

FALL 2023



COLUMNS

ALUMNI MAGAZINE



Sejin Ahn, Gabriel Pedroso De Lima, Michaela Jordan, Olivia Huffman, and Clyde Brown

*LCU Matches Students with Internships
& Prepares them for careers*

See related story, page 4

VIEW from the Hill

By Dr. Rick Brewer

It's hard to believe an entire year has passed since Columns came out. It's gone by fast, and Louisiana Christian University has been busy. All across campus you can feel the Holy Spirit at work, and I thank the Lord every day for allowing me to be a part of His great plans here in Central Louisiana.

Part of our mission at LCU is to ensure we tackle the current issues in today's secular culture. Rather than shy away from controversial—and downright evil—bombarding our youth in popular media, in school classrooms, and even in some churches, we strive to engage students in learning how to respond and react based on God's word. Christians must be able to stand up to sin.

This year LCU hosted well-known speakers who addressed Critical Race Theory, if God is good then why does evil exist, abortion, same-sex attraction, and America's founding values. We will not waiver in our responsibility to uphold godly values and train tomorrow's leaders on biblical ideals.

Today's students are tomorrow's parents, pastors, physicians, teachers, and leaders in industry. We must prepare them well.

It's definitely been a busy year in business!

The Jonathan E. Martin MBA program was officially dedicated in the fall, and its first students graduated in the May commencement.

The first Maggie Martin Marketplace Leadership Summit was held in April with the founder of Auntie Anne Pretzels, Anne Beiler, as the keynote speaker.

A \$1.25-million gift from Ellis and Heather Fowler to create the Mary Martin Fowler Endowed Chair in the JEM MBA program will allow expanded teaching, research and scholarship by attracting world-class faculty. They have also established a scholarship fund to attract top-notch Louisiana students to stay in Louisiana to attend the MBA program.

In addition, the Young School of Business has partnered with the Ron Blue Institute. This gives LCU business students a significant marketplace leadership advantage, as it allows them access to all the intellectual property and wisdom from Blue's 50 years as the most-respected leader nationally in biblical financial management.

LCU has also announced a fifth graduate program to start in August 2023. The Master of Strategic Leadership will be housed within the Young School of Business and offers the opportunity for students with any undergraduate degree the opportunity to

become leaders in their particular fields.

Nineteen LCU alumni were recognized as top educators in Rapides Parish School District. All earned degrees or educational credentials at the university, and we couldn't be prouder of them and how they represent the wonderful education at LCU.

LCU has announced the launch of the Louisiana Christian Scholars Academy for fall 2023. LCSA will allow high school students to earn an associate of arts degree in general studies by the time they complete high school, while being taught by our university faculty from a biblical perspective. This also provides significant cost savings for college.

In athletics, our varsity student-athletes attained a cumulative GPA for the year of 3.04. This is a remarkable achievement. But LCU is even prouder of these students for receiving the Red River Athletic Conference Sportsmanship Award for the second year in a row. Knowing our student-athletes and our coaching staff are sharing our mission and vision in their sportsmanship on and off the playing field gives me great joy.

While we had many firsts this year, we had a bittersweet farewell, as well. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the huge loss of our beloved art professor Tim Roper. Roper went to his heavenly home in December after an extended illness following surgery. He dedicated 18 years to LCU—his love of students, his God-given talent, and his incredible wit cannot be replaced, but we are confident we will see him again one day.

This column isn't long enough for me to share all the great things that have happened in the past year at LCU, much less to preview all that is planned for the upcoming year. Enjoy reading this year's accomplishments. Thank you all for your continued support and prayers for LCU—its students, faculty and staff.

Keep Pressing On!



Rick Brewer, PhD, MBA
President and CEO
Professor of Business
Louisiana Christian University

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Olivia Huffman at CLECO Power

LCU matches students with *internships* & *prepares* them for careers

By Elizabeth Clarke

With COVID, prayerfully, in our rear-view mirror, more students had the chance to do in-person internships this academic year, and at least one Louisiana Christian University graduate was able to transform her position into a job.

Delaina Doyle Walley, a May 2023 graduate from Hineston, with a major in English and a minor in graphic design, served as a graphic design intern at the Louisiana Baptist Foundation this spring and will begin her position as communications coordinator there on June 1.

“I was not looking for a job or an internship at the beginning of last semester, but the university’s Center for Calling & Career sent out an email that caught my eye,” Walley said. “Most of my courses during my last semester were graphic design courses, so the idea of doing a paid internship in graphic design sounded like a great learning experience. Meredith Rennie connected me with the foundation, and I soon joined the team as an intern. I am very blessed and thankful because it led me directly to a career in my field of interest and expertise.”

Louisiana Christian University has made a concerted effort over the last two years to have every student incorporate experiential learning initiatives into their collegiate education, and it’s been paying off. Dozens of students have gotten hands-on experience in various career fields across Central Louisiana.

“Experiential Learning Initiatives are so very important to our students as they can take the knowledge learned within the classroom and apply it through actual experiences within the workforce and local community,” said Vice President of Student Life Meredith Rennie.

While not required for every major, including Walley’s, she said she recommends everyone take advantage of the opportunities.

“All students, in their freshmen year at LCU, take the Clifton StrengthFinder Assessment to identify their Top 5 Strengths,” Rennie said. “We focus on building these strengths throughout their college career and use the strengths to identify areas of opportunity for internships and deciding upon a career path best suited for the student.”

For Walley, her internship was a perfect fit.

“It helped me discover different ways to use my degree as well as how to take advantage of my minor,” she said.

Her supervisor, LBF Executive Director Jeff Steed, approached her about a permanent position that Walley said LBF created and offered to her, she said.

“I will continue to use my knowledge with design programs to help the foundation create graphics for advertising their services, and I will also be using my English knowledge and skills to coordinate communication between the foundation and other organizations, institutions, etc.,” Walley said. “I will be able to combine my creativity with my love for language to communicate effectively and efficiently with everyone in my path.”

LCU’s unique Center for Calling & Career is equipping students with internship opportunities, which simply can’t be overemphasized in preparation for the competitive marketplace awaiting our graduates, said President Dr. Rick Brewer.

“When future employers include our students as interns,” Brewer said, “they discover the quality education LCU’s students have received preparing them to think critically, conduct analytical reasoning, and serve as problem-solvers while exhibiting a Christ-like attitude.”

LCU Graduates Look Forward to Bright Futures

By Elizabeth Clarke

Desiree Squires, of Rosepine, graduated this past May with a double major in chemistry and criminal justice. She knew she wanted to go into federal law enforcement, so she applied for an opening with the Secret Service, that her father found online.

Squires has a conditional offer of employment with the U.S. Secret Service. She said she never imagined that would happen.

She said her Uncle Herb, a highly decorated Green Beret, taught her some of the most important lessons in her life. “You can do a lot of things in this world, but if people around you don’t feel loved, it doesn’t matter,” she said she takes to heart every day. Squires said she is surrounded by people with good hearts at home and at LCU.

As Squires heads to the U.S. Secret Service Training Center in Georgia, her classmates Ting Jiang and Shelby Cumpton are headed back to the classroom to pursue graduate degrees.

Ting Jiang, of Eunice, graduated with a degree in business administration with a concentration in accounting. He has been accepted into the Master of Science in Accounting program at the University of Louisiana – Lafayette in the fall, while he studies for the CPA exam and gains work experience in an accounting firm.

Jiang spent the first 13 years of his life in China until his family moved to Louisiana for a new opportunity. He is a first-generation college student, and he is making it count.

He received the Louisiana Society of CPAs scholarship two years in a row. This difficult statewide competition in accounting is almost unheard of to win twice!

While Jiang has grown in his knowledge of his career pursuits during his time at LCU, his biggest growth has been in his faith.

“I learned about how to carry responsibility and become more mature. The biggest thing is I have put my faith in Christ.”

He said he is prepared for the next step in his journey.

Shelby Cumpton, of Quitman, who graduated with a history degree and political science minor, will pursue a master’s degree in communication before she attends law school.

Cumpton has taken her four years at LCU to get involved on campus and become a leader.

“My life has changed in so many ways while at LCU,” she said. “Prior, I just wanted to be invisible. I had no desire to be a leader, but fortunately, God had much better plans.”

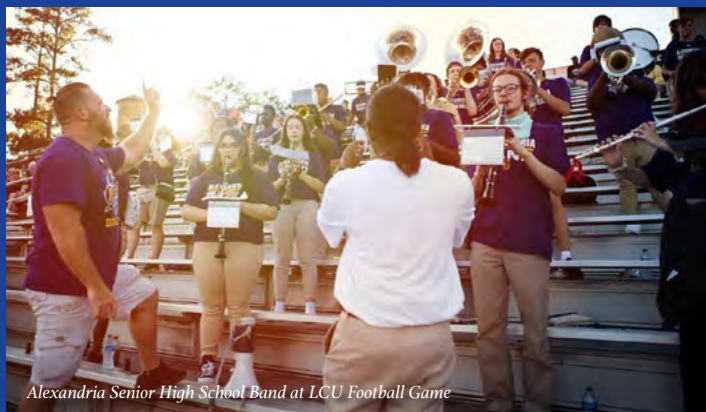
Cumpton has served in several positions in the Student Government Association, was an all-star Debate Team member, was in the C.S. Lewis Honors Program, Phi Alpha Theta, a Wildcat navigator, a tutor in the Student Success Center, and was chosen for Honors Court in 2021 and Homecoming Court in 2022.

Cumpton said she has been challenged academically and personally.

“It’s my joy to watch these students grow intellectually and spiritually during their undergraduate journey at LCU. Indeed, our graduates are emblematic of the University’s Vision for Preparing Graduates and Transforming Lives.” said President Dr. Rick Brewer.

Rapides Schools Proving Community Is Better Together on Football Field

By Elizabeth Clarke



Alexandria Senior High School Band at LCU Football Game

Louisiana Christian University announced a new partnership with Rapides Parish Schools to give area high school bands the opportunity to perform the half-time show at home football games.

Alexandria Senior High School kicked off this initiative at LCU’s first home game Sept. 17.

“We are pleased to enhance LCU’s partnership with the schools of the Rapides Parish School District hosting these high school bands to perform and add greatly to fan engagement for Wildcat home football games this year,” said President Dr. Rick Brewer. “I hope this becomes an annual musical partnership for LCU and CENLA’s high school marching bands going forward.”

The LCU home game schedule included Alexandria Senior High, Pineville High School, Buckeye High School, Bolton High School, and Tioga High School.

The bands played throughout the games in addition to performing a 10-minute halftime show. All high school band members received complimentary tickets for their parents to attend the game.

“RPSB is extremely excited to be a part of LCU Football and the Wildcat Gameday Experience!” said Rapides Schools Athletic Director Alan Fontenot. “We are always looking for new, thrilling opportunities for our students to showcase their amazing talents. Any time that our students are able to connect their passions with the community, the outcome is immeasurable for everyone involved.”

Fontenot said the relationship between LCU, RPSB Schools and the community are a great example of the school district’s motto *#BetterTogether* being put into action.

LCU Vice President of Intercollegiate Athletics Reni Mason said it’s a win-win situation for the university and the school district.

“Having high school bands on campus gives our institution tremendous leverage in recruiting opportunities,” Mason said. “It also forges relationships that need to be fostered and enhanced in our community. I’m grateful that Rapides is allowing us to be a part of their band experience.”



Top 25 Forbes' business leader brings *encouragement* & *chocolate* to LCU

By Elizabeth Clarke

Louisiana Christian University's 7th Annual God in the Workplace series began this year with a guilty confession.

"My name is Kenny, and I'm a chocoholic," announced Dr. Kenny Holt, dean of the Young School of Business—as a way of introducing this year's speaker, Shawn Askinosie.

His addiction—shared by much of the audience by the reaction—led Holt to Askinosie Chocolate during a visit to Springfield, Missouri—and as they say, the rest is history.

Askinosie, the founder and CEO of Askinosie Chocolate, left a lucrative 20-year career as a criminal defense attorney to start the small bean-to-bar chocolate company, headquartered in Springfield, 13 years ago on a quest to find more meaning and purpose to his life.

"I loved my work until I didn't," he said.

Following a routine day in court, Askinosie said he started having panic attacks and feeling like something was missing. He had spent decades defending people accused of murder and other serious crime and had never lost a jury trial, but he also was in a very high stress career field that included death threats.

"We were thrilled to have him share his message, which is so meaningful to today's students," Holt said. "Whatever you do, find a way to serve your fellow man."

This sentiment was echoed by LCU President Dr. Rick Brewer.

"It was a powerful message about what it means to live your life and lead your business on mission with God and not be driven by monetary success or external rewards," Brewer said.

Askinosie's decision to start one of the first bean-to-bar chocolate businesses in the country was not easy. Askinosie has made 46 trips foraging for the perfect beans. He works directly with cocoa bean farmers in Tanzania, the Phillipines, the Amazon and Ecuador and shares in the profits of his company with them. Two of the four main farms he works with are owned by women.

Askinosie also invests in them and their communities—and encourages them to take ownership. He does not put his or his company's name on anything he does in their villages, despite the fact that he has provided more than 1 million lunches for children in the Phillipines and Tanzania, helped build a preschool, and created educational programs through his Chocolate University program.

While Askinosie acknowledges his product is much more expensive than the top chocolate makers in this country, he prides himself on working with farmers who are allowed to find their passion to achieve their dreams, just as he has achieved his.

Askinosie Chocolate has won more than 60 international awards for quality and has been recognized by Forbes as a top small business.

The top eight chocolate manufacturers in America engage more than 1.8 million children in slave labor, allowing consumers to buy their chocolate bars in convenience and retail stores for a fraction of the cost. Still, Askinosie doesn't dissuade people from purchasing it.

The world can't be fixed overnight; it's a balance, he said.

To find their calling, he challenged students to take inventory of their talents, skill sets, what their community or world needs, and their passions.

"Pray about it, and look for intersections among them," Askinosie said. "And to find God, sometimes we need to look to the low places. It was being in the low places that led me to the high place. Those are places of transformation."

And the benefit has been a more joyful existence and a trade-off worth far more than the substantial cut in pay from his career change, he said.

"I eat chocolate every day for a living, and no one has threatened to kill me yet."

LCU Education Alumni Recognized as Top of Their Profession

By Elizabeth Clarke

Nineteen Rapides Parish School District teachers who have been recognized as this year's educators of the year all earned their credentials at Louisiana Christian University.

"I celebrate along with the community these amazing educators' hard work, investment, and dedication to the children of Rapides Parish," said Dr. Christy Warren, interim dean School of Education.

Glenmora High School Teacher of the Year Tracy Stokes has been teaching for 7 years.

She said her classroom management skills she learned going through LCU's program are top-notch and very effective in dealing with many different types of students.

Michelle Hay, Alma Redwine Elementary's Teacher of the Year for the school and the district, has been an educator for 16 years.

Hay said the personal attention given through LCU's program really benefitted her.

"LCU prepared me for my teaching career by giving me a different perspective," she said.

A more recent LCU graduate, Whitney Williams, was recognized as the Acadian Elementary New Teacher of the Year.

She credits the tough love of Dr. Christy Warren and the entire faculty and staff of the School of Education with her achievement.

"My professors believed in me whenever it was hard to believe in myself, and they gave me a push to not give up on teaching," Williams said.

Seasoned teacher Penny Nugent Luttrull was recognized as H.R. Lawrence's Teacher of the Year. Luttrull is completing her 32nd year of teaching special education.

While the professors have all changed since Luttrull first entered her classes at LCU in 1986, the same inspiration and encouragement remains.

"I felt very well prepared for the teaching profession," Luttrull said. "Every faculty member was fully invested in student success but also knew the importance of nurturing and developing the whole person."

She teaches students who have a myriad of special challenges, and she said her faith really drives her teaching.

"As a special education teacher, I have worked with many students over the years, and I strive each day to see the students as Jesus sees them, loving them unconditionally," Luttrull said. "The joy and sense of pride the students exude when they have mastered a skill still excites me. My prayer is that my students leave me knowing they were loved and valued."

Brame Middle School Teacher of the Year Virginia Cope Laborde has been teaching ever since she graduated LCU in 2014. The best thing about the program for her was the professional development opportunities available in the summer.

"I was prepared with knowledge of the new Common Core Standards before those were in place, which was a bonus to my first employer," Laborde said. "LCU's program allows you to complete the program while still being able to teach in a classroom setting. You can still be a parent, a teacher, a spouse, and go to school to fulfill your certification."

Victory Lindo-Lemons, assistant professor of education, said she is inspired to see the abundance of educators of the year in Rapides Parish who have come through the program at LCU.

"This is a testament to the quality education and training that Louisiana Christian University provides for its students," Lindo-Lemons said. "The dedication and hard work of the teachers who have graduated from our university is evident. As someone who has also graduated from Louisiana Christian University and received teacher of the year in the public school system, I personally attest to the value of the education and preparation that I received at the university. I am proud to be part of this community and I believe that LCU plays a vital role in developing the next generation of teachers in the state of Louisiana."

For more information about an undergraduate education degree, alternative certification, or graduate programs—Master of Arts in Teacher or Master of Education, please visit lcuniversity.edu/education.



LCU Education Majors with Dr. Amber Hyatt

LCU holds 168th *Commencement* Exercises

by Elizabeth Clarke

Louisiana Christian



University



*Dr. Frank Ashley
168th Commencement Keynote Speaker*

Dr. Frank B. Ashley III delivered a nostalgic and encouraging keynote address during Louisiana Christian University's 168th Commencement Exercises.

"I hate to tell you but earning this degree is only the beginning," Ashley told the graduates not to be discouraged by that. "I know that sounds disappointing, but anything is possible if you are willing to just keep on learning."

Graduates of December 2022, May 2023 and August 2023 participated in the ceremony.

"After I received my bachelor's here, graduating 'thank you, laude,' I didn't think I'd ever set foot on a university campus," Ashley said. "Neither did some of your professors."

Ashley earned his bachelor's degree from LCU in Health, Physical Education and Safety. He went on to earn his master's and doctorate from the University of Alabama.

Ashley, a 1999 LCU distinguished alumnus, has served in numerous administrative positions at Texas A&M in addition to being a senior professor. He oversees graduate education and research activities, as well as strategic planning, faculty affairs, student affairs, program development, diversity, assessment, communications and external relations, student services, and extended education programs in the Bush School.

He currently serves as the executive associate dean of Texas A&M Bush School of Government and Public Service.

Ashley left graduates with a call to action. "LCU has provided you with the tools

you need," he said. "So, Wildcats, go and take on the world. Go out and impact the lives that you touch. This is how our faith calls us to live our lives."

LCU awarded diplomas to 259 students this year; 182 received bachelor's or associate degrees while 77 received master's degrees. Included in this group were the first graduates of the Jonathan E. Martin MBA program.

President Dr. Rick Brewer welcomed everyone and spoke to the graduates.

"Since 2018, LCU students have been through a tornado on campus, two hurricanes and an ice storm—and then the pandemic," Brewer said. "You all deserve an 'A' in persistence and tenacity."

During the ceremony, Ashley and Dr. Maggie Martin, of Alexandria, were awarded honorary doctorates.

Brewer remarked on both of their lives of service and the lives they have impacted.

Martin was recognized for her many years of distinguished support and service to the university and the community. The Jonathan E. Martin MBA program, named for her late husband, is a testament to the Martins' contributions to the business community.

Several outstanding graduates spoke during the commencement exercises, as well.



*Kelsie Ward
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration*



Students from the Class of 2023 at the 168th Commencement

Caleb Howe, who followed in the footsteps of several family members in attending LCU, said his time in Pineville allowed him to grow closer to God and develop lasting friendships.

Like Howe, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in education: biology concentration, Ashley Martin said attending LCU was not a difficult decision, as her parents met as teenagers on campus.

“Every moment at LCU has affirmed this is where I was supposed to be,” said the magna cum laude missions and ministries graduate.

Lady Wildcat basketball stand-out Miya McKinney, a criminal justice graduate, was recognized by Brewer during the ceremony as the Red River Athletic Conference women’s basketball player of the year.

McKinney teared up as she told the audience she was the first person in her family to ever graduate from college, and she recognized the impact her late grandmother and godfather had on her journey.

“Coming to LCU was a testimony all by itself,” she said. “My life was transformed here. I allowed God to take control of my life, and I’ve been blessed.”



Caleb Howe (above) & Miya McKinney (below) graduate speakers

Student Government Association President Shelby Cumpton, who graduated with a degree in history and a minor in political science, encouraged her fellow graduates to use the skills and knowledge gained at LCU and to serve the Lord faithfully.



Miya McKinney & family at 168th Commencement

LCU mourns loss of beloved longtime professor

By Elizabeth Clarke

With great sorrow, Louisiana Christian University announces the death of longtime faculty member Tim Roper, who died after an extended illness following surgery a year ago.

Roper was a professor of art for 18 years at LCU, teaching painting and drawing, and graphic and web design. He held a BFA from Louisiana College (now LCU) and a MFA from Louisiana State University.

“Professor Tim Roper was a beloved member of the University’s faculty,” said President Rick Brewer. “His expertise in Graphic Design and Studio Art equipped and inspired scores of students during his tenure at LCU. Tim’s quick wit and brilliant intellect will be missed; but, above all, his commitment to sharing the Gospel through his creative gifts will be his legacy for generations who had the distinct privilege of being under his tutelage.”

LCU Director of Marketing Karen Carter, who was a student of Roper’s, earned her BFA in Visual Communication in 2014.

“Tim Roper was more than a professor turned coworker; he was a mentor and friend,” Carter said. “I would not be the artist I am today without his guidance. His witty sense of humor and calming demeanor will be greatly missed. I am incredibly sad he is gone, but I rejoice knowing he is in Heaven painting at the feet of Jesus!”

Wangling Chou, LCU art professor who specializes in ceramics, met Roper when she came to work at LCU in 2008, and the two became the best of friends teaching in the Weathersby Fine Arts Building together. She watched his children grow up.

“Tim and I were not only colleagues, we became buddies,” Chou said. “We could talk about everything from teaching, art, family to God. He was such a trustworthy friend and was never judgmental. One thing I know very well is that Tim loved

and cared about all his students. I feel it was God’s special plan that we were born in the same year and month, I came all the way from Taiwan, and we instilled and invested in the same students together for 14 years. All those memories are God’s gift to me. I will miss him forever.”

Currently, Roper’s older son Nathan is a junior in public relations at LCU. His younger son Matthew is a senior at Bolton High School. He also leaves behind his wife, Mindy.

“He was the most wonderful man I’ve ever known, and he will live on through myself and my brother, Matthew.” Nathan Roper said.

“He gave me confidence and strength. He is my reason why. I am forever grateful for every moment I had with him. He brought love and faith with him wherever he went, and I am proud and honored to say that I will always identify first as Tim Roper’s son, my hero, always.”

LCU junior art major Sam Miller remembers the last time Roper texted her before his November 2021 surgery. Roper was not just her professor but a mentor to her inside and outside the classroom.

“He texted me, ‘You guys [referring to his [students] are where my heart is, you know,’ and that will forever be the words that stick with me when I think of him.”

LCU Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost. Dr. Cheryl Clark remarked on his unique personality and enormous talent.

“Tim’s sense of humor, wit, and graphic designs have left an indelible mark on every aspect of our campus. Tim lived out his faith every day and we have assurance he is now in the presence of His Savior for all eternity.”





Dr. Rick Brewer at the Jonathan E. Martin Master of Business Administration Luncheon



Dr. Kenny Holt (above) and Roy Martin III (below) at the Jonathan E. Martin Master of Business Administration Luncheon



Dr. Maggie Martin and daughter Natalie Monroe after announcement of the Dr. Maggie Martin Marketplace Leadership Summit

Jonathan E. Martin MBA officially dedicated

By Elizabeth Clarke

Louisiana Christian University formally dedicated its Jonathan E. Martin Master of Business Administration program to a packed Granberry Conference Center.

It was clear by the outpouring of support from the business, academic and civic community that Martin was a universally admired business leader and man.

Commendations were offered from pastor, Dr. David Brooks of Calvary Baptist Church in Alexandria, Sen. Jay Luneau, Rep. Mike Johnson, U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy, and Louisiana Rep. Lance Harris.

Roy O. Martin III, current CEO and CFO of RoyOMartin, spoke on behalf of the family's company.

"This program is so vital for this community," he said.

The Martin MBA program is rooted in a biblical worldview and includes the RoyOMartin RICHES framework as a thread throughout the entire program.

The RICHES framework was established by Roy O. Martin Sr. as the values the company would operate under. He saw them as the company's "riches."

Chris Karam, president and chief executive officer of CHRISTUS St. Francis Cabrini Health System, said that the program will be beneficial for growing leadership roles in local hospitals to elevate the level of care offered to the community.

Keith Adams, incoming president and CEO of the Central Louisiana Community Foundation, spoke briefly about working with LCU and connecting donors to causes they care about.

"I'm grateful for our partnership with [LCU] and I look forward to many more partnerships moving down the road and supporting this great institution," Adams said.

Jonathan E. Martin's daughter Amanda Vincent, founder of Studyville Academic Workspace, spoke on behalf of her and her sister, Natalie Monroe, vice president of environmental, safety and sustainability operations for RoyOMartin, of their father's legacy.

"Dad read every business book that came out, but he said the best business book is the Holy Bible," Vincent said.

Martin's wife of 48 years, Dr. Maggie Martin, told the audience of how the partnership with LCU came about.

"From the time Johnny died, I knew I would find something to honor him and continue his legacy," she said. "He had innate business acumen. He empowered people and showed them how to succeed."

LCU President Dr. Rick Brewer worked alongside the Martin family and Dr. Kenny Holt to develop the MBA program.

"To name our MBA program in honor of such an iconic businessman and outstanding resident of Central Louisiana seemed fitting," Brewer said. "We are honored to help carry on his legacy of Christian leadership at LCU."

Fowlers provide \$1.25 million to the Jonathan E. Martin MBA program

By Elizabeth Clarke



Louisiana Christian University announces a gift of \$1.25 million to establish the Mary Martin Fowler Endowed Chair in the Jonathan E. Martin Master of Business Administration program.

Ellis and Heather Fowler of Boulder, Colorado donated the funds necessary to create the endowed chair position to both honor his mother, Mary Martin Fowler, and to support the newly-established Jonathan E. Martin MBA program named for his late uncle.

In addition to the endowed professorship, the funds will create the Fowler Family Scholarship Fund, to provide financial awards to outstanding students to earn their MBA at LCU.

“The Fowlers are strong supporters of higher education and have taken a keen interest in what we are doing at LCU and the Young School of Business,” said LCU President Dr. Rick Brewer. “We continue to be amazed at what the Lord is doing through the extended Martin family, and are grateful to the Fowlers for their contributions to our Martin MBA program.”

Dr. Kenny Holt, dean of the Young School of Business, said the Mary Martin Fowler Endowed Chair will help expand teaching, research, and scholarship at LCU by attracting faculty to teach in the Young School of Business and Martin MBA program in the field of accounting.

In addition to this, Holt said the Fowlers are establishing an endowment to fund the Fowler Family Scholarship to encourage exceptional graduate students to attend the Martin MBA program. Recipients of the scholarship will become Fowler Family Scholars and are encouraged to commit to remaining in Louisiana upon completion of their degree.

Scholarship funds will be available to apply for beginning July 2023.

More information about the Jonathan E. Martin MBA program, including scholarship and financial aid opportunities, may be found on the LCU website.

LCU business school forms partnership with Ron Blue Institute

By Elizabeth Clarke

The Young School of Business formally announced its new partnership with the Ron Blue Institute.

This alliance will advance biblical financial literacy through the academic and professional outreach of LCU and will provide the university an opportunity to use the intellectual property, publications, curriculum and thought leadership from the Ron Blue Institute that is changing the way Christians think, act and communicate about financial stewardship.

“Partnering with the Ron Blue Institute provides {LCU} business majors with a significant marketplace leadership advantage,” said President Dr. Rick Brewer. “When employers seek ethical business leaders who clearly understand and apply biblical stewardship, they will need to look no further than LCU. I can’t think of any better set of economic principles to articulate the university’s vision for preparing graduates and transforming lives.”

For five decades, Ron Blue has elevated a biblical view of financial wisdom, stewardship and generosity. LCU will access his intellectual property, subject matter expertise and consultant services to create a center for biblical financial literacy.

“In my over 50 years of working in the wealth management and financial services work I have found a biblical worldview approach to financial decision making simple, relevant to all and easily transferable,” Blue said. “It has been proved to be the most rational and sound approach to financial thinking and decision-making from Wall Street to Main Street.”

Blue said he sees great opportunity for the university students, employees, alumni and constituents to take advantage of the 10 years of work the Ron Blue Institute has done with Christian universities across the United States. The Ron Blue Institute has become a national center of thought leadership, curriculum and teaching about biblical principles for the management of finances.

“There is no one more respected in the field of biblical financial management than Ron Blue,” Holt said. “We are blessed to be in this alliance with him and his team at the Ron Blue Institute. It is estimated that 84% of today’s college graduates do not have the tools they need to manage their money when they graduate. In this alliance, our students in the Young School of Business will benefit from the leadership and resources from RBI.

A new course, Biblical Financial Management, will be created for Fall 2023 using Ron Blue’s literature, which will be a required course for all business students.

“In the Young School of Business, we want to ensure what we teach is rooted in God’s Word,” Holt said. “We want to integrate faith in every aspect of our students’ lives.”

Auntie Anne's Pretzels founder shares *twisted journey* at Maggie Martin Marketplace Leadership Summit

By Lexi Rachal, Wildcats Media

Louisiana Christian University kicked off its inaugural Dr. Maggie Martin Marketplace Leadership Summit featuring keynote speaker Anne Beiler, founder of Auntie Anne's Pretzels.

Beiler gave her personal testimony of her journey, her success and her purpose. She explained how her choices impacted her life and her success.

Natalie Monroe, vice president of environmental safety and sustainability operations at RoyOMartin, explained the purpose of the event and introduced her mother, Dr. Maggie Martin—the namesake of the summit. Martin then introduced Beiler to the packed Granberry Conference Center.

“As I was researching our guest speaker today, I quickly thought, Anne Beiler is a friend whom I have yet met,” Martin said. “Having visited with her briefly, she definitely is a friend, I can see there are many similarities in our lives.”

Martin spoke about Beiler's perseverance through pain in life, which ultimately led to her success as a businesswoman.

“She twisted pretzels, but through her journey, she also twisted her fate,” Martin said.

Beiler talked about her Amish roots and the things she learned in that culture that were foundational to her family life, faith and work ethic.

During the early years of marriage, she and her husband were on fire for God.

“We were married seven years when we experienced tragedy and trauma,” she said.

Their 19-month-old daughter was accidentally killed.

“I began a very slow and gradually descent into a world of emotional pain and spiritual confusion,” Beiler said.

She and her husband didn't know how to deal with grief. Eventually, she tried to find answers by speaking with her pastor.

Her pastor took advantage of her. This led her to make one of the biggest decisions of her life.

“That day I made a choice to keep a secret,” she said. “That one secret, that one choice, changed everything for me.”

The choice led to her near destruction—in her family life, her spiritual life and her physical life.

After a lot of inner turmoil and prayer, she told her very understanding husband what happened, allowing them both to heal.

This led into the origins of Auntie Anne's Pretzels.

Beiler said she is thankful that God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things.

“According to the standards of this world, I wasn't qualified,” she said. “There wasn't a headhunter in the world who would've come looking for me to be the CEO of an international franchise organization...

I was not qualified. I love God though. I made a pretzel, and the rest is history.”

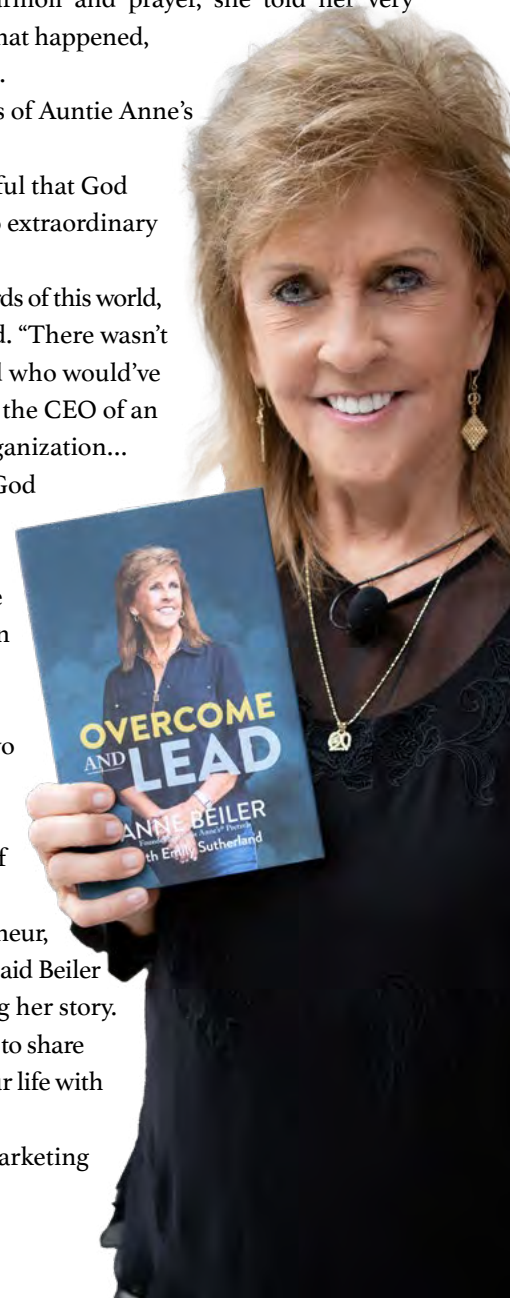
Beiler explained Auntie Anne's Pretzels is a modern day business miracle—defying all odds.

She talked about the two goals they set for the business: to give back and to be a light in the world of business.

Cindy Cespiva, entrepreneur, and small business owner, said Beiler was courageous for sharing her story.

“It takes a lot of courage to share the darkest moments of your life with strangers,” Cespiva said.

LCU senior business marketing and management major,



Kaleb Breaux said he appreciated Beiler's emphasis on relying on God's direction.

Louisiana Christian University President Dr. Rick Brewer and Pineville Mayor Rich Dupree presented Beiler with a key to the City of Pineville.

"You could not have asked for a better speaker for this inaugural event," Brewer said. "Anne's story and insight was inspirational and motivational. Her character and convictional leadership resonate with the focus of the Jonathan E. Martin MBA Program. Looking forward to the next Dr. Maggie Martin Marketplace Leadership Summit April 18, 2024."



President Rick Brewer addressing the crowd at the first Dr. Maggie Martin Marketplace Leadership Summit



Mayor Rich Dupree presenting the key to the city of Pineville to Speaker Anne Beiler



LCU Students Michaela Jordan, Sejin Ahn, Kaleb Breaux, Ting Jiang, Elysa Brady, and Ben Menard

New online master's degree announced for fall 2023

By Elizabeth Clarke

Enrollment is open for Louisiana Christian University's newest online graduate program.

The Master of Strategic Leadership (MSL) will begin its first cohort in August and is designed for leaders and emerging leaders in all types of organizations and with all types of undergraduate degrees.

"It doesn't matter if you have a business background or not, this MSL is designed for anyone who wants to become a better leader in their organization," said the Dean of the Young School of Business Dr. Kenny Holt. "Students are going to gain essential skills for the modern workplace in management, communication, marketing, human resource management, strategy, and especially character-based ethical decision-making."

President Dr. Rick Brewer said the Master of Strategic Leadership prepares students to be agents of change in for-profit, non-profit, healthcare, church-related and government organizations. The MSL is built on a character-based ethical framework rooted in biblical principles.

"We uniquely prepare graduates to become servant leaders, using their careers and organizations to change the world for the better," Brewer said. "Our seminars in Business as Mission explain how we all can serve humankind through our vocation. No other MSL program is designed to equip students for this."

The MSL requires a student to have successfully completed a bachelor's degree with a cumulative 2.5 GPA. No GMAT or GRE score is required, and there are no prerequisites. The program can be completed at the student's pace in as little as one year.

Visit LCUniversity.edu/MSL for more information.

An advertisement for the Master of Strategic Leadership (MSL) program. It features a young woman with curly hair, wearing an orange top, smiling while writing on a document. The background is a dark blue wall with white text. The text reads: "Designed For Emerging Leaders In all types of Organizations!". Below this, it lists: "• NO GMAT or GRE required", "• NO prerequisites required", and "• 31-credit hour program". At the bottom, there are social media icons for Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, and a laptop with the Young School of Business and LCU logos.



Students participating in events for Black History Month

LCU holds events in honor of Black History Month

By Elizabeth Clarke

Several events were held in February on campus at Louisiana Christian University in honor of Black History Month, including a Culture from Around the World event, gospel concert and rhythm & blues nights, and a basketball league with Hoops on Mission Founder Dwayne Jackson.

Culture from Around the World, hosted by the LCU international student population, featured music and cuisine from represented cultures.

“We invited all international students to come in their native dress,” said Dr. Joshua Joy Dara. “This was an opportunity to showcase and learn about the food and culture of other countries, as well as showcase the talents and gifts of these students.”

The Fourth Annual Gospel Concert was hosted the following night and featured LCU Gospel Choir, joined by the choirs of Nazarene Baptist Church in Alexandria and the Zion Hill Baptist Church in Pineville. This event also included a video presentation of Black legends.

“Diversity is something we embrace at Louisiana Christian University,” said President Dr. Rick Brewer. “We have a diverse student body and a diverse faculty and staff. We enjoyed the opportunity to focus on the important contributions of African Americans to our state, nation and world.”

A rhythm and blues night followed by Hoops on Mission finished out the week of fun-filled events.

Hoops on Mission Founder Dwayne Jackson, a sought-after motivational speaker, is a professional basketball player and former college player, founded Hoops on Mission, a non-profit cultural organization focused on afterschool mentoring programs and basketball from a Christian perspective. He uses his God-given skills and abilities to teach life lessons to at-risk youth in hopes they will find the hope that only a relationship with Christ can bring.

Hoops on Mission reaches youth all around the country. Jackson said his most life-changing experience has been being a missionary and world changer in his own backyard of Fort Myers, Florida.

The university wrapped up the month’s activities with an LCU Talent Search. All works performed were originally written by a Black artists. Prizes included trophies for top three, and first place will receive \$300; second place \$200, and third place \$100.

“February is a time we can honor the accomplishment of African Americans and champion diversity,” Dara said. “This year’s celebration at LCU were a time of education, fun, music and good fellowship.”



Earn an ASSOCIATE of ARTS in GENERAL STUDIES

WHILE YOU COMPLETE A HIGH SCHOOL DEGREE

Louisiana Christian University launches the Louisiana Christian Scholars Academy this fall for high school students looking for a serious jump-start on their college studies.

It is designed to offer high school students 60 hours of college credit over two full years,” said President Dr. Rick Brewer. “They will earn an associate of arts degree in general studies.

The best part—the cost of the program is only \$2500 per semester for 15 hours of credit, including textbooks. Any level high school student who meets the ACT of 20 and academic criteria is eligible to participate.

Students may attend remotely or on campus. LCSA students will receive LCU Student IDs and will be welcome to attend campus activities, athletic events, Chapel, Baptist Collegiate Ministry events, cultural events and have access to the Louisiana Athletic Club.

Information sessions will be held in late spring/early summer and will include in Welcome Week activities.

“Parents seeking a Christ-centered education for their high school student need to look no further than Louisiana Christian

University and our Scholars Academy,” said President Dr. Rick Brewer. “In the midst of a decaying culture, LCSA offers an alternative that promotes God and Country while equipping

students with the requisite ‘tools’ needed to approach the world with a Christocentric mindset.” Students will be enrolled in co-horts and will progress through to an A.A. degree in 4 semesters, said Dr. Cheryl Clark, provost and vice president of academic affairs.

It is important to register early to ensure your spot for the semester you plan to begin.

High school students not enrolled in the LCSA will still be able to enroll in dual enrollment courses at a per hour rate.

“High school students will be earning legitimate college credit being taught by seasoned professors with terminal degrees,” Brewer said. “Plus, they can live anywhere and do this. Local, statewide online, homeschoolers—it’s open to any high-achieving, scholarly student.”

Those who qualify for the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) grant for college, could have a year or two of funds left to work on their master’s degrees, if they complete their A.A. through the LCSA.



\$2500 per SEMESTER
up to 15 hrs. with BOOKS INCLUDED

lcuniversity.edu/scholarsacademy





LCU announces new *dean of nursing*

By Elizabeth Clarke

Louisiana Christian University President Dr. Rick Brewer announced Dr. Tomekia Luckett as the new Dean of Nursing.

Luckett has more than 21 years in nursing practice and 12 years of administrative and leadership service.

She has held multiple roles in nursing education, including serving as the director of nursing for an LPN program, associate professor of nursing for William Carey University, and the associate dean of Nursing Continuing Professional Development for Walden University.

She earned her Ph.D. in nursing leadership from The University of Southern Mississippi and her bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing from William Carey University.

"I have known Dr. Luckett as a student, as a faculty member, and as a colleague," said Dr. Karen Sicard, former dean of nursing for WCU and professor of nursing and special projects coordinator. "She stands for professionalism and Christian principles in all facets of her life. Dr. Luckett will be a great asset to Louisiana Christian University and the Division of Nursing as she leads the faculty to prepare graduates."

"I've build my career on trying to be of service to other people. Nursing isn't just a career, it's a calling. As dean of nursing, I hope to help others find their calling." Luckett said.

"I've got my sleeves rolled up, my boots on, and I'm ready to work," she said.

Luckett's character is matched by her experience and service to the field of nursing.

"Dr. Tomekia Luckett is a perfect match for LCU's dedication to academic excellence and our Christ-centered mission," said Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Cheryl Clark. "She is strong in her faith, energetic and passionate with a keen eye for details and organization. While displaying strong

leadership and administrative skills, she is also compassionate and sensitive to our students and faculty."

Luckett has been actively involved in the Mississippi Nurses Association, serving on the Executive Board and as director for the Council on Nursing Education. She is a coveted motivational speaker and has been an invited speaker numerous years for the Mississippi Nurses Association Convention.

"Dr. Luckett brings a litany of leadership skills underscoring the University's mission and vision," President Brewer said.

In addition to the dean of nursing, Brewer also announced Dr. Shaina Goudeau has been named Associate Vice President for the School of Nursing and Allied Health.

"Dr. Goudeau will flourish in this new role leveraging her dynamic leadership and analytical intellect," Brewer said. "Her proven track record with LCU holds great promise for future plans the university has for expanding healthcare-related academic programs on the undergraduate and graduate levels."

Goudeau has served in leadership of the the university's Physical Therapy Assistant program for 15 years and serves as the Program Director.

Goudeau holds a Master of Physical Therapy from the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, a Master of Educational Leadership and a Doctor of Physical Therapy from Alabama State University.

"She has demonstrated leadership in accreditation, program development, student field experiences and data analysis," Clark said. "She will assist Dr. Luckett with overseeing and implementing plans for reviewing and implementing changes to ensure LCU is providing quality, competent, and compassionate nursing education and is preparing the next generation of nurses to be competent expert leaders in the field."

State Nursing Board approves new nursing degree programs

By Elizabeth Clarke

The Louisiana State Board of Nursing has approved Louisiana Christian University's new Bachelor of Science in Nursing program and curriculum that will launch in the spring of 2024.

The board approved the innovative restructuring of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) and the Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN) programs at its April 13 meeting.

The new program will not only align with the Next Generation NCLEX (National Council Licensure Examination) to adapt to the evolving demands of the healthcare system and to better assess students' clinical judgment skills, but it will also be offered in a nontraditional method based on new higher education trends.

"Current research shows that nursing students are more successful when they can focus on and master less content in compressed terms," said Provos and Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Cheryl Clark. "Therefore, the program was intentionally designed to offer two-three courses in two seven-week terms within the 15-week semester instead of grappling with 12-18 credit hours within four-five clinical and theory courses over the entire 15-week semester."

Dean of Nursing Dr. Tomekia Lockett said students will enroll in pre-nursing theory, dosage calculation, pathophysiology, and basic pharmacology to build a solid foundation before enrolling in clinical courses. The program will provide pathways for traditional undergraduate students and those seeking a second degree through our 16-month accelerated program (ABSN).

To facilitate the transition between phasing out the current curriculum and offering the new program, LCU is offering a Certificate in Emotional Intelligence for Healthcare Professionals for the fall of 2023.

"Healthcare administrators seek high-EQ employees and see it as a valuable-added set of skills. Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is a set of emotional and social skills that influence how we perceive and express ourselves, develop and maintain social relationships, cope with challenges, and use emotional information effectively and meaningfully," said Dr. Shaina Goudeau, associate vice president for the School of Nursing and Allied Health.

Emotional intelligence in nursing is a vital part of providing the care patients need, and in nursing practice, it is important because nurses interact with patients and families who have challenging situations and conditions.

LCU will enroll a cohort of nursing students in the fall of 2024.

New Worship Arts and Production degree announced

By Elizabeth Clarke

The Department of Music is pleased to announce a new degree program beginning Fall 2023: a Bachelor of Arts with an Emphasis in Worship Arts and Production.

This degree is designed to prepare majors to be successful in music ministry, both during and between church services.

"In addition to receiving instruction of core music knowledge and ministry, coursework includes specialized classes that prepare students to work with musicians in worship contexts," said Jacob Wittkopp, chair of the Division of Fine Art. "Students will gain experience working with sound equipment, recording and editing with digital music software, and creating digital music media."

This degree program is unique from previous programs in that it equips students to use music technology and to implement multiple facets of music production, which are becoming increasingly valuable skills in a 21st-century landscape. The degree is an ideal fit for those who seek to lead church ministry, be involved with live sound and production, or to those seeking to become more involved with digital and recorded music media.

Media Production Associate Professor Jeff Young said almost every church has transitioned into the electronic age of worship. This degree will enable students to be well-versed in lighting, sound, graphics, and video production.

"When a student learns to direct music and couples it with an understanding of the technical arts, there is a higher opportunity of success in the local church," Young said.

To create this degree, LCU invited input from worship leaders. Caleb Willis, a 2016 LCU graduate and worship minister at Fairview Baptist Church in Alpha, served on the advisory committee.

"There is a great need to raise up a new generation of worship leaders," Willis said. "We are praying that God would use this program to equip a wide range of churches that exist in our state," Willis said. "From the faithful country church to the sprawling urban church, we need leaders that will challenge people to worship with their heart, soul, mind, and strength."

President Dr. Rick Brewer said LCU's Worship Arts and Production program will equip future worship leaders with the requisite skills to effectively respond to the needs of the local church today and into the future.

"We have intentionally designed this program to offer a solid blend of technology, music, and theology amplifying our commitment to academic excellence in a Christ-centered environment," Brewer said. "Church leaders can confidently send future worship leaders to LCU for relevant training and spiritual development."

For more information about this program, visit us online at LCUniversity.edu/music

Founder's Day pays tribute to Nortons, Tudors, & architect of *Library*

By Elizabeth Clarke



Dr. Henry Robertson addressing crowd



Dr. Cheryl Clark and Dr. Lillian Purdy

Louisiana Christian University celebrated its annual fall Founder's Day Chapel on Tuesday, Nov. 8, with a historical marker unveiling in honor of the Richard W. Norton Memorial Library.

"In the early 1950s almost 70 years ago, two members of the Norton family of North Louisiana, Mrs. Richard W. Norton Jr. and Mrs. Nellie Norton Smitherman, both ladies from Shreveport, gifted substantial funds for the construction of the first free-standing library on our campus," said LCU President Dr. Rick Brewer. "Construction finished in time for the 1955-56 academic year."

LCU's library is named for a 19th-century Baptist minister, Richard W. Norton, whose descendants wanted him honored for his tireless work in the Baptist faith, said Dr. Henry Robertson, professor of history. Norton received a college education in Virginia and at Furman College in Greenville, South Carolina. Norton accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior and preached the word in churches across Virginia, South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Texas.

During the first years of his ministry, he comforted Southern soldiers during the Civil War as chaplain for a Tennessee regiment. He helped soldiers at hospitals with their letters home, and blessed those who were marching off in the line of battle with a near certainty of death hanging over their heads. Following his war service, Norton's ministry stretched for decades and included pastoring many churches where he reached thousands for Christ.

His descendants in the Norton family were leaders in the early 20th-century oil and gas industry, and this success endowed them with tremendous wealth. They became among the most important donors in all of North Louisiana. The Nortons gave

away millions of dollars to create important places. One of the most significant, the R.W. Norton Art museum located in Shreveport remains a fantastic repository of treasured pieces of world-class painting and sculpture. "That museum and our library are the most important testaments of a desire of the Nortons to endow the world with improvements in the quality of life for all Louisianans," Robertson said. "What they did there and here in Pineville was truly transformational. We are especially grateful for our library and the Norton's belief in liberal arts Christian higher education."

The Louisiana Baptist Convention and several churches also provided funding for the Norton Library, which was designed by architect J. Cheshire Peyton, of Shreveport, and built by Tudor Construction of Pineville.

"The Tudor family has been an integral part of this university from our beginnings in 1906 and now for over a century," Brewer said. "Their donations, construction excellence, and service have given us the Library masterpiece and several additional campus buildings over the decades."

Robertson smiled as he mentioned the main reasons the library was so popular when it first opened wasn't just the much larger space for over 300,000 books, rather it was also the new amenity of air-conditioning.

"In 1955, an air-conditioned space became a popular place for anyone to visit in our humid subtropical climate," he said.

The Richard W. Norton Memorial Library stands as an example of great American achievement. There is no greater affirmation of freedom and love of country than Louisiana College – now Louisiana Christian University – fostering a place for great minds to gather, for young people to learn, go out into the world to change it for Christ.



Nationally renowned *Christian apologist* explains evil's existence

By Elizabeth Clarke

Why does God allow babies to die?

Why do Christians suffer from cancer or die from COVID?

These are questions believers struggle with understanding why a good God allows pain. And they are also used by atheists to deny that God even exists.

Christian apologist Frank Turek spoke on "If God, Why Evil?" at Louisiana Christian University's final Christ-Church-Culture event of the semester Monday night and explained why evil is actually evidence of God.

"Why does He allow those who love Him to suffer?" Turek asked. "Why believe in this being?"

Turek specifically addressed:

Does evil disprove God?

What's the purpose of evil?

What's God's solution to evil?

While going through tragedy, Turek said, nothing makes sense or will make the pain go away, but it is evil that proves there is good.

"God is the standard of good that proves evil does exist," he said. "There's got to be an external standard for us to see that something doesn't measure up."

The reason God allows evil is because He created humans with free will.

"He gave us free will so we can do good, but because of that we can also do evil," Turek said.

When humans are doing well and prospering, they often forget about God, but suffering develops character, he said. If humans got everything they wanted, they would be ruined and spoiled.

"We need difficulty in our lives," Turek said. "With it we become more like Jesus."

He said difficulties can make us better, or they can make us bitter.

Humans don't have the perspective to understand the reason for all the calamities they face, he said, but God is outside of time and knows the purpose or end result of each individual trial or disaster that happens.

It's the Ripple Effect, and God sees the whole picture. About a dozen attendees asked questions following Turek's talk.

Phoebe Lim, a junior public relations major, asked if humans

really had free will if they were already pre-destined to spend eternity in heaven or hell.

Turek explained that "knowing something is going to happen is not the same as causing it. God knows what's going to happen because He is outside of time."

He used the example of the sun rising in the morning—just because we know the sun will rise tomorrow does not mean we cause it to rise.

Selena Torres, a junior music major, asked him how he would respond to a person who says God is a manmade idea.

Turek said the evidence for God is everywhere, and he would ask the person what evidence he or she has.

"Virtually every single culture in history has believed in some kind of God," Turek said. "Why? Because we believe in cause and effect."

Turek's new book "Stealing from God: Why Atheists Need God to Make Their Case" provides evidence to show how atheists steal logic, reasoning and science from the Bible to support their claims.

The purpose of C3 events is to lovingly challenge the troubling culture we live in with the biblical truth and love of Christ. Previous speakers have addressed critical race theory, human sexuality, abortion, and many other hot-button issues.



CenLA Community Members in attendance



Dr. Frank Turek addressing questions from LCU students

Addressing cultural issues with a Biblical perspective

By Kai Stone, Wildcats Media

That is what Louisiana Christian University's C3 – Christ, Church, Culture – events bring to the campus each semester.

This fall, LCU brought in two speakers, Ricky Chelette and Dr. Mark Truman.

Living Hope Ministries Founder Ricky Chelette was the first C3 speaker of the Fall, 2022 semeste. His message to LCU students was both timely and even a little provocative as he focused on the Biblical view of marriage and the belief that Christ is the only answer to those who struggle with same-sex attraction.

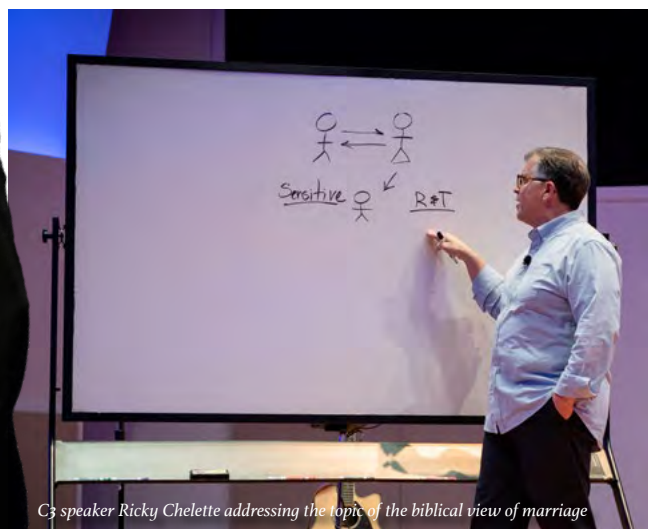
Chelette says that he meant for his message to be both timely and full of hope for those who are struggling with sexual identity issues. He shared his own personal story of having been sexually abused for 12 years and ultimately, God delivering him from both the abuse and his own suicide attempt.

A week later, LCU's C3 continued with Dr. Mark Truman, the executive director of the Denison Forum, a website that offers news of the day from a Christian perspective. Truman's message was more focused on the Christian's role in today's culture war as he attempted to better define the nature of the Christian life.

Turman talked about his upbringing and how he didn't become a Christian until being witnessed to by several of his friends. His challenge to the students was to live their faith in front of others who might not believe.

The C3 series was started by LCU President Dr. Rick Brewer, who said it important for students to be challenged to think of the major issues of the day from a Christian perspective.

You can find past speakers from LCU's C3 series by visiting the school's website!



C3 speaker Ricky Chelette addressing the topic of the biblical view of marriage

U.S. Rep. Mike Johnson special guest for 7th annual Value & Ethics series

By Lexi Rachal, Wildcats Media

Louisiana Christian University hosted its 7th annual Value & Ethics conference with U.S. Rep. Mike Johnson (R-La.) as the featured speaker.

Johnson titled his address "Restoring the Foundations." He said the challenges the United States is facing right now is not the battle between political parties, but the battle between different worldviews.

"The foundations of our country are being eroded and intentionally," Johnson said.

The foundations he mentioned are the basic truths exemplified in the U.S. Declaration of Independence: All men are created equal and have the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

According to Johnson, the foundations of the U.S. stem from God, directly to the people. The unalienable rights are irrevocable because they were endowed by God Himself.

As he continued, Johnson explained the problem the U.S. is facing in regards to its foundation. He said the truth decay in America over time has led to the foundational decay of the country.

"The foundational truths that are listed in the nation's birth certificate, we have rejected collectively as a people," Johnson said. "Not all of us individually of course. But as a nation, gradually, we moved away from that worldview."

He went on to explain the basic biblical design for human society.

He said the family's role is raising and educating children, the church's role is to take care of the needy and shine the light of Jesus into the culture.

According to Johnson, because of the truth decay in America, individual responsibility has dwindled and caused the role of the family and church to be handed over to the government. Instead of three spheres of authority, we are down to only one.

"What we tolerate in moderation, our children will excuse in excess," Johnson said as he explained the trend found in the timeline.

Johnson used more statistical data to elaborate on the timeline. Johnson said we need to change our approach to spreading the gospel message like the apostle Paul did in Athens in Acts 17. He adapted his message to the culture he was in.

Johnson called us to do the same with our message. He said we need to start at the foundation—there is a God.

He concluded his address by quoting former U.S. President John Quincy Adams.

"The duty is ours," Johnson said. "Results are God's."

LCU President Dr. Rick Brewer said Johnson's address lined up with the teachings students are hearing at Chapel.

"He was speaking right along with the same lines that we have been addressing since I have been here as president," Brewer said.

The audience included community members, along with LCU staff and students.



LCU president makes *case* for a *Christian university*

By Elizabeth Clarke

President Dr. Rick Brewer spoke passionately at the annual Founder's Day Chapel, making a solid case for the necessity of a Christian University.

"Clearly, the passion to transform human culture into the Kingdom of God is the driving genius of the evangelical tradition, and it is precisely this vision that sustains the life of the mind in Christian institutions of higher learning," Brewer said. God is the author not only of our faith, but also of every facet of the world in which we live. And because all truth is God's truth, all learning should be integrated into a coherent understanding of reality, informed by explicitly Christian convictions."

Brewer said it is incumbent upon evangelical educators to integrate explicitly Christian convictions into every branch of learning and to discover those common Christocentric threads that transform all fields of learning into one coherent whole.

"The goal of Christian education—for 2000 years—has been the integration of faith and knowledge," Brewer said. "The starting point for this integration has rested on the foundation of the words of Jesus' Great Commandment and the wisdom literature of the Hebrew Scriptures, which reminds us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, wisdom, and understanding (Proverbs 1: 7, Psalm 111:10, Job 28:28)."

Learning shaped and formed by faith results in living that is shaped and formed by faith. The integration of faith and learning forms the foundation of Christian higher education and shapes its purpose and goals.

Victoria Watson, a junior journalism major from New Iberia, said Louisiana Christian University has been instrumental in preparing her to answer her call to be a journalist.

"I believe there is a need for Christian leaders in the world and Christian influences and having an institution that teaches in a biblical worldview is essential in creating those leaders," Watson said.

Brewer reminded faculty, staff and students that LCU must

create an atmosphere of excellence both inside and outside the classroom and the athletic arena.

"At the heart of the academy is the role faculty play in shaping the hearts and minds of its students," Brewer said. "The spiritual battle for the hearts and minds of our students will be fought and won in the classroom led by an intentional Christian faculty member.

Dean of Students Brian Manual agreed with the importance that environment plays in allowing Christian students to flourish or flounder. Students will rise or fall depending on what is allowed and condoned in their surroundings—inside the classroom, in athletics and in all extra-curricular events.

"LCU must create an academic environment where students are challenged to think critically, learn continuously, and serve creatively," he said.

LCU should prepare each student to become a world-changer no matter what career path he or she is called to, Brewer said. The university can accomplish this initiative by drawing students into an integrated experience of intellectual challenge, spiritual growth, and leadership development.

"There is no room for anti-intellectualism in Christian higher education," Brewer said. "We are to have the mind of Christ, and this certainly requires us to think and wrestle with the challenging ideas of history and the issues of our day.

Junior Lexi Rachal, of Baton Rouge, said she thought it was great to be able to hear about the importance of Christian higher education.

"Dr. Brewer explained to us that learning shaped by faith will result in living that is shaped by faith, and I think that statement is really impactful," Rachal said. "We see that concept every day at LCU. The faculty and staff constantly pour into our lives spiritually while also giving us the knowledge we need to succeed in our future endeavors. Our university cares about our future here on Earth, but more importantly our eternity."



Freeman tells LCU students: ‘You’re our best hope’ toward racial reconciliation

By Elizabeth Clarke

The Rev. Robert Freeman challenged Louisiana Christian University students to be the generation to bring about racial reconciliation by having authentic conversations with each other.

Freeman, a nationally recognized speaker and facilitator on the issue, runs Robert Freeman Ministries headquartered in Illinois, and has spoken to groups nationwide and worked with two U.S. presidents on furthering the issue of racial reconciliation.

He shared his life story of growing up on the geographic line separating the North and the South, and how the cultural and racial divide shaped his identity.

“God surrounded me with people who were different from me to have conversations with,” he said. “Out the back door, it was the North, and out the front door was the South. I grew up on this Mason-Dixon line, and God has used me as an instrument of peace and reconciliation.”

Freeman lost his mother as a teenager, and a family she had worked for filled the gap and treated him as their own. Alice and Edward Taylor, a white family, he said, told him that the Lord told them to take care of him.

At 16, Freeman became a Christian.

Freeman shared many interesting stories of times when simply talking to people and spending time getting to understand them actually changed them and the communities they were in.

He said that what is really needed for true racial harmony to take place in America is simply that—authentic and lasting conversations about what matters.

“What we are doing is not working, and it’s clearly not working in the body of Christ,” Freeman said. “The Church spends lots of time arguing over little things, and the main thing is lost because we don’t have authentic relationships. We have surface talk.”

Freeman told of an incident where he befriended a Ku Klux Klan member who was an atheist. Two years of authentic conversations and understanding led the man to become a Christian, and the KKK disbanded in that community in Illinois.

LCU President Dr. Rick Brewer said the university is ready to have those conversations.

“Without conversations and communication, we can’t learn from one another,” he said. “When we acknowledge one another’s history, we can become a stronger community focused together on the source of all truth—Jesus Christ.”

“What am I saying to you?” Freeman asked rhetorically. “You’re it! You’re our best hope to right this ship—to get us back on course—to get back to the basics of L-O-V-E-love. God is calling young people to be reconcilers with one another, but more importantly, Himself.”



C3 speaker, the Rev. Robert Freeman, addressing LCU students, faculty, and staff during Black History Month





LCU honors four as *Distinguished Alumni* for 2022

By Alan Quartemont

As part of its annual homecoming celebration, Louisiana Christian University presented four Distinguished Alumni awards.

Those honors went to Larry Perkins from the Class of 1967, Dr. Mark Fenn from the Class of 1986, the late Blake Cooper from the Class of 2005, and Dr. Jamie Rister from the Class of 2006.

“These alums represent the best of the best who have graduated from Louisiana College (now Louisiana Christian University),” said LCU President Dr. Rick Brewer. “We stand on the shoulders of these leaders who have faithfully demonstrated character and servant leadership in their personal and professional lives. Indeed, this annual event at LCU is truly a highlight of the year.”

Larry Perkins: Perkins was raised in Pitkin, Louisiana and became an outstanding basketball player for Pitkin High School. He was recruited to Louisiana College by the legendary Coach Billy Allgood to play basketball for the Wildcats from 1963 to 1967.

Following his graduation from LC, Perkins became a successful high school basketball coach. He led Fairview High School from 1967 to 1968 and at Oakdale High School from 1968 to 1977.

He began a basketball program at LSU-Alexandria from 1977 to 1981 and was named “Coach of the Year” twice.

Perkins married Judy Ann Griffin on April 6, 1968. They have two daughters, Penni L. Perkins of Greenville, Texas, and Jana L. Perkins of Kilgore, Texas. They also have two grandchildren: Joshua A. Perkins and Josey L. Perkins.

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Dr. Mark Fenn: Fenn, a Morgan City native, is the associate

pastor of First West in West Monroe, Louisiana. He earned his B.A. from Louisiana College, a Master of Divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and a Doctor of Ministry from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

“Exactly 40 years ago right now, I was a 17-year-old freshman here at Louisiana College,” Fenn said. “I’d come from Morgan City. I was very immature, overwhelmed away from home. All of those things, but I knew I was called ministry, and I was scared of it. I didn’t want to be bored, boring or broke, so I was trying to figure it out. So, I kind of floundered around a little bit in the beginning, but fortunately, I was here, I was at LC, and I was surrounded by people that became good friends and good influences, and they love the Lord, and they hung in there with me.”

Fenn joined the team at First West in April of 1992 as youth pastor and served in that ministry for 11 years, followed by five years as pastor to the senior adults. In 2008, Fenn transitioned into his current role as Global Ministries Pastor, as he works to mobilize First West to reach the nations with the Gospel.

Blake Cooper: Blake Cooper was a beloved business figure in the Alexandria community before his tragic death in a plane crash that also claimed the life of his brother, Ben, on May 31, 2020.

Blake’s launch into the business world came after his time as a Louisiana College student from 2001 to 2005, as he graduated with a degree in Public Administration. From there, Cooper graduated from LSU with a master’s degree in Public Administration. In January of 2007, he began work with the RoyOMartin Company as a manager of governmental relations, business development and marketing.

For Blake, state politics was a strong passion. In 2001, he started his career as a political strategist in a variety of political

racers in Louisiana. Working through the ranks to political director, Cooper became interested in a range of policy-related issues such as tax reform, government spending, healthcare and education. While attending Louisiana College, he worked summers in Washington, D.C. at a non-profit management company with a focus on healthcare industry. He also spent time on Capitol Hill working for multiple members of Congress like John Cooksey and Mike Johnson.

While working on his master's degree at LSU, Cooper was employed by the Republican Party as the statewide political director, then transitioned to the political director for former Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal.

Over the years, Cooper volunteered his time and served in various board capacities for many organizations such as Louisiana College Board of Trustees, Central Louisiana Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, Rapides Parish Workforce Investment Council, Louisiana Charter Foundation Board of Directors, Rapides Regional Medical Center Board of Directors, the Central Louisiana Young Professionals Group, the United Way and the Alexandria Rotary Club.

Cooper had plans to run for the Alexandria City Council and one day hoped to become mayor of Alexandria and eventually the Governor of the State of Louisiana.

Cooper was a loving husband to his wife Laura Cooper, who accepted Friday's award on her late husband's behalf, along with Blake's brother, Casey. He was also father to Mallory, Audrey, Marly Anne and Mason. His family said that Cooper loved to travel, golf, fish and hunt.

Dr. Jamie Rister: A former Wildcats football player, Dr. Jamie Rister is currently is a Board Certified Orthopaedic Surgeon and Board Certified in Sports Medicine at Mid-State Orthopaedic & Sports Medicine Center on Masonic Drive in Alexandria.

Rister received his Bachelor of Science, Biology and Chemistry from Louisiana College in 2006 and his Doctor of Medicine from LSU School of Medicine in Shreveport in 2010.

While at LC, Rister played football for four years – having started several games at quarterback but eventually transitioning to tight end, where he was voted second-team all-American Southwest Conference in 2005.

“I told myself when I was getting ready to finish high school that there was no way I was staying in Louisiana for school, I was going out of state,” Rister recalled. “(Former assistant coach) Vance Morris and another LC alum changed my mind. And, I wouldn't be where I am or who I am today without that.”

During his training, Rister completed his Residency in Orthopaedic Surgery at the University

of Alabama-Birmingham Medical Center in Birmingham, Alabama in 2015 and his Fellowship in Sports Medicine at Taos Orthopaedic Institute in Taos, New Mexico in 2016.

Rister is a member of the American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons, the American Medical Association, the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine, the Arthroscopy Association of North America, the International Society of Arthroscopy, Knee Surgery and Orthopaedic Sports Medicine and the Louisiana Orthopaedic Association.

He specializes in Sports Medicine, Joint Replacement of the Shoulder, General Orthopaedics, Trauma and Fracture Care, Reconstructive Surgery of the Knee, Hip, Foot and Ankle, and Mako Robotic-Arm Assisted Knee Replacement.

He is well-known on campus at Louisiana Christian University by the school's athletes, as he has served as team physician since 2016. Rister also serves as team doctor for other area high schools, as well as, the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Team.

Rister's wife, Joy, is also a graduate of Louisiana College with a degree in Elementary Education and was a fourth runner-up in the Miss Louisiana Pageant in 2009. The couple has three children – James, 8, Jennifer, 6, and Julie, 3.

“I was lucky enough to meet a pretty young lady from Louisiana College, that both her parents went to Louisiana College,” Rister said. “And she told me I had to come back to Pineville or somewhere close enough where I could drive to Pineville to go to work. And, so we made it back here.

“Louisiana College, as you've heard many times tonight is affecting so many people's lives. So, I can't say thank you enough.”



Distinguished Alumnus Larry Perkins



Distinguished Alumnus Mark Fenn



Distinguished Alumnus Jeremy Rister



Coach Reni Mason addressing banquet attendees



Louisiana Christian University Student-Athletes turn in cumulative 3.04 GPA

By Alan Wiederhold-sohn

Louisiana Christian University's varsity student-athletes excelled in the classroom during the 2022-23 academic year, as the school announced the cumulative GPA for student-athletes was 3.04 for the year.

"The cumulative GPA of 3.04 of is tremendous," LCU President Dr. Rick Brewer said. "The goal of every college athletic program is a 3.0.

Louisiana Christian University returned its athletics program to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) in 2021 and resumed granting athletic scholarships after two decades in the NCAA's Division III, which does not permit grant-in-aid based solely on athletic performance. That change did not hinder the academic excellence of Wildcat student-athletes.

"We moved to the NAIA and didn't lose our stride in the classroom," Dr. Brewer said. "We should never underestimate the value athletics brings to LCU. This also amplifies our vision to add more athletic programs going forward."

LCU Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics Reni Mason echoed Dr. Brewer's assessment.

"Louisiana Christian University is a special institution, and it takes a special individual to excel academically and in athletics at this institution," Mason said. "I think this year's achievement speaks volumes to the type of student-athlete our coaches have recruited and continue to recruit.

"Kudos to our student-athletes and our coaches for working hard for this achievement," Mason said.



LCU receives RRAC Sportsmanship Award for second year in a row

By Elizabeth Clarke



Louisiana Christian University has been recognized for the second year in a row with the highest honor given by the Red River Athletic Conference.

The 2023 RRAC Sportsmanship Award honors the university that shows the best sportsmanship during athletic competitions by its athletes and coaches. And LCU has shown it lives up to its mission for two years straight.

“Being recognized with this award speaks volumes to the type of coaches and athletes we have at our institution,” said Vice President of Intercollegiate Athletics Reni Mason. “Honoring others is a staple in the Kingdom of God. It is truly an honor to be amongst such a fine group of people.”

LCU President Dr. Rick Brewer said this is a real testament to LCU’s Mission & Vision being amplified by the character and leadership of our coaches and student-athletes. This award also aligns with the core values of the NAIA.

“Louisiana Christian has been a welcome addition to the RRAC and a great representative of our conference,” said RRAC Commissioner Tony Stigliano. “We appreciate the work done by Dr. Rick Brewer, Reni Mason and the entire athletic department as they operate their program the right way and carry the banner for the NAIA Champions of Character program.”

Brewer said he could not be more pleased with this recognition for the second year in a row.

“Receiving this honor in consecutive years is emblematic of the commitment our coaches and student-athletes have to the mission and vision of Louisiana Christian University,” Brewer said. “LCU’s student-athletes excel on and off the courts and fields of competition.

And, the upside for each of LCU’s student-athletes is filled with opportunities to lead, serve, and flourish in their God-directed careers.”

The composite student-athlete GPA was 3.04 for the past academic year.

Latin named to two NAIA All-America teams

By Alan Wiederhold-son

After turning in one of the most dominating single-season performances in Louisiana Christian University’s football history, defensive lineman Micah Latin added more honors and hardware to his trophy case this week.

A senior from Gloster, La. (Captain Shreve HS), Latin saw his name added to not one, but two NAIA All-America lists at the conclusion of the season. He was named a First Team NAIA All-American on the Associated Press’ team for 2022 and earned Honorable Mention on the NAIA All-America list from the National Football Coaches Association.

Latin was one of only two players from the Sooner Athletic Conference to be named to Associated Press’ NAIA All-American First Team. He was joined on the team by Keaton Dudick, an all-purpose player from Southwestern Assemblies of God.

After a 2022 season in which he recorded an LCU-record 13 sacks to go along with 56 tackles (including 23 tackles for loss), Latin was also named the SAC’s Defensive Player of the Year and named to the conference’s first team.

Latin’s play in 2022 was a big part of the Wildcats’ three-game improvement from 4-7 in 2021 to 7-4 this season in their second year as an NAIA program. The 2022 season also included back-to-back wins over ranked opponents – No. 20 Texas Wesleyan at home by a score of 33-9 on Oct. 22, then a dominating 39-14 win at No. 22 Langston the following week.

Latin finished his career with 21.5 sacks and 147 total tackles.



President elected to chairman of LAICU, IABCU

By Elizabeth Clarke

Louisiana Christian University President Dr. Rick Brewer has been elected to serve two organizations important to Christian higher education.

Brewer will be serving as Chairman of the Board of Presidents for the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU) and for the International Association of Baptist Colleges & Universities (IABCU).

Both appointments are one-year terms.

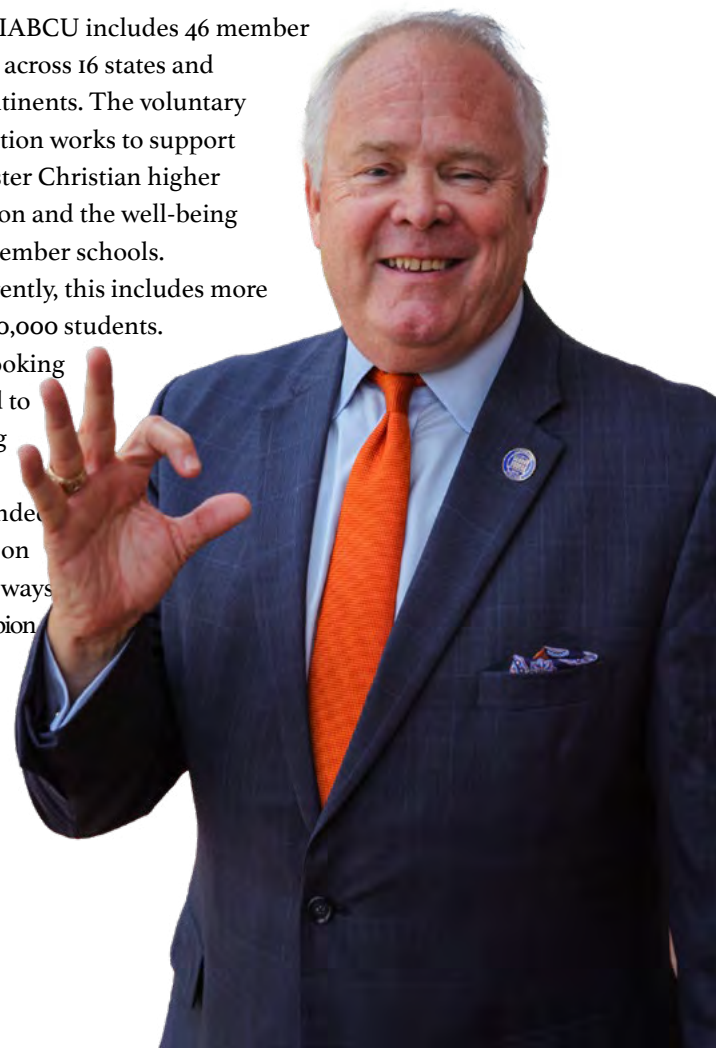
“We are excited about Dr. Brewer stepping into this LAICU leadership role,” said Dr. Eric Turner, president and CEO of LAICU. “Dr. Brewer’s vast experience and perspective in independent higher education is critical to the collective effort of our LAICU institutions to communicate the transformative value we contribute to students and their families, our communities, and respective economies throughout Louisiana, the Gulf Coast, and beyond.”

LAICU is a public policy association representing the 10 regionally accredited nonprofit private colleges and universities in the state of Louisiana. Its main functions include advocacy and research, as well as coordination of collaborative activities among its member schools.

The IABCU includes 46 member schools across 16 states and two continents. The voluntary association works to support and foster Christian higher education and the well-being of all member schools.

Currently, this includes more than 100,000 students.

“I am looking forward to working with like-minded leaders on finding ways to champion this cause.”



Mason named Vice President of Intercollegiate Athletics

By Elizabeth Clarke

Louisiana Christian University has promoted longtime Athletic Director Reni Mason to a new post.

President Rick Brewer named Mason the new Vice President of Intercollegiate Athletics.

“I am grateful to God first and foremost for the opportunity to continue to serve at LCU,” Mason said. “This promotion is an example of God’s faithfulness and provision to my family and I. I would like to thank Dr. Brewer for his continued trust of me in my role. There is still much work to get done.”

Mason has served as head men’s basketball coach since May 2015 and was named athletic director in summer 2017. Mason led the men’s basketball team to two straight conference tournament finals in two different conferences (American Southwest Conference and Red River Athletic Conference) and had a player named NAIA All-American, Kae’ron Baker.

Since taking over the role of athletic director, the focus on academics has been obvious, with the cumulative GPA of all Wildcat student-athletes rising from a 2.7 at the end of the 2015-2016 academic year to a 3.0 following 2019-20.

He led LCU’s transition from NCAA Division III to NAIA for the start of the 2021-22 seasons, which will include the introduction of athletic scholarships for student-athletes.

Mason’s tenure has also brought several improvements, including more chances for female student-athletes with the addition of the LCU women’s volleyball team, and new turf at Wildcat Field for the first time since the stadium was built.

“He has earned this and deserves it, and I am looking forward to his continued Christian leadership for many years ahead,” Brewer said. “Athletics has always had an important voice at the table, but this elevates the importance of athletics at LCU.”

Music Alum Thomason Receives National Honor

By Elizabeth Clarke



Teresa Layssard Thomason, a 1991 graduate of Louisiana Christian University (formerly Louisiana College), has been named Music Teachers National Association Foundation Fellow.

Thomason, of Alexandria, has been well-known in the Central Louisiana music community for decades and has earned local and state accolades for her piano skills. Now, she has earned national recognition for her amazing and long-standing work in

the music teaching field.

The MTNA Foundation Fellow is given to people who have been important to the organization and have made outstanding contributions for their years of service.

Thomason has been teaching piano at Country Day School in Alexandria since 1992 and at Calvary Baptist Conservatory of Music since 1995. Her students have ranged in age from Pre-K4 through high school—with a few adults over the years, as well.

She's been teaching piano since she herself was a teenager and served as church pianist at Central Baptist Church in Spring Hill throughout high school. In fact, it was this that led her to LCU.

Thomason began college in the fall of 1971 and met beloved LC piano instructor Mary Ann Crump.

She also met Tim Thomason through her third cousin, Rita Welch. The two were married in 1973, and Thomason left school to go to work teaching piano and to start a family.

"Twenty years after I started, I graduated from Louisiana College in 1991," she said. "I tell everyone I was a slow learner. And Mary Ann Crump—she said she wasn't going to retire until I finished my degree."

Thomason has taught many doctors' children—and has taught children who have gone on to become doctors themselves. Two of her former pupils were Louisiana Junior Misses.

Alexandria orthodontist Dr. Heather Badeaux Moylan said Thomason made a major impact on her life.

"Mrs. Teresa taught me piano for 10 years," Moylan said. "She was an incredibly patient, kind and encouraging teacher. She taught me persistence and discipline in pursuit of a goal, and those traits have made a huge difference in my life. I am forever grateful for her mentorship."

She worked for the Louisiana Baptist Convention for 37 years as keyboard consultant and started the State Hymn-Playing Festival in 1979 and the State Piano Festival to provide scholarships for students in 1985. The LBC started the Teresa Thomason Keyboard Scholarship in 2007 to honor the longtime music educator.

Thomason has been involved at every level of music education and has served in numerous volunteer capacities, as well, serving as the State Rally piano chair for 20 years and on the executive board of the Louisiana Music Teachers Association for eight years.

Three inducted into Sports Hall of Fame

By Alan Quartemont



Louisiana Christian University inducted three former standout athletes into its Sports Hall as part of its annual Hall of Fame Banquet. It included Jeremy Vujnovich, a 2013 graduate who played parts of seven seasons in the National Football League, Anthony "A.J." Gaines, an LCU basketball player from 2012 to 2016 who has continued his career as an international player, and Dr. Blaine Broussard, a member of the Wildcats Basketball Team from 2000 to 2004 who now operates as a pediatrician in the Alexandria, Louisiana area.

Vujnovich is the only man in LCU's recent history of football to start a game in the NFL. In fact, he started in 23 of them. His rise to the NFL is an incredible story.

Dr. Blaine Broussard, a Forest Hill, Louisiana native came to then Louisiana College in 2000 and was a member of the Wildcats basketball team under Gene Rushing. He became a favorite of Coach Rushing for his great attitude and work ethic.

Today, Dr. Broussard practices Internal Medicine and Pediatrics at the Freedman Clinic of Internal Medicine in Alexandria. He is the Chair of the Pediatric Department at Christus St. Francis Cabrini Hospital and Medical Director of the Pediatric Hospitalist Program, also at Cabrini.

Anthony Gaines, Junior, known to most as A.J., finished his career at Louisiana College as one of the most prolific players in the school's history.

"A chance is all I wanted, and a chance is what Coach Rushing gave me my senior year," Gaines said. "And I thank him for that, because if he hadn't given me a chance, I would not be speaking to you today."

Instantly, Gaines brought a new dimension to the team!

Gaines' basketball career was far from over once he finished at LC. He has continued to play professional basketball at the international level for the last six years. His stops have included Canada, China, Finland, and for the last two years, Japan where he's been named a top five player and defensive player of the year.



Junior from Lafayette awarded first Clarence & Rosa Fields *Scholarship*

By Elizabeth Clarke

Louisiana Christian University has announced the first recipient of the Clarence & Rosa Fields Emerging Black Leader Scholarship. Olivia Scott, a junior psychology major from Lafayette, received the award during a luncheon on April 25.

The award includes a full tuition and room and board scholarship given to a deserving Black student who demonstrates scholarship, Christian leadership, and promise for the future.

Scott, a 2020 graduate of Ovey Comeaux High School, is a member of the Lady Wildcats Basketball team and has made the Dean's List or President's List every semester of college. She has a 3.9 GPA. She serves on the Student Accountability Committee and as a referee for intramural sports. In addition, she is a member of the Foreign Language Honor Society and the English Honor Society.

She is the daughter of Malcolm and Vanessa Scott, of Lafayette. Scott said her parents are so proud.

"I am grateful to God for it," she said. "I prayed for it and seeing it come to fruition as one of my goals is just really big."

Scott explained that she did not want her parents to have to continue to pay out of pocket for her education as they had to for the last two years.

"This award recognizes and celebrates the transformational leadership Mayor and Mrs. Fields have provided Central Louisiana and beyond for the past 40-plus years," LCU President Dr. Rick Brewer said. "I am extremely proud of each student who participated in the first year of this scholarship award competition. I am confident Ms. Olivia Scott will represent with excellence the ideals and leadership characteristics this award

recognizes."

Clarence Fields served as mayor of Pineville for 22 years, and his wife Rosa has been a long-time respected business leader and insurance agent in Central Louisiana.

"When Dr. Brewer called us last year to say that LCU was announcing the scholarship, to say that Clarence and I were humbled is an understatement," Rosa Fields said.

"Now that the scholarship has been awarded to Miss Scott, the feeling is even more overwhelming," said Clarence and Rosa Fields. "We are just so proud to be honored in a way that will be a legacy to our community and the young, emerging leaders who are getting their start at LCU. We were so pleased to meet Miss Scott after the program. She is the perfect representative of LCU and what the scholarship exemplifies."

Scott said she plans to attend graduate school and has a passion for wanting to work with children and "help the innocents."

Scott said her experience at LCU with her coaches and major professors has been amazing.

"You can openly talk about God; that's what I like," she said. "Other places if you do talk about God, it's controversial. At LCU, you learn the subject matter but also from the Christian perspective."

The Fieldses said they are grateful that LCU has been intentional in its efforts to be inclusive and interested in our African American students' futures.

The award contest takes place annually in February for the following academic year. For more information about this and other scholarships, visit the LCU scholarship webpage.



Kai Stone at SEJC



Brandon Brown, Noel Schonhoff, Al Quartermont, Lexi Rachal, and Kai Stone at SEJC



Dr. Elizabeth Clarke at SEJC

Convergence Media students, professor earn awards at SEJC

By Elizabeth Clarke

Louisiana Christian University convergence media students made their mark this weekend at the 2023 Southeast Journalism Conference—earning honors for their work in writing, broadcast reporting, public relations, and editorial cartoons.

And LCU Professor Dr. Elizabeth B. Clarke, chair of the Division of Media, Communication and Theatre, was recognized with the Byron St. Dizier/David Sloan Award for the SEJC Outstanding Educator of the Year Award for 2023.

Eleven students attended SEJC at Nicholls State University Feb. 9-11 and participated in on-site competitions against students from other universities across the Southeast.

The following LCU students placed:

- Nathan Roper, Micah Meche, Phoebe Lim and Emily Slay: Public Relations Campaign, 2nd place
- Noel Schonhoff: TV Anchoring, 2nd place
- Kai Stone: TV News Reporting, 3rd place
- Camille Soileau: News/Feature Photography, 2nd place

In addition, Best of the South awards were given to the best student submissions representing published and broadcast works of journalism for 2022.

The following students were recognized:

- Kai Stone: Best Television Journalism, 4th place
- Sam Miller: Best Artist/Illustrator, 2nd place
- Sierra Boudreaux: Best Magazine Writer, 2nd place
- Sports Talk (Brandon Brown, Malik Cooper, Lexi Rachal, Noel Schonhoff and Kai Stone): Best Audio Program, 6th place

SEJC includes 38 colleges and universities in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee.

Rennier named Vice President of Student Life

By Elizabeth Clarke

Louisiana Christian University President Dr. Rick Brewer has announced the promotion of Meredith Rennier to the position of Vice President of Student Life.

Rennier has been serving as Executive Director of the Center for Calling & Career.

“Meredith brings significant experience and effective leadership to this position,” Brewer said. “In this role, Vice President Rennier will provide oversight for all Student Life programming, services and activities while continuing to lead LCU’s Center for Calling & Career.”

Brewer said establishing this leadership role strengthens the University’s mission, vision and commitment to a student experience known for being relevant, relational and rigorous.

This new role will oversee all Student Support Services and provide leadership specifically through LCU’s Counseling Center, Recreational Events, Student Activities, Residence Life and International Activities.

“I am honored to serve LCU’s mission of equipping student lives for learning, leading and serving through the role of Vice President of Student Life,” Rennier said. “What a privilege it is to provide leadership in a team that enriches the lives of our students. At LCU, there is a place for everyone, and the goal is that every student feels welcomed, engaged and most of all loved. I am thankful to both Dr. Brewer and Dr. Clark for allowing me to serve in this capacity and continuing to serve students.”



Meredith Rennier



Dr. Henry Robertson

Robertson named Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs

By Elizabeth Clarke

Louisiana Christian University history professor Dr. Henry O. Robertson has been named Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Robertson is the Hogan Family Board of Regents Professor of History. He started work at LCU in 2006 as an associate professor and became chair of the Division of History and Political Science in 2007. Following eight years in that role as both a faculty member and chair, he transitioned in 2015 to become the coordinator of institutional effectiveness, and not long after coordinator of sponsored programs.

He will continue in his leadership role with institutional effectiveness and sponsored programs. In his new role, he will be tasked with collaborating with local, state, national, and international partners to develop pathways for academic partnerships and new programs.

“I am delighted that Dr. Robertson is joining the administration in the Office of the Provost and Academic Affairs as the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs,” said Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Cheryl Clark. “He has a passion for excellence in academia and has already been an asset to the University with his outstanding service as the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Sponsored Programs. He was instrumental in LCU’s recent SACSOC decennial reaffirmation and handled the additional stress and workload with humor, Robertson brings a wealth of experience with over 27 years in the classroom and service on various faculty and administrative committees.”

“With Jesus Christ, all things are possible, and I am always thankful that His favor has brought me to where I am today,” said Robertson.

LCU English students earn recognition, publication

By Elizabeth Clarke



Two Louisiana Christian University English majors, Samantha Ray, of Centerpoint, and Delaina Doyle Walley, of Hinston, were accepted to present their research at the Eighth Annual Regional Student Scholars Forum at LSU – Shreveport on Feb. 17.

The forum presents research from both undergraduate and graduate students from Louisiana, as well as four other states in the region.

Ray presented a paper titled “Moby Dick: Foreshadowing and Symbolism Fuse to Convey Melville’s Warning Against Human Intrusion in Nature,” and Walley presented her research titled “Edmund Spenser and Classical Art.”

This is the second year LCU has had English majors represent the university at this forum.

Toriance Fontenot, of Mamou, an English minor, had a poem accepted for publication in the spring 2023 edition of *Outrageous Fortune*. Toriance’s piece, “A Huguenot,” was written as an assignment in her Introduction to Creative Writing course. It is an ekphrastic poem based on the painting “A Huguenot, on St. Bartholomew’s Day” by John Everett Millais.

Outrageous Fortune is the first online literary magazine created for undergraduates by undergraduates at Mary Baldwin University. It features undergraduate writing and art.

“These students have done a wonderful job sharing their research and representing LCU,” said Dr. Jeannie Gauthier, chair of the Division of Language and Literature. “They have demonstrated that our students can compete with any state university. We hope to bring even more students to the conference next year.”

History students take top two awards at Phi Alpha Theta state meeting

By Elizabeth Clarke



Louisiana Christian University history majors took first and second-place honors for their research papers presented March 17 at the regional meeting of Phi Alpha Theta in Alexandria.

Shelby Cumpton, of Quitman, won the Kimberly S. Hanger Award, given to the top undergraduate paper: “Why Should Not Woman Seek to Be a Reformer?: The Relationship Between the Abolitionist Movement and Women’s Rights.”

Her paper examined the connections between the women who advocated for the end of slavery and the advancement of women’s rights. Cumpton took home a cash prize and a book award from the Phi Alpha Theta National Office.

Laura Aime, a Smith Scholar from Baton Rouge, took 2nd place for her paper: “Defying Decoding on the Way to Victory: Navajo Code Talkers in the Pacific Theater of WWII.” Her work explained the contributions of a native American tribe who assisted U.S. troops in conveying battlefield messages in a language not understood by the Japanese.

Phi Alpha Theta is the national history honor society, and the regional meeting included all Louisiana chapters from private and public universities across the state. The meeting was held in conjunction with the Louisiana Historical Association. Aime was presented a book award from the Phi Alpha Theta National Office.

The Hanger Award honors Dr. Kimberly Hanger, a history professor at the University of Tulsa from 1993 to 1999, when she died of leukemia at age 37. Her research focused on slavery in New Orleans, and she published two books before her death: “Bounded Lives, Bounded Places: Free Black Society in Colonial New Orleans” and “A Medley of Cultures: Louisiana History at the Cabildo.”

The Hanger Award was started in 2000 in her memory. This is the first time a student at LCU has won the award.

Students present *research* at 3rd annual C.S. Lewis *Honors Forum*

By Elizabeth Clarke

Ten students presented research Saturday during the 3rd Annual C.S. Lewis Honors Forum at Louisiana Christian University.

The interdisciplinary research project is the final requirement in fulfillment of the C.S. Lewis Honors Program.

“The University’s C.S. Lewis Honors Scholars’ annual presentations serve as a solid reminder that great work can happen at a smaller university,” said LCU President Dr. Rick Brewer. “I am grateful for the professors who shepherd our students toward incredible, creative research underscoring the application of Colossians 3:17.”

The following students took part in this year’s forum:

- Shelby Cumpston, of Quitman, will graduate in May with a degree in history and minor in political science. She recorded her presentation “A Language of Resistance: The White Rose and the Use of Framing,” as she was representing the LCU Debate Team at the National Championships in Boise, Idaho.
- Ashley Young, of Shreveport, will graduate in May with a degree in missions and ministry. The title of her research was “An Exegetical Study of Psalm 137.”
- Delaina Nacole Walley, will graduate in May with a degree in English and minor in art. Her research examined the classical art in Edmund Spenser’s “The Faerie Queen.”
- Kyle Dupre, of Houma, will graduate with a degree in worship leadership in May. He is part of the Chapel band that leads worship each Tuesday. His research examined “How Much Scripture Do We Actually Sing?”
- Lily Breaux, of Mansura, is a biology and chemistry double major, headed to physician assistant school in Shreveport. Her research partner, Laura Weatherford, of Bay Minette, Alabama, is a biology major, with plans to attend medical school. Both will graduate in May. Their joint research examined how magnetotactic bacteria might be used to revolutionize medicine.
- Harrison Bieber, of Dry Prong, is a graduating senior in pre-med. He will attend LSU School of Medicine in the fall. His research examined biochemistry from a Christian perspective.
- Laurel Robinson, of Opelousas, is completing her nursing degree in May with plans to work as an obstetric nurse. She presented research on the importance of teaching in the nursing field.
- Joshua Poole, of Lithia, Florida, expects to finish his bachelor’s degree in pre-engineering with chemistry in May 2024 and then pursue a doctorate in polymer sciences at the University of Southern Mississippi. He presented research he began last summer at the National Science Foundation’s Research Experiences for Undergraduates program for the polymer sciences at Southern Miss. His research was “Development of Orthogonal Post-polymerization Modification Strategies: AU(I) Catalysis Enabled Click Chemistry.”
- Ethan West, of Bayou Chicot, is a senior chemistry and biology double major who will graduate in May 2023. He ultimately plans to be a clinical microbiologist. His research title was “Analysis of Micro-doped P₃HT Nonowires with FECl₃ using AFM and KPFM.”

Following the presentations, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Cheryl Clark presented each student with a C.S. Lewis Honors Medallion to be worn at graduation.

“The Honors Forum clearly demonstrates that LCU is providing an unshakeable Christian foundation while expecting academic excellence across all disciplines,” she said. “The students’ interdisciplinary research projects show they understand, recognize and embrace the inseparable connection between their calling and career.

“Knowing that these graduates are equipped and ready to pursue graduate degrees and professional careers renews my hope for the future.”

The C.S. Lewis Honors Program at Louisiana Christian University is an interdisciplinary program that is designed for students who perform at the highest academic standards. Its small, seminar-style courses focus on integrating faith and learning through writing, discussion, service learning, and travel. Students enter during their freshman year and complete the honors curriculum as a cohort.

“One of the best things about attending the Honors Forum every year is seeing how the students that I taught early on in the program have matured into deep thinkers and skilled researchers,” said Dr. Christine Reese, chair of the Division of History and Political Science and member of the Honors Council. “Their creativity and passion for their research topics shines through to make the Honors Forum a dynamic celebration of learning. I am grateful for the opportunity that God has given me to work with the superb faculty at LCU to produce a new generation of Christian scholars.”



Harrison Beiber



Senior speakers of the 2023 C.S. Lewis Honor Forum



Dr. Cheryl Clark speaking to those in attendance



LCU FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

NAIA SAC



East Texas Baptist University
August 31 at 7pm | Pineville, LA



Texas College
October 14 at 2pm | Tyler, TX



Arkansas Baptist College
September 9 at 6pm | Pineville, LA



Ottawa University
October 21 at 7pm | Surprise, AZ



Langston University
September 16 at 6pm | Langston, OK



SAGU
October 28 at 2pm | Pineville, LA



Wayland Baptist University
September 23 at 6pm | Pineville, LA



John Melvin University
November 4 at TBD | Pineville, LA



Oklahoma Panhandle State
September 30 at 2pm | Goodwell, OK



Texas Wesleyan University
November 11 at 2pm | Fort Worth, TX



North American University
October 7 at 2pm | Pineville, LA

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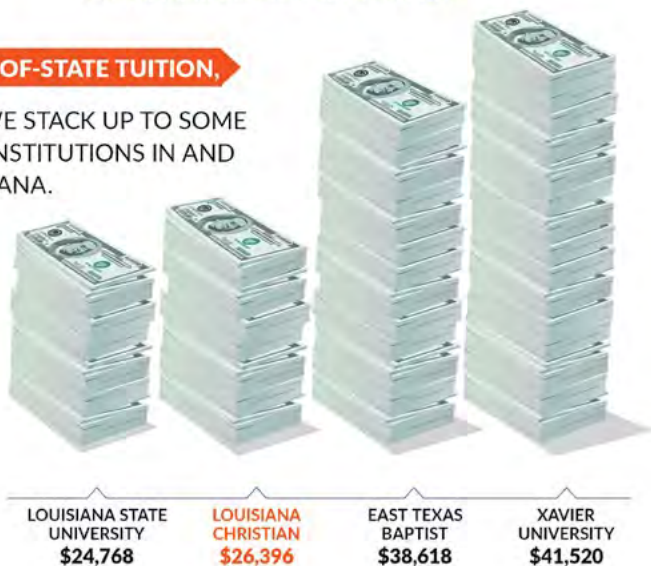
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