



Stephens College

ALUMNI F.Y.I.

NOTE FROM THE ALUM OFFICE



Dear Stephens Alums,

First order of business: A big congratulations to our **2024 graduates!** Welcome to the Stephens College Alumni family! We are thrilled to have you join our vibrant community of Stephens alums.

We encourage you to take advantage of all the opportunities to connect with fellow alums, including joining **Stephens Connect**. Make sure to save the date to attend **Alumni Weekend next year on April 24-26, 2025**.

Alumni F.Y.I. is our newsletter about you! We are anxious to watch your stories be told through your many life events and accomplishments to come. Whether you graduated in 2024 or 1944 (or any year before or between), we hope you'll stay in touch. **Share your news with us** so we can share it with fellow alums. We would love to showcase you and share our pride in your news and achievements.

Warm Regards,

Shannon

Shannon Blankenship Walls '93
Vice President for Advancement
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To read previous editions of Alumni F.Y.I. – click [here](#)

STEPHENS CONNECT



Congratulations to the Class of 2024, and welcome to the Stephens College Alumni Family. We invite you and all alums to join Stephens Connect, our secure Online Alumni Community and Directory for Stephens Alumni only! You'll be able to engage, connect, and support Stephens alumni from all over the world. Join today to post news about your lives and careers, post and seek job opportunities, and more. To get started, click [here](#).



The **2024 Alumni Weekend** was a blast filled with joy, fun, connections, and re-connections! If you want to view what you missed or reminisce on this great weekend, view snapshots of campus and candid moments from various events through our [Stephens College Alumni Photo Gallery](#). We also have recordings of the [Alumni Awards Ceremony](#) and the [President's State of the College Address](#). If you want to know everything about what we're doing on campus, there is no better way than watching the State of the College! Mark your calendars for next year's **Alumni Weekend, April 24-26, 2025**. It will be another unforgettable experience for you to reconnect with friends and faculty, meet current students, and see the beautiful campus that brought us together.

NEWS FROM ALUMNI

Entertainment News



For seven seasons, **Annie Potts '73** played the beloved Connie/Meemaw on the T.V. show *Young Sheldon*.

Young Sheldon is a spinoff prequel to *The Big Bang Theory* that follows Sheldon Cooper growing up with his family in East Texas. Annie played Connie, or Meemaw, Sheldon's fun-loving, sarcastic, patient grandmother. Craig T. Nelson, who played Connie's beau, Dale, had this to say about working with Annie, "She's very outspoken, mischievous, really funny all the time...She is a wonderful person to be around, be with, and act with." These are all characteristics of a Stephens alum!

Annie grew up on a farm in Franklin, Kentucky. When she was about 8, she got a taste of the stage. Annie participated in the Little Miss Franklin-Simpson County pageant, where she told a joke about her dog. While she doesn't remember details about the joke, she recalls she loved the embrace of the audience's laughter. In 1964, her family traveled to New York for the World's Fair. There, she saw her first Broadway show, *High Spirits*, which starred Stephens alum **Tammy Grimes '53** as Elvira Condomine.

Annie attended Stephens College, graduating in 1973 with a B.F.A. in theatre. After Stephens, Annie made her television debut in *Black Market Baby*; the following year, she would debut on the big screen in *Corvette Summer* as Vanessa, opposite Mark Hamill. She is best known for her roles in popular films such as *Ghostbusters* and *Pretty in Pink*. Annie starred in *Designing Women* as feminist Mary Jo Shively and voiced Bo Peep in the *Toy Story* franchise. Annie also performed on Broadway and debuted in *God of Carnage* in 2009. Of note is her Broadway appearance as Berthe in the Tony-winning revival of *Pippin*. Annie's list of awards and accomplishments is more than impressive throughout her 47-year career.

The ride's not over for fans of *The Big Bang Theory* and *Young Sheldon*. The spinoff (of the spinoff), *Georgie and Mandy's First Wedding*, following Sheldon's older brother, is slated for the fall. As for Meemaw continuing in the role of Georgie's grandmother in the new show - Annie says, "Well, I've not been formally asked... But they're aware that I'm a workaholic, and I love them. They're brilliant...Who knows?"

Looking ahead, Annie said she would do the right series, movie, or play and is considering a one-woman play.

Annie reflects on her storied career in a Daily Beast article that is available to read [here](#).

Awards and Honors



Amy Lau '91 of Amy Lau Design was featured in the April issue of Architectural Digest for her work on a Manhattan penthouse. Amy is “known for her educated eye and skill in seamlessly marrying art and decorations with customization.” She said she “wanted to create something Scandinavian with a bit of glitz...But the biggest goal was to harness the sun and make it feel light and airy.” Over the years, Amy has been a keynote speaker for the Phoenix Art Museum and has been featured in publications such as Elle Décor and Martha Stewart Living. Amy has won several awards for design, including receiving the Architectural Digest/AD 100 Award and being named to the New York Magazine’s Top 100 List consistently since 2012. Learn more about Amy and see the work of Amy Lau Design [here](#).

Tia LaFavor '10, '11 began volunteering with Rebuilding Together North Texas (RTNTX) in 2013. RTNTX is a nonprofit based in Plano, TX, that works to preserve affordable homeownership and revitalize communities with free home and facility repairs. Over the years, Tia has been instrumental in spearheading the creation of the Young Executive Program to



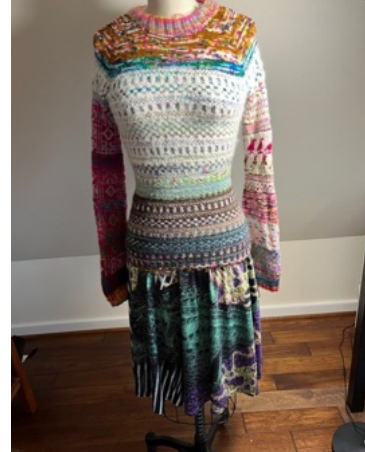
empower young individuals to contribute to their communities. Tia joined the Board of Directors by stepping in as the interim Co-Executive Director. From there, she made a career shift to the corporate world to become the RTNTX Director of Operations. She was promoted in the fall of 2022 and now serves as the Executive Director. Read more about Tia and Rebuilding Together North Texas [here](#).



A new playground in Richmond, KY, was dedicated in honor of **Joan Kay Johnson Kleine '60** on April 27, 2024. Joan was a long-time teacher in Richmond, KY, where she lived with her husband, Dr. Glen Kleine, and their three sons. Joan passed away in March 2023, but her legacy and love for children live on at Joni's Playground.

Sharon "Boo" Gonzalez '86 recently completed the United States Hunter Jumper Association Instructor Credential Program. Boo is now one of 21 credentialed instructors in the U.S. Additionally, USHJA has asked her to be an examiner for the credentialing program. The USHJA Instructor Credential was developed to offer a comprehensive educational program for riding instructors. The coursework includes expanded content in athlete wellness and safety, sports psychology, stable management, equine laws, ethics, marketing, branding, riding theory, learning styles, and teaching methodologies that preserve the American Hunter Jumper Forward Riding System. Boo is also the Owner, Instructor, and Trainer of Dublin Farms Ltd. Dublin Farms is a full-service Hunter Jumper training facility located in House Springs, MO.





After graduating from Stephens, fashion alum **Lauren Buttner '16** pursued a career in “sewing more than fashion.” This led her to the Chicago Mascots (with fellow alum Sierra Hughes' 17), where she had an opportunity to work for the Chicago Bulls. She was the first woman assistant to Benny the Bull in the organization’s history and the first Costume Coordinator for Chicago Bulls Entertainment. Currently, she is the personal tailor to Cortney Hall, host of N.B.C.’s Chicago Today, and serves as Assistant Manager at Coach in Old Orchard, just outside Chicago. Lauren recalls that during her Stephens graduation ceremony, President Lynch said, “Most of you will work jobs that don’t exist yet.” Those words echo in her mind constantly. She says her passion for sewing and the foundation of her Stephens B.F.A. in Fashion Design and Product Development has sent her further than she could have imagined.



Ann Maitland Burton '75 is a second-generation Stephens graduate. Her mother, **Marion Pool Burton '45**, was also an alum. Ann retired from Real Estate Investment Brokerage and 22 years of elected office at the second-largest public utility, Salt River Project, in Tempe, AZ. She now lives in Maui, Hawaii, and is busier than ever playing pickleball, renovating her Polynesian pole house, and farming. She grows persimmons, bananas, fuji apples, and protea flowers and has fresh eggs on her farm.



Vice Admiral Nancy E. Brown U.S.N. (RET) '73 was featured on WJPF Morning Newswatch to discuss Stephens College and Mission Promise Kept. Vice Admiral Brown was recognized for her commitment to Stephens and Mission Promise Kept at the dedication ceremony of the newly opened Center of Excellence for Veteran Success held during the 2024 Alumni Weekend. Listen to her interview with WJPF [here](#).



Jane Reid '80 reported that **Gwen Godfrey '54** celebrated her 90th birthday on May 11. In 1976, Gwen introduced Jane to Stephens while they were neighbors in Orinda, California, and they have remained dear friends. Jane recently learned that Gwen also lived in Pillsbury Hall. To quote Jane, "Once a Stephens Susie, always a Stephens Susie!"



Tamara Laskowski Freeman '05 of Houston, Texas, has spent over 20 years in education, communication, and marketing. When her son Jack was born in 2009, her friends gifted her a Stephens College onesie. Recently, her mother found more Stephens hoodies and sweatshirts that her 9-year-old daughter, Andie Lynne, proudly wears wherever she goes!

CAMPUS CONNECTED EVENTS

Now is the Time - World Premiere



The world premiere of *Now is the Time* opened at Talking Horse Productions on April 19, 2024. This captivating musical features a poignant score arranged by Stephens Adjunct Instructor Audra Sergel and book written by former Assistant Professor of Music and Musical Theater Trent Rash. The production delves into the raw and honest stories of our collective humanity.

The production has further ties with Stephens. It featured alum actors, including **Danielle Simpson '22** and **David Michael Hall '18**. Stephens fashion design major **Claire Johnson '25** designed the costumes, and Enola-Riann White, Stephens College Director of Philanthropy and Engagement, served as stage manager.

If you have news about your career or family to share with us for future editions, please submit it [here](#) or email us at alums@stephens.edu.

In Memoriam: *Honoring the Lives and Legacies of Our Departed Stephens Family:*



Nancy Pattison Fyfe Cardozier '45, creator of Sursum statue at Stephens College

Nancy Pattison Fyfe Cardozier was born November 18, 1925, in Covington, Tennessee, to Peter and Gracey Pattison McNeely Fyfe. She died on April 25, 2024.

She earned degrees from Stephens College, The Art Institute of Chicago, and Memphis State University, after which she taught art at various times to all grade levels, from elementary school to university. In 1955, she married Dr. V. Ray Cardozier, whose career led the couple to several academic posts.

As a volunteer, she lent her efforts to promoting the visual arts, serving as an officer and board member of the Texas Society of Sculptors for several years. She was also a supporter and a docent for the Umlauf Sculpture Garden and Museum.

Art was a talent she enjoyed sharing. Locations enhanced by her sculptures include the memorial garden of the First Presbyterian Church, Austin, the Austin Recovery Center, the First Protestant Church in New Braunfels, and several places in other cities, in both public and private collections, including Stephens College.

On October 15, 2006, Stephens College held a dedication ceremony for the Sursum statue, a 400 pound statue cast in bronze. Nancy had the following to say about Sursum: "At last, here she is on Stephens' campus, where I hope she will serve to inspire all who pass by to lift their eyes to more clearly see the world and their role in it, to lift their hearts toward the higher nobler things in life, with arms outstretched to embrace and celebrate life as it opens before them."

Linda Podas Chapman '65, '07, former Stephens Alumnae Board member



Linda Ellen Podas Chapman passed away on April 6, 2024, from natural causes after five years of battling multiple myeloma. Born on August 11, 1945, she was the youngest of four children of Minnie (Jerry) Irene Taylor Podas and Charles Robert Podas. Linda graduated from Washburn High School in 1963 and earned her associate degree from Stephens College, Columbia, Missouri, which she fondly called "the best two years of my life!"

In 1970, Linda married James Montgomery Chapman, with whom she had two daughters, Caroline and Melissa, before divorcing in 1987. She moved to Santa Barbara, California, where she became deeply involved in her community through the Junior League of Santa Barbara, Braille Auxiliary, Music Academy of the West, and Family Service Agency. She actively participated in her daughters' schools, Laguna Blanca School and San Marcos High School, often serving on boards to be part of decision-making.

Linda worked at Sansum Clinic for over 20 years, first in Allergy & Immunology with Dr. Myron Liebhaber and then with the Clinical Research team, supporting Alzheimer's trials. Later, at 71, she worked at Northern Trust Bank in Montecito, where she cherished the camaraderie of her colleagues.

One of Linda's proudest moments was earning her Bachelor's degree in science, Cum Laude, from Stephens College in 2007. Her daughters, sister, and three beloved Stephens classmates attended the ceremony. Her diploma was presented by Dr. Wendy Libby, whom Linda helped recruit as Stephens' President. She served on the Stephens Alumnae Board and received the 2006 Stephens College Alumni Service Award.

Janice (Jan) Moses Durret '50, former Stephens College Trustee



Janice Ethelyn Moses Scott Durrett (Jan)

'50 retained her wry, self-deprecating humor throughout her life, using laughter to soften life's hard edges.

Born October 27, 1930, in Junction City, KS, to George Gemeny Moses and Helen Marie Johnson, Jan grew up with a love for competition and tennis, which she played into her late 80's. She valued education, attended Stephens College (1948-1950), and earned a Bachelor's degree from K.U. (1950-1952) and an M.B.A. in 1980.

Jan married Warren Durrett in 1972; he passed in 2002. She was actively involved in the Kansas City Jazz music community and utilized her M.B.A. to run Triangle Enterprises, managing Olathe Townhomes from 1982 until their sale in 2018.

Jan supported many organizations, including Stephens College, Kappa Kappa Gamma, The Village Presbyterian Church, League of Women Voters, D.A.R., NAWBO, NSWTA, and the Overland Park Racquet Club.

For the last five years of her life, she lived with her adult children and extended family on the West Coast, a precious time filled with her consistent, analytical guidance. Her granddaughter, Casey Jo Collins, described her as a "relentlessly social person," enjoying gatherings, good music, and cheering for her favorite teams: the Kansas City Chiefs, Kansas City Royals, and Kansas University Jayhawks.

Her three adult children survive Jan from her first marriage to Rush Scott: Sherry Scott Collins of Tacoma, WA; Alan Rush Scott of Prescott, AZ; and Linda Sue Scott with her wife, Terryl Tagg of Carmel Valley, CA. She also leaves behind her granddaughter, Casey Jo Collins, with her wife, Sarah McLaughlin, and great-grandson, Cosmo Wesley Collins, born December 21, 2023, whom she held at five days old. Other survivors include her grandson Josh Damon, his son Kai, and granddaughter Tanny Scott of AZ.

Remembering Our Beloved Alumni:

1940s

Ann Corey Phipps '40; Albany, OH
Virginia Scheer Lyon '41; New York, NY
Harriett Pearson Swager '41; Grapevine, TX
Nancy Fyfe Cardozier '45; West Lake Hills, TX
Maria Pero Helmly '48; Miami, FL
Nina Opland Wright '49; Kerrville, TX

1950s

Janice Moses Durrett '50; Tacoma, WA
Helene Hardenbrook Streich '50; Colorado Springs, CO
Ruth Norby Pfeifer '52; Cape Coral, FL
Mary Sylvester Swetnam '52; Lees Summit, MO
Cynthia Larkins Hyatt '53; East Liverpool, OH
Judith O'Rear Rohr '56; Crows Landing, CA
Gail Williamson May '57, Salem, OH
Patricia Noble Dickson '58; Santa Barbara, CA
Helen Horne Gabler '59; Oceanside, CA
Mary Taylor Watson '59; Virginia Beach, VA

1960s

Sheahan Glaspie McGavin '60; Vancouver, BC, Canada
Patricia McWhinney Webb '60; San Clemente, CA
Pamela Lake Williams '62; Fort Worth, TX
Frances Carol Spaeth Simmons '63; Redmon, WA
Linda Podas Chapman '65, '07; Santa Barbara, CA
Suzanne Robbins Oelklaus '66; Overland Park, KS
Miriam Fredrick Slate '66; Kokomo, IN
Anne Suiter Cherowitzo '67; Westminster, CO

1970s

Gloria Scott '77; Springfield, MO

1980s

Nancy Shipp Ball '88; Wellsville, KS

GIVING

Celebrate Our Ideals



As we approach the conclusion of this fiscal year, we Celebrate Our Ideals. We invite you to contribute to the ideal or fund that touches your heart. Click [here](#) to contribute to the ideal or fund that touches your heart.

This year has been nothing short of exceptional, with each of our **Ten Ideals** coming to life:

- **Creativity:** Our Fashion Show celebrated its 80th anniversary; [Harbinger and Stephens Life](#) continue to be award-winning publications, all supported by the Dean's Fund for Excellence in Integrative Studies.
- **Respect:** Our competitive [Stars Athletics](#) produces WINNING athletes, supported by the **Stars Club and Scholarship Fund**.
- **Responsibility:** Through our **Beautiful Campus Fund**, we carefully steward our historic campus as a holistic living and learning environment for our students.
- **Intelligence:** New initiatives, like the [Stephens Promise](#), offer eligible students up to four years of tuition-free education, and Latin American Student Initiatives continue to help our students achieve their academic pursuits through the **Stephens Scholarship Fund**.
- **Independence:** The innovative [Block Schedule](#) set to launch in Fall 2024 promises immersive learning experiences made possible by gifts to the **Student Experience Fund**.
- **Courage:** Our [Women in the Trades](#) program empowers individuals to break boundaries and support their families through generous contributions to the **Workforce Development Fund**.
- **Belief:** Our commitment to women veterans is unwavering, as seen through establishment of the [Center of Excellence for Veteran Success](#). The center is an integratal space to serve women veterans and those enrolled in the **Mission Promise Kept** program.
- **Leadership:** The [Conservatory for the Performing Arts](#) is a leader in the artistic community, and funding is from the **Dean's Fund for Excellence in the Conservatory for Performing Arts**.
- **Sensitivity:** Introducing new programs like the [Animal Behavior Degree](#) and [Women in Stem Research](#) highlight our dedication to health sciences, supported by the **Dean's Fund for Excellence in the Health Sciences**.
- **Support:** Gifts to the **Stephens Fund** provide the foundation to meet the evolving needs of our students, embrace innovation, and honor Stephens' rich history.

How to Give

Click the button below to give:

GIVE TODAY

While You're Away

- Join [Stephens Connect](#)
- Shop at [Susie's](#) and sport your Stephens Gear
- Travel with alums: [Stephens Alumni travel opportunities](#)
- Give to [Celebrate Our Ideals](#) and support the accomplishments of the 2023-2024 year
- Refer Students and Spread the News about [The Stephens Promise](#)
- Follow our social media sites curated especially for Alums:



When You're On Campus

- Plan a mini-reunion with your friends: [Contact us!](#)
- Bring a prospective student for a [campus visit](#)

GIVE. CONNECT. RECRUIT.

Thank you for staying connected to Stephens!

To read previous editions of Alumni F.Y.I. – click [here](#)