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# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Rhodes College



Dear Rhodes Community,

I hope you had a peaceful and restorative break and that the new year brings good health and happiness to all of you. I was very sad to have to share the news about our beloved PJ to start off the year, and I know you all miss her terribly. We are in the process of ordering a small memorial and will share more news about a dedication and remembrance ceremony when we have received it. In the meantime, there is a temporary marker at her favorite spot for you to visit.

As you know, two of our most newsworthy graduates right now are Justice **Amy Coney Barrett '94** and Congresswoman **Jasmine Crockett '03**. In furtherance of our commitment to free expression and civil discourse, I have invited them both to campus to speak this semester. Although we are still working to secure a date that works for Congresswoman Crockett, I am delighted to announce that Justice Barrett has accepted our invitation to come to campus and will be here on March 18. In advance of her visit, Provost Tim Huebner and I will be hosting a book discussion on March 3 at 4:00 p.m. to discuss her recent book, *Listening to the Law: Reflections on the Court and The Constitution*. Stay tuned for additional details about her visit and the book discussion as we work to finalize the plans.

We had some wonderful news come in over the break. The first is that the American Council on Education and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching announced that Rhodes has met all criteria for the [2026 Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement](#). We are one of only 277 institutions recognized with this designation. The Carnegie Foundation noted that we documented with clarity and distinction how we are deepening partnerships, leveraging community assets, and addressing urgent societal challenges, and that we demonstrated excellent alignment among campus mission, culture, leadership, resources, and practices that support dynamic and noteworthy community engagement. This classification is valid until 2032, at which time we can apply for reclassification. I want to thank Dr. Natalie Person who led this effort and everyone who worked so hard on putting this application together. Thank you as well to our incredible students, faculty, and staff who show up every day to support and engage with our Memphis community in such a rich variety of ways.

We were also selected among the top institutions in the nation for study abroad participation, according to the [Open Doors 2025 Report on International Educational Exchange](#) released by the Institute of International Education (IIE). We ranked in the following categories: #30 for number of undergraduates participating (284 total for Rhodes), #34 for participating baccalaureate colleges, and #18 for number of students participating in short-term programs. These rankings reflect U.S. students

studying abroad during the 2023/24 academic year. The Open Doors report is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State.

**Dave '84 and Elizabeth Martin Neithamer '84** met during Opening Convocation their freshman year and have been together ever since! Rhodes has been important to their family for years, with both their daughter Kelsey and Elizabeth's aunt and cousin attending. They recently endowed **The David '84 and Elizabeth Martin Neithamer '84 Scholarship for the Sciences** to help make a Rhodes education possible for students who can contribute meaningfully to the Rhodes community. The scholarship will be awarded to a student interested in pursuing a degree in the fields of science to include chemistry, biology, physics, neuroscience, computer science, and mathematics.

One of our recent graduates, **Dulce Mario Salcedo '22**, is featured on the cover of *Memphis Magazine* this month. You can read the cover story [here](#). Dulce said, "Looking back on everything in my life, I think Rhodes is 100 percent the highlight of my existence," she says. "I think being in college opened so many doors for me, and it taught me so many valuable lessons, and I was able to meet so many people that truly inspired me." We are so proud of you, Dulce, and all the work you are doing to serve our community.

This is the time of year when we proudly honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I hope you will take the time to attend some of these events or perform an act of service in his honor. You can find a full calendar of events [here](#). You can also visit the National Civil Rights Museum for free Monday. Its list of activities can be found [here](#). On campus, we will be hosting Dr. Chelsea Yarborough for a Martin Luther King, Jr. Day lecture on January 20 at 6:00 p.m. in Hardie Auditorium, Southwestern Hall.

In terms of winter sports, the Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving Teams are undefeated in SAA meets, with one conference meet at Sewanee remaining before the SAA Championships in Danville, KY, in February. Men's Basketball is 2-1 in the SAA, 11-3 overall, and is coming off two big road wins at Sewanee and Centre, while Women's Basketball also won at Sewanee. Spring sport athletes return to campus this week, with practices beginning for each team over the next eight days.

I want to remind our students that I have set aside office hours to meet with them each semester. I will be available to meet with students individually or in small groups. I love to hear students discuss their career goals and listen to their thoughts about events happening on campus. [You can sign up here](#).

I wish you all the best with the beginning of the semester, and thank you so much for being part of the Rhodes community.

**Jennifer M. Collins**  
President



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