

BEN LIPPEN SCHOOL

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2024

Constructing Excellence

BLACKWELL CENTER FOR LIFE IMPACT



The **Blackwell Center for Life Impact** is rapidly taking shape and poised to transform our campus landscape. Each day, the vision of this new facility becomes more real, promising an exciting addition to our academic environment. From eight new classrooms and offices to inviting communal areas, every detail is tailored to foster learning and community engagement. Scheduled to open its doors in August 2024, the BCLI will leave a lasting impact on our students, faculty, staff, community, and alumni for years to come.

Beam signed by
students, faculty,
staff, parents
and alumni!



COME TO THE TABLE

A NIGHT OF CELEBRATION AND VISION

The 2024 Come to the Table dinner and auction was a fantastic evening! Nearly 250 guests experienced a wonderful night filled with fellowship, celebration, and vision. With the support of our community and a collection of 140 auction items, we successfully raised over \$100,000 for the Blackwell Center for Life Impact. Following the silent auction, attendees enjoyed dinner and heard from members of the Ben Lippen family, such as Brandon and Bonnie Allen and Delaine Blackwell, who shared a testimony of her late husband, Mike Blackwell, the namesake of our new building. Headmaster Dr. Tony Fajardo reflected on the past year's accomplishments and shared an exciting vision for the future. To close, our live auction entertained the crowd and served as a festive ending to a great evening. We are grateful to all who attended and supported the event!



ENJOY A RECAP OF THE EVENT AND THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS
ON THE BLACKWELL CENTER FOR LIFE IMPACT.

Alumni Spotlight

KENT LIGHTNER '89

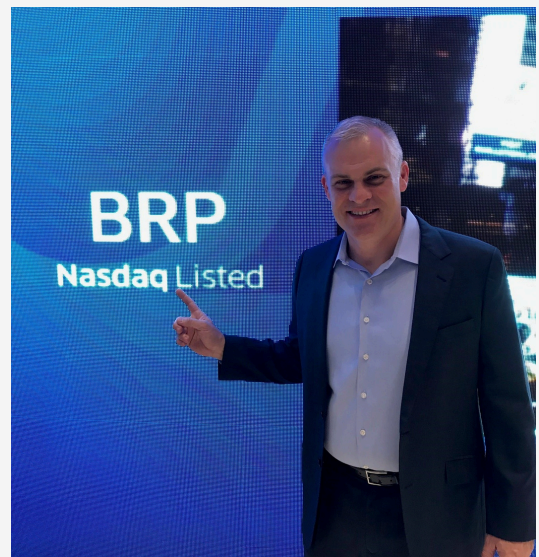
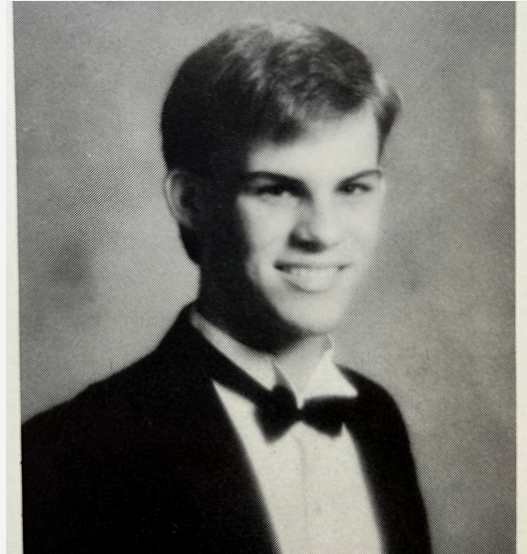
FROM MK TO MILITARY LEADER AND
BUSINESS EXECUTIVE

Growing up as a missionary kid in Costa Rica, Kent Lightner's childhood was filled with unique experiences that shaped his perspective on life and leadership. From navigating different cultures and languages to excelling in academics and sports, his journey has been one of constant adaptation and growth.

"My parents were missionaries in Costa Rica where I grew up from age 2 to 17," Lightner reflects. "I graduated from high school in Costa Rica, which only goes through 11th grade (all Spanish), but I knew I wanted to go to college in the U.S., which meant I would need to do a 12th grade somewhere."

Determined to pursue higher education in the United States, Lightner made a pivotal decision to attend Ben Lippen School. "Since it was a boarding school with a lot of international students, I knew Ben Lippen would be a great transition experience to the U.S. school system and learning to study in English," he explains.

At Ben Lippen, Lightner immersed himself in academics and extracurricular activities, playing soccer and basketball during his senior year.



“MY FAITH DOESN'T INFLUENCE MY WORK, IT DEFINES IT. I CONTINUOUSLY STRIVE FOR MY INTERACTIONS WITH OTHERS AND LEADERSHIP STYLE TO REFLECT CHRIST.”



click
here

TO READ THE COMPLETE STORY

CAREER WEEK 2024

During High School Career Week, our students participated in various career exploration activities. They engaged with professionals from our community, including parents and alumni, and drew inspiration from them during daily sessions and a networking social. Students broadened their knowledge of post-high school opportunities by exploring diverse industries and professions. Career Week wasn't just an event but a unique opportunity to encourage new pursuits and pave the way for promising futures.

We are so grateful to our alumni and alumni parents whose support contributed to the success of this event!



Students enjoyed listening to professionals from various fields, including healthcare, aviation, engineering, sales, ministry, finance, military, and law. Special thanks to all our alumni and alumni parents for participating. We are thrilled to welcome you back to BLS!



SHOUT OUTS FROM CAMPUS

FALCONS GIVE

The 2024 Ben Lippen Commencement holds a unique significance for the Whitaker family. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all our alumni who generously participated in the **Alumni Day of Giving** this past February. We appreciate your commitment to investing in the lives of our current students and ensuring a bright future for Ben Lippen School. Luann Washer Whitaker, walked across the stage in Huston Hall for her own Ben Lippen graduation ceremony.

Thank You



FALCONS SERVE

Ben Lippen School upholds its mission of honoring God through serving others. All high school students engage in different service activities throughout the school year, including projects worldwide through our Winterim Program. Most recently, a group of high school students dedicated their time to enhancing the surroundings at Camp Cole. Camp Cole offers camps for individuals facing illnesses, disabilities, and life obstacles and also operates as a retreat center for the community during winter, spring, and fall.

FALCONS SOAR

Congratulations to seniors Kay Baumgartner, Dorothy Lin, and Annabelle Thompson on their recognition as National Merit Finalists in the 2024 National Merit Scholarship Program! We are extremely proud of these students for their dedication and outstanding accomplishment!

CONGRATUALTIONS!



Well done!

FROM TRAGEDY TO TRIUMPH

A CONVERSATION WITH JESSICA KOLP '22

DURING JESS'S SENIOR YEAR AT BEN LIPPEN, SHE WAS T-BONED BY A DRUNK DRIVER AT OVER 115 MPH, CAUSING LIFE-THREATENING TRAUMA, INCLUDING SIGNIFICANT BRAIN INJURY AND MULTIPLE BROKEN BONES. THE BL COMMUNITY AND COUNTLESS OTHERS RALLIED BEHIND JESS, AND ALL WITNESSED HER MIRACULOUS RECOVERY. WHILE SHE STILL WORKS THROUGH THE HEALING PROCESS, JESS LOOKS AT EACH NEW DAY AS A GIFT. SEE HOW THIS EXPERIENCE HAS STRENGTHENED HER FAITH AND GIVEN HER LIFE NEW PERSPECTIVE AND PURPOSE.

Jessica, you look happy and healthy! How are you doing physically? How is your healing journey going?

What I like to tell people now is that from the outside, you would never know anything happened to me (besides scars), but internally, I am still dealing with some doctors. I still see my eye doctor, Cardiovascular, and ENT. Healing wise, everything can only get better. Since leaving the hospital, I have only gone up!

Please update us on where you are in your college journey and your involvement on campus.

I just finished my sophomore year at Charleston Southern University, and time flies in college! I am majoring in psychology with a minor in sociology. At CSU, I have the luxury of being a Campus Ambassador and a part of FCA on campus. Off-campus, I have the pleasure of working with FCA Low-Country.

What career path are you considering after graduating from college?

I have decided to become an online student and complete college that way while still getting my Master's. However, I have recently decided to take up motivational speaking full-time. And I have roughly a speech a week now, so I can only keep growing!



“GOD WASN'T DONE WITH ME YET AND I STILL HAVE A PURPOSE HERE, AND FROM THAT IT GIVES ME SO MUCH JOY JUST TO BE ABLE TO TALK TO PEOPLE ABOUT GOD.”



Congratulations on publishing your book, *Leaving It All on the Field: How My Faith and Sports Training Restored My Life!* What motivated you to write it?

Truly, everyone else. I had no want to until everyone told me I should. But during the hospital, I did write down different things about what was going on and what I was seeing.

Continued on next page



I'm sure that choosing a topic like this for your book made you reflect deeply to identify what lessons you learned from your accident and healing process, including the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects.

Mentally my book still makes me cry every time I read it. From a healing standpoint, it was good and was what I needed. No one truly understood everything that was happening to me, but writing my book showed me how good I have it and how blessed I am, as well as seeing how far I've come. The spiritual was also a positive viewpoint as well, for it was another way to share my story with others and how cool God is!

How has this traumatic experience impacted your faith and view on life?

Through my accident, my favorite thing and my safe place were taken away from me (being softball), but from that, I learned how special and precious life truly is. And now I live every day with the biggest smile because you never know when your time is up. I also learned in the hospital that while I might be mad or upset, making others smile will make you forget your issues. Life is too short not to be smiling and laughing. My relationship with God truly grew in a way I could have never imagined. Getting t-boned at 115, no one should survive that. And the first 4-5 days of my coma were very touch and go (meaning the doctors were not even sure I would make it through the night). And now that I am still here and able to do more than what doctors expected shows how powerful God's love is and how good God is. God wasn't done with me yet and I still have a purpose here and from that it gives me so much joy just to be able to talk to people about God.

How has forgiveness played a role in your healing process?

I told my mom on a whiteboard in the Prisma ICU "I forgave him" (I was in the process of relearning my English). My mom gave me the biggest hug and said, "No, I don't think you understand what truly happened." I looked at my mom, attempted to smile, and shook my head up and down. I knew that if I had not forgiven him, I would have carried that with me, and it would have taken so much longer for me to heal.

I also knew that God had forgiven me for all the wrongs that I've done, so why can't I forgive the man who hit me and truly have peace in my life? As mentioned above, life's too short to be an angry person and hold grudges. What's done is done, and of course, him hitting me was his choice, but I still have the mindset of what God is trying to teach me from this pain.

Athletics were a significant part of your life as a student at Ben Lippen. Please share a special memory with us.

Coach Abbot is my favorite sports memory. He made being out on the field every day the best day. I just got to be the keynote speaker for the Low Country FCA banquet, and I got to center it around how good coach Abbot is and how he incorporated God into everything we did on that field. Our team motto was "in such a way." In such a way, we're living daily for God's glory and can show that on the field.

Was there a particular Ben Lippen teacher that made an impact on you?

Mrs. Hodges or the running joke from the hospital when I tried writing her name "Mrs. Hisdogs." Mrs. Hodges was the absolute best and always a positive influence in my life. Before and after the accident, Mrs. Hodges was always my BL mom. ❤️



**LET'S BUILD
A FUTURE
TOGETHER!**



If just half of our alumni base gave **\$100**, we could meet half of our \$400,000 near-term milestone and keep construction progress on track with the **Blackwell Center for Life Impact!** If you want to help build an exciting future for BLS, **click the graphic above** to learn more and give. Contributions of any size make an impact!

Save the Date



IT'S A REUNION YEAR FOR **4'S & 9'S!**
CONTACT THE ALUMNI OFFICE FOR HELP
PLANNING YOUR CELEBRATION!

**BEN LIPPEN SCHOOL
ALUMNI COUNCIL**



**CALLING ALL ALUMNI!
EXCITING UPDATE: INTRODUCING
OUR NEW ALUMNI COUNCIL!**

**BE A PART OF SHAPING THE FUTURE,
HONORING OUR OUTSTANDING ALUMNI
WITH ESTEEMED AWARDS, AND
DEVELOPING CREATIVE WAYS TO
RECONNECT OUR ALUMNI COMMUNITY!**

INTERESTED? EMAIL
ALUMNBLS@BENLIPPEN.COM TODAY!