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COLLEGE OF THE OZARKS®

The Keeter Report



*Former White House Press Secretary
Speaks at Convocation*

Tony Snow Visits C of O

By Elise Vazquez,
College of the Ozarks Student

Thousands of people filled the Keeter Gymnasium at College of the Ozarks on Thursday, December 6, to hear Tony Snow recount his personal bout with adversity. Snow's speech, "Overcoming Adversity: Beating the Odds and Passing the Tests," gave his audience an inside look at a man who has not only battled criticism as the White House Press Secretary, but has fought and continues to fight his own battle with cancer. Snow was first diagnosed with

colon cancer in February 2005 and after a successful surgery, began chemotherapy. The cancer went into remission but returned in April of 2007. However, with characteristic optimism, Snow said that his cancer has been a blessing; in fact, he insisted that all adversities can be blessings by God's provident design. The key to victory, Snow said, is faith: "God hasn't promised us tomorrow, but he has promised us eternity. How can you not have faith at a time like that?"



Snow was remarkably open about his health, but then, he has been open all along. His candor has prompted some in the media to call him courageous, but Snow disagreed. Pointing to a group of ROTC cadets in the audience, Snow said, "Courage is you guys in uniform. You signed up for it. I didn't ask for cancer."

In addition to faith, Snow also stressed the value of work in overcoming adversity. The op-

Mr. Snow participated in a question-and-answer session with mass communication students.



Mynette Ulrich, Supervisor of the Fruitcake and Jelly Kitchen, shows off the Centennial 101-pound fruitcake.



Mr. Snow receives his Hard Work U. sweatshirt.

portunity to work in the White House, he said, made him feel that he was a part of something much larger than himself, and this commitment to a greater good gave him a sense of purpose. At its best, “work is an act of creation,” Snow said. “It isn’t easy, but the challenges will make you.”

Snow then offered an overview of his work experience—his life in journalism—and observed that life can take you to unexpected places. He began his career in the newspaper business, writing for *The Greensboro Record*, *The Virginian-Pilot*, *The Daily Press*, and *The Washington Times*. He

also substituted for Rush Limbaugh on Limbaugh’s radio program and went on to anchor *Fox News Sunday* for seven years. He was eventually given his own show, *Weekend Live with Tony Snow*, and his own radio show. Snow’s appointment at the White House was a continuation of his extensive work in news television.

While Snow has had to deal with the demands of a high-profile career and a recurring disease, he hasn’t had to do so alone. He has the love and support of his wife, Jill Ellen Walker, and their three children. In fact, he resigned from his position at the White House in order to spend more time with his family and to encourage others who are fighting their own battles with cancer.

From this vantage point of a well-grounded faith, a successful career, and a solid family, Snow offered this advice to the student body: “You have to be strong and count your blessings every day. Do good deeds, but . . . don’t forget to have fun.” Finally, he exhorted students to “be not afraid,” to walk in faith, and to live in love: “We don’t know how the narrative of our lives will end. But we get to choose how to use the interval between now and the moment we meet our Creator face-to-face.”



Natalie Hinds poses a question to Mr. Snow.

Unsung Heroes—Student Honorees

By Emily Forster, College of the Ozarks Student

This summer, two College of the Ozarks students demonstrated courage and strength by risking their lives to save others. Isaac Hatton and Cambre Thrasher rose to the occasion when their help was a matter of life and death.

Hatton was jogging near Lake Taneycomo last spring when he noticed a man fishing in a small boat. The man lost his balance and fell overboard, causing the boat to circle around him. The man in the water started panicking, trying to reach the boat. When he caught the boat, it tipped over and began to fill with water. By this point, Hatton decided to swim out to help him.



Isaac Hatton pulled a fisherman to shore when the man's boat overturned.

“When I got out there, (the man) was just laying across the mostly-submerged boat, hanging onto either side,” Hatton said. “I could tell he was in shock, so I grabbed the front of the boat with my left arm and started swimming back to shore with my right.”



Cambre Thrasher receives his award for saving a toddler from drowning.

When the two reached the shore, the man started bailing water out of his boat and Hatton retrieved other items that were floating around. Others had arrived on the scene and helped the man tug his boat to his campground. The man was extremely thankful to Hatton, but Hatton knew it was the Lord that helped them both.

“I was just thankful that God had me on that little peninsula right

at the perfect time to be able to help him out.” Hatton said.

Hatton is a sophomore studying studio art and pre-medicine. He plans on becoming a missionary doctor serving in a Third World country.

Cambre Thrasher’s heroic act also involved a water rescue, this time of a toddler. Thrasher was working at the marina one afternoon during the summer. He was helping a family bring in their rental boat, when the mother and two boys got off the boat and headed towards the tackle shop. The mother realized the boys still had on their life jackets, so she took them off and went back to the boat to put them up. Thrasher noticed the boys walking around some tubes tied up to the dock. The two year old boy didn’t notice that the corner of the dock dropped off. Despite the railing, his foot fell through the opening, and he plummeted into the water. Thrasher acted immediately.

“Being the closest one and the only one who had seen this, I naturally dove in after the little boy.” Thrasher said. “With the help of God, I was able to retrieve him and get him out of the water before anything bad happened to him.”

Thrasher is a sophomore majoring in animal science and agricultural business and hopes to have a farm some day.

Spring 2008 Character Forum

“The Role of Faith in Public Life”

Gen. Peter Pace (Ret.) will be the featured guest at the Spring Character Forum at College of the Ozarks. Pace has served as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the past two years. He was the principal military advisor to President George W. Bush, the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Council, and the Homeland Security Council. The Spring Forum for College of the Ozarks students, students from other institutions, and invited cadets from the U.S. Military Academies will be on March 6, 2008.



Convo Honorees

By **Melissa S. Ebert**, College of the Ozarks Student

Three very special people were honored at this year's Gittinger Community Convocation, organized by The Keeter Center for Character Education. The guest of honor, former White House Press Secretary Tony Snow, helped with the award ceremony honoring two C of O alumni and one professor. Sue Head, Executive Director for The Keeter Center for Character Education, said: "They were chosen to be honored because of certain situations in which they have overcome adversity."

Janelle Stolz is a 2007 graduate of C of O, and is now an elementary school teacher. Raised in a financially-strapped, single-parent home, she grew up helping pay bills instead of saving money for a new car and prom dresses. After supporting herself and her brother through high school and surviving a house fire, she became the first member of her family to graduate from college.

"C of O has helped me fulfill my dreams academically, financially, and spiritually," she said of her accomplishments at C of O.

Martin Niboh, the second honoree, was born in 1963 in Cameroon, Africa, to a single mother. Born into poverty, the odds of his getting an education were very slim. Martin worked his way up by gaining scholarships here and there, working when he needed to, and eventually becoming the first English-speaking student to graduate from the French university in Cameroon.

Soon after, he pursued his dream of going to the United States,



attended graduate school at Kent State for physics, and finally accepted a teaching position at College of the Ozarks. More recently, he founded the Torchbearer Foundation, a group aimed at improving education and the economy in his home country of Cameroon.



Tony Snow with honoree Janelle Stolz

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Dr. Martin Niboh accepts his award.

Movie Night Under The Stars

Pulling into the parking lot beside the soccer fields at the Branson Rec-Plex, cars and minivans loaded with children were finding their parking places. Families were already staking out spots on the manicured lawn a half hour early. They were setting up chairs and spreading out blankets, and children were running around on the lawn. “Movie Night Under the Stars” was a First PLACE! event to kick off the year-long focus on families and character-based activities for them to enjoy together.



Movie night under the stars was a big hit with Taney County families.

Set up on the field was a large screen and speakers provided by Air Theater Productions of Branson, Missouri. The featured movie was *Charlotte's Web*, and by the time the soccer field lights were dimmed and the movie began, moms and dads, grandparents and children of all ages (and a few pets, too!) covered the field. The movie version of the E. B. White classic children's story received the 2006 Best Family Film of the Year honor in theaters. In the movie, Wilbur, an adorable pig, strikes up an unlikely friendship with a spider named Charlotte. The film was loaded with examples of the valuable character traits of loyalty, kindness, perseverance, compassion, and commitment, among others.

For two hours on a fun Friday night, some families in Taney County were able to set all the hand-held gadgets and cell phones aside and enjoy a movie that focused on positive relationships and cooperation among a barn full of animals. Hopefully, the movie provided some good discussion for the ride home and a memorable moment for each family.



— The Year of the Family —

2008 Teachers Academy: *C.S. Lewis and Character Education*

By Mr. David Ringer, Assistant Professor of Humanities

On January 10, fourteen Taney County public school teachers joined four College of the Ozarks faculty members for The 2008 Teachers Academy: *C. S. Lewis and Character Education*. The two and a half day Academy was the brainchild of Dr. Hayden Head of the C of O English Department. Sue Head, Executive Director of The Keeter Center for Character Education, organized and administered the event and arranged with the Slusher Foundation to underwrite the workshop.

The daily schedule included presentations by two or more of the four C of O faculty members (Drs. Danita Frazier, Hayden Head, Mark Rapinchuk, and Mr. David Ringer), small group discussions, and special events. The latter included a roundtable discussion with Karen Best, a former principal and poverty expert, and Joan Davis, state coordinator of CHARACTER^{plus},[®] and a viewing of the film *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. The faculty presentations were based on specific works by C. S. Lewis: *The Abolition of Man*, *The Screwtape Letters*, "Screwtape Proposes a Toast," *The Magician's Nephew*, and *The Silver Chair*. Each presenter focused on the aspects of the assigned book, essay, or novel which brought out Lewis' ideas about the moral law and character education. Each presenter also gave attention



Facilitators with participants of the C. S. Lewis Teachers Academy



to the relationship between Lewis' thought and the Taney County First PLACE! Character Traits.

Possibly, the most stimulating times of the Academy occurred during the small group discussions. The fourteen participants ranged from new teachers to seasoned veterans; they teach Kindergarten through grade 12 and specialize in a wide range of subjects. We (the four C of O faculty members) were humbled and challenged as these teachers shared openly their insights into the readings, their struggles to meet the intellectual and emotional needs of their students while teaching them character traits, and their intense desire to model those traits in their daily lives and in interactions with students and colleagues.

Testimonies

I sometimes question what I feel is my calling – to teach. I wasn't sure I wanted to do it anymore. I felt I wasn't making a difference, and I no longer saw the point of my being a teacher.

*On the first day of the academy, it all came rushing back to me – I'm there to love kids, to teach them to differentiate between right and wrong, to teach them responsibility and absolute truth. I felt like [the devil] Screwtape had gotten ahold of me – my eyes were opened to what [he] said in *The Screwtape Letters*, "Make the work hard and get them to give up. Keep them from fulfilling their duty." I was there. I didn't want to go on. This workshop has so encouraged me in my Christian walk and this "duty of being a teacher."*

Elementary School Teacher

Thank you so much for allowing us to come and spend this time sharing and learning how (and why) to incorporate character education into our classrooms. I have come away full in every sense of the word and ready to go out and plant seeds of integrity and thought in my students.

*Thanks again and
God Bless,
A participant*



First PLACE! Offers Training to Neighboring Stone County

The Keeter Center for Character Education's First PLACE! initiative kicked off the New Year by offering a training for all of the schools in neighboring Stone County. In the Ozarks region, Stone and Taney stand side by side, and many residents live and work on both sides of the county line. When First PLACE! first launched in Taney County, many wondered why Stone County had not been included. The staff at CHARACTER^{plus}® whose framework was being used for First PLACE! had never worked with an entire county before, so the decision was made to start with the county in which College of the Ozarks is located and then expand.



Now that First PLACE! has been in progress for nearly three years, Stone County has been invited to join the initiative. The two-day training was conducted by CHARACTER^{plus}® staff and was hosted at The Keeter Center. After all the teams have participated in the training on the *Ten Essentials*, a kick-off of First PLACE! of Stone and Taney Counties will be held on April 1st at Silver Dollar City to re-select traits and recruit more First PLACE! Partners. In Taney County alone there are over 400 churches, civic groups, organizations, and government leaders who have “linked arms” in the effort. The Table Rock Area Chamber of Commerce, located in Stone County, has already committed to recruiting partners for the initiative. By expanding to the next county, the goal is



to have an even greater influence on the lives of children throughout Stone and Taney Counties, and in turn all residents of the area known as Ozark Mountain Country.

The team from Reeds Spring Intermediate takes a break during training.

First PLACE! High School IMPACT Group

Well into its third year, the First PLACE! character education initiative is continuously striving to sustain the positive impact it is having on Taney County, Missouri. Elementary schools around the county start each week off with a character assembly and recognition of students who have demonstrated good character at school. Teachers have successfully embedded character education into their day and report that they have seen a clear difference in classroom behavior and attendance over the past two and a half years.

Implementation at the high school level is understandably the most challenging. In an intentional effort to take character education to a deeper level at the high schools, a group geared just for teenagers has begun to meet each month. Rotating the location of the IMPACT meeting each month has given each high school the opportunity to host the other students on their “home turf” and for students at the hosting school to organize and conduct the meetings. The purpose of the group is to brainstorm project ideas that will build bridges between the schools. Simply discussing successful projects in their own schools and forming relationships with each other has been beneficial.

A local magazine, *Branson Living*, is turning over its spring issue to First PLACE! and is allowing the county’s high school students to write, edit, and design the issue with the help of its staff. The stories will reflect students’ experiences with character education and what it means to them.

Whether it is producing a magazine, discussing a service learning project, or working on a “Character Week” idea, area high school students are being given the opportunity to improve their leadership skills and to work on collaborative projects that will benefit the residents of the area and cultivate leadership in high school students.

Admissions Interviewing for Character

By Kia Stacy, College of the Ozarks Student

Recently, College of the Ozarks was listed number eight among the choosiest schools in America in the *Newsweek* college guide *How To Get Into College 2008*.

Unlike the others ranked, Harvard and Yale among them, C of O's selectivity stems from sheer mathematics due to the overwhelming number of applicants and limited number of open spots. Not only do all applicants have an interview, they are also evaluated for financial need and academic ability.

"There's the misperception that we're looking for someone to wow us during the interview. We can't assess in 20 minutes if a student has good character for C of O, but we can communicate what is important," said Marci Linson, Dean of Admissions.

Interviews are part of each potential student's application process. Before interviews can be conducted, the applicant's file must contain a high school transcript and ACT score. C of O standards prefer that applicants be in the top half of their class and have above a 19 on the ACT. After the interview, the file is reviewed by the admissions committee and accepted or rejected.

But don't let all of this information overwhelm you. Admissions representatives Kayla Connell and Andrea Gilkison, who interview approximately 24 applicants weekly between them, said that the interview is a way of getting to know the applicant better.

"I try to have more of a conversation interview, more like they're talking to a friend – someone they can relax with, relate to," Connell said. "My interviews are very relaxed."

During interviews, admissions reps discern applicants' time management skills, respect for authority, ability to carry out goals, and possession of Christian character.

Linson said part of the interview is making sure that prospective





students understand what C of O requires of them. Character is not something easily measured, so when it comes to searching for character in C of O applicants, the interviewers prefer to make sure the students are informed about the character expectations and then let the students' character speak for itself.

Honorees

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"My choice was to do something about it, or keep quiet!" Niboh said of his continuing passion for his native people.

The third honoree, Earl Woodard, graduated from The School of the Ozarks in 1938, joining the Army Air Corps in 1941. Shot down over France in 1944, he managed to escape across the mountains into Spain, then England, and he finally made his way home. Interestingly enough, he met the woman who would be his wife, Nancy, on the train home after arriving back in the States. Woodard passed away on November 8, 2007. Four of his six children, Barry, Charlie, Steve, and Lucy accepted the award in memory of their father.



The Woodard Family listens as College President Jerry C. Davis recounts the heroic acts of their father.

Homecoming Queen's Farewell Address Focuses on Character



At the College's recent Homecoming Coronation, the 2006 Queen gave her farewell address which focused on the importance of character. Following are portions of her remarks:

Good evening, my name is Bonnie Harrell. It has been an honor and a pleasure representing College of the Ozarks as homecoming queen.

Last semester I had the opportunity to speak at Hollister elementary school for First PLACE. The character trait of the month was honesty. I struggled at first with trying to connect honesty with my experiences as queen, but then I realized that honesty was precisely what being queen was all about. The definition of honesty extends beyond just truthfulness of one's words, but is concerned also with truthfulness of actions and being honest about who you say you are. I asked the kids "Would I be honest if I told you I was a perfect person?" "No" they all replied. Being honest for me means being honest even about my weakness. If I am to be any kind of example, I need to be a real person – not a façade. Christ has already met the standards of perfection that I could never attain. And it is in Him that I stand. Being queen only amplified the responsibility and need to be honest as a person. There's something about a 155 diamond tiara that makes one a bit conspicuous. It definitely stands out in a crowd! When I walked into the school, every kid there noticed me. Some were speechless, but others asked if I was a real princess. I asked them how many of them would have noticed me if I had not had a crown on...they admitted that they probably wouldn't have paid any attention to me. This crown doesn't give me more value and it has not defined me as a person; it just reminds me that I need to be honest and let my actions be a reflection of my character.

I have been proud to represent College of the Ozarks during its centennial year. It is amazing to me that I am standing here tonight in the one hundred and first year of the College. The centennial celebrations this year have made me consider what it means to leave a legacy of character.

My Semester at Focus on the Family Institute

By Grace Kunze, College of the Ozarks Student

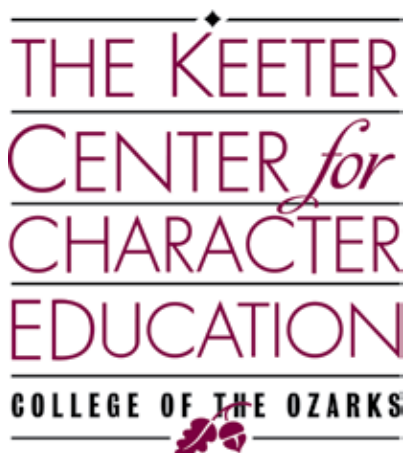
College of the Ozarks offers a variety of opportunities to students, including a semester at the Focus on the Family Institute. The Focus on the Family Institute is an undergraduate semester program that selects 88 students from around the world to learn more about marriage and family issues facing our culture in addition to worldview belief systems, public policy, and the role of church in society. C of O selects two students per semester to attend this phenomenal program.



As a freshman, I was interested in this opportunity, yet doubtful I would ever get to attend. During my junior year, God reminded me of the institute. Although I had been experiencing a dry period in my faith, I felt the Lord prodding me to apply for the FFI Scholarship. I did all the necessary paperwork and then sat back to see where He would lead me. I was interviewed and received the call that I had been accepted. I was so happy I cried.

As I finished my junior year at C of O, and prepared for my semester away at the Institute, I subconsciously formed expectations of what kind of experience I might have in Colorado. I imagined I would meet 87 amazing godly individuals, experience good Christian community and learn tons of life-changing information.

God has a way of teaching us things we could never dream of learning. I learned a lot about topics such as absolute truth and the role of family and church in society. In addition to the informative classes, God also taught me about myself and about who I am in Him. He impressed on my heart that He created me uniquely and that certain characteristics about me that I had always wanted to change were a part of me according to His design. He showed me through my classes and the time I spent in His word that He wants His desires to be my desires. While at times it was difficult to accept the challenges God brought me, I look back on the experience with deep gratitude and awe of who He is.



The Keeter Center for Character Education was established at College of the Ozarks by the generosity of the James P. Keeter family and many friends from across the country. The purpose of the Center is to provide programs and activities which enhance the development of character and good citizenship. In so doing, the Center reflects the principle upon which the College of the Ozarks was established: that

character in young people is best developed from an education which includes the head, the heart, and the hands.

Over the past several years, The Keeter Center for Character Education has hosted such noted speakers as General Colin Powell, Former Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu, Mrs. Barbara Bush, President Gerald Ford, General Norman Schwarzkopf, and General Tommy Franks. During our annual forum, cadets from each of the nation's military academies are guests of the College through the Thoresen Cadet Exchange Program.

College of the Ozarks, nicknamed "Hard Work U" by *The Wall Street Journal*, is a unique college that provides a tuition-free education to deserving young people who are willing to work. Every student on the 1,000 acre campus in southwest Missouri works 15 hours a week in one of 80+ work stations on campus. The College was recently recognized by the Young America's Foundation as one of the nation's "Top 10 Conservative Colleges." *U.S. News & World Report* has ranked College of the Ozarks among America's best liberal arts colleges yearly since 1989. College of the Ozarks is a shining example of conservative ideals.

The Keeter Center for Character Education

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