



THE MURRAY STATE
NEWS

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Kristopher Fister /The News

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Financial aid office causes blues

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As we settle into the new academic year, there has been frustration arising from students about their FAFSA returns. Many took to forums like Yik Yak to describe and discuss their issues—specifically with the offices of Murray State.

Three students have come forward and discussed their issues to *The Murray State News*, saying they've been hung up on and left with less aid than they should have.

Maddie Williams, a senior creative writing major, saw she had almost no aid.

"I get refunds for Murray State ... I went and looked in my financial aid and almost none of my financial aid was there," Williams said. "My Pell Grant was not there, my Federal Work Study was not there, and my Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship money had been reduced to half and then cut off for the spring. I was going to have to pay Murray State."

Williams tried to contact the office several times about her Pell Grant and didn't get a reply for a week and a half. She called one more time and got a connection, but not with the financial aid office, it was the bursar's.

"Which is close enough (because), in my eyes, I need to talk to somebody, anybody," Williams said. "(The office said), 'Oh, well, that was, yeah, you know, you're not gonna get a Pell Grant.' And I was like, that makes no sense. I've gotten one every year. I went and I checked, I'm nowhere near the lifetime capacity for it. And they said, This was based off of your parents 2023 tax information. They make too much. The family contribution is too high."

Williams said her parents filed for bankruptcy.

"My family contribution is zero," she said. "I don't get any contribution from it. They're unable to provide me assistance for paying for college. And they're like, 'Yeah, unfortunate. That's just how the federal government sees it.' So, you're saying that my parents make too much money, even though none of that is going towards me?"

The office had Williams fill out a special circumstances form. Still, Williams was without answers to why this was happening.

"Hey, can you also answer my question about my KEES and why it's been reduced?" Williams asked. "(The office) said, 'No, I can't, but I will take your name and number down and I'll give it to somebody who will reach out to you tomorrow.'"

Williams did not hear from the office for several days. When they contacted her, it was to inform that her KEES were going to be totally cut off. Then, she received an email to her initial Pell Grant

inquiry in the beginning, asking for her M number.

She asked them if there was any chance of an update on her special circumstance form. The office replied saying "No, because it's a first-come, first-serve basis."

"We are on the eighth business day of my special circumstance form being looked at and reviewed," she said. "I don't have a lot of hope."

Sidda Roche, a senior anthropology major who uses they/them pronouns and a regular recipient of the Cap Grant, noticed they were not receiving it this year after being notified via email July 23, the bill payment deadline.

"I learned literally through having to compare my financial aid between last year and this year after they told me I owed over \$1,400 with two weeks to either pay it or start a payment plan," Roche said. "I'd never had issues before this, so I looked at everything and saw that my Cap Grant, which I had also gotten last year, was missing, even though The Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority had already awarded it on the website. I immediately emailed them back asking about it, and they didn't respond."

Roche went to the registrar's office in person afterward to resolve this, the office said they'd fix the problem. Then, the office emailed Roche informing them the office has their address set in Arkansas, where they're from, and not Kentucky, which is where their official address is listed on the FAFSA.

Roche said, except for their first year, they do not have an Arkansas address; Murray is their permanent address. They said in hindsight this makes sense that they need to change their address to Murray, but this has never been an issue before. Contacting the office became harder each time as they attempted to understand.

"I called the registrar's office only to be told to send an email instead," Roche said. "After going back and forth a few times, they sent me back to Student Financial Services, where I was told that they were just going to take the Cap Grant off of last year's financial aid and replace it with a Murray State grant so it would even out, and that I was ineligible for the KHEAA Cap Grant going forward. I repeatedly asked how I was able to get it last year but not this year, and instead of ever actually answering me, aka admitting that someone made a mistake, they just replaced the money."

Since they live off-campus as compared to recent years, Roche is frustrated with how this has played out, as living expenses make up most of their cost and they expected to be paying less this year.

Yet Roche has had to take out the biggest loan of their college career.



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Demands made for syllabuses

Universities face FOIA requests for courses, raising political concerns

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Universities across the country have been hit with Freedom of Information Act requests from a large national media company, all part of an effort to bring attention to the “propaganda” pushed in public universities.

On Aug. 6, the Jackson Purchase News announced it was sending an open records request to Murray State asking for all course syllabuses information for the spring 2025 semester, including course and instructor names, department and delivery format. The University complied with the request, leading departments to work over the summer to pull together course information.

The Jackson Purchase News is a local news site owned by Metric Media LLC, a national news network which owns over 1,200 news sites across the country. Universities all over the nation have responded to similar requests from Metric Media-owned news outlets. According to the company, this is all part of a report exposing the kinds of ideas being taught in public universities.

“We want to know what colleges are teaching these days to our young people,” said Brian Timpone, co-founder and owner of Metric Media. “We’re very curious, especially state-funded colleges like Murray State ... we want to know if they’re actually teaching, teaching you something, or if they’re trying to propagandize you with nonsense.”

Timpone criticized public universities for teaching inane and unimportant concepts, as well as working to “politicize” children. He said schools have traded teaching important subjects like writing and arithmetic for an emphasis on less-important subjects, like women’s history and “homosexual history.”

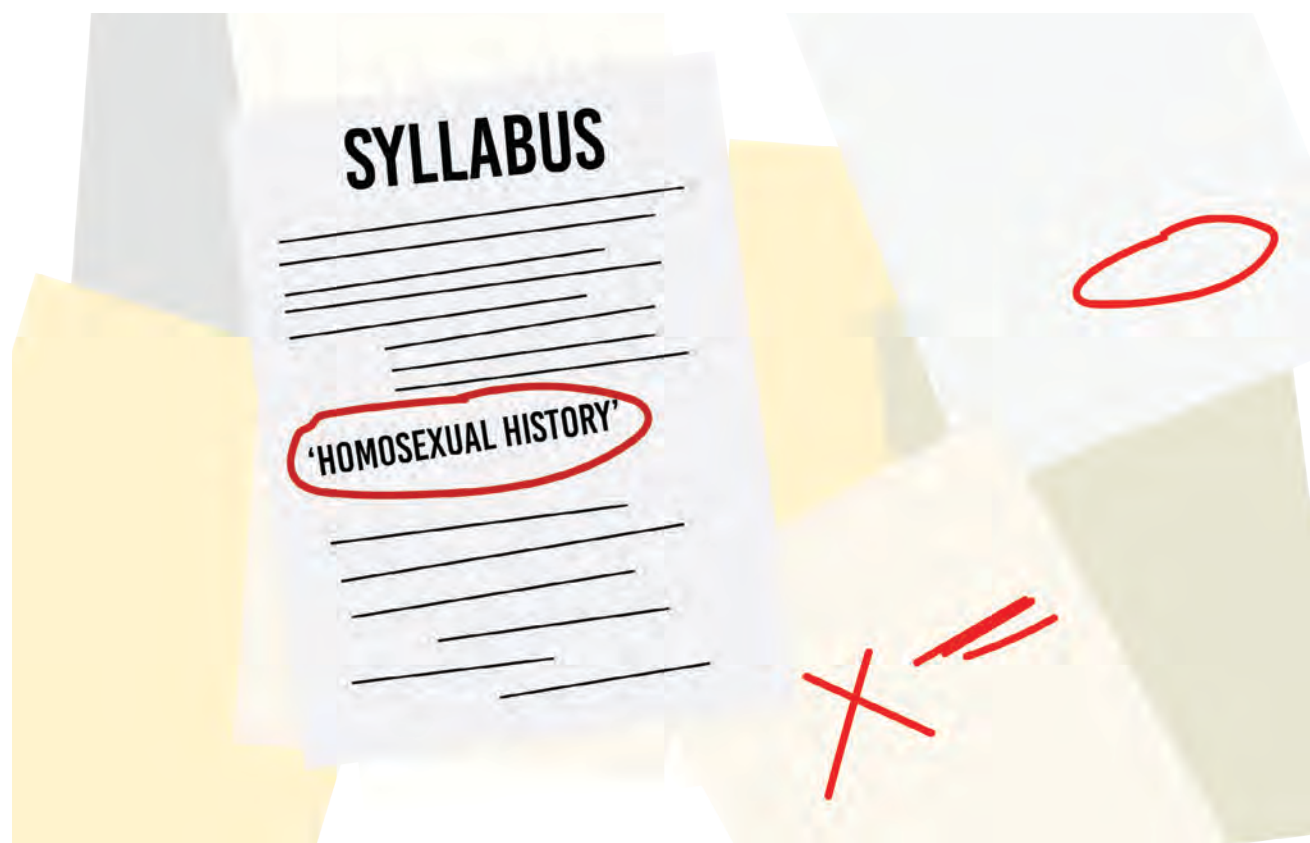
Timpone said the results of the records requests will be published verbatim by Metric Media, and that the agency isn’t looking to spin them. Timpone said he wants to make sure parents and taxpayers knew what public universities were teaching their kids.

“People haven’t been paying attention, because we trusted and thought it would be absurd that a professor would try to teach, say, gay history to a bunch of students or ‘trans’ history to a bunch of students,” Timpone said. “But actually it’s not. It’s actually happening everywhere, so we’d like to know where.”

Timpone, a businessman and former TV reporter, founded Metric Media in 2019. The network, which says it produces over 5 million articles a month over its 1,200 local news sites, has been criticized for engaging in “pink-slime journalism,” a tactic where news sites rely on poor-quality, often computer-generated, news stories that masquerade as local news.

The news network has been profiled numerous times by the Columbia Journalism Review, a magazine for professional journalists published by the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism since 1961. Their initial report on the network after its establishment in 2019 found that out of the network’s thousands of published stories, only a few hundred had authors credited in the byline. Many of their articles are generated through consumer price reports and press releases.

The records request sent to Murray State was written by Jules Goonewardena, who said he was a news reporter for the Jackson Purchase News. Despite claiming to be a media professional and employee for the new site, Goonewardena is not listed as a reporter on the Jackson Purchase News website, nor does his



MacKenzie Rogers/The News

name appear in the byline of any articles on their website. The Jackson Purchase News does not have any listed employees, and few credited authors.

While he doesn’t appear on the news’s website, Goonewardena’s name does appear in a LinkedIn search as a data manager for Local Labs LLC. Local Labs describes itself as a “leading publisher of community news and events,” and works to collect and publish public records obtained through FOIA requests. Timpone founded the company in 2006.

When asked about this issue, Timpone said it was the network’s practice to not put writers’ names in articles or on their websites for privacy reasons. He said the decision was also guided by a belief that news should stand on its own and not need credited writers.

“We don’t feel compelled to put their names on the website, because when our reporters put their names on a website, people attack them,” Timpone said. “Crazy left-wing lunatics try to attack them and call their parents and harass them.”

Investigations into Metric Media by the Columbia Journalism Review also found the network had received millions of dollars in support from right-wing nonprofit organizations and political action committees. This included a \$7.5 million investment by two PACs and the nonprofit Restoration of America. These three organizations are backed by billionaire shipping magnates Richard and Elizabeth Uihlein. According to a ProPublica article, the Uihlein family is a large donor to the Republican Party.

According to the report, Metric Media also received \$240,000 from the Peter Theil-backed Saving Arizona PAC. During the state’s 2022 midterm election, the PAC paid Metric Media’s Grand Canyon Times for consultation as well as “Printing/Postage.” According to the report, the newspaper shipped at least two editions of its paper to Arizonans during the election.

Metric Media’s records request was done in partnership with another nonprofit, the Coalition Against Government Secrecy. The coalition is a Missouri-based non-profit with the mission to “aid and encourage

citizen participation in government and the political process.” It does this often through FOIA requests, as well as finding lawyers to manage lawsuits for public access.

Timpone said this coalition was another agency he helped found. He said he realized that to get access to many public records, he would need lawyers behind him to compel the government into releasing certain information.

“We’ve had a lot of success with the coalition opposing government secrecy and getting local governments to actually give out information they should,” Timpone said.

Ray Horton, associate professor of English, said criticism and attacks on education like this aren’t new. Horton said higher education has served as a target for conservative movements since the Red Scare, where they were often considered a “den of reds.”

Horton said University departments had still been quick to comply with the records request. While Horton said some of his colleagues found the need for extra work over the summer annoying, the request hadn’t created too much trouble for faculty and staff.

Horton said he was glad to see the University comply with the request quickly, as records requests are important for public accountability. He also said, however, that this request had contributed to a growing concern among his colleagues over political attacks on education. These concerns have grown sharper since the passage of Kentucky House Bill 4, which banned teaching of “diversity, equity and inclusion” in the classroom.

Read the rest of the story online:



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What broke in just a few days

Murray State's new president addresses problems

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Unexpected damages to several University buildings marked the beginning of the fall semester.

The new damage and incidents around campus have garnered attention from Ron Patterson, Murray State's new president, who said they will be the focus of his leadership and tenure at the University.

"One of our requests to the Capitol Planning Advisory Budget Committee (involved) my second week on the job (was) a pool of funds to continue our work in terms of addressing our deterred maintenance across our campus, especially with, again, our older facilities," Patterson said.

A leak was noticed in Wilson Hall, inside *The Murray State News*' newsroom, where it trickled over one of the desks because of the chiller unit above the office.

Then a second leak was discovered in the northeast corner of the building. The water, said to be from the earlier rain showers, poured through ceiling tiles and fluorescent lights, pooling on the desks and chairs, settling on the carpet, or running down to the first floor and threatening the equipment in the photography room.

It was captured and broadcast on Instagram and Facebook, and also reported to Murray State's maintenance by *The News*.

That same day, a fan motor blew out in Wells Hall, resulting in smoke and sparks. Then, over the course of the next few days, more breaks and incidents occurred across campus.

Utilities were shut off in Hester Residential College that left residents from the third floor up without hot water. There was another water leak in the Oakley Applied Science Building. There was also a flood in Regents Residential College.

Murray State's Office of Branding, Marketing and Communication said the fire in Wells was because of the fan motor's electrical circuit being overloaded.

BMC said Hester had a broken water pipe, Facilities Management believes construction in Oakley caused the leak, and the flood in Regents was due to a broken shower valve stem.

Another leak was called in on campus—except it was reported to be a gas leak.

In RH White Residential College, students were evacuated after a foul smell was noticed on the fourth, fifth and sixth floors. An anonymous residential adviser said many residents were complaining of

“**MIGRAINES.**
- ANONYMOUS RA”

headaches.

"Migraines," the RA said.

The RA said all of RH White's gas lines are in the basement of the dorm, and when several of the other RA's went to check for what was described as "methane," nothing of the sort was found on the eighth or second floor.

"But more than a few of the residents smelled it," the RA said. "I'm pretty sure the fourth-floor RA smelled it."

The fire alarm was finally pulled when one of the RA's own portable carbon monoxide detector began beeping around midnight.

But the beeping was only the detector's low battery, and when the fire department arrived and assessed the situation for around 45 minutes to an hour, they found nothing. Murray State public relations office confirms this and said no gas was detected.

The RA said the remaining smell is theorized to be coming from the toilets.

"But that's a completely separate issue that's not gas-related," the RA said.

Newcomers to Murray State expressed unease and concern for this introduction to campus.

Kyle Warren, freshman psychology major, recalled the fire drills conducted in high school, comparing the two situations until he noticed how old the building is.

Another freshman, Pearl Cavins, social work major, said RH White is referred to as a bad dorm.

"People outside were like, 'This just happens,'" Cavins said.

"It kind of enhanced an already existing negative stigma of the building and that reflects on the campus a little bit," Warren said. "Kinda feels like a legend story, like one day the building is just gonna collapse."

Elie Watson, freshman business administration major, said this is something to be mindful of.

"It may happen more often," Watson said.

Lifestyle Editor Gray Hawkins contributed to this story.



Top, Wilson Hall room 202 is tapped off from campus community. Middle, the classroom is shown after clean-up. Bottom, this shows the damage left behind from the leak.

River Murt/The News



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Watch for sobriety checkpoints

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Shortly before new and returning students arrived at Murray State University for move in and classes, the Murray Police Department set up sobriety checkpoints out and around town.

Murray PD released the locations through a Facebook post on July 23, saying they would be set up to promote safety for those on the road and deter driving under the influence.

Captain Andrew Wiggins, community services division commander, said the checkpoints were planned based on collision numbers, on alcohol and/or drug-related traffic events and where a checkpoint can be done safely.

Wiggins said there were two important reasons for these checkpoints.

“The first is the National Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over Campaign (that) runs from Aug. 13 to Sept. 1,” Wiggins said. “The second is (that it’s) a good way to increase our visibility as the new fall semester starts to remind motorists to drive safely and have a sober driver.”

On the National Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over website, found under the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation, it shares critical, sobering information.

A person is lost every 42 minutes because of a drunk-driving crash. This results in 12,000 deaths every year. Because of this, Wiggins and the police department have folks’ safety on their minds.

“The biggest takeaway about this is that we would like MSU students and everyone in the public to be sure to have a designated driver, taxi, or other way to get home safely after they’ve been drinking,” Wiggins said. “DUIs are entirely preventable; however, at the same time, they are extremely dangerous.”

He also warns of the greater impact this behavior has not only on yourself, but of those around you.

“Not only can you get a criminal charge that will follow you later in life, you can also hurt or kill yourself or others if you drive while intoxicated,” he said. “Our goal with these sobriety checkpoints is to increase public safety by deterring intoxicated driving.”

The Facebook list says police are posted at:

South 12th Street between Glendale Road and the Murray City limits;

Main Street between Eighth and Ninth;

Wilshire Drive between Bailey Road and Vasser Drive;

Glendale Road between Ninth and 12th Street;

Main Street between Industrial Road and the Murray City limits;

Chestnut at the intersection with Eighth Street;

U.S. Route 641 at Diuguid Drive;

Doran Road at Holiday Drive;

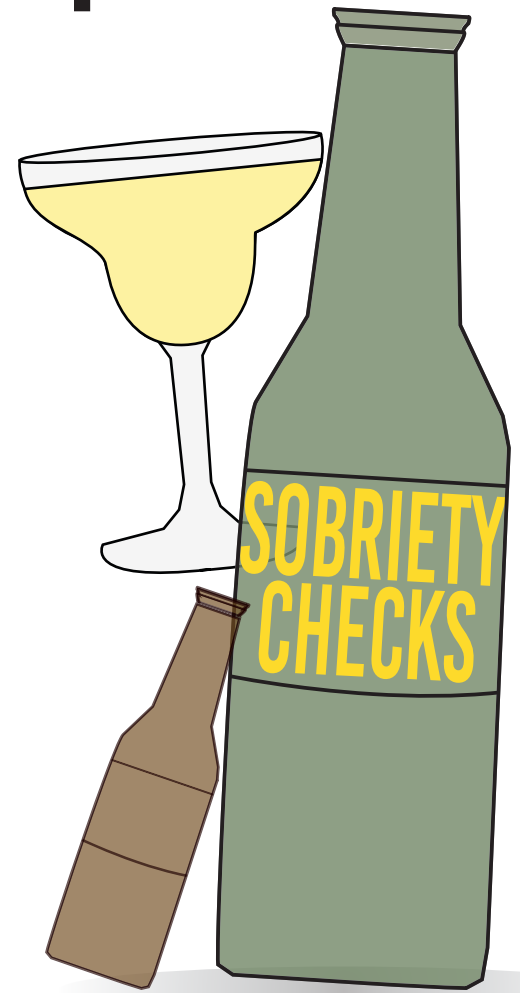
North 16th Street at the intersection with Olive Street;

Highway 94 at the intersection of Doran Road;

Fourth Street between Sycamore Street and Murray City limits south;

Olive Street between Sixth and 12th;

North 16th Street between Kentucky 121 and Diuguid Drive.



MacKenzie Rogers/The News

Welcome Racers!

We are very excited to be part of the Murray State family. Shoes up!

The Patterson Family





Kristopher Fister/*The News*

Arthur J. Bauernfeind College of Business building as seen from the quad.

Construction forces counseling offices to move

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The Murray State Counseling Center has been temporarily relocated to Suite 351 in the Business Building due to an ongoing construction project, but remains operational.

The construction is part of an Asset Preservation project expected to provide various improvements to the Oakley Applied Science building, home of the Counseling Center.

Jason Youngblood, Assistant Vice President of Facilities Management, said the work includes “the addition of single occupancy, Americans with Disabilities Act compliant restrooms on each floor, major mechanical and electrical upgrades (and) a few space refreshes in certain areas.”

Previously stationed in Suite 104 in Oakley, the Counseling Center offers in-person and remote therapy sessions from licensed psychologists and a “Zen Den,” where students can unwind and destress in a quiet environment.

All of these services except for the Zen Den remain available in the new location.

While the Zen Den may be temporarily out of commission until the center returns to Oakley, Waterfield Library now offers its own quiet place for students to utilize.

“University Libraries received a MSYou Matter, Racers Care mini-grant to establish a calm space in the library,”

said Stephanie Leedy, collection development and acquisitions librarian. “Our area provides a quiet space with comfortable seating and ambient lighting. Students needing a few moments of peace and tranquility to overcome stress and anxiety can utilize the space to self-calm.”

The library’s new quiet space can be found by the stairs to the second floor and adjacent to the computer lab. Unlike the Zen Den, however, it cannot be reserved for 30-minute sessions.

“The calm space set up in the library differs from the Zen Den in that it is available on a first-come-first-serve basis and does not offer the same amenities that the Zen Den does, such as a weighted blanket and aromatherapy,” said Cris Ferguson, associate professor and dean of libraries. “That said, we hope students will take advantage of the space we have set aside to rest and relax when the need arises.”

While a timeline is not set in stone, Angie Trzepacz, director of the Counseling Center and licensed psychologist, said they are expecting to remain in the Business Building until at least November and may not return to Oakley until January.

Updates can be found by visiting the center’s website at murraystate.edu/CounselingCenter.

To book an appointment, Zoom session or find help locating the new temporary location, call 270-809-6851 or email msu.counselingcenter@murraystate.edu.



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Programs available include: Accounting; Agricultural Education; Agriculture; Animal Technology; Applied Engineering; Applied Engineering and Technology Management; Art; Biology; Business Administration; Career and Technical Education; Chemistry; Civil and Sustainability Engineering; Civil Engineering Technology; Clinical Psychology; Communication Disorders; Computer Information Systems; Computer Science; Construction Management and Architecture; Counseling; Criminal Justice; Cybersecurity and Network Management; Design Engineering Technology; Earth and Environmental Sciences; Economic Development; Economics; Education Administration; Elementary Education; Engineering Physics; English; English Pedagogy and Technology; Engineering Management; Exercise Science; Finance; General Experimental Psychology; General Studies; German; Health and Physical Education; History; Human Development and Leadership; Information Systems; Integrated Studies; Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education; International Studies; Japanese; Learning and Behavior Disorders; Liberal Arts; Library Media; Logistics and Supply Chain Management; Management; Marketing; Mass Communications; Mathematics; Mechatronics; Middle School Education; Multimedia Journalism; Music; Music Business; Music Education; Nonprofit Leadership Studies; Nursing; Nutrition and Dietetics; Occupational Safety and Health; Occupational Therapy; Organizational Communication; P-20 and Community Leadership; Physics; Political Science; Postsecondary Education Administration; Psychology; Public Administration; Public and Community Health; Reading and Writing; Respiratory Therapy; School Counseling; Social Work; Sociology; Spanish; Special Education; Speech-Language Pathology; Strategic Communications, Sustainability Science; Teacher Education and Professional Development; Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages; Teacher Leader; Theatre; Visual Communications, Wildlife and Conservation Biology.

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For more information concerning the application of these provisions may be referred to: 1) the Executive Director of Equal Opportunity and Title IX, Murray State University Title IX Coordinator, Murray State University, 103 Wells Hall, Murray, KY 42071 Telephone: (270) 809-3155 Fax: (270) 809-6887; TDD: (270) 809-3361; Email: msu.titleix@murraystate.edu; or 2) to the Assistant Secretary of the United States Department of Education, U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington D.C. 20202-1100; Telephone: 1-800-421-3481, Fax: 202-453-6012; TDD: 1-800-877-8339; Email: OCR@ed.gov. For more information, contact the Executive Director Equal Opportunity and Title IX, 103 Wells Hall, 270-809-3155 (voice), 270-809-3361 (TDD).

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Parking office releases plans

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bgrubbs@murraystate.edu

The availability of parking on campus is a pressing issue for many students on campus, particularly the freshmen. Many students find it difficult to secure a parking spot throughout the day.

Few want to resort to parking near the football stadium, leading to a mass scramble towards the various red and blue parking spaces around campus. This problem has only been worsened by the construction of the new Jackson Hall nursing building. A lack of parking is a common issue among most universities, however, with Murray maintaining its own campus separate from the rest of the city, most students are unable to park outside its grounds and walk to class. As it stands now, many have begun vocalizing their frustrations, tickets in hand.

“I look at the campus parking situation and laugh,” said Jacob Wilson, a transfer engineering major. “We have more commuters to this school than most others, making parking a crucial aspect of the campus. Other colleges have everyone living in the dorms, making it easier for them to walk or bike to class. Murray needs to expand their parking and make it more accessible for the everyday commuter and forget about the cash grab of parking.”

In response to a growing demand for an expansion of parking, Parking Services has undertaken a “large-scale project to expand several parking lots to continue to best serve campus for better usage, once completed.”

This project is ongoing, with the parking areas west of 16th Street between Ryan Avenue and Calloway Av-



Shipping containers and pick-up truck preventing parking across from Pogue Library.

River Murt/The News

enue remaining closed off to accommodate.

Students with Red or Blue parking permits are encouraged to use the spots around the following areas:

Kentucky and Calloway South (Corner of Kentucky Avenue and Calloway Avenue).

Kentucky and College Terrace North and South (Intersection between Kentucky Avenue and College Terrace).

16th and Ryan Northeast (North Corner of 16th Street and Ryan Avenue).

The project is expected to be completed during this fall semester.



Jackson Hall construction taking place on the former faculty and staff parking beside Faculty Hall

Kristopher Fister/The News

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Q
A

Written by Zach Simmons, Editor-in-Chief

The beginning of classes at Murray State brings a lot of faces to “the finest place we know.” Freshmen begin their collegiate careers, seniors prepare for their final year of school and for the first time since 2018, a new president will be in charge at Murray State University.

Q: What are some of your hobbies?

A: I love to cook. And so I’m always looking for new recipes. I’m watching cooking shows, and I try to replicate that for my family at home. I love the grill. I love the barbecue. And so, people, please understand that they’re very different. Barbecuing and grilling are very different, so I’m very astute in all three. And those are kind of my happy places. I love to play golf. I used to love to play basketball until I injured myself, and so I’m waiting and recovering from my injury before I can actually pick up a basketball again, but my wife is not encouraging me to do that either, right? Sure. And I love to fish. My son and I love to go fishing. My family does, and we enjoy that time together. And I love listening to music.

Q: What Murray State tradition are you the most excited for to integrate with your life, or maybe just experience for the first time?

A: Well, I think there are several, right? I’m looking forward to Great Beginnings this week and this weekend, helping the students and their families get them moved into the residence halls. I’ve been assigned to Richmond and so that’s where I’m going to start. Then we’re going to just work our way around and shake hands and say hello and thank people for choosing Murray State University. The other ones are Tent City. I’ve heard so much about it, so I’m looking forward to that one. Those are a few that I’m very excited to actually get my first opportunity to witness.

On July 1, Dr. Ron Patterson, a Corinth, Mississippi, native, stepped into the role of university president. He is the 15th president in Murray State’s history. *The Murray State News* sat down with Patterson on Aug. 12 to ask him how his family has enjoyed campus, what he’s been doing since arriving in Murray and getting to know him more on a personal level.

Q: How has it been meeting people since arriving here and what are you learning from the people here in the Murray community?

A: So we’ve launched three dates so far. We had the Town and Gown breakfast here in Murray at the CFSB Center in the Murray Room. We had a day in Paducah last week. And then yesterday, I was in Mayfield most of the day. I’m asking two questions to all of the constituents that I’m encountering. And one is, what are we doing well? And the second question is, what can we do better? Right? What are opportunities for us to continue to enhance, advance, rather enhance and elevate Murray State University, and so far, everything has been very positive. There are some great ideas and suggestions that have been shared with me and with the team that’s traveled alongside me, and so the newspaper and others will get to see those opportunities here in the very near future.

Q: How’s everything been since you’ve made it to Murray?

A: Every day is going well, I’ve been here a month and 12 days, but who’s counting. I’ve been thrilled to serve as the 15th president at Murray State University. I’ve hit the ground, literally running and actively listening and learning, and that’s been important as well. And I look forward to getting around campus, to listening and learning with our campus constituents.

Q: Where does your sense of style come from?

A: I get my style from my mother. She’s very eclectic, but she has great style. The shoes I just picked up along the journey. You know, we are, we’re as administrators and individuals, we’re on our feet a lot throughout the day, and so the hard-bottom shoes don’t work well for my feet. So tennis shoes are more comfortable. And so what I’ve done is I’ve tried to order shoes that fit my suit collection, you know, whether it’s a blazer or a full-on suit, I try to order shoes that match. And so that’s where the style comes from.

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President Ron Patterson



New Racers share first impressions

Annabelle Massa

Contributing Writer

amassa@murraystate.edu

The transition from high school to college can be brutal. Incoming freshmen have been making introductions, navigating campus and trying to decorate without damaging their walls.

After move-in chaos and first classes, freshmen are forming their own opinions about Murray State University.

Eleanor Holder, freshman earth and environmental sciences major, came to Murray State from Louisville, Kentucky. She said she is already getting involved with organizations on campus as a member of Alpha Delta Pi.

"It's actually kinda cool getting to meet a lot of new people," Holder said. "Murray is a great, community-based place, so it's pretty easy (to get involved)."

Clara Vargas, freshman communication disorders major from Brentwood, Tennessee, said being an introvert can make it challenging to make connections on campus.

"It's hard for me to invite people sometimes, but if people invite me, I'll definitely say yes," Vargas said.

Riley Reeves, freshman graphic communications media major from Highland, Illinois, said she has had no problem finding her people in her new home.

"It's a beautiful campus," Reeves said. "It's probably the safest area to be around for kids like us, and everyone is just so friendly."

Dorm life means sharing space with a roommate and a bathroom with your floor. Holder said communicating with her new roommate is the biggest difference she's adjusting to.



New pledges run home to Alpha Delta Pi on Bid Day.

Kristopher Fister / The News

"I grew up with an older sister, but I've always had my own room ... that's definitely a big change," Holder said.

Reeves said living with a roommate is different, but having to "commute for the bathrooms" on a communal floor has been a big change for her.

Holder said she is "a little all over the place" in terms of where she goes to eat, going to Winslow, Starbucks and occasionally eating microwave meals and snacks in her dorm.

Vargas said that she typically eats at Winslow once a day and will otherwise eat at the Curris

Center or her dorm. She said her favorite spot so far is SubConnection.

While Reeves said she eats mostly at Winslow, Chick-fil-A is her favorite place to grab a bite on campus.

Resources and more information on all these campus topics and more can be found at @racerdining on Instagram for campus dining services, the Center for Student Involvement's website and the Residential College information website for links to each college's respective social medias.



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Connect to campus in social hot spots

Gray Hawkins

Features Editor
hhawkins4@murraystate.edu

Since move-in, you may have seen quite a few groups promoting events or tabling along the breezeway. They offer diverse communities and great ways to get involved at Murray State University, but it can be hard to find the right fit for you.

There are, however, a few low-commitment and accessible hot spots where students can get acquainted with the on-campus community.

Your residential hall

From RH White Residential College to JH Richmond Residential College, each residential hall is its own little neighborhood. Think of your resident assistant like the friendly neighbor who hosts cookouts and invites you to brunch. Part of an RA's job is to host events for the students in their buildings.

Kane Purdy (they/them), a junior secondary English major, is a second-year RA in Hart Residential College. They said their residents are often underclassmen who can really benefit from the community building that residential colleges offer.

"Going to events, meeting people and forming new friend groups is a huge part of why I feel that Murray State's culture is so good," Purdy said. "People will sometimes have a rocky start, but then they get involved with RCC or become a worker here after interacting with people at these events and programs."

If your RA is the extroverted neighbor, the Residential College Council is town hall. The RCC's job is to oversee all the residential colleges and look out for the interests of the student community. Purdy said people usually don't realize residents can approach the RCC with their own event proposals to receive aid and supplies.

"Attending (RCC) allows people to know what's happening— not only in our building, but around campus with different organizations, including events at Winslow and concerts happening in Fine Arts and Lovett (Auditorium)," Purdy said.

Your academic department

On your way to class, have you skimmed any flyers on the corkboards? Has your Transitions professor plugged the clubs they and their coworkers advise? Many departments have Registered Student Organizations related to their course content, and they are great places to make connections.

Madison Miller, senior public relations major, is pursuing her degree in the journalism and mass communications department. She has joined TV Club, Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) and *The Murray State News* at various points while in the department. She said department



Kristopher Fister/*The News*

Students can get involved in academic clubs across campus.

clubs foster community and support between students with similar interests and goals.

"Joining TV Club and PRSSA has furthered my ambitions," Miller said. "Those clubs create a bridge between learning in the classroom and seeing how those skills come to life in real projects."

Waterfield Library

Some of these may sound a little too daunting for the start of the school year. Large events and high attendance isn't everyone's speed; however, there is somewhere on campus for those seeking a low energy, quiet and versatile space to socialize: the library.

Joshua Lawrence, a senior English literature major, has worked in Waterfield Library as a circulation clerk for the past three years. He said Waterfield's student spaces— including the newly renovated bottom floor— and diverse foot traffic make it a good place to get connected.

"Everyone is going to go to Waterfield for something, even if it's just getting a bagel," Lawrence said. "There are a lot of clubs that meet here. I know the board game club (meets here) for sure; they meet in the gallery."

Waterfield Wired, the library's beginning of the year event, was held on Aug. 17 as part of the 2025 Great Beginnings event. Lawrence said International Games Week is also good for socialization with fun group games like Jackbox and Super Smash Bros events. Waterfield hosts these programs twice a year in November— through the American Library Association's International Games Month— and again in the spring semester independently.

"There's a lot of things that we do that make it a great place to meet new people, especially if you're not one to go to any huge events," he said. "If you're a little nervous about going into a big social gathering, Waterfield is a good place to go and meet new people without it being too rowdy."



Kristopher Fister/*The News*

Waterfield Library is open to the campus community until midnight on weekdays.

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Exhibit fuses photography, biology

Shelby Burley
Contributing Writer
sburley@murraystate.edu

Do you ever feel inevitably connected—to the world, to the plants around you, to the flow of life itself? Or wonder if the nervous system mirrors the veins of a leaf, or feel the brain's sense of an urgent need to understand everything—not just to choose, but to witness how through every action we not only carve a place of history for ourselves, but the ecosystem around us?

The Mary Ed McCoy Hall Gallery presents its first photography exhibition of the academic year, showcasing the work of Murray State faculty members Kate S. He, professor of plant ecology, and Cintia Segovia Figueroa, professor of photography. The two professors bring together distinct perspectives in a collaborative project that highlights both the biological and cultural dimensions of nature. He captures ecosystems and natural landscapes, while Figueroa explores themes of cultural identity and migration through photography.

Together, their work underscores the importance of protecting both the natural and cultural foundations of America and fosters a sense of educational and informed connectedness within the community.

Upon receiving a competitive grant funded by the Kentucky Arts Council

and the Kentucky Historical Society in celebration of America's 250th anniversary, the two collaborators set out to explore what it means to commemorate a nation's milestone birthday. In doing so, they emphasized the importance of reflecting on environmental and sociological changes that shape both personal and collective identity.

The exhibition grew out of the professors' shared interest in examining the intersections of science and art. By chance, or perhaps by the laws of determinism, the collaboration began during a previous photography course, where they discovered how their individual approaches could complement one another. By their perspectives, the duo created a body of work that encourages viewers to think critically about the relationships between humans and nature.

Beyond their complementary approaches, the exhibition engages with historical narratives, showing how both the natural world and human communities have been shaped over time, particularly in western Kentucky. When Murray State faced extreme weather during the 2021 ice storm, He found beauty in capturing how art prevails against human disruption and emphasized the importance of persevering and protecting the area.

He said she wanted the exhibition to promote reflection and emphasize the



Shelby Burley / The News

These exhibition photos depict Almo School and a local family.

idea that in order for America to truly celebrate and understand its history—and evolve its present—it must first reflect upon its damages, which can be illuminated and aestheticized through her photography.

Figueroa said she hoped for a humanistic perspective.

"I hope this exhibition encourages individuals to be curious about who they are and where they come from, and how people, communities and the environment are interconnected," Figueroa said.

One of Figueroa's photographs depicts a small Almo family in Calloway County, who have lived in the area for

four generations. Through her lens, the exhibition shows how their daily lives and connections to the land reflect broader cultural and historical shifts in western Kentucky, highlighting the ways communities adapt while preserving their heritage.

The exhibition is on display until Wednesday, Sept. 17, on the sixth floor of the Price Doyle Fine Arts building.

For more information on how through connection, reflection and friendship can inspire the mind and produce a beautiful embodiment of work, the reception will be hosted from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 2.

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05 2- 3:30 P.M.
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NIELSEN**

06 SEE PAGE #19 FOR
MORE INFORMATION
FAMILY WEEKEND

09 11 A.M.
PRICE DOYLE FINE ARTS
ROOM 623
**PAGE PERROTT, AKA
HAYPEEP ARTIST TALK
AND WORKSHOP**

09 4- 5:30 P.M.
FACULTY HALL
ROOM 208
THE MINDFUL MOVEMENT

11 4- 5:30 P.M.
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11 5- 6 P.M.
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SEPTEMBER CALENDAR OF EVENTS



FRIDAY, AUG. 29

6 - 9 P.M. BOWLING AT CORVETTE LANES

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6 - 7:15 P.M. SESSION 1, \$30/PAIR

8 - 9:15 P.M. SESSION 2, \$30/PAIR

SATURDAY, AUG. 30

10 A.M. MARCH FROM CORVETTE LANES TO WITS' END

10:30 A.M. VENDOR FAIR OPENS

10:30 A.M. STORY TIME AND CRAFTS AT WITS' END

NOON - 2 P.M. LUNCH AT SOUP FOR THE SOUL

DRAG BRUNCH AT CVB (RSVP REQUIRED)

NOON - 12:45 P.M. SHOW 1

1 - 1:45 P.M. SHOW 2

2 P.M. RIVERDUST DUO BAND AT WITS' END

3 P.M. BOBBIE GLASS SPEAKER AT CVB

3:30 - 5 P.M. POETRY AND COMEDY SHOW AT CVB

4:30 P.M. KING KAIJU AT WITS' END

5:30 P.M. VENDOR FAIR ENDS

7 P.M. DJK PRE-SHOW AT WITS' END

8 P.M. DRAG SHOW AT WITS' END



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FAMILY WEEKEND

Friday, Sept. 5

8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. University Gallery Exhibits
6th Floor Fine Arts

11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Criminal Justice and Social
Work Virtual Reality Lab Grand Opening
Carr Hall

6 p.m. Mr. MSU Pageant
Sponsored by Alpha Omicron Pi sorority
Lovett Auditorium

Saturday, Sept. 6

8 a.m. Racer 5K
Wellness Center | Check in at 7:15 a.m.

9 a.m. - 9 p.m. Bauernfeind Student Recreation
and Wellness Center
1000 Racer Drive (west of Stewart Stadium)

9:30 - 10:30 a.m. Residential College Reception
Residential College Lobbies

9:30 - 10:30 a.m. Honors College Drop-in
Franklin Residential College Lobby

10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Burton Family Hall of
Champions Tour
CFSB Center, Front Main Entrance

2 p.m. *Gaming Wisconsin Premier*
Department of Global Languages and Theatre Event
Curris Center

4 - 6 p.m. Racer Family Tailgate
Hosted by Sodexo with Student Affairs
Green Space East of Hester Hall

4 p.m. Racer Walk
Departing from Entrance B of CFSB Center and walking
around Stewart Stadium to South Gate

6 p.m. Football Game vs. SE Louisiana
Outstanding Family Member Award Presentation at *Halftime*
Stewart Stadium (Gates open at 4:30 p.m.)

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Volleyball 'set' up for success

Laney Evans

Sports Editor

levans11@murraystate.edu

The Racers volleyball team will kick off their 2025 campaign with a fresh start on a familiar court on Aug. 29 in Clarksville, Tennessee, to write a new story after an abrupt end to their 2024 season in the first round of the Missouri Valley Conference (MVC) Tournament in November.

The Racers wrapped up their previous season with an even 14-14 record overall, going 9-9 in the conference with wins against Indiana State, Evansville, Southern Illinois, Missouri State, UIC, Belmont and Illinois State. Head coach David Schwepker, the longest-tenured and winningest coach in Murray State volleyball history will be returning for his 27th season with the Racers.

Veteran player Ella Vogel will return for her senior year after starting all 28 matches last season and leading the Racers in kills with 431 total and an average of 3.92 per set, which also placed her at third best in the MVC. She was one of six players named to the preseason All-MVC team on Aug. 25. The third-year starter has also earned the All MVC First-Team award and totaled 69 blocks.

Fellow seasoned starter and senior Federica Nuccio will join Vogel on the court, looking to improve upon her 216 total kills, which averaged out to two per set. Local junior Lily Burnett will be back in action as well after earning 237 kills, averaging 2.47 per set, just behind Vogel in the ranks.

A few fresh faces will join the returning Racers this season. With newcomers hailing from across both the Midwest and Middle East, the team stands at seventh in the MVC coming into the new season.

The Racers welcomed two freshman Middle Eastern players and one European player earlier this year, all with extensive resumes. Burcu Gulomur is a middle blocker from Turkey and has won multiple championships across various leagues, most recently with her volleyball team in Izmir, Turkey. Elita Foti, a setter from Cyprus, won the U16 women's championship and has played for the Cypriot Junior National Team. Hailing from Central Europe, Mija Pristovnik joins Murray from Slovenia after winning both the U17/18 Volleyball European Championships as well as the U20 Volleyball European Championships.



Senior outside hitter Ella Vogel was named to the preseason All-MVC first-team.

Kristopher Fister/The News

In November, Schwepker signed four incoming freshmen who each collectively hold eight district championships, eight all-district awards, eight all-region awards and two all-state awards. Anne Makowski, an outside hitter from St. Louis, holds the 2024 state championship title, and Halle Forester, a libero from Strafford, Missouri, holds the 2021 state runner-up title. Forester is also a 2x top-five beach volleyball national finalist and earned over 1,000 digs during her high school career. Hendersonville, Tennessee, native Katie Titus comes in with over 700 assists and 500 kills and digs each in high school, and she was also named both the all-district and Sumner County Most Valuable Player. Samantha Nelson, a libero from Elizabethtown, Kentucky, has claimed three district and regional championships while being named to the all-region and all-district teams each time.

"Anne is just coming off of winning a Missouri State 4A Championship and is going to add some great offense to our program, while Sam and Halle are incredible defenders and passers with that crazy and fearless

tenacity needed to be great at this level. Katie is rounding out the class as an exceptional setter with height and athletic ability that will also allow her to put up a solid block. And while they are all exceptional athletes, they are equally as great in the classroom," Schwepker said to GoRacers.com.

With the addition of six new Racers, the team is ready to wipe their slate clean and begin their 2025 season against their former Ohio Valley Conference rival, Austin Peay, on their home court at the Stacheville Challenge. The team will continue their travels in St. Louis, Sept. 5-6 for the Billiken Invitational, hosted by St. Louis University. Their non-conference play will finish in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, from Sept. 12-13 at the SEMO Tournament.

Their eight-game home campaign will begin in Racer Arena on Sept. 26 at 6 p.m. against the Southern Illinois Salukis, and will end on Nov. 14 at 6 p.m. against the Northern Iowa Panthers.

Check thenews.org and goracers.com for frequent updates throughout the season.

Rocco's helping Racers

College World Series contest raises funds for college food pantries

Laney Evans
Sports Editor
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Over \$8,000 has been donated to Murray State's Racers Helping Racers Food Pantry by Rocco's, a restaurant in Omaha, Nebraska, known for its annual Baseball College World Series Jell-O shot competition.

For every Jell-O shot purchased, \$1.50 is donated by Rocco's owners to the participating university's local food bank, as well as to food banks around Omaha. During the Murray State Baseball team's historic run that brought them to Omaha, Racer fans bought 8,340 Jell-O shots, placing fourth out of the eight teams represented. This donation is part of a \$130,000 donation to collegiate food banks across the country.

Picture this: Oh no! It's the second week of school and you've already run out of Cheez-its, toilet paper and toothpaste. Unfortunately, the trek to Walmart is just too far to bear in the heat, and who wants to lug those heavy plastic bags all the way across town? Your family won't be here for another week to help you restock, and with all the hustle and bustle of moving in and starting the first week of classes, you haven't had time to get a job and earn any money in order to fund this desperately needed grocery trip.

Luckily, an answer to your problem is over on the academic side of campus. Tucked away on the second floor of the Blackburn Science Building is the Racers Helping Racers Food Pantry. It has four shelves filled top to bottom with delicious snack items, an array of ready-to-eat meals and several types of hygiene products ranging from toothbrushes to tampons—and it is completely free to all students.

"We know it can be a lot to pay for food and go to Walmart on your own, so the mission is to let people come here and get what they can," said Roniya Franklin, a student worker for Racers Helping Racers.

The self-funded pantry, which will reach 12 years of operation in February, is the passion project of Re'Nita Avery, director of student life and the Curris Center.



Inside of the 'Jello Shot Room' at Rocco's Pizza and Cantina in Omaha, Nebraska.

Zach Simmons/The News

After attending a National Association of Student Personnel Administrators conference, which highlighted successful collegiate food pantries across the country, she felt it was only fitting to bring this resource to Murray State's campus.

The donation from Rocco's will be used to continue the pantry's mission of fighting food insecurity and creating an easier path to success for all students at Murray State.

The pantry has three locations: Blackburn 244, the third floor of the Curris Center and the Hopkinsville Murray State campus. If you want to avoid the hassle of carrying grocery items across campus, the Curris Center location offers curbside pickup. Students can place an online order that will be delivered to their car during their weekday operating hours.

From undergraduate to graduate level students, anyone enrolled in classes at Murray State can come by Blackburn 244 and choose up to 13 items per week. The only requirements are that you must sign in on their Google form and provide your M number and contact information.

The pantry is open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday and Friday throughout the school year, and has varying hours throughout winter and summer break that can be found on Murray State's website.

Racers Helping Racers is currently looking for student ambassadors who will volunteer to spread the word about the pantry and subsequently allow as many students as possible to reap the benefits of access to free food and hygiene products. If you are interested in being a student ambassador, email Roniya Franklin at rfranklin5@murraystate.edu.

Additionally, the pantry is always accepting monetary donations as well as food donations. It relies entirely on funds from student organizations, local businesses and private donors to stay stocked. If you are interested in giving back to the campus in this way, email Avery at ravery@murraystate.edu.

Whether you are a regular shopper or a consistent donor, the food pantry is a vital instrument in helping Murray State fight food insecurity and achieve a more stable and successful community of students.

Two Racer football jerseys to be retired on Family Weekend

Staff report

The jerseys of MSU football legends, Rick Fisher and Jack Wolf, will be retired at Murray State's Family Weekend home game against Southeastern Louisiana on Sept. 6. Kickoff is set for 6 p.m.

The two were teammates in the late 60's and early 70's and each earned various honors throughout their time as Racers. Fisher was inducted into the Murray State Hall of Fame in 1981 and Wolf was inducted in 2024.

No. 31 Fisher joined Murray State's football squad in 1969 after being undefeated at his high school in Shelby, Ohio. During his final season in 1971, he became the Racers' first 1,000 yard rusher and the Ohio Valley Conference Offensive Player of the Year. He totaled

1,078 yards that season and was Murray State's all-time rusher with 2,292 career yards.

After playing for the NFL's St. Louis Cardinals and the World Football League's Florida Blazers, Fisher continued his football legacy in Murray by coaching Murray High School from 1990-2005, where he had a total record of 129-54, a 70% winning percentage and a hall of fame induction.

No. 81 Wolf played for the Racers from 1967-71, was named an All-OVC receiver in 1969 and is one of the top horse racing executives in the world. His football tenure from 1967-71 as a receiver and his impactful professional career earned him a 2014 Murray State Distinguished Alumni Award. He and his wife, Laurie, founded Starlight Racing in 2000 in his hometown of Louisville, Kentucky.

His business has produced two Hall of Fame horses, a Triple Crown winner, nine Eclipse Awards, 39 Grade-1 victories, and more than 110 stakes wins. His is responsible for champion thoroughbreds Ashado, Authentic, Harlan's Holiday and Justify. He also received the Warner L. Jones Horseman of the Year Award in 2013 for his many contributions to the sport.

After Fisher and Wolf's jerseys are retired, there will be seven total retired jerseys in Murray State Football history.

The first two retired were quarterbacks No. 10 Larry Tillman (1966-69) and No. 11 Michael Proctor (1986-89). In the last two years, the jerseys of No. 21 tailback Don Clayton (1971-74), No. 25 Dennis Jackson (1960-64), and defensive end No. 87 Austen Lane (2006-09) have been retired.

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SPORTS CALENDAR

SCORES AT A GLANCE

August 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				28	29	30
31						

Volleyball
 Aug. 29-30 at Austin Peay
 29 Austin Peay
 Tennessee Tech
 30 vs Xavier

Soccer
 Aug. 28 at Xavier
 Aug. 31 vs Marshall

Cross-Country
 Women & Men at Cape
 Girardeau

Football
 Aug. 30 at East Tennessee State

Soccer
 Aug. 14 vs Troy
 W, 2-0
 Aug. 17 vs Lindenwood
 L, 0-1

Aug. 21 at Lipscomb
 L, 1-2
 Aug. 24 vs Tennessee Tech
 W, 1-0

Soccer
 Sept. 4 at UT Martin
 Sept. 7 at Austin Peay
 Sept. 11 vs Southeast Missouri

Football
 Sept. 6 vs Southeastern Louisiana
 Sept. 13 at Georgia State

Golf
 Sept. 8-9 Women at Total Athlete
 Men at Marshall Invitational
 Women at Total Athlete Collegiate
 Sept. 15-16 Women at Velvet Classic
 Men at Grover Page Classic

Volleyball
 Sept. 5-6 at St Louis
 5 Western Illinois
 St. Louis University
 6 Austin Peay
 Sept. 12-13 Volleyball at Cape Girardeau
 12 Weber State
 13 Southeast Missouri State

September 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17			

MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY

FALL 2025 EVENTS

SEPT 4 Clinton and Mary Opal Moore Appalachian Writer's Residency*
 ARTtalk Series with Author Frank X. Walker
 7:30 p.m. | Location: Curris Center Large Ballroom

SEPT 11 Magic Silver Show*
 Opening Juror Talk and Reception with C. Rose Smith
 5:00 pm | Location: Clara M. Eagle Gallery
 The Elena Diane Curris Juried Photomedia Exhibition 2025
 August 19 - October 13, 2025

SEPT 18 Breakfast on the Farm
 Presented by the Murray State Hutson School of Agriculture and the Murray-Calloway County Chamber of Commerce
 7:15 a.m. | Murray State University Doran Arboretum | \$40

SEPT 18 9th Annual Sid Easley Lecture*
 "Vladimir Putin and Russian Memory of the Second World War"
 Lecturer Dr. Karen Petrone | Reception to follow Thursday, September 18 | 7 p.m. | Wrather Hall

SEPT 25 Bacon Farmer Workman (BFW)/Marcum Engineering Leadership by Design*
 Evy Poupouras, former Secret Service Special Agent and co-host of Bravo TV's "Spy Games"
 7:00 p.m. | Lovett Auditorium | Advance Registration Required

OCT 30 A Taste of the Arts
 Dinner, auction and arts performances,
 Event sponsored by FNB Bank
 5:00 p.m. | Lovett Auditorium | \$75

OCT 31 Homecoming: Oct. 31 - Nov. 1*
 Parade | Main Street | 9:30 a.m.
 Tent City | Stewart Stadium | 12:00 p.m.
 Racers vs. SIU Football Game | Stewart Stadium | 4:00 p.m.

DEC 2 Oakhurst Holiday Open House
 Meet the 15th President of Murray State University, Dr. Ron K. Patterson, and First Lady Jenny Patterson.
 Sponsored by Murray State University Town and Gown
 4:30pm - 6:30pm | Location: Oakhurst

DEC 2 Town and Gown Holiday Concert*
 Listen to holiday music performed by the community band and chorale.
 7:00 pm | Location: Lovett Auditorium



*Free and open to the public

murraystate.edu/calendar
goracers.com



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