

GRAVOIS AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS PRESIDENT'S MEDAL

President Hulin Presents Honor at Commencement Ceremony

Middle Tennessee School of Anesthesia Doctor of Nurse Anesthesia Practice Graduate Michele Gravois, DNAP, CRNA was named recipient of the President's Medal at the MTSA commencement ceremony. MTSA President Chris Hulin ('06) DNP, MBA, CRNA awarded this special tribute and honor during the graduation ceremony held November 20, 2015 at the Madison Campus Seventh-day Adventist Church.

"I was very pleased to present this award to such a deserving candidate," said Dr. Hulin. "We are very proud of the work she has done in representing the underserved."

The President's Medal is presented to an outstanding

DNAP graduate recognizing their capstone project that will help advance the current practice of nurse anesthesia. Capstone projects are assessed using the following criteria:

- 1. Significance to nurse anesthesia practice
- 2. Impact on patient care and safety
- 3. Contribution to the current body ofknowledge
- 4. Improvement in the healthcare delivery system
- 5. And, the mastery of a subject in a given area

In reaction to being named the President's Medal recipient, Dr. Gravois said, "Receiving the President's Medal is a true honor for me. I certainly appreciate the recognition for my project which is an idea close to my heart and practice."

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GRAVOIS AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS PRESIDENT'S MEDAL

Continued from front cover



Michelle Gravois ('15), DNAP, CRNA is a staff CRNA at DCH Regional Medical Centerlocated in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. She received a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 1998 from the University of Alabama and a Master of Nurse Anesthesia in 2005 from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

She was conferred a Doctor of Nurse Anesthesia Practice degree from MTSA at the School's recent graduation ceremony held November 20, 2015 where she was also awarded the distinguished President's Medal as the outstanding DNAP graduate.

Dr. Gravois' hobbies include reading, traveling, and spending time with her husband and three children.



THE CAPSTONE

Dr. Gravois' capstone project title is: To What Extent Does One Cultural Competence Training Class Affect Hispanic Cultural Competence Among Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs)? She said, "I started the program with two topics in mind. During the first on-site week at MTSA, I was able to narrow my choice to epidural use in laboring Hispanic women. This focus was inspired by my observations in labor and delivery. I wanted to know why it seemed Hispanic women did not want or receive as many epidurals for labor pain as other races or ethnicities.

"The beauty of the MTSA program was that we were able to have roundtable discussions with other nurse anesthetists and research experts," said Gravois. "During these conversations, I was introduced to the term 'health care disparities.' The faculty really encouraged me to dive into the research and explore the problem. Soon, I was able to define a framework that guided my project with current evidence.

"Once I defined my topic area – 'Hispanic Cultural Competence and Anesthesia' – my efforts were focused on researching, grading, and categorizing the evidence. Organization was key so that I stayed on track. It was easy to 'get into the weeds' because there is so much information available to us now. Continual contact with committee members and classmates was important to making progress.

"Part of my project also involved planning, implementing, and evaluating an intervention. I therefore developed a Hispanic cultural competence class and administered the content to CRNAs. I could not have navigated this process without the expertise of Dr. Michael Vollman, Dr. Maria Overstreet, Dr. Rachel Brown, Dr. Amy Gideon, and Dr. Katrin Sames," said Gravois.

"Dr. Gravois is compassionate about the topic which gives her the inspiration to drive changes at her work environment," said MTSA faculty member and Gravois' Committee Chairperson Katrin Sames ('07) DNAP, CRNA. "During this entire process of researching and writing, she was always self-motivated and attentive to details while maintaining sight of the bigger picture. Her diligent research and compelling arguments encouraged all of us – as well as her coworkers – to become more culturally competent which leads to improved health care experiences and outcomes for our patients.

"The relevance of her work on the topic will continue to be more and

more apparent with the increasingly culturally diverse population, which effects every healthcare provider in the United States. By engaging in more culturally competent care for our patients, we (CRNAs) will improve the health care experience and outcome of our patients." She continued saying that, "The process of her research, including a pre-test and post-test cited in her project, shows excellent and academically sound work – including relevance with quality work and delivery. It was such a pleasure to work with Michele. She is professional and passionate about her capstone, work, and service to patients."

REFLECTIONS

"The rigors of completing my capstone project taught me the value of sound research. I learned that every aspect of a quality project is intentional and supported by evidence," said Gravois. "The metaphor 'standing on the shoulders of giants' certainly takes on a new meaning for me now.

"In summary, I came to MTSA with an idea. With the assistance of my committee and chairperson, other faculty members, and my classmates, I developed that idea into a project. Fortunately, I was able to implement the project and evaluate the outcomes. Although it had a small sample size, the project had significant value and I'm proud of it."

Dr. Gravois reflected on how this capstone changed the way she practices anesthesia saying, "I believe cultural influences are very important to the health care experiences of patients, my experiences as their anesthesia provider, and to the health care system as a whole. Therefore, I now strive to be more knowledgeable about individual's cultural values and to integrate those values into their care."

WHY MTSA?

When asked how a doctoral candidate from Tuscaloosa, Alabama found her way to middle Tennessee and MTSA Dr. Gravois responded, "Honestly, I saw the advertisement on Facebook. The timing seemed to be more than a coincidence because I had been contemplating going back to school. When I saw the ad for MTSA, I began researching the school and everything about the program. The hybrid format and Christian focus were both

valuable to me. I spoke with Mindy Mullins ('14) DNAP, CRNA, (2014 President's Medal winner) who was a student at that time, and she gave me a lot of information. After a bit of soul searching and discussion with my family, I decided to go for it."

As for choosing MTSA's DNAP program rather than a traditional DNP degree, she said, "The DNAP was appealing to me because I wanted the anesthesia focus. At MTSA, most of the faculty are CRNAs and our studies would center on topics like education, administration, and evidence-based research/practice as they relate to anesthesia."

Dr. Gravois commented about the program saying, "The academic environment was unlike anything I had experienced previously. The faculty respected me as a professional and recognized what I could bring to the table. They had a special ability to tap into my talents and encourage me to step outside of my comfort zone. The curriculum was challenging and interesting and I found coursework information and our class discussions to useful in my current practice." She continued saying, "Now that I have graduated, I'm actually going back to review several of the topics in more detail."

When asked if she could reflect on a faculty member that had impact or influence in her experience at MTSA, she said, "This is a hard

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question to answer because I feel like I personally connected with the entire faculty. Each one offered their unique experiences, personalities, and abilities to us." She continued, "If I had to pick just one, then I would have to say Dr. Katrin Sames. Not only is she a great committee chairperson, Dr. Sames has an unparalleled commitment to patient safety. She was very encouraging and helpful when it came to my capstone project, and communication was always easy, even if she was literally half way around the world. Her dedication to safer anesthesia is also influential.

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DNAP Program Application Period Open



Submit your application for the next DNAP cohort which will begin classes in the Fall, 2016.

You may apply online for MTSA's Doctor of Nurse Anesthesia Practice Degree. The application period is open through April 30, 2016. Apply online by visiting mtsa.edu.

CE Video Series Not Available in 2016

For those alumni and area CRNAs that participate in the monthly Valley Review continuing education video series, please note that MTSA is not able to offer this service in 2016. We urge our alumni and area CRNAs to plan accordingly.

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Continued from page 3

Dr. Sames inspires me to do better for my patients and I hope to use information from her class to improve patient safety at my hospital."

When Dr. Gravois was asked if she would do it all over again? she said, "Yes, without hesitation. The hybrid format afforded me the flexibility I needed to get work done as well as the personal contact with faculty necessary to learn." Regarding the choice of MTSA, she said, "The curriculum was designed for CRNAs and therefore relevant to my purposes. I had the opportunity to learn from some of the best and brightest in the business so there has never been a moment of regret. The educational and technological support was outstanding. Finally, the relationships I have made could never be replaced. Although my education at MTSA is complete, I have no doubt that I will remain in touch with my instructors and classmates."

What's Next?

Gravois said, "In the near future, I hope to present more cultural competency courses at my work place. There are many reasons to continue learning about the communities we serve and, quite frankly, I find it very interesting. I also hope to publish my current project in the AANA Journal and will start working toward that goal."

When asked if she had any thoughts or advice for those considering a doctoral program she said, "I would advise current and prospective students to know the real reason why you are seeking this degree (you may need to remind yourself when things get tough); be prepared for the time commitment and have support in place prior to starting; connect with a current or former student who can offer you tips/advice; choose a capstone project topic early but be flexible enough to let it evolve as you search the literature; and, stay organized, especially as you build your database."

As Dr. Gravois reminisced on receiving the President's Medal she said, "My committee and classmates were extremely helpful throughout the entire process." Of course, I could not have done it without their guidance, input, and encouragement. I share this honor with all of them."

While drawing a spiritual lesson from this process Gravois said, "My reaction to this project parallels what I have learned as a Christian." She then quoted II Corinthians 10:15 which states, Neither do we go beyond our limits by boasting of work done by others. Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow, our sphere of activity among you will greatly expand.

"If I glorify God within my sphere of influence, maybe those around me will do the same, so that my efforts are exponential," said Dr. Gravois. "I do not expect to change the whole world, fix a multi-billion-dollar health care disparity problem, or win a Nobel Prize. My hopes are for the small changes I make to influence those around me in a way which honors Him."

MTSA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year!



I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your interest and support of MTSA this past year. It was a good year as the Lord blessed and guided the School. As we look forward and continue to build on the previous year, I want to share a few thoughts of our future plans.

You may recall reading in the last issue of *Airways* that MTSA hosted its inaugural mission trip to Haiti. We had three students participate under the leadership of Program Administrator Rachel Brown ('96) DNP, CRNA. It is our intention that this trip is simply the beginning of a broader and sustainable mission and service component at MTSA which will allow for students, alumni, faculty, and staff participation.

I was pleased to participate in a collaborative trip to Haiti recently with Belmont University representatives as we scouted various service and mission opportunities for our students. I also met with administrators and members of the medical team at Haiti Adventist Hospital where there seems to be numerous opportunities for engagement.

MTSA continues to build upon the Acute Pain Center of Excellence. I am pleased to announce that the MTSA Board of Trustees approved a new strategic initiative for MTSA to develop a Post-Graduate Acute Pain Fellowship. We are proud to be in a position to lead the nation with this specialty practice.

On another subject, I am pleased to share with you that MTSA received a positive fifth-year review and Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) approval from the Southern Association of Colleges & Schools Commission of Colleges (SACSCOC). This news was shared at the annual SACSCOC meeting held in Houston, Texas last month. The fifth-year interim review is part of a ten-year, comprehensive monitoring process which ensures institutions meet accreditation standards and continued continued quality improvement. MTSA continues to meet these standards and is, therefore, able to offer both its Master of Science and Doctor of Anesthesia Practice degrees.

Additionally, I hope you'll join me in celebration of National Nurse Anesthetist week (January 24–30). MTSA has plans to highlight the good work of not only MTSA and its graduates, but the CRNA community at large. You are welcome to join us on Wednesday, January 27 at 1:00 p.m. as we serve cake and ice cream to students, faculty, alumni, and staff to celebrate the week. Please watch and listen for a variety of messages from MTSA to commemorate this special week.

MTSA continues to be blessed with the involvement of a wonderful student group, faculty, trustees, and staff. Please feel free to contact me if I can ever be of service to you. Best wishes to you and your family. We look forward to this New Year in anticipation of what God will do at His School in the coming months.

Chris Hulin ('06) DNP, MBA, CRNA MTSA President



Visit us online at www.mtsa.edu

CLASS OF 2015 **COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES HELD**

MS and DNAP Degrees Conferred



MTSA Master of Science Class of 2015.

Commencement exercises for the Middle Tennessee School of Anesthesia Class of 2015 were held Friday, November 20, 2015 at the Madison Campus Seventhday Adventist Church. Both Master of Science with a Focus in Anesthesia and Doctor of Nurse Anesthesia Practice degrees were conferred.

Mary Elizabeth "Ikey" DeVasher ('69/'94), PhD, CRNA, Dean Emerita led the procession of MTSA board of trustees, administration, faculty, and graduates while carrying the MTSA mace. A welcome was given by MTSA President Chris Hulin ('06), DNP, MBA, CRNA followed by the invocation by graduate John Myers. MTSA Chairman Art Runyon-Hass, MD, PhD, gave

opening remarks followed by Steve Haley, MDiv, President of the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference of Seventh-day Adventists who presented an homily reflecting MTSA's spiritual values and roots. He was introduced by graduate Nikki Marotta. The commencement address was presented by Laurence (Larry) Lancaster, EdD, ACNP, retired MTSA faculty. He was introduced by graduate Denise Miller. MTSA President Hulin presented the diplomas.

Each year MTSA graduates well-exceed requirements of the Council on Certification of Nurse Anesthesia Programs (CCNA) regarding the number of cases and procedures for clinical experiences in order for

the candidate to be eligible to take the National Certification Examination. The following statistics are derived from the information provided to the CCNA for certification requirements for the graduates as of November 1, 2015.

MTSA CERTIFICATION:		
	Minimum Required	MTSA Class Average
Clinical Hours	850	1,751
Number of Cases	550	902
Pediatric Cases	35	169
Obstetric Cases	30	107
Regionals	25	108

A special musical presentation was provided by MS graduates Joseph Hampton and Ryan Mathews which was followed by the benediction offered by graduate Marc Federico. A reception was held on the MTSA campus for graduates and their families and friends.

During the graduation ceremony, awards were presented to the following graduates:

The Team Spirit Award

was presented to MS graduate Rick Loenser by MTSA Dean Maria Overstreet, PhD, RN.

The Bernard V. Bowen Award

was presented to MS graduate Joseph Hampton by MTSA Program Administrator Rachel Brown ('97) DNP, CRNA.

The Agatha Hodgins Award

was presented to MS graduate Randy Hailey by MTSA Medical Consultant Rob Taylor, MD.

The President's Medal

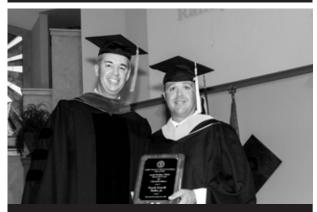
was presented to DNAP graduate Michele Gravois, DNAP, CRNA by MTSA President Chris Hulin ('06) DNP, MBA, CRNA.



MTSA graduate Rick Loenser ('15) (right) was voted by fellow class members the Team Spirit Award for Class Leadership and Support. The award was presented by MTSA Dean Maria Overstreet, PhD, RN.



Joseph K. Hampton, class of 2015 graduate (right) was awarded the Bernard V. Bowen Award for Academic Excellence. The award was presented by MTSA Program Administrator Rachel Brown ('97) DNP, CRNA.



Randy D. Hailey, Jr. was awarded the Agatha Hodgins, CRNA Memorial Award for Clinical Excellence. The award was presented by MTSA Medical Consultant Rob Taylor, MD.



Doctor of Nurse Anesthesia Practice graduate Michele Gravois was awarded the President's Medal by MTSA President Chris Hulin ('06) DNP, MBA, CRNA.

Country Music Hall of Fame & Museum to Host Third Annual MTSA Mission & Awards Gala

Planning is underway for the Third Annual MTSA Mission & Awards Gala to be held Thursday, May 5, 2016 at Nashville's Country Music Hall of Fame & Museum. "Last year's event was so nice," says Gala Chairperson Michele Arant ('96) MS, CRNA. "This evening of dining, recognition, and celebration is a tradition that is not only fun, but which will also benefit the School. Each committee member is working hard so that attendees will have a good time and enjoy having a part in furthering the mission of MTSA."

One significant change for the 2016 Gala is that all proceeds will benefit MTSA's new mission trip program — with plans to incorporate both local and international missions. The School sponsored its first mission trip — which was to Haiti — in the Fall of 2015 when MTSA Program Administrator Rachel Brown ('97) DNP, CRNA and three students participated. "We have plans to expand trip opportunities to more than one time per year," explained MTSA President Chris Hulin ('06) DNP, MBA, CRNA. "I have just returned from a combined mission and exploratory trip to Haiti and was able to investigate several collaborative mission opportunities. I am grateful for the efforts of the Mission & Awards Gala Committee and their interest in funding our new mission trip initiative. What better way to demonstrate the MTSA mission and heritage than to serve our fellow man."

Costa

Last year's MTSA Mission & Awards Gala Chairperson Nancy Palmore ('95) MS, CRNA (right) and AANA President Sharon Pierce, MS, CRNA (left) greet Larry Stewart lead singer with Restless Heart who performed at the event.

The event will also build community involvement, support, and awareness for MTSA while celebrating its heritage and mission by honoring and recognizing alumni, individuals, community partners, and others for their dedication, engagement, and support of MTSA.

Five specific awards will be presented as nominated by MTSA alumni and community friends including: Mary Elizabeth "Ikey" DeVasher Alumni Distinguished Service Award; Nevin Downs, MD Leadership Award; Clinical Excellence Award; Philanthropy Award; and Mission & Heritage Award.

The evening will include a reception, dinner, entertainment and private Country Music Hall of Fame & Museum access for all guests. The event is open to all including alumni, faculty, students, physicians, medical groups, corporations, and community individuals. There are several sponsorships available, in addition to table sponsors and individual tickets.

For more information, contact the MTSA Advancement & Alumni Office at (615) 732-7674.



An Evening of Dining, Recognition, and Celebration

Benefitting Middle Tennessee School of Anesthesia's Mission Program





WHEN Thursday, May 5, 2016

WHERE Country Music Hall of Fame® and Museum

6:00 p.m.

LOCATION Event Hall

RECEPTION & MUSEUM TOURS

DINNER, AWARDS & ENTERTAINMENT 7:00 p.m.

DRESS Black tie or

DRESS Black tie optional

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TABLES \$1,000 (10 guests)
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Finding the Winning Balance

MTSA student Mark Keck ('17) is the 2015 State of Tennessee Physique champion. This title adds to Keck's growing list of achievements, including winning first place in the 2015 Kentucky Muscle competition in the Men's Physique category.

Excelling in fitness competitions while studying to become a CRNA is no easy task. Keck finds strength in his coach, lifting partner, and family. He also credits fellow classmates Grant Visbeen ('17), Ben Ralls ('17), and Mike McCray ('17) for keeping him accountable in the classroom and the gym. "They have been great people to study with in preparation for exams," said Keck. "They are also great support in motivating me and giving me feedback."

He also finds support from the staff of MTSA. "Dr. Hulin (MTSA President) always asks how I am doing and is supportive in discussing my goals and offering motivation to continue my progress," explained Keck. "Pastor Wetmore (MTSA Chaplain) also constantly asks about competitions and training while offering some time to give to prayer and feedback on some stress relief. He has even offered to come to the competitions to cheer me on."

Keck loves the new fitness facility on campus. Opened this fall in the newly renovated, former P.T. Magan building, the fitness facility offers cardio and strength training to students and MTSA employees with a view of the entire campus. This fitness facility was made possible in part as a result of a generous contribution from Anesthesia and Pain Specialists — an anesthesia group located in Bowling Green, Kentucky. "This facility allows students the ability to work out or to do cardio in a close, convenient place. This is great for them because in this area there are not many gyms and the travel time to a gym takes away from study time or family time. So, having the facility here on campus is a great advantage and convenience," Keck said. The fitness facility is just one of the improvements on campus as part of MTSA's overall focus on health. Other measures include implementing a recycling program, installing purified water stations, and distributing BPA-free reusable water bottles to students. The School has a long tradition promoting healthy living which is still very much part of its philosophy today.

"MTSA is taking great strides for the students in adding the purified water machines vs. soda machines and adding the fitness facility. This allows students to have the opportunity to be healthy and make healthy choices," Keck added. "I am also a fan of 'going green' at MTSA to reduce the waste. I think that MTSA is putting student health and fitness in the forefront with these additions and understanding the time constraints of students."

MTSA's core values include taking a wholistic approach to education, health care, and a balanced lifestyle. When asked how he finds that balance between graduate school and fitness, he responded, "Finding balance for competing comes with time management, but it's also my stress relief and 'me time' that allows me to unwind and think about other things besides school. But with that being said my family and faith come first followed by school and then my training — balancing time and making sacrifices to go out to events or things others are wanting to do." Keck looks for opportunities to include his family in his passion, especially when his exercise routine allows his son to participate with him and be active in the gym.

Keck began training others in 2002 when he was enlisted in the military as a combat medic. Since then he has enjoyed helping others in developing nutritional diets that will help them obtain their goals. He has provided nutritional, athletic, and personal training courses. His goal for the new year is to provide these services free to employees and students of MTSA.

ALUMNI PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Max Fort ('97) MS, CRNA

I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself and to wish you a Happy New Year! I am Max Fort and I am privileged to serve as the MTSA Alumni Association President this year. I graduated from MTSA in 1997 and have been practicing in the Middle Tennessee area since.

I invite you to join us for a variety of activities in this new year: National Nurse Anesthetist Week is the week of January 24-30; and the third annual Mission & Awards Gala will be held on May 5 at the Country Music Hall of Fame & Museum. Watch for continuing education opportunities at the School throughout the year, as well as the annual MTSA Golf Classic which will be held September 15.

Please join me in congratulating the newest graduates from Master of Science and the DNAP program on their accomplishment (see story in this issue of Airways).

Additionally, if you haven't been around the school lately, come by and see the new developments and innovation happening on campus.

As the new president, I want to welcome each new member of the Alumni
Association this year who volunteer of their time in service to you and the School.
Remember that the Alumni Association is here to be a liaison between you and MTSA, so give us your input on any topics, group outings, and/or ways we can best serve you. We are open and want to hear from you. Please feel free to contact me (max.fort@comcast.net) or anyone on the committee with your advice or suggestions. Thank you for allowing me to serve you.

MTSA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION 2016 Officers and Representatives

The annual election of MTSA Alumni Association officers and representatives was recently elected and the results are noted below. This group gives of their time, energy, and effort to make a difference for MTSA alumni in planning regional dinners, open houses, continuing education seminars, and more. They are to be commended for their efforts on behalf of MTSA alumni everywhere.

(*) Indicates elected in the most recent election. Secretary, Treasurer, and Decades reps are elected in an every-other-year cycle.

Past President	Aaron Jones ('00/'15)
President	*Max Fort ('97)
President-elect	*Mathew O'Conner ('07)
Secretary	Tammy Kellogg ('03)
Treasurer	*Kay Chamberlain ('80/'03)

Decade Representatives include:

2010 – Present	Christy Pennington ('10
1990 – 1999	*Matt Demaree ('08)
1980 – 1989	John Shields ('85/'05)
1970 – 1979	*Michael Argo ('85)
Pre 1969 & Retired	*Lois Bernard ('68/'94)

National CRNA Week

Nurse Anesthetists Make a Difference— One Patient at a Time

MTSA will celebrate the thousands of nurse anesthetists across the country and the difference they make to their patients and the U.S. healthcare system during observance of the 17th annual National CRNA Week January 24 - 30, 2016.

This year's theme, *Making a Difference – One Patient at a Time*, reflects how CRNAs dedicate themselves to each of their patients before, during, and after surgery. CRNAs stay with their patients throughout their procedure to ensure the safest anesthesia experience possible.

You are invited to join us in the MTSA classroom in Building A on Wednesday, January 27 at 1:00 p.m. for ice cream and cake. We will celebrate this nationally recognized week with students, alumni, faculty, and staff. You can also be watching for a variety of messages from MTSA in commemoration of this special week.

More than 49,000 CRNAs and student registered nurse anesthetists provide approximately 40 million anesthetics to patients in the United States each year.



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Airways is published quarterly by the Middle Tennessee School of Anesthesia for alumni, students, faculty, staff, trustees and friends. Your comments are welcomed by emailing us at alumni@mtsa.edu or by calling (615) 732-7674.

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

MTSA Founder Bernard B. Bowen, CRNA, DSc is shown working from his home-office located on Berwick Trail, Madison, Tennessee. He died December 11, 2010 at age 93. His passing occurred on the same hospital campus (Madison Hospital – now Skyline Medical Center/Madison Campus) where he was born.

Dr. Bowen's vision to provide an anesthesia school in the South has been far-reaching in its impact and influence. Through his dedication and commitment to providing high-quality, affordable anesthesia training, more than 1,650 graduates have been able to be a part of this very special heritage. MTSA currently offers two degrees: Master of Science with a Focus in Anesthesia degree and Doctor of Nurse Anesthesia Practice completion degree.

Bowen founded the Madison Hospital School of Anesthesia for nurses in 1950. In 1980, it officially became Middle Tennessee School of Anesthesia. More than two-thirds of Middle Tennesseans having surgery entrust their lives to MTSA graduates.

