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GATEWAY

2022

*CELEBRATING A
CENTENNIAL*



A special publication of The Murray State News



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Letter from the Editor

Celebrating a centennial is to experience a once in a lifetime event; therefore, my staff and I found it necessary to highlight Murray State's centennial celebration as well as reflect on its history. I began my journey at Murray State in the Fall of 2019, and I found that it holds a high significance to the community.

From the start, Murray State has felt like the heart of Murray. Over the last 100 years, both the town and the University have evolved together.

Now approaching my senior year, Murray State and the community as a whole is a place where I have made some of my most fondest memories and have met some of my closest friends.

My Father was in the military for the majority of my life; thus I have moved around across the country quite a few times before coming to Murray State. In all of those places I have set roots and reflect on those locations as markers in my coming of age.

Moving on after my graduation, no matter where life decides to take me Murray State will always be significant in not only my growth as a journalist, but my overall growth as a person.

Please enjoy the glimpses into the past, commemorations of our centennial and reflections of the town that has evolved around Murray State in this year's *Gateway Magazine*.

Sincerely,
Dionte Berry, Editor-in-Chief



2022

Gateway

Staff

Editor-in-Chief
Dionte Berry

Designer
Dionte Berry

Editorial
Jill Smith
Ania Boutin
Sam Mitchell
Grace Rapp
Eliza Simikian
JMC 194 class

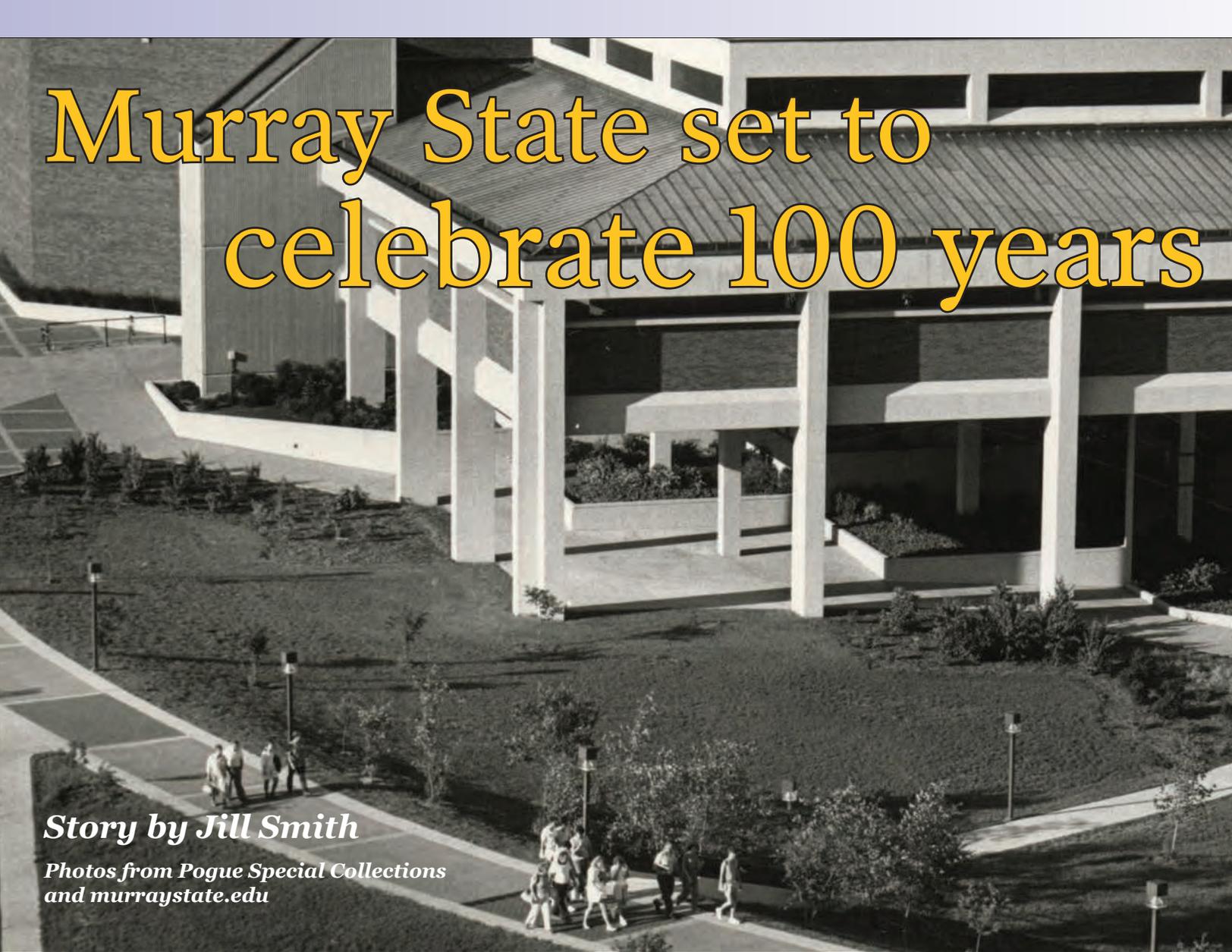
Advertising
Kate Manley
Chloe Jones
Taylor Moore
Aidan Schweitzer
Jamie Skarupsky

Photography
Dionte Berry
Rebeca Mertins Chiodini
Jordie Oetken

Copy Editor
Alexis Schindler
Emery Wainscott

Faculty and Staff
Carol Terracina-Hartman
Gill Welsch
Marcie Hinton
Orville Herndon

Cover Photo
Gross Magee



Murray State set to celebrate 100 years

Story by Jill Smith

*Photos from Pogue Special Collections
and murraystate.edu*

Murray State is marking 100 years since its founding with a year-long Centennial Celebration.

In 1922 Murray, Kentucky, was selected by the state legislature as the home of the Western Kentucky Normal School, now called Murray State University, according to Murray State's website. The community came together to donate \$117,000 in cash and other assets to win the bid for a Normal School in western Kentucky.

A Normal School is an institution that trained high school graduates to become teachers.

"This was remarkable for the times — 1,352 donors made an average gift of \$82.10, with \$2,500 the largest cash gift received," the website reads. "Additionally, 350 families opened their homes with the promise to board up to 2,000 students should Murray be selected for the location of the school."

President Bob Jackson said the centennial is a celebration of success.

"Our centennial, a celebration of 100 years of success and achievement, is a tribute to our alumni and friends, faculty, staff and students — and recognition for those who came before us," Jackson said. "We encourage our entire campus community, alumni and supporters to celebrate this historic year with us."

One of the first tasks was to determine a logo for the celebration, said Director of Alumni Relations Carrie McGinnis.

"They kind of looked like, you know, it represented our past and their future on one of our most beloved and original buildings on campus," McGinnis said. "At the same time, with that sort of sunburst appearance, it looks off into the distance into the future as our best days are ahead, as Dr. Jackson likes to frequently say."



The centennial logo, inspired by the shield visible on the exterior of Pogue Library, was designed by Murray State's Graphic Design Manager Melissa Shown.

Planning for the celebration was fun, McGinnis says, especially in the early stages.

"A lot of thought and time went into what [the logo] would look like," McGinnis said. "Once we established what the logo would look like, then we put a lot of thought into what are things that people will want to wear or have to commemorate this thing that's only going to happen one time in our lifetime."

McGinnis said the Murray State Bookstore is launching a series of items including apparel, key-chains and other items that will feature the logo.





The Centennial Celebration is a collaborative effort among all offices and departments across campus.

Currently, McGinnis said they are creating an online toolkit for campus departments and offices to post their centennial events.

The toolkit will contain branding statements, logos, photographs and other information for departments and offices to use for their centennial events.

“They can use the toolkit to fill out a form, let us know what their events are going to be, then we can promote it to the greater alumni or greater Murray community, and make sure that everyone knows all the exciting things that we’re doing all year long,” McGinnis said.

“ Our centennial, a celebration of 100 years of success and achievement, is a tribute to our alumni and friends, faculty, staff and students — and recognition for those who came before us. We encourage our entire campus community, alumni and supporters to celebrate this historic year with us. ”

— President Bob Jackson

The centennial event calendar features the Ohio Valley Conference Tournament, All Campus Sing and Distinguished Alumni Awards, according to the Murray State website.

The week of March 8 included a celebration for the University’s Founders Day, in addition to more events in April, McGinnis said.

“In April, we’ll have a full slate of activities that will begin with All Campus Sing on April 13; and then that following week, we’ll have a luncheon honoring our 2022 Golden Horseshoe recipients,” McGinnis said. “We’ll have our distinguished Alumni Dinner and banquet.”

The Alumni Dinner took place on April 22 from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Director of Marketing and Communication Shawn Touney said individuals who want to stay updated on the University’s Centennial Celebration events should visit the Murray State website at murraystate.edu/centennial.

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Location: Blackburn Science Bldg, Room 244

Phone: 270-809-4499

murraystate.edu/campus/curriscenter/racershelpingracers.aspx

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Once a Racer, Always a Racer! Murray State University Alumni Association members define RACER PRIDE. Our members allow Murray State's rich traditions and University mission to thrive, while also supporting alumni activities all over the world. The MSUAA encourages alumni to network with other Racers through a mix of programming and events. Membership is open to all graduates, students, fans and friends.



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ROBERT L JACKSON, SEAN J. MCLAUGHLIN, *and* SARAH MARIE OWENS

The FINEST PLACE WE KNOW

A CENTENNIAL HISTORY OF MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY, 1922-2022



President co-authors book
exploring campus history



Story by Jill Smith

Photos from murraystate.edu

In honor of the University's centennial, President Bob Jackson, along with co-authors Jeff McLaughlin, director of special exhibits and archives, and Sarah Marie Owens, library specialist, wrote the book "The Finest Place We Know," a celebration of the University's unique history.

This book is a collection of photographs and stories from Murray State dating back to the University's founding in 1922.

Jackson said this book showcases the unique history of Murray State.

"It's going to start in 1922 and end in 2022," Jackson said. "So it's a lot of facts and information that most will not know, many photographs that many have never seen in our archives, both starting in the '20s all the way through today. I think it will be a great addition for this university, for the faculty and staff and students."

Jackson said the title of the book comes from Murray State's alma mater, written in 1932 by Dean A.B. Austin.

A book committee of University officials was formed to help assist in making decisions on what to include in the book, including going through thousands of photos, Jackson said.

"We made the final calls on that," Jackson said. "When you look at some of the old photos, they've never been used before. That's what we're trying to do. We wanted to share a story that hadn't yet been fully told."

McLaughlin said there was a lot of guidance on the book.

"The committee included various points, and so I think the collaborative nature of the project made it much better," McLaughlin said. "For me, it was a lot of fun just kind of swapping stories in the office and figuring out what made sense for the book."

McLaughlin said they focused on trying to incorporate the right amount of photos and text.

"We began with the original notion that this would be just a really glossy book of terrific photos with short captions under each," McLaughlin said.

The book contains seven chapters, which will be followed by vignettes to give more context to the history of the University, McLaughlin said.

The book is being published by the University Press of Kentucky, according to the Murray State



website. The Press is selective on what they publish, Jackson said, so it's exciting they decided to publish this book.

When researching for the book, McLaughlin said he realized how special Murray State is.

"I kind of really gravitated to the story about integration," McLaughlin said. "The president at the time, Ralph Woods, actively chose to do the right thing and started bringing Black students before there was any pressure from the state or the federal government to do so. I think we should be proud of that."

It was a priority for the committee to ensure the history of Murray State was told well and accurately.

"I think it's vitally important that we tell stories, maybe that haven't been told before, to give everyone an appreciation for the unique history of this institution," Jackson said. "It's a very good history."

Jackson said this book is a way to remember those who had an important role in founding Murray State.

"It's to remember those that came before us, and to tip our hat and to thank all of those throughout history that have made a difference in this place," Jackson said.

A portion of book sales will go towards Pogue Library, according to the Murray State website.

Jackson said the money will be used to ensure the archives stay protected for the next centennial. "The Finest Place We Know" is available for pre-sale now and will be available in October.

RACERS' GUIDE TO SOCIAL MEDIA

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Exploring beyond the University

The charm of Murray Coffee Shops



Story and photos by Eliza Simikian
Source: www.postcardsfromthebrink.com



SHAFFER COFFEE

404A N 4th St, Murray, KY 42071

@shaffercoffee



Shaffer Coffee

If you're a fan of latte art, then **Shaffer** is the place for you. From the classic tulip to hearts, their latte art is a wow factor. This cafe has a busy, lively ambiance. Shaffer is great for coffee dates with your friend groups or family as they have community tables and even some cozy chairs. I thoroughly enjoy the vibe that the lighting fixtures give here as well. When I head to Shaffer I always look forward to the homey atmosphere, iced matcha's with soy milk, and their gigantic, sweet cinnamon rolls.



5TH & MAIN

100 S 5th St, Murray, KY 42071

@5thmain



5th and Main

Located in the Murray square on the lower level of the New Life Christian bookstore, **5th and Main** is an underrated coffee shop here in

Murray. Not only is their java phenomenal, but it is also very affordable. Aside from coffee, they also have books, mugs, and seasonal items for sale. The next time you need a quiet place to read, study, or even sit, go down to 5th and Main. Grab yourself a cup of joe, sink into one of their couches, and enjoy the aroma of coffee.

Future Grounds

Future Grounds has been a Murray staple since 2006. They have some delicious pastries, such as muffins, scones,

and bagels from other local businesses such as Kirchoff's baked goods. Having themed seasonal drinks is a tradition at this coffee shop. From Harry Potter's Butterbeer, a mix of caramel, toffee, and hazelnut, to the Pot Of Gold, dark caramel with Irish cream, their coffee is filled with all sorts of flavors. You can enjoy these drinks as hot, iced, or my personal favorite, blended. FG is a great place to work alone, catch up with old friends, and even have some casual business meetings.



Third Eye Grind

THIRD EYE GRIND

204 Coldwater Rd, Murray, KY 42071

@thirdeyegrindcafe



Third Eye Grind is the trendiest, hip place to get your caffeine fix in Murray. They are a plant-based restaurant located at Five Points offering some tasty treats to pair up your coffee. If you're not sold on coffee, they also have some great handcrafted teas, lemonades, and smoothies. This spunky cafe has fun drink names like White Rabbit, a sweet white chocolate latte, and Better Latte Than Ever, your classic latte, but sweetened with agave. Every other Tuesday night they have karaoke, so grab a latte and hang out with some local Murray artists.



A glimpse into the Archive

There's a horse in our stadium!

The Violet Cactus Story

Story by Gage Johnson

Photos from Pogue Special Collections,
murraystate.edu, Jordie Oetken and Dionte Berry

There are over 5,300 colleges and universities in the country, and each one has its own special traditions that set them apart from the others.

While Murray State has a multitude of traditions, from the shoe tree, Tent City, All Campus Sing, Homecoming and many others, one that stands out among them all is Racer One.

At a home football game in 1976, the words “Clear the track!” were shouted through the PA system following a Racer touchdown. All of a sudden, “And here comes Violet Cactus!” was shouted as well, and off went a thoroughbred horse by the name of Violet Cactus.

Violet Cactus arrived at Murray State in 1974 as a donation. The then 10-year-old thoroughbred was given to the Racers by Cecil Seaman, who donated Violet after her racing career came to a halt because of a broken bone.

A year later it was decided that a thoroughbred horse would become the school's mascot, and allowed Violet Cactus to ride again. The only difference is this time it would be on a track to herself.

For 10 seasons of Murray State football, Violet Cactus triumphantly rounded the track after each Racer touchdown. This tradition would become one that would be memorable to anyone who witnessed it. Dave Winder is currently in his 14th year of working with Racer Athletics, and he also played baseball for Murray State from 1983-1987. Even after all the time he spent



within college athletics, Winder is still fond of the Racer One tradition so dear to Murray State football.

“It is one of the most amazing things I've seen at any place in college athletics,” Winder said. “I get goosebumps just talking about it.”

Sadly, after Violet Cactus turned 20 years old, the trusty steed passed away. After her passing, it was decided that Violet would be made forever a part of Racer Football.

Every year a new horse takes the track, bearing the name Racer One, ridden by a student jockey. After every Racer touchdown, “And here comes Racer One!” is shouted as Racer One takes off from where Violet Cactus is now buried, adjacent to the north end zone in Roy Stewart Stadium.

Anna Thomas was the Racer One jockey in the 2017-18 football season, and understands the magnitude of the longstanding tradition.

“It’s not everyday you get to see a horse running around the football field,” Thomas said. “I think it has a huge impact at the football games. As a fan, it’s a huge excitement to watch Racer One run around the track.”

While there will never be another Violet Cactus, with the Racer One tradition and the statue dedicated in her honor, she will be the most memorable horse to take the track at Murray State.



Violet Cactus holds a special place in the hearts of Murray State fans. Every time the Racer football team scores a touchdown, the current Racer One will take off from where Violet Cactus is buried, letting her legacy live on forever.





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Senate meets Wednesdays at 4:30 p.m. in the Curris Center Barkley Room
www.murraystate.edu/sga

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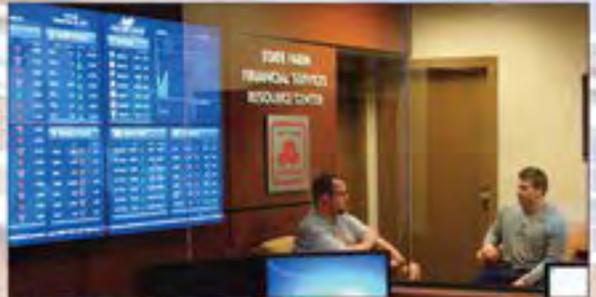


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- Willow Bistro

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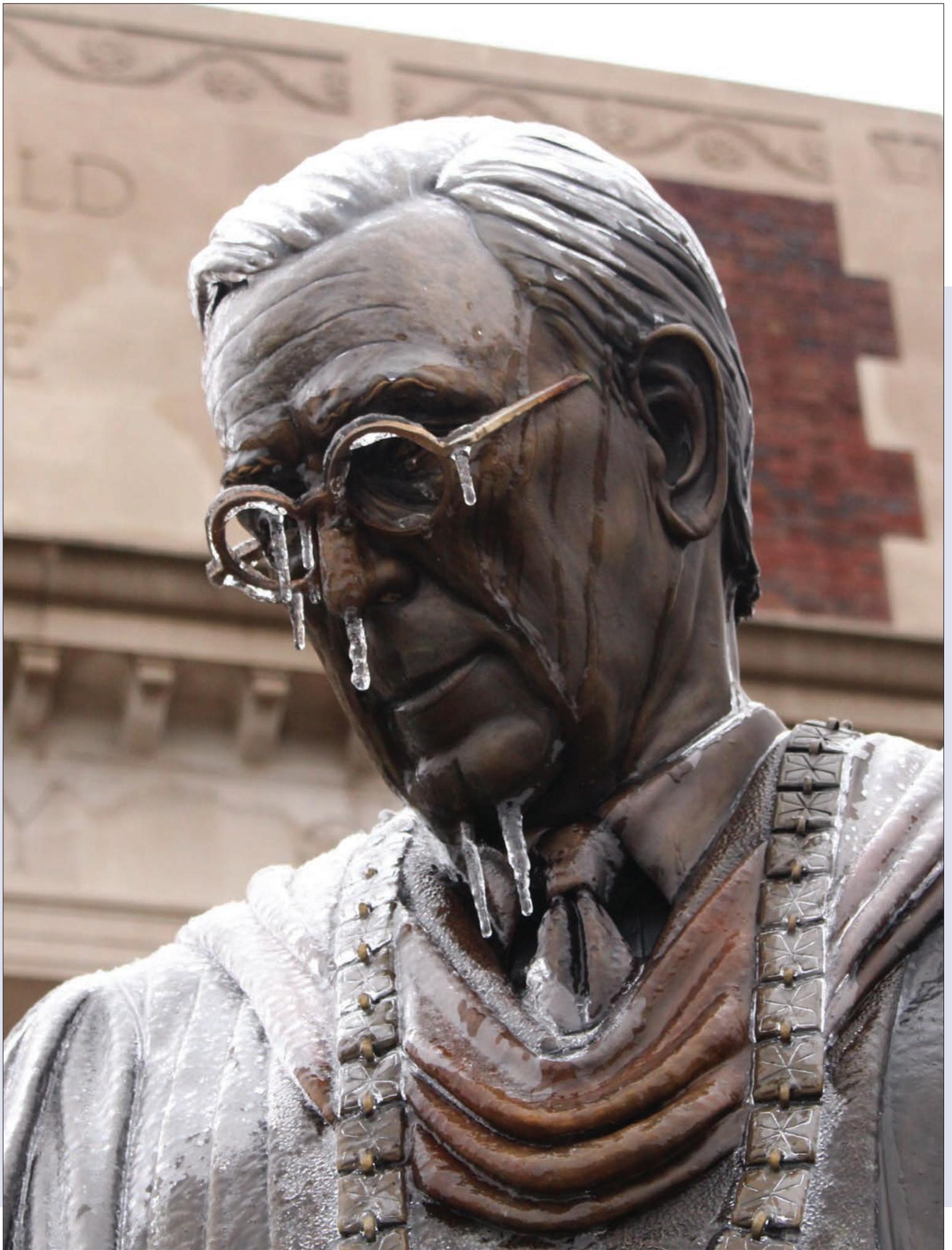


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A glimpse into the Archive

Leaving a Legacy

Honoring Rainey T. Wells

Story by News staff

Photo by Dionte Berry



Murray would not be the same city without its University. And Murray State is most certainly “Murray’s University.” The story is interesting and so is the tale of the man at the center of the birth of Murray State: Rainey T. Wells.

After WWI, the return of peace, coupled with the return of soldiers from Europe, inspired hope for greater prosperity. Calloway County was no different from any place else in America, but the local economy was agricultural and that set limits on growth. It also inspired youth to look elsewhere for opportunity: no land, not much future.

So, in 1922 when the O’Rear Commission was established to find a place for a new teacher’s preparation school in western Kentucky, excitement rose in Murray. Several communities prepared for the Commission’s meeting in Louisville. The little farm town of Murray was regarded as the least likely to succeed.

But, no one had considered Wells.

Wells was a Calloway Countian personally devoted to the idea of education as the key to progress. As head of the Murray delegation, he waited his turn to address the Commission. Each of four or five larger, more prosperous towns preceded him, and each promised great things if the new school was sent to their town.

At last, Wells rose to address the body. After modest comments about his town and with

praise for the others, he announced he had not come to tell anyone what Murray would do; he had come to show what had been done.

With that, he presented the Commission with two checks for \$50,000, each drawn on one of Murray’s two banks.

The money had been contributed by 1,300 individuals and businesses and represented the modern equivalent of nearly \$2.5 million.

But, Wells wasn’t finished.

He dropped on the table the deed for 400 acres of land and a fine house, already fit for the school’s first president. A letter from the local school board pledged the use of the high school’s new auditorium and classrooms for the Normal School’s first year.

Finally, he presented the pledge of homeowners to welcome students into their home at no cost — so anxious was the town for this opportunity to support education in the West.

At that point, the choice was simple: Murray was the new seat of the western Normal School and has been producing teachers for the Commonwealth ever since. After a variety of name changes to reflect its growing diversity of programs, it now reigns in the top tier of public universities nationwide.

The town still loves the University for which it fought in 1922. The University is part of Murray, and Murray is part of the University today.

And so is the memory of “The Founder” and second president, Rainey T. Wells.



Racer Band: One of the oldest Murray State traditions

*Story by Sam Mitchell
Photos from racerband.com*

The stadium lights shine down from above. The cheers from the excited crowd. The cold, crisp air chills your skin just a touch. Your heart racing, pounding in your chest as you move across the field in perfect time. All around you is music, the drums beat behind you and the brass roars alongside, saturating the air with sound. By the end of it, you are drenched in sweat, your lungs heaving for air, and it is magical. An electricity buzzes through the air around you. This is how it feels to be a part of Racer Band. To be surrounded by hundreds of other people with a single goal in mind: to entertain. For many people, Racer Band brings a sense of community and belonging that can often be absent from their lives.

The Murray State University Racer Band is among the largest organizations available to students, with a participation of over 200 members representing nearly all majors on campus. With the majority of students coming from outside of

the music department, it is extremely inclusive and open to anyone able and willing to just put in the time and effort it takes to be a part.

That variety is key to its endurance, says trumpet section leader Bek Schmidt.

“What makes Racer Band so special is the amount of people from different majors and that everyone makes the same sacrifices to be there,” Schmidt said. “Everyone that’s there is there to genuinely have a good time.”

Founded in 1927, Racer Band has evolved over the years into something known well by the local community and recognized on the national stage, performing at Bands of America Grand Nationals as an exhibition in November of 2021.

Among the leadership, all it really takes to lead in the group is to simply care: Care about the work being done, and to care about the people who give up so much time to bring together something great.



Each year a new team steps up to bring the group together.

The leadership team is a large part of what gives Racer Band its identity. With members that care, with the similar goal to see the group grow and improve. The key component of the success is directly derived from the leaders, the ones who want to push the group to be the best they possibly can be.

It's the shared vision that contributes to overall success, says former drum major Kaley Holland.

“Being a leader for the Racer Band means setting an example for others to ensure this program grows and continues the long tradition of success and excellence,” Holland said.

Additionally, current drum major Jason Dollinger says, “I just want to say that we have an amazing group this year, and I’m so excited to work alongside [them].”

With many people working, putting every spare moment of time they have towards the betterment

of the organization, it is easy to see how dedicated each and every member is.

It's common to call groups a “big family” when the members work together, but Racer Band is not just a family, but a home. It provides so many opportunities to grow, particularly for new students, such as make new friends, get accustomed to the MSU campus, and especially be involved with a long-term commitment that can fill a school schedule with something exciting.

Belonging is something that college students often struggle with, especially early on in their university experience. Giving those who feel as though they could easily be cast aside or left behind is what makes Racer Band so special. To be a part of a group such as this one is truly spectacular, and few things can be more rewarding than the experience of belonging among the hundreds of students, entertainers, and performers students can work and grow alongside over the course of the season. **23**

Exploring beyond the University

Five Instagrammable spots in Murray, Kentucky

Story and photos by Grace Rapp

Source: www.postcardsfromthebrink.com

Pagliai's Pizza & Italian Restaurant Pink Wall



A hidden treasure in Murray is this vibrant two-toned wall located on the east side of Pagliai's Pizza and Italian Restaurant. Perfect for a girly photoshoot or even a vibrant

headshot. If the bright pink isn't your thing, check out the exquisite turquoise wall located next to it! While you are there, head inside to grab a delicious pizza or pasta meal.

Wilson Hall Front Steps



Wilson Hall, home of the Journalism and Mass Communication Department, was named after James F. Wilson. As the second oldest building on campus, the first Racer basketball game was hosted here as it housed the gymnasium, library, agriculture department and bookstore. Journalism and Mass Communications, Organizational Communications and the Graphic Communications Management Department students attend their classes within the walls of Wilson Hall. The steps are a staple in Murray for photos as the building is one of the most historic in the area.

Murray Mainstreet Imagination Alley

This colorful alley located next door to the Bull Pen building is a unique place to accentuate a simple outfit with some color. This alley is a unique place for children in Murray to explore their creativity. The pop of color at this location is the most ideal location for an artsy Instagram post. Imagination Alley is within walking distance of many downtown shops and restaurants to explore.



Murray State University Quad

The quad is one of the most beautiful parts of Murray State University. Historic buildings surround the Shoe Tree and open green



spaces. Legend has it that the Murray State Shoe Tree is said to have good luck to a couple who meets at Murray State and tie their shoes on said tree. Some couples will write their anniversaries or even tie baby shoes on the tree. The quad is a must-visit Instagrammable destination if you are looking to showcase the heart and "sole" of the Murray State campus.

Bull Pen Steak and Spirits Doors

These French chestnut doors are some of the most Instagrammable on the square. In the heart of



downtown, this vacant restaurant is within walking distance of many local businesses. BullPen Steak and Spirits opened their doors in 2001 and closed for good about five years later. While this building has remained empty all these years, they sure do have some classy, Instagrammable doors!



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Centennial Exhibit launches in Wrather West Kentucky Museum

Story by Jill Smith

Photos by Dionte Berry, Rebeca Mertins Chiodini and from murraystate.edu



To commemorate the Centennial Celebration, University Libraries and the Office of Development hosted the Grand Opening of the Centennial Exhibit in Wrather West Kentucky Museum on April 21.

Planning for the exhibit began in 2020 with drafting storyboards, which are now displayed in Wrather Museum, says Interim Dean of Libraries Cris Ferguson.

“In early 2021, we began to gather images for Murray State’s Special Collections archives and worked to design and build our exhibits managed this spring,” Ferguson said. “Two years after this exhibit was first envisioned, it has finally come together.”

Four rooms within the Exhibit featured artifacts and history of the University from different points in time. With one room displaying old cheerleading uniforms and letterman jackets.



These exhibits are a celebration of Murray State's history and growth, Ferguson said.

"These interactive exhibits bring to life the rich history of this institution, chronicling our transition from a normal school of just 87 students to a nationally recognized regional prominent ... university of more than 9,000 students," Ferguson said. "Moreover, through these exhibits, we acknowledge and celebrate all of those who have contributed to making Murray State the finest place you know."

All exhibits on the main floor galleries were curated by students in the class Introduction to Public History and Topical Seminar in Information Studies.

Murray State alumnus Melvin Henley was the event's guest speaker.

Henley described how the University has changed considerably since his time as a student—there were only seven buildings on Murray State's grounds at the time.

"The boundaries of the campus were Main Street, Fifteenth Street and Sixteenth Street and a portion of Chestnut Street," Henley said. "Dr. Carr, being the visionary that he was, during the recession, [when] 40 acres became available on the north side of Chestnut Street, he fought for that 40 acres because he knew that Murray State sometime in the future would need that."

He graduated in 1962 with a bachelor's degree in Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics before continuing to earn his PhD in chemistry and physics in 1964.

Henley also received a Master's in Business Administration in 1990 at the University of Mississippi.

Henley was a former chemistry professor, department chair and Board of Regents member at the University.

"In his many years in public service, he served as mayor of the City of Murray in 1978 to 1982, as well as his stint on the Murray City Council," Executive Director of Governmental and Institutional Relations Jordan Smith said. "Lastly, [he served] as state representative from 2005 to 2013 ... as co-chair of the Capital Projects Committee and on the budget of the Subcommittee on Post-secondary Education."





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**— Interim Dean of Libraries
Cris Ferguson**

The Exhibit highlighted the changes the University has gone through since Henley’s years as an undergraduate student.

Jackson said he is grateful for the work of University Libraries and those who helped curate the exhibits.

The exhibit also features photos from Digital and Media Services Manager Jeremy McKeel.

Renovations on the museum already have started, with more work occurring this summer, Director of Special Collections and Archives Jeff McLaughlin said.

“Work has already begun in the underbelly of the building on stuff like the boiler, internet stacks, etc,” McLaughlin said. “Much of the building will be a construction site when the fall term starts, but all of the work in the main gallery spaces has already been completed and we’re free to resume normal museum operations.”

A renovation timeline has not been announced, but McLaughlin said he does not expect the space to be ready for classes and events until 2023.

Wrather Museum is currently closed for renovations, but will re-open in August for those interested in visiting the Centennial Exhibit.

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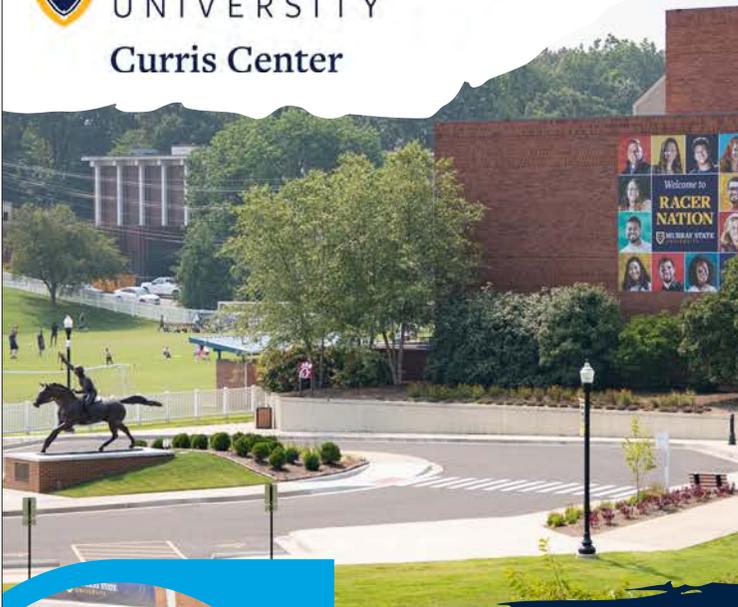


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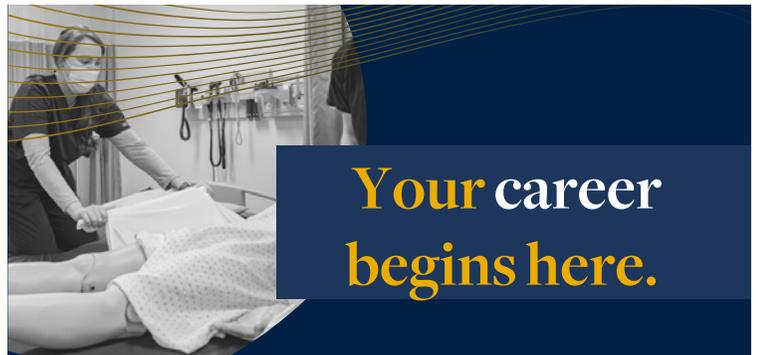
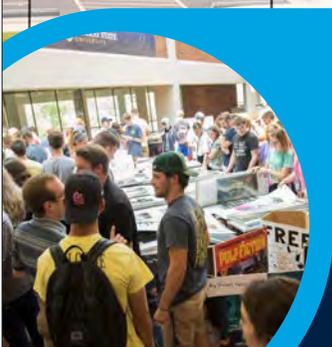
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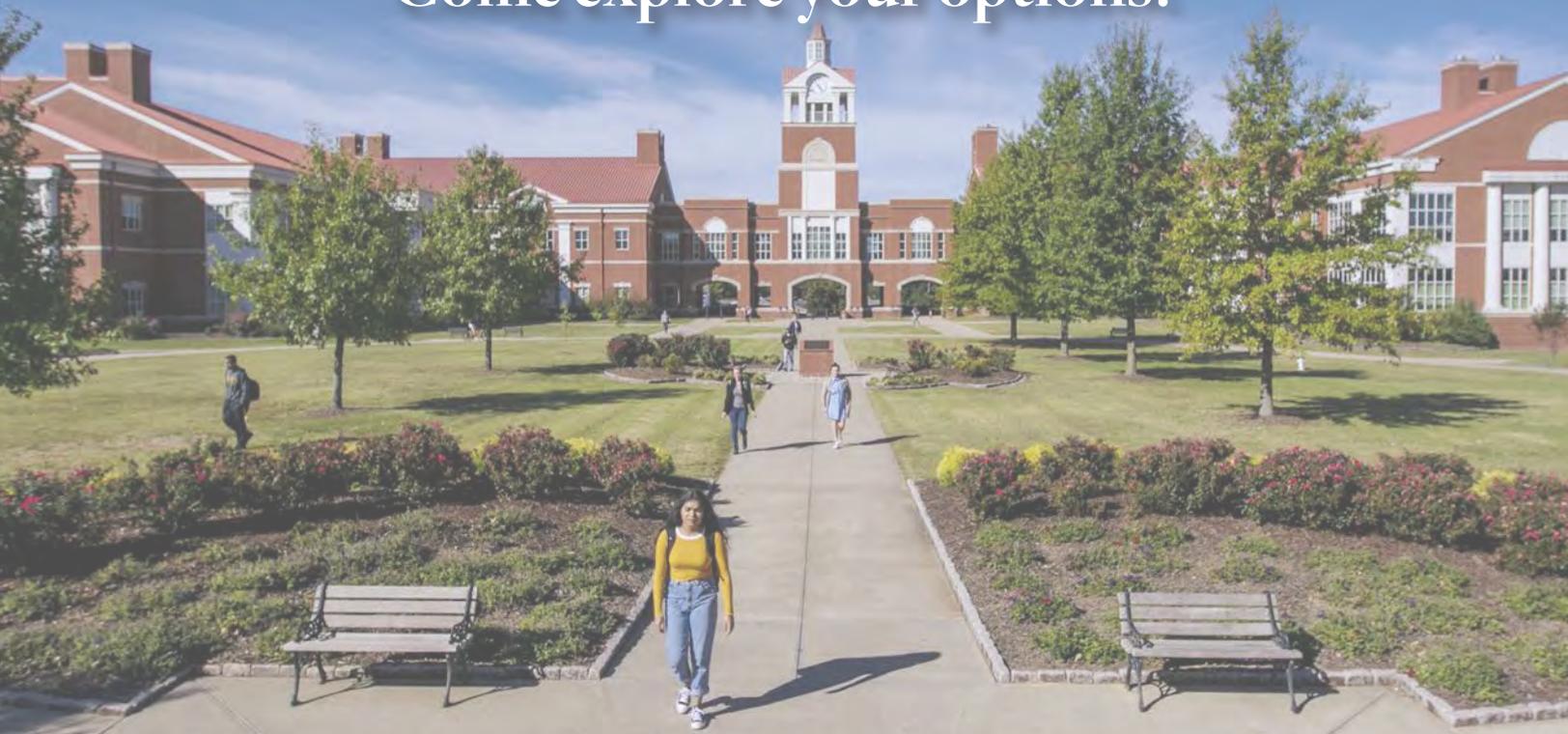
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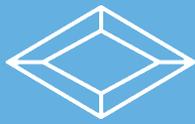
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Five reasons to study abroad in Regensburg, Germany

Story by Ania Boutin

Photo from msu.studyabroad on Instagram

One of Murray State University's oldest and most popular study abroad programs, the Regensburg Exchange Program offers many great opportunities to MSU students.

The Regensburg Program has led MSU students to Regensburg, Germany since 1991. For the MSU student looking to travel abroad, here are the top five reasons to study with the Regensburg Program.

1. Learn a New Language, Fast

Aiming to provide students a chance to acquire six of their foreign language hours, the Regensburg Program was designed with language in mind, according to Co-director Melanie McCallon Seib, who has advised for the Regensburg Program for 20 years. Students pursuing a Bachelor of Arts must take 12 hours of a foreign language, while students pursuing a Bachelor of Science must take six.

"The idea was that students could go with this program to get 6 hours...They would start their German there or they would complete their German there," Seib said.

To ensure students grasp German language foundations quickly, the language classes offered through the Regensburg Program are Intensive Language Courses, which apply immersion techniques to ensure students learn the most content possible in the shortest amount of time.

"It's serious, but serious is fun," said history professor David Pizzo, who has taken students on 24 study abroad trips and currently serves as the Regensburg Program's co-director. "When they hit the ground, they're in six hours of German a day for six weeks, which you need. It's like boot camp."

These ILC classes don't just host American students, international students from all over the world study abroad at the University of Regensburg, students are motivated to

improve German so they can begin communicating with their peers.

"When I was in the ILC, there were other international students in my class," said Mallory Wooldridge, a senior Spanish and history dual major who studied through the Regensburg Program in 2019. "The only common language that we all had was the German that we were learning."

The ILC classes through the Regensburg Program offer MSU students the chance to not only earn a majority of their language hours but also the chance to learn a new language at an accelerated rate.

"It was a very intense environment, but it was also one of the most rewarding language environments that I've ever been in," Wooldridge said. "I really enjoyed being able to see such rapid progress, which is something I've never been able to replicate back in the states in my own learning."

2. Gain a New Perspective on History

In Germany, students walk through history. While this can include beautifully preserved cathedrals, Germany doesn't hide the darker sites of its history, such as the infamous concentration camps.

Learning about the Holocaust in school did nothing to prepare her for the experience of standing in such a haunting place, Wooldridge said.

"In my head, concentration camps existed in the same place as heaven and hell," Wooldridge said. "They were outside of this world. They could exist only in textbooks or in the past or in a collective memory, but not in a physical, tangible world."

Wooldridge said walking through Sachsenhausen, a camp next to Berlin, gave her an entirely new perspective.

"This is dirt that I'm walking on, and it's the same dirt that I walk on every day," Wooldridge said. "These buildings are

are made of wood and cement and metal, not Hilter's pixie dust. I think that's when I began to internalize...that history existed in this world. The narrative exists now and is shaped by people, not evil villains that were beamed down from outer space. They existed in the same way that I exist."

Pizzo said simply seeing pictures of these places in textbooks can't yield the same effect.

Pizzo said simply seeing pictures of these places in textbooks can't yield the same effect.

"I think for students, it seems more real," said Pizzo. "It's grounded in something concrete. When you look in a textbook...and there's a picture...it's black and white. It's four by six. People tend to push it back to unreality. It just doesn't feel connected to their lived experience. Being in a place is totally different, so the things I teach resonate so much more strongly there."

3. Form Lasting Friendships

Studying abroad presents an environment designed to cultivate new friendships, and this was the case for Wooldridge when she studied in Regensburg.

"I met some of my best friends on that trip," Wooldridge said.

While some friendships in the program are formed with German students attending the University of Regensburg, many are formed with international students from all over the world. Wooldridge said the first student she met at the University of Regensburg was from Ireland.

This crossover of countries is one of the Regensburg Program's greatest draws, according to Seib.

"Students are living with people from all over the world and having the opportunity to have a real exchange of ideas, developing friendships and gaining new perspectives," said Seib. "It's not this isolated group. It's not on little America that we've designed. It's Regensburg."

These friendships can last lifetimes. Pizzo has maintained a friendship with Monika Fiedler, who he met when he studied abroad in Germany as a student. He's been able to both reconnect with her when he teaches with the Regensburg Program and introduce her to his students through the program.

"It takes out the lack of desire to know about the world," Seib said. "When the newsfeed pops up on world news, maybe you're gonna pay a little more attention to that if you've met someone from that part of the world."

In this way, international friendships don't just offer a new community, but a new outlook.

4. Experience Christmas Markets

Christmas markets are traditional street markets that appear during the four weeks of Advent and celebrate the

Christmas holiday. These markets originated in Germany, and they're very present in Regensburg.

"Christmas markets are bananas," said Pizzo. "They are so legendary that there are specific cruises and buses that come to Regensburg just to take people to the Christmas markets."

While Regensburg hosts its own markets, students are also able to travel to surrounding markets in Europe. Wooldridge traveled to Salzburg, Austria while abroad to experience some markets there.

"They're incredible," Wooldridge said. "There was a huge Christmas tree, taller than all the buildings around it, and there were all these booths with vendors selling all kinds of homemade Christmas goods: ornaments, nutcrackers, and stars."

Germany can become a bit grim in November as it begins to become cold and get dark sooner, said Pizzo. The Christmas markets feel like the cities waking up.

"Suddenly in early December, all these lights go up," said Pizzo. "Literally every alley and street has these illuminated snowflakes"

While this Christmas tradition doesn't exist in America, Pizzo encourages every student to travel and experience it at least once, and the Regensburg semester provides the perfect opportunity.

"It's a Christmas wonderland," Pizzo said.

5. Use All of Your Financial Aid

For most students looking to study abroad, finances can be a big obstacle. Ensuring a program will accept most of a student's scholarships and financial aid plays an important part in deciding where they go.

"That was one of the huge considerations for me whenever I was trying to decide which study abroad program would be feasible," Wooldridge said.

Seib said the tuition rate a student pays at MSU is what they pay for the Regensburg Program. Any scholarships a student has for tuition or housing can be applied.

The ability to apply for these scholarships is especially useful for students like Wooldridge.

"I got to apply for the scholarships that I had for housing and tuition, so basically all that I was paying for was my plane ticket, meals, and independent travel," Wooldridge said. "That was a huge part in deciding that I was going to go to Regensburg because I'm not sure it would have been possible without that, financially."

The ease with which students can apply their scholarships and financial aid through the Regensburg Program allows this study abroad opportunity to open doors for students, regardless of their financial state.

"There are not enough words in the English or German languages to communicate how amazing the program is and what it does for people," Pizzo said.



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