

Rhymes & Reasons

A Newsletter of the Mississippi State University
Department of English

Vol. 2 No. 2

Jan. 2011

We would like to introduce you to...

The Department of English proudly introduces you to our excellent new faculty members and teaching assistants:

Dr. Lyn Fogle (far right) holds a PhD in linguistics from Georgetown University and an MA in TESOL from American University; she comes to MSU as a visiting assistant professor. Specializing in bilingualism, Lyn currently focuses her research on second-language acquisition; she has a book contract on this subject. Lyn's scholarship also drives her commitment to effecting healthy social change, as evinced by her teaching in the Ukraine and by her service as a Peace Corps Volunteer and as a Fulbright Professor. Bringing this expertise into MSU classrooms, Lyn teaches our students introduction to linguistics as well as courses in syntax, second-language acquisition, and TESOL.



Brad Campbell (left) and **Daniel White** (center) also joined our faculty as instructors. Both Brad and Dan received their MAs in English from our department in 2008. Both men teach Basic Writing, Composition I and II, and Introduction to Literature. Additionally, Brad offers "Teaching Grammar" for Primary Education majors, Dan has recently taught Accelerated Composition II, and both tutor in the Writing Center.



Thanks to the recruiting efforts of Dr. Kelly Marsh, Dr. Tommy Anderson, and our new Director of Graduate Studies, Dr. Lara Dodds, our MA program has attracted excellent students.

Above, you see our newest teaching assistants:

Front Row, from left: Hallie Gladstone, Anna Bedsole, Neil Barrett, Alisha Street

Back Row, from left: Carina Lewis, Jessica Temple, Jonathan Smith, Jannell McConnell, Natalie Nations, Lillian Rogers, Lisa McMurray

And here are all of our 2010-2011 Graduate Teaching Assistants:



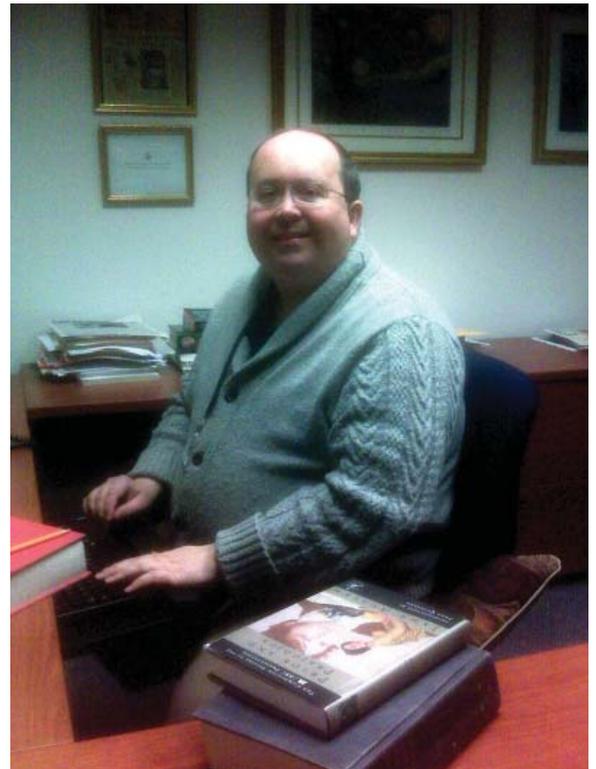
Kneeling, from left: Raquel Hollingsworth, Hallie Gladstone, Christie Collins, Amanda Philley

Standing, second row: Josiah Meints, Chelsea Henshaw, Emily Mills, Amanda Patterson, Ja'Net Blackmon, Anna Bedsole, Neil Barrett, Alisha Street, Alice Gill

Standing, third row: Kris Robinson, Kate Salter, Carina Lewis, Jessica Temple, Jonathan Smith, Janell McConnell, Natalie Nations, Lillian Rogers, Lisa McMurtray

Online Adventures

We began the fall semester of 2010 with another new colleague, **Dr. Chris Gilmer**. With his salary funded by a grant from the Department of Academic Outreach and Continuing Education, Dr. Gilmer teaches exclusively online, allowing us to extend our writing and literature courses to students all over the country and all over the globe. During his first year with us, Dr. Gilmer has taught our 'distant' students Composition I and II, English Literature I and II, and Grant Writing. Additionally, he has taken the lead in developing our certificate program in professional writing, an online program that will include undergraduate- and graduate-level courses in technical writing, legal writing, editing, grant writing, and web-based writing. Count on a progress report from Dr. Gilmer in next year's newsletter!



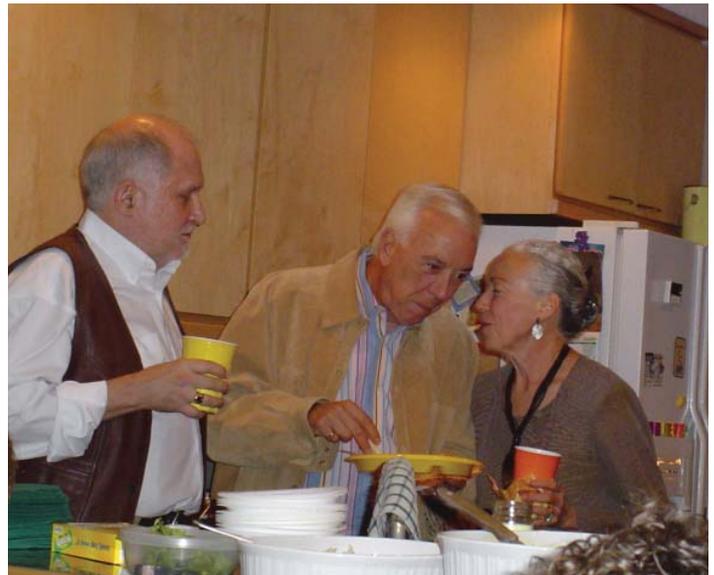
In Memoriam
Dr. Richard F. Patteson
August 23, 1946-June 20, 2010

We lost our dear friend and colleague Richard Patteson on June 20, 2010, after his year-long struggle with lymphoma.

During that struggle, Richard had bravely endured chemotherapy and radiation treatments, and his courage gave us hope, particularly as we watched him plan, with his usual exuberance, a trip to Mexico and new scholarly adventures in Caribbean literature.

Though the disease thwarted Richard's plans, his death generated tearful but joyful celebrations of his life and work. Within a week of his passing, over 100 colleagues and students followed Richard's friends Kelly Marsh and Pat Creevy to the Old Venice tavern, where we toasted stories about Richard as teacher, writer, and friend.

After cousin Joan Ashmore and her husband Robert buried Richard next to his mother in West Virginia, Richard's dear friends Jack and Emilie White tended to Richard's estate while the rest of us planned a more formal fair-well. That celebration of Richard occurred on Saturday, September 18, at the Hotel Chester, where a former student, Professor Eric Smith, introduced Robert Antoni, the Caribbean novelist



Richard with Emilie and Jack White

featured in Richard's recently published book, *The Fiction of Robert Antoni: Writing in the Estuary*. Dr. Antoni read from his recent work, weaving memories of Richard among the threads of his narrative; he then opened the floor to other memories of Richard and reflections on his work.

Knowing Richard would approve, we then adjourned to hors d'oeuvres and drinks, and I offer the photos below as proof of that approval. Both shots feature Richard in party-mode, first with Emilie and Jack White, then with Connie and Gary Myers and Pat Creevy.

I'll close this remembrance with another, this one from Dr. Bryan Johnson, an associate professor of English at Samford University:

"I've known Richard since I was 18, when I walked into my first college class. I was a first-generation college student, had no idea what to expect from a college professor, and I was terrified. Richard's gentle, sardonic humor was precisely what my shy, nervy self needed and he became something of a surrogate father to me. It is no stretch at all to say the evolutionary trunk of my education begins with Richard."



Richard with Pat Creevy, Gary Myers, and Connie Myers

Faculty Publications and Awards

In spring 2010, Delaware University Press published **Dr. Tommy Anderson's** *Acts of Reading: Interpretation, Reading Practices, and the Idea of the Book in John Foxe's Actes & Monuments*.

Studies in American Culture recently published **Dr. Ted Atkinson's** article on James Street's *Tap Roots*. Additionally, *Southern Literary Journal* will soon publish his article on "Hellbound on His Trail: Faulknerian Blood-guilt and the Traumatized Form of Lewis Nordan's Wolf Whistle."

The D. H. Lawrence Review published **Dr. Greg Bentley's** "Hester and the Homo-Social Order: An Uncanny Search for Subjectivity in D. H. Lawrence's "The Rocking Horse Winner."

Dr. Shalyn Claggett attended the Project Narrative Summer Institute at Ohio State University. Also, the *Victorians Institute Journal* will soon publish her essay on "Putting Character First: the Narrative Construction of Innate Identity in Phrenological Texts."

Dr. Peter DeGabriele's article on "Sympathy for the Sovereign: Sympathy and the Colonial Relation in Edward Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*" will soon reach print in *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation*.

Dr. Lara Dodds published "'poor Donne was out': Reading and Writing Donne in the Works of Margaret Cavendish" in the *John Donne Journal*.

Becky Hagenston's collection of stories titled *Strange Weather* won the 2009 Spokane Prize for Short Fiction. She also published "The Lake" in *HOBART* and "Ivy Green" in *Passages North*.

Dr. Shirley Hanshaw published *Conversations with Yusef Komunyakaa* with the University Press of Mississippi. She also placed "'He Said; 'She Said'; 'We Said': Cultural Memory and African American Literary Pedagogy" in *Memory and the Narrative Imagination in the African and Diaspora Experience*, and "The Time Has Come: Lines Composed in Anticipation of the Inauguration of President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama" in *The Griot: The Journal of African American Studies*.

Dr. Holly Johnson's article "A Fifteenth-Century Sermon Enacts the Seven Deadly Sins," will soon appear in a collection of essays, *Sin and its Cultural Place in the West*. Also, her essay on "God's Music-Making: The Cross-Harp Metaphor in Late Medieval Preaching" will also reach print soon, as will her comprehensive book on *The Grammar of Good Friday: Macaronic Sermons of Late Medieval England*.

Dr. Michael Kardos' story "Metamorphosis" received recognition as a "Notable Story of the Year" in *Best American Short Stories*. He also published two stories, "Two Truths and a Lie" in *PRISM* and "Texas Justice" in *Iron Horse Literary Review*, as well as an article titled "MFA Insider" in *Writers' Digest*. Additionally, his collection of short stories, *One Last Good Time*, will reach print early in 2011.

Dr. Matt Little published "The Kibosh and the Kourbash" in *Comments on Etymology*.

Dr. Richard Lyons published eight poems: "Eyebrows" in *The Cincinnati Review*; "Art and Death" in *Brilliant Corners*; "Health Care, Taoist Mysticism, and Voodoo" in *The Gettysburg Review*; "At the Hotel Excelsior" and "Red and White Mexican Blanket" in *Lake Effect*; "Train Breakdown near Carrara" in *The Pinch*; "Ordinary Beginnings" and "Small Town Life" in *New South*.

Dr. Bonnie O'Neill's article on "The Personal Public Sphere of Whitman's 1840s Journalism" will soon appear in *PMLA*.

Dr. Catherine Pierce published six poems: "Postcards from her Alternate Lives" and "The women from the 70s are beautiful" in *Court Green*; "How It Ends: Three Cities" and "Train Safety Assembly" in *diode*; "Poem to the Girls We Were" and "Poem from the Girls We Were" in *Sixth Finch*.

Teaching English published **Dr. Rich Raymond's** "Re-Placing Lit in Comp II: Pragmatic and Humanistic Benefits," a condensed version of a chapter from his forthcoming book on this topic.

The Polish Journal for American Studies published **Dr. Noel Polk's** "Living Outside of History." Dr. Polk also published "His Father's Determination to Get off the Farm" in *The American Scholar*.

The Scholar published **Dr. Don Shafer's** article titled "Is Obama Black? The Pseudo-Legal Definition of the Black Race: A Proposal for Regulatory Clarification Generated from a Historical Socio-Political Perspective."

Dr. Robert West published three poems in *Come What May: An Anthology of Writings about Chance*. Dr. West also published two essays on Southern poets, one essay in *Southern Quarterly*, the other in *Appalachian Heritage*, and he continues his work on an edition of the complete poetry of A. R. Ammons, which will be published by W. W. Norton.

In Their Own Words: On Being an English Major

(Dr. Tommy Anderson's third installment
in a series of profiles of our English graduates)

During a visit to MSU in 2010, the Dean of Mississippi College School of Law—Jim Rosenblatt—made a special visit to Lee Hall to congratulate the Department of English for the many well-prepared graduates that have gone on to excel in their law school. One of our recent graduates to whom Dean Rosenblatt was referring is Matt Clark.

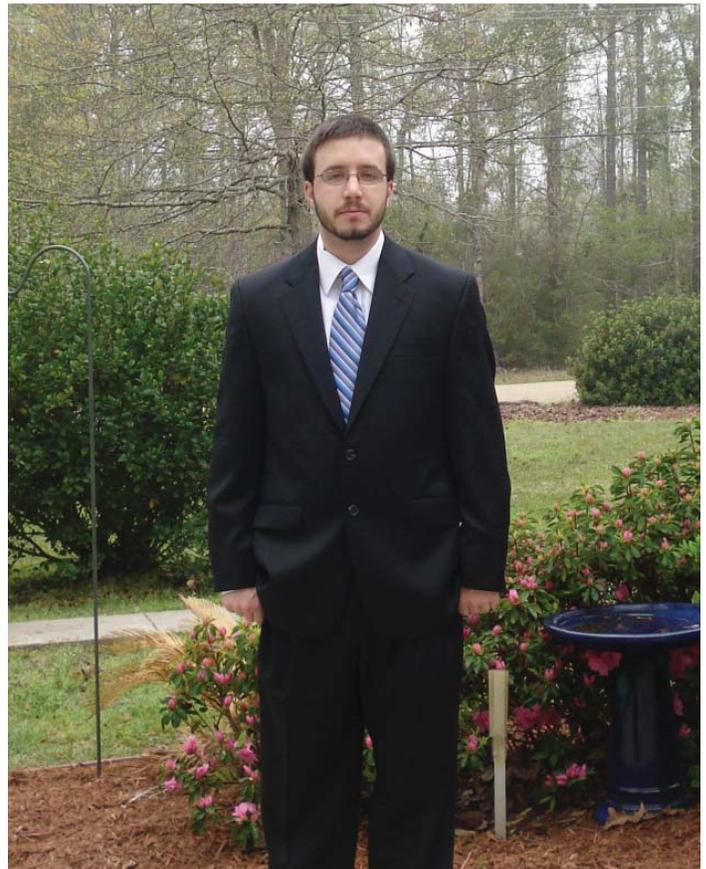
Matt graduated in 2008 with a degree in English with a special focus in creative writing. He is now a second year law student at MC School of Law. As an English major, Matt won awards for both his poetry and literary scholarship. His positive experience in legal studies speaks to the special relationship that exists between our English program and law school.

My time in the MSU English Department went a long way to preparing me for the heavy workload of law school. While many of my law school classmates were at first taken aback by the lengthy reading assignments we are given each day, I was already at home and happy with my nose in a book for a couple of hours in the evening. I've also been surprised by the similarities between the processes of preparing writing assignments for literature and law courses. Whether you are dealing with a novel or a case, the ability to close-read and analyze your source material and to research successfully can serve you very well.

I just finished my appellate advocacy course, which was one of the most challenging and rewarding tasks I've ever completed. For this course each second year law student is given a record of proceedings for an imaginary trial, and has to act as either the party who lost the case and is now appealing the decision or the party who won and is opposing the appeal. The main assignment was to research and write a forty-page brief supporting your side and to argue the substance of your brief in front of a panel of judges. The assignment, which was completed over a

six-week period, certainly tested my time management skills and was an exercise in perseverance. Having the completed brief in my hands feels great. Also, if everything goes according to plan, I'll be externing with a judge in the Mississippi Court of Appeals in the coming summer. I'm sure that will offer all sorts of new challenges and experiences.

When I think back on my time as an English major, one of my fondest memories is of my "Advanced Composition" course during my sophomore year. "Advanced Composition"—renamed "Critical Writing and Research in Literary Studies" in 2010—is



Matt Clark

the required upper-division writing course designed to introduce English majors to the rigors of scholarly research and writing. It was in this course that I feel I matured the most as a writer during my time at State. I had never truly been challenged to close-read a text and draw from it to form a coherent analysis. When I built my Exit Portfolio during my final semester, I was amazed at how obvious the differences were between the papers I had written prior to and after this course.

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In Their Own Words

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My early papers were filled with loose inferences and a lot of shoddy speculation. After “Advanced Composition” I was really able to bite into a text and to draw my analysis deeply but directly from the source material.

I chose to major in English the summer before my first semester at State and I’ve never regretted it. My own experiences and the statements of other people continue to hammer home my belief that the ability to write is an invaluable skill that can take you places. It’s only when you step beyond the fold of the English Department that you realize that there are many intelligent people who don’t know how to write well. While applying to various law schools, I was told time and time again that my English B.A. was one of the most attractive degrees a prospective law student can have, and I feel certain English students applying for postgraduate school and work in other fields would find their degree similarly valuable. I’m still very up-in-the-air about what I’m going to be doing in the next few years. I still really enjoy writing and plan on being somewhere where I can continue to scratch that itch. I’m certain that my English degree—especially when coupled with my J.D.—will continue to provide many opportunities.

In 2010, many of our English majors followed in Matt’s footsteps. English majors were accepted into a variety of law schools including Tulane, University of Missouri, Temple University, University of Tennessee, University of South Carolina, University of Alabama, Ole Miss, Mississippi College School of Law, and the University of Memphis.

Kudos for Our Students

Seniors **Kathryn Hope Long** and **Jessica Porter** and MA students **Lillian Rogers** and **Jannell McConnell** won the **Howell H. Gwin Memorial Scholarship**.

Elise Boone won the **William H. Magruder Scholarship**.

MA students **Christina Collins**, **Lisa McMurtray** and **Raquel Hollingsworth** and senior **Matthew Morgan** won the **Eugene Butler Creative Writing Award**.

Matthew Tutor received the **Peyton Ward Williams Distinguished Writing Award**.

Sophomore **Hannah Rogers**, junior **Victoria Mayhall**, and junior **Jessica Humphreys** won the **Helen W. Skelton Scholarship**.

Hannah Rogers, **Victoria Mayhall**, and freshman **Reginald Swanson** won the **Roger LeMoyne Dabbs Memorial Scholarship**.

Kelsey Norris won the **Undergraduate Gender Studies Paper Competition** for her paper “Her Own Worst Enemy: A Feminist Analysis of Women and Self-subjugation in Lahiri’s Short Stories.” **Tyler Trimm** won the same award at the graduate level for his essay on “Edna O’Brien and the Madwomen in the Irish Attic.”

Marianna Prather and **Lisa McMurtray** won the **MSU Undergraduate Writing Contest**.

Jessica Porter won the **Peyton Ward Williams Award** for her essay “Political Advancement and Identity in Carroll’s *Through the Looking Glass*.”

Careers and Accomplishments:

Leslie Adams, MA, pursues the creative writing PhD program at the University of Illinois.

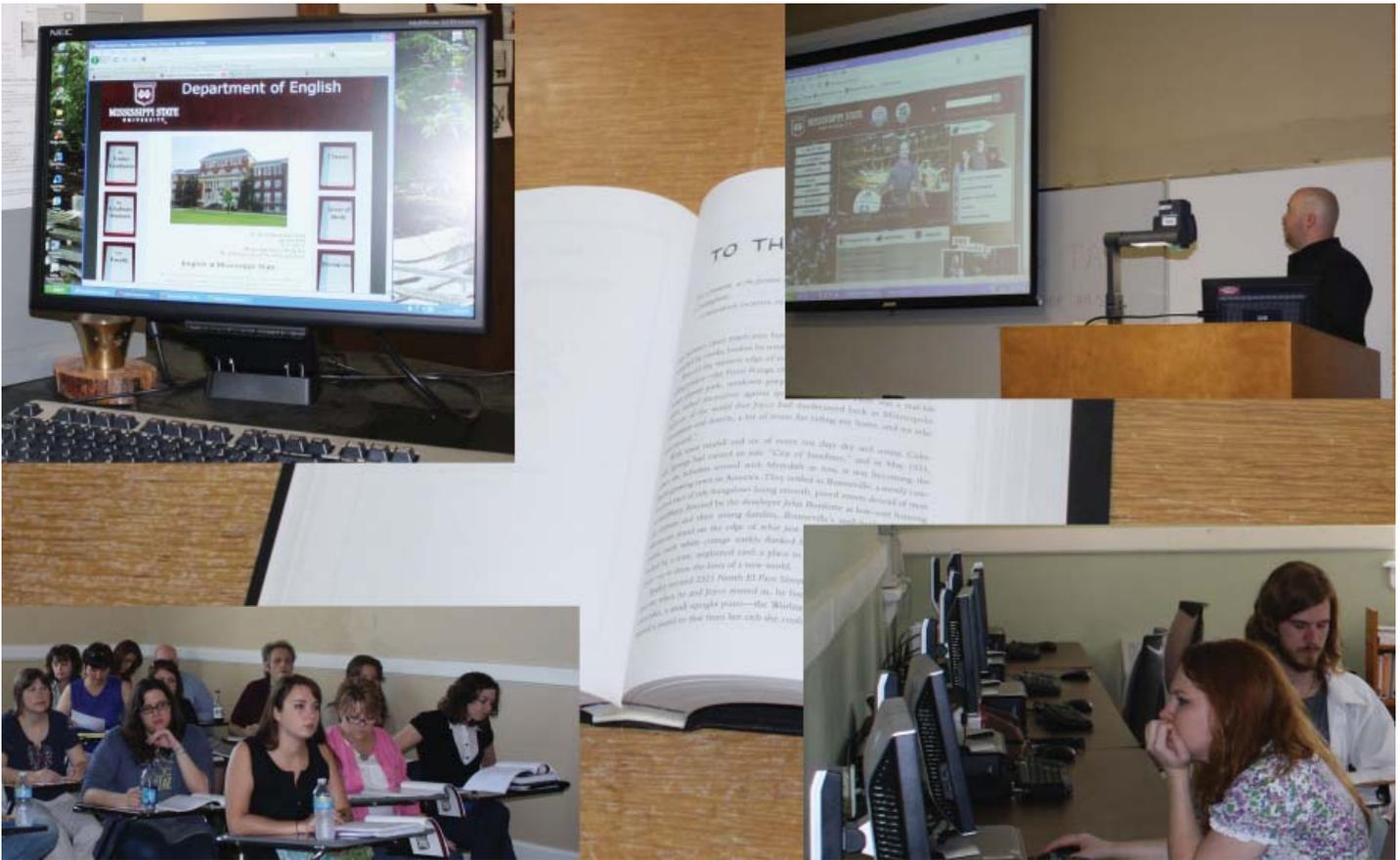
Laura Allen will move to Memphis to apply for the program in Cognitive Psychology and Linguistics at U Memphis.

Roderick Allen will begin the Masters Program in Public Administration at MSU.

Lindsayann Anderson accepted a position as Tutor Center Administrator in Arlington, Texas.

Catherine Bryant Bell received her law degree from Ole Miss.

Andy Black, BA, received his MA in Medieval Studies at the University of Memphis. He also pursues his PhD studies at the University of Maryland.



Kudos for Our Students (continued)

Casey Bonner will attend law school at the University of Alabama.

Angela Taylor Brewer, BA, received her MS at MSU and now serves as an assistant editor at McGraw-Hill.

Shannon Brewer, BA, earned her law degree at the University of Florida and now practices law in Orlando.

Laurie Buchholz, MA, serves as Director of the Study Skills Center at Monterey Peninsula College.

Sarah Bush has begun her MA program in English at Hunter College in New York.

Erica Cain accepted a \$10,000 scholarship to support her studies at Vanderbilt's Peabody College of Education.

Tiffany Love Curtis, MA, pursues the PhD in English and creative writing at the University of Southern Mississippi.

Annie Falor earned her MA in Education at the University of Northern Arizona.; she now teaches tenth and eleventh grade English at Winslow High School near Flagstaff.

Amy Halford has begun her master's work in nursing at U Memphis.

Molly Hartzog pursues graduate studies in linguistics and ESL at North Carolina State University.

Meg Herbert has accepted a \$17,000 scholarship to enroll in the Law School at U of South Carolina.

Misty Jameson, MA, earned her PhD at the University of Georgia and now serves as an assistant professor at Lander University.

Reagan Joyner attends law school at Ole Miss.

Rachael Loftin has accepted a position with Portrait Innovations in Memphis.

Beth Clayton Luthye, BA, earned her MA at Florida State University and taught writing in Tennessee. Currently, she works as compassionate ministries coordinator for a faith-based organization that provides aid for people in the Caribbean.

Lynn Mullen, BA, pursues her master's degree in communication at Auburn University.

Ester Neal, BA, received her MBA at MSU and works now as a research analyst in Huntsville, Alabama.

