



BlueSky Institute Welcomed 32 Students to Inaugural Class at Signing Day Event

Page 3



Ruben Studdard to give June 19th Concert at Chamberlin Pavilion on the UTC Campus

Page 4



Biden Taps 1st Black Woman, LGBT White House Press Secretary

Page 8

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Complimentary

Vice President Kamala Harris Delivers Historic TSU Commencement Address, Receives Honorary Degree



As an official member of the TSU Alumni Family, Vice President Kamala Harris joins President Glenda Glover, and University officials for the University Alma Mater song to end a historic commencement day. (Photo submitted)

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (TSU News Service) – “I’m now a Tiger!” Vice President Kamala Harris cheered as she received an honorary doc-

torate degree in humane letters from Tennessee State University after addressing nearly 600 undergraduates at the Spring 2022 commencement ceremony.

Harris was hooded by TSU President Dr. Glenda Glover as the crowd looked on, including University trustees, cabinet members and mayors John Cooper

of Nashville and Randall Woodfin of Birmingham, AL.

The historic moment took place Saturday at TSU’s Hale Stadium shortly after Harris addressed the graduates with a heartfelt commencement speech, marking this as her first address at a University and HBCU as Vice President of the United States.

Graduate Matthew Benton, who now has a degree in business administration, said that the historic event was as inspirational as he imagined.

“I’m thankful to have had a university President like Dr. Glover with the right connections and friendships to bring Kamala Harris, the Vice President of the United States, to our campus to give the keynote address.”

As a fellow HBCU graduate of Howard University, Harris gave the students a chance to mirror the person they can one day become.

The Vice President celebrated the 2022 graduates’ through their trials, mentioning the challenges of obtaining a degree through the COVID-19 pandemic, fundamental principles, and racial inequalities.

Harris stated that the graduates are more than just a class of 2022 but graduates that the United States need in the near future.

“I look at this unsettled world, and yes I see the challenges, but I am here to tell you, I also see the opportunities. The

See Harris Page 4

Chattanooga Native, Kane Brown Recognized

By Camm Ashford

On last Saturday night, more than 15,000 fans packed Finley Stadium to welcome country music superstar Kane Brown back home for his first-ever stadium show in Chattanooga.

Brown made the comeback to Chattanooga as the first stop of his “Blessed and Free” tour to show appreciation for his home city.

“I had my hardest times here in Chattanooga, had my best times here in Chattanooga--it just made me the man I am today,” Brown said. “I wouldn’t change it for the world. Like I said, my friends and my family are from here and all my memories. I wouldn’t trade anything for Chattanooga.”

On the eve of the sold-out show, representatives from the Bessie Smith Cultural Center hosted a recognition event at Finley Stadium to offer a warm welcome and honor Brown’s achievements. During the event, proclamations

officially declaring May 7, 2022, as Kane Brown Day were read by state Rep. Yusuf Hakeem, Hamilton County Mayor Jim Coppinger and Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly.

Mayor Kelly also gave the award-winning singer/songwriter the key to the city, the first he said he has awarded since taking office. Brown will also have a road named after him--“Honorary Kane Brown Parkway.”

“Chattanooga’s got a long history of producing great musical talent and too many times, we didn’t recognize them until they

See Kane Brown Page 4



Chattanooga native and country music superstar Kane Brown, proudly holds sign that designates Chattanooga street as ‘Honorary Kane Brown Parkway’ which was presented by Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly (to Brown’s left) and Hamilton County Mayor Jim Coppinger., (to Brown’s right). State Rep. Yusuf Hakeem., far right, had also presented the state proclamation officially declaring May 7, 2022, as KANE BROWN DAY! (Photo: Herman Prater Jr. of VisualsbyHerman)

City Councilwoman Coonrod Earns UTC Degree

By Shawn Ryan

Demetrus Coonrod enrolled at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga in 2012. She was two course-credits shy of graduating in 2015 when life got in the way.

Helping her daughter earn her college degree. Taking care of her grandchild. Serving on the Chattanooga City Council.

“It was a journey, trying to juggle being a parent, a grandma raising my 6-year-old granddaughter, serving on the council. It took a lot of sleepless nights,” Coonrod said.

Those potential end-of-the-road barriers were only potholes for Coonrod. On May 7, seven years after she stopped taking classes at UTC, she walked across the McKenzie Arena stage to celebrate a new bachelor’s degree in sociology with a minor in criminal justice.

Known for her distinctive eyeglass frames, Coonrod started college in 2009 and earned an associate degree in sociology from Chattanooga State Community College in 2012. She transferred to UTC for the fall 2012 semester, left in 2015 and returned this January. Knowledge gained through earning

her degree will help her work on the city council, said Coonrod, a first-generation college graduate.

“It helps me to understand people more and their behaviors and how we can impact them from the root cause or the issues that are happening within our city,” said Coonrod, the council representative for District 9--which includes East Chattanooga, Eastdale, Glenwood, Missionary Ridge and Ridgedale.

“Then you begin to understand exactly what their needs are and address it from that point, instead of me coming in and saying, ‘Hey, this is what’s needed’ with not really understanding what’s going on.”

It was not an easy path to her degree, Coonrod said, and she has advice for anyone who thinks their goals are out of reach.

“I would just tell them to stay fo-

See Coonrod Page 4



Chattanooga City Council member Demetrus Coonrod walks across stage in McKenzie Arena on May 7, 2022 after completing her bachelor’s degree in sociology.

INDEX

Commentary	2	National	8
Local/Regional	3-4	General News	9
Health	5	Business Mall	10
Churches	6-7	General News	11-12