

# STUDENTS FIRST

Two recent gifts enable the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences to give more than lip service to the quest for student success

by Allison Gorman, Gina K. Logue, and Drew Ruble

## THE WRIGHT STUFF



Pam Wright

photo: J. Infintoli

**T**WO MAJOR FINANCIAL GIFTS PROVIDED IN the past year promise to transform the lives of students studying behavioral and health sciences at MTSU.

The gifts, one from alumna **Pamela Wright**, arguably the most successful female entrepreneur in the state of Tennessee, and the other from real estate developer John Floyd, which was facilitated by Health and Human Performance professor **Colby Jubenville**, each focus on student success—both inside and outside the classroom.

Here's a closer look.

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Alumna Pam Wright ('73) jumpstarted the college careers of 11 MTSU students when she announced a \$100,000 donation to the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences in October 2015. The money will fund the Wright Travel Leadership Scholarship Program, an endeavor designed to motivate students through strategic coaching, formal mentoring opportunities, and pathways to scholarship money upon completion of specific criteria. Recipients will also participate in personal development sessions that will include leadership, networking, and honing interpersonal skills.

Wright graduated from MTSU with a degree in Psychology, later working in the field of social work, and eventually making a life-altering decision to form her own travel agency, Wright Travel, which is today Tennessee's largest travel agency. In making the gift to MTSU, Wright encouraged students to follow their professional passion.

“Find the thing that makes you want to go to your career every day, not to go just to a job that you don’t particularly enjoy going to,” Wright said.

“This makes me so excited for my future, actually,” said Smatha Denby, a Criminal Justice Administration major from Tullahoma. “I look forward to helping people and giving back, and I’m really grateful for the opportunity to advance in leadership.”

In addition to Denby, the 2015–16 Wright Travel Scholars, their majors, and Tennessee hometowns are:

- Mary Grace Farone, Nutrition and Food Science Dietetics, Murfreesboro\*
- Tia Pride, Psychology, Antioch\*
- Cambre Godwin, Leisure, Sport, and Tourism Studies, Hampshire
- Brittany Harris, Social Work, Murfreesboro
- Faith Metcalf, Child Development and Family Studies, Memphis\*
- Kamaria Cross, Social Work, Memphis
- Sheena Collins, Pre-Nursing, Memphis
- Erica Brown, Community and Public Health, Memphis
- Ashley Feltner, Pre-Nursing, Manchester
- Alexia Moore, Textile, Merchandising, and Design, Cordova

\* Awarded Wright Travel Scholarship for 2016–17 Academic Year

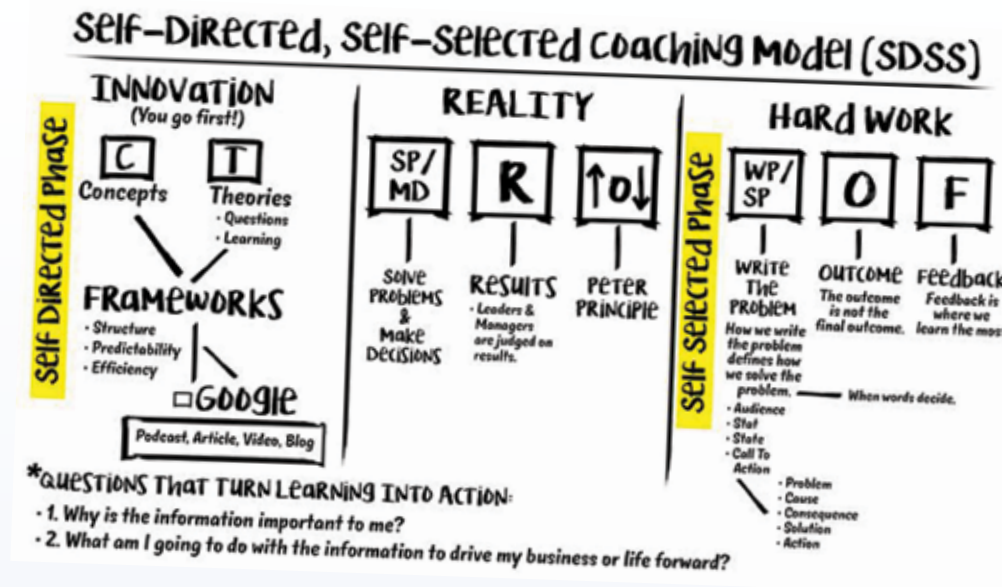
## Participating Wright Scholars must meet the following requirements to be eligible to apply for the scholarships:

- a minimum GPA of 2.5
- completion of personal development workshops
- a personal strategic plan developed and on file with the college’s student success officer
- a recommendation from a faculty member or professional mentor
- active involvement in a community or campus service project



photo: Andy Heidt

“When students step into the new CBHS Center for Student Success and Coaching, they’ll know it means business”



Speaking of the college’s student success officer, Jubenville has a clear message for the students he gets to work with who are studying in the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences.

“I’m going to do everything in the world in my power to save you if you fall out of this boat, but if you do, you’d better become an active participant in your own rescue,” said Jubenville, the man appointed by Dean Terry Whiteside to fill that role.

Jubenville has been getting the best from his students since he began building the Leisure and Sport Management master’s in 2001. Its graduates now occupy front-office positions in top-tier franchises like the Houston Astros, Tennessee Titans, and Talladega Motor Speedway, as well as crucial industry organizations such as the Nashville Sports Council.

All those success stories caught the attention of Whiteside, who now offers Jubenville’s special brand of one-on-one mentoring college-wide. The Center for Student Success and Coaching, located in Alumni Memorial Gym, is now the official space for Jubenville to do what he’s been doing unofficially for the last 15 years.

When students step into the new CBHS Center for Student Success and Coaching, they’ll know it means business, Jubenville said. From its oversized whiteboard to its logoed carpet, the space will reflect the corporate America where CBHS grads hope to land.



Colby Jubenville

photo: Andy Heidt



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Through individual, peer, and group coaching sessions, the center will help students make the leap from college to career by focusing on four areas:

#### **Academic skills and critical thinking**

Students will learn Jubenville’s self-directed, self-selected coaching model to learn to effectively solve problems and make decisions, just as they will be expected to do on the job.

#### **Emotional intelligence**

Studies have shown that the ability to identify and manage your own and others’ emotions is the strongest predictor of workplace performance.

#### **Personal branding**

Using materials from “Me: How to Sell Who You Are, What You Do and Why You Matter to the World,” students will create a personal brand for a competitive edge.

#### **Career development**

In partnership with the MTSU Career Development Center, students can complete personality/career assessments, develop their résumés, train for interviews, and take advantage of new technologies like CareerShift and Career Clustering.

Jubenville practices what he preaches. He has built an impressive professional network, become a sought-after speaker and consultant, authored books, and racked up high-profile honors like the *Nashville Business Journal’s* 40 Under 40 award and the Nashville Emerging Leaders Impact Award. Along the way, he’s met some key people that are drivers of the middle Tennessee economy. One of those drivers—the aforementioned Floyd—Jubenville coached through the economic downturn and helped launch the Center for Student Success and Coaching at MTSU. Additional major gifts are in the works that will bolster the new center’s size and scope.

From an on-campus perspective, it’s fair to say that the center will showcase what it has done that no other college can match. But the center also promises to be a solid competitive advantage for all MTSU students when it comes to both student recruitment and retention.

# Credit Where Credit is Due

Brelinda Johnson, advising manager in the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences, works with students on a daily basis who lack management skills regarding their financial health.

As a part of a scholarship program and in an effort to fill this need, Johnson, with the support of her CBHS advising team, extended their student support services to the area of managing credit in order to ensure student success both now and in the future.

Bea Perdue, CBHS development officer, provided Johnson with a close contact she had at Wells Fargo to get the program started. Last fall, Wells Fargo representatives came to campus to conduct a credit workshop for CBHS students.

The Wells Fargo logo is displayed in a red square. The words "WELLS" and "FARGO" are stacked vertically in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font.

“Our college is here to assist students become better citizens,” Johnson said. “We want to assist our students to develop skills that will aid them both in the classroom and in life.”

Many student approaching graduation and eyeing their first professional jobs don’t realize that prospective employers commonly conduct a credit check as part of the interview process to better size up a candidate’s qualifications and character. The workshop discussed credit scoring, credit cards, and budgeting. According to Johnson, students felt it was beneficial and asked great questions.

It’s just another example of CBHS putting its money where its mouth is regarding student success! ●