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**Dear Rhodes Community,**

We have had so many reasons to celebrate over the last few weeks. I am delighted to share with all of you the long list of accolades Rhodes has received recently, and some lovely honors awarded to individual members of our community:

- *The Wall Street Journal* named Rhodes to its list of 2025 Best Colleges in the U.S., and #2 in Tennessee in the overall rankings and for best salaries upon graduation, behind only Vanderbilt.
- The Princeton Review included Rhodes in *The Best 390 Colleges*, and Rhodes ranked in the top 25 in four categories: campus beauty, Greek Life, students studying the most, and best-run colleges. In June, The Princeton Review also ranked Rhodes in the Top 50 Best Value Colleges and ranked us #16 for student internships.
- *Forbes* ranked Rhodes among the top 500 colleges on its list of 2024-2025 America's Top Colleges, rankings based on return on investment, average student debt, and outcomes for graduates.
- Niche named Rhodes to its list of 2025 Best Colleges and #1 for Best Liberal Arts Colleges in Tennessee.
- *Southern Living* featured Rhodes in its recognition of "The Most Beautiful College Campuses in the South." It described Rhodes as a "haven inside the city," noting our new and original Gothic-style buildings and elegant oak trees grown with seedlings from our original campus in Clarksville, TN.
- University Magazine ranked Rhodes #13 on its list of College Campuses with the Highest Internship Opportunities, ahead of SMU, USC, NYU, Penn, UC-Berkeley, and Northwestern.
- Finally, the *Fiske Guide to Colleges* featured Rhodes in its 2025 edition as one of the best colleges in the U.S., Canada, and the United Kingdom. Rhodes was recognized for its strong programs in economics, English, international studies, history, chemistry, business, biology, and psychology, as well as our distinctive Search curriculum.

Continuing the good news, I want to congratulate the following members of the Rhodes theatre community who recently won Ostrander Awards, which recognize the best in Memphis theatre:

- Props Design, Div II: **Molly O'Connor '24**, *Amélie*, Rhodes Theatre Guild
- Lighting Design, Div II: **Melissa Andrews**, *Amélie*, Rhodes Theatre Guild

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- Leading Actress, Div I Musical: **Cameron Crawford '19**, *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*, Theatre Memphis
- Best Ensemble, Div I Play: *A Monster Calls*, New Moon Theatre, Directed by **Aliza Moran**

Additionally, **Darlene Brooks**, director of Barret Library, has been honored as the 2024 recipient of the Excellence in Advising Award by the Mortar Board National College Senior Honor Society. **L.A. Webb**, associate vice president for campus safety, was sworn in as president of the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators at its annual conference. Professor **Carole Blankenship '85**, chair of music, was honored for Excellence and Service by the National Association of Teachers of Singing. Congratulations to all these outstanding members of the Rhodes community!

Rhodes was recently awarded a one-year Capacity-Building Grant of \$50,000 by Wake Forest University's [Educating Character Initiative](#), thanks to [Lilly Endowment Inc.](#) The Educating Character Initiative aims to equip us with the resources, funding, and support needed to integrate character education into curricula and culture. "Creating a Community of Character at Rhodes College" will allow us to reflect on the ways in which character education has traditionally aligned with a Rhodes liberal arts education and to strengthen the integration of character education going forward. A special thanks goes to the project leaders: Professors **Catie Welsh** (principal investigator, computer science), **Daniel Cullen** (philosophy), **Rebecca Finlayson** (English), **Mary Miller** (biology), **Laura Taylor** (educational studies), and **John Bass** (music).

We will be able to expand our long-established Search program with the support of a \$75,000 grant from [the Teagle Foundation](#). "Revising and Renewing the Search Program at Rhodes College" is the title of the proposal for the grant, which will be used for three academic years through June 30, 2027. This grant follows a \$25,000 planning grant the college received in 2023, jointly sponsored by the Teagle Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

We will celebrate our parents and families this Friday and Saturday as we gather for Family Weekend. I hope you will make time this weekend to attend some of the exciting events, such as All Sing and the Arts Walk, and support our athletic teams. I want to thank our 30 faculty members who agreed to have guests in their classrooms. A complete list of events can be found [here](#).

This is an especially wonderful time of year to be on the Rhodes campus. As I walk around campus, I remain thankful to our wonderful facilities and grounds staff who do such a terrific job keeping our campus beautiful and meeting the needs of our students, faculty, and staff on a daily basis. Thank you to all of you for being part of the Rhodes community.

With gratitude,  
**Jennifer Collins**  
President  
Rhodes College



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