



Stephens College

# STEPHENS F.Y.I.

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## NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT



My goodness, we have so much to share with you this month!

First, and most importantly, students have arrived back on campus for what is sure to be a most-memorable year in both their lives and in the history of Stephens College. New students have been oriented and are learning their way around their new home, returning students are reestablishing their bonds with each other, athletes are working hard in practice, and all are

excited to be moving forward with bold intentions for success. Beginning a new school year is such an important ritual and tradition that we all cherish.

This new school year is a special one for so many reasons. Stephens is 190 years old this year, and we festively celebrated our birthday on August 24, with students, faculty, and staff, and lots of cake. I know that you've heard from Shannon Walls about the gift from Stephens to you, our alumni - [Stephens Connect](#) - which will provide you with the virtual community you've been asking for to stay in touch, to connect with old friends and new, and to support Stephens and her students. I trust you've signed in and established your profile and are beginning to learn about the many ways that Stephens Connect can benefit the alumni community. Happy Birthday from Stephens!

Also, a special thank you to all who recognized this important milestone in Stephens' history and participated in our Founders Day Giving Day last week! No matter the size, each gift will make a difference, and seeing the community come together to celebrate Stephens means so much to us.

All my best,  
Dianne

## NEWS FROM CAMPUS

### In New School Year happenings...



**August 18** was a gorgeous day in Columbia, MO making it the perfect day to welcome our new students to campus and to get them all moved into their new homes in the residence halls. We were so excited to meet these new academics, athletes, performers, scientists, equestriennes, designers, writers, educators, creatives, researchers, leaders, and more. They are here to make their mark on Stephens and the world around them; the same way as all who've come before them for 190 years.

We also send a special thank you to **Betsy Baker-Rall '76** from the Mid-Missouri Alumni Group for being on campus to welcome these new faces and to provide hydration and snacks for the heavy-lifters on behalf of the Alumni Association.

**Crossing the Bridge** is one of our favorite events each spring to ceremonially welcome new students as they officially join the Stephens family and bid farewell to their parents, siblings, and other relations. The fall event is bookended each spring with a reverse ceremony when seniors are welcomed into the Alumni Association. Since 1997, these events have provided a meaningful reminder of the cycle of education and our students developing, embracing, and achieving their goals.

▶ [Crossing the Bridge Video](#)

The **Pen Pal Program** was a big hit with both alumni and students. We matched more than 50 students with alumni to connect and develop meaningful relationships that bridge time and distance with a shared experience and affection for Stephens College - all through written communications. Thank you to all the alumni who spent time writing special notes to our incoming students. Look for replies within a couple of weeks!



### Announcing Stephens Connect

We're thrilled to announce the launch of [Stephens Connect](#), our new Online Alumni Community and Directory for Stephens Alums to find, engage, connect, and support one another and Stephens.

You can login using your Facebook or LinkedIn profile or your email address. If you have questions or suggestions or wish to start a group space or publicize your alumni event within Stephens Connect, feel free to connect with us at [alums@stephens.edu](mailto:alums@stephens.edu).

We're thrilled to unveil this new chapter in our alumni engagement journey!

Check it out [here](#).

## Founders' Day Giving Campaign



August 24, 2023 was Stephens' 190th Birthday, and we celebrated on campus and nationwide Stephens-style!

On campus, students, faculty, and staff gathered for a Birthday Party (with cake!) and a Welcome Back Bash in which student organizations shared their plans for the year and recruited new members. Students from the Conservatory led us in singing Happy Birthday to Stephens, and we celebrated the onward journey toward our bicentennial with the launch of the new academic year.

We were honored by the Community with a mayoral proclamation that August 24, 2023, was named **Stephens College Day**. The Columbia Chamber of Commerce honored the College with a ceremonial ribbon cutting. And, alums worldwide gave birthday gifts to and shared their memories of Stephens.

The cycle of Stephens is a strong one, and we are so appreciative for all who raised their hands to contribute to its future of strength and optimism.

## Speaking of Raising Hands



**April 11-14, 2024, is Alumni Weekend.** We are searching for volunteers for the Classes ending in 4s and 9s to help lead your milestone reunions and serve as a contact for your classmates. [Stephens Connect](#) provides lots of tools to make this a piece of cake! If you are interested in learning more about the opportunity, contact us at [alums@stephens.edu](mailto:alums@stephens.edu).

**Registration for the weekend opens November 1.** Stay tuned to [Stephens Connect](#) for more information!

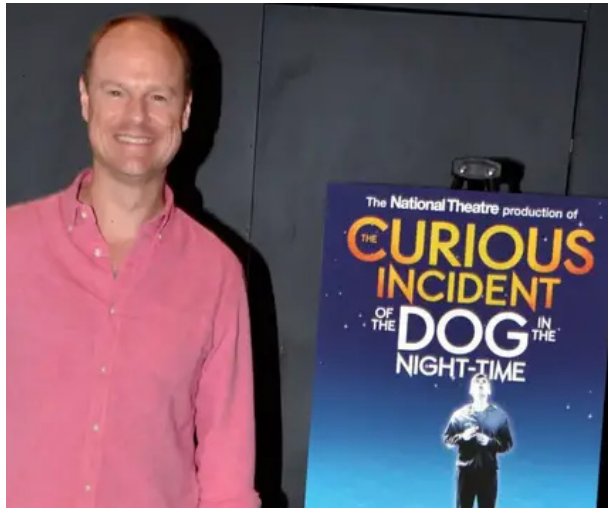
## New Role, Same Winning Attitude...



A familiar face is taking over as Athletic Director at Stephens College. **Andre Bell**, who has been serving as head basketball coach since 2021, was named AD on August 1. Stephens College athletics is on an upward trajectory, thanks in part to the culture change that has taken place during Coach Bell's time leading the basketball program. Last season, Coach led the Stars to their most successful season in school history, winning 16 games including the defeat of crosstown rival Columbia College for the first

time. We are confident his leadership will continue to elevate the department's profile and performance and to expand and improve upon our tradition of ethical, disciplined, and competitive athletics.

## Broadway Veteran Returns to The Conservatory for the Performing Arts...



The Conservatory welcomes back Broadway veteran and Assistant Professor of Acting, **John Hemphill**, this fall. John recently completed two years playing “Larry Murphy” on the national tour of Dear Evan Hansen. John re-joins our talented Conservatory faculty of other working professionals including Lisa Brescia, Darren Gibson, Jamey Grisham, Nollie Moore, Paula Vanlandingham, James Leo Ryan,

Martha J. Clarke, Brandon PT Davis '10, Michael Burke '86, Craig Carnelia, and Jennifer Hemphill, dean of the Conservatory.

## New Workforce Development Programs coming soon...

Bipartisan legislation providing \$2.8 billion to rebuild and expand Interstate 70 to six lanes from Kansas City to St. Louis was signed August 16. This historic funding presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the state’s economic development, including high paying jobs for Missouri’s construction and skilled trade workforce.



Stephens College asks: “Will women be able to take advantage of this opportunity?”

The answer: “YES!”

Read more about Stephens’ innovative [Women in Trades](#) program led by Director of Workforce Development, **Dr. Scott Taylor**.

## NEWS ABOUT STUDENTS



On July 12, at the Lexington Junior League Charity Horse Show, incoming freshman **Ellie Stevens** was recognized as the recipient of the \$10,000 USEF/ASHBA Performance Rider/Driver Scholarship. This Scholarship was established in 2022 by **Sally McClure Jackson '56** to support students who are committed to continuing their involvement in the American Saddlebred Industry. Ellie is a recent graduate of Lexington Catholic High School and plans to major in

Integrated Human Biology and minor in Equestrian Science. She looks forward to the opportunity to attend college where she can combine her passion for horses and education. Ellie states, "The decision was easy. Stephens College has everything I had wished for, from being able to ride in college to being able to pursue a degree as a physician assistant all at the same school. I was set and couldn't ask for more." As the scholarship's sponsor, Sally shared, "It was clear from Ellie's video and application that she has a passion for horses and a passion for Stephens College. I am thrilled to be presenting Ellie Stevens with this \$10,000 scholarship and look forward to what her future holds."

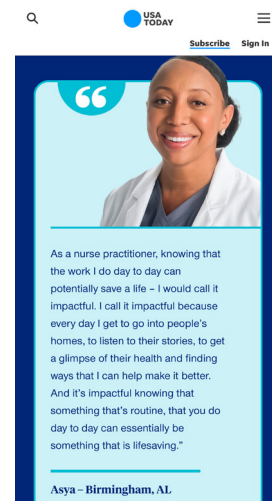


**Margeaux Larson '23** and her stunning senior collection "Over the Garden Wall" were honored by the Surface Design Association (SDA) with an Outstanding Student Award which recognizes students who have demonstrated excellence in fiber arts. Margeaux shared she has always used her imagination to escape into fantastical worlds of beauty, space, and peace, and she modeled her senior collection after these musings. She describes her collection as one where a girl can escape from the outside world and her problems or worries to a perfect English garden where she can be free. Read more about the collection on her [website](#). Congratulations, Margeaux!

## NEWS FROM ALUMNI



From far and wide, friends and alums, **Choo Choo Hannemann Boyer '65** of Laguna Niguel, CA; **Janan Perkins Huntsberry '66** of San Rafael, CA; **Carolyn Skoglund Kuttenkuler '65** of Shawnee, KS; and **Jackie Jacobson Steele '66,'68** of Minneapolis, MN, visited the Okoboji Summer Theatre this month to see the last two 2023 season productions and visit with Professor Emeritus **Rob Doyen '69** and OST Executive Director **Ruth Ann Schulze Burke '86**. Janan reports she has visited the last several seasons, and she finds the quality of the productions to be wonderful! We love when alums visit to experience the magic of Boji!



**Asya Love Whitley '10** of Birmingham, AL, shares the exciting news of her graduation from Delta State University with a Doctorate in Nursing Practice. She was featured in a recent USA Today article celebrating Nurses Week.



**There are no engagements or marriages to report this month, but we have a few alums with stories about wedding and event businesses that we are proud to share.**



**Janna Merciel Volmert '09** of Holts Summit, MO, reports her business JM Couturiere participated in the Off-White Wedding Show in St. Louis showcasing bridal and formal wear alongside her Stephens College embellishment and embroidery instructor, **Suzi Geiger** (owner of Galore Atelier). She credits Suzi's class and teaching as one of the deciding factors in her decision to focus her senior collection around formalwear and the starting point for her successful career in the business. She said it was a treat to see Suzi again as they both promoted their businesses.



We love when a mom writes to share news about her daughter's success story, and that's just what happened for **Breanne Pickering Lopez '13**. Mom Judy writes to share that Breanne bought Hitched Planning and Design just after Covid, and although there were steep restrictions, alterations, and postponements for weddings and events during this time period, she persisted. Today, she's running a vibrant business by applying the talents she honed at Stephens in the Theatre

Department. Mom says, "She has never changed her tune about the influence, hard work, and approach to life she gained by attending Stephens."



**Tara Liaschenko '95** of Saint Petersburg, FL, announces the 20th anniversary of her business The Link {event professionals, inc.}. She shared her pride in weathering the COVID-19 pandemic with flexibility and business savvy. She says they are stronger than ever, and they're proud to continue to support the industry they love, both virtually and in person!

## More precious Stephens babies...



**Ciara McCormack Greenwalt '11** in Seattle, WA shared the news she and her husband Gavin, welcomed their daughter **Olive** on May 24, 2023. Congratulations to the Greenwalt family! She's so adorable!!



**Stephens Trustee Angeleigha Mendez Thomas '14** and husband Michael from Amelia, OH, welcomed baby girl **Mora Leigh** on August 3, 2023. They say she's a beautiful, healthy girl with dark eyes, long legs (20.5 in) and a ton of facial expressions that they could sit and watch all day long. We think she's a cutie, too!

**We're saving a special place in the Class of 2045 for both of these amazing young women!**

## A note from a Dad that reminds us why we do what we do...



**Emily Mendoza Fellers BS Psychology '15, M.Ed. Counseling '18**

Dear Dr. Lynch,

Howdy! Just a friendly note to tell you I had two moms stop me in two separate places and ask me about SC.

In 2017, I moved to Adrian, Michigan. Since my kids are all grown and on their own, I decided to return to my home state.

Thursday morning, I had many chores around town. I went to my bank wearing my SC-Dad t-shirt. A lady asked me my opinion on SC for her high school senior daughter. I gave my highest recommendation.

Later on, I went to a second bank to pay bills and... another mom asked me about SC for her daughter! I may have to get on the payroll as your Michigan recruiter! Ha ha ha...

Just wanted to let you know (again) that I very much appreciate the awesome education and experience my daughter Emily received at Stephens College. You have my 100% support. Now if I can only win the Powerball so I can give you a \$1 million donation ;)

Most Sincerely,  
Noli Mendoza, DO  
Proud Stephens College Dad

**If your parent needs a Stephens Dad or Stephens Mom t-shirt, check out [Susie's](#).**

## UPCOMING EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES



**SRN** SCREENWRITING  
RESEARCH NETWORK

**September 20-23**, Stephens College is hosting the **International Screenwriting Research Network Conference: Gender and the Female Gaze** on campus. The

stellar keynote speakers include Oscar and Emmy nominees and recipients **Meg LeFauve** (Inside Out, The Good Dinosaur, Captain Marvel, and [more](#)); **Lorien McKenna** (Ratatouille, Up, Brave, and [more](#)); **Jeff Melvion** (Killing Eve, Northern Exposure, and [more](#)) and **Philip LaZebnik** (Pocahontas, Mulan, The Prince of Egypt, and [more](#)) (also son of longtime Stephens instructor Jack LaZebnik). **Dr. Rosanne Welch**, executive Director of Stephens' Master of Fine Arts in TV + Screenwriting program, serves as Chair of the SRN. Previous conferences have been held in Vienna, Oxford, Porto, Milan, Sydney, Brussels, Copenhagen, and so on. Stephens College is proud to host this prestigious conference for screenwriters, especially at this critical time in their industry. All are welcome to attend. Details and registration can be found [here](#). Several MFA alumni are making the trip to Columbia to be in attendance for the conference, and they additionally will be hosted for an MFA Alumni brunch in the Hugh Stephens Library Penthouse - the first alumni gathering especially for this Stephens program!

Check out the regional events happening around the country on [Stephens Connect](#) and on campus [Stephens Events](#). If you have an event to post, let us know at [alums@stephens.edu](mailto:alums@stephens.edu).

### When You're On Campus...

See a show: [76th Performing Arts Season](#)

Catch a game: [Fall Athletics Schedules](#)

Travel with alums: [Stephens Alumni travel opportunities](#)

Shop for Stephens Gear: [Susie's](#)

## Did You Know?



August is **National Make-A-Will Month** which is a great time to reflect on your future through estate planning. It's important to have estate plans in order at any state of life, but according to a 2023 study by caring.com, only 34% of American adults have a will. Stephens has many resources available on our website to help you think about how this this critical document can affect everything from your assets to the lives of those you care about (including, of course, Stephens College). [These resources](#) are available to our alumni on our website year-round to help you learn about and explore all kinds of estate planning options.

**Be thoughtful. Be kind. Be savvy.**

## GIVE. CONNECT. RECRUIT.



In closing, I want to thank you for all that you do for Stephens. From reading all of our news to the very end, to making a gift, to connecting with old friends and new, and to referring prospective students to Stephens. You are an important part of what we do – the steward of our history, the concierge of our present, and the benefactor of our future. And for all that, we are grateful every day.

JUST ONE [gift](#), JUST ONE [connection](#), JUST ONE [new student](#).

To read previous editions of Stephens F.Y.I. – click [here](#)