

## *The Memphis Center Expands its Mission Through a Transformative Gift to the College*

By Gaye Swan

Since the momentous 1925 decision to relocate the school to Memphis, Rhodes has grown into one of the most civic-minded colleges in the country, thanks in large part to the city that has embraced it so wholeheartedly. With each succeeding year, the intertwined communities of city and campus saw the opportunities for mutual benefit grow. Programs such as the Rhodes Learning Corridor, the Rhodes Institute for Regional Studies, and the Mike Curb Institute for Music became an intrinsic part of the Rhodes experience—and in 2012, these and other programs with a Memphis and Mid-South focus were gathered under one dynamic academic umbrella: the Memphis Center.

In her January 2018 inaugural speech, President Marjorie Hass unveiled a significant expansion to this deeply rooted Rhodes program, made possible by the generosity of a deeply rooted Memphis family: Lynne and Henry Turley. Just over a month later, the college celebrated the launch of the newly named Lynne and Henry Turley Memphis Center, and set a course to more than double Rhodes' investment in community partnerships.

The expanded areas of focus for the Turley Memphis Center are urban education, the arts and social change, neighborhood and community development, and youth empowerment and justice in our community. Projects to support the vision include an endeavor to motivate systemic change and promote equity for Memphis youth. Throughout the spring,

the Center hosted a series of events that spotlighted the creative arts as a critical element in the fight for liberation and justice, including lectures, performances, and an exhibition of artworks. A series of community-based conversations and targeted fellowships are planned to improve students' understanding of and engagement with Memphis neighborhoods. Finally, the center will actively seek opportunities to bring practitioners, theorists, and lay-people together to identify solutions to social problems, building on work pioneered by Mike Cody '58 and AC Wharton, the former mayor of Memphis, who both taught classes at Rhodes in the 2017-18 academic year in courses funded by grants awarded through The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. ☐





## “Where the College Meets the City”

At the launch celebration in February, President Hass described the new Turley Memphis Center as the place where the college meets the city. The enlarged academic umbrella provides a way to bring all community engagement efforts under one roof and with one mission. The Center will house all Rhodes core community-facing projects, including Crossroads to Freedom, Urban and Community Health, the Rhodes Archaeological Field School, and the new master’s degree program in urban education. The Turleys’ gift will enable the existing connection between city and college to grow deeper, richer, and more impactful.

Turley Memphis Center Director Dr. Charles Hughes says the expansion builds on the broad vision of President Emeritus William E. Troutt and reflects the excitement of the new leadership of President Hass.

“Dr. Hass recognized an amazing opportunity to take the next step with the Memphis Center,” says Hughes. “She was excited about the chance to expand, and the Turleys were ready and supportive, as they always are.”

The expansion will extend to staff, research opportunities, and programming events. An associate director will join the leadership team to oversee ongoing fellowship opportunities and community partnerships, and teach in the classroom. Hughes will work to increase fellowships, create programming events, and develop community partnerships. A historian with a PhD from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a published author, Hughes first came to Rhodes as an Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at the beginning of the Memphis Center project. In addition to his duties as director, he will also teach Memphis-based courses, facilitate other curricular op-



Justin Fox Burks  
Acclaimed author and educator Jeff Chang spoke at the opening celebration for the Lynne and Henry Turley Memphis Center.



Justin Fox Burks  
Lynne and Henry Turley

portunities on campus, and serve as a resource for other faculty members. Plans call for approximately 36 faculty members and 150 students to be involved in some aspect of the Center’s work in the first year.



## Strengthening the Connection

The projected increase in programming events will contribute to more interaction between Memphis and Rhodes. The presentations—including conferences, lectures, and panels—will stimulate real conversations about the Memphis area, its challenges, and its many strengths. The goal is for participants to share and learn together, Hughes says.

Fittingly, the launch of the Turley Memphis Center was just such an event. In her welcoming remarks, President Hass called the evening an example of the way the Center will invite and inspire the community—and it is just the tip of the iceberg, she added.

Guests first celebrated the new Center and its benefactors at a reception. Respected author, scholar, and educator Jeff Chang of Stanford University then spoke on the role of hip-hop arts, activism, and education in the struggle for social justice in today’s world.

“It was a wonderfully engaging and provocative talk,” says Hughes, and fit in perfectly with the aim of the Turley Memphis Center to involve both communities in meaningful dialogue on important topics.

The event was a way to celebrate the Turleys as well, Hughes adds.

“It was wonderful to see their excitement and joy,” he says. “The Center speaks to all they have appreciated about Rhodes, and to all they have envisioned for Memphis.”

The Lynne and Henry Turley Memphis Center stands as both a testament to the past and a challenge for the future. As President Hass told guests at the celebration, “The opportunity to celebrate the Center is not just a chance to step back and say ‘Isn’t this wonderful, we’ve completed something.’ It’s really a moment to say, ‘We’re at the starting line, we’re just beginning, we have the wind at our back.’” **R**



Corey Nolen  
Memphis Center Fellow Aylen Mercado '19

## Exceptional Opportunities for Exceptional Students

The goal for expanded research opportunities at the Lynne and Henry Turley Memphis Center is for students to build cohorts of thinkers with community partners and faculty.

“We want to have the greatest impact for positive change by offering exceptional opportunities for exceptional students,” says Turley Memphis Center Director Dr. Charles Hughes.

Memphis Center Fellow Aylen Mercado '19 is happy about the new opportunities. A Mellon Innovation Fellow in her first semester, she became familiar with the Memphis Center when she helped with an LGBT oral histories project. As a 2017 Memphis Center Fellow in the Arts, she developed an exhibition to challenge how people interact with art space—more specifically, gallery space. Her fellowship allowed her to collaborate with an exhibit in Rhodes’ Clough-Hanson Gallery, “Memphis Cartonera: Cooperative Publishing, Art, and Action,” itself a collaborative effort between the gallery, Dr. Elizabeth Pettinaroli of the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, and the Memphis Cartonera fellows, speaking with students and visitors





about the project. She also organized an event for the closing reception that brought in an Aztec dance group to perform to connect the indigenous language books featured in the exhibition to local activities. Mercado's involvement with the Memphis Center has continued into 2018 with a Mellon Liberal Arts and Social Justice Fellowship.

Her years with the Memphis Center have introduced her to many different conversations in research and academia. While she and her fellow students were helped by discussions with each other, they greatly benefitted from regular meetings with faculty, where both groups challenged one another to excel. With the newly expanded Turley Memphis Center, Mercado hopes to see more opportunities for students to work with faculty and more space for collaboration between Rhodes and the city of Memphis.

"As student researchers, we support the work of professors, their projects, and the courses they are

developing," she says. "I have explored the archival records in the Memphis Room and learned how to navigate historical online records. As an artist with a background in photography, I have documented historically significant sites in the city. The Memphis Center has opened me up to so many possibilities. I believe it can transform how we experience the liberal arts education."

In the coming days, 10 students will be named Turley Fellows, and they will take on a collaborative role with faculty to track the impact of the Center. They will consider metrics such as the percentage of Rhodes students that stay in Memphis after graduation, the number of community partnerships formed since the Center's expansion, the diversity of student and faculty participants, and the engagement of Memphians from a variety of neighborhoods. Fellows will also undertake individual projects connected to the primary areas of focus.



Programs and initiatives under the umbrella of the Turley Memphis Center include the Shelby Foote Collection, Rhodes Learning Corridor, the Mike Curb Institute for Music, the Rhodes Institute for Regional Studies, Crossroads to Freedom, and the Rhodes Archaeological Field School.

# MEMPHIS CENTERED

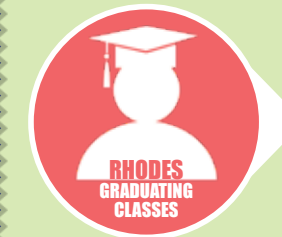
In **2017**, Rhodes commissioned a study that focused on one aspect of the college's contribution to the Memphis community: economic impact. The study revealed that Rhodes, through its educational mission, contributes **\$316.6 million** to the local economy every year and serves as a financial anchor for the region.

"We know our home in Memphis makes Rhodes unique and provides limitless opportunities for our students to gain practical career training and give back to the community through service," said President Hass. "Our community has been generous to Rhodes. We commissioned this study to get a better understanding of how we're giving back to **our hometown.**"

## FACULTY & STAFF

Employees at Rhodes earn incomes totaling **\$36.8 million** per year. 58% of full-time faculty and 38% of full-time staff live in the five zip codes surrounding the campus. Faculty and staff salaries/wages spent in the community generate an impact of **\$60.5 million** in incomes and 2,763 jobs; most of them in Memphis, and many of them in the Midtown area.

**\$60,500,000**



**GRADUATES WHO REMAIN IN MEMPHIS TO BUILD A CAREER HAVE A \$555 MILLION IMPACT ON THE MEMPHIS ECONOMY**

**EVERY GRADUATING CLASS, OVER A LIFETIME OF EMPLOYMENT, HAS A \$1.53 BILLION IMPACT**

**OPERATING BUDGET**  
\$69.2 MILLION



**WAGES & SALARIES**  
\$36.8 MILLION



**COMMUNITY SERVICE**  
\$9.3 MILLION



**CAMPUS VISITORS**  
\$10.2 MILLION



**OFF-CAMPUS LIVING**  
\$11.8 MILLION



**CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION**  
\$83.6 MILLION

**\$3,300,000**

Rhodes students are among the highest-paid graduates in Tennessee. After 10 years of experience the typical Rhodes graduate with a baccalaureate degree earns **\$97,100** per year or **\$3.3 million** in work life earnings.



**\$9,300,000**

Total Value of Hours Volunteered by Rhodes Students & Staff in Memphis

**\$11,800,000**

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF OFF-CAMPUS STUDENT EXPENDITURES

Students spend **\$6.4 million** on living expenses, mostly in the Memphis Midtown area.



**THE IMPACT OF RHODES VISITORS ON THE MEMPHIS ECONOMY TOTALS \$10.2 MILLION AND CREATES 122 JOBS**

Rhodes College hosts numerous visitors: parents, potential students, returning alumni & their families. Visitors to Rhodes spend **\$5 million**.

**NEW FACILITIES & CAMPUS RENOVATION**

In 2017, Rhodes completed three projects for a total of **\$41 million** in construction. These projects led to an **\$83.6 million** impact on Memphis business activity & created **691 jobs**.



The study was authored by David H. Ciscel, PhD, Director, Memphis Forensic Economics, Professor Emeritus, University of Memphis and D. C. Sharp, PhD, Managing Director, Econ One Research, Inc.

\* All values in 2017 dollars, unless stated otherwise