

# 225<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY TUSCULUM UNIVERSITY

An Act to establish a College  
in the Territory of the United States

Whereas in all well regul  
best duty of the Legislature to consult the  
and endeavor to fit them for an Honourable  
of life, by paying the strictest attention  
Be it enacted by the Governor,  
Representatives of the Territory of the  
that there shall be  
shall be

Dear friends,

During my five years serving on the Tusculum University Board of Trustees, I had the privilege of seeing firsthand the outstanding work of faculty and staff, as they advanced our institution to the next level of excellence.

Then, when the board asked me in August to serve as acting president, I recognized this was a perfect opportunity for me to give back to Tusculum and to collaborate with everyone who is seeking innovative approaches to serve our students.

Tusculum continues to demonstrate why it is a first-choice destination for so many students, as well as faculty and staff members. We are earning impressive national rankings and developing quality academic programs that will be a model for others to follow.

In this issue of Tusculum magazine, you will read many examples of excellence occurring throughout the university. We are extremely proud that our College of Business has achieved accreditation, undergraduate research in our chemistry program is growing and the Niswonger College of Optometry continues to progress. We are pleased to share inspiring stories about our alumni and impressive achievements by our faculty and staff members, as well as our students.

This year, Tusculum turned 225 years old, which makes this a great time to reflect on how far the university has come. Many graduates have distinguished themselves after receiving their degree from Tusculum, including returning to their alma mater to serve on the faculty and staff and the Board of Trustees. Throughout our history, many of our faculty members have invested considerable years in their lives to help prepare the next generation for successful careers.

Building on our achievements from the past, the strength of our present and a strong vision for our future, we will attain even more impressive heights. Spread the word. Tusculum is moving forward.

With Pioneer Pride,



[Dr. Gregory Nelson](#)  
[Acting President](#)



Dear Tusculum supporters,

Serving on the Tusculum University Board of Trustees is an honor, and I am grateful for the opportunity to help set the direction for our beloved and historic institution of higher learning.

I am fortunate to see Tusculum up close because I run a company in Greeneville, and I am impressed with the breadth, depth and quality of the university's academic offerings. I am confident Tusculum graduates have the capability to elevate the quality of any organization they serve.

[As board chairman, I collaborate with the other trustees and Dr. Greg Nelson, our acting president](#), to ensure we are meeting students' needs. We are focused on Tusculum remaining on the cutting edge of education and preparing students for the next phase in their lives. We seek long-term success and are certain we are moving in the right direction.

We thank our students for choosing Tusculum, are pleased with their performance and pull for their social and academic success. Our board also congratulates Tusculum faculty and staff members for their exceptional work to help students reach their full potential. And we are proud of the longtime ties we have established with the communities we serve. They are vitally important to Tusculum.

We are grateful for the tremendous financial support from the Tusculum family, alumni and community members. You are fostering an environment in which students can thrive and achieve their career goals while demonstrating a love for their communities. The success stories you will read in this edition of the magazine show Tusculum is a wise investment because the return is multiplied many times.

Tusculum is a treasure for our region, and I look forward to partnering with all sectors of the community and the university family to remain pioneers in education and civic engagement.

With Pioneer Pride,



Tom Wennogle  
Chairman  
Board of Trustees



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TU

# Leading the way

Accreditation, national rankings and corporate partnerships place Tusculum's [College of Business](#) in elite company

When it comes to writing the book on running a successful College of Business, Tusculum University is authoring several chapters.

The College of Business has experienced considerable success in the last year, earning accreditation and national rankings, expanding academic offerings and establishing corporate partnerships. Looking through a two-year window, one can see the college has experienced major growth in the Master of Business Administration program, with enrollment doubling.

"These results demonstrate the value of having everyone in the College of Business working collaboratively to examine our coursework and structure with an eye toward innovative approaches that will benefit our students and employers," said Dr. Jacob Fait, the dean since January 2018. "Our dedicated professors are always seeking to be on the cutting edge, and with support from our administration and others on campus, we are achieving impressive heights."

## Accreditation

One of the biggest accomplishments for the college occurred in November 2018, when it earned global business accreditation from the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs. Earning this game-changing status followed about two years of extensive work by faculty members and university leaders and a site visit three months before the awarding of accreditation.

Dr. Fait said accreditation will help Tusculum expand its regional presence to a worldwide one. He said students considering the university, as well as their parents, will have even more confidence in the College of Business. They will see that the College of Business' core components are verified to meet the rigorous standards of this accrediting agency, he said.

"This accreditation gives additional credibility to our College of Business and more value to each of our graduates," Dr. Fait said. "When employers look at a resumé and they see Tusculum University College of Business ACBSP-accredited, they know we hold ourselves to a higher standard. So in terms of career goals and career achievement, our graduates are one step up."

Dr. Antônio Bós, who has taught at Tusculum for 28 years and helped drive the accreditation process, said this status could enhance not only the recruitment of students but also faculty members.

"Earning accreditation reflects our commitment to run the College of Business in a very professional and effective manner," Dr. Bós said. "We have established a plan that is strategic and will remain with us even if some of the personnel change over time."





ACBSP 2019 National Conference in Houston. Left to Right: Steve Parscale, chief accreditation officer for ACPSP, Matthew Sweet, College of Business director of accreditation, Dr. Jacob Fait, dean of the College of Business, Brad Kleindl, ACBSP commission chair

## Program growth

At a time when many MBA programs are facing challenges with enrollment, Tusculum is experiencing growth, which Dr. Fait attributes to many strategic factors. For one, the university looked at the trends in its enrollment and decided to offer only an employer-focused MBA general degree instead of also providing a specialized one. Historically, almost all students sought the general MBA degree, so the college decided it would be more efficient and effective to dedicate all resources toward that option and implement an employer focus.

That change led to the college reorganizing the MBA curriculum to the five-class format, a rarity in the country, and finding new ways to ensure students can apply their knowledge in a work environment. One of the classes became a comprehensive business project in which students research and propose solutions to a business need. This benefits a student's employer and his or her career development, Dr. Fait said.

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Other beneficial factors Dr. Fait cited are the ability to complete the degree in 12-21 months, having a dedicated recruiter for the MBA program, accreditation and the corporate business partnerships.

The college has also added to its Bachelor of Arts in business administration program, offering a new marketing concentration and minors in management, entrepreneurship and economics for students. Dr. Fait said this has given students more choices during their four years at the university and made them more marketable when they seek a job.



## Impressive rankings

The college has experienced a banner year in 2019 with rankings that illustrate the strength of this program.

- [College Consensus](#), a national website, ranked Tusculum seventh among the 25 best online MBA programs in the country that do not require a Graduate Management Admissions Test score as part of the application process.
- [MBA Central](#), another national website, placed the MBA program seventh among the 15 Best Tennessee Online MBA programs.
- [Study.com](#) selected Tusculum 21st in the country in its Best Online Business Degree Programs list.

## Partnerships

In addition, the college has created multiple partnerships with companies and higher education institutions that give students the ability to receive a 10 percent tuition reduction to pursue the Pioneer MBA, a 30-credit-program featuring five classes that can be finished in as short as 12 months. Tusculum has reached these agreements with TVA Credit Union, East Tennessee Children's Hospital, Pilot Flying J, A.O. Smith, Greene County Partnership and Pennsylvania College of Technology.

Sue Wilburn, vice president of human resources for East Tennessee Children's Hospital, said the Tusculum agreement is an attractive employee benefit. She knows Tusculum's quality because two of her direct reports hold degrees from the university, one of which is an MBA.

"Today's workers want assistance with professional development, and Tusculum's tuition reduction is helpful for those who have loans to repay," Wilburn said. "I am impressed with Tusculum's program and the standards they have worked hard to establish."

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From Tusculum student to National Book Award recipient,

# Justin Phillip Reed

**distinguishes himself on national stage**

One of the proudest moments for a university is to watch alumni achieve success in their chosen fields, especially when it occurs on the national stage.

That is exactly what is happening to Tusculum University with Justin Phillip Reed, a 2013 graduate who earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English, with a concentration in creative writing. Reed earned the prestigious [National Book Award](#) for poetry in November 2018, and nine months later, he received one of five 2019 Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Fellowships and a \$25,800 prize.

The fellowship came from the Poetry Foundation and Poetry magazine. The foundation said the five fellowship winners were selected from 1,573 submissions.

“Justin is distinguishing himself as one of the top poets in the country and demonstrates considerable talent as an essayist and in other writing forms,” said Wayne Thomas, dean of the College of Civic and Liberal Arts. “We are extraordinarily proud of him and his work and anticipate he will continue to grow as a writer and attain even greater heights in his profession.”

Rachel Swatzell, a senior English major in the creative writing program, said she screamed and performed a happy dance when Reed won the book award. Then in the spring, Reed came to her poetry workshop class, and she learned more about his writing process, his experience winning a major award and the need to pay attention to craft as one writes. She said it was an honor to spend that time learning from him.

After winning the book award, Reed shared about the influence Tusculum has had on his career.

“I would emphasize that all of the classes I took in the writing program at Tusculum were really rigorous,” Reed said. “The program attempts to build an appreciation for and an ability to create using various genres and modes of writing and to develop a critical eye. That is not a common experience among my peers. All of my writing workshop classes at Tusculum continue to influence the way I write and read all kinds of poetry.”

Reed’s career ambitions evolved during his time at Tusculum.

“Originally, I was a graphic design major, but when I had Wayne Thomas for a class, he brought me into the journalism program, where we worked on the student newspaper,” Reed said. “That gave me creative agency. He affirmed my voice and made me feel I had something to say that people would want to hear.”

Reed earned the book award for his collection “Indecency,” from which he read during the 2018 Old Oak Festival with about 150 people present. Thomas, who has maintained regular contact with Reed, reflected after the award was announced on the poet’s years at Tusculum.

“He had an innate talent, he worked really hard and he was consistently thoughtful,” Thomas said. “In the English Department, we talked for a long time about how he was destined for success. The fact that he won this award so early in his writing career is surprising, but the fact he received this award is not shocking for those of us who have known him for a long time.”

Swatzell said Reed’s success reflects the quality of Tusculum’s creative writing program.

“Any undergraduate student that studies creative writing at Tusculum University is in capable hands,” she said. “I believe we are one of the top undergrad programs, at least in the South, for our program offers plentiful opportunities to grow as a writer.”

To learn more about Reed, please visit [www.justinphillipreed.com](http://www.justinphillipreed.com).



**Dr. Donald Raber,**  
a trustee for 22 years,  
was a dedicated community servant



Dr. Donald Raber, a dedicated community servant who had graced Tusculum University as a member of the Board of Trustees since 1997, died Saturday, Oct. 15, from cancer and a brief illness.

In 1997, Raber and his first wife, Loyce C Raber, established the Augustine and Loyce Ritzler Endowment at Tusculum. When he died, people who wanted to honor him were asked to submit memorial contributions to that scholarship.

Dr. Raber was founder and president of Aldebaran Financial Inc. of Kingsport, Tennessee, a registered investment advisory firm. Previously, he was a senior vice president of Home Federal Bank, FSB, in Johnson City, and prior to that he was an executive vice president and senior trust officer of First American National Bank in Kingsport.

He earned a bachelor's degree in business from Hofstra University and a master's in business from West Virginia University. He was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Tusculum in 2013.

"We will miss Don's leadership of our Investment Subcommittee, his wisdom and his passion for education in this region and at Tusculum," said Dr. Greg Nelson, Tusculum's acting president. "We are thankful he shared his expertise with our university and know Tusculum is in a better position because of his counsel."

Don is survived by his wife Barbara A. Raber; children, Peter W. Raber and wife, Katie, and Donald R. Raber II and wife, Kimberly; and grandchildren, Henry, Ben, Ian and Sydney.

**Tusculum now has a**  
*Welcome Center*  
Alumni and guests are always welcome

at Tusculum University!

To make the experience of a visit on campus even more enjoyable and convenient, Tusculum has opened the [Welcome Center](#) in the former Niswonger Foundation office at the corner of Gilland Street and the Erwin Highway near Tredway Hall. The attractive facility, home of the Office of Institutional Advancement, serves as the information station for the university. Staff there are ready to serve you!

Visitors can:

- Pick up a campus map
- Get directions
- See Tusculum annuals and books as well as copies of Tusculum magazine
- Receive materials about the university and programs offered
- Drop off items for campus personnel
- Take a moment to rest during a walk and visit with some friendly folks
- Grab a hot coffee or a cold bottle of water
- Learn about our app for self-guided campus tours

We look forward to seeing **you** at the Welcome Center!



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**Tusculum Day of Giving**

During Tusculum University's celebration of Charter Day Tuesday, Sept. 3, the university incorporated another special element that enabled people to show their love and support for the institution.

The university held Day of Giving, an opportunity for Tusculum family members and the community to share some of their financial resources with Tennessee's first higher education institution. The fundraiser was a tremendous success, raising \$19,075!

The funds came from a nice mixture of people. About 60% of the donors were alumni, and 44% were Tusculum faculty and staff members. The event garnered 16% first-time givers.

Thank you to all donors for backing Tusculum University!



#TusculumDayofGiving

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**DAY OF GIVING**

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TOTAL GIFTS

\$19,075  
TOTAL RAISED

WWW.TUSCULUM.EDU/DAYOFGIVING

**#DAYOFGIVING**

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Benefactors are defined as those who have given a total of \$1 million or more to the university or have made an irrevocable estate commitment at that level. Benefactors may also have given a combination of gifts and estate commitments totaling \$1 million or more. Through the years, benefactors have had a profound impact on the present and future of Tusculum University, and their support continues to transform the university into a stronger and more effective institution.

*Thank you!*

- Nettie Fowler McCormick and family
- William L. Tredway '33
- Harriet Reaves Neff '21
- Edna Tate Smith
- Scott M. Niswonger '87 H'06
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*Let's  
celebrate:*  
**Tusculum honors its history  
by commemorating  
225th anniversary**

Since the days when the Rev. Hezekiah Balch and the Rev. Samuel Doak established the framework for higher education in Tennessee, Tusculum University has empowered students to pursue their dreams and make a positive difference in the community.

This tradition has spanned 225 years, with students leading successful lives after graduation that are rooted in civic engagement. Students have benefited from guidance provided by faculty and staff members during and after their Tusculum years.

Those who have called Tennessee's first higher education institution home have left indelible footprints and enabled the university to achieve significant growth.

## *Charter Day*

With the arrival of Tusculum's 225th anniversary in 2019, the university took time to commemorate this special milestone and reflect on the institution's impact. Tusculum held Charter Day Tuesday, Sept. 3, to give faculty and staff members as well as students, alumni, the Board of Trustees and the community an opportunity to celebrate.

More than 400 people participated in the event, with the original charter, encased in glass, on display for people to view.

"Our faculty, staff and students have worked hard over 225 years and continue today to provide an institution of higher education that East Tennessee and the Appalachian Mountain region deserve," Dr. Greg Nelson, Tusculum's acting president, shared at the event. "We have achieved great things together, and even brighter things are ahead. Let's always connect Tusculum's future to our history and remember our roots and our mission will guide us as we walk into the future."

The charter for Greeneville College, a predecessor of Tusculum University, was signed Sept. 3, 1794, with Balch as founding president. In 1818, Doak and his son, Samuel Witherspoon Doak, founded Tusculum Academy. Fifty years later, the two institutions merged and experienced a few name changes before becoming Tusculum University in 2018.

One of the people who attended Charter Day was Dr. David Bow, a professor in the physical education and sports studies department, who is now in his 43rd year at Tusculum.

"Probably the thing that comes to mind most is how Tusculum has grown from what it was when I came to what it is today," Dr. Bow said. "It makes me very pleased. I've enjoyed serving here. Every day, the opportunity to come here and contribute keeps me going. I could have retired some time ago, but I don't think I'm ready because I still feel like I've got something to contribute and I really enjoy doing it."

He has watched the university evolve with the addition of more facilities, such as the Niswonger Sports Complex, the Meen Center, the apartment complex and the Scott M. Niswonger Commons. He has also seen the expansion of the Thomas J. Garland Library.

Academically, Dr. Bow recalls Tusculum's ability to begin offering master's degrees as a major step forward for the university. The former athletic director has also witnessed impressive expansion of the athletic program, with four teams in action when he arrived climbing to 24 today.



## WE WANT YOU TO SHARE YOUR STORY!

For Tusculum's

# 225<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY

we want to feature the memories and amazing stories from our Alumni and Friends.

[225.TUSCULUM.EDU](http://225.TUSCULUM.EDU)



## Tusculum 225 website

As part of the 225th anniversary celebration, Tusculum dedicated a portion of its website to reflect on the university's history. Tusculum invited people to submit stories about their time at the university, and many shared their memories.

Stephen Geaghan, who graduated in 1970, recalled how David Behan, head of the theater department, played a major role in his career development by encouraging him to help with behind-the-scenes work in productions.

"It was largely through his guidance that I ultimately majored in theater and after graduation furthered my education in theatrical scenic design at a master's degree level," he said. "The skills and enthusiasm Dave Behan taught have allowed me a 50-year ongoing international career in the film and television industry, where I have designed and produced numerous films."

Bonnie Parks Brown, a 2014 graduate, has many wonderful memories of Tusculum.

"My first would be traveling to London for a study abroad trip in my 18th Century British Literature class," she said. "While we were on the trip, we saw many of the streets and landmarks mentioned in our assigned reading, as well as very new and modern parts of London. As an English Literature major, I took classes where we actually spoke pretty extensively about history. For example, in one American literature class, we learned about important figures during the first half of the 20th Century."

To illustrate what she learned, she submitted a photo of her dressed as "Rosie the Riveter."

Kent Workman, a 1977 Tusculum graduate, who retired after 50 years in higher education as a student and employee, earned a bachelor's degree in elementary and special education and served with Upward Bound during his years at Tusculum. He is grateful for his training.

"While working at TC with Upward Bound, I discovered that I wanted to spend my career, my life, working with college students and making sure all students, from all backgrounds, would have the opportunity to be successful at college," Workman said. "What I learned in my classes at TC I have been able to apply to help college students with special needs who some would say were 'not college material.' Well, they were 'college material,' and with the kind help I received at TC, they were as successful as anyone."

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## Leaving a legacy

# Margaret Gaut '40

**Even after her death,  
she is impacting the university**

[Margaret Gaut](#) and [Tusculum University](#) were intimately connected for eight decades, and, thankfully, those ties have continued since her death in January 2019.

After graduating in 1940 with a Bachelor of Science in home economics, Gaut served as Alumni Association president and, even in her later years, was a member of the Alumni Executive Board. She also assisted her alma mater by sitting on a presidential search committee and the External Relations Committee of the Board of Trustees. Gaut served as a class representative and phonathon volunteer as well.

Tusculum recognized her contributions by bestowing on her the Pioneer Award, the Alumni Association's highest honor, in 2001 and the

Distinguished Service Award in 2015. As a final gesture, Tusculum presented her with the first diploma bearing Tusculum's name as a university.

She died Jan. 12 at age 100 and on her way to her final resting place, the hearse drove her through the Tusculum campus one last time. But that was not the end of Gaut's role at Tusculum.

During the March production of "[Little Shop of Horrors](#)" in the Behan Arena Theatre, actresses Molly Doss, Kristin Girton, Margo Olmsted, Sara Claiborne and Jodie Carter wore outfits Gaut owned. Gaut's family donated her clothing to Theatre-at-Tusculum, and Erin Schultz, the costume director, found six outfits that would fit perfectly for this musical.

Schultz said a friend, Betsy Reed, was helping sort through some of Gaut's belongings and alerted her about the availability of clothes, some of which were homemade.

"Everything was beautifully preserved and labeled," Schultz said. "On many shoeboxes, she would say where she bought the footwear. There was one dress where she listed the party to which she had worn it. Some of her clothes were folded with tissue paper so they wouldn't get creases. To be able to obtain a large amount of vintage clothing that's still usable, as was the case here, is pretty incredible."

In her role as Audrey, Doss wore a nightgown that belonged to Gaut. She considered the ability to wear an article of Gaut's clothing an honor.

"This is the first costume I received as Audrey, and it was a big deal for me," Doss said. "It really made my character come to life, especially knowing the clothes were from the time period the show portrays. From the vintage aspect, it really helped me to be able to come together and feel a lot closer to the role and the show. It's just very special to think that I'm wearing something that meant so much to someone."

Olmstead donned a black and white dress with a cape and red belt, red gloves and red hat in her role as Skip Snip. She also wore a green dress in her other part as a member of the show's ensemble.

As she showed off the first outfit during a rehearsal, Olmstead called Gaut a pioneer and highlighted the support the centenarian provided the university throughout her life.

"When I wear this dress, I feel like I'm empowered, just like she was," Olmsted said. "She was very stylish and very iconic. It's such an honor to be able to bring my character to life using her fashions. Clearly, she was an amazing woman, and if you didn't get to know her, you missed out on someone so special."

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Theatre-at-Tusculum's cast of "Little Shop of Horrors" wearing clothing donated by the family of Margaret Gaut.



Margaret Gaut '40, Ann Beeson Gouge '40 and Kim Kidwell, director of the the Tusculum Fund

## Ann Beeson Gouge '40 a Tusculum family history

[Turning 100 years old](#) is a relatively rare experience for humans, but one Tusculum College alumna took that distinction a step further.

Ann Beeson Gouge, a 1940 graduate, was born on Christmas Day in 1918. As she neared her 100th birthday, she celebrated with a family event and a visit from Kim Kidwell, director of the Tusculum Fund. She lived almost nine months longer before dying Monday, Sept. 9, 2019.

Gouge, a widow who had one child, Janet, was a granddaughter of Thomas Samuel Rankin, who earned three degrees at Tusculum. He then developed deeper roots with his alma mater by teaching ancient languages for 45 years, serving as bursar and treasurer for 25 years and sitting on the Board of Trustees.

Tusculum recognized his commitment by naming a campus building Rankin Hall, which now houses the coaching and athletic administration offices.

Leadership by the Rankin family continued when one of Gouge's uncles, Raymond, an alumnus, served as Tusculum's president from 1951-65. Many other family members have attended Tusculum and earned degrees there.

When she was a student at Tusculum, Gouge was involved in the small orchestra conducted by her sister, Mary, and worked in the library and as a waitress in the cafeteria. Gouge graduated with an English degree and a minor in music.

Music was a major part of Gouge's adult life, too. She played the flute, piano, violin and viola and was a founding member of the Johnson City Symphony Orchestra, in which she played for 40 years. She also performed at Tusculum special events, at fashion shows and in churches. She taught string instruments in the Johnson City school system.

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# Homecoming

Tusculum alums celebrate their connection to the university during annual festivities



Laughs and smiles were in abundance as a bevy of entertaining, celebratory and informative events provided the forum for Tusculum University alumni to share stories and connect more deeply with their alma mater during this year's annual Homecoming.



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Held this year from Wednesday, Oct. 2, through Sunday, Oct. 6, Homecoming activities attracted about 400 guests, including alums, donors and families of students who came from nearby locations and as far away as England to participate. Tusculum faculty and staff members, as well as students and residents of the community, also had an opportunity to enjoy this special week at the university.



- Sports Hall of Fame Induction in which former Tusculum tennis coach Tommy Arnett was inducted and Mike and Carrie Maggert received the [Sports Benefactor Award](#)
- Annual alumni meeting in which deceased alumni were memorialized, Doug Jones collected the [National Alumni Recognition Award](#) and Dr. Peter Noll received the [National Living Faculty Award](#)
- Class decade photos
- Class, decade and sports team reunions
- University Rising 225 Parade
- Football, lacrosse, soccer and alumni baseball games
- Recognition of 50 years of Tusculum soccer
- Selection of Keveon Broadwater and Bailey Lowery as Homecoming king and queen, respectively

"Our alumni enjoyed all the activities Homecoming had to offer," said Dr. Lisa Andrus, Tusculum's director of alumni engagement. "We were excited to see them on campus again. We encourage our alumni to join us for Homecoming in 2020 and to stay connected with us throughout the year."

*Homecoming in 2020  
will be Oct. 21-25.*



Among the activities held during Homecoming were:

- [Pastors Prayer Breakfast](#), where Dr. David Smith, pastor of Tusculum Baptist Church, delivered remarks focused on listening to God and local church leaders prayed for Tusculum
- Let's Glow and Run 3K Run/Walk
- Homecoming Golf Tournament
- Pioneer Pig Out Dinner, featuring delicious barbecue and shrimp, at Pioneer Park



# Nettie Day

## continuing to drive civic engagement for students

Enhancing their community service skills, Tusculum University students traded their books and laptops for window cleaners and tools Wednesday, Sept. 11, to participate in this year's Nettie Fowler McCormick Service Day.

More than 700 students, faculty and staff members put their muscles to work performing a variety of tasks, such as demolition and cleanup, at 34 sites. This annual event highlights the emphasis Tusculum places in its curriculum and expectations of students throughout their time at Tusculum to be involved in the community.

Haley Shanks, a senior pursuing a nursing degree, sees a connection between the volunteer work she performed at the YMCA of Greeneville and the career she is pursuing.

"Nursing is a caring and giving field and works very closely with people in need," she said. "Volunteering is a way of giving back and demonstrating concern for others, and it goes hand in hand with the duties of a nurse. It was important for our nursing students to come together at Nettie Day and use our abilities to do something great for the community."

Dexler Benjamin, a freshman, was busy with demolition work and moving tiles at the Greeneville Theater Guild. As he reflected on his experience, he saw the benefit of community service.

"You can have fun while doing that and while helping people out," he said. "It teaches you good character. It's a nice way to say thank you."



Tusculum's ability to expand Nettie Day with increased attention on veterans' needs and more financial resources will grow in 2020 with the receipt of a [\\$45,000 grant from the Corporation for National & Community Service](#).

Tusculum was one of just nine organizations in the nation to receive a 2020 September 11 National Day of Service and Remembrance Grant.

"This is exceptional news for our university and will show our commitment to civic engagement more fully," said Dr. Greg Nelson, Tusculum's acting president. "We are proud of our record of community service and welcome the opportunity to improve the quality of life in a comprehensive way with Nettie Day."

The grant will allow Tusculum to expand the number of communities Nettie Day serves and increase participation to more than 800 people. The funds will also help Tusculum purchase new supplies, such as hand tools, paint brushes and goggles, that can be used for several years. It will also support staffing needs, transportation expenses and meals.

Tusculum will place further emphasis on veterans' needs and honor these individuals' service through Nettie Day activities. [At least 20 percent of Nettie Day participants will serve at several locations to address veterans, military families and/or veterans support services.](#)

In addition, Nettie Day will provide an opportunity for veterans, a military family member or a currently serving member of the armed services to give back to the community by participating in this special day. Each volunteer and representatives of the agencies that are served will receive a button with a slogan about the service of veterans.

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# Undergraduate

students tackling  
renewable energy,  
cancer in research program

Undergraduate [chemistry](#) and [biology](#) students at Tusculum University are exploring new frontiers typically associated with the master's and doctoral levels that might present solutions to issues impacting the world.

In the fall 2018 semester, [Tusculum's chemistry program kicked off a more formalized research initiative](#), which prepares students for further studies at advanced stages of their academic and professional careers. The inaugural group consisted of three chemistry majors and two biology majors who are putting their knowledge and talent to work in the Meen Center's state-of-the-art research labs.

"We have developed this program to prepare students fully to enter a comprehensive research program at the master's and doctoral levels or to pursue a career in industry immediately after graduation from Tusculum," said Dr. Dennis Ashford, an assistant professor of chemistry. "We are training them to develop critical thinking skills and presentation capabilities and to become independent scientists."

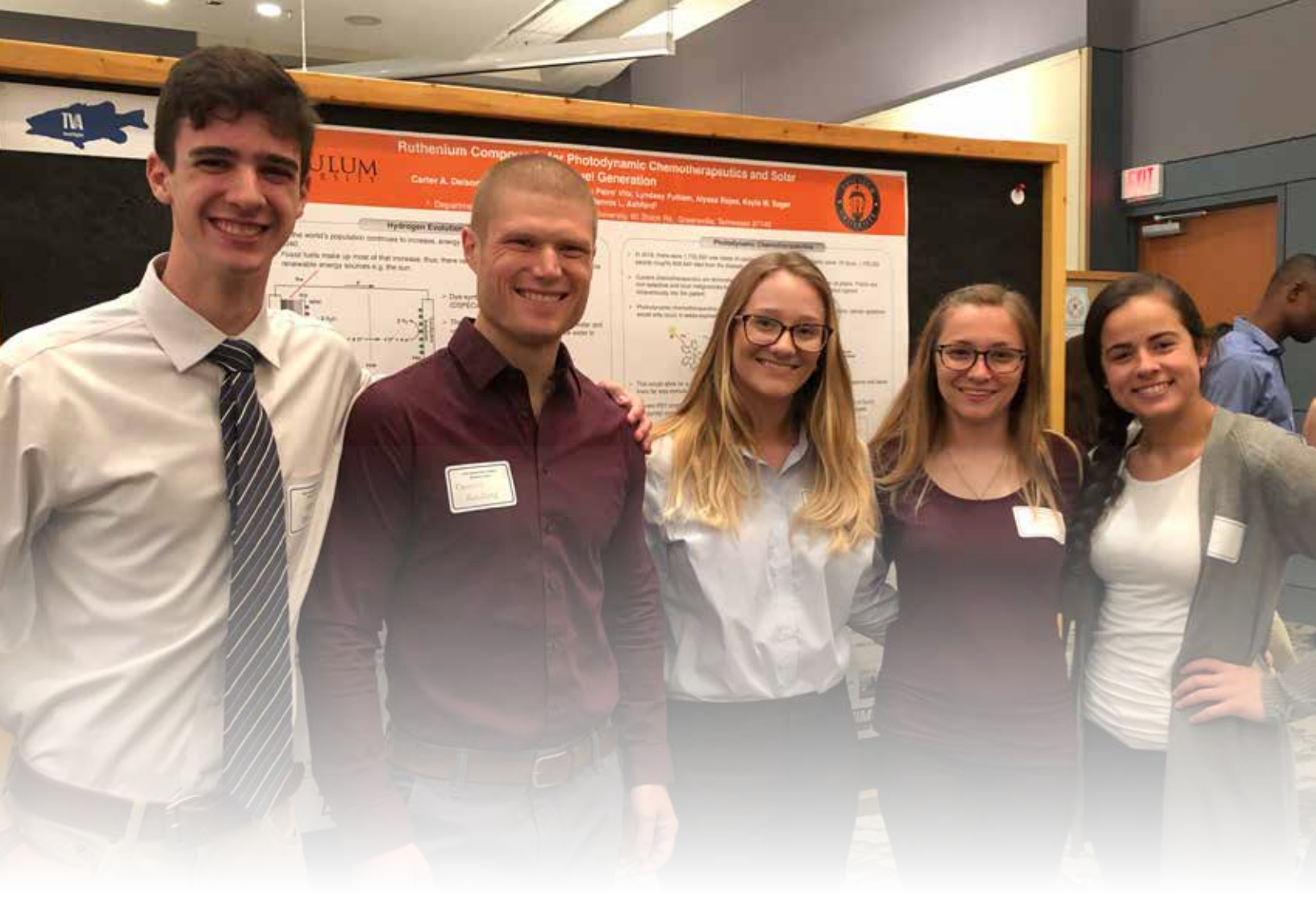
The topics being explored are renewable energy and anti-cancer prodrugs. Specifically, the group is looking into designing and making new materials for solar energy conversion and new drugs for chemotherapeutic applications.

So far, students researching the anti-cancer prodrugs have successfully synthesized and characterized five new compounds that are being tested for their anti-cancer properties. In the renewable energy research project, students successfully synthesized a new hydrogen evolution catalyst, which will be tested this academic year for its ability to generate renewable fuels from sunlight.

Annie McCullough, a senior chemistry major, is studying renewable energy.

"I think it's such a big field that's so important, but I think it's overlooked a little bit," McCullough said. "It's interesting to research this topic and see what can be accomplished or how things could be better addressed. We might not save the world, but there is still a lot of value in examining this subject in greater depth."





Carter Delsorbo, a senior majoring in biology with a premedicine concentration, is working on the design of new photodynamic chemotherapeutic medications.

"If this drug works, chemotherapy will be a much less challenging experience for people who have been diagnosed with cancer," Delsorbo said. "Patients will not experience the effects of chemotherapy nearly as much, and it could increase their chances for survival. I'm enjoying my participation in this project, which could transform the care of cancer patients."

The initial stages of the research program benefited from a \$5,000 grant from the East Tennessee Foundation to pay for supplies, such as chemicals and instrumentation, for the undergraduate researchers.

In June 2019, the program received a [\\$52,750 grant from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations](#) that will increase the number of students who participate during the academic year to 10. With the funds, the program will be able to provide a stipend and housing assistance for two undergraduate students to conduct full-time research during the summers of 2020 and 2021.

In addition, the grant will provide the financial resources for students to present their research at regional and national conferences. It will also cover items such as supplies and external testing and analysis of compounds developed by research students.

Tusculum received further good news in October 2019 when the Eastman Foundation allocated \$3,000 to further support the undergraduate research program.

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# President's Circle

Tusculum University is proud to honor and recognize the distinguished group of leadership donors, who, year after year, help the University prepare our students for success.

Tusculum's most prestigious annual giving society celebrates the philanthropy of donors who contribute \$1,000 or more each year. Through their giving they inspire others to help meet the needs of their community.

Their gifts serve as the foundation on which the Tusculum Fund is built. *They are our leaders.*

## 2019 President's Circle (to-date):

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| Mr. Geoffrey W. Anderson '69                           | Jarden Zinc Products LLC                                |
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| Dollar General Literacy Foundation                     | Dr. and Mrs. Craig Shepherd                             |
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| Mr. and Mrs. James F. Durham '79                       | Sun Tan City  |
| Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth G. Earl '98 '00                   | United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)          |
| Eastman Chemical Company Foundation                    | Dr. Angelo Volpe H'08 and Dr. Jennette Volpe            |
| Joshua Edens '08 & Ashley Edens                        | Wal-Mart Foundation                                     |
| Mr. Patrick J. Eramo '55 and Mrs. Sally L. Underwood   | Dr. Jerry F. Ward and Mrs. Carolyn Ward '88             |
| Greeneville Army Recruiting Station                    | Mr. William Westervelt '69 and                          |
| Mrs. Lesley Murray Hawk '04                            | Mrs. Ann E. Parker Westervelt '71                       |
| Mr. Nick Hirschy '02                                   | Mrs. Annie-Laurie Wheat '71                             |
| Mr. Ralph Horne '57                                    | Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation                        |
| Mr. Brian Horton '97 and Mrs. Amy B. Horton '98        | Dr. Ramona Williams                                     |
| Dr. Patricia D. Hunsader and Mr. Michael Hunsader      | Mr. Karl Wilson and Mrs. Angela T. White-Wilson '77     |
| Ingles Markets   | Mr. Tim Wilson  |
| Interfaith Youth Core                                  | Estate of John Joseph Witherill                         |

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# Niswonger College of Optometry

continues momentum,  
progresses in accreditation process

With detailed renovation to create clinical and teaching rooms in the Meen Center and progress in the accreditation process, the [Niswonger College of Optometry](#) at Tusculum University has taken many steps forward on the path toward transforming eye care in [Central Appalachia](#).

Tusculum created the Niswonger College of Optometry to address the prevalence of ocular disease in the region. [Students will receive training](#) in the contemporary practice of optometric medicine, which includes the ability to prescribe oral medications or eye drops for more serious eye conditions.

They will also have the ability to recognize through an examination that a patient might have conditions such as high blood pressure or diabetes that warrant further attention from a primary care physician.

"We are focused on creating the premier program in the nation and have recruited an excellent team that is developing an innovative curriculum, an excellent teaching and training environment and outstanding facilities to accomplish our goals," said Dr. Andrew Buzzelli, dean of the Niswonger College of Optometry and executive vice president of Tusculum's College of Health Sciences. "We are excited and motivated as we move the Niswonger College of Optometry closer to the finish line."

In July 2019, the Niswonger College of Optometry achieved the second stage in the accreditation process with the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education. This stage is not a preaccreditation or accreditation status, but rather a step toward potential accreditation. The Niswonger College of Optometry is engaged in the process of developing the program to meet accreditation standards.

Moving from Stage 1 to Stage 2 clears the way for a site visit from the ACOE. Tusculum has elected to have a site visit from the ACOE in summer 2020. The university projects to start classes in fall 2021, pending the receipt of preliminary approval of accreditation.

Tusculum extended the process a year to prepare for the site visit and have more time to recruit the first class of 70 students. Recruitment cannot start until Tusculum has received preliminary approval of accreditation.

[Construction](#) crews spent about six months converting approximately 50,000 square feet on the ground and first floors of the Meen Center to serve the Niswonger College of Optometry. This created needed space for optometric examination labs, an optics lab, an anatomy lab, a primary care ophthalmic surgery suite and exam rooms.

In addition to construction activity, the Niswonger College of Optometry has filled all of its administrative positions. Besides Dr. Buzzelli, these leaders include:

- [Dr. Donnie Akers](#), associate dean for academic affairs
- [Dr. Adam Hickenbotham](#), assistant dean for research and chief of surgery
- [Heather Keene](#), associate vice president of the College of Health Sciences
- [Dr. Greg Moore](#), assistant dean for clinics



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Dr. Andrew Buzzelli,  
executive vice president of the college of health sciences,  
founding dean of the college of optometry



The Niswonger College of Optometry has also already hired the inaugural faculty to teach students, and that group will include many College of Health Sciences administrators. Program leaders are now in the process of filling additional faculty positions.

"We are grateful for our donors, alumni and partners throughout Tusculum and the region who have supported this critical initiative," Dr. Buzzelli said. "They will be pleased with the way the Niswonger College of Optometry makes a significant dent in ocular disease and sets the standard by which similar programs across the country will want to follow."

The Business Journal of Tri-Cities Tennessee/Virginia has recognized the talent and commitment of two members of the Niswonger College of Optometry team. The monthly magazine named Dr. Buzzelli a Healthcare Hero and Keene a member of the [40 Under Forty Class for 2019](#). Both were honored for their work in bringing the Niswonger College of Optometry to the region, and Keene received her award for her community service work as well.

The Niswonger College of Optometry will not only provide unprecedented health benefits to patients, but it will also stimulate the region's economy. Optometrists who graduate from the program and stay in the region to practice will contribute to the tax base and quality of life.

When the four-year program has all slots filled, the Niswonger College of Optometry will have 280 students. Dr. Greg Nelson, Tusculum University's acting president, noted that some optometry students will be professionals with families who will need off-campus housing, which might not currently be available.

"That could lead to additional housing growth for the community," he said. "The Niswonger College of Optometry is a point of pride for all of Tusculum and will be a jewel for our region's health and economy. Combined with the many achievements occurring in other areas of the university, the Niswonger College of Optometry will position Tusculum for long-term success."

## Memorials

### 1940s

[Sarah Jenkins Duyck '40](#), February 5, 2019  
[Margaret Simpson Gaut '40](#), January 12, 2019  
[Ann Beeson Gouge '40](#), September 9, 2019  
[James McCartt '47](#), April 10, 2019  
[Mary Helen Hensley Paxton](#), December 28, 2018  
 Morelle E. Swift Sweet, '46, April 13, 2019,  
*Photo provided by the family*



### 1950s

[Hugh Jaynes '52](#), November 3, 2018  
[Thera Love Anderson '58](#), July 16, 2018  
[Oscar Lewis '53](#), June 17, 2019  
[Malcolm Stevenson '51](#), January 13, 2019  
 Kathleen Cheek Schwartz '58, March 11, 2019  
[Joseph Stallard '56](#), March 4, 2019  
[Howard Webb '55](#), October 13, 2019

### 1960s

[Peter Andersen '69](#), October 20, 2018  
[Lynn Neas Boardman '62](#), June 6, 2019  
[Charles R. English '60](#), September 13, 2019  
[Preston Hayes '63](#), August 19, 2019  
[Charlie Jackson '62](#), September 5, 2018

### 1990s

[Kathy J. Feathers '96](#), September 8, 2019

### 2000s

[Dallan Leishman '04](#), May 19, 2019  
 Muhammed Yūsuf '13, October 14, 2019

### Employee

[Bernard \(Bernie\) Elkins](#)  
 Facilities Department, March 21, 2019

### Trustee

[Dr. Donald Raber '13](#), October 15, 2019

## Class Notes

[Helen Gillespie Jeffers '41](#) celebrated her 100th Birthday on Aug. 5, 2019, in Greeneville, Tennessee, with her family and friends.

[Greg Pielich '69](#) brought home the silver and bronze swimming metals from the 2019 Tennessee Senior Olympics. Mr. Pielich resides in Johnson City, Tennessee.



Mary Lou (Winant) Edens, (BA '60), received the South Carolina statewide Rotary's "The 2019 Governor's Inspiration Award." She has, as a deaconess of the Methodist Church, created and directed for the last 20 years The G.I.F.T. Program, which feeds and provides educational experiences to over 200 a year low-income children around Abbeville, South Carolina. during the summer months, when school lunch programs are not available.

Daniel Cate '16 '18 has been hired as a continuum of care coordinator. Daniel has started and maintains an accountable care organization for five East Tennessee hospitals. He works with each hospital and the local primary care physician's, rehabilitation facilities, skilled nursing homes and home health/hospice agencies to improve patient outcomes and increase overall population health. *Provided by D. Cate*



Brooke Crum '10 graduated from Edward Via College of Osteopathic medical school in Blacksburg, Virginia. She married Clark Crum in March 2018, and they currently live in Dayton, Ohio.

Taira Burns '14 completed graduate school at Carson-Newman in December 2016 with a Master of Science in clinical mental health counseling and is employed with Youth Villages as the clinical supervisor of a juvenile justice program. She married Chris Burns '14 in July 2016. Chris is a school counselor at Jefferson County High school. They reside in Morristown, Tennessee.

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Stacey Keiser '17 now works at her dream job at OmniVisions, providing therapeutic fostercare. *Photo provided by S. Keiser*



Macy French '17 is an Master of Arts in Education candidate at Milligan College. She will be licensed to teach kindergarten through fifth grade. Her poetry has appeared in Connotation Press, DASH Literary Journal, Gravel Magazine and others. Her research thesis will examine the effects of flexible seating versus traditional seating in a kindergarten classroom. She is to be inducted into Kappa Delta Pi, an international honor society in education. *Photo by M. French*



Taylor Smith '17 is a second-year student at The University of Tennessee College of Law. Smith received The Center for Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction (CALI) Award for the highest grade in secured transactions and in professional responsibility. *Photo provided by T. Smith*



The Rev. Jonas M. Hayes, Class of December 1999, is senior pastor of a diverse congregation in Long Beach, California - Grace First Presbyterian Church ([www.gracefirst.org](http://www.gracefirst.org)), and he has served as a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) pastor for over 12 years. Jonas' parents, Clifford and Pamela Hayes, met and fell in love at Tusculum College, which is how he learned and was introduced to Tusculum. His service learning project "Stories on the Land" with the support of Professor Alice Lofton sparked for Jonas a passion for storytelling and listening, as a relational way to pursue ministry and community organizing. Hearing the powerful and moving stories, particularly of the farmers in Greene County, Tennessee, grounded him in having a deeper spiritual connection with the land along with all of God's good creation.

Bo Cordell '13, director of business development at Landair, received the awards for top revenue producer and the Parker Award for Excellence for the contract logistics team.



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