

WARREN COUNTY FACES

Burgess a Motlow mainstay

BY **LUKE CAMERON**
Special to the Southern Standard
(McMinnville, Tennessee)

When Monica Burgess started working for Motlow College in McMinnville, Ronald Reagan was president. That was August of 1986, when Monica was 21 years old and newly graduated from Motlow.

Figuring she would work a couple of years and earn some money before leaving to further her education, she took a job as administrative secretary at Motlow. She has yet to leave, spending her first 27 years there as administrative secretary and the last five as microcomputer technician.

Monica is a life-long resident of Warren County, residing in the Bel-Aire community. Growing up, she attended an assortment of local elementary schools including Southside, West, William Biles, and Northside schools. While riding the school bus one day, she befriended a dark-haired girl whose pastor father drove that very bus.

Melody Edmonds, now Motlow's interim vice president of academic affairs, has been Monica's friend ever since. Following elementary school, Monica went on to attend Warren County Junior High and Warren County High School, graduating in the class of 1983.

Monica says she loves Motlow so much she cannot imagine working anywhere else. She enjoys providing customer service to students, and she enjoys the relationships with the faculty and staff.

"We truly are family,"

she says of her colleagues. That family atmosphere has led to some good-natured pranks over the years, the most memorable being when mathematics professor John St. Clair arrived for work one day to find his office had disappeared. Monica, along with staff members Carol Wells and Ivan Jones, informed him he had been "relocated." Upon finding his office had been moved to the men's restroom, professor St. Clair gamely sat down and got to work for the day.

Monica's hobbies include listening to music, going to concerts, and spending time with her seven grandchildren. She likes all kinds of music, rock in particular. Her favorite artists are Pearl Jam, Coldplay, Metallica, Foo Fighters, and Australian musician Tash Sultana. She has also been to Bonnaroo every summer beginning in 2013, citing 2017 (U2 and Red Hot Chili Peppers), 2016 (Pearl Jam), and 2013 (Paul McCartney and Tom Petty) as her favorite Bonnaroo years.

While attending a Pearl Jam show in Memphis in 2014 with her grandson Cameron, Pearl Jam frontman Eddie Veder came down into the audience and handed Cameron his guitar pick. Also, Monica collects and listens to vinyl records, including colored vinyl and "coke-bottle" vinyl. The records do not simply collect dust on her shelves. She listens to them often, in keeping with her philosophy that her possessions (including her trademark silver Mustang) are meant to be used and enjoyed, not simply hoard-



Warren County native Monica Burgess began working at Motlow College as a 21-year-old in 1986 and has carved out a lifelong career.

ed.

In her spare time, Monica can also be found out and about with her grandchildren. They enjoy hiking at Fall Creek Falls, Rock Island, and other state parks, swimming at Gilley Pool, Center Hill Lake, and Ragland Bottoms, kayaking the Caney Fork and Collins rivers, strolling the Warren County Farmers Market on Saturday mornings, playing at Sky High Sports trampoline park in Nashville, and eating great food and riding rides at the Warren County A&L Fair during fair week.

They also like to eat at Collins River Barbeque (loaded nachos), Smooth

Rapids, and Topz (brick-oven pizzas and flatties).

During Monica's 32 years at Motlow, she has seen the college transition from "analog" to digital. "When I first started," she says, "there were no computers. Now, in the Digital Age, everything is done online."

She says Motlow is important to McMinnville because "not many communities have an institution of higher learning with such excellent faculty and staff."

Monica's favorite quotations are "Be the change you wish to see in the world" (Mahatma Ghandi) and "It is what it is."

FAIR SCHEDULE

SUNDAY, SEPT. 9

1 p.m. Gospel singing

MONDAY, SEPT. 10

5 p.m. Petting zoo
5:30 p.m. Chick chain sale
6 p.m. Carnival rides open
7 p.m. Fairest of the Fair pageant

TUESDAY, SEPT. 11

8:30 a.m. Senior Citizens Day
5 p.m. Petting zoo
5 p.m. Dairy judging
5:30 p.m. Pee wee showmanship
6 p.m. Dairy show
6 p.m. Farmers Olympics/ tractor show
6 p.m. Carnival rides open
7 p.m. Little Fairest of the Fair pageant

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 12

11 a.m. Special needs day
3:30 p.m. Baby show
5 p.m. Petting zoo
5:30 p.m. Poultry judging
6 p.m. Carnival rides open

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