

July 21, 2021

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A newsletter for alumni & friends of King University

THE E-TORNADO

Join Us for Campus Clean-Up Day



We are excited to invite King University alumni on campus on August 6th from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. to volunteer to help prepare the campus for a new school year. Facilities staff have been hard at work cleaning and repairing campus but they could use our help to refresh and renew areas to ensure the grounds are looking their best for students arrival. As a Clean-Up Day volunteer, you too can make a difference by collecting waste and recycling, removing old flyers and stickers, pulling weeds, and picking up sticks and other debris.

Sign-up to volunteer for Clean-up Day online by Wednesday, July 28th . All volunteers will have to complete a volunteer waiver upon arrival. All volunteers will receive King University swag. Water and other refreshments will be provided to stay hydrated throughout the afternoon. Collection materials, scrapers, gloves, and sunscreen will also be provided. [Click here](#) or the button below to register.

[Click Here to Register](#)

Rhythm & Roots Alumni Gathering

Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion music festival is back this year and celebrating Bristol Tennessee/Virginia's music heritage as the birthplace of country music with over 100 bands and 13 stages of performances.

This year, all tickets for the annual music festival must be purchased directly from the BR&RR office by

[clicking here](#). King alumni who are purchasing tickets can use the code **ALUMNIKING25** to receive a discount. This

discount can be applied when purchasing online with the link above or in person at the Birthplace of Country Music.



Alumni and their family members who are ticketholders are invited to join us on Saturday, Sept. 11, from 1-5 p.m. at our new location Kil'n Time (818 State Street) for our annual Rhythm & Roots event. Come as you can for yummy food, refreshments, and a chance to mingle with members of the King campus community. **[Click here to register for the Rhythm & Roots Alumni Gathering.](#)** We hope to see you there!

Alumnus Matt Lavinder makes Headlines for Businesses

Former King alumnus and soccer coach, Matt Lavinder, has made local headlines for his business New Again Houses. Matt started out with a local house-flipping business that he has grown into 23 franchises and counting all over the country. To read more about Matt's story and New Again Houses **[click here](#)**.

Matt and his wife Hollie have also been hard at work on another project. During the pandemic, they decided to renovate the Bristol Racquet and Fitness Center into the Bristol Sportsplex. The Bristol Sportsplex is an incredible facility with tennis courts, pickleball, a fitness zone, and other accommodations. For more information on the Bristol Sportsplex **[click here](#)**.



Alumni Awards

We are now accepting nominations for the 2022 alumni awards. Award categories include Young Alumni Achievement Award, Legacy Award, Volunteer of the Year Award, Christian Service Award, and Distinguished Alumni Award. For more information about the awards and for a list of past recipients [click here](#).



Alumni Spotlight - Jeri Ward '16

It had been a somewhat ordinary day for the thirty-year-old, Mrs. Ohio International 2021 pageant winner and King University alum, Jeri Ward. She sat on the couch beside her



husband Dean in their Dayton, Ohio home and worked on her laptop, trying to catch up on work she'd missed earlier that day. Aside from a headache, her day had been going along normal when she had become nauseous and left her job early to go home and rest. Over the previous five days, she had been battling a migraine that didn't seem to want to dissipate.

But the discomfort from nausea had only occurred that day. After a long nap, her headache had subsided considerably, and her nausea had settled down. "I remember sitting there beside my husband when I experienced a feeling of vertigo. A moment later, my

eyes became blurry, and I heard a pop in the back of my head. I then could no longer speak or move. I felt like a prisoner in my own body. It was terrifying," Jeri said.

"I wanted to turn and tell my husband, who was sitting right beside me, that something was wrong, but I couldn't." After a minute or so, Jeri was once again able to speak move slightly. But her speech was slurred.

Dean realized that something was wrong and took Jeri to the hospital. Doctors were alarmed to inform Dean and Jeri that she was in the grips of a massive stroke.

Jeri was born in Emory, Virginia, a tiny town in the southwestern part of the state in the shadow of the Tennessee state line. At the age of four, she competed in her first beauty contest. "I always wanted to be a part of something," Jeri said. "I was never good at sports, but I loved spending time with people, communicating, and getting to know people. That is part of what drove me to compete in pageants." She competed in numerous pageants over the years, including the Miss Virginia competition. Jeri is an extrovert and made friends easily. She loved listening to the life stories of the other competitors and participated in volunteer work in the community. It was working in the community where she learned about King University and how it was an institution devoted to service within a Christian environment.

Jeri decided that King had the programs and the culture that she was looking for and enrolled. "When I got to King, I realized that it was where I needed to be. I was really comfortable, and it felt like home. You feel like you belong there. The campus and

environment have a way of making you feel safe during such a transitional period of your life,” Jeri said.

At King, Jeri studied psychology and communications. After graduation, she took a job as a social worker and therapist. She said the stress of the job was overwhelming and possibly part of what caused the stroke at such a young age.

After the doctors had stabilized her, she recalls lying in the hospital bed paralyzed except for the ability to blink her eyes. Doctors discussed her situation with her husband, often in her presence. “I remember them telling Dean that there was a good chance I wouldn’t survive. They said that if I did, I would probably be in a vegetative state. I heard all of this. I decided right then and there that I wasn’t going to go out like that. That wouldn’t be the end for me. Despite the odds, I was going to make it.” To read the full story, please [click here.](#)

Save the Date for KingFest

We are excited to announce the date for the second annual KingFest on October 16th. The event is in conjunction with Family Weekend and includes fall-themed activities, NCAA sporting events, delicious food, the Athletic Hall of Fame reception, and more. Alumni, friends, faculty, staff, students, and the greater Bristol community are all invited to KingFest. Stay tuned for more information to come.



"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope."

Romans 15:13



"When you give cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed." Maya Angelou

Consider making a gift to King University and watch your blessings multiply in the faces of our students!

give.king.edu

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