

## Locals Celebrate Completion of a Monument to Civic Pride

*Move Into New Montreat Town Hall Caps Years of Dreaming, Planning, and Hard Work*

By Chloe Wood & Faithlyn Baker

Residents of Montreat dedicated their new governmental center this summer, after a winding seven year journey of consultation, fundraising and construction. And with its fresh paint, sparkling windows, and prominent flagpole, Montreat's just-completed Town Hall unabashedly announces itself as the area's new kid in town. Even as its stone, wood, and architectural nods to local landmarks make the structure somehow seem like it's been there forever. Rising along Montreat Road, it's impossible to miss—and represents a triumph of design, a labor of love, and a tangible testimony to the civic pride of the Montreat community.

For many years town members did not feel a need for a substantive administrative building in their quiet, densely forested zip code that numbers 836 residents. So the town government leased a small building near its historic stone gate from the Montreat Retreat Association, securing a one-hundred-year lease for a mere one dollar. From there they provided essential personnel and services to the residents for a period of 53 years. But as the area welcomed more new residents each year, town officials pondered constructing a more permanent town hall.

In 2013 discussions began taking place about a new building that might house offices for police and the town staff. An initially selected site on Florida Terrace was rejected after sparking controversy. Then the town council, with heightened community input, settled on some land immediately adjacent to their existing home, but outside the town limits. The Montreat Town Council asked the Black



When asked in an early online survey to describe what traits they would find most desirable in a town hall design, respondents used words including "friendly," "helpful," "beautiful," "functional," "modest"... and "Montreatish." They got their wish.

Mountain aldermen (elected members of the municipal council) to de-annex the parcels of property — owned by the Conference Center — at the intersection of Montreat Road and Rainbow Terrace. An affirmative vote by the Black Mountain Council, ratified by the NC General Assembly, enabled the town of Montreat to annex the property, placing the proposed town hall within Town limits.

A groundbreaking ceremony was held on June 11, 2019. As contractors began work with a team of laborers and craftsmen, commissioners Kitty Fouche and Tom Widmer, along with the Town Administrator Alex Carmichael, oversaw progress at every turn, checking a host of

details as the building took shape. But they hardly found themselves alone. Widmer said citizen participation was key, commenting, "Everybody was involved and seemed very excited about what was going on." The interest from the community proved a good thing, since project details filled pages of lists. Tasks ranged from locating just-right rocks to planning for rain chains on the roof, from puzzling interior stone floors to hanging art by local artists.

Town residents wanted their new building to honor the history of their home. To help achieve this goal, they enlisted local architect Maury Hurt, a man with ties to the community that include a father who served as president of Montreat College for eleven years. They also brought on board contractor Brian Sineath, of Weaverville's Sineath Construction, a man Hurt was quick to credit with much of the project's success. "Somebody like me can sketch pretty things on paper all day long," he noted. "But unless you have a builder like Brian who is really dedicated and driven to do a good job, it all just stays on the drawing board."

When close to 80% of residents surveyed said they wanted the new town hall to be built of stone, Hurt's answer was to propose using a combination of field stone and river rock, echoing the technique found in the walls of the Left Bank Building on Lake Susan. Discerning eyes will notice other creative homages to nearby beloved structures that Hurt incorporated into his architectural vision. The support brackets and provided > See ON THE BLOCK Page Two

## For the Cavs, It Feels Like They've Arrived in The Promised Land

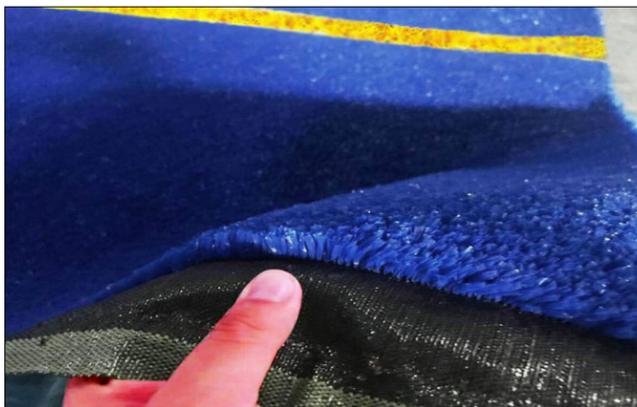
*Baseball Stakes Claim to New Turf as Pre-Season Begins*

By Joseph Locascio & Kevynn Arias

New and returning members of the Montreat College Men's Baseball Team got their first look at a new, state-of-the-art artificial turf baseball field when they hit campus the week of Aug. 18, 2020. Coaches and players both expressed enthusiasm about Newell Field's renovation, as well as their upcoming 2021 competitive season.

"We're excited about the new turf... It should help our recruiting. The change was needed, especially as we are in the mountains where the weather is so unpredictable," said Head Coach Jason Beck. In recent years, heavy rain had often transformed the infield into a soggy mess (areas in North Carolina were drenched with upwards to 30 inches of water during Hurricane Florence), a situation that left the field susceptible to damage and players prone to injury. The Cavs had spent close to \$15,000 annually for repairs and upkeep for the field. After deliberating on solutions, coaches Jason Beck, Grayson Snipes, Marshall McDonald, and Mike Bonifay decided artificial turf was the best solution. But it was also an intimidatingly expensive one. The seemingly impossible became a reality, however, and an anonymous donor came forward. With the financial obstacle out of the way, renovations commenced last fall, and the \$350,000 project was completed early July. Coach Beck expressed, "God blessed us with an amazing tool, and we want use it now to glorify Him in all we do."

The project, initially anticipated to take three months, ended up taking nine due to delays surrounding COVID-19 and precautionary measures. The new turf, including the only



Newell Field now features 30,000 square feet of glorious green, blue and gold.

navy blue and gold field in North Carolina, was custom designed by Turf Dogs of Gainesville, GA. The company is proud of their special 'Spring Turf.' Spring turf is exceptional for the region we live in, due to the draining system that is implanted underneath the turf. "It also has a synthetic feel to it, which allows us to get more creative with the coloring." Says Jimmy Hartman of Turf Dogs.

The new turf covers roughly 30,000 square feet, a little less than half the space of a 57,000 square ft. football field. Jimmy Hartman, one of Turf Dogs sod specialists, had nothing but great things to say about Newell Field's location: "Working on the field was an honor, and the way we could see the different angles at which the sun hits the mountain — it was all pretty breath taking. It was almost like being in heaven up on the field working on it. I can't

imagine the feeling the players get when they launch a ball half-way up the mountain. God's creation— it's simply beautiful."

With the infield renovation complete, Coach Beck has even more plans ahead for the Cavs and Newell field. In the coming years players and fans should be expecting stadium style bleachers, standing tall the left of home plate. The next two slated additions will be a new concession stand, with a press box above it. After that, Beck says a new scoreboard may be in the works, along with a new backstop. After those improvements, the second turf installment, with the replacement of the green in the outfield, will come. The combined total of all advancements will be north of \$500,000.

Senior Jared Drayton expressed his excitement for the new field: "Two things come to mind. The wait was well worth the reward, and there is always a climb to reach something great. I say that in a literal sense and in a motivational sense, because the addition of that turf has fueled a train I don't see stopping anytime soon!"

But for now, the Cavs are simply grateful for their great new field. "We are pumped with our navy-blue and gold grass infield and how it turned out. This is something [we've] needed for a long time. It puts us up there with some of the best fields in the state," said Assistant Coach Grayson Snipes. Entering its second full week of practice, the team has started to get rolling for their upcoming spring season. Game No. 1 will be held on Newell Field and played against Bob Jones University, at 3:00 pm on February 19, 2021. The Cavs will be amped up and ready to defend their new home. Roll on, Cavs!

*Drive-by Viewing*

# There's a New Kid in Town: Checking Out the Latest Addition to the Block



Photo courtesy Sineath Construction



[Clockwise from left] Entering through the front doors of Montreat's new Town Hall, visitors are met with an array of textures and a color palette that reflect careful consideration of the structure's natural habitat. A light-filled foyer features multi-colored stones puzzled together in loose mosaic pattern reminiscent of the floors of Montreat College's Gaither Hall, leading eyes to the entrance to the large community room. During construction the back of the building was the facade most visible to passerby on Montreat Road. Outside, a unique rain garden can be spied from the vantage point of the building's welcoming front porch.

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deep overhangs of the Wayout Building inspiration for the own hall's stylized exterior woodwork. Circular attic vents and soldier course rooflines are reminiscent of those found on Gaither Hall. And the centerpiece of the new building's main community room is a large, arched pane window modeled after the ones that line the exterior of the Montreat Retreat Center's Assembly Inn.

Other features of the new town hall include a front porch designed with smoothed-out stone flooring allowing easy access for those using wheelchairs. Then there is the special piping that runs from the gutters on the roof to guide the flow of the rainstorm waters (that can reach up to 7,000 gallons in a typical thunderstorm) to an already-budding rain garden designed by landscape architect Joel Osgood. Folks just wanting to take in the view will discover that on the porch four rocking chairs await them. These bear labels reading "Kindness," "Integrity," "Gratitude," and "Joy."

Stepping inside the building's main doors, one immediately notices the gleaming floor. Its style emulates that found in Anderson and Gaither Halls, with polished, multi-colored stones of various sizes fitting together to form a free-flowing mosaic. All the pieces were given careful aesthetic review — and some were replaced —before final grouting. Rock walls in the foyer recall Gaither Hall as well, with earthy hues that are accented by flecks of mica, a natural mineral with a pearly luster. The mica was no easy find. "We had to sort through hundreds of pieces [of rock]

and a lot of land," said Sineath. The town council also had to conduct additional fundraising to cover the 'splurge' the stone walls and floors represented.

Straight ahead is a large community room equipped with digital screens and audio equipment that will be used for town meetings, as well as social gatherings. Upon entering, the eyes are drawn to an immense arched window facing the doorway, before moving left to admire an imposing, four foot tall version of the Montreat town seal, made from a drawing that was transferred to wood via laser etching and then hand-painted to heighten contrast. There is also a smaller conference room with a handsome wood grain conference table, handcrafted from a Montreat black walnut tree by Widmer and Peter Van Dorsten.

Working out the interior floorplan proved a unique challenge given constraints posed by the site's inflexibly narrow dimensions. Hurt's solution was to angle inside walls so that the building would "not look like a bowling alley." Offices for the Police Chief and police patrol occupy the left wing of the town hall, making it the only section constantly locked. There is also a small kitchen (with shelves lined with coffee cups that sport the town seal, custom-made by Sally Jones Pottery/ Currie Craft Center) and two "flex" rooms designed to provide adaptability for unanticipated future needs. The right wing includes offices for the Town Administrator, Finance Officer, Town Clerk, and Development.

Attention to detail is evident in décor everywhere. Original artwork adorns the walls, all of it

created or donated by denizens of Montreat.

Pieces include Janie Holt's beautiful photos of birds, a reproduction of an original Robert Jones painting of the old post office and general store that used to stand across from the current post office, and a reprint of Andy Andrew's "Mountain Mist," the original of which hangs in a foyer of Gaither Hall.

The Presbyterian Heritage Center donated an 1898 map, and at the end of one corridor visitors will see photos of the first Montreat fire department, as well as small framed photographs of all the town's mayors from 1967 to the present — a collection Widmer laughingly called "a Rogues' Gallery."

The construction of Montreat's Town Hall was completed on time and as planned, despite some labor and supply setbacks due to COVID-19. The price tag for the final project was two million dollars. The council wanted a gala opening, but settled for an 'open house' held on July 4, 2020. "With [the quarantine] we had to be quite careful. So we had maps printed and asked guests to start at the upper end of the building and space themselves out as they walked through," said Fouche. Many people have yet to see the inside of the structure, but town officials said that word-of-mouth is stoking curiosity. "We want everyone to see it, and to enjoy it," commented Widmer. "It's been a long time coming."

A long time coming, but worth the wait. Now complete, the town hall seems like a love letter in wood and stone to the Montreat community, signed, stamped, and delivered at last to the people.



THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF MONTREAT COLLEGE  
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"So often in life, things that you regard as an impediment turn out to be great, good fortune." —Ruth Bader Ginsburg

"The only thing that will make sense of your life is faithfully following the Lord Jesus. For time and eternity, He's the one to hang on to. It's very elementary to say that, but the rule of wisdom is always to begin at the beginning. That's the magnetic north for guiding your life, the magnetic north for your compass, if I can put it that way." —J.I. Packer

The Whetstone aspires to journalistic excellence characterized by reporting precision, literary verve, intellectual integrity, social consciousness, and Christian conviction. Using words and images, this student newspaper communicates campus news, shares stories, and provides a platform for voices, all with the goal of fostering creativity, growth, and community. Officially published by Montreat College, The Whetstone is written, edited and produced by its students. Opinions are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the administration, faculty, or staff. Articles and letters to The Whetstone will be edited prior to publication. All submissions become the property of the newspaper.

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*The Huck, R.I.P.*

# Students React to Losing Popular Campus Hangout Spot

By Rukiya Wylie

Amidst all of the other craziness surrounding their return to campus after a season of quarantine, Montreat students in August discovered that The Huckleberry would be closed for the 2020-2021 school year. Affectionately referred to as 'The Huck,' the café located on the side of Lake Susan provided an alternative to the campus cafeteria. Many regarded the space as the go-to spot to grab an ice cream, a Starbucks beverage, or just hang out with friends. More than a few students expressed disappointment over the unexpected closure, with some wondering about the reasons for The Huck's demise.

English professor Elizabeth Juckett said, "The Huck was a great place to get a drink or snack and connect with students or colleagues, and I already miss it." Dr. Juckett remembered "ordering a grande cappuccino and [being able to] say hi to my students before getting to work (energized by caffeine) or having a casual conversation with someone. More often than not, I'd get lured into the Ten Thousand Villages store [next door] as well, and have to resist buying a thousand beautiful things."

Senior Ashley Ruppard had more pointed words to share. "I hate that it is closed. I feel like they could've still had it open, as long as they took precautions and made sure students were also taking precautions. I feel like I'm paying for a meal plan that I don't even get to use due to my schedule conflicting. I believe [the decision makers] should have thought things through more."

"I'm not a fan because that was the only other place on campus to eat," commented junior Kemani Watson. "I appreciate there had to be reasons behind the decision to close, but things just won't be the same. Although Nelson's in the library is open, it doesn't really have good options to choose from. I think it is especially bad for athletes because the cafeteria is closed by the time we get out of practice," she added.



Photo courtesy: DFF.com

The Huckleberry's closure has stirred conversations about coffee, COVID, and which campus resources are disposable.

Because students expressed concern over exactly why The Huckleberry was closed, *The Whetstone* approached Jack Heinen, Vice President for Finance and Administration, to find some answers. Heinen shared that Montreat College does not own The Huckleberry Café, but had been leasing the space from the Montreat Retreat Association/Montreat Conference Center for nine years. "[Our] lease was scheduled to expire in September, and the college was faced with the decision of whether to renew the lease, or to vacate and move to a different service model," he explained. In July the decision was made by College Leadership to vacate the space instead of renewing the lease. Although that decision was based on business considerations, according to Heinen, Coronavirus factors came into play. "The primary reasons were related to student safety and the [overall] dining experience. If the Huckleberry had remained open, Governor Cooper's executive orders would have limited the dining capacity to no more than 50%,"

Heinen continued. "Because of the narrow hallway leading to The Huck, a fire code would have required students to line up outside of the building and wait. And that would mean sometimes waiting in cold and wet weather, until seating became available. Those restrictions would have had to remain in effect indefinitely, producing a negative experience for students."

Along with the closure of The Huck, many other things have changed in terms of meals and facility operating hours in response to the threat of COVID-19. Faculty and staff are working hard to keep the students safe as everyone gets their meals. Sharon Randall, Director of Food Services for Aramark, has sent multiple e-mails to the student body highlighting new changes. Dining options now available to students include Howerton "Dine-In," Howerton "To-Go," and Nelson's (located in the library, where only to-go options are available). Randall also mentioned a new "Howerton After Hours" addition, featuring

grill items formerly offered in The Huckleberry. This last service is being available Mon. through Thurs. from 6:30-10:00 p.m. Aramark has also begun providing Starbucks coffee in Howerton, and students can go there to place coffee orders in a manner similar to how they did in The Huck.

While some have not gotten used to the dining changes, others don't seem to mind. Sam Jones, a junior, commented, "It's unfortunate, but I do not mind the new meal switches." And junior Melina Welch said, "I am actually content with it. I know it is the college just trying to establish some safety mechanisms for us as students and staff. We as a community want to stay safe and help stop the spread of this virus. We don't want to take anything unhealthy back home to our loved ones."

Students continue trying to adapt to the 'new normal.' Due to the pandemic they cannot congregate as they normally would, but at least — if they look for it — they can still find a cup o' joe.

## Cavs Set to Cross-Up COVID

*Men's Basketball Gets Game Ready While Playing It Safe*

By Jaylan Shelton

COVID-19. It is presenting challenges across the board, but maybe no one has more balls to juggle than athletics, and in particular Montreat's Men's Basketball team. While preparing for the upcoming season, Coaches Garret Jones, Tyler Strange and Kent Ott have put in place a series of precautionary measures to ensure the safety of their roster. Head Coach Garret Jones jump started the Cavs' pre-season training this year on September 1. Four practices into week three, Jones is still busy dealing with the new details surrounding the safety for his squad.

After North Carolina University and North Carolina State postponed fall sports due to the virus outbreak last week, Montreat became one of the only programs to ensure fall sports on the west side of North Carolina, and one of few schools to remain open throughout the state. Schools open include UNC Asheville and UNC Charlotte. This will require coaches to have a dedicated plan of action.

Coach Jones stated, "Checking all 48 of the player's temperatures as well as CampusClear app will be mandatory upon entry to the gym. We also have split the teams practice times up to manage the mandated 40 person limit." CampusClear is a mobile app that is being used throughout the nation to self-diagnose each student prior to being in public locations, such as gyms and classrooms. In order to ensure a season, the players know these protocols must be in place. When asked how they will go about guaranteeing the season, Cavs senior Victor Tshiona says, "Things are different from how things were. We know as a team we must keep clean and do whatever it is so we can play. We have a number of seniors who look forward to playing their last year at the college level. Coach stresses everyday how lucky we are to be playing with all these schools closing, keeping a mask on and keeping hands clean are the two focal points they stress the most."

Assistant coach Tyler Strange is ready to take on the huge task of protecting the players: "Coach Jones and I are working day in and day out at coming up with ideas to maintain the team's safety. We encourage each player to stay home on the off days, the least interactions they have will lead to them being less likely to come in contact with the virus." Even though coaches are required to wear face masks while practicing, players are not. This comes after getting the green light from the NAIA (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics) enabling players to workout without the need of face covering. Other leading factors consist of sanitation of the gym and basketballs.

The ACC conference has committed that a season will take place for the fall and spring sports. As long as the coaching staff and players do their part in staying safe, the promise will be fulfilled. Keeping a mask on and staying a safe 6 feet apart are the two major components!

Photo Illustration by H. Baptiste



## The Lamp Post Gets a Belated Formal Debut

By Rukiya Wylie

Athletics was not the only thing derailed when the onset of COVID-19 brought so many things to a standstill last spring. Distribution of *The Lamp Post*, Montreat's literary magazine, was also interrupted. In the first part of April, magazine staff organized an open mic night event to hype the publications upcoming release. Guests in The Huckleberry got to listen to spoken word, rap, singing, piano performances, and even some beatboxing from former student Caleb Jones.

But with the college's shift to distance learning, the staff had to navigate difficulties including remote editing and page layout. After finally getting *The Lamp Post* proofed and edited, a group decision was made to delay its paper release. And now that students and staff are back on campus, *The Lamp Post* hosted a fall launch party for its spring 2020. The event took place on Gaiter Hall's lawn at 7:00 p.m. on Thurs., October 1.

Contributor Ashley Ruppard, a senior whose painting is featured in *The Lamp Post*, said, "It was very excited and nerve-wrecking to submit my work for a magazine. I've never done that before, so ... [am] excited to see a copy of the magazine and see my art! I'm satisfied with how it turned out." Junior Melina Welch, an attendee at the launch party, said she "enjoyed seeing the variety of talent from students and professors." Kemani Watson, a junior who works with Montreat's Student Activities Office, was on hand helping set things up for the party. "I think it was successful," she commented. "We had a good turnout and lots of volunteers. No one felt pressured to perform and all-in-all it was a smooth process. I think the magazine turned out great, and I enjoyed myself — except for the evening's temperature drop!"

English Department Chair Kimberly Angle praised the contributions of students and magazine faculty advisor Dr. Elizabeth Juckett. "Quote." Just back from a year-long sabbatical, she sounded well rested and happy to have returned. "My sabbatical was wonderful, and I have come back recharged and ready to teach. In my time away I realized that Montreat is where I belong." Of the launch party, she noted it "is creating momentum and excitement for our magazine. I am looking forward to how Montreat students will creatively respond to the challenging and dynamic issues we are currently facing on local, national, and global levels as we plan for the spring 2021 issue."

Like many other college literary magazines, *The Lamp Post* exists to give students an opportunity to show off their creative talents. Though there is no explicit faith component in *The Lamp Post*'s mission statement, what differentiates the journal from many of its counterparts at secular schools is a willingness to publish students' conversations about God and their faith. For last year's issue, editors encouraged students to submit whatever they wanted without pressure of outside expectations. The diversity of content in the 2020 issue shows the results of that strategy.

A new staff is already in the works for the next issue of the magazine, slated for release in Spring 2021. Some staff are former members, and new participants are welcome as well. Interested students can enroll in COMMXXXX, or submit original work for spring 2021 publication to [thelampost@montreat.edu](mailto:thelampost@montreat.edu) using the subject line, "the lamp post submission."

## Obits

# Remembering Two Human Faces Who Influenced Their World

## Ruth Bader Ginsburg

By Chloe Wood

Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg died September 18, 2020 from complications from pancreatic cancer. The second woman ever nominated to the Supreme Court, Ginsburg spent two and a half decades fighting for gender equality, late in life battling several health scares including five previous bouts of cancer. Displaying an indefatigable work ethic, the justice specifically scheduled her chemotherapy so she would be fit enough never to miss oral arguments. She remained determined to serve her country as long as she was physically able, and sat on the bench for 26 years following her nomination to the bench in 1993 by President Bill Clinton. In that time, she ruled on several important cases, including *United States v Virginia*, *Obergefell v Hodges*, and *Sessions v Dimaya*. Of her 483 majority, concurring, and dissenting opinions," said Chief Justice John Roberts said "they are written with the unaffected grace of precision."

Over the years her dissenting opinions became ever more bold. In 2007, Ginsburg wrote the dissenting opinion for *Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.*, a case that denied a woman the right to sue her employer for gender-based pay discrimination because of the length of time that had passed since the violation. Two years later, the U.S. Congress overturned the court's verdict on the basis of Ginsburg's reasoning. Fans of the justice dubbed her "The Notorious R.B.G.," playing off the fame of the late New York rapper Notorious B.I.G.

While Ginsburg considered herself a generally shy person and only a moderate liberal, she became a tireless advocate of equality for all people after growing up in what was a different time. In 1956 she enrolled at Harvard Law School, where she was one of only nine women in a class of close to 500 men. At a dinner at his family home the dean asked the female law students, including her, "Why are [you here], taking the place of a man?" Ginsburg would transfer to Columbia Law School, becoming the first woman to have been on two major law reviews, both those at Harvard and Columbia. Despite graduating law school at the top of her class, she struggled as a 26-year old to find a law firm willing to hire her. "Not a law firm in the entire city of New York would employ me," Ginsburg remarked on her difficulties. "I struck out on three grounds: I was Jewish, a woman and a mother." She was finally hired to clerk for Judge Edmund L. Palmieri, and her path from there has become history.

While a professor at Rutgers Law School, she co-founded the Women's Rights Project with the American Civil Liberties Union, fighting six gender-based discrimination cases in front of the Supreme Court (and winning five) decades before she would find herself seated there as well. As a lawyer, Ginsburg approached the cause of gender equality carefully, arguing for women's rights case by case and choosing mostly male clients. Noticing her skill and wit, President Jimmy Carter nominated her to the U.S. Court of Appeals. The *Los Angeles Times* characterized her decisions over thirteen years there as those of a "cautious jurist."

Even those who disagreed with Ginsburg's advocacy of abortion rights praised her life as "heroic." *America Magazine* noted her "unflappable resilience, reputation for equanimity and composure, and dedicated work on behalf of others." But it also dissented from her pro-choice philosophy, noting, "to truly realize across our culture her noble vision for caregiving, we will have to point our children to others, those who recognize unborn children not as potential hindrances to the contributions we might make in the world but as reasons for



Photo courtesy CNN

greater solidarity with one another." Admired for how she handled adversity, Ginsburg over the years faced a variety of illnesses and injuries, including colon cancer, pancreatic cancer, fracturing three ribs after a fall in her office, and surgery to remove cancerous growths in her left lung. She quietly battled the illness for eleven years after first undergoing surgery for it. Chief Justice Roberts remembered her as "tough, brave, a fighter, a winner... Her voice in court and in our conference room was soft, but when she spoke people listened."

Thousands of people paid their respects to the justice as she lay in repose outside the Supreme Court building the last week of September, with lines backed up around the National Mall. Given the unexpectedly large number of visitors, organizers determined 24 hours would not be enough, and so Ginsburg became the first justice to have two days of viewing there. Afterwards, her coffin was moved across the street, where Ginsburg became the first woman in American history to lie in state at the U.S. Capitol. Many felt it seemed a fitting honor for the woman who lived her beliefs and wasn't afraid to voice them.

## James Innell Packer

By Bruiser Cabe

Famed British-born theologian J.I. Packer passed away on July 17, 2020. The author, who achieved international acclaim over a lifetime of producing manuscripts on a manual typewriter, died of natural causes after a four-year struggle with macular degeneration that left him unable to read, write, or travel. The son of a railway clerk, Packer was involved in a road accident at the age of only seven that caused serious injury, leaving him with a metal plate in his head. But the dent in his head left no similar dent in what became a remarkable career. He edited the English Standard Version of the Bible, championed Puritan literature, and authored over 388 books and journal articles (as well as a long list of forewords to the books of others). Born in 1926, his career would intersect with a Who's Who of Christian leaders including C.S. Lewis at Oxford, Martyn Lloyd-Jones in London, and Thomas Oden and Avery Cardinal Dulles in America.

Explaining his significance to a secular world, *TIME Magazine* commented, "When it comes to doctrine, Evangelicals practice the equivalent of states' rights. Encompassing huge, philosophically distinct denominations like the Southern Baptist Convention and the Assemblies of God, and thousands of independent pentecostal and 'Bible churches,' the movement has no formal arbiter. Nonetheless, Packer, an Oxford-trained theologian, claimed the role informally with the release of his 1973 book *Knowing God*. It outlined a conservative Christian theology deeper and more embracing than many had before encountered... Conservative Methodists and Presbyterians and Baptists could all point to the book and say, 'This sums it all up for us.'"

He was also sought after as a speaker. Pastor John Piper said of him, "He was articulate, he was steady, he was slow, he was deliberate in his speech... Nobody, I mean N-O-B-O-D-Y, talked like J.I. Packer." Nor of the many published obituaries could any quite do literary justice to the man Pastor Geoff Thomas judged "Evangelicalism's most stylistically elegant spokesman." Prof. Paul Helm said, "He was a Christian gentleman, and a great theological figure. Striking to look at, softly spoken, with every word worth attention, he was remarkable. In a class by himself."

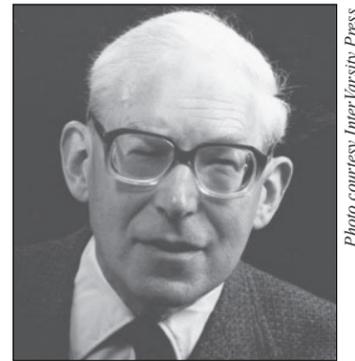


Photo courtesy InterVarsity Press



## “Dear Freshman Me...”

If you are reading this article, congratulations. You have persevered through one of the most tumultuous years in recent history. Despite all that has taken place, you have found your way here to Montreat College — for that you should be grateful.

I don't think I need to remind you that your time at Montreat is precious and should not be taken for granted. Just living in the world this year has probably taught that to you. But as a graduate and newly minted member of the workforce, I feel compelled to share some advice with you: be intentional about making the most of your time as a college student. Now, more than ever, it is necessary for you to capitalize on these years and prepare yourself for the world beyond the Montreat gate.

After I graduated in May, I wrote out a list of all the things I learned about life, faith, and myself while I was at Montreat. I was truly pleased with the person I had become in the last four years and was afraid that the impending pressure of "adult" realities would push that part of me where she would never be found again. Fortunately, four months later I find that was not the case. The lessons learned are a part of my soul now, and a few months of my deer-in-the-headlights reaction to the world have not pushed them away. In fact, I have relied on them all the more.

So, I encourage you to start building your own list of lessons now. Actively seek out opportunities to grow yourself as a student and professional. Take classes that you know

will challenge you, rather than just looking for an easy 'A.' Find student work opportunities that connect with the career you want to have after college. That work experience will prepare you as much as any coursework, and may even open up opportunities for mentorship. Speak with your professors about areas in your major in which you can improve, and actually participate in class. Once you have your diploma in hand, it is too late to go back and learn the lectures and labs you didn't pay attention to. You only have four years to build the foundation of your future success. Take the responsibility of making it a solid one; no one else is going to do it for you.

Similarly, use this time to discover who you are as a person. You may laugh at or even resent the seclusion of the Montreat "bubble," but that environment allows you the safety in which to ask hard questions of yourself and the world, without outside pressures swaying your judgement. Talk to your friends, talk to your profs, talk to your life group leaders... just talk to someone about what you are thinking. College is the ideal time to form your worldview and practice defending it. Don't shy away from difficult or uncomfortable conversations because you are afraid of conflict. Learn instead how to engage in those conversations respectfully. Perhaps that is how our generation will change the culture.

All this might sound like a pretty heavy lifting, but you will find that much of your list will in fact be easy to compile. Discover your unique likes and interests. Do you like coffee or tea? Oatmeal or omelets? Do you let off steam by pounding weights or by walking through the forest? The little things are just as important in the making of you as the big things are. The little things are what will keep you sane when the rest of the world feels like it is falling around you.

To be completely transparent, life outside the gate is thrilling and terrifying all at the same time. College is comfortable and beginning adulthood is not. But, because of the lessons I learned at Montreat, I was prepared as both an individual and an employee. Sure, I will probably have to remind myself of a few of those lessons down the road, but the ones that matter will stick with me forever. Start your list of lessons now so that when you drive out the gate for the last time, you are ready for what awaits you. — Emily Wells, Class of 2020