



Stephens College

STEPHENS F.Y.I.

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT



I am back on campus after two weeks in Vermont – and yes, it rained torrentially. Flooding devastated several communities, but my house is high in the hills, so we weren't directly impacted, and for that, we are incredibly grateful. We had a wonderful time – and I am happy to be back!

It's just four weeks until students arrive on campus – renewed, rested, and ready for the 2023-24 academic year. We have an exciting

year ahead with the execution of our new strategic plan, and I look forward to sharing our journey and progress with you in the coming months.

In this issue, I am pleased to share news about our exceptional students (always!), the newest members of the Board of Trustees, success stories from the alumni world, and both new and traditional ways for you to support and connect with Stephens College.

I also want to give my very special thanks to Jennifer Flaks '03 and Flaks Studio for volunteering to smarten up our monthly Stephens F.Y.I. newsletter with a new design. We are proud of the news we share with you, and now we are proud of how we share it. Please join us in thanking Jennifer for this amazing gift to Stephens and all the alumni who enjoy this publication. They say, "It takes a village," and we appreciate Jennifer connecting with us to provide her expertise as a member of the Stephens village.

All my best,
Dianne

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

NEWS FROM CAMPUS

In Strategic Planning...



As we shared with you last month, the Board of Trustees approved the College's strategic plan: Reimagining Stephens. Within the plan:

Stephens is reimagining the possibilities of how we deliver a high-impact education to the next generation of students. Today's learners are more diverse and often balance work and family responsibilities. They want to know the immediate and long-term value of their educational endeavors and that their investment is worth it.

Stephens is reimagining how we provide a student experience that is accessible, immersive, and leverages our innovative spirit, assets, and relationships to help them grow into the leaders society needs.

Stephens is reimagining the undergraduate curriculum and leveraging our assets (think our Okoboji Summer Theatre) and relationships with trades and industry to develop multiple teaching and learning opportunities and new revenue streams.

This is about more than changing our current academic calendar and program design.

Stephens is transforming the higher education landscape and taking radical steps to reimagine the marketplace based on how students learn and engage, paying close attention as artificial intelligence gains greater influence across higher education.

As we reimagine Stephens, one thing will not change. Stephens is and will remain a women's college committed to her core mission and values. We will still be the Stephens you know and love – but stronger, bigger, and better.

Excitement is unfolding by the day, and we look forward to sharing more with you in the months ahead.

In Scholarship News...



Columbia Rock Bridge High School graduate **Thalma Wahab** has been selected as the 2023 Muriel Battle Scholarship recipient. Thalma will be a pre-med student at Stephens and is sure to be an active community member on campus.

In high school, Thalma received honors from the National Honor Society and the Spanish Honor Society; she was a cheerleader and served as co-captain; she participated in Girls Who Code and the Muslim Student Union; and she volunteered her time at the University Hospital, the Food

Bank of Central and Northeast Missouri, and Down Syndrome Innovations. She is a remarkable woman who is sure to make an impact at Stephens and in her professional career that follows.

The Muriel Battle Scholarship was established by Stephens College in 2019, and each year is awarded to a student in partnership with the Columbia Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. It is a four-year, full-ride scholarship, including tuition, room, board, and books.

Mission Promise Kept in the News...



Kansas City Magazine published a wonderful article earlier this month about one of our first MPK students Ashley Cole '24 and why the program at Stephens appealed to her and how it is supporting her educational and life goals through wrap-around service in coordinating academic, medical, mental health, and legal support systems as well as social services and life-skills training. Check out [her amazing story](#).



NEWS FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees is pleased to announce the election of seven new members. These exceptional leaders join the Board as important members of the team tasked with stewardship of the College's mission, monitoring the effectiveness of the academic programs, service to students, and participating in and promoting financial sustainability to ensure the institution for future generations.

Please join us in congratulating them on their election and thanking them for their service.



Shatenita Whitfield Horton '06

Roanoke, VA
Senior Vice President, Freedom
First Credit Union



Rikki Takeyama Menn '09, '10

Kansas City, MO
Senior Manager for Analyst Relations,
Ping Identity



Kay Chaney Nadel '65

Scottsdale, AZ
Long time Stephens enthusiast
and entrepreneur



Stacy Schroeder Peters '81

Dallas, TX



Leigh Anne Preston '85

Louisville, KY

Retired Educator, Small Business Owner,
Trade Association Executive, and Capitol
Hill Staff Member



Jennifer Kelley Wilder '94

Fairfax Station, VA

Director of Development and
Communications, Warrior
Canine Connection



Ana Ximenes '83

Castle Rock, CO

President at Four2One, Inc.

Four current Trustees were also reelected for another term:

Sara Herrnstadt Crosby '76, Sioux Falls, SD; Social Justice and Diversity Educator and Advocate — **M. Anne Murphy '78**, Houston, TX; Freelance Philanthropy Advisor — **John Sebree**, Los Angeles, CA; CEO of California Association of Realtors — **Angeleigha Mendez Thomas '14**, Amelia, OH; Assistant Vice President, Communications Manager, U.S. Bank

NEWS FROM ALUMNI



The film *Hidden Secrets*, written and co-starred by **Angela Dirksen '00**, has had raving success on the film festival circuit. The film was accepted into ten festivals, and it won awards in 7 of them, including:

- Best Short Film - Peoria Film Festival (AZ)
- Best Comedy Short - Medusa Film Festival (CA)
- Best Actor for CJ Barkus - Andromeda Film Festival (Istanbul)
- Jury Selection - Best Comedy - Andromeda Film Festival (Istanbul)
- Semi-Finalist - Best Short Film - Sweden Film Awards (Sweden)
- Honorable Mention - Best Comedy - Night of Comedy Shorts (Milan)
- Nominee - Best New Filmmaker for Director Lauren LALA Robbins - 4th Dimension Indp. Film Fest.

Angela's production company JazzyAngel Productions has three new films in post-production and heading to film festivals soon. Watch for news on *Only You*, directed by Luran LALA Robbins, and *After it Happened* and *You Killed My Choos*, both directed by Angela Dirksen.



Classmate **Susan Bettis '63** proudly shared some big news about her dear friend and Stephens classmate **Shahri Estakhry '63**, who was recently honored by the city of San Diego with a proclamation of Shahri Estakhry Day, May 16, 2023. Shahri is a native of Iran, and she has a fascinating life story which includes education in the U.S., time as a diplomat's wife, and an escape on foot from Iran during the 1979 revolution. She and her daughter settled in San Diego, where she was instrumental in founding a

number of cultural and philanthropic institutions, including the Iranian School of San Diego, the Iranian-American Scholarship Fund, the Persian Culture Center of San Diego, the Dollar-A-Month Fund to support the health, nutrition, and education efforts for thousands of children on four continents, and more. Shahri also spearheaded a successful campaign at the United Nations for the official recognition of Nowruz, the first day of spring, celebrated for more than 3,000 years as the beginning of the new year in the Middle East, Balkans, Central Asia, and other regions. Shahri was deservedly recognized as the godmother of the Persian community and culture in San Diego for her lifelong promotion of public service and preservation of community ties.



After reading the latest issue of [Stephens Now](#), **Tari Viney Pasquale '69** shared her story:

"I just finished going through the latest Stephens magazine with news on classmates and students. I was at the school from 67-69 and received my AA degree in May 1969. I had been interviewed by American Airlines in February of 1969 and was accepted for "stewardess" training that summer. This was something I had planned on doing since I had taken my first flight at 12 years old. September 11, 1969, was my official hire date with the airline after graduating from their training school in Dallas. Here I am, almost 54 years later, still employed as a flight attendant with AA, with no plans on retiring. There probably aren't many alums with this much longevity in any career. I just wanted to 'toot my own horn' and let Stephens know I had always planned on getting my BA when I moved on from flying, but, at this point, that will not be happening. I owe it to Stephens for making me "the girl next door" to fit the image American was looking for in their recruits."

If you see Tari on your next American Airlines flight, let her know you read about her in Stephens F.Y.I.!



Neesha Edwards '16 has a public art installation displayed in Kansas City at the Union Station streetcar stop. The display will be up through November. She encourages you to stop by to see it in person if you're in Kansas City! Read more about her project [here](#).



Andie Young Burnidge '11 in Kansas City shared the news that she and her husband Luke, welcomed a rainbow baby boy, Cameron John Burnidge, on July 6, 2023. Congratulations to the Burnidge family! He's such a cutie!!



Leah Shepard Martin '12 and husband John from Fort Myers, FL, welcomed baby girl Zoe Grace Martin on June 17, 2023. They call her the sweetest baby girl in the world. And we think she's a cutie, too!

If you have news about your career or family to share with us for future editions, please submit it [here](#) or email us at alums@stephens.edu.

Mail your letter/card to:

Stephens College Alum Pen Pal Project

c/o Office of Advancement
1200 East Broadway
Campus Box 2035
Columbia, MO 65215

Please include the following for your return address for your letter/card envelope:

Your Major and Class Year
Name
City, State

Suggestions to include in your letter to incoming students:

- Welcome to Stephens!
- Name
- Current city
- Years at Stephens
- Major/Degree earned
- Your preference of email or mailing address for the student to write back
- What to expect at Stephens
- A favorite memory of Stephens
- Why you love Stephens
- Advice for a new college student

If you have questions about the Pen Pal Project, don't hesitate to contact Stacy Morse at Stacer.morse@gmail.com or alums@stephens.edu.

The Stephens Alumni Group of Mid-Missouri will also be active on campus and around Columbia this fall, and they invite locals and out-of-towners alike to join them for these activities:

Friday, August 18, Move-In-Day

The Group will hand out snacks and water for new students, families, and faculty/staff movers as the new academic year officially commences with the College's Move-In-Day traditions.

Following the busy morning of moving into residence halls, the College will host the Crossing the Bridge Ceremony, one of the bookend traditions of the Student Experience in which new students cross the bridges over College and Broadway to receive an enthusiastic welcome to Stephens College! All alumni are welcome to join the celebration. If you plan to be here, let us know at alums@stephens.edu.



Friday, October 21, Homecoming Happy

This is Mizzou's Homecoming Weekend, and we know that many Stephens Alumni come for the festivities with their Mizzou family and friends. If you are in Columbia that weekend - or as an incentive to get you to visit Columbia that weekend - the Stephens Alumni Group of Mid-Missouri will be at The Roof at the Broadway Hotel at 5:00 to welcome you to their second annual Homecoming Happy Hour. Enjoy a beverage and Stephens camaraderie during this festive weekend.

Other Upcoming Events for Your Calendars



Saturday, August 12

The St. Louis Alumnae Planning Committee is hosting an Ice Cream Social for new and returning students to connect with alums.



The Okoboji Summer Theatre has three productions remaining:

- Cole (A Musical Review)
July 25-30
- Dial “M” for Murder
August 1-6
- The Wedding Singer
August 8-13

Don't miss your chance to see these toe-tapping, suspenseful, and hilariously touching performances.



Fall Athletics Schedules are also out. Come cheer on the Stars!

- The Stars Volleyball Season's first serve is Saturday, August 19. The first home match is Wednesday, August 30.
- The Stars Soccer Season kickoff is at home on August 26.
- The Stars Basketball Season's tip-off is at home Friday, November 3.



The 76th Performing Arts Season has also been announced, featuring:

- Songs for a New World
September 28-30, October 1
- An Enemy of the People
October 26-29
- A Christmas Carol the Musical
December 8-10, 14-15
- Boeing, Boeing
February 8-11
- Footloose
March 15-17, 21-22
- Curtain Up: A Celebration of the Work
May 2-3



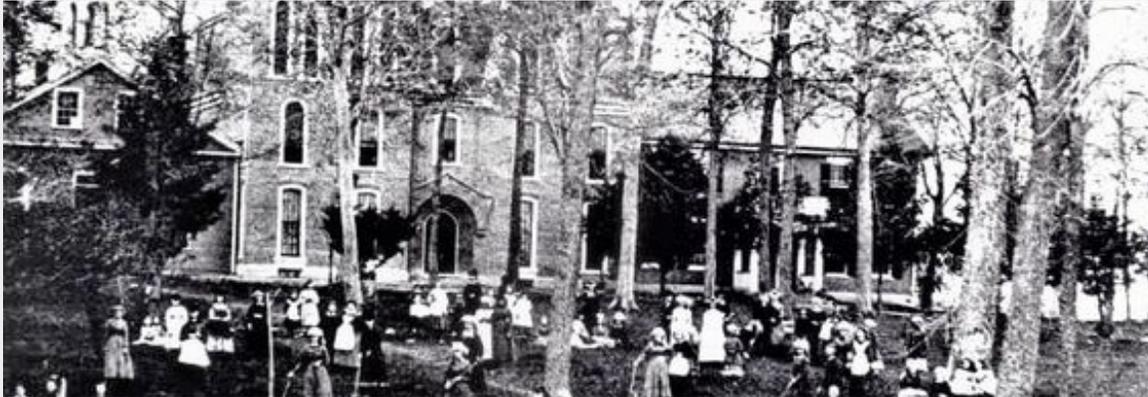
We have some exciting 2024 Travel Destinations planned with our travel partner Alumni Holidays International. If you feel the spark to bond with Stephens Alumni and other curious travelers in an educational adventure, please explore our [Stephens Alumni travel opportunities](#):

- United Arab Emirates, February 13-22, 2024
- Paris, featuring the African American Experience, April 27-May 5, 2024
- Cotswold Escape, May 16-24, 2024
- Romance of the Douro River, September 27-October 8, 2024
- Croatia & the Dalmatian Coast, October 1-12, 2024
- Chilean Wonders - Lake District & Patagonia, December 9-20, 2024



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. If you are interested in learning more about the opportunity, contact us at alums@stephens.edu.

GIVE. CONNECT. RECRUIT.



Even though our alumni migrate far and wide after their Stephens days, we have so many ways for you to stay connected to and support Stephens. From volunteer projects like the Pen Pal Project; to being on campus for student performances, games, and showcases or attending an Alumni Weekend (April 11-14, 2024); to taking part in Stephens activities in your communities aimed at recruiting students, connecting with fellow alumnae, and keeping Stephens College ever-present in your hometown; to making the philanthropic gifts that make the important work we do at Stephens for our students possible – we appreciate you.

August 24 is Stephens College’s Founders Day. On this date in 1833 – 190 years ago! – a group of Columbia citizens gathered and made the impactful decision to start an academy to educate their daughters. The founders believed that their daughters deserved an education that would prepare them for rewarding and productive lives – a cutting-edge concept in a pioneer town, and the heralding declaration of the institution that Stephens would become. In celebration of the 190th birthdate of this endeavor, we will invite you on this day to advance the aspirations of the founders by giving back to Stephens and supporting this onward journey toward our bicentennial. Mark your calendar. Watch for information. Plan to participate. Make a difference.

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

(Stay tuned also for a new Stephens Alumni Directory and Connections Portal coming soon...)

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