

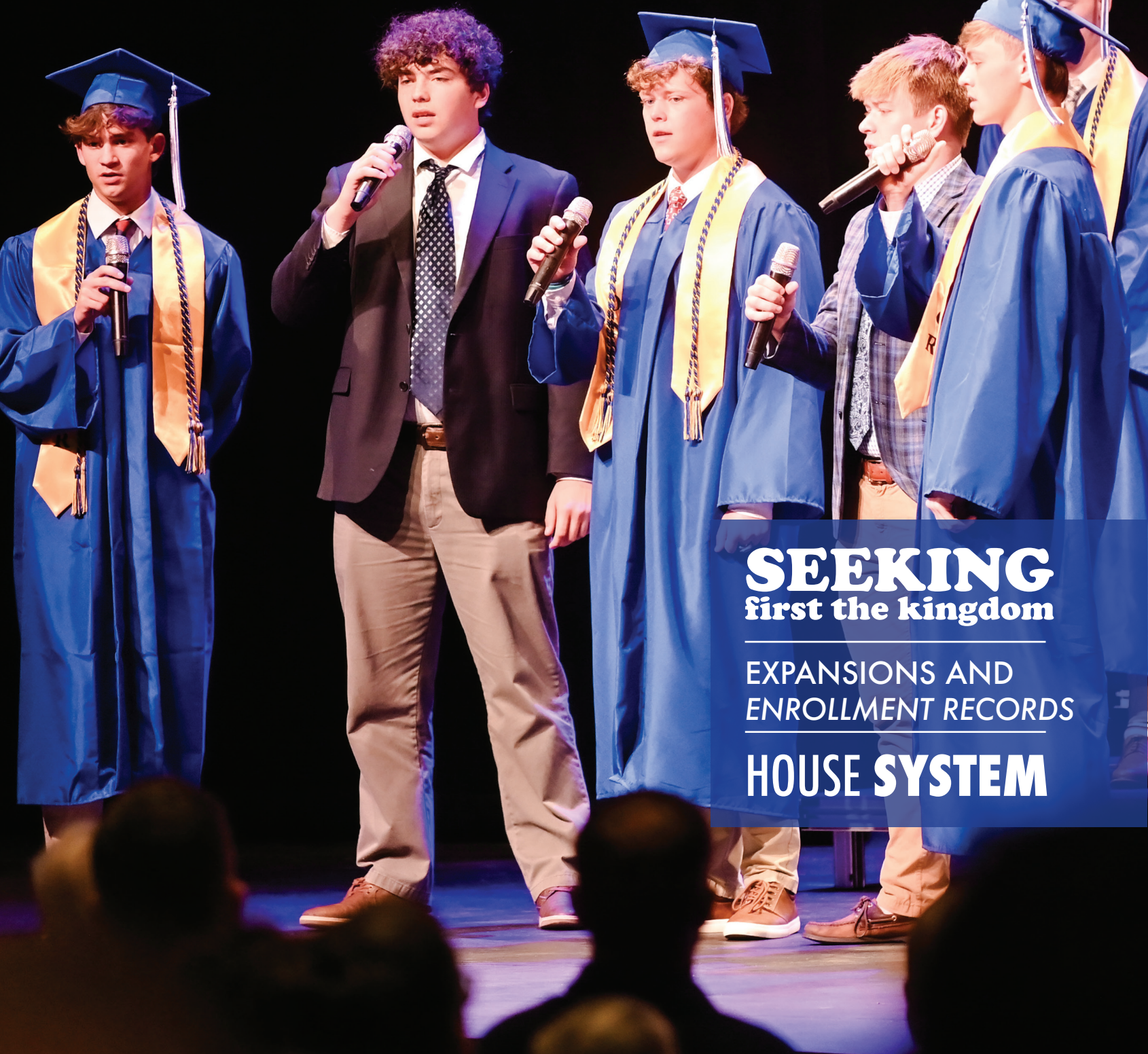


MARS HILL

BIBLE SCHOOL

# PANTHER NOTES

Summer/Fall 2025



**SEEKING**  
first the kingdom

EXPANSIONS AND  
ENROLLMENT RECORDS

**HOUSE SYSTEM**





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BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
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Matt Burgess

PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR  
Rachel Chandler

Office of the President

The Lord continues to bless our beautiful corner of His kingdom. Jesus spoke of His people being a “city on a hill”—a city that creates collective light in a dark world. Faith’s light at Mars Hill is burning brilliantly and brighter than ever. This is because we stand on the strong shoulders of so many before us who had a vibrant vision, made deep sacrifices, and demonstrated unwavering faithfulness. Today, we see a new generation renewing the noble mission set out in 1871 by founder T. B. Larimore: to bring the excellence of Christian education to the Shoals area.

The greatest honor we can give our past is to forge new paths for the future—to commit ourselves to bless and plan for students yet to walk our halls, and to pass the torch of Christ’s light to those who follow. The school is unified in strategic planning to see clearly who we are and where we are going.

Our facilities have been recently updated in a myriad of ways. The middle school received new lockers, fresh paint, and beautiful murals. New cafeteria floors, additional auditorium chairs, and much-needed repairs across all campuses were completed over the summer. The board boldly pressed forward with an investment in a gym renovation after much planning and deliberation, adding seats and amenities that set a new standard of quality for our players, students, and spectators to enjoy.

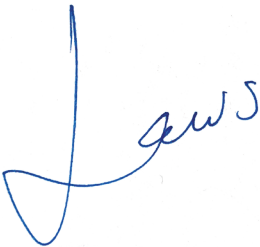
Mars Hill’s greatest measure of success is the outcomes and achievements of our students. Last year, our senior class was awarded over 4 million dollars in scholarships from outstanding universities. Our overall ACT scores averaged 23% higher than the state average, and students are finding their place in prestigious collegiate programs. Our academic offerings have expanded with courses such as Greek, Physics, Dual Enrollment Biology, and Western Civilization, just to name a few.

We have seized opportunities to strengthen and support the safety of our students by adding more critical infrastructure and partnering with the Florence Police Department. We have also expanded support for our students’ mental health by establishing a counseling department with additional resources and personnel.

Our athletic program is recognized as the best in the state, with multiple sports achieving state championships and our teams competing at the highest levels. Go Panthers! We look forward to seeing even greater success in all areas of the school: spiritual growth, leadership, academics, arts, student life, and much more.

Mars Hill has been blessed with so many who truly prioritize Christ, care for children, and champion educational excellence. With this foundation, we move forward at light speed.

In Christian love,



Dr. Laws Rushing II  
President



# Big Growth. FIRM FOUNDATION

GYMNASIUM RENOVATION  
SCHEDULED FOR  
COMPLETION IN FALL 2025



12,000-FOOT EARLY EDUCATION  
WING OPENED FALL 2024

Over the past five years, our elementary programs have experienced significant enrollment growth, with interest continuing to rise. At the same time, our preschool programs have continued to maintain extensive waiting lists. To meet these needs, a 12,000-square-foot early education addition opened last fall. This new wing features six preschool classrooms, five elementary classrooms, and administrative offices. One of the many benefits of this expanded capacity to serve young learners has been the addition of two new Transitional Kindergarten classes beginning in fall 2025–26.



PARTNERSHIP WITH FLORENCE  
POLICE DEPARTMENT

In today's tumultuous times, the safety of our students is a top priority. To address needs in this area, the 2024-25 brought two major changes. First, a FEMA grant allowed for the upgrade of campus notification, surveillance, and access systems. These systems will enable enhanced security measures and faster response times in case of an emergency situation. Second, a partnership with the Florence Police Department brought a daily police presence and the friendly face of an SRO to campus. These officers have gone above and beyond to help our students feel safe, secure, and loved.

NEW TURF PLAYGROUND FOR  
PRESCHOOL AND ELEMENTARY  
COMPLETED FALL 2024



NEW SENSORY AND COUNSELING  
CLASSROOM



## Fifth Consecutive Year of Enrollment Growth

2024-25 welcomed almost 800  
preschool-12th grade students to campus daily.





*"Mars Hill Bible School has played an important role in the lives of our family, especially Rosemary's. All three of our children attended Mars Hill from preschool through high school graduation. Mars Hill is where Rosemary and I met and fell in love. The students still remember our courtship that year."*

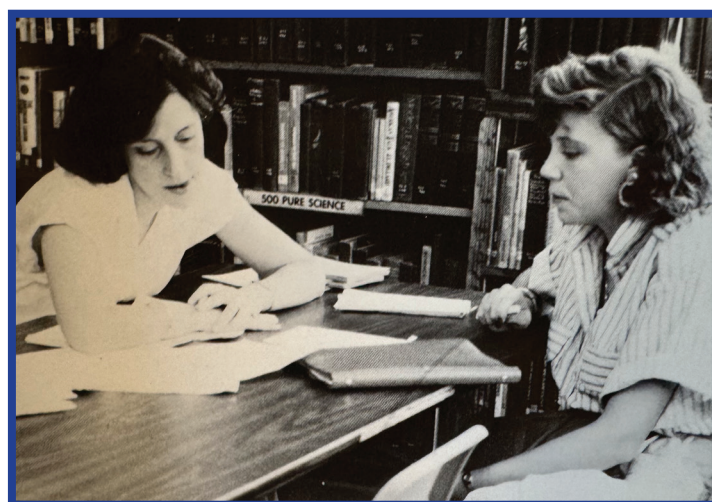
*Yes, Mars Hill played an important role in Rosemary's life, and she has played an important role in the life of Mars Hill. She had so many different roles at Mars Hill: student, alum, teacher, guidance counselor, parent, grandparent, board member.*

*So, just as Mars Hill left its fingerprints on Rosemary, we believe that she has left her fingerprints on the school she loved so very much."*

**- Don Snodgrass**

Dr. Rosemary Snodgrass, a beloved member of our school family and Board of Directors, passed from this life on July 31, 2025.

Throughout the years, Dr. Snodgrass touched nearly every part of life at Mars Hill. Her enduring legacy at Mars Hill and in Christian education stands as a powerful testimony to her deep faith and love. MHBS is forever grateful.



*Alumni of the Year* **DANNY SMELSER**  
CLASS OF 1969



**MHBS was pleased to honor  
Dr. Danny Smelser as Alumni of the Year  
at Homecoming 2025.**

Dr. Smelser, class of 1969, has spent his life and career serving in the field of emergency medicine. He and wife, Nancy, have dedicated much of their lives to the work in Tanzania, working as medical missionaries leading the work at Tanzania Christian Clinic and Alpha Omega Christian Secondary School. They have also loved filling the role of Mars Hill parents and grandparents!



ACCOLADES

Mars Hill  
Bible SchoolMars Hill  
Bible School

Mars Hill  
Bible School

**JAIME BANKS**  
Middle/High Teacher of the Year  
Art

Mars Hill School

**MORGAN SNODGRASS**  
Elementary Teacher of the Year  
Second Grade/Robotics

Mars Hill  
Bible School

**STACY JACKSON**  
Employee of the Year  
Middle/High Administrative Assistant





# CLASS OF 2025



*Panther Power...*

SCHOLARSHIP DOLLARS AWARDED

**4.2 million**

GRADUATES PLANNING TO ATTEND COLLEGE  
OR APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS

**98%**

GRADUATES WHO EARNED AN  
HONORS DIPLOMA

**72%**



Every class is special, but the Class of 2025 truly stood out as a high-achieving, spiritually grounded group of servant leaders who have left a lasting mark on our school community. From initiating a weekly boys' Bible study called FELLAship to assisting with elementary car line each day, they have put their faith into practice at MHBS. As they step into the next chapter of their lives, this class leaves behind a legacy of leadership and Christ-centered purpose that will inspire younger Panthers to follow in their footsteps.



**ELI POUNDERS**

Larimore Award Recipient

"Mars Hill has helped me grow so much in my faith and in my spiritual growth. Being surrounded by people who love me and love the Lord has been such a blessing and will make an impact for the rest of my life."



**CAILEE DANLEY**

Salutatorian

"From the board, to the teachers, to the coaches and directors, everyone works hard to make Mars Hill a great, Christ-centered, hardworking school that pushes its students to grow academically and spiritually."



**WINN CROOK**

Valedictorian

"Mars Hill has provided me with a safe and nurturing environment in which I could build my faith and strengthen my relationship with Jesus. Mars Hill prepared me for my next chapter in life."





## 'A BRIGHT AND BURNING LIGHT': BELOVED TRADITIONS FOR A NEW GENERATION

### LARIMORE AND PUNKIN DAYS BRING MEMORIES AND FUN

On September 13, MHBS celebrated a historical remembrance of the life of T.B. Larimore. This founder's day event was the inaugural celebration of an annual event designed to provide our students with a synopsis of the rich legacy of Mars Hill Bible School. Alumnus Dr. John Young and former president Dr. Nathan Guy reflected on Larimore's history and faith, followed by a schoolwide chapel with all students and staff.

November brought the rebirth of a beloved tradition... Mars Hill Punkin Day! Hundreds of members of the MHBS community came out to enjoy a gorgeous day of old fashioned chicken stew and homemade corn dogs, games, pumpkin painting, dunking booths, crafts vendors, and so much fun.

Please join us on Saturday, November 1 for Punkin Day 2025!



## Return of the Punkin Day



MARS HILL  BIBLE SCHOOL

# PUNKIN DAY

**Saturday, November 1, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.**

A MARS HILL TRADITION!

Inflatables | Petting zoo | Dunking booth | Games |  
Arts and crafts village | Chicken stew, corn dogs, meals, snacks

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR PUNKIN DAY 2025!**





# Panthers in the HOUSE

MIDDLE SCHOOL  
INTRODUCES  
HOUSE SYSTEM

HOUSE OF SUCCESS



HOUSE OF KINDNESS



HOUSE OF COURAGE



HOUSE OF GIVING



This spring, Mars Hill middle school launched the House System, a dynamic program designed to build community, inspire healthy competition, and cultivate student leadership. Every student and teacher became a member of one of the four Houses - Altruismo, House of Giving; Isibindi, House of Courage; Nukumori, House of Kidness; and Protos, House of Success. Through team-based challenges, service projects, and celebrations, the House System will benefit middle school students with stronger relationships, accountability, and a sense of belonging.





As part of our strategic plan, MHBS has made significant investments in supporting student mental health, recognizing its essential role in both academic achievement and holistic growth. A sensory and counseling classroom was opened during the 2024-25 school year. In 2025-26, MHBS is transitioning from a part-time to a full-time elementary counselor and adding a dedicated full-time middle school counselor, ensuring consistent care and guidance for our students at critical stages of development. In addition, mental health days focused on specific topics will be implemented throughout the year, giving students practical tools and space to build resilience and well-being. Together, these efforts reflect our commitment to nurturing students mind, heart, body, and soul.

*My child has changed. He's simply happier since he's been at Mars Hill, and that's worth everything. - Mars Hill Parent*



# Mental Health Matters

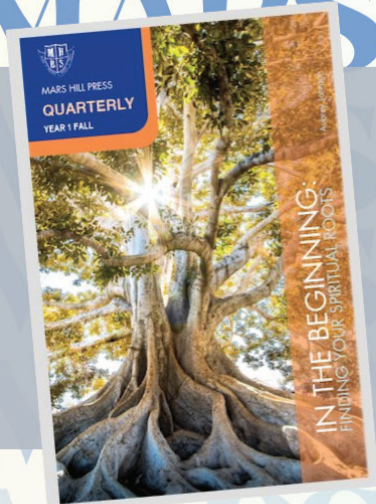


**BEN HAYES**  
Elementary Counselor  
"Mars Hill has always been a special part of my life. My mom worked in Housekeeping before I was old enough to attend. I am excited to continue to work to create a Godly and encouraging experience for all who come through these doors."

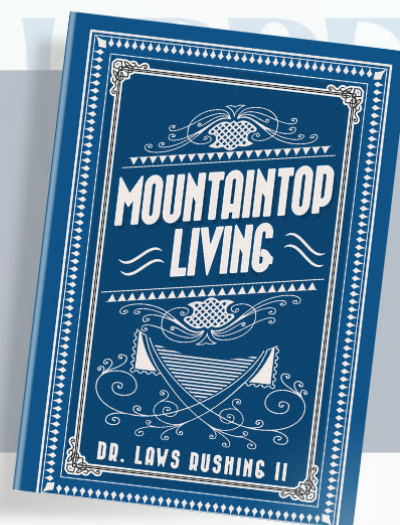
**KRISTEN WALLACE**  
Middle School Counselor  
"Mars Hill is a special place, and I am thankful to be able to work alongside so many strong Christian colleagues and to have the opportunity to shape the social, emotional, and spiritual lives of our students."



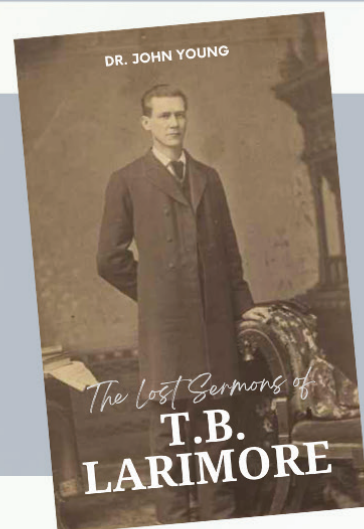
# MARS HILL PRESS



**NOW AVAILABLE**  
 Adult Bible Study Quarterly  
 Quarter 1  
*In the Beginning: Finding Your Spiritual Roots*  
 by Aubrey Johnson



**NOW AVAILABLE**  
 Mountaintop Living  
 by Dr. Laws Rushing II



**COMING SOON**  
 The Lost Sermons of T.B. Larimore  
 by Dr. John Young

Quality materials for personal, small group, or Bible class study. Proceeds go to Mars Hill Bible School.

**[lambertbookhouse.com](http://lambertbookhouse.com)**

# (FOUR) BANNER YEAR

Panthers Collect Two State Championship and Two State Runner-Up Trophies





# MASTER CLASS



FACULTY HOLDING A  
MASTERS DEGREE:

70%



## ACADEMICS SET A STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

At MHBS, academic achievement continues to soar. In 2024–25, the very first graduating class to complete diploma tracks set the bar high—72% earned honors distinctions, and 14 seniors achieved the coveted Larimore Honors Diploma, the school's highest academic recognition. The coming year brings even more opportunities for students to thrive with fresh F Block courses in ACT Prep, Debate, Robotics, and Shoals History, alongside a new fine arts option in Creative Writing.

**Did you know? Seven out of ten MHBS faculty members hold a Master's degree, and another 15% of faculty members and administrators have completed or are pursuing advanced post-master's or doctoral studies.**



## ACADEMICS

I AM A MARS HILL BIBLE  
SCHOOL SCHOLAR.



I am a **lifelong learner**, which means I commit myself to a life of **exploration** and **discovery**.



I am part of a **school family** that **respects, works, grows, learns, and succeeds** together.



I am a **hard-working student** and a **servant** to my family, school, and community. I give my very **best**.



I am **competent, compassionate, and conscientious**, and I work with **honesty and integrity**.



I plan for **success** and settle for nothing less than **excellence**.



I **lead** when called, **follow** when necessary, and **bring glory to God** in everything I do.





## ARTS

I AM A MARS HILL BIBLE  
SCHOOL ARTIST.



I am an **explorer** who brings joy, **creativity**, and a **curious spirit** to every endeavor.



I **respect** and **encourage** my fellow artists. I am a **motivator** who works for the good of my group.



I give my very **best** in the pursuit of my **gifts** and **talents**.



I have a **positive attitude** and dedicate my **all** to every practice and performance.



I am **punctual** and **committed**. I **lead** and **listen**.



I practice **humility** and **bring glory** to God in everything I do.

## PANTHERS IN THE

# Spotlight



In 2024-25, Mars Hill students participated in over 25 outstanding performances. Key moments included a moving band and choral Veterans Day tribute, three showstopping show choir nights, a sold-out middle school production of Mary Poppins Jr., an inventive mini-golf box project that showcased students' design and construction skills, and a vibrant student-directed variety show. Every TK-8th grade student engages in the arts daily as a part of their core curriculum, and nearly half of high school students continue to actively participate in the arts. At MHBS, the arts are more than an extracurricular - they cultivate talent, build confidence, and celebrate the God-given creativity in every student.





# BUILDING CHAMPIONS

MARS HILL ATHLETICS



## STUDENT ATHLETES EXCEL ACROSS DISCIPLINES

The 2024–25 school year once again showcased the extraordinary depth and consistency of Panther athletics. Across every sport, MHBS teams demonstrated the discipline, grit, and excellence that have become hallmarks of our program. Football, baseball, basketball, cross country, soccer, softball, volleyball, and track all advanced deep into postseason play and meets, with multiple teams earning Final Four appearances and several athletes claiming individual titles in addition to two state championship and two runner-up titles. Panther athletes embodied strength, teamwork, and perseverance, continuing the tradition of excellence that defines Mars Hill athletics.

- Did you know?**  
In the past eight years, Panther teams have earned:
- 10 team state championship titles
  - 10 individual state championship titles
  - 12 team state runner-up titles
  - 1 individual state runner-up title



## ATHLETICS

### I AM A MARS HILL BIBLE SCHOOL ATHLETE.



I recognize my body as **God's temple**. I commit to its **care** and **wellness**.



I am a **team player**. I value my **teammates** and work as part of a **unit** that is bigger than myself.



I am a **goal setter**. I am **responsible** and **committed**. I am a **strong competitor**, striving for **excellence** in all areas of my life.



I show **good sportsmanship** and **character**. I am **respectful** of all officials, teams, coaches, and players.



I am a **leader**, a positive role model, and a representative of Christ.



I practice **humility** and bring **glory to God** in everything I do.



# Spiritually Grounded, Servant Hearted

The primary focus at MHBS is on immersing students in a biblical worldview that will foster a wise, virtuous, and true commitment for the course of their lives. In addition to over 2800 hours in classroom Bible study over the course of their academic careers, biblical principles are central to every course of study. Annual Life Retreat for high school students, Life Day for middle school students, and Service Days grow students' hearts in love for the Lord, His church, and all people. In 2024-25, new opportunities included a biblical Greek class, Preachers' Club led by President Rushing, and an early morning weekly boys' Bible study called FELLAship.



## SPIRITUAL FORMATION I AM A MARS HILL BIBLE SCHOOL SERVANT.



I am a committed Bible student. I am eager to **grow** in my **knowledge** of God and His Scriptures. I am a diligent **seeker of truth**.



I live out my **faith** in all areas of my life. I desire to do what is **right**, and I make **choices** which reflect that desire.



I am **ethical, fair, and kind**. I speak **life** and **positivity**. I show the steadfast **love of Christ**.



I am a **servant leader**. I seek to **serve others** rather than be served and **love** my neighbor as myself.



I put my heart **joyfully** into times of worship, study, singing, and prayer.



I am an **authentic Christian**. I bring **glory** to God in everything I do.



# SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM

Throughout 2024-25, students and faculty across campus considered a central theme focusing on our charge to Seek First the Kingdom found in Matthew 6:33: “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” During the 2025-26 school year, our schoolwide theme will center on Living by the Spirit, based on the call found in Galatians 5: “Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” Each month, classes and chapel services across grade levels will focus on one of the fruits of the Spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control.



2025-26 SCHOOLWIDE THEME







# AN ENDURING LEGACY

## DONORS LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Our generous donors continued to go above and beyond to secure the future of Mars Hill Bible School in 2024-25. Giving Tuesday raised \$407,000, marking the greatest single day of giving in Mars Hill history. A beautiful day at the Fall Classic Golf Scramble and a sold-out crowd for the annual Benefit Celebration featuring Willie Robertson were also key to the year's success.

Help us keep the momentum going! Have you considered endowment giving? Endowment gifts provide a lasting legacy—an investment in the future of Mars Hill that ensures generations of students will continue to thrive spiritually and academically. Unlike annual contributions, which meet immediate needs, endowment giving builds a permanent foundation of support, with earnings each year strengthening programs and opportunities across campus. We invite you to consider leaving a mark that endures: a gift to the MHBS endowment is not just for today, but for tomorrow and every year to come.



## 2024-25 GIVING HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ **Endowment Growth:** Our endowment grew by \$1.5 million, strengthening the foundation for future generations of MHBS students.
- ✓ **Record-Breaking Day:** We celebrated the largest single day of giving in school history, raising \$407,000 in one day of generosity.
- ✓ **Stewardship You Can Trust:** 91% of all expenditures were directed toward academics, instruction, and campus operations—maximizing the impact of every gift.

To learn more about how you can leave a lasting legacy through endowment giving, we invite you to contact CFO Pat Moon at [pat.moon@mhbs.org](mailto:pat.moon@mhbs.org) for a personal conversation. Together, we can build on this momentum for generations to come.





### RECURRING GIFTS

Begin Today!

### GOLF FALL CLASSIC SCRAMBLE

September 8, 2025

### PARTNER WITH US IN 2025-26!

This school year, partner with MHBS to make an eternal difference as we train up a generation of Christ-followers, servant leaders, and community builders.

**Why Give?**

Character Development ✓	Quality Education ✓
State-of-the-Art Facilities ✓	Scholarship Opportunities ✓

### GIVING TUESDAY

December 2, 2025

### BENEFIT CELEBRATION

March 6, 2026

*Guest celebrity to be announced on Giving Tuesday*





*Mars Hill Alumni, join us for*  
**HOMECOMING 2025**

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2025**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alumni Chapel | <input type="checkbox"/> Alumni Tent, Meal, and Seating at Homecoming Game |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Campus Tours  | <input type="checkbox"/> Time with old and new friends                     |

**Alumni, we want to welcome you home to the Hill! All alumni are invited to participate in Homecoming activities and the Friday evening alumni tent.**

**Classes of '55, '65, '75, '85, '95, '05, and '15 will be honored on the field prior to the Homecoming game.**

**ALUMNI...  
 KEEP UP TO DATE WITH CLASSMATES AND  
 YOUR PANTHER NEWS!  
 UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION TODAY.**

Big things are coming for MHBS alumni in the coming year, and we want you to be a part! Update your information or volunteer to assist with alumni events by visiting [mhbs.org](http://mhbs.org) and clicking the Alumni link at the top left corner, or by emailing Ms. Lori Tays at [ltays@mhbs.org](mailto:ltays@mhbs.org).







# 2025-26 CALENDAR

## AUGUST

- 5 - In-Service, Schoolwide Prayer Service
- 6 - Elementary Parent Meetings
- 7 - First Day of School

## SEPTEMBER

- 1 - Labor Day Holiday (no school)
- 4 - Larimore Day
- 5 - Elementary Grandparents Day
- 17 - Teacher In-Service (dismiss at 11:45 a.m.)

## OCTOBER

- 10 - Homecoming
- 13-17 - Fall Break (no school)

## NOVEMBER

- 11 - Veterans Day (no school)
- 24-28 - Thanksgiving Holidays

## DECEMBER

- 18 - Last Day for Elementary/Middle (dismiss 11:45)
- 19 - Last Day for High School (dismiss at 9/11)

## JANUARY

- 5 - Teacher Inservice/Work Day
- 6 - Classes Resume
- 19 - MLK Holiday

## FEBRUARY

- 20 - School Holiday (no school)

## MARCH

- 6 - Benefit Dinner (dismiss 11:45)
- 23-27 Spring Break

## APRIL

- 3 - Good Friday (no school)

## MAY

- 1 - School Holiday (no school)
- 17 - Graduation
- 21 - Last Day for Elementary/Middle (dismiss at 11:45)
- 22 - Last Day for High School (dismiss at 9/11)

MARS HILL BIBLE SCHOOL  
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