

# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Rhodes College



## Rhodes Community,

It is with great sorrow that I must open my February newsletter with an acknowledgment of the tragic events this week at Michigan State University. We grieve alongside everyone impacted by this terrible tragedy, and Rhodes College stands with Michigan State and all the other educational institutions impacted by these senseless acts of violence. We urge our students and employees to take advantage of the many resources available for support if you need help processing either these horrific events or the continuing impact of the Tyre Nichols tragedy here in our beloved city of Memphis.

I also want to express my appreciation for the community's understanding and flexibility when we had to cancel classes for three days in February due to the ice storm. I especially want to thank those of you whose critical roles meant you had come to campus despite the weather to assist our residential students and ensure that essential facilities could remain open.

## Poet Laureate of the United States Visits Rhodes

We are honored to have a special guest on campus next week. Ada Limòn, the 24th United States Poet Laureate, will read from her poetry as part of the annual Jack D. Farris Visiting Writers Series on Thursday, Feb. 23. The event is free and open to the public, beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the McCallum Ballroom of the Bryan Campus Life Center. A reception and book signing will follow. The author of six books of poetry, she is currently part of a collaboration involving NASA and the Library of Congress in which she will craft a new poem to be engraved on NASA's Europa Clipper spacecraft, expected to be launched in 2024. While visiting Rhodes, she will speak to students in the Advanced Poetry Writing course taught by Dr. Caki Wilkinson. This is quite an honor for Rhodes. More information can be found [here](#).

## Philanthropy News

Hopefully, you saw the wonderful news that we have recently received two gifts to support our incredible faculty and students. The first was a [\\$2 million gift](#) from the estate of Dr. Frances Elaine Donelson '59. The F. Elaine Donelson Chair of Psychology and Religion will recognize the outstanding work of a psychology faculty member and provide resources to enhance their research and teaching. The gift also establishes an endowment to support student fellowships to engage in research alongside our psychology faculty.

The second was a [\\$1 million endowment](#) thanks to the generosity of Patricia and Charles Robertson, Jr. The Charles and Patricia Robertson Biology Faculty Research Fund will provide \$50,000 annually to the Department of Biology to fund new and ongoing faculty-led research. Charles Robertson is a trustee and a member of the class of 1965. These initiatives could not have been funded without the generosity of our alumni. The College's annual Giving Day will be March 28-29 so look for more information on that soon.

## Lynx Athletics Success

Warmest congratulations to Coach Steve Webb and the swimming and diving program. The women's team won the SAA title, while the men's team finished second. Adeline Carroll '25 received the Swimmer of the Year award. Jack Whitten '26 earned the Men's Newcomer of the Year title.

Our indoor track team had 12 personal best marks in Birmingham last week. Jared Briant '23 broke the school record in the 3000-meter run. Rachel Sullivan '23 is currently ranked seventh in the nation in the high jump while Ace Cole '23 is ranked 9th in the nation in the pole vault. Additionally, Olivia Freeman '26 is ranked 14th in the nation in the 60-meter dash.

Men's basketball won two conference road games and is the second seed going into the SAA tournament. Women's basketball can solidify a number two seed with a win tonight. The Lynx baseball team won a huge non-conference game against Emory last Friday, and congratulations to first-year Coach Rebecca Arbino for winning her first softball game with the Lynx.

## Coming Up

We are beginning preparations to celebrate the College's 175th anniversary this fall. A planning group has been meeting for a couple of months, and we will share preliminary plans later this semester.

Thank you so much for being part of the Rhodes community.

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Collins

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