lecture can be made at murraystate.edu/giving or by check made payable to the Murray State University Foundation and mailed to the Murray State Office of Development at 200 Heritage Hall, Murray, KY 42071.

'Born Pink' signifies Blackpink's music return

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"Born Pink" spotlights the confident and feminine pop sound that put Blackpink on the map, making them one of the most current well-known girl groups.

The Korean pop group debuted under the music label YG Entertainment in 2016 with four members: vocalists Jisoo and Rosé and rappers Jennie and Lisa.

Blackpink became popular by expanding on the bubblegum pop that was common among female Korean pop groups at the time. The group created an emphasis on confident and assertive attitude. Unheard of in previous groups, there was a strong emphasis on rap, pulling inspiration from American hip-hop.

Blackpink became well known for songs such as "BOOMBAYAH," "Kill This Love" and "DDU-DU-DDU-DU." They received over 1 billion views on YouTube, making them the first Korean girl group to reach this achievement.

In comparison to other Korean pop groups, Blackpink is one of the few to become popular in the U.S. music market. The group performed at Coachella in 2018 and have had nine songs on the Billboard Hot 100 Chart.

"Born Pink," released on Sept. 16, marks Blackpink's first album since "The Album," in 2020.

The eight track album starts with the lead single "Pink Venom." The track is a boastful rap-dominated track that takes inspiration from '90s rap and early 2000s pop, paying homage to the Notorious B.I.G and Rihanna.

The hip hop themes are blended with traditional Korean instrumentation, such as the geomungo, a six string zither. I enjoy the blend between Korean and African American culture since Korean pop does take a lot of inspiration from hip-hop and R&B.

"Shut Down" continues the same confident themes from "Pink Venom." The track is backed by heavy bass and violin and is more minimalist in comparison to the previous track.

"Typa Girl" starts with a more delicate sound, but cuts to a zig-zagging kazoo-like sound. In comparison to the previous tracks, "Typa Girl" feels like a good blend of femininity and boastful confidence—Blackpink's signature sound.

The song rejects typical femininity and female gender roles that men may desire. This idea is explicit in Jennie's verse, "I bring money to the table, not your dinner."

"Yeah Yeah Yeah" is a dive into sweet 80s pop rock. This track feels like a standout compared to Blackpink's typical sound.

"Hard to Love" is Rosé's solo, and it maintains the bright pop feel of "Yeah Yeah Yeah." The premise of the song feels odd and a little self-deprecating, but the overall sound is smooth and jovial.

Despite being titled "The Happiest Girl," this ballad track does not feel as such. The track describes a failing relationship and the desire to salvage it. But, it is complicated. The relationship seems toxic, as if the woman is abasing her emotion to her partner.

"Tally" is a guitar-driven track that rolls through with a smooth "bad girl" vibe and a lot of swearing, which I like because it's seldom heard in commercial Korean pop. The lyrics focus on doing what you feel like whenever you feel like it.

"Ready For Love" embraces the traditional pop sound of Blackpink. The track feels out of place, almost as if it came from a decade ago. The EDM dance chorus doesn't fit the modernity of the rest of "Born Pink."

None of the songs on "Born Pink" are poorly composed, but none of them are home runs in terms of nuance or evolution in Blackpink's sound.



Photo courtesy of YG Entertainment
'Born Pink' was released on Sept. 16, under YG Entertainment Members left to right: Jisoo, Jennie, Lisa and Rosé.

Content wise, no solid theme holds the songs together; there is no focus.

It feels as though Blackpink is trying to recreate the success they had with their earlier hits. In their six-year career, it doesn't feel as if they have had any sound progression or any major experimentation beyond their initial sound.

"Born Pink" signifies a stagnation of ideas that led to recycling sounds and song structures. This doesn't mean the songs are bad—they are all pretty solid—but it doesn't mean the songs are exciting.

"Born Pink" has the harmony of a compilation album, but it's not a compilation. I think a major element of the album's sound is the producers, as a lot of the songs have the same producers.

Another gripe I have with the songs is some overuse Blackpink's catchphrase, "Blackpink in your area." It's meant to be a

quick kind of stamp on each song, not worked into multiple verses.

Despite the lack of album structure, "Born Pink" does have some stand out tracks such as "Typa Girl" and "Yeah Yeah Yeah."

With that being said, "Born Pink" deserves a six out of 10. In the future, I would like to see an album with a vision and more cohesiveness.

I am not sure what we will see from Blackpink in the future because their contract with YG Entertainment ends in 2023. I would be surprised if they released more music within that window.

I would also be surprised to see Blackpink remain with YG Entertainment, but I hope the group is able to either continue as Blackpink and discontinue their contract or explore solo careers. Regardless, whatever path they take, I can bet they'll find success.

OPTION 9, from page 2

Individuals at Christian County and Carlisle County schools are currently compiling resumes and transcripts of classified staff interested in the program. Whaley said they will then determine the number of applicants and preparation levels for the program.

Whaley said once all the approvals are in, they will start the program immediately.

The EPSB must approve the program at Murray State before students can enroll.

Whaley said he is working with Veteran and Military Student Success Coordinator AJ Cunha to offer the Option 5 alternative certification program to the University.

Option 5 is specifically for military veterans, with at least six years of eligible service and an honorable discharge, to earn a teaching certificate.

Whaley said this certification program is very unusual.

"The military veteran doesn't necessarily have to have a degree in order to become a teacher," Whaley said. "If [military veterans] don't have their degree, what they're required to do is to pass the teachers test for content, the Praxis exam."

Currently, the only approved alternative certification program at the University is Option 6.

Option 6 is for individuals who have a bachelor's or master's degree in a non-teaching major and are interested in attaining initial teacher certification. For example, an individual with a degree in biology could utilize this program to become a biology teacher.

Option 9 still needs to go through the approval process before students can enroll in the program.

GEC, from page 1

Members organized a vigil in April 2021 for women who were victims of gender-based violence. Lidner said they also had a committee work on sexual assault and violence last year that included developing a questionnaire about incidences of harassment and assault by faculty or experienced by faculty on campus.

Along with the published statement, Lidner spotlights the past incidents of violence against women that have occurred in the Murray State community.

The GEC statement highlights the murder of Sarah Townsend in March 2021 and the upswing of campus assault rates during September 2021 as recent examples of violence toward women.

Lidner also cites the alleged murder suicide in March 2021 as an example of violence toward women that affected campus.

Regarding the incident, police said 31-year-old Anthony Amoroso shot his girlfriend, 46-year-old Katherine Bryan, and a child before turning the gun on himself.

"She was not a community member of Murray State, but she lived in a house right next to the dorms...a number of my students heard the gunshots," Lidner said. "It was not a campus incident, but it still affected our community."

Regarding the reporting on these incidents, Lidner would like to see more transparency.

"From my understanding from talking to students and everybody else, people were freaked out that there was a lack of clarity over what happened," Lidner said. "People just had to know. I think there is a fine line between raising an alarm that scares more people or might be activating people versus keeping people informed."

Beyond transparency, Lidner points out the weight placed on faculty when it comes to helping students through these incidents.

"On top of normal trauma, there's a high rate of domestic intimate partner violence, homophobia and gender-based violence, I come into each class, recognizing the weight of those layers of trauma [in students]," Lidner said. "I am not a counselor. I can listen, but I'm not trained to be the therapist, but I'm very happy to say, 'This sounds like something that you should go to the Counseling Center [for].'"

Lidner said she would like to see a support network for faculty, when it comes to listening to their students' trauma as well as coping with their own.

Along with advocating for more transparency, GEC President Sara Cooper said the statement serves to name what happened as an act of violence toward women, rather than have it be seen as an isolated act.

"We felt it was important to name the incident as an instance of violence against women since, as far as we knew, that had not yet happened," Cooper said. "This is especially important because the response to gender-based violence is so often silence."

Along with gender-based violence being a focus of the GEC, Cooper said they have also made strides to ensure the campus remains aware of this violence.

In 2021, the GEC held a Sexual Assault Awareness Fair along with a panel highlighting the violence that Indigenous women face.

Cooper said they plan to continue to host awareness-raising events this year to get involved in efforts to support early intervention in cases where warning signs of violence and abuse are reported.

Domestic Abuse Resources

Murray State Women's Center: 270-809-3016

C102, Oakley Applied Science Building

Lotus Sexual Violence Resource Center
1-800-928-7273

Merryman House Domestic Crisis Center
1-800-585-2686

24 Hour Crisis Hotline
1-800-585-2686

Rape Crisis Hotline
1-800-656-4673

"It is important to all of us that the response does not stop at a statement, but rather that a statement is a part of ongoing work toward equity," Cooper said.

The GEC's statement highlights that they will continue supporting the work done by Murray State's Sexual Assault Response Team and partnering with survivors, allies and advocates to develop a safer environment on campus.

The GEC is working toward circulating the statement, and it has been endorsed by the English and Philosophy Department.

"We're hoping that other departments and entities at the University will endorse it and adopt similar language to share on their social media and university websites," Panchuk said.

Our View: Victims of child sex abuse can pursue justice

President Joe Biden signed the Eliminating Limits to Child Sex Abuse Victims Act into federal law on Sept. 16. This act revises the statute of limitations on report times for sexual abuse crimes occurring to minors.

Before the signing of the bill, people could only report crimes up to 10 years after their 18th birthday, but this time limitation has been removed.

The existence of this law opens up many possibilities for people who have fallen victim to abusers in the past. More people will be able to come forward and share their stories. Removing the time limit victims have to come forward and report is especially important for young children who lack mobility and financial independence.

This law helps recognize child sex abuse and reporting time on a federal scale since it wasn't recognized as widely beforehand. The law makes it much easier for survivors to report after these crimes occur. By removing the barrier of a report time, survivors of abuse have more of an outlet for help and assistance.

Many children are also groomed into believing the things happening to them are normal. Although this bill won't undo what happened to the children, it will allow for some form of reparations. Allowing people to fully realize what happened to them and understand it sometimes takes years. Removing the statute of limitations gives people more room for this, especially since understanding often comes with age.

One issue with this bill is the extent of the need for evidence. Abuse crimes happening years ago will most likely require significant evidence that can't always be provided by victims, depending on the length of time between the crime and the report. Unfortunately,



Wesley Hammer/The News

the legal system will be more likely to side with the abusers in some cases since there will be a lack of evidence.

Because children often lack the understanding needed to report crimes against them or understand necessary evidence, education is crucial to ensuring justice. Making sure children understand the process of how to safely report will change lives for victims of child sexual abuse.

At *The News*, we believe many crimes of abuse can be considered "right" by parents since forms of punishment can create a gray area. Abuse in some households is referred to as "proper punishment," so children are unaware of the abuse they are going through and are told it is right.

This principle of punishment has changed over time, and we now understand methods used by parents years ago are no longer considered appropriate. This recognition of

abuse can also have an impact on how cases will be seen.

Although judges would most likely have dismissed cases involving some forms of abuse before, we have grown more educated as a society on what constitutes abuse, and therefore can better handle these situations.

This new legislation is an excellent start to ensuring justice for survivors of sexual abuse. This step is life-changing for many survivors, so legislators should consider victims of all forms of abuse to bring justice to a greater number of people. We should spend time seeing this as a victory for survivors because they typically are not as uplifted.

This bill is necessary in the process of healing for so many, but other victims should also have justice for their abuse. Just because a certain amount of time has passed, it doesn't mean survivors of abuse should be discounted or told they won't get justice. This bill

should allow survivors to be believed and help more people in the long run.

Overall, the purpose of this bill should be to generate more power for survivors. Leaving the justice of survivors in the hands of abusers only makes problems worse.

Hopefully, the signing of this bill will encourage survivors of any kind of abuse to come forward and tell their stories. The statute of limitations was discouraging to many. Now, people may feel empowered and gain the courage to speak up.

There are many resources for victims of child sexual abuse. For help or assistance, the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) is the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization and operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline (800.656.HOPE). As a survivor resources exist, especially with the signing of this bill. You are not alone and help is available.

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Photo courtesy of Dave Winder/Racer Athletics

Sophomore linebacker Cade Shuppard (#58) recorded five tackles, including a sack, in the Racers' loss to EIU on Saturday, Sept. 24.

Football loses first conference game

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The losing streak continued for the Murray State football team as the Racers lost to the Eastern Illinois Panthers 35-21 during the Family Weekend game on Saturday, Sept. 24.

Second-string quarterback Jayden Stinson, a native of Mayfield, Kentucky, took his first collegiate start for the Racers in the game. Speaking after the game about taking his first start, he said it's been important to just try his best in Murray.

"Most importantly, it's just been sticking to what we have here," Stinson said. "With the transfer portal and getting to play behind a player like DJ [Williams], it can be easy to just leave. You can leave or you can stick through it, help the team, and do whatever you can to win." Stinson was quick to make an impression as he led the Racers down the field in speedy fashion. He completed his first two passes, first to senior wide receiver LaMarte Brooks, then to sophomore tight end Jake Saathoff for a 23-yard gain.

Three plays later, Stinson found sophomore tight end Cole McDowell for a 12-yard gain and a first down. The drive ended with a 12-yard completion to senior wide receiver DeQuan Dallas to give the Racers a 7-0 lead.

Dallas, who is the oldest on the team at 24 years old, spoke af-

ter the game about Stinson's performance and what he sees in the young quarterback. He said Stinson's future looks bright for the team.

"I see a lot out of him just because he's young," Dallas said. "It gives him room to improve. Everybody has a lot to improve on, but since he's here at Murray State, he's got a lot to look forward to."

Senior quarterback Dom Shoffner took the field for the Panthers and proceeded to run all over the Racers' defense. He ran for 28 yards over three plays to start the drive, then found senior wide receiver Justin Thomas for a 30-yard gain.

On the next play, Shoffner took off and rushed one yard for the touchdown to tie the game at seven points apiece.

After holding Murray State to a punt, sophomore wide receiver Cooper Willman took the punt 55 yards up to the Murray State 33-yard line.

Shoffner found sophomore wide receiver Nile Hill for a 16-yard completion, then found Thomas in the end zone for a two-yard touchdown completion to give the Panthers a 14-7 lead.

Stinson ended the first quarter with a 29-yard pass to sophomore Taylor Shields, then started the second quarter with an 18-yard pass to Saathoff.

The Racers ended the drive with a 28-yard pass from Stinson to Shields to tie the game at 14 points apiece early in the second quarter.

Sophomore running back Jaelin Benefield started the Panthers' next drive with an 18-yard rush, and soph-

omore running back Kendi Young followed it up with a 43-yard rush, moving the Panthers into Murray State territory.

Shoffner then rushed for 17 yards, but the Racers' defense held strong and forced the Panthers to settle for a field goal to take a 17-14 lead.

Stinson then threw an interception on the Racers' following drive, and Young took advantage with a 36-yard touchdown rush to put the Panthers up 24-14.

Before the half came to an end, Stinson tried to put together one last drive, but threw an interception on the last play, leaving the score at 24-14 at halftime.

Neither defense gave in during the third quarter, with both offenses struggling to get the ball moving. The Racers had one chance to get a few points on a field goal but the ball went to the right of the goal post, leaving the score at 24-14 after three quarters.

As the fourth quarter began, the Racers had a chance to get back in the game. After three straight completions to Dallas to move the Racers up 69 yards, Stinson found Brooks in the corner in the end zone for a six-yard touchdown reception, cutting the Panthers' lead to three points.

The Panthers started with good field position on the next drive, but the Racers' defense continued to hold strong and held the Panthers to a field goal. With 6:23 left to play, the Panthers led the Racers 27-21.

When the Racers got the ball back, they went straight to the passing game.

This turned out to be costly as Stinson threw his third interception of the game.

With the ball on the Murray State 8-yard line after the interception, Shoffner dashed into the end zone for his second rushing touchdown of the game. That put the Panthers up 35-21 with the two-point conversion working in the Panthers' favor.

The Panthers ran the clock out, and when it was all said and done, they had defeated the Racers 35-21 on Family Weekend.

Stinson completed 28 of his 46 passing attempts for 334 yards and three touchdowns, throwing four interceptions in the process. Dallas caught nine passes for 97 yards and a touchdown, while Brooks had 53 yards receiving, and Shields had 76 yards receiving. Both had a touchdown each.

Dallas spoke after the game on the team's performance so far in the season. He said despite the rough start to the season, the team continues to push on.

"I just pick up my teammates and tell them, 'We're doing good,'" Dallas said. "It really starts with just picking up the young guys, then working up. That way, the whole team is up rather than just one person."

Murray State falls to 0-4 on the season and 0-1 in OVC play. The Racers move on to Hammond, Louisiana, where the Racers will take on the No. 21 team in the nation, the Southeastern Louisiana University Lions. Kickoff against the Lions is set for 6 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 1.

Mens basketball holds first practice

Jakob Milani
Sports Editor

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The 2022-23 season officially launched as the Murray State men's basketball team took the court for the first time on Tuesday, Sept. 27.

The practice was open to media and fans to take in the new look of the basketball team, including the return of Head Coach Steve Prohm, who takes over for former coach Matt McMahon.

Prohm spoke on the significance of the first practice, which he said is just as important as any other day ahead.

"We had a great summer and a great pre-season, but today is the first official day, and it's great to be back," Prohm said. "I just hope we can carry over a lot of what we learn over the summer. Focus more on the defense, learn more about the guys. We just gotta get better each day. Just win the day and move on to the next."

Sophomore guard Brian Moore Jr., a transfer from Northeastern Oklahoma A&M, said he's just ready to get to work.

"It's exciting, man," Moore said. "We've worked all summer to get here

with 14 new guys, and we can finally see how we can perform together. The biggest thing Coach Prohm has said to us is just to buy in and accept whatever role we have. We may have been the main guy at our old school, but we gotta play for the name on the front of the jersey, not the back."

Some players said it has felt like a family since they got to Murray State. Prohm said the team is focusing on getting comfortable and feeling like a family with each other.

"A coach I used to know said, 'Recruit, retain, develop,'" Prohm said. "I think we've done a good job of that. These guys are a big part of our lives.

"...This is a special program and a special place. No program does what Murray State does, so I hope these guys truly feel like this is a family."

Junior guard Quincy Anderson said he's loved Murray so far, and he loves the small town feel.

"I grew up in Wisconsin and went to school in Minnesota, so it's definitely different," Anderson said. "I'm used to living in those bigger cities, so to come to a small town like Murray, you can just feel that sense of family and togetherness and that's something that I love. The people here



Jakob Milani/The News

The team runs drills to start its first practice of the 2022-23 season.

have already shown me a ton of love."

Anderson also said the locker room feels like a home to him with how close he's gotten to the team.

"It's made things easier," Anderson said. "I don't feel as much pressure to be perfect. I'm just expected to be myself, and that's something I've always been comfortable with, but in a small town, it's just easier. It's just alleviated some of the stress I felt coming here."

Anderson, who played with NBA guard Tyrese Haliburton growing up said he's gained a lot of knowledge on the court thanks to the other guys he's playing with.

"Playing more efficiently is something I'm always working toward," Anderson said. "It was an adjustment, but learning to pass, score and move more efficiently is something new... then a different

level of grit on defense, but overall, I've learned that I just need to figure it out."

Recalling players who stood out during pickup games over the summer, Moore said everyone's had their days, but there is one player he said no one will want to guard.

"Sure, everyone from Braxton Stacker to Jacobi Wood has had his days," Moore said. "But one guy who's really good is Kenny White. He came out of Tennessee Tech. He's a six-foot-eight-inch guy who plays like a guard. That's one guy you don't wanna match up with."

Murray State's first exhibition game takes place on Nov. 2, when the Racers play host to the Brescia University Bearcats. The team then travels to St. Louis to take on the Billikens of St. Louis University on Nov.

Volleyball starts MVC schedule 0-3

Ronan Summers

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The Murray State volleyball team began MVC play over the weekend, dropping its first three conference games since the switch.

The Racers hosted the Southern Illinois University Salukis on Friday, Sept. 23; the Missouri State Bears on Saturday, Sept. 24; and the Belmont University Bruins on Tuesday, Sept. 27.

vs. SIU

Murray State got off to a hot start in the first set. The Racers started the game with a five-point rally started by a kill from freshman outside hitter Ella Vogel.

Freshman middle blocker Haidi Miliou continued the rally with a kill. Vogel earned another kill, then SIU committed an attack error, and Vogel rounded the rally out with another kill. The Salukis were able to respond, tying the game at 13 apiece and eventually winning the set 25-22.

The Racers were down 22-18 in the second set, but a rally started by a pair of kills by Miliou were exactly what the team needed to get rolling.

Sophomore setter Bailey DeMier earned a service ace to continue the rally. A trio of SIU attack errors followed, giving the Racers a 24-22 lead. Senior outside hitter Alysha Smith finished the set with a kill, winning 25-22.

Murray State got out to another fast start in the third set as Smith started a rally with a kill. Then Smith and Miliou each had a kill, and SIU committed two more errors, rounding out an eight-point Racer rally. The Racers kept their foot on the gas, winning the third set 25-16.

The Racers trailed throughout the majority of the fourth set. They did not have a lead at

any point. The Salukis coasted to a 25-17 win to even the score of the match at two sets apiece.

The fifth and final set was competitive, as both teams were able to string together good possessions. The Racers had a 7-6 lead, but the Salukis were able to get ahead after a three-point rally.

The Racers fought to stay in the game, but SIU was able to seal the victory, winning the last set 15-13. The Racers fell to the Salukis 3-2.

vs. Missouri State

The Racers started the first set of the game with a four-point rally. Vogel initiated the rally after a kill. Graduate middle blocker Elisa Dozio followed with a kill of her own, and two Missouri State attack errors completed the rally.

The Racers completed another four-point rally after a pair of kills from Vogel and a pair of Missouri State attack errors increased the Racers' lead to 13-7. The Racers ultimately won the first set 25-18.

The second set of the match was heavily contested and went to the 29th point. The Racers had a 27-26 lead before giving up three straight points to allow the Bears to steal the win 29-27.

Murray State was behind 3-1 early on in the third set before it was able to go on a five-point rally. The rally began off a Missouri State attack error. Junior libero Dahlia Miller then earned a service ace, and freshman outside hitter Federica Nuccio followed with back-to-back kills. The rally's conclusion came from another Missouri State attack error, making the score 6-3.

The Bears were able to tie things up at 13 apiece before going on a five-point rally, helping them coast to a 25-21 win in the third set.

The Racers were down 4-2 in the fourth set before Smith started a rally that stemmed from a



Senior outside hitter Alysha Smith finished the weekend with 27 kills.

Photos courtesy of Racer Athletics

kill. Miller then earned a service ace, and Nuccio followed with a kill. Smith earned herself another kill, and Dozio finished the rally with a kill of her own.

After going back and forth, the game was tied up 19-19 thanks to a kill by Dozio. Missouri State then committed an attack error, and Dozio continued the rally with back-to-back service aces, making the Racers up 22-19. The Racers won the fourth set 25-23.

Down 7-4 in the fifth set, the Racers were able to tie the set up at seven apiece thanks to two Missouri State attack errors in a row and a kill from Dozio.

The Bears were able to put together two rallies at the end of the set and eventually won the fifth and final set 15-9. Missouri State won the matchup 3-2.

vs. Belmont

Down 6-4 in the first set, the Racers jumped out in front thanks to a four-point rally initiated by back-to-back kills by DeMier. Nuccio then earned a service ace, and Vogel rounded the rally out with a kill.

The game was tied at 18 apiece before a kill from Vogel and a Belmont attack error helped give the Racers a lead. The Racers eventually won the set 25-22.

The second set was tied at four apiece before Belmont went on a four-point rally. The Racers were able to get a lead after Dozio killed the ball and Miller earned a service ace, making the score 17-15.

Belmont responded by going on a five-point rally to regain the lead, going on to win the second set 25-22.

Belmont had control for the majority of the third set and did not allow the Racers to get within striking distance. Belmont went on to win the third set 25-20.

The Racers went on a six-point rally early on in the fourth set, making the score 6-1. However, the Bruins made their way back, tying things up at 10 apiece. Both teams were going back and forth until Belmont went on a late four-point run to help the team inch closer to a win.

The Bruins won the fourth and final set by a score of 25-20 and won the match 3-1.

Vogel had 47 kills over the three game span. DeMier had 151 total assists, 17 kills and 33 digs through the three games. Across the trio of games, Nuccio had 29 kills and 47 digs. Miller totaled 61 digs, while Dozio had 26 kills and 10 digs.

The Racers will host the Indiana State Sycamores at 6 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 30.

Shann Riley/The News

MURRAY STATE ATHLETICS SCHEDULE

SEPTEMBER 29 - OCTOBER 2

- **SEPT. 29** Soccer vs. Indiana State @ Murray, KY 3 p.m.
- **SEPT. 30** Cross Country vs. Missouri @ Columbia, MO ALL DAY
Volleyball vs. Indiana State @ Murray, KY 6 p.m.
- **OCT. 1** Volleyball vs. Evansville @ Murray, KY 5 p.m.
Football vs. Southeastern Louisiana @ Hammond, LA 6 p.m.
- **OCT. 2** Rifle vs. Ohio State @ Murray, KY 9 a.m.
Soccer vs. University of Illinois Chicago @ Murray, KY NOON

For more information
visit GoRacers.com



Professor's early life prompts writing research

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In an exploration of literary analysis and his own personal experiences within a fringe movement of Christianity, Assistant Professor of English Ray Horton published his essay “The Praise Band to English Professor Pipeline” as part of an essay series on the “Christian right.”

The essay collection explores a political and religious movement known as the “Christian right.”

“ **I was raised in a ‘Word of Faith’ community attending three or more services a week...**

— Ray Horton, assistant professor of English ”

“The ‘Christian right,’ at least as I understand the term, refers to a historically specific configuration of religion and politics, and the politics espoused by this movement leverage a very particular reading of the Bible to justify and mobilize a Christian nationalist agenda,” Horton said.

The essay collection titled “W(h)ither the Christian Right?” was published by an organization named Post45. The organization was founded in 2006 and is a collective of scholars studying American literature and culture since 1945, according to the Post45 website.

For Horton, his interest in the “Christian right” is personal and began at an early age.

“I was raised in a ‘Word of Faith’ community, attending three or more services a week at a suburban, predominantly white aspiring megachurch where we spoke in tongues, used faith to heal the sick...” Horton said in his essay.

Horton’s relationship with religion and his experiences growing up in an extreme religious community also led him to explore religion as a research area, he says.

“I think I latched on to this research area partly as a means of processing my own religious trauma and partly because I found that I kept coming back to some of the same types of research questions connecting literature and religion, and these questions kept proving to be extremely fruitful,” Horton said.

Horton’s essay analyzes the writing of several different writers including James Baldwin, Octavia Butler and revivalist preacher Kenneth Hagin.

Hagin is a particularly important topic in Horton’s essay because of his pioneering of the “Word of Faith” movement in which Horton



Art from Ray Horton’s essay “The Praise Band to English Professor Pipeline” featured in Post45’s collection ‘W(h)ither the Christian Right?’. Photo courtesy of post45.org.

was raised.

“My family’s church in Pennsylvania was led by a pastor who had attended Rhema Bible Training Center in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, the ministry school founded by Hagin himself,” Horton wrote in his essay.

Horton’s essay compares Hagin’s work and messages to Octavia Butler’s “Parable” novel series in which a theocratic Christian government takes control of the ruling government.

“Particularly in the second novel, she shows how an especially authoritarian form of politicized Christianity rises to power by presenting itself to the public as the solution to these complicated, life-changing crises,” Horton said.

Some of the ideas presented in literature on the “Christian right” have manifested themselves in the real world, Horton says.

“I know people have been making ‘The Handmaid’s Tale’ comparisons ever since the beginning of the 2016 presidential primaries,” Horton said in reference to the popular Margaret Atwood novel. “But when I saw the image of a giant cross set up next to a gallows outside the U.S. Capitol during the Jan. 6 insurrection, my first thought was, ‘Oh, great. Now we’re just living in an Octavia Butler novel.’ It’s quite alarming.”

Horton shifts the latter part of his essay to discuss how his skills as a literature student and professor have interacted with his religious past.

“Studying literature saved

me from the Christian Right, but it did so not in the heroic way one imagines, say, a firefighter dragging someone from a burning building,” Horton wrote in his essay. “A better analogy might be the way water and sunlight enable plants to emerge from the soil where seeds have fallen.”

The experience of analyzing literature also helped Horton escape what he refers to in his essay as the “echo chamber of the Christian Right.” These echo chambers form when voices and opinions from outside of the church are discredited.

During his time growing up in the religious community, Horton says he also experienced this echo chamber first hand.

“I can say, without exaggeration, that we were constantly told in church services and other church-related activities that we needed to be on guard 24/7 for any ‘worldly’ influence — and ‘worldly’ influence could include the expertise of our teachers in public schools...and it could even include friendships with other Christians who belonged to other denominations,” Horton said.

“ **Studying literature saved me from the Christian Right, but did not do so in the heroic way one imagines...**

— Ray Horton, assistant professor of English ”

Horton also warned this echo chamber can be

perpetuated by the practices of some media organizations.

“...And I do think that much of the right wing media environment in the United States today — talk radio, Fox News, Newsmax, etc. — follows a similar pattern: ‘Listen to us, not them, because they are lying to you,’” Horton said.

One key takeaway from the essay, Horton said, is readers should understand the value of studying literature and closely analyzing texts.

“ **In the United States today — talk radio, Fox News, Newsmax, etc. — follows a similar pattern: ‘Listen to us, not them’...**

— Ray Horton, assistant professor of English ”

“Studying literature carefully helped me learn to trust my own questions about texts and experiences,” Horton said. “It helped me formulate better, more effective questions, and it encouraged me to better trust my own judgments in response to my reading, even as it taught me to be skeptical of my own tendency to ‘read into’ a text [for] things that may not actually be there.”

Anyone interested in reading Horton’s essay can find his essay along with the 11 other essays about the “Christian right” featured in the essay collection at post45.org/sections/contemporaries-essays/whither-the-christian-right.

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The Murray State News

Family Weekend celebrates 100 years of family



(Clockwise from left) Saxophones taken center field as Racer Band performs at Roy Stewart Stadium. Spectators look on as the Racer football team takes on the Eastern Illinois University Panthers. Alpha Gamma Rho member, Clint, Draper, takes home the crown of Mr. MSU in Alpha Omicron Pi's annual philanthropy event.

Photos by Mary Huffman/
The News



HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

ACROSS

4. This man became the first Hispanic American to be inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

5. This Hispanic American artist has sold 80 million records worldwide and is the only female entertainer to have a number one album and film simultaneously.

6. Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and this country all celebrate their independence day on Sept. 15.

7. This man, born in Costa Rica, became the first Hispanic American to go on a space mission.

9. This Hispanic American congresswoman representing the Bronx, New York, has quickly become a widely known political figure.

11. This Puerto Rican artist made history at the 2022 VMA awards after being the first non-English-language act to win "Artist of the Year."

12. The annexation of this state, which Mexico considered part of its own territory, led to the Mexican American war.



DOWN

1. This Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient founded the National Farm Workers Association after decades of fighting for the rights of farm workers.

2. This Bronx native became the first Hispanic American to serve on the United States Supreme Court.

3. This man became the first Hispanic person to serve as part of the United States Congress.

8. This traditional Mexican holiday is celebrated in early November to remember the dead.

10. This traditional Mexican music genre typically features lyrical themes of love, patriotism and nature.