

A Magazine for  
Alumni & Friends

 **VOL STATE**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

2025

# Vision

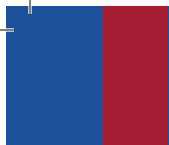


## GUIDED BY PURPOSE

Volunteer State Community College  
President, Dr. Wendi Tostenson, reflects on  
the past while embracing a bright future.

*(December 2024 Commencement)*





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# WELCOME



**KAREN MITCHELL**

Vice President for Advancement,  
Executive Director of  
the Foundation

Greetings Alumni, Donors, and Friends,

This is a season of exciting beginnings at Volunteer State Community College, and I am honored to share it with you.

We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Wendi Tostenson as the 5th President of Volunteer State Community College. Dr. Tostenson brings with her a wealth of experience, a bold vision, and a deep commitment to academic excellence and innovation. Her leadership promises to build upon the strong foundation we've laid together and to steer our community toward a more vibrant future.

A quote I love: "If there were no change, there would be no butterflies!" While we have had a lot of change, that only means we are ready to emerge as a beautiful butterfly! Transitions like these are powerful reminders of the strength of our community. The foundation built by generations of students, faculty, alumni, and donors like you makes it possible for new leadership to dream boldly—and act decisively. Your support has been vital to our momentum, and now it plays a crucial role in what comes next.

I invite you to join me in extending a warm and enthusiastic welcome to President Tostenson. Your continued engagement and generosity remain essential as we move forward into this exciting new era. As we embark on this next chapter, I want to personally thank you for your belief in our mission and your continued commitment to our shared future. There is so much to look forward to, and so much to accomplish together.

Thank you for your unwavering support, your pride in this institution, and your belief in what we can achieve together!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Mitchell".



**DREW ROWLEY**

Senior Pastor,  
Cottontown Baptist Church  
Chief Information Officer,  
Healthcare Provider Solutions  
Alumnus, Volunteer State Community College  
Chair, VSCC Alumni Advisory Council

Welcome, Alumni and Friends!

As an alumnus of Volunteer State Community College, I'm honored to welcome you to this special edition of the *Vol State Vision*. Whether you walked these halls decades ago or recently crossed the stage at graduation, you're part of a powerful community that continues to grow, serve, and shape the future.

This college helped lay the foundation for my career, my calling, and my confidence. Vol State was where I truly discovered the power of connection—relationships that started in those classrooms and hallways continue to impact my life today. Many of the people I met at VSCC have helped shape my career, opened doors for new opportunities, and remain trusted voices in my life almost 15 years later.

In this issue, you'll see the impact of your support and the stories of students who are following in our footsteps. I hope you're reminded that our time here didn't just prepare us for what was next—it planted something lasting.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Your support still changes lives.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Drew Rowley".

## 2024-2025 BY THE NUMBERS

Private philanthropy continues to be what transforms a good college into an extraordinary one. Whatever contribution you choose to make, your investment will be greatly appreciated. The Volunteer State College Foundation continues its work because of investors like you. Together, we can provide assistance for students to complete their dream of an education.

### THE FEED (STUDENT FOOD PANTRY)

**400**  
VISITS PER  
YEAR

**\$7**  
PER VISIT  
AVERAGE

### COST OF ATTENDANCE

**\$4,756** **\$1,470**  
TUITION (FULL TIME IN-STATE 1 YEAR) BOOKS

**\$214K+**

### OTHER STUDENT SUPPORT

**444** **\$601K+**  
AWARDED IN TOTAL  
AWARDS

### SCHOLARSHIPS

### SOURCES OF SUPPORT

**47%** CORPORATIONS/ BUSINESSES  
**30%** TRUSTEES/ALUMNI/FRIENDS  
**18%** NON-PROFITS  
**5%** EMPLOYEES



# 2024-2025 COMMITTEES & LEADERSHIP

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Executive Director of the Foundation*

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*Development Officer*

### Alexis O'Malley

*Alumni and Engagement Officer*

### Rebecca McKinney

*Scholarship Associate*

### Lynn Jones

*Executive Administrative Assistant*

### Carole Maxwell

*Advancement Associate*

## DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS

2023

### EVAN JONES

Selected by the Volunteer State Community College Alumni Advisory Council, Evan Jones is the 2023 Distinguished Alumnus of the Year. Evan graduated Vol State in 2012 and was a pitcher on the baseball team and a TCCAA Distinguished Scholar-Athlete. After graduating VSCC, he attended the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga where he received Bachelor's Degrees in Accounting and Finance.

Evan volunteers with Full Count ministries and serves as the Youth Pastor at his local church – Gallatin Church of God of Prophecy. His day-to-day business is working for the Gallatin home builder, Randy Jones Construction, in the business operations and new home sales department.

Evan has had the opportunity to serve on the United Ministerial Alliance, Habitat for Humanity of Sumner County Board of Directors, and the Gallatin Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.



2024

### KIM BAKER

The 2024 Distinguished Alumnus of the Year is Kim Baker, 2010 graduate of Volunteer State Community College. After graduating from VSCC, Kim went on to Middle Tennessee State University where she received a Bachelor's Degree in Organizational Communication.

Kim was named Leadership Sumner's Alumni of the year in 2019, the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executive's Top 40 under 40 in 2021, Pope John Paul II Preparatory School's Mentor of the Year in 2023, Advocate of the Year for United Way in 2023, and most recently named the Tennessee Chamber of Commerce Executives 2024 Executive of the Year. She has been CEO of the Gallatin Chamber of Commerce since 2015.

She currently serves on the Volunteer State College Foundation's Women Empowering Education committee and on the Board of Trustees.



## CRITERIA FOR THE DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS

The criteria for the Distinguished Alumnus Award is overall accomplishments in professional achievements and community service, involvement in the alumni association and/or college, and consistent support of Volunteer State Community College. To nominate a Vol State Alum for the Distinguished Alumnus of the Year, contact Alexis O'Malley at (615) 230-4866 or [alexis.o'malley@volstate.edu](mailto:alexis.o'malley@volstate.edu) for more information.



The Volunteer State Community College Alumni Scholarships are awarded by the Volunteer State Alumni Advisory Council and are funded by alumni dollars. These scholarships include book scholarships and full tuition scholarships for one academic year. To qualify for the scholarship, the recipient must be a relative of a VSCC alumnus, have a minimum 2.0 grade point average and complete an essay stating why the scholarship would be beneficial to them.

## IS THERE A FUTURE PIONEER IN YOUR FAMILY?

The Vol State College Foundation offers more than 175 different annual and endowed scholarships, including the VSCC Alumni Association Scholarship.

To apply, visit:

[www.volstate.edu/foundation/scholarships](http://www.volstate.edu/foundation/scholarships)  
and select "Go To Application."



## SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



### CLAIRE JARED

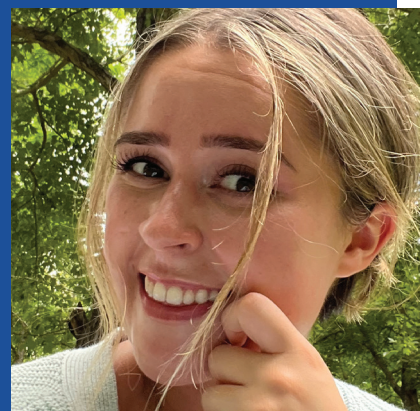
Major: University Parallel  
Concentration: General Studies

“

I hope to reach my goal of gaining my Bachelors of Science in Nursing and I would enjoy going into any specialty with a fast-paced environment such as an emergency room.

I chose Vol State due to having a long list of close relatives that are alumni of the college. This scholarship gives me the chance to further my education without putting a financial strain on my family.

”



### HELANA WADE

Major: Radiologic Technology

“

I plan to become a cardiac sonographer and this scholarship allows me to pursue learning and passions without the tie of financial burdens and helps cover costs for items such as books.

The financial burden of tuition, books, and other expenses has always been a significant concern for me and my family. Receiving this scholarship has not only alleviated much of that stress but has also allowed me to focus more intently on my studies and personal growth. This scholarship has given me the freedom to explore my academic interests without the constant worry of how I will manage to cover costs.

”



# HOMEGROWN

## Success

**One word to describe alumna Mallory Higginbotham (2010) would be “homegrown.”**

From student to adjunct professor, to now being the Program Director for Vol State's Respiratory Care Technology program, the road to where she is now was not initially planned.

Originally, Mallory wanted to become a dentist; however, due to family circumstances, she found herself interested in the field of respiratory care and was drawn to Vol State's program. That decision set her on a journey that would shape both her career and life.

“Getting to college was a whole new ballgame for me. I had to figure out my study techniques and what that looked like,” she said, adding that she credits her instructors for helping shape her into the best respiratory therapist she could be.

Just three weeks after graduating, Mallory was asked to return as a lab instructor. She quickly progressed, taking on clinical instruction, then lecture teaching, and eventually serving as interim clinical director.






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*“Vol State has supported me in my lifelong journey of education.”*

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In addition to her role at Vol State, Mallory has worked in a hospital setting since graduation and still picks up shifts to stay current in the field. “I work a few shifts a month just to keep my skills up. I think it’s important if I teach that I still currently practice,” she explained.

Mallory has earned multiple credentials in respiratory care. She takes pride in mentoring students, understanding firsthand the sacrifices they must make to succeed. “My story is unique in the fact of what I’m able to bring to the table for students. I do know where they come from. I’ve been in their shoes, and I know the academic rigor is very challenging. I know the time commitment and sacrifice it takes to be here, so I can definitely relate to the students and empathize with them, especially on the hard days.”

One of the most rewarding parts of her job is welcoming a new cohort of students and watching their skills grow throughout the semesters. Even after they graduate, her students keep in touch, updating her on new developments in the field.

Looking ahead, Mallory has one more credential she hopes to obtain, continuing her commitment to growth. “Vol State has supported me in my lifelong journey of education,” she said—a journey that has come full circle as she now helps shape the next generation of respiratory therapists.





# GUIDED BY *Purpose*



“Oh, I love shoes!” Dr. Wendi Tostenson said with a wide smile when addressed with the “buzz” around campus that she likes shoes. “I love all of my shoes, kind of like my children. I don’t have a favorite – it’s just depending on the day.”

Volunteer State Community College welcomed Dr. Wendi Tostenson, nicknamed “Dr. T” on July 1st, 2024 as it’s 5th college President. Over a cup of coffee, she shared some of the most important lessons she has learned through the many “shoes” she’s worn in her life.

Born and raised in South Georgia, one such lesson began the first time she met her husband at an airport, before embarking on a school trip to Europe. Being that her husband was from Minnesota, the longest consecutive time they were together before they got married was 11 days. During their 4.5 years of long-distance dating, they primarily communicated through letters.

“I think it gave me a different perspective of how important it is to communicate with people, because those letters were really the only way we had to stay in touch with each other. I know the written word is really powerful and it connects people.”

As challenging as a long-distance relationship was, Dr. Tostenson was also navigating her first year of college.

“I absolutely had a phenomenal time in college, but maybe not academically. I did spend a lot of time socializing and not a lot of time in my academic space. I really judged



myself on those failures and I started to believe that that was all I could be,” she said, reflecting on her time as a freshman at the University of Georgia. “I hope I never lose the perspective of what it’s like to be new and lost, because if we can take care of all of our students who are new and lost, they don’t stay lost.”

One of the most impactful roles she then stepped into was that of motherhood. Raising three (now adult) children under the age of four was not only the hardest job she said she ever had, but also where she learned how to negotiate. During her 15 years as a stay-at-home mom, she learned the value of compromise and the importance of explaining the “why” behind family decisions—from bedtimes to chores.

“Giving them some background was really important, and I think that’s carried through my life because most of us just want to know the why. I think that sometimes we frustrate people just because we don’t tell them things that are going on behind the scenes. If we just gave everybody a heads up, a why and a ‘this is what it’s going to look like’ and ‘this is what you’re going to expect,’ the road doesn’t become as scary.”

Now, as she leads Vol State, Dr. Tostenson is working to share that same philosophy with the college, launching the theme “Guided by Purpose.”

“For me, ‘Guided by Purpose’ really means that every day, everything that I do is intentionally growing us to be exactly who we’re supposed to be and in the way we’re supposed to be. If it’s not guided by purpose, what is it guided by?”

Dr. Tostenson’s path to Vol State unfolded in an unexpected yet meaningful way. She initially heard of the college while working on her dissertation, studying it as part of a comparison with Georgia institutions. When the president position became available, a friend sent her the job posting the day before it closed and encouraged her to apply. She submitted her application the day the posting closed, not expecting to be invited for an interview.

“I had told my husband, ‘I’m just going to go do the very best job I can do. I’m going to leave it

all out on the table, but I’m not going to be upset if I don’t get it.’ I remember walking through the double doors, and I came into the President’s Suite, and I met everybody. I told them I had to go to the bathroom, but I didn’t really have to go to the bathroom. I texted my husband and said ‘I’m totally going to be upset if I don’t get this. I’m going to be a hot mess. You just need to go ahead and know that.’

I walked in the doors, and I felt like I was home. I can’t really explain it.”

“

*I walked in the doors, and  
I felt like I was home.  
I can’t really explain it.*

For 53 years, many faculty, staff, students, community members and alumni have called Vol State home. To date, the college has nearly 40,000 alumni.

”

“Alumni are our secret sauce. They have a perspective of what Vol State was to them

then, what it means to them now, and what it should mean for our future generations,” she said, adding that listening to their stories is important to shaping the future of the college.

“Where I would really like to see us is just being #1 in everything that we do. That doesn’t always mean winning everything, but being #1 in what we set out to do. **My goal is for us to grow the very best students to create the very best economy for the communities that we live in and that we serve.**”

Currently, each division and department at Vol State is working on 1-, 3-, and 5-year strategic plans to align with this vision. This initiative is one of many steps toward achieving this collective goal.

Outside of being the President, Dr. Tostenson enjoys everyday hobbies such as cooking (she can make a phenomenal gumbo), reading, gardening, canning/preserving food, hanging out at the house with her dogs, teaching history as an adjunct professor, and, of course, shopping for shoes. Her most recent purchases included a pair of boots with her initials and heels she described as “utterly beautiful” to be worn to her son’s wedding.

Choosing her favorite pair of shoes may depend on what the day holds, but whatever she wears, as long as her steps are ‘guided by purpose’ (and maybe a little sparkle), they’ll take her wherever she wants to go.



## INAUGURAL EVENT



## ***VOL STATE*** *Launches Annual*

# Giving Day

The Volunteer State College Foundation's first annual "Vol State Giving Day" was a great success, netting over **\$65,000** and adding **62 new donors**. Held on November 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>nd</sup>, the goal for total number of donors was surpassed with 222 donors giving to the campaign. The event culminated in a celebration that included student testimonies and academic-focused demonstrations.

Giving Day donations support students who are pursuing their educational dreams, directly benefiting student scholarships, academic programs, and eight key partner campaigns aimed at enhancing the college experience for Vol State's diverse student body.





The event contained Partner Campaigns. Each campaign focused on a specific area of Vol State, empowering donors to support the causes that matter most to them. Whether you're passionate about advancing student scholarships, strengthening the arts, boosting health sciences, or enhancing athletic programs, there was a campaign for everyone to support!

#### The Partner Campaigns included:

- Vol State Student Scholarships & Other Student Programs
- Alumni Scholarship
- Athletics
- Business & Technology
- Health Sciences
- Humanities & Fine Arts
- Math & Science
- Nursing
- Social Science & Education

***THANK YOU TO ALL WHO GAVE!***  
*what a difference a day makes.*

Join us November 5-6, 2025 for our 2nd annual Vol State Giving Day and help make a difference in the lives of the students who will shape the future of our community!



## 2024-2025 FOUNDATION EVENTS

For more information about recent or upcoming events, including pictures, please visit [www.volstate.edu/foundation](http://www.volstate.edu/foundation) and select any of the event pages.



The Vol State Athletic Association Golf Classic supports the Athletics Program at Volunteer State Community College, including scholarships, equipment upgrades and team uniforms.

Corporate Cup  
Sponsor



The Complete the Dream Casino Night benefits VSCC students attending our Springfield campus through scholarships and other student support programs.



A 36-hour fundraising event designed to raise crucial support for Vol State students. Funds raised will directly benefit student scholarships, academic programs, and key partner campaigns.

Celebration Sponsors

**Highpoint Health**  
Sumner

with  Ascension  
Saint Thomas



An empowering fundraising luncheon benefitting scholarships for VSCC students.

Title Sponsors

**Highpoint Health**  
Sumner

with  Ascension  
Saint Thomas





2024-2025 TOP SPONSORS

\$20,000+

Highpoint Health  
Sumner

with  Ascension  
Saint Thomas



\$3,000+



Jo Ann Graves



\$1,500+

Jerry & Wanda Faulkner  
State Representative Johnny & Kara Garrett  
Dollar General  
Servpro Industries  
Wilson Bank & Trust  
Garrott Brothers  
Dr. Mark & Stefanie Carter  
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Business Credit Reports  
Tristar Hendersonville Medical Center  
Grace Tomkins  
Robertson County Farm Bureau  
Tristar Northcrest Medical Center  
United Community Bank  
In Memory of Betty Coley Neal & Thomas H Neal, Jr



# HAL R. RAMER SOCIETY MEMBERS

The Hal R. Ramer Society recognizes outstanding contributions by individuals, foundations, and business corporations. Inductees embody the volunteerism of Volunteer State Community College and the community at large.

## GIVING LEVELS

<b>REGENT</b> ..... \$1,000,000+	<b>TRUSTEE</b> ..... \$150,000 — \$249,999	<b>FELLOW</b> ..... \$25,000 — \$49,999
<b>CHANCELLOR</b> \$500,000 — \$999,999	<b>CHAIR</b> ..... \$100,000 — \$149,999	<b>PARTNERS</b> ..... \$10,000 — \$24,999
<b>PRESIDENT</b> ..... \$250,000 — \$499,999	<b>SCHOLAR</b> ..... \$50,000 — \$99,999	

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Johnny & Kara Garrett  
Garrott Bros. Continuous Mix  
Bill & Jo Ann Graves  
Goodall Homes & Communities  
Goodlettsville Evening Lions Club  
Jacquelyn D. Guthrie  
H & VH Challenge Scholarship  
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Fred A. Kelly, III  
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Ted & Astrid Lyon  
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Eric Melcher  
Carl & Pam McKellar  
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The News Examiner  
Hendersonville Star News  
Robertson Co. Times  
R.C. Owen Company of TN  
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 VSCC Recycling Committee  
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 Dixie Jones  
 Jeffrey D. Kent  
 Kiwanis Club of Hendersonville  
 Krueger International, Inc.  
 Waldfried & Elfriede Lamm  
 L. K. & Susan Lannom  
 Lee, Danner & Bass, Inc.  
 Lee Raines Insurance James Anderson  
 Beth & Len Little  
 Leo L. & Patricia B. Lebkuecher  
 Hugh & Frances Love  
 Bill & Sandie Nichols  
 Joseph & Hilary Marabeti  
 Thomas & Ann Martin  
 Ed & Betty Mayberry  
 McFarland Hospital  
 MET  
 MGM Industries, Inc.  
 Mid-Cumberland Area Development  
 Corporation  
 Glen & Karen Mitchell  
 Sue Mulcahy  
 Nashville Academy of Veterinary Medicine  
 National Board for Respiratory Care  
 Norman M. Nelson  
 Warren & Chris Nichols

Noah & Associates  
 Louis & Cathy Oakley  
 Steven & Melinda Parker  
 Susan Peach in Memory of my  
 Mother Edna Bitz  
 People's Bank  
 John R. & Wilma T. Phillips  
 Pinnacle Financial Partners  
 Dennis & Sharon Powers  
 Precision Casting of TN, Inc.  
 Regions Morgan Keegan Trust  
 John M. Roberts  
 Robertson County Career Women  
 Christy Sanders  
 W.E. "Buddy" & Jean Shaw  
 Tyler A. Schultz Memorial  
 Drs. Rick Jay & Paula Myrick Short  
 Smith & Takacs Law Firm  
 Softball Players Association  
 Springfield Rotary Club  
 Starstruck Entertainment  
 Stone's River Woman's Club  
 Sumner Bank & Trust  
 Sumner County Bar Association  
 Sumner County Medical Society  
 Sumner County Master Gardeners  
 Association  
 Michael L. & Joyce Swallows  
 Tommy Tomkins  
 Carol "Top" Topping  
 Tennessee Juvenile Court Services  
 Association  
 Tennessee Valley Authority  
 Virginia H. Thigpen  
 Tom Bannen Chevrolet Buick GMC  
 Union Planters of Goodlettsville  
 Unipres USA, Inc.  
 US Bank  
 Mike & Jennifer Vrabel  
 VSCC Athletic Booster Club  
 VSCC Music Department  
 Wal-Mart of Gallatin  
 Judge Jane & Donald Wheatcraft  
 White House Chamber of Commerce  
 White House Kiwanis Club  
 White House Lions Club  
 White House Rotary Club  
 White House Utility District  
 Doug Williams  
 Wil-Ro, Inc.  
 Womelduff Family  
 John Zobl  
 Betty R. Zuccarello

# CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN PHILANTHROPY



2023

## DR. PAUL AND JANICE ENOCH

Since 1996, Dr. Paul and Janice Enoch have continued to make a difference in the lives of Vol State students. Initially supporting the Friends of the Library campaign, they continued their support of Volunteer State Community College when they created the Dr. and Mrs. Paul Enoch Scholarship in 2000. Over the years, the Enoch's commitment to supporting an annual scholarship has significantly impacted the lives of 26 Vol State students. In 2016, the Enoch's were inducted into the Hal R. Ramer Society thanks to their dedicated support of Vol State. In 1961, Dr. Enoch opened the Enoch Veterinary Clinic in Gallatin which remained a staple of our community serving over 11,000 clients. He is currently retired and sold his clinic.



2024

## BRENDA PAYNE

Brenda Payne is a former Vice President for Resource Development and Executive Director of the Foundation for Volunteer State Community College. She has continued to support the Volunteer State College Foundation since 1985 and has made a significant difference in the lives of Vol State students. Ms. Payne continued her legacy of giving through a major gift to our Steinhauer-Rogan-Black Humanities Building, as well as supporting other events and scholarship funds. In 2018, Ms. Payne turned a personal tragedy into blessing for others and started the Andy Swift Memorial Scholarship, all while continuing to support other events and projects of the College.

## WAYS TO GIVE

### *Your Financial Support Funds DREAMS*



#### 1. ONLINE

You may make your gift anytime online at:  
[www.volstate.edu/foundation/giving](http://www.volstate.edu/foundation/giving).



#### 2. RECURRING GIFT

A recurring gift is an ongoing, specific amount decided by you and is charged monthly to your credit card or bank account. You may select what your investment supports. For more information or to enroll, contact (615) 230-3506.



#### 3. MATCHING GIFTS

Many employers offer matching gift programs that will significantly increase the benefit of your generosity. Contact your Human Resources department to find out if your company participates.



#### 4. CHECKS

Checks can be mailed to:

Volunteer State College Foundation  
1480 Nashville Pike, Gallatin, TN 37066



#### 5. BEQUESTS

You may include Volunteer State College Foundation as a bequest in your will.



#### QUESTIONS?

Contact the Volunteer State College Foundation at (615) 230-3506 or [foundation@volstate.edu](mailto:foundation@volstate.edu).



To go to the Vol State Foundation Giving Page, please use this QR code:





# ATHLETIC AWARDS



**JOHNNY LYNN**  
TCCAA Coach of the Year

## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL



**KENDALL MYREE**  
First team All TCCAA and  
Defensive Player of the year.

## WOMEN'S SOFTBALL

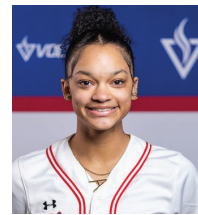


**LYDIA KIRBY**  
First Team All TCCAA,  
TCCAA Player of the Year  
(2nd time)  
All-American

## MEN'S BASKETBALL



**TAYLOR GROVES**  
First team All TCCAA,  
TCCAA Player of The Year,  
TCCAA Freshman of the  
Year, TCCAA Offensive  
Player of the Year



**A'MIYAH COLLIER**  
First Team All TCCAA  
All-American

\*Tennessee Community College Athletic Association







1480 Nashville Pike  
Gallatin, TN 37066  
Phone: 615-230-3506  
Fax: 615-230-3508

[www.volstate.edu/Alumni](http://www.volstate.edu/Alumni)

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## FOLLOW VSCC ALUMNI & FRIENDS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

1. Stay up-to-date with alumni and college news and events
2. Update your alumni contact information
3. Stay involved with the VSCC Alumni Association
4. Support VSCC



[www.volstate.edu/alumni-donors](http://www.volstate.edu/alumni-donors)



Vol State Community College  
Alumni & Friends



@volstatealumniandfriends