

McCALLIE

— HONOR TRUTH DUTY —



Founders Day

Remarks by Head of School Lee Burns '87
Wednesday, September 25, 2024

On September 21, 1905, 43 boys, four teachers, and two co-headmasters gathered on the side of Missionary Ridge, just a few hundred feet from where we assemble right now, to begin classes on the first day of school in the history of the McCallie School.

Today, we celebrate that founding of our school—a remarkable story of vision, courage, and sacrifice. We honor our founders, two brothers, Park and Spencer McCallie, their father and mother, and siblings—a large family, the McCallie family. We retell and reflect on our history, especially the men and women who devoted their lives to teaching over 16,000 McCallie boys, as well as some milestone moments that shaped our story. We marvel at our growth over the last 119 years. And we give thanks to God for His provisions, protection, and blessings on our school.

We assemble today on the site of a Civil War battlefield from 1863. Long before boys and young men would strive for our ideals of honor, truth, and duty, long before boys would study in classrooms and sweat on fields, other young men sacrificed and spilled their blood in battles over beliefs and principles, and the battles here and elsewhere would help shape our country's story, including its march toward more justice and freedom.

We are surely situated and sit this morning on a sacred site.



*The five McCallie sons (left to right) with their parents (front).
Douglas, Edward, Thomas, Spencer, and Park.*

During the Civil War, the Reverend Thomas Hooke McCallie served as the pastor of First Presbyterian Church in downtown Chattanooga. First Presbyterian Church, located today on McCallie Avenue near the UTC campus, remains a large and prominent church.

Reverend McCallie and his wife Ellen had 16 children, half of whom would die before reaching age 20. In 1882, Reverend McCallie was slowing down and worried about his health, so he and Mrs. McCallie, who were living downtown near the church, bought 80 acres of farmland about two miles outside the city. Their new farm sat on the slopes of Missionary Ridge, the site of a battle in the Civil War. It is, of course, where we sit today.

The McCallie family would, in fact, farm their land. Cows and sheep grazed the hillside. They produced milk and cheese; they grew vegetables and berries. They built a two story house, called the Allin House, located about where the Keith Greenway is near the dining hall right now.

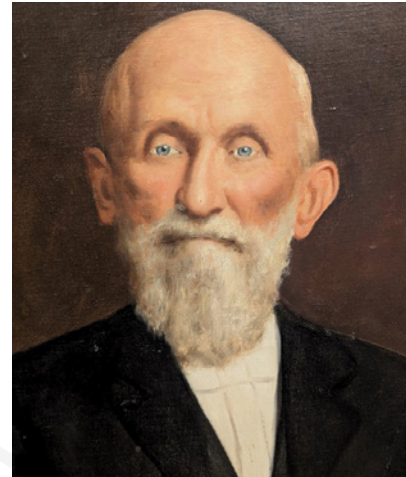
In 1891, they built a second house on their farm. This one, though, was much larger—a Victorian, three story, 18-room home to accommodate their large family. That home was located where Founders Dorm is right now. That home would be called Founders Home.

The Reverend and Mrs. McCallie greatly valued education. Reverend McCallie had earned a doctorate in divinity in New York City in 1859. When he and Mrs. McCallie were still living downtown, in 1864, they started a home school for 60-80 students. They did that for one year. That was, in a sense, an original McCallie School.

The McCallie family pushed for their children to be well educated and to value education. Son Park McCallie was a graduate of the University of Virginia, where he studied the scriptures and science, earning a PhD in astrophysics and advanced studies in math and philosophy. In his mid-twenties, he was teaching math at a leading boarding high school for boys, the Culver School, in Indiana.

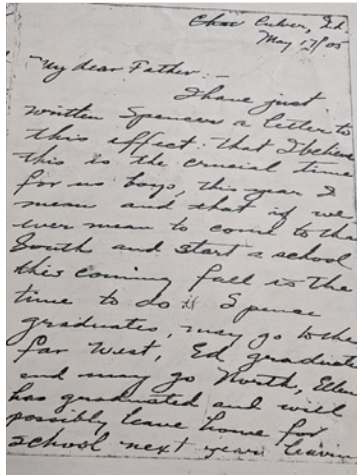
His older brother Spencer had studied at Southwestern College (later known as Rhodes College), receiving two degrees there, and the University of Chicago. He served as the Superintendent of Cleveland Schools about 30 miles up the road from here. He did all that in his twenties and was headed to Seattle to be a professor at the University of Washington when his younger brother Park approached him with an idea in the spring of 1905: let's start a school.

The two brothers, age 25 and 29, met at the Culver School in early May to further contemplate the idea of starting a school in Chattanooga. They wanted boys from Chattanooga and the Southeast to have the same educational opportunities they had. They believed that the South needed a great school. They would need the help of their family for their bold idea; they had no land or money to start a school. Park wrote to their father, seeking his advice and support. The letter, in part, reads:



Reverend Thomas Hooke McCallie





My Dear Father,

I have just written Spencer a letter to this effect: that I believe this is the crucial time for us boys, this year I mean and that if we ever mean to come to the south and start a school, this coming fall is the time to do it... Of course it would be difficult for us, though by no means impossible, to get a good start without some help and backing from you. I wish you would let me know just what you think of us starting up next fall at this undertaking.

GPS the following year—but the McCallie family endorsed the idea for a school for boys and would provide land from the family farm and either \$2,000 or \$2,500 in start-up capital. They would also let their sons use their initial home as a classroom building and their current home as a dormitory. Their charge, their condition, their expectation was that the school would be committed to the glory of God in Christ.

T. Hook McCallie's letter to his son, sent to them on June 1, 1905, reads in part:

"Our aim is not wealth, or even having our family together, as desirable as this is, but the glory of God in Christ...You would expect to make it a Christian school, and exercise a good, wholesome Christian influence on your pupils."

Brothers Park and Spencer McCallie had a herculean task in front of them: to open a school in the fall. They had 99 days to develop a curriculum and programs, hire teachers, convert a home into a classroom building, convert another house into a dormitory, recruit students from the city and the South, secure textbooks, and build a gym.

They did it all.

And on Thursday, September 21, 1905, 43 9th-12th grade boys showed up, some on foot, many on the Missionary Ridge-line trolley car that dropped them off on Kyle Street just below what is now the chapel parking lot. In the coming days, the student body would grow to 58, including eight boarding students. Fifteen percent of the students on day one had transferred from Baylor.

The forty acre school campus had, besides the converted classroom building and converted dormitory, a 30x60 foot gym built by the brothers that summer on the edge of the lake, approximately where the SAC rotunda is today. The lake, truly a spring-fed lake then, was almost twice as large as it is now.



In the early years, commitments were made, recognized today as enduring traditions: to the Honor Code and the Senate; to our motto of “man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever;” and to the importance of character, consistent with the ideals of honor, truth, and duty which would be established formally later. Bible classes would become a diploma requirement, and for many years they were taught by one or both of the brothers who were serving as co-headmasters.



A football team was established and played that first year, with coaches playing in practices and games. The 1905 team finished the season undefeated, including a 41-0 victory over Baylor.



In 1906, the brothers would build a three-story brick classroom in what is now about the center of the current quadrangle. That building would become known later as Middle Hall, and, in 1919, it would be expanded to include North Hall and South Hall. These would be the school’s academic buildings until 1976, when they were torn down to create the quadrangle we now enjoy.

1906 also marked the start of financial aid at McCallie. We have a long history of making McCallie accessible to talented, mission-fit boys, even if their families didn’t have the full financial means. Today, over 40% of our student body receives financial aid totaling over \$11 million.

McCallie experienced rapid growth in its early years. Ninety students enrolled in the second year. A new dormitory, Douglas Hall, was built in 1907, in the approximate location of Caldwell Hall today. It was named for the family of Ellen McCallie. The first yearbook, called the *Pennant*, was published that same year. The Glee Club, our men’s chorus, first performed in 1908, with the orchestra established in 1912. The Debating Club had been organized in 1911. The first international boarding student graduated in 1910.

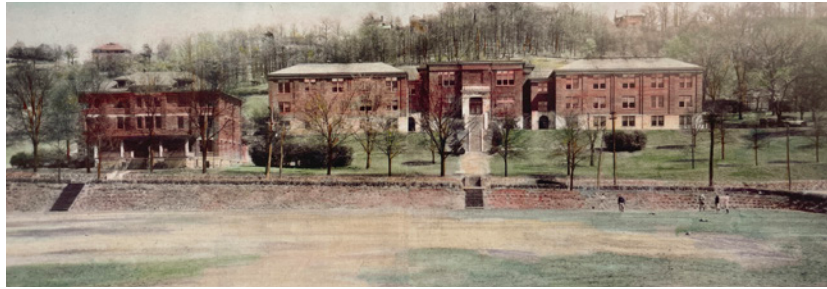
Starting in 1910 for a brief period, fifth and sixth graders, called “little shavers,” had been enrolled. These younger students were members of the McCallie family or their close friends.

In 1912, Clifford Barker Grayson graduated from McCallie. He would die in World War I in the trenches of France in 1918. The following year at graduation, his father would present a medal to the outstanding senior. To this day, the Grayson Medal is the highest award presented at McCallie.



Clifford Barker Grayson

Enrollment grew to 300 boys by the 1920s, and the north and south additions to the academic building were made. The picture below shows the connected North, Middle, and South Halls, as taken from what is now Spears Stadium, but at the time was a field to practice military. For most of our history until 1970, McCallie was a military school, with daily military practice and boys earning various school military ranks. The dress code each day was a military uniform. To the left in that picture is the dorm, Douglas Hall.



Towering slides and a toboggan-like chute were added to the lake in the early 1920s, along with the 1923 tower, which is today the oldest structure on campus, though missing the iron steps. An alumnus described the lake as an aquatic amusement park. The school would let visitors swim in the lake for a nickel to help with its finances.

The 1921 football team was so ferocious and fast in outsourcing their opponents—271-6—that season that they were dubbed the Blue Tornado. Bill Spears, class of 1924, would quarterback the football team the upcoming seasons, become an all-American quarterback at Vanderbilt, and then return to teach and coach at McCallie before later serving 26 years as a trustee. The football stadium is named for him.

The school would add a larger gymnasium in 1924, near the original 1905 gym and close to the current SAC rotunda. The new gym, called by later generations of McCallie boys “the barn” or “doghouse,” would be torn down in the late 1980s to construct the SAC—the Sports and Activities Center—which opened in 1993.

The buildings of course were crucial to the growth and success of McCallie, but of even greater impact on the school has been the men and women who served the school as teachers, coaches, and administrators.

Beginning around the 1920s, several men joined the faculty, and these men would have a profound impact on McCallie as they helped to shape and transform the lives of thousands of McCallie boys over many decades.

T.E.P. Woods came to McCallie in 1921 as a veteran pastor and former school head in North Carolina. He taught, oversaw student behavior, created the privilege rating system, and helped the school run smoothly as associate headmaster. He served for 27 years. The sophomore leadership organization, TEPS, was established in 1957 in honor of him. It is the younger brother organization to Keo-Kio, founded in 1939 based on a senior leadership group at Davidson College. The Missionary Committee was also instituted in 1939.



Arthur Lee Burns, Chalmers McIlwaine, and Wallace Purdy



John Strang

Three faculty legends would arrive in 1925—Chalmers McIlwaine '21, Arthur Burns '20, and Herbert Dunlap—and serve into the 1970s. They would teach, coach, and counsel boys for almost 150 years combined, eventually serving as associate headmasters, among other administrative roles, including in the military program. Burns Dorm is named for Arthur Burns '20, often known as Major Burns or Maj, who is my grandfather. There's an endowed fund for a math teacher at McCallie to honor Mr. McIlwaine, along with John Pataky. The middle school baseball fields are named for

Colonel Dunlap. Wallace Purdy was also a long-serving cohort of McIlwaine, Burns, and Dunlap. The Purdy Award for physics is given at Awards Day each year.

John Strang, whose nickname was Yo or Bud, arrived in 1949 and taught Bible and coached tennis while serving for 53 and a half years. A jovial man with an ever-present smile, he dispensed hundreds of pieces of candy daily to McCallie boys, along with Bible verses and corny jokes. The indoor tennis center bears his name, along with a former student and player of his, Coach Eric Voges '81, currently our director of tennis operations in his 37th year at McCallie. The top award in the middle school is named the Strang Award.

Speaking of the middle school, the former middle school facility, called the junior school at the time, but since demolished and located where the amphitheater is, was called Tate Hall, named for Russell Tate '29, who won the Grayson Medal and taught for 36 years.

These and other teachers set an example of McCallie teachers and administrators devoting their lives—most of their lives—to the boys of McCallie. They weren't just teachers and coaches; they were mentors, guides, role models; they were, in many senses, in loco parentis. A multitude of long-serving, eclectic, and iconic teachers would follow in their footsteps—Mr. Bill Humphreys, Chaplain Rocky Young, Elliot Schmidt, John Pataky '49, Bill Eiselstein, Bill Cherry, Bob Bailey, Coach Pete Potter, Dean Warren James, Steve Bartlett, Dee Parker, Steve George, Ed Lewis '53, Coach John Day, Miles McNiff, Marilyn Landis, Curtis Baggett '65, Terry Evans, Bob Bires, Cissy May, Bill Royer, Tom Makepeace, Kemmer Anderson, Steve Hearn '74, Chet LeSourd '73, Kenny Sholl, and Cleve Latham, to name a very few and to omit a multitude.

Throughout these decades, with so many incredible faculty and staff, the McCallie family was a constant. The founding brothers, Park and Spencer McCallie, retired in the late 1940s, and were succeeded in 1949 by their sons, Bob '29 and Spencer Jr. '28, as co-headmasters, and their cousin, William Pressly, who would leave McCallie in 1951 to found Westminster School in Atlanta. Pressly dorm is named for him.

In 1974, Spencer McCallie III, class of 1955, son of the then current headmaster and grandson of founder Spencer McCallie Sr., would become headmaster and serve until his retirement in 1999, overseeing a remarkable era of growth and strength. The quadrangle is named the Spencer McCallie III Quadrangle. His brother, Franklin, served as head of Kirkwood School in St. Louis, and cousin Jim was president of the Darlington School in Rome, Georgia. Daughter Becky and niece Rachel both taught Japanese at McCallie. His nephew, Sumner McCallie, currently serves as our dean of faculty; his cousin, Alex McCallie '78 currently serves in our college guidance department; and Dr. Michael McCallie, another family member, teaches guitar at McCallie. Paul Pressly, the son of the former co-headmaster who founded Westminster, served as headmaster of Savannah Country Day School. Spencer's cousin, Dr. Jack McCallie '75, has served as our school doctor for many years, while another cousin, Allen McCallie '73, and Dr. David McCallie '40 served as trustees. Mel Cooper married Eleanor McCallie and served as vice president of development for many years, partnering with Spencer and the board to raise significant philanthropic support for key strategic initiatives. The McCallie family is one of the great multi-generational educational families in American history.



Though the McCallie family had turned governance of the school over to a Board of Trustees in 1937, the family has remained deeply involved, invested, and supportive.

As the school grew in its size, complexity, and needs, the newly established Board of Trustees provided necessary structure and support, especially to secure much needed philanthropic funding, mostly from alumni, for capital projects. Especially crucial in the transition to the Board structure and the school's development was Robert Maclellan, and sons Bob '24 and Hugh '30, who as brothers would serve 59 years as trustees, and whose family would be a great benefactor to the school. Hugh O. Maclellan '57 would serve as a trustee a generation later.



The Board of Trustees, throughout its history, including today, stewards the mission of the school, plans for its long-term strength and flourishing, selects an individual to serve as head of school, and helps to provide, gather, and align the resources to implement our mission, vision, and strategic plans. Their steady hand, their strategic thinking, and their stunning generosity have played a vital role in the development and history of our school.

Only alumni serve as trustees, and no more than 24 at a time, as selected by the current Board members. They are passionate about and generous to McCallie, ambitious for the school yet humble in their roles. A few years ago, I called an alumnus to tell him he was being invited to serve on the Board. He was driving in his car as I spoke to him. He had to pull over to the side of the road, so overcome with emotion and tears at the honor of being asked to serve his alma mater as a trustee. Many trustees have remarked that serving as a McCallie trustee is one of the greatest honors and joys of their lives. One trustee recently told me that when McCallie asks something of him, the answer is always yes.

Serving and leading the way on the Board have included, among others, luminaries like Gordon Smith '43, Hardwick '40 and Hacker Caldwell '66, Lew Boyd '46, Hugh Maclellan '57, Olan Mills '48, the Brock family, Bill Walker '46, Charles Lebovitz '55, Ed Michaels '60, David Stonecipher '59, Hal Daughdrill '73, and Elliott Davenport '78, as well as other Davenport men—Rody '46, Robert '49, and both Gordon's ('51 and '77).

Throughout our history, whenever the school had a great need, alumni stepped up to provide the funds for the current and future generations of McCallie boys. Often, these were buildings, with the names of the families who gave so generously, including:

- > Davenport Gym in 1949
- > Hutcheson Dorm in 1951
- > Maclellan Dorm in 1953
- > Belk Dorm in 1963
- > Caldwell Hall in 1965
- > Hunter Arts in 1975
- > Maclellan Academic Building in 1976
- > McDonald Middle School in 1998
- > The Keith Greenway in 2019

It's not just buildings, though, that tell the story of our progress and strength. McCallie overcame significant struggles in our history, including two world wars and the Great Depression, when enrollment shrunk and all the teachers, staff, and co-headmasters took 20% pay cuts. McCallie faced the ugly history of our country's segregation and the upheavals on the road to civil rights and desegregation. Brothers Spencer III and Franklin McCallie urged their father, the headmaster, to integrate McCallie, which the Board did in 1970. David Chatman '75 would become the school's first African-American graduate a few years later in 1975. The school survived other social upheavals, recessions, debts, fires, tragedies, pandemics, and the change of many boys' schools to co-ed ones. Many of our peer schools in the South faltered, failed, and folded.

McCallie moved onward and upward.



We expanded programs, activities, and offerings to meet the interests, passions, and needs of boys. Over the years, we increasingly served a growing and diverse range of boys. McCallie has become a more welcoming and inclusive school, with boys from more cultures, countries, and backgrounds than ever before, all loved and respected while experiencing the common bonds of the McCallie brotherhood and the enduring McCallie mission and values.

As the years unfolded, we have added resources to help in the development of the whole boy—heart, soul, mind, and body. We've grown the arts. We've added extraordinary academic and learning experiences. This year, we offer 150 different classes, 385 total classes, an additional 35 T-term classes, five international trips, 50 athletic teams, 30 extracurricular activities, 45 clubs, and 10 service organizations. Every boy belongs at McCallie, and there is something for everyone.



Yet with the growth, changes, innovations, resources, expansions, and excellence, the heart and spirit of McCallie have remained constant. We are a community—a family—of deep relationships, of belonging and brotherhood, a place of playfulness and prayer, of ideas and intellect, of adventures and even occasional misadventures, of character and faith. A place that loves, understands, and celebrates boys. A place of joy.

Onward and upward indeed.

Other key milestones in our upward trajectory include:

- > The student-led creation of S.P.I.R.I.T.U.A.L.S. in 1967.
- > The purchase of Central High School on what is now our varsity soccer field in 1971, its conversion to our wrestling facility called Killebrew Gym, and its demolition in the late 1980s.
- > The offering of our first AP class in 1978. Last year, boys took 654 AP exams, with 95% of those earning a 3, 4, or 5.
- > Resuming our football series with Baylor in 1971 after 31 years of not playing because of fights between students at the two schools.
- > Beginning Sports Camp in 1980.
- > In 1985, holding our first Candlelight under the direction of Lew Cisto.
- > Establishing the Coordinate Program with GPS in 1985.
- > Recognition as a national school of excellence by the United States Department of Education in 1989.
- > Launching the learning center in 1991 under the direction of Linda Snodgrass.
- > Adding 6th grade in 1998.
- > Selecting the first non-McCallie family member, Dr. Kirk Walker '69, to serve as headmaster in 1999. McCallie continued to flourish under his excellent leadership. The science building, Walker Hall, is named for him.
- > Winning our first football state championship in 2001, one of 70 total state athletic championships this century.
- > The growth of our endowment to over \$150 million.
- > The creation of the Wild Blue Yonder program in Montana in 2022, thanks in large measure to the generosity of the late Billy Dunavant and his wife Tommie and teachers Duke Richey '86 and Bart Wallin '99.
- > The adoption of a new strategic plan in 2023 to chart our course for the next decade and beyond.



The Honors Scholars Program began in 1998 as a way to attract outstanding students from around the country. In 2018, it was named The Michaels-Dickson Scholars program to honor the two alumni who conceived the idea, generously contributed to it, and helped secure millions of dollars of funding. Those two men are Ed Michaels '60 and Alan Dickson '49.



Ed Michaels' good friend David Stonecipher from the class of 1959 conceived of the Founders Club to grow our endowment. With his leadership and generosity, approximately \$90 million has been given or pledged in the last several years.



In the quadrangle by the amphitheater, there are a Founders Club recognition plaques on the stone wall. It recognizes sacrificial giving of the highest magnitude to McCallie, especially to support our endowment. On that same wall are the McCallie men who made an even greater sacrifice: that of their lives in military service to our country. Ninety-two McCallie alumni have died in military service to our nation.

Sacrifice and service are themes that run throughout our history. Our founders, our faculty, our students, our alumni—all sought bigger causes, all have put others first, all have invested in others, given to others, paved the way for us.

Alan Dickson, Ed Michaels, and David Stonecipher

And with us today we have teachers who are serving, supporting, and shaping you in ways that you will not be able to grasp until you are much older. Thirty-seven of them have been doing so for 25 years or more. I'd like to recognize these men and women. Please join me in the traditional one clap salute as I call their name.

With 25 years of service, Tammy Barber, Tom Herring, Nina Keane, David Levitt '94, Ann Watkins

With 26 years of service, Brent Alverson, Hank Bramblet '96, Paul Cudd, Theda Griffin, Steve Hearn '74, Cary Hubbard, Abbie Roberts

With 27 years of service, Roger Dahlke, Neal Dexter, Robert Wilson

With 28 years of service,
Chris Richardson

With 29 years of service, Jim Carlone '88, Roc Evans '91, Sumner McCallie

With 30 years of service, Suzie Howick, Randy Odle, Steve Reno, Tim Stowell

With 31 years of service, Mike Newman

With 32 years of service, Michael Lowry



With 33 years of service, Stan Corcoran

With 35 years of service, Holly Deeds

With 37 years of service, David Hughes '78,
Mike Wood

With 38 years of service, Hank Hopping,
Eric Voges '82, Frank Watkins

With 41 years of service, David Vining

With 42 years of service, Kenny Sholl

With 44 years of service, Bill Jamieson

With 45 years of service, Gordon Connell

And with 56 years of service, the most in the history of McCallie, John McCall '61. When considering his six years as a McCallie student, Mr. McCall has 62 years at McCallie—over half our history.

I am grateful for these men and women, for their service to you and to our school.

I would like to recognize Spencer McCallie III '55 and members of the McCallie family.

I would also like to recognize Dr. Kirk Walker '69.

I would like to recognize the members of the Founders Club, especially its founder and greatest champion, David Stonecipher '59.

I would also like to recognize some current and former trustees who are with us today.



I am grateful for the legacy and history of our school, and especially the people.

1905. One family, two men, four teachers, 43 boys. A battlefield: a place of sacrifice, of valor, of striving for noble ideals, for justice, for progress and purpose. A farm: a place of nourishment, of growth, of providing for others. A ridge: a steep journey upward demanding commitment and sweat, but with a beautiful vista at the top. A family: a home, a place of love and belonging, of unity and brotherhood.

2024. One family. 203 faculty and staff. 999 boys.
16,716 alumni. 119 years. The long blue line. The
McCallie School.

Draw inspiration from our founding, our history,
our unfolding story.

Be bold and adventurous. Do hard things. Get to
work. From day one, we've been a school that rolls
up our sleeves and gets to work. We work hard.
We exceed expectations. We overachieve. We are
resilient and relentless.



The story of McCallie is a grand narrative. We are part of a story much bigger than ourselves. McCallie is bigger than you or me or any of us. That should humble us. But it should also fortify us, because we can draw upon the character and culture and connections of this community. Shared stories and experiences can bond us, shape us, strengthen us. They also remind us of the importance of committing to a purpose bigger than yourself. And of sacrifice. Find your bigger purpose and find true joy.

Finally, our founding and history remind us that, as the writer of Deuteronomy tells us, we drink from wells we did not dig. We enjoy the fruits of the labors of other people. It is they who enabled the opportunities we enjoy. Yes, enjoy the water today from the wells dug over the last 119 years at McCallie. And find ways to start digging your own wells, here and beyond, for other people. You are a beneficiary of a remarkable legacy and history of The McCallie School. And you have a responsibility to it. To honor and respect it. To live it out. To live up to it. And to advance it. To, one day, give back to our school, to give the upcoming generations of McCallie what you experienced, but even better.



But for now, be attentive to this
history, and especially the people.
And be grateful—to them and to
the good Lord, who has blessed,
protected, and caused this our
school to flourish.

Let us close in prayer and the
singing of the alma mater which
was written in 1929, by, at the time,
a recent alumnus and young faculty
member, Arthur Burns.

On McCallie...and onward
McCallie...

Thy loyal sons are we.