

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Murfreesboro, Tennessee

“When I came on board in 2002, there was some administrative transition. I wanted to put some emphasis on our development efforts and pay more attention to our growth in that area. We had a good development department in place, but the university was relatively new in its efforts at nurturing and providing support for its development activities.”

Those are the words of Dr. Sidney A. McPhee, the tenth President of Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. His early tenure was highlighted by a heightened focus on MTSU’s fundraising activities and an increased emphasis on nurturing positive donor relationships. He called on The Covenant Group to assist the institution in their transition.

Dr. McPhee believes that the transition was significant, and that The Covenant Group’s involvement was essential in keeping momentum. “I made some organizational changes and decided that we needed new leadership in our development area. So, one of the first things I asked The Covenant Group to do was a development audit. During this process, Dr. Bill Rothwell of The Covenant Group really became a senior advisor to me. His expertise and energy helped MTSU in a number of ways. He got involved, he was enthusiastic, he got to know the people in our community – he became part of the university fabric quite quickly.”

The Covenant Group served in an advisory role for over nine months. During this time we conducted a development audit, created a communications piece entitled “Creating an Endowment,” oversaw various day-to-day activities within the development department and assisted in identifying, screening and interviewing the new Vice President of Development.

“I was particularly interested in not losing ground during this important time. Not only did The Covenant Group provide general support and advice, I can point to that specific outcome in terms of dollars. Dr. Rothwell was instrumental in developing the conceptual paper which led directly to a \$1.7 million gift to our Nursing School.”

Dr. McPhee summarized his thoughts. “I really have no suggestions on what they could have done to improve their service to our university. A lasting result of their involvement has been the more focused nature of our donor relationships. We can now interact with our donors and more clearly articulate the needs of the university, and that has strengthened our development efforts considerably.”