

Soon-to-be graduates will continue to “Shine Forth”

By Cierra Strawser

As commencement approaches, members of the MVNU class of 2019 are making preparations for the future. The mission statement of MVNU states, the University, “Exists to shape lives through educating the whole person and cultivating Christ-likeness for lifelong learning and service.”

This motto has once again been implemented into the lives of not only the seniors but all the students who attend this University. One example of a senior who has been inspired by this motto is senior social work major Hannah Nye. She shared, “My experience at MVNU has been life-giving because of the people who have invested in me and helped me grow these past few years.”

It’s no surprise that MVNU helps its students grow educationally and professionally, but the most important growth the students experience is growing spiritually. Baylee Jacks, a senior social work major, expressed, “My experience at MVNU has been nothing less than life-changing.” Another graduating senior, nursing student Jordan Cormier, stated, “My personal growth in the Lord has grown in ways I never imagined.” She also said she is, “looking forward to how this growth will play out in my nursing career.”

The seniors have been prepared

for life after college by receiving the training and hands-on experience that is essential for them to succeed. Nye described, “The people [here] have shaped me and challenged me in ways that I could have never imagined.” She admits she is, “Sad to leave the place I’ve loved these past four years, but I’ve been well prepared for this next season of life.”

The professors have made sure all of their students understood the importance of morals, values and ethics transforming the overall way they perceive the world around them. Most of the professors even pray before class starts -- a uniquely different practice than some of the other colleges around the United States. “[They] are amazing! They exemplify Christ through their teaching,” said Jacks regarding the professors at MVNU. “They invest so much into their students, be it academically, spiritually, or in my opinion, create an environment where success is inevitable.” Jacks believes MVNU students are able to experience God outside the confinements of a church, in the classroom or any time, anywhere.

The seniors are working diligently and efficiently as the days of graduation get closer and closer. Jacks said, “I am most excited to see where God takes me, even though I am unsure where that is.” Whether it is preparing for graduate school, internships, jobs

or career paths, their future will be bright. Cormier described her experience at MVNU to be, “One of the most rewarding of my life. I have always dreamed about being a nurse, and MVNU has made my dream a reality.”

The graduates will take their skills they learned and the wonderful memories they have experienced through their time here at MVNU and continue to shine forth.

Spiritual life department sees more change

By Eddie Dilts

In a Q&A session in February, there was discussion between students and members of Mount Vernon Nazarene University’s leadership over a variety of subjects involving life on campus.

One of the most discussed subjects had to do with the employment of Anthony Mako, who had contacted members of chapel band to let them know his position had been terminated. It was clarified at this meeting by MVNU President Dr. Henry Spaulding that the position was not terminated, though it would be seeing a change in salary due to how the money was being delegated during Joe Noonon’s tenure as university chaplain.

Many students were stunned by this news, as Mako had become a figurehead of the campus. Mako

chose to resign and gave a closing statement about his departure during chapel on March 29. Senior chapel band member Matt Moore, who was present at the Q&A meeting, was upset to hear the news.

“Our school is losing a vital part of the spiritual life department,” said Moore. “[He was] someone who was invested and influential in the lives of students.”

These financial changes mean that Kendra Lambert and Catie Hayes are affected as well, but the university wants to continue to preserve the work they do for programs such as student leadership and CoSMO groups.

The university is continuing to try to improve communication on subjects like these so that there is less confusion and rumors among the MVNU community in the future.

Program cuts eliminate valuable faculty member Dr. Huntington

By Ellie Parker

The sunsetting of the political science program at MVNU has brought with it the loss of esteemed faculty member Dr. Terilyn Johnston-Huntington. Dr. Huntington is the assistant professor of political science at MVNU and is one-half of the history and political science department, alongside Dr. William Wantland, professor of history and department chair.

Dr. Huntington is remarkably qualified and boasts a litany of degrees. She holds three master's degrees – theological studies, international studies with a focus on international security and intelligence, and political science – as

well as a PhD in political science from the University of Kansas. Her dissertation focused on the use of weaponized drones in warfare and counter-terrorism.

From the fall of 2016 to the spring of 2019, Dr. Huntington taught classes on subjects such as American politics and government, campaigns and elections, foreign policy, international and comparative relations, and terrorism and homeland security, for an impressive total of 13 different courses. She says that she really appreciated the opportunity to teach the students that she had, and, as of the spring of 2018, had 23 political science majors in her program. She also redesigned the program to



Dr. Huntington

make it more holistic and streamlined. Throughout her time here, she has seen many students study off campus and said that “the opportunities that those students have had to explore the world have been really exciting for me to watch.”

MVNU Arts and Humanities Dean Dr. Yvonne Schultz explained that, “The political science major and minors are being sunsetted as a result of an in-depth and thoughtful academic prioritization process that involved the entire academic community.” The decision was data-driven, based on how many majors and minors were enrolled, external demand for the program, operating costs, and several other factors.

Dr. Huntington said that she has really appreciated her time at MVNU but is “regretful of the way that things have turned out,” and wishes that students had been more involved in the decisions to eliminate programs. Senior history major and president of the history and political science club, Malisa Simco, said that, “The school is making a grave mistake eliminating the major and Huntington’s position.”

Senior political science and history major Austin Miller feels similarly, calling the loss of Dr. Huntington and the political science program a “massive tragedy.”

Dr. Huntington said that her goal for the classroom is to help students to become better citizens and better equipped to engage the world beyond MVNU. She wants her students not only to be engaged in political processes but also, “to think about their fellow human being, fellow citizens, and how they can address the needs of those people.” She hopes that her students are “asking tough questions” and is confident that they are going to be successful in many areas and will do great things.

“Dr. Terilyn Johnston-Huntington has brought intelligent and informed energy to her classes, engaging students with creative pedagogy and genuine care in their development. I will miss her leadership as a scholar whose vision sees far beyond the university to domestic and international policies and politics,” said Dr. Schultz. Simco was witness to that vision and leadership, saying that Dr. Huntington is, “caring, passionate and willing to do whatever it takes to prepare students for the future” and appreciates her strong support, passion and love for students. Miller stated that, “In such a short time. [Dr. Huntington’s] program grew immensely, dozens and dozens of people jumped on board, because they, too, could see not only what an expert she was in the subject area, but her Christ-like qualities as an individual. I am absolutely sure that Terilyn Huntington represents the epitome of quality teaching, exceptional character and Christ-like attitude.”

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The National Christian Schools Athletic Association hosted their 16th basketball tournament at Mount Vernon Nazarene University on Feb. 28 - March 2. This year was the fourth year the tournament has taken place here. Assisting with this year's activities were the MVNU facilities and housekeeping team, the Lady Cougars basketball team, Samantha Scoles of the marketing department, campus safety, Madison Krebs from admissions, Joe Rinehart from WNZR, MVNU men's basketball graduate assistant Will Smith and Jared Ronai, MVNU men's basketball coach.

Eighty teams came from Canada, Montana, Nevada, Kansas, New York, New Jersey, New Hampshire, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio. There was a wide range of experience with the coaches and players. Coach David Gindhart, senior director of information technology for finance and business at Penn State University, served in the U.S. Air Force for 14 plus years. He brought that same discipline to his team, Grace Prep Storm from State College. Another coach, Ace Kennedy from Grandview, MO, said, "Our team's number one priority is to honor God in all aspects of our lives." Coach Craig Carse from Montana was a former assistant coach at Louisiana State University and coached Shaquille O'Neal. Currently, he teaches biology and the Bible and is the strength and conditioning coach at Billings Christian School.

Nate Hartman, founder and director of the NCSAA, is also one of the coaches. He shared with a MVNU communication class that he was grateful that when he and his wife, Kara, started NCSAA, that "God kept it small, which allowed us to learn how to do it. If it had been large at first, the organization would have failed." That message is

MVNU hosts National Christian Schools Athletic Association basketball tourney

a great model to emulate when one is starting something new. "Something I hear a lot from new teams that come is, 'The opportunity to play in this tournament is great. If we had known about it before, we would have come in previous years,'" added Hartman.

Madison Krebs, admissions, welcomed the NCSAA teams and coaches Thursday morning. NCSAA's mission is to pursue

Christ-centered excellence in athletics, build relationships with and meet the needs of Christian schools, and impact communities with the love of Christ.

Some of the parents attending were MVNU graduates, including former men's basketball coach Scott Flemming. Tracy Waal, vice president of student life, was hopeful that the team here working the tournament would "make the

group feel welcomed and loved."

MVNU students Stephanie Steel, Lainie Vanamburg, Esther Hart, MacKenzie Kuntz, Tyler Johnson and Anna Chrysler also played an important role. As part of their communication class, they contacted the athletic directors and coaches from the schools participating and wrote and distributed news releases for the local papers of the teams who came. The students agreed it was a good way to share something positive about student athletes from the states represented.

MVNU men's basketball coach Jared Ronai shared that he was part of the initial group that wanted to approach NCSAA about bringing the tournament to MVNU. Formerly, the tournament took place in Erie, PA. One of the NCSAA leadership team members, Kevin Ramsey, said, "Your facilities are so much nicer than where we were before. We love it here."



Playing an important role in the success of the National Christian Schools Athletic Association basketball tournament at Mount Vernon Nazarene University were, from left, Tyler Johnson, MacKenzie Kuntz, Lainie Vanamburg, Anna Chrysler, Esther Hart and Stephanie Steel. Courtesy photo.

New safety app, Alertus, now available for MVNU students

By Cierra Strawser

Students now have access to a new safety feature during their time at MVNU. A meeting took place March 20 in Jetter Business Center where students were encouraged to take part in a security forum. They were able to ask questions regarding safety and the security on campus. Vice President for Student Life Tracy Waal shed some light on the plans to give students more peace of mind in case something unexpected were to happen on campus.

Waal explains that, "One of the strategies campus safety has implemented was the rollout of a new app called Alertus." This app allows students and staff members to receive real-time campus safety alerts to their phone in the event of an emergency. It's similar to Nixle in this regard, which will continue to be in use alongside Alertus. However, unlike Nixle, Alertus lets people report incidents in two ways.



The student or staff member could either choose to make a phone call from the app that will

directly connect to the campus safety cell phone, or they can submit an incident report that allows

them to submit a custom message and attach up to three pictures. Alertus gives students the opportunity to make a personal profile, making it convenient and reliable.

As soon as they report an incident, campus safety will immediately know who the report is from. The personal profile on the app consists of the person's name, phone number, birthdate, profile picture, and medical notes – important things for first responders to know (it's helpful to be detailed).

The Alertus app is free and can be downloaded on both Android and iPhone devices. Waal wanted to clarify that when searching for the app two options come up. "Alertus" is the correct one, not "Alertus Activator." Waal also stated, "You'll want to allow notifications to get real-time emergency alerts and location to be able to send your GPS location to campus safety."

Waal mentioned that he personally tested out the app without campus safety's prior knowledge. He said, "In less than a minute, the first campus safety officer responded ... in all, five people responded to my test submission." Waal suggested that, "The first line of action in an emergency would be to call campus safety instead of using the incident report." In a possible situation where the person cannot have a verbal conversation over the phone, they should fill out the incident report. In any instance, students can choose the option they are most comfortable with.

If you are interested in installing the app, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=XoqLivf2O3E. Find more information at the bottom of the page of www.mvnusga.com/updates.

Hard work for MVNU Student Government

By Nathan Parker

Student government is an organization on campus that specializes in being an advocate for students and conducting events that are geared for the students. A lot of aspects, in order for these to happen, are behind the scenes, and students might not know exactly know all the work that goes into SGA.

"From the concept of coming up with the idea of an event, you have to decide when and where it is

going to be, how much it will cost, all of the things we have to rent out, and what should and should not be allowed at an event. It wouldn't take so long to plan every event and get policies approved if everyone on SGA did not have classes of course," said Junior Class President, Nathan Parker.

This year, SGA has helped out with hosting a security forum along with attending many town hall meetings. Each town hall meeting allows students to come

forward with their concerns such as: "LGBTQ, chapel changes and picking a new chaplain." With a cabinet of 13 individuals, MVNU Student Government meets every week for an hour in order to go over the agenda that is set forth by the current student body president, Bailey Philips. Overall, MVNU Student Government is made up of students who put forth their effort in order to bring a better experience for students during their time here at MVNU.

Year's end proves emotional for MVNU students and faculty

By Mark Wesley

Many friendships are formed, and unforgettable memories are made over the course of a person's time in college. So much so, that even asking a senior about their experiences in college can often be a loaded query. A lot can happen in just four years; and with the 2018-2019 school year rapidly coming to a close, seniors and some faculty are experiencing a myriad of emotions about their time spent here at MVNU.

It's no secret that the past school year has been one full of copious amounts of changes. And while these changes have brought an invariable amount of discussion, it has brought a sense of community, whether for those students newly arriving or for individuals just getting ready to depart for one last hurrah.

Ryan Long, assistant professor of theatre, is one of those who will be exiting at the end of this school year, per the changes that have affected the theatre program. While she is very sentimental about her time at MVNU, there was no doubt that teaching theatre here was one of her most joyous experiences. "It's been great," said Long. "I've had some of the best students and some amazing experiences, both as a professor and as a person."

Professor Long also spoke about how the communication department is still doing great things, despite the inherent changes. "I

think there are positive things going on," she stated. "The communication program has put together a program that greatly helps students to prepare for their futures. I am, frankly, very proud of what we're doing".

Of course, faculty aren't the only ones who are nostalgic about the past few years. Trevor Moore, a senior and host of WNZR's "The Morning Thing," is just one of many seniors who is reminiscing about what MVNU means to him and how the school has played a monumental role in his life.

"I'll definitely miss MVNU once this semester ends," said Moore. "Sometimes it's crazy to think about how much I've seen and experienced here, but I wouldn't trade it for the world. My time here has been nothing short of amazing, and the things that I have been a part of has shaped me into the person I am now."

Similar sentiments have been noted among the other graduating seniors on campus. Time spent in small groups, M2540 or SGA, has proved largely beneficial in the eyes of these individuals. It is just another example of how MVNU is using its programs to forge a new path for students to follow. Moving on past college can be difficult, but Professor Long had some parting advice for seniors who are struggling with finding options. "Make your own opportunities," Long stated. "If you truly care about what you're doing, make it happen yourself!"



"Chip" Wilson

Wilson serving as new athletic director

By Jehane Hoagland

A new era began Dec. 20 when David "Chip" Wilson took on a new role in the MVNU athletic department -- the position of athletic director.

Before becoming athletic director, Wilson served as the cross country coach at MVNU.

Wilson is an MVNU alumni, graduating in 2004 with a degree in middle childhood education. He also received his master's degree in 2007. Wilson was a public school teacher for 11 years until he returned full time to MVNU.

"I've been with MVNU part-time as a part-time cross country coach," said Wilson. "I helped to start the program in 2006. When I was given the opportunity to work here full-time in 2015, I really felt a nudge from God. I really felt a leading to be back here. I had the opportunity to raise my kids in this setting. I

have a 9 year old and a 12 year old. I had the opportunity to raise them in this environment and to pour into the lives of college student athletes. That's been a passion of mine for a while now."

While a search for a new athletic director began in the fall, Wilson was unsure if he should apply.

"It was through a lot of prayer," said Wilson. "In the late fall when we were searching for an athletic director, it wasn't necessarily something I was looking for; but again, I felt a nudge from the Lord to apply. I received some good advice from the coaches in the office. At the very least, I'd grow as a professional to go through the interview process. My passion is for student athletes; but what I found through the interview process is I really have a passion for the university. I really want to do what I can to benefit the

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By Matt Harden

The MVNU Cougars' mens baseball team got off to a strong start this season and is looking to finish the regular season strong heading toward tournament play. In a season that's seen seven canceled games and six games postponed due to weather, the Cougars are sitting in a prime position in the Crossroads League.

As of this writing, the Cougars are third in the Crossroads League, only two and one-half games behind first-place Huntington University with a conference record of 9-6 and an overall record of 26-13. A very successful start to the season with some games being played in Florida has led to the team's success.

Coach Keith Veale knows that the team has been successful so far and that the spring trip has been a key to their performance. "We had a very productive and challenging spring trip. We played a number of nationally-ranked teams and had a packed schedule with 16 games in 12 days. We have pitched well throughout the early spring, and that gives us a chance to be competitive every day," Veale said.

Playing in those Florida tournament games is something that Veale knows has been a benefit to the team. "We finished second in the Warner University Invitational which included four teams in the NAIA national poll," said Veale.

All those games prepared the team for challenge of playing some tough teams in the Crossroads League. "We opened the league by going 2-1 versus Spring Arbor in Florida. We'll find out a lot over the next few weeks. We have a three game series with Taylor, IWU, and Marian that will go a long way in determining our position in the crossroads league," said Veale.

MVNU won two of the games against Taylor and two of the games against Indiana Wesleyan but has

MVNU baseball primed and ready for the "home stretch"

had five games combined against Marian and Indiana Wesleyan postponed due to bad weather.

All of the team's success hasn't come strictly from tough games. Some of that success can be accounted for by team leaders and this is something that Veale knows has been a huge benefit to the team.

"We have some quality upper-classmen on the team. Leadership comes from all levels when you have a large roster. Guys coming in and putting in the work, paying attention to details, and understanding the bigger picture creates some positive things for each guy to do his part," said Veale. One of those team leaders is senior Christian Bacon who has an eye for changes in his team's strengths and weaknesses.



Christian Bacon

"A huge improvement from last year has been the pitching. Day in

and day out, we struggled to consistently attack the zone and make other teams beat us last year. This year I'd say that is something that we do very well. Another strength of this team is our hitting. Every day I come to the ballpark, look at the lineup card, and chuckle to myself because I know we are going to mash today," said Bacon.

Having solid pitching on any baseball team is important, and that is something that MVNU will need this season. "I do like our pitching staff, and they have been doing a great job. With the volume of games in front of us, nobody [alone] will be able to carry us. We will need six to eight guys throwing quality innings," said Veale.

Along with pitching, a team needs to be versatile, and that is something that Veale knows will be important to the performance of the team this season. "We've gotten off to a solid start due to having a well-rounded team this far. Offensively, we can do a lot of things. We have some guys that can create havoc on the base paths. We have guys that can pop it to win games with the long ball. I like our team defensively. We can run things down in the outfield, and our infield can get us out of jams with their glove work. It's just about being consistent and making plays when it counts," said Veale.

Senior Brandt Miller agrees that having a well-rounded and versatile team is important. "We are an

all-around good team. We have a bunch of different ways we can win -- anything from small ball to hitting home runs to pitching and defense. We are solid all around," Miller said.



Brandt Miller

For the seniors, competing and spending time with your teammates are important, and Bacon enjoys it. "I'm most looking forward to competing against good competition and enjoying the time spent with my teammates," said Bacon.

Miller agrees and is thankful for the opportunity. "I'm enjoying one last year playing with my best friends. My teammates is what makes baseball fun, so I'm just trying to soak it all up before it's gone," he said.

Setting and reaching goals are common in sports and can be great with the right approach. Putting your team first as your goal helps define a team leader, and Miller agrees to the "team first" mindset.

"My goal is to do what is expected of me and put my team in the best position to win, and anything I can do to get us closer to a win is what I focus on," said Miller.

As of this writing there are just 15 games left in the regular season before tournament play begins. Rest assured the Cougars, led by their four seniors, will be soaking up every moment and will give their all before that final out of the season is made.



MVNU Head Baseball Coach Keith Veale, center, receives a special award from athletic director Chip Wilson after earning his 1,000th victory at MVNU. Also pictured is Coach Veale's wife, Toni.

Photo by Gerod Harder

Veale wins 1,000th game

By Jehane Hoagland

On March 25, head coach Keith Veale led the MVNU baseball team to a win over Indiana Wesleyan University, making Veale the first head coach in MVNU history to win 1,000 games.

"Honestly, we were just glad to win the game," Veale said. "It's was a hard-fought, come-from-behind win. It was fun for me to see the excitement in the eyes of the players and coaches. Baseball doesn't afford the opportunity to relish accomplishments or wade in your failures. There is another game coming right at you. It's a good thing."

Veale has an impressive set of

stats. He has been head coach for 30 seasons. Veale has a winning percentage of .661. He also has nine conference championships, four conference tournament championships and five NCCAA World Series championships.

"Obviously, there have been many players, assistants and teams that have all played a role in whatever successes we have experienced," Veale said. "The game of baseball doesn't allow for anyone to do much on their own. I am forever grateful for those who have been a part of this journey. In many ways, I'm just am along for the ride."

Lady Cougar softball team back in full swing

By Jordan Lewis

The 2019 softball season is underway, and the Lady Cougars have an overall record of 16-12 and 11-7 in the Crossroads League. The Lady Cougars sit behind No. 3 Marian University, No. 13 Indiana Wesleyan University and receiving votes Taylor University for fourth place in the conference. When asked what she's seen so far in the season, head coach Jeana Howald said, "I feel like our spring break trip to Florida was helpful. Dealing with weather was difficult. It has put stress on our players, but they've handled it well. Every time out, we've really worked hard to get better."

The team has also had a good amount of leadership coming from the team as a whole. The team is led by seniors Tyler Bivens, Cassidy Cain, Cheryl Clum and Jennifer Kurelic. "They've been great. Our

junior class has also shown positive leadership. We play a lot of sophomores. Overall, it's been a group effort," said Howald. Senior exercise studies major Tyler Bivens said, "I want to be someone that my team can count on and come to in any time of need, on and off the field. Being a senior, I want to make sure that the girls are comfortable and have someone that's easy to talk to when times get hard or if they have any questions."

When asked what the team's strengths and weaknesses are, Bivens said, "We tend to get down on ourselves if mistakes are made; however, we manage to get back on top and work as a team to get runs across the plate. We never lose focus on what needs to be done and how we need to make that happen, and I think that this is one huge thing we strive to continue as the season comes to an end."

Members of the 2019 Lady Cougars softball team are front row, from left: Kristin Davidson, Meghan May, Cassidy Cain, Jennifer Kurelic, Cheryl Clum, Tyler Bevins and Katelyn Perkins. Middle row -- Maddison Ruhl, Sydni Altman, Kaylee Myers, Cassidy Frazier, Courtney Knepper, Maddie Johnston, Savannah Richards, Alyson Adams, Hannah Barco and Emma McVay. Back row -- Chloe Brenneman, Kayla Tschudy, Sarah Boue', Mackenzie Huey, Karmen Huntsberger, Samantha Collier, Hannah Jordan and Stephanie Drillien.



Men's basketball team wraps up record-breaking season

By Matt McKenzie

Basketball seasons come and go, but this past MVNU men's basketball season was one for the record books. Led by seniors Jordi Mas, Jeremiah Roberts, and Brett Viperman, the Cougars compiled a record of 27-8 overall and 12-6 in the always-challenging Crossroads League while also competing in the NAIA national tournament.

This season had a ton of record-breaking moments. The team had 27 wins, which tied an MVNU school record for most wins in a season while playing the second-toughest schedule in the country. The Cougars also had 14 overall Crossroads League wins which resulted in the team hosting their first-ever postseason game in Ariel Arena and also playing in their first-ever Crossroads League Tournament championship.

Wilson is new athletic director

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university. The committee really felt that this was the best choice."

After receiving the position, Wilson was thankful for the opportunity.

"I'm thankful to be in a position where I can help the university," said Wilson. "I'm thankful to be in a position where I can have a voice for our athletic department. I am incredibly thankful for the people I am able to work with. I love working with this crew as a colleague and now as the director of the office."

Wilson is excited for the future. "I'm really looking forward to working closer with the coaches and staff in this department," said Wilson. "These are incredible people; and to have the opportunity to work alongside them in a closer

The team would also beat seven teams that made the NAIA national tournament, including eventual national champion Spring Arbor University twice with both games being at Spring Arbor. In addition to this, the team made the NAIA Sweet Sixteen, beating Montreat (N.C.) 76-63 in the round of 32.

Looking at the individual accomplishments for the team, Jevon Knox, Mas and Jacob Paul were Daktronics Scholar Athletes. Knox was first-team All-Crossroads League and an NAIA second-team All-American. Viperman was named All-Crossroads League second team and also an NAIA Honorable Mention All-American. Roberts was also named All-Crossroads League Defensive Team.

With this level of success, the team also had challenges, according to head coach Jared Ronai.

"There are multiple obstacles

role . . . that's probably the biggest thing I'm looking forward to. I'm also looking forward to using athletics to connect with other departments on campus."

Wilson considers himself a family man. "In my free time, I love spending time with my family," said Wilson. "I love being involved in the things they're involved in. I also enjoy spending time with our dog."

Wilson believes that athletics is about more than just sports.

"Athletics to me has always been an avenue leading to more important conversations," he said. "The one common thing all the athletes and coaches in this department have is athletics. That's the common theme that brings us together, but it is also not the ultimate priority down here. The ultimate priority is building into the lives of student athletes here and building into the lives of the campus community."

every team has to battle through throughout a season," said Ronai. "We persevered through many personal and team obstacles that helped us rise to a different level as a team. Every adversity you go through is an opportunity for growth together."

One way coach Ronai is thankful for this season is the support from the community and making Ariel Arena a challenging place for opponents to play. The Cougars went an outstanding 16-3 at home this season.

"The MVNU campus and Mount Vernon community support was tremendous all season long. We can't thank them enough for the love that they have shown all season long to our guys," said Ronai. "When we took over four and one-half years ago, we really felt that Ariel Arena could become one of the best small college basketball atmospheres in the country. This season showed that because of our awesome student body, faculty,

staff, and community".

A big part of the season was the effect the seniors had on the team. Mas, Roberts and Viperman all had important roles on the team, and the impact they made was vital.

"Jordi, Jeremiah and Brett are so special to me, my family and our program. Jordi has been with me since day one and has battled through so much adversity throughout his career," said Ronai. "I'm so proud of him and who he has become through out his journey. Jeremiah and Brett were our first two recruits four years ago. They have had such a big hand in changing a program and creating a culture. I love all three of them, and they will be missed".

One thing that made this season so special was the RULE Cougar culture coach Ronai has implanted from day one. Every single member of this team had an impact, and the bond these players truly defined this season.



MVNU senior Jeremiah Roberts goes up for two points in Cougar basketball action against Indiana Wesleyan University. Roberts was one of three seniors who led the team to an extremely successful 2018-2019 campaign.

Photo by Gerod Harder