

A man with glasses and a beard, wearing a dark blue button-down shirt, is pouring a blue liquid from a blue bottle into a clear glass. He has a name tag that says "TYLER" on his shirt. The background is dark and out of focus.

THE MURRAY STATE NEWS GATEWAY

2026-27 EDITION

WALK THE WILLOW

A MAN AND A PASSION
FOR MAKING ART WITH
WILLOW TREE BRANCHES.

MOCKTAIL GUY

BANKER TURNED
MOCKTAIL MAKER,
TYLER COPE.



STAFF



AVERY POSTON



GRAY HAWKINS



MACKENZIE ROGERS



ANNABELLE MASSA



AINSLEY BEATTY



HARPER SPAULDING

NOT PICTURED: KENNEDY FRANKLIN

**MOCKTAIL GUY:
BANKER TURNED
MOCKTAIL
MAKER**

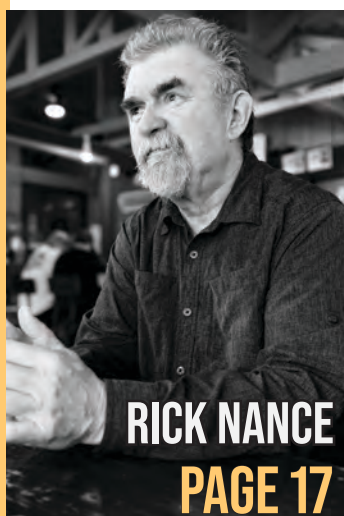


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EDITOR'S NOTE

A FINAL FAREWELL
FROM A GRADUATING
SENIOR

WRITER
MACKENZIE ROGERS

After spending the last four years at Murray State and [The Murray State News](#), I have finally reached the same conclusion that hundreds of students have achieved: graduation. I've done a lot during my time at Murray State, and making [this magazine](#) has been one of the brightest moments in my academic career. [A final project](#) with no grade, something to leave behind for future students to gander at, a temporary piece of my legacy for you to enjoy.

With this being my second time being involved with this magazine as an editor and designer, there was only one direction we could go: up. Better designs, better stories, better us. [Finishing this magazine](#) during my last two months at [Murray State](#) made this a heartfelt project for me and the rest of the team who made it a reality. Every photo and story written wouldn't be possible without the help of my crew, and it is with an excited heart that I pass the torch onto the [2026-2027 News team](#).



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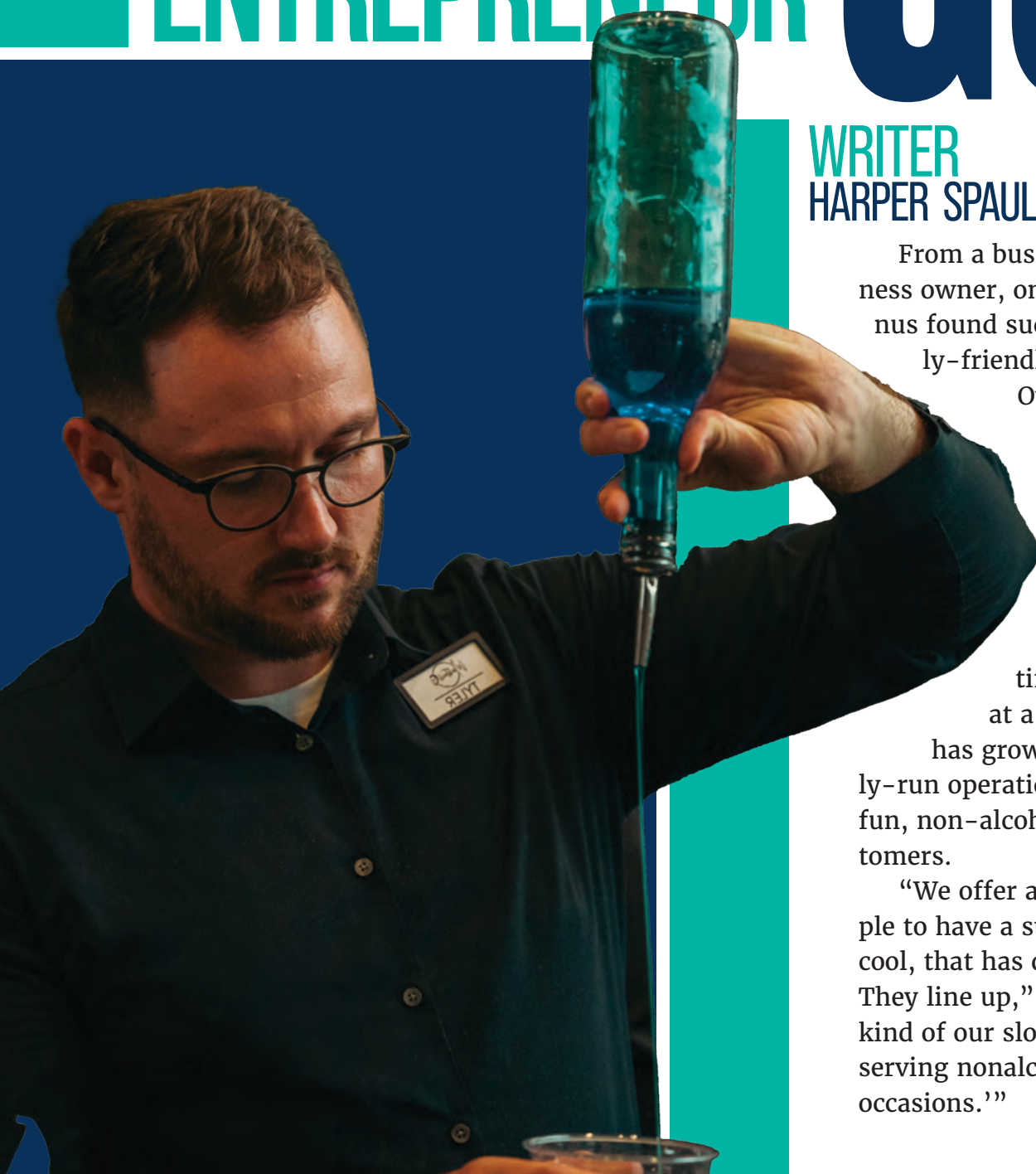
FROM ADVISER TO ENTREPRENEUR

WRITER
HARPER SPAULDING

From a business adviser to a business owner, one Murray State alumnus found success in his new family-friendly catering business.

Over the last year, Tyler Cope, a business development officer for CFSB, has been busy with his new venture, a business he named the Mocktail Guy. What started out as a one-time catering opportunity at a CFSB-sponsored event has grown into a large, family-run operation dedicated to serving fun, non-alcoholic drinks for its customers.

“We offer an opportunity for people to have a stellar drink that looks cool, that has different layers, flavors. They line up,” Cope said. “And that’s kind of our slogan, ‘The Mocktail Guy, serving nonalcoholic drinks for all occasions.’”





Cope and his family began serving drinks under the Mocktail Guy brand around March 2025. Cope catered more than 30 events after that and found his calendar booked well into 2026. Cope said his drink menu has expanded to include over 40 original drinks, such as Berry Breeze, Citrus Sunset and the Zero-Proof Piña Colada.

Cope said the idea for the Mocktail Guy came during the 2025 WedFest wedding expo, which was sponsored by CFSB. As a sponsor, CFSB had the opportunity to set up a table at the expo, and despite never having made mocktails in his life, Cope said he and a friend decided to make that the theme of their booth. Together, they worked to come up with a fun drink menu for the event, and ended up serving over 500 mocktails before the event's end.

During the expo, Cope said he was approached by a woman who asked if he would

be willing to cater at her own wedding later that March. Cope said he was originally unsure, but she reassured him that as long as the drinks were as good as this, they would be worth it.

Cope said from that day on, his business started to grow. Along with the wedding, he was able to pick up more events, until eventually being able to establish the Mocktail Guy as a registered business. Now, the business has two part-time employees, a website and its own commercial. Recently, Cope said he has also employed the help of a financial adviser who has helped build multi-million dollar businesses in the past.

Cope's business has also expanded outside of Calloway County, as he has received catering requests from surrounding counties and states as far as Florida. Cope said he thinks the business will continue to grow and continue to

thrive into the future.

"I believe that it can be as big as I want it to be," Cope said. "I think we're going to go big, honestly. So it just depends on just kind of where the Lord takes us."

Cui Liu, a local business owner who has worked with Cope and hosted his business for her events, said she has gotten to see his business grow from working only a few events to being booked all the time. She said the creativity of his drinks helps bring a fresh experience to events, which guests really appreciate.

"People love the Mocktail Guy because they provide this unique and unforgettable experience for the guest," Liu said. "It kind of brings that fun factor and uniqueness to the experience, kind of what we call it, elevating the actual event."

Together, Liu and Cope also work on the Murray-Calloway County Chamber of Commerce Event Committee. She said Cope is very involved in trying to better the community and foster community involvement. Liu said she appreciates Cope's professionalism and vision to make a positive impact on people's lives and the community.

Liu also complimented Cope and his team for their entrepreneurial spirit and hard-working attitude. Liu said many people don't understand how hard it can be to run a business, especially when you have your own family to take care of as well. Liu said Cope has done a great job with his business, and she looks forward to seeing it expand into other cities and towns.

Between his work at the Mocktail Guy, his job at CFSB and his heavy involvement with Westside Baptist

Church, Cope said his life has gotten hectic. Cope said his wife regularly helps him with the business. As for his kids, Cope said they have also sparked an interest in making mocktails, giving him hope this could continue as a family business.

"Our kids, we have four. They're all under seven years of age, and they love making mocktails," Cope said. "My son, Silas, is 5, and honestly, he makes dang good mocktails. I don't know how he figures it out, but he does,



and I tell him all the time, one day, you're going to work with daddy."

While running his business, Cope has encountered many challenges, especially in securing the ingredients for his mocktails. Cope said his biggest trouble recently has been finding pineapple juice, a core ingredient in many of his drinks. Cope said the supply of pineapple juice in stores he visits has decreased, and the branding and size of the containers he can find are inconsistent.

Cope said this, combined with the seasonality of many of his other ingredients, has added some difficulty in supplying his business. While his menu currently boasts 40 drinks, Cope said he is looking to knock that down to 20 by removing some of their less-popular mocktail options.

The other big stressor on his business, Cope said, is time. Working 40 hours a week at the bank and 25 hours a week for the Mocktail Guy has led to many late nights and stressful days. While Cope said he doesn't like turning down event opportunities, sometimes his schedule requires sacrifice.

"It's really, really hard, especially having to say no," Cope said. "I hate saying no. I want everybody to be able to experience the Mocktail Guy, but I only have so much PTO I can use."

Speaking on his business, Cope attributed much of his success to the lessons he learned working at CFSB and from his time at Murray State. He said his time at the bank helped prepare him for how business works and taught him the ins and outs of business operations and marketing. Though he does get a lot of good networking opportunities and advice with CFSB, Cope said he tries to keep his two work lives separate, though clients at the bank do occasionally recognize him and ask about his business.

Dana Howard, the director of marketing at CFSB, said it has been exciting to see Cope's

**IF YOU CAN COMMUNICATE,
WELL, I KNOW THAT YOU CAN
DO ANYTHING IN THIS WORLD
THAT YOU WANT TO DO.**

business grow and thrive since it was first pitched months ago. She said it was fun for her and Cope's fellow coworkers to see the passion and creativity he has put into the business pay off.

"I know the passion that he puts into this, this endeavor, and I know how creative he is, and so it's really fun," Howard said.

Howard, who said she has seen many of her friends start small businesses of their own, said Murray has many opportunities for new businesses and has support for people with new and creative ideas. While she said Murray is a town where small businesses can thrive, she also said there are difficulties starting a business in a town like Murray. Specifically, she mentioned the problem of oversaturation and how businesses have to meet a need that hasn't been fulfilled yet if they want to thrive.

For Cope, this isn't a problem. Cope said the Mocktail Guy has found a niche market, one that can appeal to many people. Cope said his business had found success with younger millennials and Gen-Z, and has found a customer base among schools, corporate events and weddings.

Murray State has also been an important venue for Cope and his business. The Mocktail Guy has been contracted by the Bauernfeind College of Business to cater for some of their events, something Cope said was important for his business. Cope said he looks forward to future partnerships with the University, which has been a big part of his life for over a decade.

Cope, a Graves County native, came to Murray State in 2011 and graduated in 2015 with a bachelor's in organizational communication and another in youth and nonprofit leadership (now called nonprofit leadership studies). Cope said he loved attending Murray State and that his time on campus greatly impacted both him and his work.

"I came in as a freshman as one person, and I left a completely different person for the better," Cope said.

Cope said he felt each of his professors had left a lasting impact on him as a person, both by challenging him and supporting him through his college career. After the death of a close friend earlier that day, Cope said he spoke to one of his professors on his way to an important class presentation, who helped console him and reassure him that he could make it through this. Cope said the lesson she taught him stuck and has served as an important source of motivation throughout his life.

Cope said he still uses the lessons he learned through his organizational communication and leadership classes, both with his work for CFSB and the Mocktail Guy. Cope still flips through his textbooks when he has a question relevant to his work.

Of the many lessons Cope learned, he said the most important is the importance of communication. Cope said to be successful in the business world, you need good communication and emotional intelligence skills. He said it is important not just to understand and communicate the emotions of others, but also to be able to know your emotions and communicate them in a way that is professional and generates respect.

"If you can communicate, well, I know that you can do anything in this world that you want to do," Cope said.

Cope said he would like to come back to campus one day to get his master's in organizational communication. For now, however, Cope continues to work on expanding his business and supporting his family. ■■■



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AVERY "GINGY" POSTON



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HEATHER



WRITER
MACKENZIE ROGERS

AND HER SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

People spend much of their lives finding themselves, and Heather Hughes found herself through her spiritual healing journey.

Born in Murray, Kentucky, Hughes spent her childhood participating in sports and dancing, and was considered a strong-willed, stubborn child who made those around her smile and laugh.

"My preschool teacher said, 'Heather likes everything to be the biggest, the best and the brightest. And what she doesn't know, she fakes beautifully'," Hughes said. "I feel like that line has kind of summed up my life. Being raised in a small town where everyone knows everyone, learning to smile and nod when you don't feel like smiling and nodding."

After a traumatic experience when she was 12, Hughes' world was turned upside down. Judged by those around her and feeling isolated, she said she lost herself.

"I was a rebellious teen. I didn't know what I wanted. I didn't have the tools to communicate and have conversations with people," Hughes said. "When you're a teen, you don't

PHOTOS

BY ANGIE FIKE SMITH

DESIGN

BY MACKENZIE ROGERS &
AVERY "GINGY" POSTON



know these things. Nobody knows how to act (as a teenager).”

Throughout her life, Hughes struggled with her weight, which became a theme in her spiritual healing journey. She said her weight held her back in some regards.

“I was very active in my sorority and on campus, but no one ever asked me to a dance, not one boy ever asked me,” Hughes said. “And to some people, they’re like, ‘well, whatever,’ but it mattered to me. I felt in some ways invisible, unattractive, ugly, all the things.”

Hughes didn’t initially earn her degree; instead choosing to withdraw. Unsure of what she wanted to do and after multiple major changes, Hughes settled on nursing school and graduated at 30. She was selected by nursing faculty for the Outstanding Senior Award.

After graduating, Hughes moved to Maryland to work at Johns Hopkins Hospital, a school known for its premier status as a teaching hospital. During this time, Hughes had to step away from the comfort of her small town and into the cultural shock of Baltimore.

“I had left a small town where everything was fairly safe, and everyone knew everyone, and you didn’t see people begging on the streets,” Hughes said. “You didn’t see people doing drug exchanges at the stoplight at 6:30 in the morning. You didn’t hear about gun-

shots all the time. You didn’t take care of a 15-year-old murder victim.”

Despite the shock of Maryland, Hughes said it was the best thing for her.

“I needed to leave my bubble of safety and one of the best things that I did for myself was move up here and cut that cord,” Hughes said.

From there, Hughes earned her master’s in science with a nursing education focus from Stevenson University, deciding to become a nurse practitioner and entering an Adult-Gerontology program in Maryland.

ANY KIND OF TRAUMA, IF YOU DON'T LEARN TO HEAL FROM THAT, ANYTHING THAT BOTHERS US AFTER A PERIOD OF TIME CAN PUT YOU AT A HIGHER RISK TO GET SICK, BUT IT'S IMPORTANT FOR US TO REGULATE OUR NERVOUS SYSTEM.

Her mother's death in 2018 triggered something inside her.

"That is when my healing journey began and everything changed for me. She was the catalyst, her dying," she said. "And over the last seven years, I have been on a spiritual journey."

Her journey has led her to become a transformational coach for women. Her goal? To help them heal through trauma.

"Any kind of trauma, if you don't learn to heal from that, anything that bothers us after a period of time can put you at a higher risk to get sick," Hughes said. "But it's important for us to regulate our nervous system. It's important for our health. It's important for our relationships and for ourselves. And I didn't know all these years."

Undercovering her own trauma and uncovering her attachment style, a system of foundational emotional attachment patterns, Hughes began to see her life as a minor case study, something that became more evident after she wrote the initial draft of her memoir, *The Wounded Healer: Through Fire and Into the Light*.

The book serves as an extension of Hughes herself, through her life and the unfolding of her life through trauma to now, as she thrives and dedicates her time to helping others flourish.

"I wish I'd had this knowledge when I was a young girl," Hughes said. "But I want to offer that to other women."

Hughes was influenced by her mentor to put together her memoir. What began as journaling became an outlet to channel all her emotions. Hughes described the endeavor as a healing labyrinth.

"It's about learning and growing. Things that happened to me when I was young, a lot of people do stupid (things) when they're young and letting that go and forgiving all that," Hughes said. "These stories have lived in me for years and they needed to come out because here's kind of my answer: things got too heavy and I couldn't hold them anymore. And I had to set them down. And the best way for me to set them down was to put them on paper and share them rawly with the world."

The book is available on Amazon and on her website: <https://drheatherhughes.com>. ■■■



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THE GRAPHIC DESIGN
TRAVELER

WRITER
KENNEDY FRANKLIN

RICK MANAGE



Rick Nance carries his passport much like others might carry a cherished book, pages marked, corners dog-eared and always on hand.

Nance's story begins in central Illinois, near Peoria, where he grew up before moving with his parents to the St. Louis area. From a young age, he was recognized as "the artist" among his classmates, a label that would follow him through high school and ultimately inspire him to study at Murray State, which was well known for its art programs. Beyond his creative pursuits, Nance built a life centered on both family and exploration. He is the proud father of a daughter and a son, and his career has taken him across continents and into countless professional roles, from freelance journalism to radio broadcasting.

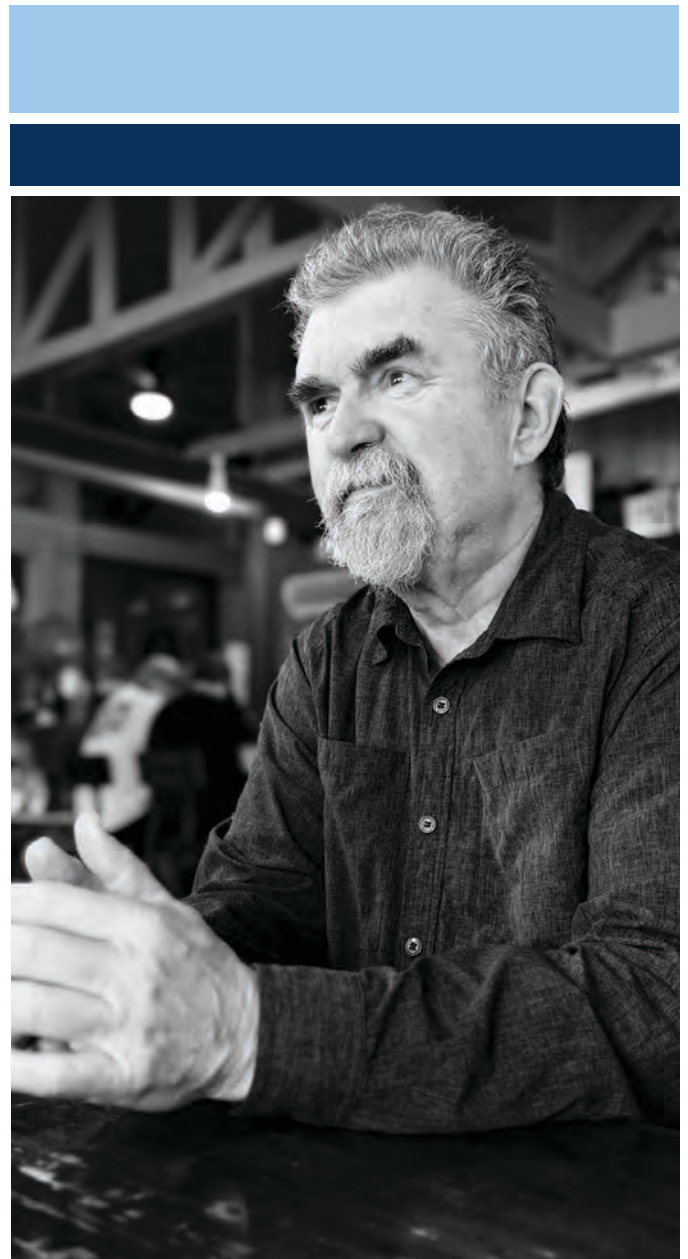
One of the most colorful stories he shares from recent years revolves around him and a close friend of many years. For his 60th birthday, Nance and his best friend embarked on a journey to walk across England, traversing a route that meanders through quaint villages, lush fields and beautiful towns. They completed the trek on his friend's birthday, embodying Nance's thoughtful existence: he thrives on companionship and seeks experiences that challenge both body and curiosity.

"We walked around 100 miles together," he recalls with a laugh, reminiscing about the blisters, the silent afternoons and their modest celebratory finish.

That friendship remains strong, and Nance mentions how he plans to continue traveling with him.

Nance is not merely a travel enthusiast; he views travel as a means of interpreting the world. He has explored every continent, freelanced for 15 years and continues to check items off his bucket list.

When asked where he envisions himself in five years, he responds with a laugh, "Very old!" He also shares his desire to visit Bhutan or Nepal; he is planning a trip to Nepal for





his 80th birthday. He admits he is “running out of places to add to my bucket list,” yet this admission sounds more like a

NANCE’S ADVICE FOR YOUNG ARTISTS AND OTHER NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS IS STRAIGHTFORWARD: “NEVER GIVE UP.” HE ACKNOWLEDGES IT AS A CLICHÉ, YET INSISTS IT IS CRUCIAL, ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE NEW TO CREATIVE PURSUITS.

challenge; it’s an invitation to find another line on the map and pursue it.

Creativity and music drive Nance’s explorations. He hosts a radio show on WKMS called “The Kitchen Sink” (originally titled “Rick’s Kitchen Sink” until he decided the work should stand alone rather than have his name). True to its title, the show features “just about any type of mu-

sic you can imagine,” a diverse range that influences his work as a photographer and artist. Last fall, he exhibited a collection of photographs taken abroad at Paducah’s Art and Design School. He humorously describes the exhibit as “quirky”: “You definitely don’t want to miss this show.” The relationship in his art between music and visual art shows how art can change and develop depending on different factors. Nance’s different practices show how curiosity across different media can enhance, rather than dim, an artistic vision.

Nance speaks candidly about the most challenging aspect of returning to classes as an older student. An essential trait that has sustained him through freelance assignments and radio appearances, coordinating assignments, studio time and travel is how deadline-driven he is. Yet, he finds the silver lining in being “reminded of some of the changes made to be an artist.” This self-reflection speaks volumes: Nance returned to school not merely to attend classes but to assess how his craft has evolved and to engage in conversations that shape a diverse art world.

Nance’s advice for young artists and other non-traditional students is straight-

forward: “Never give up.” He acknowledges it as a cliché, yet insists it is crucial, especially for those new to creative pursuits. He answers the challenging question, “How do you want people to remember you?” first responding, “Wow, that’s a tough one,” before stating, “I simply want people to think well of me.” It’s a humble aspiration that favors quiet respect over grand ideas of fame and money.

Students are drawn to Nance because he is an example of how to lead a life full of curiosity. He navigates time with an awareness of deadlines and a love for improvising. He travels the globe while also participating in studio critiques and radio shifts. Whether he is submitting an essay, editing a photo series or packing for a trip to Asia, he is driven by a singular instinct: to keep exploring, creating and being present.

At 72, Nance continues to add to his narrative, planning an 80th birthday trip to Nepal, preparing for a photography exhibition and hosting a radio hour that transcends traditional genres, all while cherishing the steadfast friendship he forged during his walk across England.

For students still mastering the balance between ambition and patience, his life serves as a clear and inspiring one, meet deadlines, find joy in the work and never stop moving toward the next horizon. ■■■

PHOTOS
PROVIDED BY RICK NANCE
DESIGN
BY MACKENZIE ROGERS &
AVERY “GINGY” POSTON



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WALK THE MOTOWN

**BENDING
STICKS INTO
ART**

WRITER
GRAY HAWKINS



As a city known for its small-town college experience and retirement comfort, Murray can sometimes feel like a world of its own with a culture and community that stays confined in the city limits. For one local artist, however, the small town bubble has burst, allowing him the opportunity to share his work across the country.

Justin Roberts, an eco-centric artist from Murray, runs a family-owned artisan business called Walk the Willow. With a focus on environmental awareness and functional art, his works incorporate invasive plants, found objects and renewable materials, primarily the branches of invasive willow trees that he has gathered.

From his first willow sapling Easter baskets to a driftwood mythical sculpture, Roberts approaches his work with a blend of imagination and thoughtfulness.

“My favorite (project) is the one I’ve just finished or the one I’m currently working on,” he said.

The project Roberts recently finished was an interior piece for FLOWER Magazine’s 2025 Showhouse in Nashville. The Showhouse’s Cutting Room, designed by Amanda Khouri Interiors, features a counter backsplash made of woven willow branches. Tours of the Showhouse were hosted in October 2025, and FLOWER Magazine’s March/April issue highlighted the Cutting Room’s interior work.

Roberts was the 2026 artist-in-residence at the Ladew Topiary Gardens in Monkton, Maryland. Ladew is a cultural preservation nonprofit with a mile-long nature walk and over 100 topiary sculptures. Roberts stayed in Monkton for roughly two months as the artist-in-residence. In that time, he built a new sculpture in the garden, taught a class on chair-making and gave a lecture on his work and philosophy.

PHOTOS

PROVIDED BY JUSTIN ROBERTS

DESIGN

BY MACKENZIE ROGERS &
AVERY “GINGY” POSTON

“It’s a huge honor,” Roberts said. “We have some neat things planned that we’re going to be building. (We) will be unveiling a sculpture” in 2026.

Before becoming an artist, Roberts worked at an oil change station by day and pursued a cheffing career by night. He said after the birth of his first child, he thought a lot about the “throw away culture” he witnessed in the amount of food waste, unused oil and carbon emissions coming from his jobs, and he wanted to change course in a way that lessened the waste.

“I decided to make my son’s Easter basket out of willow saplings from my friend’s property, and after Easter, we planted the basket so it would grow back into a tree,” Roberts said. “I became more conscious of the world I lived in and my surroundings because I had brought a little human into the world. I wanted to do my part to make a difference, living in harmony

with Earth.”

Roberts said after his “crude Easter baskets,” he was encouraged to reach out to George Beard, a folk artist in Murray who specialized in willow furniture. He began an apprenticeship under Beard in which he did many household repairs while Beard told him about chair making in a way that Roberts said was “very similar to ‘The Karate Kid’s’ whole wax on, wax off thing” before he was given the opportunity to make chairs himself.

He said Beard did not think of his willow chairs as an art form, but as a goal of perfecting the craft he had been taught in his time travelling across Kentucky as a fruit harvester.

“You can harvest the plant every year for 27 years, and then you can literally take a stick, stick it in the ground, and it will grow,” Roberts said. “In a way, (Beard) reduced his carbon footprint tremendously by settling down and making furniture from a renewable material.”





Many of Roberts's art pieces require metalwork, either for the installation process or woven branches' base. That is where his friend and collaborator Nathan Kennedy, a welder from Murray, gets involved. Kennedy said he began sculpture work as a high schooler when he entered a metalwork shipwreck in a Skills USA competition and began a vocational program with George Bandera, a metal sculptor based in Murray. Roberts and Kennedy met through Debi Danielson, director of the Murray Art Guild. Since then, Kennedy has worked with Roberts to provide metal bases for many projects including a decorative arch for the Murray Elementary School's third- to fourth-grade promotion and a wedding pergola in East Hampton, Connecticut.

Kennedy said collaborating with Roberts makes for a blend of carefully planned and improvised work that can result in projects turning out more interesting than the original plan they started with.

"I really like the way (Roberts) looks at things and the projects he's come up with that I've gotten to help," Kennedy said. "Sometimes, there's happy accidents where I'll make something that's not exactly right, but he changes his entire way of going at it and works around whatever I've done. It turns out cooler than if we had planned it in the first place."

Roberts shares many of his recent works on Walk the Willow's Instagram page @walkthewillow under the hashtag #magicalstickbending. ■■■

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION MURRAY STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE, MURRAY, KENTUCKY

VOLUME ONE

MURRAY, KENTUCKY, FRIDAY, JUNE 24, 1927.

NUMBER ONE

FAMOUS ARTISTS TO APPEAR HERE

SEVENTEEN NEW MEMBERS OF COLLEGE STAFF

Many Heads of Schools Here for Summer Work as Faculty Members

TEACHERS ON LEAVE

Paducah Superintendent and Principal Employed

Heavy registration of students, and leave of absences granted to several of the instructors on the regular staff, necessitated the addition of seventeen new members to the college and high school staffs at the beginning of the summer session.

Among the new members of the faculty are four superintendents of public schools and three principals of public schools of Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, and Tennessee. Of this number, four are Masters, and the remaining hold A. B. degrees.

The following are the members of the new staff: Dr. Richard C. Lehnhoff, principal of the University of Kentucky, arrived in the mid-afternoon of Monday night.

L. J. Hanifan, A. B. ALWAYS since 1927

Editors at Mayfield Kentucky Press Association in 58th Convention

Approximately 100 editors of Kentucky, members of the Kentucky Press Association, are in session in the 58th annual mid-summer convention being held in Mayfield this week. Efforts are being made to have the delegates to the convention visit the college campus before the adjournment of the meeting Saturday afternoon.

Dr. J. W. Carr made a special trip to Mayfield the early part of this week, and appeared before the Board of Commerce of Mayfield with the invitation to the editors. If the entertainment committee of the convention accepts the Murray invitation, plans will be made to dine the editors at Wells Hall, and have them inspect the college plant.

Ernst Trophy Awarded

Societies Win Cup Each in Literary Contest

The second annual inter-society literary contest, held in the auditorium of the college Monday night, resulted in the winning of a trophy by each of the four literary societies. The winners were the Phi Kappa Phi, the Phi Eta Chi, the Phi Gamma Delta, and the Phi Kappa Phi.

COLLEGE NEWS MAKES ITS BOW TO THE SCHOOL

Newspaper to Appear Twice Each School Month as Official Organ

WHITEHEAD IS EDITOR

Staff to be Chosen From Journalism Classes

The College News, the first official newspaper of the Murray State Teachers College, and a realization of the dreams of Dr. Rainey T. Wells, president, and Dr. John W. Carr, dean, makes its bow today to students, alumni and friends of the college.

The newspaper has been in view since the early part of the year, but has been delayed in publication from time to time. It was only after the beginning of the summer

term that the first issue was published. The newspaper is published twice each month as the official organ of the college. The staff will be chosen from the journalism classes.

NEW RECORD AS 885 ENROLL IN SUMMER TERM

Total for Year Brought to More Than 2,200 When Registration Closes

17 NEW INSTRUCTORS

Twenty-four Counties, Four States Represented

Approximately nine hundred students went the routine of registration during the first week of the first session of the summer term, which opened June 6, according to an announcement issued from the registrar's office, thus shattering all previous records for summer school and bringing the year's attendance to more than twenty-two hundred.

Estimates made by officials of the school were exceeded by more than two hundred, and the great influx of students was being shown at the campus.

The first day of registration was a busy one, and the registrar's office was kept very busy. The first day of registration was a busy one, and the registrar's office was kept very busy.

Upshaw Praises M. T. C. Georgia Congressman Visitor on Campus

"This is amazing, unbelievable, and a mark to education in the South," said W. D. Upshaw, that Georgia cyclonic congressman who addressed a mass meeting in the Murray high school auditorium Tuesday night, when he visited the campus of the college Tuesday morning in the company of Dean J. W. Carr.

"When I get back to Atlanta, I am going to shame the people of the city in their refusal to build an adequate auditorium for Georgia Tech, and I shall point to Murray State Teachers College's new auditorium to show what Kentucky is doing for her schools," flamed the famous congressman when he gazed upon the new auditorium structure from the windows of the Administration building.

"What I would like to know is, what is happening in Kentucky, when she takes a wooded field and in two years builds on it the magnificent educational plant which I see here today," he was being shown at the campus.

Lehnhoff to the news.org Will Study f i x d s i n

AMERICA'S BEST TALENT TO BE COLLEGE OFFER

Wanda Landowska, Garrison, N. Y. String Quartet to Give Concerts

KNOWN WORLD OVER

Dates of Attractions to Be Announced Later

Three of America's leading concert programs, to be presented during the fall and winter of 1927 and the spring of 1928, by artists of international fame, have been obtained for the 1927-1928 school year entertainment series to be offered in the new auditorium of the Murray State Teachers College, according to plans formulated by the college committee on school entertainment.

Contracts have been signed for the appearance here of Mme. Wanda Landowska, distinguished Polish pianist and harpsichordist, who is making her fourth annual tour of America; The Garrison String Quartet, which was organized in 1919 by Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Garrison, and the Pulitzer prize-winning soprano, Miss. The exact dates of the appearances of these artists



THE MURRAY STATE NEWS

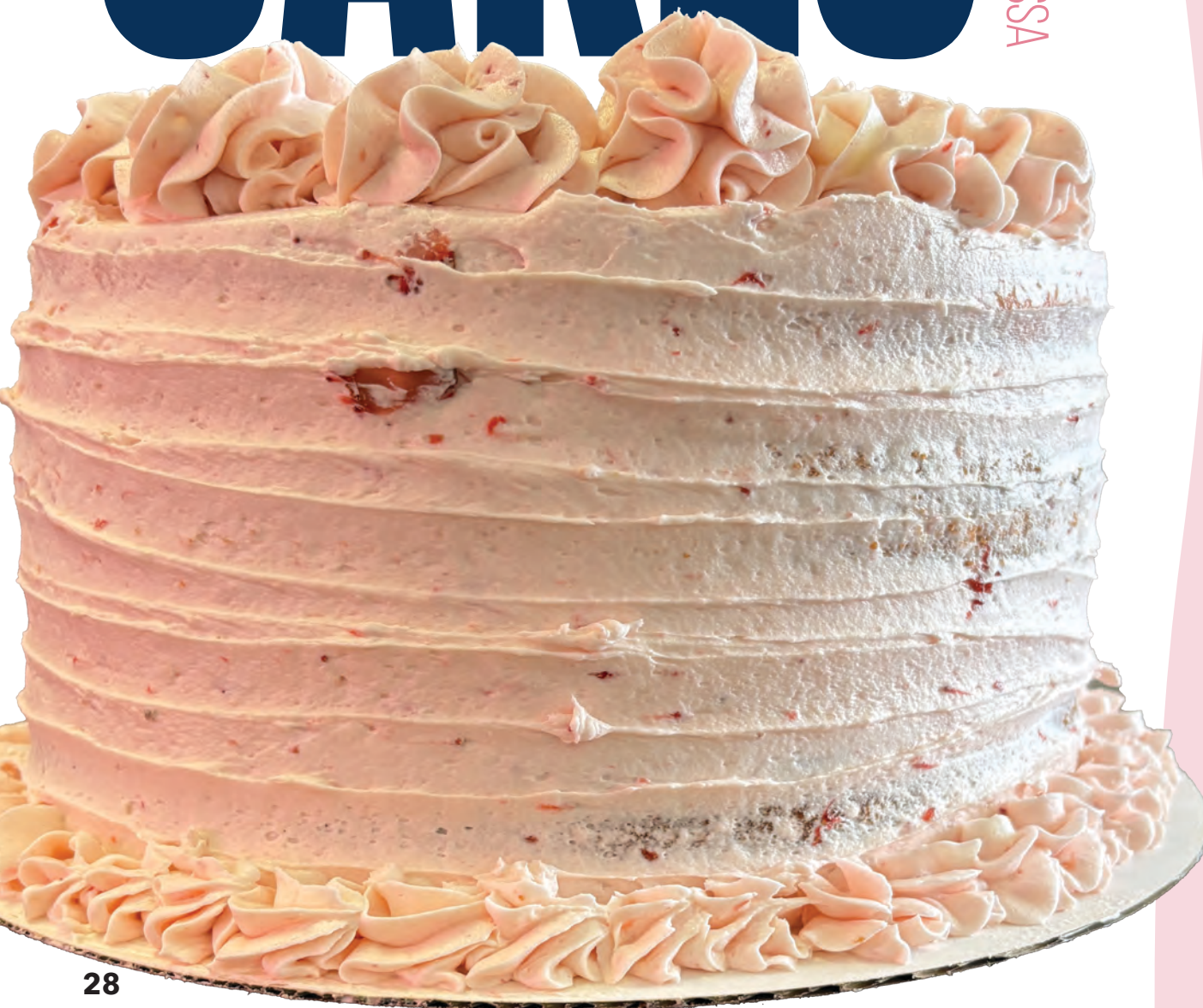
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TINY CAKES

CHASING
THE
FAMILY
DREAM

WRITER
ANNABELLE MASSA





Two cousins baking together on the weekends led to a new store opening in downtown Murray.

Owners Heather Vasseur and Adam Lessley opened Tiny Cakes Emporium in August 2025 after mutually deciding to quit their jobs to chase Vasseur's dream of opening a bakery with her cousin, Matthew Penick. Penick had lived with her family and was like a brother to her.

Opening a bakery was something Vasseur and Penick wanted to do for years. Vasseur was encouraged by Lessley to commit to her dream.

"I knew I couldn't do it alone; it was already too big to do alone," Vasseur said. "(Lessley) sat me down and he said, 'For your brother and for your dream, if this is what you want to do, I will also quit my job.'"

Vasseur and Lessley worked out of her mother's restaurant, Southern Fried and Sweet Tea in Puryear, Tennessee, until they got so busy with orders that they had to find their own space.

"We found a building, and we've been so blessed. The community has supported us so much, and everybody's so happy we're here," Vasseur said.

"I'm so proud of it. It should not be doing as well as it's doing, based on the experience. I have no formal training at all. I just picked up a spatula and a measuring cup one day and started making cakes."

Jaylyn Caldwell, a prep cook, also had no prior baking experience before being hired. She says Vasseur taught her everything she knows.

I'M SO PROUD OF IT. IT SHOULD NOT BE DOING AS WELL AS IT'S DOING, BASED ON THE EXPERIENCE. I HAVE NO FORMAL TRAINING AT ALL. I JUST PICKED UP A SPATULA AND A MEASURING CUP ONE DAY AND STARTED MAKING CAKES.



“I think the first time I ever baked cakes, I burnt them. Like, all of them,” Caldwell said. “And then she taught me how not to burn them. And I’m getting better, slowly but surely.”

Sadly, Penick wasn’t able to open it with them.

“(Penick) lived with us growing up from the time we were pretty young, so he was like a brother to me,” Vasseur said. “He got leukemia at the age of 18.”

After receiving a bone marrow transplant, Penick developed graft-versus-host disease. The donor’s cells began to attack Penick’s. This hindered his ability to move his hands, along with other symptoms.

During that time, Vasseur was going through a divorce. With their shared love of baking, Penick and Vasseur decided to open an in-home bakery on the weekends. Vasseur said Penick was the taste tester, and she would add in the ingredients.

Before they could open the bakery, Penick contracted COVID-19 and discovered a spot on his tongue. The steroids doctors gave him caused the spot to spread rapidly, and he was diagnosed with oral cancer, Vasseur said.

“We had already applied for our home

bakery license, we had made business cards and had a business name and everything,” Vasseur said. “His nickname was always Tiny Boy, that’s what I called him. He called me HB, and we made cupcakes and we called them ‘tiny cakes’.”

Vasseur said Penick had beaten cancer four or five times before being diagnosed with oral cancer.

“I guess all of us thought he was invincible because he kept winning,” Vasseur said.

Penick died about eight months after being diagnosed.



“One of the last things he told me – he texted me because he couldn’t speak anymore – he said, ‘I don’t think I’m gonna make it to Tiny Cakes’ grand opening, but please don’t forget me, and please still open the bakery,’” Vasseur said. “I still have that text message on my phone, and I look at it every day.”

A few months later, Vasseur’s mother opened Southern Fried and Sweet Tea. Vasseur, having never done anything with a layered cake before, began to sell her baked goods out of her mother’s restaurant. Vasseur said that after about a month, her cakes started going viral on Facebook.

“There’s no reason those cakes did as well as they did. There’s no reason they should go as well as they have here, other than the fact that I know that he is with me every single day,” Vasseur said.

Tiny Cakes is located at 611 Maple St. For more information on Tiny Cakes, visit their Facebook page. ■■■



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BY LIZ ROYCE

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