

## WHAT THEY'RE SAYING ABOUT MMC AND UT

### **Dr. Joey Hensley: Tennessee State Senator, District 28**

"This will be a great benefit for all of the citizens of Southern Middle Tennessee and will provide another option for quality, affordable education that will benefit students in this area as well as businesses. I will do all that I can in the legislature to ensure this is successful."

### **Clay Doggett: Tennessee State Representative, District 70**

"We have the best state college system in the entire nation, and the addition of Martin Methodist College would not only strengthen the entire system but would also enhance the profile of our fine institution and our community."

### **Dr. Mark Green: United States House of Representatives (TN-07)**

"A partnership between Martin Methodist College and the University of Tennessee is cause for celebration. Through this partnership, expansive educational opportunities will be available for students in the southern Middle Tennessee region. This merger will also form a path to retaining rural Tennessee residents after graduation, increasing our educated workforce and recruiting jobs and companies to the Volunteer State's economy. I look forward to watching in the months and years ahead as Martin Methodist College and the University of Tennessee work together to provide educational opportunities for all Tennesseans."

### **Bradley Jackson: President and CEO, Tennessee Chamber of Commerce and Industry**

"Enhancing Tennessee's skilled workforce is at the core of the Tennessee Chamber's mission. As Tennessee competes for the best jobs, initiatives that can enhance our workforce and give more options for Tennesseans to excel in an in-demand career should be pursued. Collaborations, increased vocational education, specialized skill training, and community driven mergers can all be effective options to achieve our workforce goals. Mergers like the one being proposed will certainly strengthen our communities and result in a healthy business climate that creates economic prosperity for all of Tennessee," said Bradley Jackson, President and CEO of the Tennessee Chamber of Commerce and Industry. "The Tennessee Chamber of Commerce & Industry stands ready to take part in conversations about supporting our rural counties through this important partnership between UT and Martin Methodist."

### **Janet Ayers: President, Ayers Foundation**

"We applaud both Martin Methodist College and the University of Tennessee for exploring this merger, and we are excited about the increased opportunities it can bring students, especially in our rural communities along the border of southern Middle Tennessee."

### **Adam Lister: President and CEO, Tennesseans for Student Success**

"Every student in every community across the state deserves to be in a classroom with a high-quality teacher. The unfortunate reality in many rural communities across the state, higher education deserts virtually eliminate the likelihood of recruiting these teachers from postsecondary institutions in or near their community. A partnership to incorporate Martin Methodist College as part of the University of Tennessee System will address these critical inequities by ensuring an affordable higher education is accessible for thousands of Tennesseans."

## **Giles County**

### **Melissa Greene: County Executive & Chairman of the Giles County Commission**

“This proposal would bring much needed growth opportunities to our rural community. But more importantly, this merger will provide untold educational opportunities for the children in the entire south-central Tennessee region.”

### **Pat Ford: Pulaski City Mayor**

“This merger is the spark that has been needed to create a dynamic and robust economic and educational footprint in southern Middle Tennessee. I can only begin to imagine the quality of life it will bring to our community. I wish I could bottle and distribute all the excitement and promise it offers.”

### **Vickie M. Beard, Director: Giles County School System**

“This proposal provides a geographically accessible opportunity for affordable post-secondary educational experiences. Additionally, the merger allows for increased early post-secondary opportunities and enhanced career pathways for area high school students.”

### **Brad Butler: Giles County Commissioner; MMC Alumni Association President**

“The proposed merger of UT and MMC is an exciting opportunity for Pulaski, Giles County, and the surrounding Southern Middle Tennessee area. The expanded educational opportunities UT will provide will make this area even more enticing for prospective students and draw families and businesses that are looking to locate in the area.”

### **Jessie Parker: Giles County Chamber of Commerce CEO**

“I keep finding myself saying, “this is perfect,” said Giles County Chamber of Commerce CEO, Jessie Parker. “This merger will expand our quality of life and livability not just in Pulaski, but the region. As a young adult, mother, and citizen, I am overwhelmed with pride for our community and what our future holds. “

### **Richard Kelley: Chair of the Pulaski-Giles Economic Development Commission Board, PES & PES Energize President & CEO**

“The proposal would bring new life to our community, offering a broader array of educational and career opportunities. As CEO of PES, Chair of the Pulaski-Giles EDC Board, and a Rotarian, I stand committed to serving Giles County and striving to build a brighter future for our community. It is my civic duty to support only those projects that are the BEST.”

### **David Hamilton: Executive Director, Giles County Economic Development Commission**

“This proposal will open up many opportunities for our citizens to receive a great education and provide our local businesses and industries with employees prepared to compete in a global economy. The support and quality education offered by UT will provide highly qualified individuals to work with industry and business throughout southern middle Tennessee.”

### **Jim Edmondson: CEO, Southern Tennessee Regional Health System - Pulaski**

“I believe the Martin Methodist College proposed merger with the University of Tennessee will be very good for our regional health care industry. The need for more healthcare professionals is nearly limitless. Expanding the number of disciplines being taught locally is of high importance but so is the expansion of existing programs like the nursing program. Expansion not only in numbers of students but also, disciplines that can be pursued within the nursing degree.”

**D.Doran Johnson: Senior Vice President, NHC South Central Region**

"I have worked in South Central Tennessee my entire career with seniors. The Nursing program at MMC has been a great addition for this population. For the senior care industry, daily long-term care such as Hospice, Home Health, Rehab services, Assisted Living and Skilled Nursing has to be provided close to home so family and loved ones are able to provide psychosocial support. Therefore, the UT and MMC merger will create a process for sustainable future for the development and education of the healthcare professionals that will serve the rural areas of South Central TN. This merger will strengthen and greatly contribute to the environmental, social and economic systems of the senior care industry. It will improve the quantity of the healthcare professionals, adding availability to the interest of our youth. It will undoubtedly improve the quality and quantity of Nurses for our seniors. MMC and I have dreamed and studied the possibly, (my dream) of more Allied Health professionals. If students are supported by the UT system locally, they will be more likely to join the UT Allied Health Programs throughout the State."

**Lawrence County**

**Blake Lay: Lawrenceburg Mayor**

"Having Martin Methodist College become the fourth campus in the UT System will be transformational for the southern Middle Tennessee region from an educational and economic development perspective. The opportunities UT will provide on every front for this rural area are limitless."

**T.R. Williams: Lawrence County Executive**

"Thousands of southern Middle Tennessee students cross the Alabama border to go to college every year because we don't have the educational opportunities they are seeking here at home. This proposal reduces that 'brain drain' and gives our students the opportunity for an education from one of the top public universities in the country."

**Michael Adkins: Director of Lawrence County Schools**

"Partnering MMC's stellar reputation in this region with UT's mission and vision will open doors of opportunity for our students to reach their goals."

**Ryan Egly: President & CEO of the Lawrence County Chamber**

"Access to higher education is the first step of increasing educational attainment and increasing educational attainment in our community is the key to sustaining economic development," explained Ryan Egly, President & CEO of the Lawrence County Chamber. "For this reason, the University of Tennessee's proposal to acquire Martin Methodist College is not only popular regionally but is necessary to provide our students with access to a public, four-year institution for the very first time."

**Marshall County**

**Greg Lowe, Director of Economic Development, City of Lewisburg**

"Martin Methodist has served our region very well for a century and a half; but the opportunity for it to become a University of Tennessee campus will spur significant growth in the region and workforce and community development. Innovation in the region just leaped forward in 2020."

## **Maury County**

### **Chaz Molder: Columbia Mayor**

“We are thrilled to learn of the UT and Martin Methodist College merger as it will join together two well respected institutions which have long played a role in producing job ready, and life ready graduates. The result of this merger will lead to increased educational opportunities, and a more robust economy in the south-central TN region.”

## **Lincoln County**

### **Carolyn Denton: Executive Director, Fayetteville-Lincoln County Chamber of Commerce**

“This merger would offer more educational opportunities for our students in the region and open doors for economic development and growth. Such exciting news!”