

An abstract painting of a phoenix, rendered in vibrant blue, orange, and black brushstrokes, set against a teal background. The bird is depicted in a dynamic, rising posture, with its wings spread and tail feathers fanning out. The colors are bold and expressive, creating a sense of fire and rebirth.

PHOENIX

MSAAA NEWSLETTER

REUNION
ANNOUNCEMENT

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT
HELEN LE

ELECTION TIME

READ ABOUT
MSA ON
THE LOCAL NEWS

President's Note

I can't believe that the 2018 Reunion is almost here. Preparations have been underway for several months now for what promises to be one of the most exciting reunions to date, very fitting considering we're also celebrating the bicentennial of our state this year! We are so extremely thankful to our strategic partners who have helped us along the way in planning and advertising for the Mississippi Boychoir performance that will accompany this year's reunion and help us replenish the Rising Phoenix Scholarship.

It has never been easier to support MSA and give back: membership to MSAAA is available through the MSA website for only \$10 a year, with 100% of that going straight to the alumni scholarship. Your donations have provided Rising Phoenix Scholarships to three students over the past year and a half, and we want to double those numbers soon. Membership in MSAAA also pays for you to attend the Reunion. That's a sweet deal!

Even if you can't attend the reunion or join MSAAA, you can still help us by spreading the word not only about the 2018 reunion this May 19th, but about MSA and the opportunities available to students in Mississippi.

Hope to see you soon!

Sincerely,

Brianna Moore-Christa
MSAAA President



Do you want to be a contributor? Please send your submission to msartsalumni@gmail.com for approval.



14TH EDITION

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Brianna Moore-Christa*
Editor

Shelby Hamilton*
Co-Editor/Producer/Art Director

JH Sprenkle
Contributor

Representatives are shown with an asterisk ().*



ABOUT THE COVER ART

Olivia Lindsey

Olivia's work has been inspired by the artist Samantha French and other impressionist artists for some time now. She attended MSA from 2007 to 2009 and continued her education at The University of Southern Mississippi, then at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community college, where she received her Associates of Arts Degree. Olivia is currently attending the University of Maryland for a Bachelors Degree in Graphic Communications. Through the bumpy road of life she has continued to draw and paint commission pieces than art for herself. Her preferred medium is Prisma

colored pencils and graphite, but she also enjoys pulling out acrylics from time to time. "The biggest goal I've set for myself," says Olivia, "is to become a known local artist and a decent graphic designer, but I married military so it will take me time to establish that."

She has learned that she doesn't always know what she wants to do in life, but will always have her artistic talent to fall back on. "The best advice I can offer, through learned experience, is that hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard."

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PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

Brianna Moore-Christa
Visual Discipline 2005



Over the past two years as President, Brianna has overseen the organization and planning of the 10th, 11th, 12th, and 13th MSA Reunions, which have in recent years included alumni from Whitworth College in addition to all classes of MSA alumni, as well as the implementation and fundraising of the Rising Phoenix Scholarship, which was awarded to two students in 2017 and paid for a third student to travel to New York City and perform in Carnegie Hall in 2018. Brianna also wrote and helped implement the bylaws of MSAAA and spearheaded the effort to merge MSAAA's financial account with the MSA foundation to provide financial security and oversight to the association. As president, Brianna has organized several major fundraisers for the Rising Phoenix

Scholarship, including booths at Hog Wild Festival and Ole Brooke Festival in Brookhaven (for the past four years), and the upcoming Mississippi Boychoir concert that will take place on the MSA campus. 2018-2019 goals for the alumni association include providing two more scholarships to current MSA students and continuing to grow the association, particularly the database of alumni MSAAA is able to reach and continuing to provide enhanced opportunities for alumni to assist in recruiting for MSA.

2010-2011 Secretary

*2014-2018 Class Representative
(Class of 2005)*

2014-2018 Newsletter Co-Editor

2015-2016 Vice-President

2016-2018 President

SECRETARIAL CANDIDATE

JH Sprenkle
Visual Discipline 2005



JH Sprenkle is the mind behind the online empire of Al Hatter the dragon king (Art Hat with Albrecht995), a youtube art channel that specializes in mythical creatures, visual psychology, and occasionally weird abstract textures. Her day job consists of freelance stagehand and film work and she often lives in the belly of Baabee, her Honda Odyssey. Part-time road warrior and vagabond extraordinaire, her goal is to draw the dragons of the world, one odd nook at a time.

She's supported the alumni organization through volunteering at past reunion events and created the design for the 2017 Christmas card. Her plan is to continue supporting the organization in whatever might be needed as it continues to grow in the year to come. She's particularly excited at the alumni involvement at Ole Brook and the possibility of expanding alumni involvement to other Mississippi art festivals.

2017-2018 Secretary

VISUAL REPRESENTATIVE CANDIDATE

Shelby Hamilton
Visual Discipline 2009



After graduating from MSA, Shelby Hamilton pursued her passion for art by attending Memphis College of Art and graduated with a BFA in Illustration. From there she taught art classes at the Jewish Community Center in Memphis, TN, worked with graphic design and social media at Delta Technical College in Horn Lake, MS, and became the Internal Communication and Design Specialist for Caesars Entertainment Mid-South in Robinsonville, MS. Shelby has knowledge in fine art and digital art, and she works with both on a daily basis. She understands the hardships that young artists face in small business and large corporations when continuing with their

visual, artistic passion. Shelby and her husband are welcoming their first child in the fall and they cannot wait to introduce it to the world that MSA has helped to create.

Shelby has worked closely with the MSAAA Newsletter Committee to create cover art pieces and has helped with the initial development of The Phoenix Quarterly since its beginning in 2014. In 2017, she took over as the Co-Editor, Producer, and Art Director of the Phoenix Quarterly. Shelby hopes to set up a mentoring program between alumni and recent graduates to help young artists achieve what they want out of their art and to set them on the best possible path.



Dorian Davis

Theatre Alumni Dorian Davis recently starred in an Academy Award nominated short film, *My Nephew Emmett*. The twenty-minute film was nominated for Best Short Film (Live Action). Set in Mississippi, the film depicted the struggle of 64-year-old Mose Wright as he tried to protect his young nephew, Emmett Till, from a lynch mob in 1955. Initially released in August of 2017, the film was released around the world on February 9, 2018. *My Nephew Emmett* was originally an NYU graduate project directed by Kevin Wilson Jr., who stated, "This was an exercise we used to practice our craft, so I never thought that assignment would get to the point where it's nominated for an Academy Award," he says. "It's shocking." (CBS). While producing the film, Wilson also received the Student Academy Award for Best Narrative.

Dorian Davis is currently filming *Santa Girl* in the role of Billy Stevens, and joined the Shenandoah Conservatory in his third mainstage production this past February while pursuing a BFA in Musical Theatre. Dorian is also part of a student-led Shakespeare troupe, *Shut Up! It's Shakespeare!* and an improv comedy troupe, *The Loaf*.





FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK

Stay up to date on opportunities, events, and what your fellow alumni are doing by following MSAAA on Facebook! If you are a member of our MSAAA Facebook group, make sure to follow us by checking the "Notifications" box on the top right hand side of our page. You don't want to miss out on the exciting things that are happening!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/msaaa/>

SUPPORT MSA RENOVATIONS BUY A COMMEMORATIVE BRICK

By purchasing an engraved brick you are given the means by which to become a lasting part of the Mississippi School of the Arts. Each newly engraved brick will be placed in the walkway of Lampton Auditorium at MSA. You will also be contributing to further improvements to the campus and facilities at MSA. Order forms are available at Mississippi School of the Arts or by clicking [here](#).

\$ 100
4"x8" Brick

\$ 250
8"x8" Brick

\$ 500
8"x8" Granite
Custom Paver

2018 MSAAA REUNION

May 19

MORE ACTIVITIES AND DETAILS COMING SOON

LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS

It's time to start planning for the 2018 MSA/Whitworth Reunion! MSAAA is excited to announce that this year will be an extremely special year: The Mississippi Boychoir has agreed to put on a special performance during the reunion to benefit the Rising Phoenix Scholarship. We've also lowered the cost of admission (which is still FREE for MSAAA members) to \$10 per person! The Reunion is our biggest fundraiser of the year, and ALL proceeds of this event benefit the Rising Phoenix Scholarship, so please spread the word. We hope to see you there!

Saturday, May 19

Registration	10:00 a.m.	Enochs
Historical Tour of Campus	TBA	Enochs
MSA Registration	11:30 a.m. (Register early if interested in Historical Tour)	Enochs
Silent Auction Bidding		Enochs
Lunch	Noon	Enochs
Performance by the Mississippi Boychoir	2:00 p.m.	Mary Jane Lampton Auditorium
Water Ballon Fight to Follow!		Bell Tower

Helen Le

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Vocal Alumni Helen Le of the class of 2011 was recently the first Asian-American to be featured on the cover of Signature Magazine for their Spring Fashion Issue. We caught up with Helen to ask her some questions about what she's been up to since graduating from MSA:

I live in Hattiesburg, MS. I am a full-time nail tech. I specialize in nail art and embellishments. It's funny that I attended MSA for Vocal Music, and I do "visual work" on people's nails. I never expected to follow my mother's footsteps in the nail industry, but I enjoy it. It still allows me to get creative and meet some really awesome people. It was never an ideal career path for me, but it pays the bills and funds my music endeavors. I've recently gotten back into singing/songwriting and producing under my artist name, Heart of Troy. I've been teaching myself how to make my own beats, because sometimes other producers don't always understand your sound like you do. I also collaborate with other artists, and I actually frequently collab with one of my best friends Erisse Peterson (aka PLANES) who produces and is also a fellow alumni in my same graduating class. And she majored in Theater! I haven't gone completely public with music yet, but I have project in the works that I'm very excited to share.

I try not to think (or obsess) too much about the future anymore, because in a way it distracts me from taking the necessary steps to get where I really want to be. I get so caught up daydreaming about it, and I can get so excited that I don't even know where to start!

I've always aspired to be a singer/songwriter, and it wasn't until recently that I've felt a shift to pursue it. I've began to fully immerse myself into music full force again, and I feel really good about it. I used to always feel discouraged about pursuing music, because it's so easy to feel invisible in a world full of extraordinary creatives. There were times when I felt that being a woman of color, I wouldn't be seen or I couldn't be heard. Yet, I feel more motivated than ever to discipline myself and to believe that it's still possible. It's hard and so easy to feel inadequate, but it only means you have to work harder and make time for your dreams. Other than my own project, I am simultaneously working with more friends and artists. I hope someday everyone will listen and feel something.

On successes:

Musically, I've done a few things here and there. I was featured on PLANE'S "SOMETHINGMISSING" EP with a song called "Swim in the Dark". The EP gained a good bit



of attention and was featured on The Fader. I was also featured on Pell's "Floating While Dreaming" album with a song called "Gibberish".

I have done some photography work awhile back, and some of my work has been featured in online mag's. One of my favorite sets that I've done has been with my muse and dearest friend Sanvernetas Thomas in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He has walked in NYFW for designer, Stevie Boi. Recently, I landed being on the cover of Signature Magazine, which is a popular magazine in the Pine Belt. I am the first Asian girl to be on the cover, and I am truly grateful that I got to be a part of it. Also, being a pretty cool godmother to Marley (whose mother is also an alumni and my best friend, Shannon Beranich) is on my list of accomplishments.

Advice for future alumni:

One of my favorite books is called The Alchemist, and I recommend this book to anyone. The main character, Santiago, is on a pursuit to see the pyramids, and in one particular chapter he settles in somewhere and gets a job cleaning crystals. The crystal merchant confides in Santiago and tells him about a pursuit of his own but fell into the trap of complacency and fear. He says to Santiago, "I'm afraid that if my dream is realized, I'll have no reason to go on living."

I feel like most of us lose sight of what our pyramids are. I know I have. There was a point in time when I've felt like everything I will ever feel the rest of my life would be "less versions" of extraordinary things I've felt, including MSA. There were times when I've felt comfortable in what I was doing and convinced myself that this is how I want my life to be. But, I think about when I first applied to MSA and that invincible feeling it gave me when I got accepted. I think to myself, "Who was that girl and what changed? When did the magic stop? Did it ever really have to stop, no matter the circumstances?" We told ourselves that we are capable of dreaming, and we did it. We've done it before, why can't we do it now? Why not now? So, my advice is to never stop, no matter how uncomfortable it is.

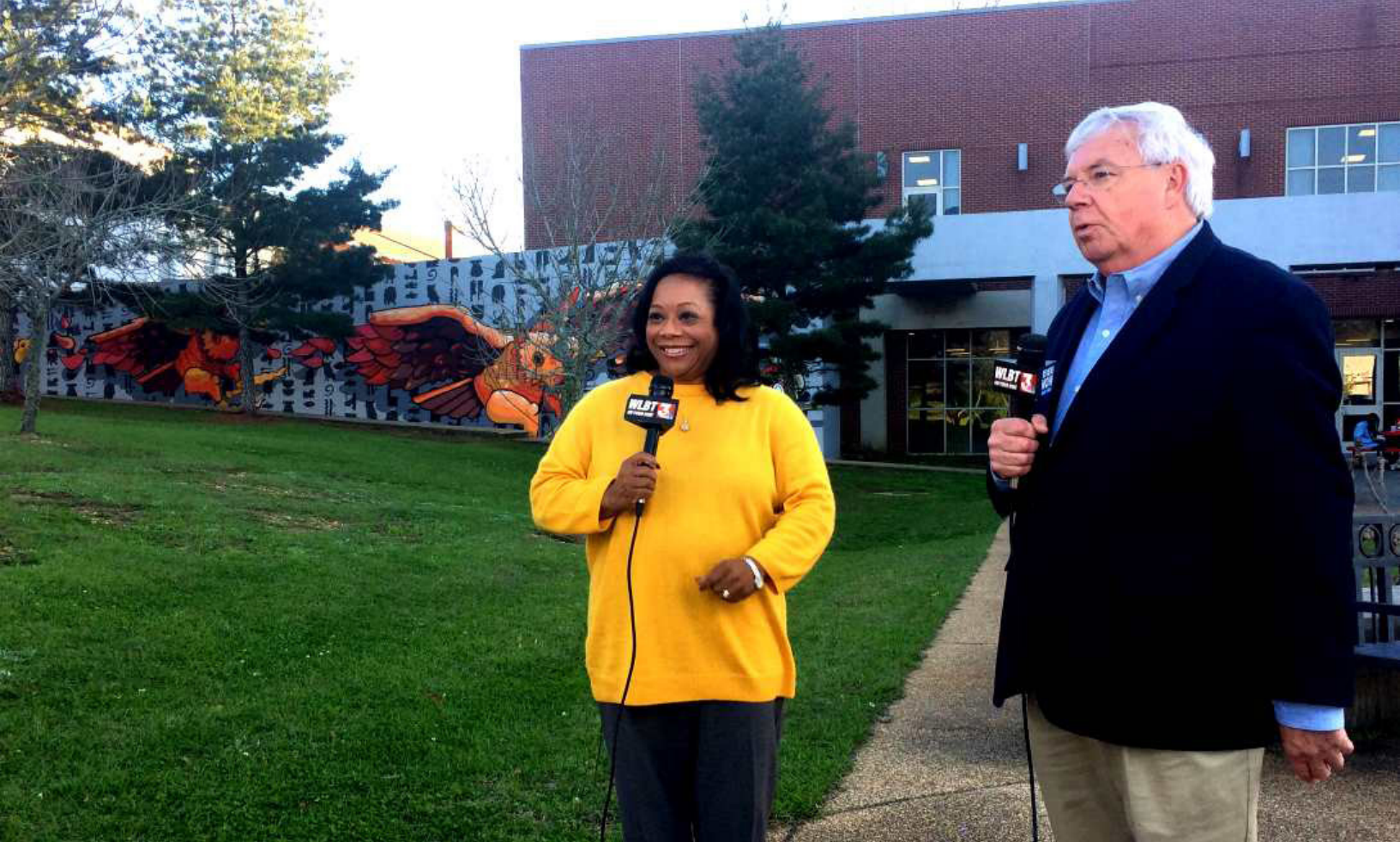
There is purpose in this experience. There is purpose in where you are now. There is a light to every single human being who gets to walk through those hallways. I feel it every time I visit, and I know, as students, you feel it all around. Don't take this experience for granted. You deserve more art school after art (high) school. You deserve to constantly be surrounded by people who are passionate about creating and being a part of something bigger than you. You deserve to keep believing in your dreams, even if you feel like no one is rooting for you. You deserve to create and to never limit yourself to



feeling ordinary, when this place is made help you realize how incandescent your light and your gifts are. This world deserves you. This world deserves to witness what you have to offer, and what you are able to express through creativity. I wish when I was graduating from MSA that I had someone to tell me, "don't be afraid." So, don't be afraid, you were made for this. You were made to shine. You are special, and I know that you feel it, too. Hold it, keep it, and carry it with you through these next two years and for the rest of your life. This is just the beginning.

Your younger sister was recently accepted to MSA- what advice do you give her on how to make the most of her experience at MSA?

First and foremost, I am so so extremely proud of you. It can get tough sometimes, kid. I know you can handle it. Embrace everyone and really get to know your classmates. Study them, learn, them, and accept them. You are creating, living, eating, and breathing with them every day. Join as many clubs as you can. Don't spend too much money at the Piggly Wiggly, and listen to your floor mom. You will cry a lot. You will also laugh and smile a lot. Sometimes, you will question if you belong, but you do. You always have. Stay motivated and never feel inferior. Support your classmates and your friends. Accept the criticism. Most importantly, be yourself. You're pretty rad, and they will love you. Just like I do.



IN THE COMMUNITY

MSA was recently featured on WLBT's 3 On The Road by AP Hall of Fame reporter and author Walt Grayson and Woman of the Year and Lifetime Achievement recipient Maggie Wade. On March 6th, Grayson and Wade showcased the campus, students, and history of MSA in a segment that shared information across the Jackson area to the WLBT audience. Grayson mentioned that MSA is one of only nine specialized art high schools in the entire country, as well as the fact that MSA seniors received over ten million dollars in scholarship offers last year. He stressed the importance of the opportunities provided at MSA, as well as the necessity of access to the arts. To view the segment online, visit the link below:

<http://www.msnewsnow.com/story/37662254/3-on-the-road-mississippi-school-of-the-arts>

AD SPACE AVAILABLE! FREE FOR YOUR FIRST EDITION

Do you have a product or service to sell? Are you an artist in need of promotion? When it comes to fund raising, MSAAA wants to help support our association by integrating with our members and our local communities in Mississippi through selling ads in our newsletter *The Phoenix Quarterly*. All proceeds go to our Rising Phoenix Scholarship that helps fund a special incoming MSA junior each year. We even have volunteer designers to create your ad. Ads will run for 12 months.

PRICING

Full Page ad: \$50/year per ad

Half Page ad: \$30/year per ad (FREE for your first edition)

Quarter ad: \$15/year per ad



Without your input and contributions, the twelfth edition of our MSAAA newsletter would not have been possible. *The Phoenix Quarterly* is made by the alumni for the alumni. If you would like to contribute to future editions or have suggestions please reach out to our newsletter committee by emailing us at msartsalumni@gmail.com.

You can download previous editions of *The Phoenix Quarterly* [here](#).

Thanks for reading and be sure to share!



Brianna Moore-Christa
President

Jessica Sprenkle
Secretary

Shelby Hamilton
Visual Representative