

COLUMBIA ACADEMY

# COMMUNICATOR

Forty-Sixth Year | Volume 28 | 2025

## CA THEATRE SOARS WITH **MARY POPPINS!**



- » **BASEBALL GOES BACK-TO-BACK**
- » **40+ YEAR EMPLOYEES HONORED**
- » **CAMPUS HISTORY REDISCOVERED**



FROM THE PRESIDENT



“LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE  
BEFORE OTHERS, SO  
THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR  
GOOD WORKS AND GIVE  
GLORY TO YOUR FATHER  
WHO IS IN HEAVEN.”  
MATTHEW 5:16

What a difference light makes! Whether you are driving at night, exploring a cave, or walking through a toy-filled playroom, light makes all the difference. Light helps us learn, experience, choose wisely, and stay safe. It even provides comfort after a long night of sickness or when we are afraid.

Jesus said in John 8:12, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” As a school, we want all of our students to not walk in darkness but to have the light of life. That’s why, most importantly, our mission statement says that our school exists to help students “become Christ-like in attitude and behavior.”

We also know that God’s word is a “lamp to our feet and a light to our path” (Psalm 119:105). At Columbia Academy, we use God’s word, the Bible, as our guide for how to point people to the light and how we can bring light to this dark world. That’s why our students have daily Bible classes, regular chapels, and each faculty member tries to integrate God’s message into their lessons and example.

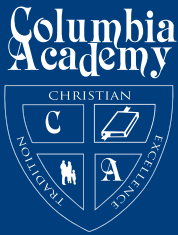
I am convinced that Columbia Academy is a light in our community. It’s a place where students are loved and taught what is necessary for their growth and future success. It’s a place that teaches what is right in the sight of God. It’s a place that serves our fellow man and those who need help. It’s a place that prepares our students to be successful in every area of their lives.

I’m deeply grateful for our dedicated faculty and staff and for our wonderful students and families that partner with us to create a “light on a hill.” I’m thankful for the many supporters who contribute financially to help us provide the best education and environment possible. Most of all, I’m thankful to our heavenly Father, for His blessings on our school. May He receive all the glory!

I hope you enjoy this issue of the “Communicator.”

*James A. Thomas*

James A. Thomas, Ed.D.  
President



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# CA STUDENTS & STAFF SHINE BRIGHT

## NATIONAL HONORS SOCIETY INDUCTION



Front Row: Hannah Coil, Rebecca Goodwin, Seth Hulen, Andrew Thomas, Rudy Cothran, Braelyn Henry, Annyston Barker, Anna Kate Cofer, Addison Thomas, Katie Beth Brown, Sofi SanMiguel, Charlotte Henry; Second Row: Anna Brewer, Gregory Jones, Lawson Keeling, Sofie Millikan, Carolina Johnson, Maya Keeton, Carley Wright, Carson Wright, Jordan Harrison, Blake Barker; Third Row: Abigail Schwartz, Madeline Hale, Mikayla Wagoner, Alessia Lombardi, Leigha Picard, Makayla Townsend, Margaret Lehner, LeiLani Landon, Gavin Poché; Fourth Row: Presley Miller, Jake Ballard, Luke Thomas, Luke Phillips, Jackson Curry, Jax Hickerson, Gabriel Karkau, Jack Gordon; Back Row: Chandler Butt, Mac Jackson, Matthew Thomas, Jay Coleman, Ty Withrow, Thomas Gaines, Jacob Helms, Reed Butt, Jackson Usherwood, Will Rhodes, Noah Love

On Thursday, May 1, the annual National Honor Society induction ceremony was held to introduce new juniors and seniors entering the program and presented the existing seniors with gold cords. These students pledged to take on the four pillars of the program:

1. Scholarship
2. Service
3. Leadership
4. Character



## 200 MAGI BOXES FILLED

Fourth grade students raised \$1,254 by completing household chores or selling baked goods to purchase the supplies needed to fill 200 MAGI boxes! These boxes will be sent to developing countries for children to receive as Christmas gifts. Thank you to every student, teacher, and family who helped to fill these boxes!

## CA HELPED PROVIDE AID FOR HURRICANE HELENE VICTIMS

In late September 2024, Hurricane Helene produced severe flooding resulting in tragedy in East Tennessee and into North Carolina. CA Alumna Emma Voss ('20) partnered with her mother, kindergarten teacher Mrs. Voss, to collect and deliver items such as paper products, toiletries, and nonperishable food items to the Central Church of Christ in Johnson City, Tenn. Students filled Emma's car to help the victims in the area. We are thankful for all who were involved in helping with this project!



## ACADEMIC AWARDS



**Summa Cum Laude:** Front Row (L-R): Chandler Butt, Mac Jackson, Lawson Keeling, Noah Love, Gavin Poché, Will Card; 2nd Row: Lily Baum, Rebekah Goodwin, Hannah Coil, Mackenzie Reames, Andrew Thomas; 3rd Row: Braelyn Henry, Anna Cofer, Tasha Stone, Charlotte Henry, Sofie Milikan, Rudy Cothran, Abigail Schwartz, Annyston Barker, Carley Wright, Seth Hulen, Sofi SanMiguel, Jackson Gordon; 4th Row: Jake Ballard, Presley Miller, Greg Jones, Anna Brewer, Katie Brown, Jordan Harrison; Not Pictured: Sam Rivers, Jase Kincaid, Briar Helton, Jackson Lee



**Magna Cum Laude:** Sydney Overall, Chloe McNeese, Josh Lofton; Not Pictured: Noah Gibson, Nicholas McMurty, Lynlee Cole



**Cum Laude:** Harrison Brownlee, C.J. Barr, Tamia McClellan, Katherine Hinson, Maggie Passarella; Not Pictured: Laura Hixson, Carter Kimes

## COLUMBIA ACADEMY CLASS OF 2025 STATISTICS

### COLLEGE/DUAL ENROLLMENT



801 hours of college credit hours earned through Dual Enrollment



Students will attend 26 different colleges, universities and trade schools across the United States

### ACT AND SCHOLARSHIP MONEY

Highest ACT Composite Score

35

Total scholarship money offered: **\$8,333,642**  
Average scholarship award: **\$120,777**



Class average ACT score - 24  
Athletic scholarships accepted - 10

### PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS...



Took a dual enrollment course



Offered a scholarship



Graduated with honors

8,266 service hours completed during high school

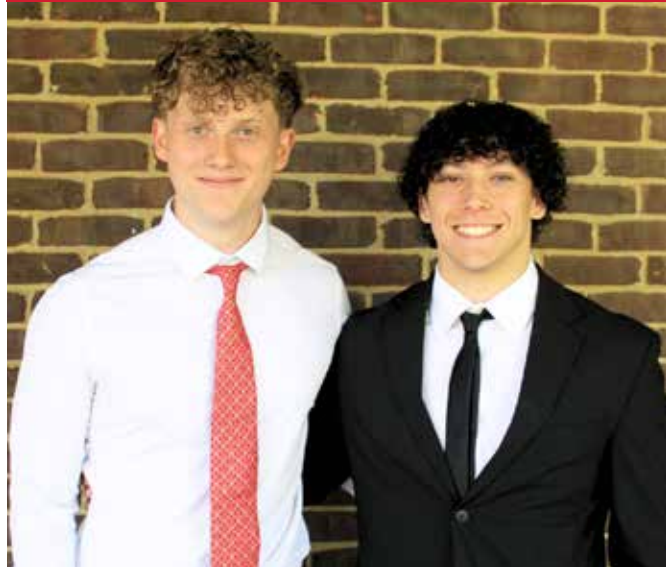


LEARN MORE ABOUT COLUMBIA ACADEMY AT [CABULLDOGS.ORG](http://CABULLDOGS.ORG)



# CA CLASS OF '25

## VALEDICTORIAN AND SALUTATORIAN



Representing the Columbia Academy Senior Class of 2025, the valedictorian was **Gavin William Poché**, son of Chris and Christy Poché of Spring Hill (on left in photo). The salutatorian was **Jackson Gordon**, son of Timothy Gordon and Jessica Serfass of Spring Hill.

Gavin Poché has been a student at CA for eight years. He is a member of the ACT 30+ Club, HOSA Club, REACH Academically Advanced Program, National Honor Society, National Beta Club, Best Buddies Club, and Youth Leadership Maury. Gavin serves as the Treasurer of the Science Club and is a two-time Academic All-State Trapshooter on the Gundawgs team. He has received the Carl Pierson Scholar-Athlete Award. He will attend Boston University in the fall, double majoring in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and minoring in Neuroscience.

Jackson Gordon has been a student at CA for 13 years. He is a member of the ACT 30+ Club, Best Buddies Club, HOSA Club, National Beta Club, and National Honor Society. He served as Vice President of the Science Club. Jackson is also an athlete, running on the track and field team and leading the football team as captain. He was awarded the Daniel Thomas Hustle Award and was named a Top Scholar for his class three out of four years. He will attend the University of Alabama in Huntsville in the fall, double majoring in Aerospace Engineering and Astrophysics and minoring in Mathematics. He will enter the University of Alabama in Huntsville Honors College, where he has accepted the University Saturn V Academic Scholarship.

## MR. AND MISS COLUMBIA ACADEMY



At the conclusion of each school year, Columbia Academy Upper School faculty select Mr. and Miss Columbia Academy. This is a high honor bestowed upon two students who best exemplify character and attributes consistent with the Columbia Academy mission.

Mr. CA is **Jake Ballard**, son of Jerry and Christa Ballard. He has been a student at CA for 10 years. Ballard has been active in organizations such as Best Buddies, Youth Leadership Maury, National Honor Society, and Beta Club. Jake was a member of the football, basketball, and track teams. He plans to attend Freed-Hardeman University in the fall, where he will study Civil Engineering and play for the Lions basketball team.

Miss CA is **Carolina Johnson**, daughter of Ted and Marnie Johnson. She has been a student at CA for 13 years. Johnson was the varsity soccer team captain and played on the varsity softball team, which she helped to win state championships in 2021 and 2022. She was an American Legion Auxiliary Girls' State delegate and the Pep Club President. She also served as the Beta Club Reporter and Senior Class Treasurer. She was a member of Best Buddies, the National Honor Society, and the ACT 30+ Club. She was one of our school ambassadors and a life group co-leader. Johnson was crowned the 2024 Homecoming Queen. She will be attending the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in the fall, majoring in Elementary Education.

## 2025 COLUMBIA MILITARY ACADEMY SCHOLARSHIP

We are proud to announce that Carter Thomas Kimes has been selected as the recipient of the 2025 Columbia Military Academy Scholarship. A devoted student, servant leader, and future soldier, Carter exemplifies the values and spirit of Columbia Military Academy at its roots.

Carter, the son of William and Carrie Kimes, has attended Columbia Academy for seven years. He graduated as a Cum Laude Honor Graduate, demonstrating consistent academic excellence throughout his high school journey. He was also dual-enrolled during his senior year, taking classes through Freed-Hardeman University to further his education.

In addition to his academic accomplishments, Carter has been an active participant in extracurricular activities. He served on the yearbook staff, was a proud member of both the National Beta Club and the Best Buddies program, receiving graduation cords for his involvement with Best Buddies, an initiative that fosters friendships and inclusion for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Carter has always had a heart for service. He volunteered throughout high school, including time assisting at King's Daughters School. He was also the only graduate recognized at graduation for his dedication

to Blood Assurance, earning cords for his consistent blood donations during and outside school hours.

His passion for animals and science was reflected in his selection by CA staff to attend the World Strides Veterinary Academy in Summer 2024. Through the Loop Abroad Program in Victoria, Texas, Carter completed 40 hours of hands-on volunteer work in zoo management and veterinary medicine at the Texas Zoo.

Carter's achievements extend beyond the classroom. He earned numerous scholarships, including:

- Greater Columbia USBC SMART Scholarship – 1st Place, Division C Doubles (2019)
- Tennessee Promise Scholarship
- Tennessee HOPE Scholarship
- Tennessee STRONG Act Scholarship
- GI Bill Grant
- GI Bill Kicker Grant

And most notably, the CMA Scholarship.

Carter has been accepted to Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU), where he plans to pursue a bachelor's degree in Nutrition and Food Science, focusing on Nutrition and Wellness, beginning in the spring of 2026.

In July 2024, at just 17 years old, Carter made the courageous decision to enlist in the Army National Guard, signing a six-year commitment with the support of his family. Since then, he has participated in monthly drill weekends, training in marksmanship, physical fitness, hand-to-hand combat, and tactical operations. Carter's discipline and dedication have already led to his promotion to E2 – Private First Class, with an E3 promotion expected shortly into basic training.

On June 2, 2025, Carter departed for Fort Sill to begin 10 weeks of basic training. Afterward, he will move to Fort Sam Houston for over 16 weeks of Advanced Individual Training (AIT) to become a 68W Combat Medic. Once trained, he will be stationed with the 251st Military Police Company in Lexington, Tennessee.

He is also a faithful member of The Bridge Church in Spring Hill, Tenn., where he volunteers regularly. His faith, nurtured both at home and through his education at Columbia Academy, has grown stronger over the years—a guiding light as he steps into a life of service and leadership.

*Pictured with Bill Wade, C.M.A. class of 1968.*





## UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE DISTINGUISHED TENNESSEAN SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

We are honored to recognize senior Mac Jackson as the Maury County recipient for the prestigious Distinguished Tennessean Scholarship from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

This scholarship is offered to only 95 of nearly 70,000 Tennessee high school seniors. One representative from each Tennessee county is chosen after a thorough review of community involvement and academic standing. Academic, professional, and personal recommendation letters were submitted on behalf of Jackson.

Since its inception in 2022, CA has had four students receive this scholarship that will cover full tuition and mandatory fees for up to four years at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Mac Jackson is a top scholar. He is a leader within his school serving as the student body president, National Honor Society president and football captain. Jackson participates on the mock trial and tennis teams. He is a part of the ACT 30+ Club, a Boys' State representative, and a senator at Boys' State. He has received athletic recognition such



as All-State Defensive Back in football and All-Region Defensive Back three years in a row. He is also expected to receive his Eagle Scout soon.



## JON DAVID SCHWARTZ NAMED COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER

Jon David Schwartz spoke at Columbia Academy's 46th annual commencement exercises.

J.D. Schwartz is the student minister for the Graymere Church of Christ, where he has served since 2016. Previously, he served as a youth minister with the Chapel Hill congregation in Chapel Hill, Tenn. and with the Pulaski Street Church of Christ in Lawrenceburg, Tenn. This year marks 23 years of experience in youth and family ministry.

Columbia Academy President Dr. James Thomas stated, "Jon David has been and continues to be a great influence on our students. He connects with students and helps them grow in their faith. I know that his words will be both motivational and encouraging as graduating seniors begin the next phase of their lives."

J.D. is a former 9th and 12th grade Bible teacher in the upper school, while his wife Amy is a current 5th grade teacher in the lower school.

He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Bible, with a minor in Youth Ministry, as well as a Masters in Ministry. Both degrees were obtained from Freed-Hardeman University. Currently, he serves as a co-director for Horizons and is involved with Freed-Hardeman University Lectureship's Youth and Family Ministry Workshop. He is also a member of the Nicaragua Christian School board.

J.D. is most proud of his family. He is the husband of the former Amy Lynn Porter, a Columbia native and CA alumna. They have two children: Abigail Lynn ('25) and Lane David ('29).

## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE SPRING HILL CAMPUS



BY: NATHAN HIXSON,  
SPRING HILL CAMPUS  
PRINCIPAL

With time, memories take root and relationships deepen.

It's hard to believe that I've been in Tennessee and a part of Columbia Academy for 10 years! Oh, where does the time go? This year more than any other I seemed to realize that the kids I had just a few short years ago are grown and doing great things!

I value the great culture that we have at Columbia Academy where we're one BIG school and there's opportunities for interactions with some of the big kids that have moved on from our small satellite campus. Being an elementary setting only allows us to work with our students until 6th grade.

It's great when Upper School students come back to pick up our non-perishable items from the annual canned food drive. We get to see familiar faces! When Coach Diles picks up our MAGI boxes with student helpers, more familiar faces! When Mrs. Littrell's 8th graders make time to come up and share their novels with us, yet again, more familiar faces! What a blessing it is to see our students flourish in the older grades! When on campus they're excited to walk these familiar halls, connect with their former teachers and indulge the proud principal with a picture.

While we're always proud of our former students, a first took place this year. The Salutatorian for the graduating class of 2025 started at the Spring Hill campus. Jackson Gordon was a star for us in his elementary years and only got better with age! Congratulations to him and all of our graduating Bulldogs!

In other Spring Hill happenings, much success was achieved again this year! Sixth graders competed in a math competition at MTSU, we enhanced our GATE opportunities, grew spiritually through split chapel, and our athletes performed on the fields of play in a greater capacity than ever before in our Spring Hill history. The school year was topped off with graduating 22 students from our sixth grade class - once again, our largest group to date! Sounds like the trend will continue of Spring Hill students making an impact at the big campus in future years! Remember to represent, remember where you started, and make us proud!

As always, we give thanks, praise and glory to our LORD for his rich blessings in the 2024-2025 school year!





# FINE ARTS AT CA

## CA THEATRE DEPARTMENT:

# Soaring To New Heights!

What a year it's been for the Columbia Academy Theatre Department! From packed houses and show-stopping performances to a record number of students involved and top-tier recognition, 2024–2025 was truly unforgettable. One hundred eighty students stepped into roles both on stage and behind the scenes, growing and thriving like never before.

This season wasn't just about great shows; it was about students discovering their voices, building lifelong friendships, and working together to create something amazing. With the leadership of our directors and the dedication of young performers, the theatre department broke new ground.

A special highlight this year was the expansion of our elementary theatre program, now under the direction of Music Teacher, Jessica Fonville ('18). Her enthusiasm and fresh ideas brought new energy to our youngest performers, setting the stage for a bright future in the arts at Columbia Academy.

The year kicked off with "Annie," performed by two outstanding casts from our Spring Hill and Columbia campuses. Audiences were charmed by the energy and heart of our elementary students, who earned standing ovations at every show.

Then came our very first upper school Christmas production, "A Very Merry Christmas Movie Wonderthon"—a fast-paced, festive whirlwind full of laughs, holiday cheer, and student creativity. It quickly became a new fan favorite.



And just when we thought things couldn't get better, spring arrived with "Mary Poppins." It was a breathtaking production that raised the bar for us all. With 80 talented cast and crew members, flying effects, elaborate sets, and vibrant costumes, it was a magical experience that wowed sold-out audiences and left a lasting impression.

For the first time since 2020, Columbia Academy was honored to have our musical adjudicated by the Spotlight Awards, Tennessee's prestigious high school theatre competition. Out of 40 schools, "Mary Poppins" received multiple nominations, affirming what we already knew—our students are among the best!

Here are just a few of the honors:

**Outstanding Lead Performer Nominees:** Lilly Baum, Hutson Cofer, and Sofi SanMiguel

**Outstanding Vocalist:** Sofi SanMiguel

**Crowd Pleaser Nominee:** The cast's high-energy number, "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious"

**All-Star Cast:** Anna Kate Cofer and Frazier Isenberg

**All-Star Crew:** Wyatt Briceno and Chloe McNeese

**Applause Award:** Hutson Cofer's upside-down dancing and singing (yes, really!)

**Outstanding Design Concept and Outstanding Large Ensemble:** Celebrating the collective talent and creativity behind the scenes

As part of the awards celebration on May 17 at TPAC's Jackson Hall in Nashville, nearly 100 of our students, crew, and families will attend to cheer on their peers. Three of our lead performers were also invited to participate in a special workshop and performed onstage in the final Spotlight Awards ceremony. This was a huge honor and exciting opportunity!



### Looking Ahead: Even More Magic to Come

We couldn't be more proud of this year's accomplishments, and we know the best is yet to come. Thank you to every student, teacher, parent, and volunteer who made this season possible. Your time, talent, and heart are what make this program so special.

### Announcing Our 2025–2026 Season:

**Fall Upper School:** "Little Shop of Horrors"

**Fall Lower School:** "The Little Mermaid"

**Spring Upper School:** "High School Musical"

**Spring Upper School:** Special Student Director Project

We can't wait to see what next year brings. Until then, bravo, Columbia Academy Theatre. You've made us all incredibly proud.

## CA BAND YEAR IN REVIEW

This was a great year for the band program at Columbia Academy with several performances and trips. The high school band played in the stands for the home football games and got to make the trip with the team to play at the state championship game.

In the fall, all of the band and guitar classes attended a dress rehearsal of the Nashville Symphony Orchestra, where the students heard music by Dvorak, Rachmaninoff, and contemporary composer Carlos Simon. They ended the first semester with a Christmas concert.

In March, the high school band performed at the annual Concert Performance Assessment held by the Middle Tennessee School Band and Orchestra Association. They received a rating of Excellent (the second highest rating) for their prepared performance and a rating of Superior (the highest rating) for sight-reading.

The high school band combined with the seventh grade band to perform at the Music in the Parks Festival in May. They received another Excellent rating and got to spend the day at Dollywood after their performance. Finally, all of the band and guitar classes ended the year with another concert performance here on campus.

The band program had two graduating seniors this year: Nate Card and Andrew Thomas. Nate won the John Philip Sousa Award for band and Andrew (who was in both band and guitar this year) won the Guitar Class Award.





# Adrienne Sanders Law Chair of Excellence in Science and Math



Columbia Academy is proud to announce the establishment of the Adrienne Sanders Law Chair of Excellence in Science and Math, a tribute to a beloved educator, board member, and advocate for academic excellence.

This endowment has been created to enhance science and math instruction at Columbia Academy, with annual proceeds directed towards whatever is most needed to provide excellent education in these two important subjects. The fund can support faculty and provide special resources and opportunities to students who show a special interest in science and mathematics.

Adrienne Sanders Law taught math at Columbia Academy from 2008 to 2016, inspiring countless students and instilling a love of the subject. Following her time in the classroom, she continued to shape the academic future of CA by serving on the Board of Trustees from 2017 to 2022, where she chaired the Academic Committee. Her passion was to create a “culture of excellence” in which every student was challenged to reach their full academic potential.

The creation of this endowment is a direct extension of Adrienne’s vision for Columbia Academy. It represents a commitment to raising the level of academic instruction and fostering a learning environment where both teachers and students thrive.

To celebrate the launch of the endowment, a special luncheon was held on May 14, 2025, attended by friends, family, and faculty. Adrienne’s husband John is establishing this endowment with the support of their sons, Richard (’12) and Vince (’14), who have expressed their support for this initiative and are proud to see their mother’s legacy honored in a meaningful way. Richard is a financial advisor with Baird in Columbia, and Vince is completing his residency in oral surgery at the University of Kentucky.

Honorary and memorial gifts to the Adrienne Sanders Law Chair of Excellence are welcome and appreciated. In addition, Columbia Academy will be seeking corporate and local sponsorships to further enhance science and math instruction through this fund.



Adrienne’s impact on Columbia Academy will now live on through every student who is inspired and every teacher who is empowered through our math and science programs.

For more information on how to support the endowment, please contact the president’s office at Columbia Academy at 931-380-8509 or [jill.jones@cabulldogs.org](mailto:jill.jones@cabulldogs.org).

# SPIRITUAL LIFE AT COLUMBIA ACADEMY

BY: BEN DILES, DIRECTOR OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT



*“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. 25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. 26 From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. 27 God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.”*

The apostle Paul spoke these words above as recorded in Acts 17:24-27 to the people of Athens, proclaiming to them that they were made to seek the living God, Lord of Heaven and Earth.

Columbia Academy exists because the Christians in this community share this worldview. We believe our students were designed and made by God to seek and reflect His glory. We strive to lead our students to know Him better by the daily study of His Word and to serve Him more closely by putting these beliefs into practice.

We want our students to come to know God better through open discussions of His Word, encouraging them to bond in student-led small group discussions, and adopt an attitude of sacrificial service through multiple service opportunities, as listed below.

- Our very active Best Buddies club, where our students bond with students with special needs throughout the year
- Annual Thanksgiving canned food drive raises over 75,000 cans a year
- Walk for Water to raise money for digging wells
- Weekly service at the People’s Table meal service and food distribution at The Well in Spring Hill
- Mission trips focused on Service to the City of Children in Ensenada, Mexico; Lima, Peru; and, beginning next year, the Nicaragua Christian School.
- Various other service efforts

We hope our students and their families grow in grace and peace in their knowledge of Christ. With that in mind, we also offered a parenting seminar to help our parents effectively raise faithful children, and Barry and Tina England led a marriage seminar to bolster and strengthen those relationships in the Lord. In short, we use a variety of approaches to lead our students to hopefully choose a life filled with the love of Christ and His service.



*“Columbia Academy has had a profound impact on my spiritual life from the time I was four years old through my senior year. While Columbia Academy is not a perfect place, it is filled with teachers who genuinely care and continually encourage and guide us in our walk with Christ. The Christ-centered environment helped me build a strong foundation in my faith and grow in my personal relationship with God. I’m especially thankful for the Bible teachers who have poured into my life over the years—Mr. Andrew Fulks, Mr. Russell Smith, Mrs. Malaiika Ballard and Mr. Ben Diles. Their wisdom, compassion, and dedication played a key role in my spiritual journey and ultimately led me to the decision to be baptized recently—one of the most meaningful moments of my life. I’m grateful that Columbia Academy has been a place where my faith has been challenged and strengthened. Go Dawgs!”*

- Presley Miller (’25)





# BULLDOG ATHLETICS



## A SEASON TO REMEMBER

Columbia Academy's 2024-2025 athletic season will be remembered as one of record-breaking achievements across several sports. From historic championships to individual accolades, our Bulldogs demonstrated what it means to compete with Bulldog pride.

### BASEBALL

History was made as Columbia Academy baseball won back-to-back State Championships for the first time! The 2025 team finished 36-5, defeating Clarksville Academy 2-0 in the final. They did not allow a single run during the state tournament. Gunner Skelton was named Mr. Baseball, a first for the school. The team posted an astounding 73-11 record over two years, setting a legacy that will be hard to match.

### GOLF

Both the boys and girls golf teams posted a strong season, finishing 4th in district play. Four standout golfers: Jay Coleman (captain), Landry Simmons, Ava Codling, and Francie McDonald, advanced to the regional tournament. With senior captain Seth Hulen graduating, a veteran core of experienced upperclassmen, including Sam Owens, Wyatt Briceno, Parker Thomas, and Cutler McKnight, promises an exciting 2025 season.

### GIRLS SOCCER

The girls soccer team recorded its first winning season in nearly a decade, finishing 9-7-1. Known for their sportsmanship and unity, the team continued its growth trajectory and looks forward to next season together.

### VOLLEYBALL

A young varsity volleyball team shows great promise under new head coach Rebecca Camacho, graduating only two seniors and gaining valuable experience for the seasons ahead. Meanwhile, the middle school team had a strong year, beating key rivals through teamwork and enthusiasm.

### CROSS COUNTRY

The boys team saw three runners named All-Region: Ty Withrow, Jayden Brooks, and C.J. Barr. Withrow also earned All-State honors, and Barr signed with Ouachita Baptist University.

The girls had a phenomenal season, winning both the Regional and State Championships! All-State honors went to Presley Miller, Gracie Orton (State Runner-Up), Janie Reames, and Charley Hutchison. Mackenzie Reames signed with Freed-Hardeman University, and Presley Miller signed with the University of Southern Mississippi.

### BOWLING

In a historic run, the bowling team went undefeated (16-0), won the Regional and State Team Championships, and had the most state qualifiers of any team. Congratulations on an amazing season!

### SWIMMING

The "SwimDawgs" made waves again, with the middle school team winning the MTHSSA Division II Championship. The program continues to grow and flourish.

### BASS FISHING

The high school team (Andy Cofer & Cole Park) had their best West Region finish in two years, placing 56th of 213. The junior high duo (Ethan & Athena Loveall) finished 25th of 83 teams in their region and 83rd statewide. The program continues to build momentum.

### FOOTBALL

In a landmark season, the Bulldogs finished 10-4 and advanced to the State Championship game for the first time in school history, finishing as the DII-A State Runner-Up. Eight players earned All-State honors, a school record.

### TRACK AND FIELD

The boys' team sent multiple athletes to state, placing in several events:

**4x800m (5th):** Carden Venable, Ty Withrow, Jayden Brooks, Luke Phillips

**800m (3rd):** C.J. Barr

**100m (7th) & 200m (3rd):** Jeremy Jackson

All were named All-State.

The girls' team also excelled:

**800m:** Presley Miller (4th), Grace Charley (6th)

**1600m:** Presley Miller (3rd)

**3200m:** Gracie Orton (3rd)

**Hurdles and Long Jump:** Emma Rees placed top 5 in three events

**4x800m Relay:** State Runner-Up

**Pentathlon:** Emma Rees was State Champion, scoring 2903 points

All were named All-State.

The middle school program continues to grow, with the girls team placing 1st at the Fairview meet. Nearly every track event was represented, and there are plans to expand into more events next season.

### CHEERLEADING

The Varsity Sideline and Competition Cheer teams had an outstanding year. They rallied fans all season and earned bids to the Nationals at Disney World. The Gameday team placed third in the nation in a highly competitive division. Congratulations, girls!

The middle school cheer squad grew significantly, supporting athletic teams and competing nationally in Florida.

### SOFTBALL

In Coach Catherine Huey's debut season, the varsity team won the district, advanced through the region, and made a strong showing in the State Tournament, finishing 18-8. Six players earned all-district honors, and one earned all-region honors.

The middle school team improved its record by seven wins and ended the season on a five-game winning streak.

### BOYS SOCCER

Despite injuries, the boys team battled through the season, highlighted by a 7-2 region tournament win over Mt. Juliet Christian. They fell in round two to the state runner-up, Webb School. Jackson Usherwood, who scored 21 goals and had 12 assists, earned all-district recognition.

### TENNIS

Both varsity boys (12-5) and girls (8-9) teams enjoyed successful seasons on Columbia Academy's new tennis courts. The brand new facilities, known as the Thrasher Family Tennis Complex, contributed to the strong team performance and school spirit.

The middle school boys went undefeated (8-0), and the girls went 4-4.

### GUN DAWGS (TRAP SHOOTING)

The Gun Dawgs saw strong competition results throughout the year and have their sights set on the State Tournament (June 16-21) and the National Championship in Ohio. Team and individual trophies have been plentiful.

### BASKETBALL

The Bulldog basketball team finished the season with a 9-18 record, making them 5th in the district. This season was highlighted by the play of seniors Jeremy Jackson, Jake Ballard, and Harrison Brownlee. The team represented CA well both on and off the court. Jeremy Jackson and Jake Ballard will continue their basketball careers at the collegiate level. Jeremy will play at Trevecca Nazarene University, and Jake will play at Freed-Hardeman University.

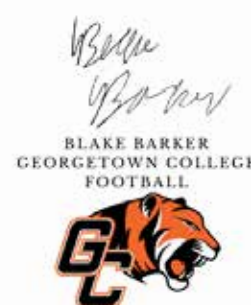
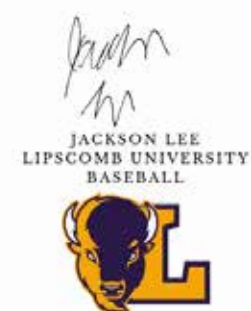
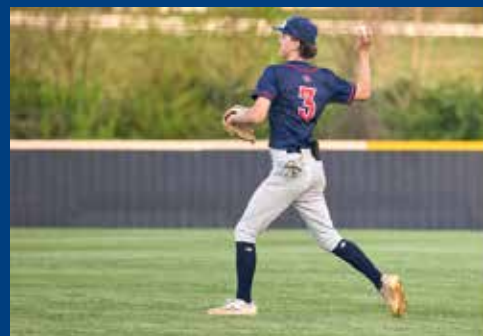
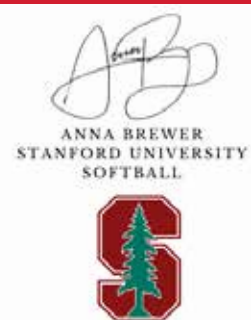
The CA Girls Basketball team finished third in the toughest Tennessee girls district with an overall record of 13-16. Three Lady Bulldogs finished with double-figure scoring averages for the season. Reese Shirley's average was 15, Charley Hutchison's was 15, and Haley Collins' was 13. Reese Shirley was also named to the BCAT All-State team for Division II-A.



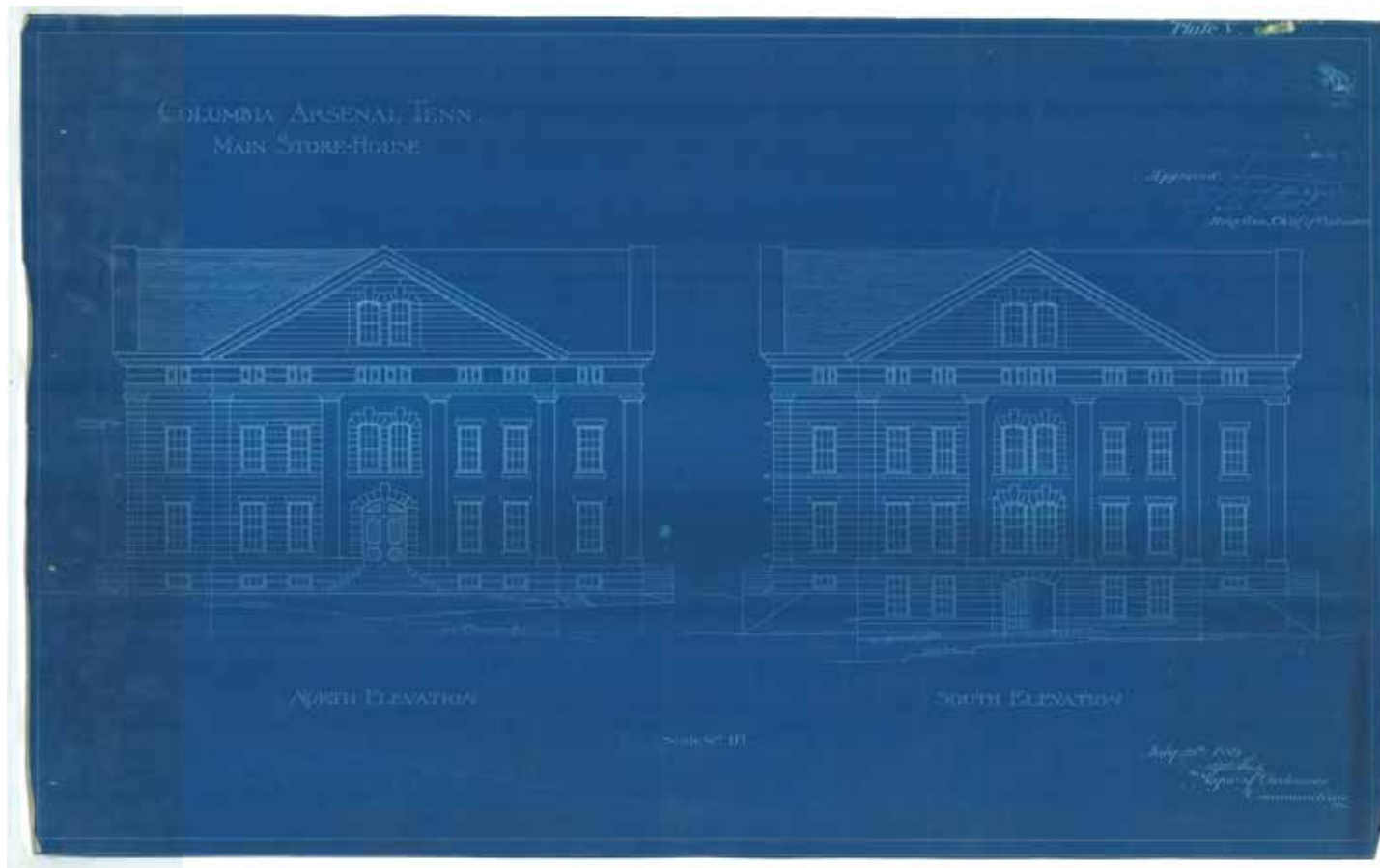




# PLAYING AT THE NEXT LEVEL







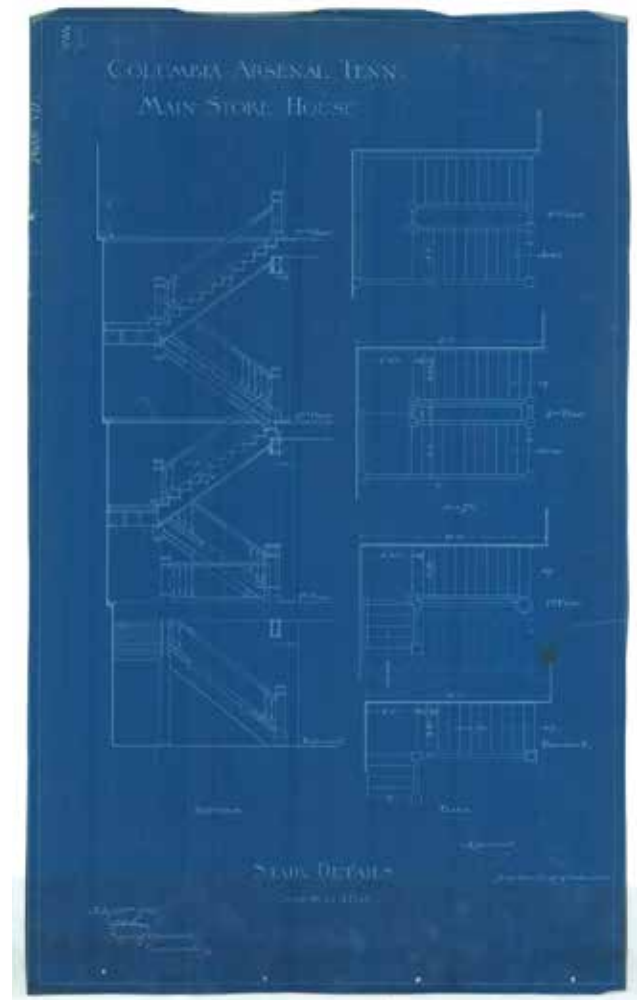
## THE HISTORY OF COLUMBIA ACADEMY *Rediscovered*

This year, Columbia Academy was thrilled to host the first ever history and architecture lecture featuring Justin Lowe of Centric Architecture, Maury County Archivist Tom Price, and Columbia Academy President Dr. James A. Thomas.

The panel dissected the rediscovered blueprints of the Columbia Arsenal that were housed at the National Archives in College Park, Md., and pulled by Dr. James Thomas during the annual 8th grade field trip to Washington D.C.

Built in 1890 by the United States Government, the 67-acre campus was an active military installation known as the Columbia Arsenal and originally consisted of 10 buildings, six of which remain today. The arsenal closed shortly after the Spanish-American War in 1901 and transitioned into Columbia Military Academy in 1904. In 1979, the academy was turned over to a board from local Churches of Christ as they established the PreK-12th private school now known as the beloved Columbia Academy.

The full event can be found on the Columbia Academy Youtube page.



CA FIFTH GRADERS EXPLORE SPACE WITH...

## U.S. SPACE FORCE AND SPACE SYSTEMS COMMAND

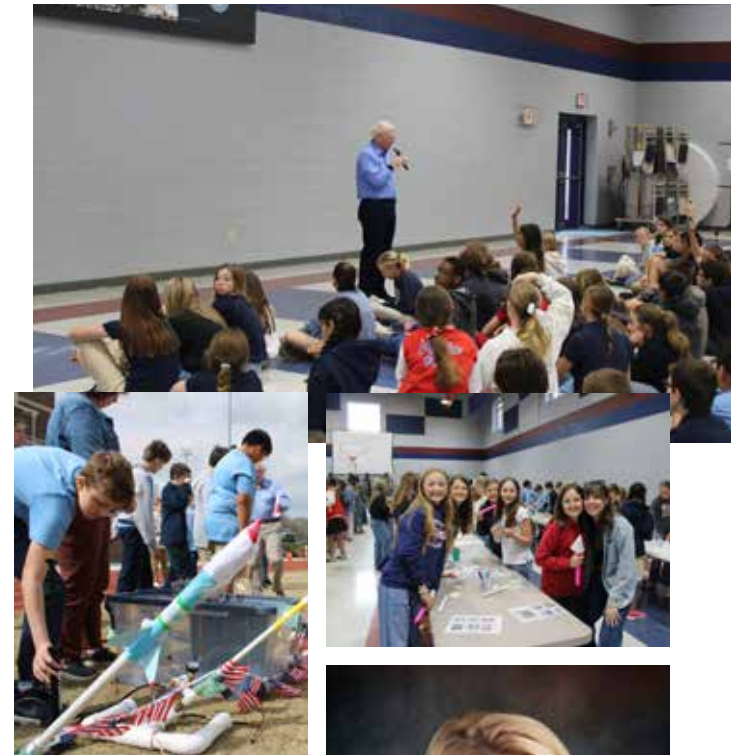
Columbia Academy recently brought learning to life with an immersive, space-themed day for fifth-grade students, emphasizing the importance of hands-on education. The event was led by experts from the Space Systems Command and the United States Space Force, offering students a rare opportunity to engage directly with professionals in the field of space exploration.

A highlight of the day was a live Zoom session with active Space Force Guardians, where students asked questions and gained firsthand knowledge about the newest branch of the U.S. military. Lane Gilcrist of the Space Systems Command, who plays a key role in acquiring satellites for the U.S. Space Force, shared his expertise on the mechanics of rockets and other space technologies.

Joining the event in person was Gilcrist's father, Mike — a Columbia Military Academy alumnus, retired Air Force Colonel, and former NASA employee — who spent the full day with students, enhancing their understanding of space science with real-world experience and stories.

Building on their new knowledge of aerodynamics, students designed and built their own air-powered rockets. The day concluded with a high-energy rocket launch on the football field, where students tested their creations in a friendly competition, applying what they had learned in a memorable, hands-on activity.

Columbia Academy is grateful for unique educational experiences like this one, which take learning beyond the traditional classroom and inspire students through real-world connections and interactive learning.



## SPOTLIGHT ON COLLETTE ESTEP

When it comes to student support, few go above and beyond like our incredible Academic Advisor, Mrs. Collette Estep. Her dedication and personal investment in every student's future make her a true cornerstone of Columbia Academy.

Each week, Mrs. Estep sends out detailed emails to senior students and their parents packed with essential updates, deadlines, and resources—ensuring no one is left in the dark during the often overwhelming college and scholarship application process. She takes the time to teach students how to speak up for themselves, particularly as they navigate applications for colleges and scholarships.

Her extensive knowledge of academic programs across universities allows her to guide students toward schools that best match their interests and career goals. Whether a student is looking for a specific major or a unique dual-enrollment opportunity, Mrs. Estep is ready with advice and tailored information.

She is a go-to expert on the scholarship and student loan process. Whether it's government aid, university-specific funding, or community-based scholarships, Mrs. Estep helps students understand eligibility, meet deadlines, and submit strong applications. Her excellent rapport with TSAC (Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation) and college representatives enhances these efforts,

providing students with even more support and opportunity.

In addition to her advising responsibilities, Mrs. Estep oversees our AP and Dual Enrollment programs. She also manages multiple important portals such as Common App, Slate, and TSSAA, uploading all necessary documents and ensuring everything runs smoothly behind the scenes.

While most students may only think about graduation in the final weeks of their senior year, Mrs. Estep spends countless hours throughout the year refining and perfecting the graduation script, making sure it accurately reflects each student's achievements.

What sets Mrs. Estep apart the most, however, is her deep understanding of the students themselves. She takes the time to learn their goals, interests, and aspirations—and then works tirelessly to help them achieve them.

We are incredibly fortunate to have Mrs. Estep on our team. Her work may often happen behind the scenes, but its impact is seen for a lifetime in our graduating seniors.





# CLUBS AND OTHER EXTRACURRICULARS



## BETA CLUB

The Beta Club enjoyed a successful year marked by strong participation, meaningful service, and continued growth, concluding the year with 168 active members. In the fall, members traveled to Nashville to attend the State Beta Convention at the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Hotel, where many students took part in a variety of competitions, proudly showcasing their skills and talents.

In March, 13 students represented the club at the Leadership Summit in Gatlinburg, further developing their leadership abilities. One of the club's most impactful projects this year involved partnering with the local Department of Children's Services. Students collected birthday party supplies—including cake mix, plates, napkins, candles, and gifts—to create "Birthday Bags" for families to celebrate children in foster care or facing hardship. A total of 35 bags were assembled and delivered to the center.

In addition, several students returned to the center to assist with organizing its donation closet, earning service hours while continuing to support the community. It has been a privilege for our club to serve in these meaningful ways.

## HOSA

The mission of HOSA-Future Health Professionals is to empower students to become leaders in the global health community through education, collaboration, and experience.

This year's group was fortunate to participate in a learning lab for proper tourniquet application with the United States Army and experience the cadaver lab at Lipscomb University's Physician Assistant program.

The competition group also had another successful year. The following students competed at the state level in March and earned the opportunity to advance to the International Leadership Conference in June.

**California Hill** — 1st Place, Extemporaneous Health Poster  
**Isaac Hilliard** — 2nd Place, Life Threatening Situations  
**Addisyn Yarbrough** — 1st Place, Foundations of Veterinary Science  
**Priscilla LoRe** — 1st Place, Foundations of Medical Terminology  
**Aspen Klare Turner** — 1st Place, Math for Health Careers  
**Ansley Chase and Chandler Hayes** — 1st Place, Health Education



## ROBOTICS

Members of our school's VEX Robotics club eagerly anticipate each season's game release, knowing it will spark countless strategic discussions and innovative design concepts. The announcement of a new challenge immediately sets teams brainstorming potential solutions—from precision launchers that propel game objects across the field to sophisticated manipulator arms capable of precise object placement. Each team must carefully evaluate their options and commit to the mechanisms that best align with their competitive strategy.

This season, the team conducted extensive analysis before deciding on their robot's core systems: an efficient intake mechanism for collecting game objects and a reliable clamping system for securing their position at scoring zones. These design choices reflected hours of deliberation about the optimal balance between functionality, reliability, and competitive advantage.

Despite the inherent challenges of the club structure, their dedication has yielded impressive results. The team recently achieved runner-up status at a regional tournament—a testament to the countless hours invested in design, construction, programming, and practice. The competitive landscape of VEX Robotics is unforgiving, with rapid development cycles and high-stakes tournaments, but these very challenges fuel students' passion for the sport and drive their continuous improvement as engineers and competitors.



## BEST BUDDIES

In its 12th year of existence, the Columbia Academy Best Buddies Chapter enjoyed a record enrollment of over 240 students in grades 9-12. Led by President Sofi SanMiguel, Vice President Cole Endsley, and Secretary Katie Beth Brown, the chapter experienced one of the most productive years in its history.

The year began strong in July when siblings Cole and Annie Endsley attended the Best Buddies Conference at Indiana University. This is a major event where chapters connect with individuals with intellectual disabilities and discuss strategies for the upcoming school year.

Events the chapter participated in included "My Day at the Fair" in August at the Maury County Fair. They also hosted Best Buddies nights at both a football game and a basketball game. Members volunteered at the Maury County Special Olympics Bowling event at Tenn Pin Alley in November. In March, several members accompanied King's Daughters students to the Best Buddies Prom hosted at Columbia Central.

Although the Maury County Spring Games, scheduled to be held on campus, were canceled due to weather, students were still able to host 40 King's Daughters athletes who later participated in the Special Olympics Summer Games hosted by Lipscomb University.

This year, the chapter raised over \$10,000. CA's chapter was the leading fundraising school for the Best Buddies Friendship Walk, contributing a total of \$4,000. In addition, they provided \$3,000 to King's Daughters School for Summer Games T-shirts and travel expenses.

Preparations for next year are already underway. Lucy Pink Carnahan will serve as President, and Annie Endsley will be Vice President. Both will attend the Leadership Conference at Indiana University in July. A secretary will be selected when school resumes in August.



## REACH

From researching and presenting on current innovations to touring the Nissan plant in Smyrna, Tennessee and Lipscomb University, REACH students have demonstrated intellectual curiosity and creative energy this year. Students recently presented their original research projects at the annual REACH forum. Topics ranged from "The Future of an AI Society" to "The Effects of Music Therapy on Mental Health." This year has been a testament to their dedication, talent, and passion for making a meaningful impact at Columbia Academy.



## SCIENCE CLUB

This club exists to give interested students an opportunity to expand their interests in science. This was accomplished in several ways. In October a Science night was held with Dr. Brad Harrub speaking in the high school auditorium about Dinosaurs and their Coexistence with Humans. He provided scientific support for that premise. Also, last year, the CA Science Club sponsored a Magic Show!



The club members also engaged with some elementary students in a program: Science After School. On 4 different days scattered during the year, club members and Dr. Farris conducted science experiments with 4th - 6th grade students. These sessions were for a nominal fee. Student participants were enthusiastic about science after being involved in these sessions. Even current club members remember the excitement when they were participants in elementary school.

Another activity club members engaged in was the STEM Night in the elementary school. K-6 students and their parents came on a winter night to do science activities at various stations, aided by CA Science Club members. It was an exciting night.

The club was privileged to enjoy having two PhD scientists make virtual visits during morning sessions following their chapel assemblies. Dr. Tara Fortier with NIST, speaking from Paris, France, talked to students about the Quantum World and how things are so drastically different there than in the macroscopic world. For another club meeting, Dr. Jacob Walker spoke via videoconferencing technology from London, England about Visual Artificial Intelligence. It was great to have such accomplished scientists take time to talk to CA's students.

Several students attended a campout at Dr. Farris's farm at the end of the year. Besides eating and sleeping in tents (or cars), they ran through the woods on a scavenger hunt (for hidden food), walked/ran through a maze in the field at night (ask them about the sheriff's deputy coming to see what was going on!), and they had a devotional. Some parents and Dr. James Thomas attended the event as chaperones.

Lastly, the year ended with a trip to the Huntsville Space and Rocket Center. There they viewed information about the US space program, got to ride some rides, and watched a movie. They thoroughly enjoyed this event!

A special shoutout goes to this year's president, LeiLani Landon, now a graduate, for her amazing organization and leadership!



# SNAPSHOTS



5th Grade Field Trip to the Huntsville Space & Rocket Center



Wearing Blue for Mrs. Malaika



Baseball State Championship - Smallest Bulldog Fans!



Walk 4 Water



First Day of School - Spring Hill Campus



Lower School Field Day



CA Christmas Parade Float



Grandparents Day



Full MAGI Boxes



Rotary Scholarship Recipients



Lower School Students Giving Teachers Flowers for Teacher Appreciation Week



CMA Day 2024



Maury Alliance Brought Business Professionals by as a Part of Leadership



Employee Mandatory Fun Day to End Summer Break

# HOMECOMING 2024



1. Spirits were high as the Dawgs geared up for the game!
2. 2023 Homecoming Queen - Addison Morgan
3. Kindergarten boys led the football team onto the field!
4. Presentation of the Kindergarten Girls
5. Homecoming Court Convertible Parade
6. Homecoming Court: (L-R) Lillian Lovell (8th), Claire Jones (7th), Paige Andrews (10th), Emmaleigh Taylor (12th), Carolina Johnson (12th), Annyston Barker (12th), BlakeLea Jackson (9th), Grace Billman (11th)

## Homecoming Queen: Carolina Johnson

The 2024 Homecoming Queen is Miss Carolina Johnson. Carolina is the varsity soccer team captain and played on the varsity softball team where she helped bring home two state championships in 2021 and 2022. She is an American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Delegate and the Pep Club President. She also serves as the Beta Club Reporter and Senior Class Treasurer. She is a member of Best Buddies, the National Honor Society, the ACT 30+ Club, and the Beta Club. She is one of our school ambassadors and life group co-leader. We are proud to have Carolina as a representation of Columbia Academy!





# WE APPRECIATE YOU!

## 2025 FACULTY AND STAFF APPRECIATION



### UPPER SCHOOL TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Lisa Sumosky



### LOWER SCHOOL TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Tiffani Sands



### PRESCHOOL TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Jessica Jones



### SPRING HILL TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Mandy Harrison



### STAFF MEMBER OF THE YEAR

David Fagan



### VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Dolly McNabb



### VOLUNTEER FAMILY OF THE YEAR

Ted and Marnie Johnson



### SERVICE AWARDS

#### 45 YEARS



Dr. Barry Farris

#### 20 YEARS



Karla Hardison

#### 15 YEARS



Emily Anderson, Laurie Love, Brandy Young

#### 10 YEARS



(L-R) - Christa Ballard, Mary Murphy, Amy Schwartz, Kathryn Phillips, Carrie Beasley, Zach Scott, Ben Jones, Beth Worley, Nathan Hixson, Delisa Cofer, Stephanie Cofer, Not Pictured: Becky England, Terry Stafford

#### 5 YEARS



Back Row (L-R): Collin Davis, Robin Hulen, Jill Jones, Carol Stout, Elizabeth Wisdom, Shelly Gentry, Mandy Harrison, Michael Harrison, McKenna Atkins; Front Row (L-R): Kelly Alsop, Lindsey Bailey, Christina King, Not Pictured: Monica Brauti

### DUNCAN FELLOW



Carrie Beasley

### GLENN HULEN AWARD



Seth Lasater

### TUESDAY CREW MEMBER OF THE YEAR



Raymond Wallace





# CA ENHANCES CAMPUS SAFETY THROUGH STRATEGIC UPGRADES AND STAFF COMMITMENT

At Columbia Academy, the safety and security of students, faculty, and staff remain a top priority. The administration continues to evaluate and implement measures that enhance campus safety without disrupting daily routines or interfering with the school’s mission. While safety improvements are an ongoing process, several notable advancements were made during the 2024–2025 academic year.

One of the most significant projects was the construction of a new entrance at the Columbia campus, initiated in the summer of 2024. This upgraded entrance was designed to accommodate increased traffic as the campus grows and now allows the school to restrict through traffic during designated times. Access is controlled via a call box at the gated entry, ensuring only authorized individuals are permitted on campus during these periods.

In addition, Lockdown Alarm stations were installed across both the Columbia and Spring Hill campuses. When activated, these stations broadcast a pre-recorded lockdown alert through every speaker, room phone, and office phone on campus. This system enables anyone who identifies a threat to quickly notify the entire campus, significantly reducing response time and enhancing the ability of students and staff to move to safety. Furthermore, these alerts provide

real-time location data to school staff, improving the efficiency of the security team’s response.

The school also continues to expand its network of surveillance cameras, increasing coverage and visibility across campus grounds. Another key addition this year was the implementation of a secondary notification system. This system alerts staff when 911 is dialed from any classroom phone, providing an additional layer of communication that works independently from the Lockdown Alarms to ensure swift awareness and emergency response.

While technology and infrastructure are vital components of a comprehensive safety strategy, the security department recognizes that its most valuable safety asset is its dedicated staff. Faculty and staff members consistently take safety drills seriously, ask clarifying questions to ensure correct emergency procedures, report facility concerns, and alert security to any suspicious activity. Their attentiveness and commitment play a critical role in maintaining a secure learning environment.

As a school, we remain deeply grateful for the dedication of its staff and continues to prioritize the safety and well-being of every student and member of the school community.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SPOTLIGHT

Columbia Academy is committed to supporting our faculty and staff as lifelong learners. Administrators and educators from the lower, middle, and upper schools embarked on several professional development opportunities to continue growing their skills and enhancing the learning experience for all.

CA is supporting 10 teachers with tuition assistance as they continue their education (master’s, specialist, doctorate degrees).

Chief Technology Officer Eric Karkau attended the annual ISTE Conference in Denver, Colorado and the MacAdmins Conference at Penn State University (July 2024).

Multiple lower school math teachers, grades K-6, engaged in Eureka Math training with Great Minds at our Columbia Academy campus (July 2024).

Multiple lower school reading teachers, grades K-6, attended a session provided by Alison Ryan of Learning at the Primary Pond, which focused on literacy, fluency, and comprehension for their students (July 2024).

Thirty teachers, including all new faculty, attended Mental Health First Aid Training, provided by Dr. James Cook of Region IV Mental Health Services (July 2024).

Eight science teachers from grades 3-12 attended the annual Tennessee Science Teachers Association Conference in Murfreesboro, TN (October 2024).

All teachers, lower, middle, and upper, attended the annual Christian School Inservice Day (sponsored by Freed-Hardeman University) at Ezell-Harding Christian School (November 2024).

Spring Hill campus interventionist, Hannah Irish, began a 30-hour Orton-Gillingham training program (runs through November and into spring of 2025).

Middle school teachers Lisa Sumosky, Mary Murphy, Allison Matney, Bryce Davidson, Kelley Loveless, and Andrea Roberson attended the annual Association for Middle Learners Education Conference in Nashville, TN (November 2024).

Upper school administrators Jon Bennett, Bryce Davidson, and Jarrett Jones along with upper school guidance counselors, Collette Estep and Brandy Young participated in LMS training offered by FACTS, formerly known as RenWeb (January 2025).

All upper school teachers attended a session by Doug Eaton on “The ABCs of AI Training for Teachers” at Columbia Academy (January 2025).

All lower school and Spring Hill campus reading teachers attended mini-sessions on fluency, phonics, and comprehension, provided by Alison Ryan of Learning at the Primary Pond (January 2025).

Dr. James Thomas, Dr. Clint Pulse, Marty DeJarnette, Bryce Davidson, and Jarrett Jones attended the annual National Christian School Conference in Austin, TX (February 2025).

Dr. Clint Pulse, Director of Academics, attended the TAIS Teacher Mentoring Conference at St. Paul’s Academy in Nashville, TN (February 2025).

All upper school faculty attended a session provided by Doug Eaton entitled “Participatory AI Workshop” at Columbia Academy (February 2025).

Teachers Kelli Bolton, Andrea Love, Shelly Gentry, Celia Owens, Emily Voss, Hannah Irish, Mandy Harrison, and Heather Diles engaged in a training provided by Erin Paske of the Nashville Dyslexia Center (February 2025).



# HONORING 40+ YEAR EMPLOYEES

Shirley Pogue’s journey at Columbia Academy began in June of 1983, starting as a Bookkeeper and ultimately serving as the Business Office Manager. Her husband, Larry, joined her at Columbia Academy after retiring from the military, taking a role in the maintenance department. Earlier this year, the couple announced their joint retirement, and while we are excited for them, we will deeply miss their presence. Over the years, both Shirley and Larry have become cherished and invaluable members of the Columbia Academy family. We wish them nothing but the

best as they embark on world-wide travels and enjoy precious time with their grandchildren.

Sally Craig was one of the founding members of the Columbia Academy team, joining in 1979, the year the school was established. Originally Sally Fowler, she quickly became a beloved teacher to upper school students. Throughout the years, Sally has made her mark not only as an educator but also by leading the cheerleading program and guiding thousands of students on unforgettable tours of New York City to celebrate their senior year. She is a deeply cherished part of the Columbia Academy family.

Dr. Barry Farris joined Columbia Academy at the start of the 1980-81 school year, and from day one, he has sparked a passion for chemistry and the sciences in his students. His genuine care for their success extends beyond the classroom, as he frequently works to create opportunities for students to explore various careers and meet professionals from a wide range of fields. Dr. Farris is dedicated to helping young minds discover their true interests, whether that leads them to science or another path. His commitment to his students’ growth and future is evident in everything he does.

Julie Thomason began her journey at Columbia Academy in the 1984-85 school year as the new 5th grade teacher, and she has been a beloved and constant presence in that grade ever since. Throughout her time at Columbia Academy, Julie has earned the admiration and affection of students, parents, and colleagues alike. Her unwavering passion for teaching and her genuine care for her students’ personal growth have been at the heart of her success.

Left to Right: Shirley Pogue, Julie Thomason, Dr. Barry Farris and Sally Craig





# ALUMNI UPDATES

## CLASS OF 1990



In July of 2025, **Major Doug Taylor** retired after 29 years with the Tennessee Highway Patrol.

## CLASS OF 1995

**Kevin Duncan** married Lindsay Joy (Rude) Duncan on June 24, 2023 and started work as the Director of the Powell Institute for Responsible Citizenship at the Collegiate School in Richmond, VA in August 2024.

*The class of 1995 will celebrate their 30th class reunion September 19 & 20, 2025. Please reach out to Kevin Duncan at [duncanade@gmail.com](mailto:duncanade@gmail.com) or Kari Robinson at [tyekmom@gmail.com](mailto:tyekmom@gmail.com) with your current address and contact information.*

## CLASS OF 1996



**Laurie (Kirk) Pewitt** graduated with her Ph.D. in Information Technology from The University of the Cumberland in May 2025. She is an instructor of computer science at The University of Tennessee Southern in Pulaski, Tenn. She and her husband, Joey, have two children. Baylie (22) is a 2025 graduate of Tennessee Tech and Jacob (19) is a 2023 graduate of North American Lineman

Training Center.

## CLASS OF 1999



**Aaron Darden** is the CEO of the Tulsa Housing Authority. Aaron has been instrumental in leading the organization's transformative efforts to revitalize Tulsa's housing landscape. Under his leadership, the River West development in Tulsa has become a shining example of mixed-income community building, demonstrating the power of intentional economic development

to create impactful change.

## CLASS OF 2001



**Allan Trevor Kirk** received the prestigious award of Power to X in New York City, March 13, 2025. Allan is a partner of Ellis and Kirkland law office in Houston, Texas, and serves clients in Houston, New York City, and London. His expertise is in mergers and acquisitions in the gas/oil and other energy departments. Power to X deals with corporations converting unused water and wind power into other types of energy that may be converted into powering cars and heating and cooling units.

Presently, he lives in Katy, Texas, a suburb of Houston. Allan's family includes his wife Kara Kennedy Kirk and children Trevor, Kennedy, and Harrison.



**Grant Pinkston**, a Major in the U.S. Army, won Outstanding Lead Performance in a Male Role in a Play at the 63rd Annual Installation Management Command - Europe Tournament of Plays (TOPPERS).

## CLASS OF 2008

**Matthew Chesnut** graduated in December with his master's degree in Agriculture with a concentration in Systems Science from UT Martin. Matthew previously received bachelor's degrees in Animal Science and Veterinary Health Technology, also from UTM. He lives in Martin with his wife, Erin, and children, Hailey and Noah. Matthew has been teaching in UTM's veterinary health technology program since 2018.

## CLASS OF 2012



**Richard and Toria (Parrett) Law** announced the birth of Whitten Troy Law. Goldie is the proud big sister.



**Bryant Pratt** was recognized as the J.E. Woodard's Teacher of the Year! Regarding Bryant, the school stated, "Mr. Pratt has been a cornerstone of our 4th-grade team, inspiring students with his passion for math and his unwavering dedication. His contributions have been instrumental to the success of our school and students."



**Wesley and Morgan (Thomason) Bland** welcomed their third baby, Amelia Jewell Bland on July 8, 2024. Proud big brother and sister are Owen and Reese.

## CLASS OF 2014



**Samantha Anderson** married Kellen Beard on August 16, 2024. They reside in Centerville, TN. Samie is a physical therapist & Kellen is a CPA.



Sophia Violet Hayes was born January 12, 2025 to **Blake Hayes**, and wife Mady, and big sister Mila Lee Hayes in Chattanooga, Tenn.



Henry Jefferson Harris, Son of **Christian** and Rebecca **Harris**, grandson of **Kyla Benderman Harris** ('88) was born on February 11, 2025.

**Vince Law** graduated from the University of Kentucky College of Medicine in May of 2025.



**Lake Lomax** graduated from Lincoln Memorial University - DeBusk College of Osteopathic Medicine. He will be doing his Residency at Eastern Virginia Medical School - Old Dominion in Norfolk, Virginia in Internal Medicine.

## CLASS OF 2017



**Shelby (Anderson) & husband Ross Wortman** are the parents of a daughter, Sutton Elizabeth Wortman, who was born May 17, 2024. They reside in Chattanooga, Tenn. Both teach at Boyd Buchanan, and Ross also coaches football.



**Wil and Kayla (Gibson) Sargent** ('19) welcomed their first baby into the world Marshall Lee Sargent on December 2, 2024!

## CLASS OF 2018



**Parker Harrelson** and **Evan Turner** were married on May 18, 2024. Parker graduated from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville with his master's in computer science with a concentration in software engineering on May 17, 2025. He started work at Fanatics in June 2024. Evan Harrelson graduated from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville Law School on May 15, 2025.



**Katie Beth (Sharp) Staggs** graduated from University of Alabama Birmingham with her Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD) in December 2024. She is now a registered occupational therapist at Greenbriar at the Altamont which has skilled rehab, independent living, assisted living, and long term care. Dr. Katie Beth Sharp Staggs and her husband, **Braden Staggs** ('18), reside in

Birmingham, Ala.

## CLASS 2019

**Dawson Carter** and **Zoe Johnson** ('20) were married July 13, 2024. They are Freed-Hardeman University graduates and the two reside in their hometown of Columbia, Tenn.



**Catherine (Cox) Cofer** graduated with a master's degree in speech-language pathology from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. She will begin working at East TN Children's Hospital in September.

## CLASS OF 2020



**Ella Johnson** will graduate from Freed Hardeman in May of 2026 with a bachelor's degree in education with a concentration in middle school science. **Jacob Pollard** ('20) graduated from Freed-Hardeman University in May of 2024 with a bachelor's in Bible with emphasis in youth and family ministry. He is currently the youth minister at Church Street Church of Christ in Lewisburg. Jacob & Ella

got engaged in February of 2025 and will be married in May of 2026.

## CLASS 2021



**Josie Harrelson** and **Landon Prentice** were married on June 6 in Nashville. Josie has accepted a job teaching 1st grade at Columbia Academy.

**Morgan Parker** was accepted to the Belmont College of Law.



## IN MEMORIAM

### Malaika Ballard

August 30, 1977 — September 10, 2024

Columbia Academy Preschool and Upper School Teacher



*"She formed numerous, lifelong friendships during the various chapters of her life, whether it be from her time in Kenya, FHU, White House, Goodpasture, CA, etc. One of her beautiful gifts was making people feel they were loved and special - no matter how long or short she knew them. She touched each person differently. I think providing an opportunity for anyone to relay their kind comments and*

*warm sentiments is invaluable and therapeutic. Thank you for your consideration."* - Colette Estep

*"Malaika Ballard exemplified the joy of the Lord more than any person I have ever met. When she began working in the Upper School, she quickly became my very best friend. We shared stories from our day as we walked around the track in the afternoons. We shared in-service lunches together. We really walked through life together—through the good and the bad. She loved me like she loved her own girls. We joked that I was the 4th Ballard girl — 'Bailie Ballard.' Malaika and I also chaperoned the City of Children trip together in 2022. It was so amazing to see Malaika in a mission environment like the one she grew up in Africa. I miss her everyday as I teach her classes. As often as I can, I remind the girls that if Malaika would want them to know anything, it would be that she wants them to get to heaven to see her again. We discuss all of the things that we need to do and don't need to do to get there. Malaika truly was the salt of the earth and light of the world, and I am so thankful that we were brought together to be friends through Columbia Academy."* - Bailie Pegg

The 2024 Recall Yearbook was dedicated to Malaika.

### Jana Robertson

August 29, 1960 — March 1, 2025

Lower School Front Desk Secretary



*"Jana was my co-worker in the elementary office, but that's only the short version. She was also the first person I met when my family moved to Columbia in 1997. We were friends from the very beginning.*

*I enjoyed reminding Jana the kids who came in the office ran past me and into her arms. I was okay with that. That's the way it should have been. With that warm smile, who could blame them? Everyone was drawn to her... students, teachers, parents, and it was a beautiful thing to witness.*

*I still sub at the high school. Occasionally a student will call me 'Mrs. Jana,' and I love it. It was an honor to be her friend."*

- Benja White

### Brian Brewer

January 14, 1975 - September 2, 2025

Class of 1993



### John Ryan Massey

July 15, 2004 — February 11, 2025

Class of 2023



### Mrs. Dot Mayfield

September 3, 1933 - September 24, 2024

Former Cafeteria Manager of 28 years



### Megan Tietgens

June 29, 1990 — October 24, 2024

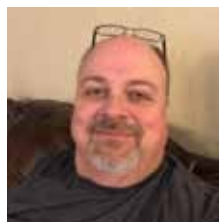
Class of 2008



### Christopher P. Thrasher

May 23, 1975 — November 15, 2024

Class of 1993



### Thomas Stone

July 21, 1969 - February 21, 2025

Class of 1987

## ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

JEFF DUNCAN ('93)

## CELEBRATING COMMUNITY SERVICE

Columbia Academy is proud to announce Jeff Duncan as the 2024 Alumnus of the Year. A true servant to the community, Jeff has consistently led by example and has earned the respect and admiration of all who know him.

For 28 and a half years, Jeff served the citizens of Columbia as a member of the Columbia Police Department, where his commitment to public service shone brightly. Throughout his tenure, he received numerous awards and recognitions. One of his most impactful initiatives is the "Shop with a Cop" program, which he founded in 2003. This program has positively touched the lives of hundreds of youth in our community, fostering meaningful connections between law enforcement and the families they serve. This initiative has grown over the years, inspiring other local agencies, such as the Maury County Sheriff's Department, to implement similar programs.

Jeff, a member of the Class of 1993, was not just an outstanding student but also an active participant in school sports, serving as a four-year member of the varsity basketball team. His spirit and enthusiasm were recognized when he was voted "Most School Spirit" during his senior year. Today, Jeff continues to be an integral part of Columbia Academy, volunteering extensively in various sports programs and managing social media for both boys' and girls' basketball teams.

His commitment to law enforcement runs in the family. Following in the footsteps of his father, Frank Duncan, a dedicated officer for 40 years with the Columbia Police Department, Jeff began his own career in November 1995. After nearly three decades of service, he retired in May 2023, leaving behind a legacy of excellence and community engagement.



Throughout his career, Jeff received multiple accolades, including:

- Floyd Hines Memorial Award (2004) from the Fraternal Order of Police for his dedication in establishing the "Shop with a Cop."
- Officer of the Year (2005 and 2019) from the Knights of Columbus, making him the only two-time recipient of this honor in the department's history.
- Howard Allen Memorial Award (2007) for outstanding investigative work.
- Chief Ed Hilton Award for Community Service (2023) from the Columbia Noon Rotary Club.
- In 2007, Jeff furthered his education by graduating from the University of Tennessee's National Forensic Academy, known as "The Body Farm."

Columbia Academy is proud to honor Jeff Duncan for his service to our community!

## THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS!

### GOLD LEVEL



### SILVER LEVEL

Howell Building Group, RX Compound Centre, NAVTechnology, Krebs Kubota, Richardson Landscaping LLC, Tommy Hight Shelter Insurance, Hill Family Dentistry

Please send all alumni updates to [ashley.gilles@cabulldogs.org](mailto:ashley.gilles@cabulldogs.org). For a free Tiniest Bulldog onesie, please include your shipping address.



COLUMBIA ACADEMY ANNUAL GIVING REPORT

Columbia Academy is truly blessed with generous supporters like you. During the 2024-25 school year, you came through in a huge way. Thank you for sharing the blessings that God has given your family to make a lasting impact on our school and our students.

Because we do not receive government funding, we rely solely on our supporters to help us fulfill our mission. While we will never achieve perfection, we are grateful to our supporters who understand our mission and love our school. Generous donors enable us to focus on teaching our students about Jesus and how to be more like him every day. Thank you to our families and supporters who helped us this year. Thank you for believing in and showing your support for the important work we do at Columbia Academy.

Your support of Columbia Academy allows us to continue to fulfill our mission:

- Our students are led by dedicated Christians inside and outside the classroom.
- Our students attend a Bible class daily.
- Our students have multiple opportunities to worship the Lord each week.
- Our students are equipped academically and spiritually so they can be successful in all aspects of their lives.

As we begin our 47th school year, we trust that God will continue to bless us as we honor Him and serve our young people and their families. Thank you again for your investment in Columbia Academy. We ask for you to continually keep CA in your prayers. The following Annual Giving Report is for the fiscal year ending May 31, 2025.

## ENDOWMENT FUNDS

Since December 1984, families have invested in the future of Columbia Academy by establishing endowments or supporting endowments by giving to them. The intent is for the principal to remain for perpetuity with only the growth and interest gained to be used for current needs.

Most of Columbia Academy’s endowed funds were created to provide need-based financial assistance for students. Thank you to the many generous donors who have helped grow the CA endowment, knowing that these funds will continually serve to provide needy students with an opportunity to learn in a Christian environment.

**Tommie Baker Pigg Endowment**  
Established December 1984

**Ruth Murphy Endowment**  
Establish June 1985

**Leon and Martha Burns Endowment**  
Established August 1985

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Established August 1985

**Earl and Edna Baker Endowment**  
Established March 1986

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Established May 1987

**N. J. and Nina Stanford Endowment**  
Established July 1987

**Daniel Thomas Endowment**  
Established September 1988

**Bluford Edwards Endowment**  
Established January 1990

**Lois Yates Farris Endowment**  
Established January 1990

**Authur and Bonnie Crabtree Endowment**  
Established January 1990

**Richard and Jessie Sowell Endowment**  
Established December 1990

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Established January 1991

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**Mr. and Mrs. Henry L. Shelby Endowment**  
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**Meredith Hubbard Endowment**  
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**Anna D. and Paul Wilson Endowment**  
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**Sherwin E. Witt Family Endowment**  
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**Thomas R. and Judith B. Duncan Endowment**  
Established June 1998

**Higginbotham-Hardison Scholarship Endowment**  
Established January 2003

**Mary Helen McMeen Endowment**  
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Established April 2006

**Frances Jackson Cranford Scholarship Endowment**  
Established April 2006

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Established May 2006

**The Glen H. Stevenson Family and Staff Educational Endowment**  
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**James D. and Willa Frances Williams Endowment**  
Established November 2009

**Grace and Hyman Frank Endowment**  
Established December 2010

**David Pilkinton Endowment**  
Established April 2011

**The Tuesday Crew Endowment**  
Established May 2011

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Established July 2012

**Graymere / Sue May Endowment**  
Established December 2012

**Josephine Mims Endowment**  
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**Tillman W. Knox Endowment**  
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**Cpl. David A. Bass Memorial Endowment**  
Established August 2023

**Adrienne Sanders Law Chair of Excellence**  
Established May 2025

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## September

- 1 Labor Day - *No School*
- 2 Parent/Teacher Conferences -  
*No School*
- 19 Homecoming

## October

- 3 Grandparents' Day - *Early Dismissal*
- 6-10 *Fall Break*

## November

- 3 Christian School Inservice -  
*No School*
- 24-28 *Thanksgiving Break*

## December

- 19 *Half Day of School*
- 22-31 *Christmas Break*

## January

- 1 *Christmas Break*
- 2 Teacher Inservice - *No School*
- 19 MLK Jr. Day - *No School*

## February

- 6 C.A.R.E. Dinner
- 16 Presidents' Day - *No School*
- 17 Parent/Teacher Conferences -  
*No School*

## March

- 19 Staff Appreciation Dinner
- 30-31 *Spring Break*

## April

- 1-10 *Spring Break*
- 16 Teacher Collaborative Day -  
*Early Dismissal*
- 17 Junior/Senior Banquet
- 23 Academic Banquet

## May

- 14 Teacher Collaborative Day -  
*Early Dismissal*
- 16 Graduation
- 22 Last Day of School - *Early Dismissal*

