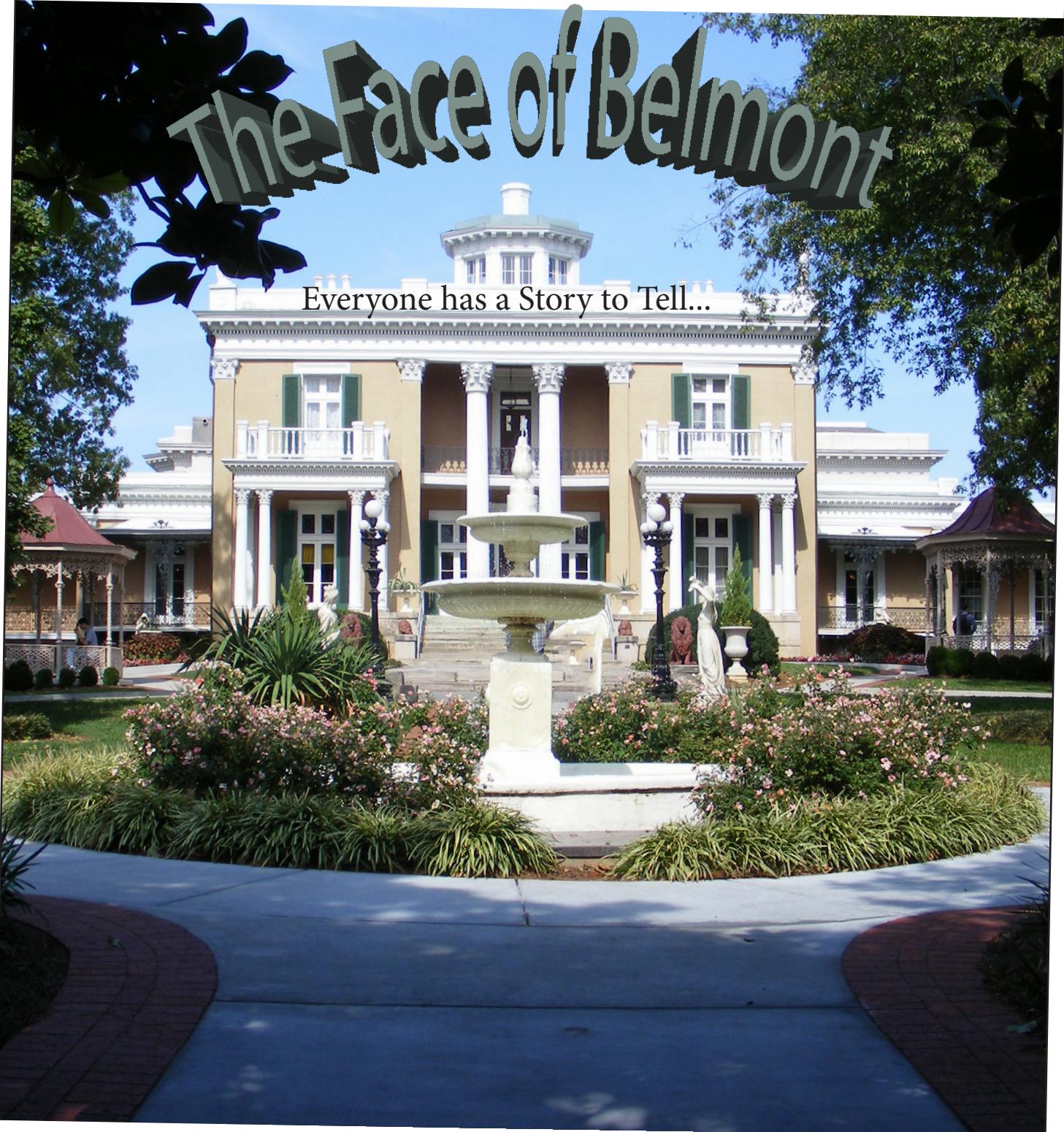


# The Face of Belmont

Everyone has a Story to Tell...



It's 6:00 am on a Saturday and Kelly Brickey is putting on a smile for possible future students here at Belmont. This isn't any ordinary day, it is Preview Day. On the other side of campus, Mikailia Minott is just dragging herself out of bed to head out to work, the Fitness Center in the Beamen. While Kelly prepares to talk to the press, The Vision student newspaper, Mikailia simply gets ready to face her coworkers. One getting the fame and spotlight while the other is just blending in, remaining in the background.

Belmont University, a liberal arts school, is filled with students from all around the world. This school is eclectic by nature, "From Here to Anywhere," is their motto. Clubs and student organization ranging from Bruin Recruiters, Belmont Ambassadors, Student Government Association, SGA, and Orientation Council, to Honor Societies, tutors, and simple major clubs, like English Club, plus many more, make up the student organizations on campus.

Organizations getting more attention than other, students being defined as the "face" of Belmont because of titles, other students being ignored.

***"Ambassadors are literally the face of***

***Belmont..."***

"The Belmont Ambassadors do more than wear red blazers; these 27 students represent Belmont University," according to the Belmont Student Newspaper, The Vision.

More often than not the Belmont Ambassadors are portrayed as the "face" of Belmont.

Belmont Ambassadors have the responsibility of representing Belmont every single day, whether it is as hosts and hostesses for events they are working; such as Christmas at Belmont, the suites at basketball games, Board of Trustees meetings, building dedications and ribbon cuttings, or just a matter of walking to class. Ambassadors also have the honor of directly working with VIPs, alumni and big wigs such as Vince Gill and Barbara Massey and therefore are held to a high privacy or confidentiality standard.

"Ambassadors are literally the face of Belmont," said Mareon Smit a Belmont Ambassador. She is a junior International Business and German double major. "If someone, who has never been to Belmont, comes on campus, we are sometimes the only real students the person gets to meet or interact with," said Smit.

Ambassadors are meant to represent a decent

portion of campus, meaning they are to be involved with different things, so visitors will have a taste of what Belmont is. Belmont Ambassador Emma Cate says they are supposed to be personable yet professional, look put together, arrive at events on time, etc.

“We are meant to also be the friendly Belmont face,” said Emma Cate, senior English Lit and German double major.

Smit is more than just a Belmont Ambassador; she is a member of Alpha Sigma Tau sorority serving as a PanHellenic Delegate and as the Director of Alumni Relations. She is also a member of Alpha Chi, the college honor society, a member of the International Business Society, a VP of the College of Business Administration Student Advisory Board, the only student member of the University Vision Committee, a member of the Belmont University Student Center for Public Trust (basically the ethics organization), a member of the Belmont Ethics Bowl Team, a member of the Collegiate DECA team, as well as holding two on-campus jobs; a student worker in



the Humanities Department and at the Alumni House. On top of all of this Smit also participates in community service whenever she gets the chance.

The exuberant crowd of students known as the Bruin Recruiters has also been labeled as the “face” of Belmont. Being a Bruin Recruiter is all about helping prospective students and their families during those early mornings and long days known as Preview Days. They also host Lunch Brunches with the prospective students and families as well as give tours throughout the week.

“We are all about giving the real-life view of what Belmont is all about,” said Kelly Brickey, a junior Journalism major. “We love to get prospective students interested in what college is like here at Belmont.”

The Bruin Recruiters represent many aspects of Belmont, not only because they reach out to prospective students but also because they are such a diverse group of individuals stemming from a mixture of majors

and organizations. They offer a widespread look of what Belmont has to offer.

“We bring a sense of realness to the campus by being completely ourselves and showing guests how much we really appreciate this school for what it is,” said Brickey. “I joined Bruin Recruiters because the people involved are just incredibly driven to making this school the best place possible and I’m so lucky to be a part of a group like that.”

Another dedicated group of students is the Orientation Council who facilitates Towering Traditions New Student Orientation Programs, which includes the Towering Team Leaders, TT Leaders. A group of ten students dedicate their time to make the transition to Belmont as smooth as possible for freshmen. They serve as the face of Belmont to families. The TT Leaders assist the new students in becoming acclimated to Belmont’s environment through welcoming enthusiasm. These leaders are sometimes the first faces new students meet and therefore are their first impression of Belmont students.

Perhaps the epitome of representing Belmont is Student Government Association, SGA. Their purpose is to positively affect Belmont by collaborating with students and administration, supporting organizations, and by following through with Belmont’s Christian standards. SGA wants

to enable students to actually have an impact on Belmont as well as the community.

Jeanette Morelan is the president of SGA and puts about 20 hours into being president every week, this includes going to congress meetings, meetings with the Dean, Dr. Fisher, other members of administration and students. A majority of her time is spent reading and responding to emails, trying to connect students with other members of the congress.

“I firmly believe it takes an entire community to make a positive impact,” said Morelan, President of SGA, junior Social Entrepreneurship, with a concentration in Environmental Studies, and Mass Communications double major. Morelan is also a member of Kappa Alpha Theta Fraternity, the President of the National Residence Hall Honorary, a Bruin Recruiter and holds two on-campus jobs; a student worker at Residence Life and the Office of University Counsel.

Morelan represents the student body at Belmont as well as representing SGA.

“The student body has entrusted me to make the common desires, of being respected, recognized and heard, be turned into actions. That is a responsibility I do not take lightly,” said Morelan.

SGA has reached out to hundreds of students

through their Town Hall and Coffee & Conversation events, the feedback they have received has been brought to member of administration on a regular basis.

“Seeing those conversations happening makes me feel like my job is worthwhile,” said Morelan.

SGA, Bruin Recruiters, Towering Traditions, Ambassadors are all the main focus when it comes to Belmont. All of these organizations combined shine and deem themselves one way or another as the “face” of Belmont.

But, who is to say that is fact.

**I** feel like there are people on this campus that work their butt off but don’t get recognized because it’s things no one thinks about,” said Mikaila Minott, a junior English and Philosophy double major with an Italian minor.

Minott is an editor for the undergraduate philosophy journal, Philogoi, an active member in her sorority, Alpha Sigma Tau, a new member of the honor society, Alpha Chi, and holds three jobs. She works in the language lab and in the FitRec center as a Referee and scorekeeper for intramurals, as well as working at the front desk and in weight room.

“I wanted to go somewhere to challenge me. I wanted to get a degree in four years that will make me become a more intellectual person, who, after four years can proudly, confidently, pursue my dreams,” said Minott.

***I feel like there are people on this campus that work their butt off but don’t get recognized because it’s things no one thinks about...”***

excelling in her academics she is trying to save up her own money for a semester abroad in Italy.

Jessica Martin, a junior English major and a Public Relations minor chose to contribute to Belmont through a different means than prospective students.

“I think Belmont can definitely over-exaggerate these top organizations. I feel like they make it seem as though these top organization are the make or break it aspect when it comes to success outside of Belmont,” said Martin. “They are definitely important for the institution and it looks nice on a resume but they feel almost theatric, which isn’t me. I felt like there were other organizations that I could actually believe in, fit in, and make a difference in.”

Martin is the Co-President of English Club,

Anime Club member, President of SPEW; society for the promotion of engagement in the world, is a new organization on Belmont's campus this year and Martin helped make that happen, and she is also the Editor-in-Chief of Belmont Literary Journal.

"I contribute a good attitude in the classroom, hard work on assignments, and perseverance in the organizations I'm apart of," said Martin.

There are also students like Heidi Jallouk, junior Accounting and Finance double major. An enthusiastic learner who is a member of Alpha Chi Honor Society and Beta Alpha Si, an accounting honor society. She is also a tutor for student athletes.

"My contribution to Belmont is its academic image. I help athletes maintain their GPA and become more well-rounded academically so they can sill represent Belmont," said Jallouk.

Courtney Bright, a full-time adult student, brings a different perspective to Belmont's campus.

"I feel my biggest contribution is the different perspective I can bring to the campus," said Bright. Even though there are increasing numbers of "non-traditional" college students across the country, many don't have the opportunity to attend classes as a

full time student.

"Being able to bring a point of view into class discussion that differ from both the professors and the students en-masse is positive for everyone," said Bright.

Bright considers herself a normal student; she doesn't really feel as if she is so "non-traditional." She instead involves herself solely in the academic workings of Belmont more so than the social and extracurricular activities.

"I'm inherently an academician more so than a social butterfly," said Bright.

Bright definitely is more akin to the "life-experience resume" than a typical college age student. Besides from being an adult student she has experienced more than a 27-year should ever have to.

Before coming to Belmont, Bright attended Baylor University, which is where she met her future

husband, for two and a half years. Life took an unexpected turn, her father, was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia, surprising her entire family because he was a completely healthy 52-year old with



*Jessica Martin*

absolutely no risk factors. This resulted in a financial catastrophe for her family, the cost of cancer treatment coupled with three children in college. So Bright withdrew from college to spend time with family and work to help pay for the medical bills. This long grueling process ended four years later, her father passed away the summer of 2013, two weeks before she started school at Belmont.

Going back to Mareon Smit, she has an incredible story. A super involved student but for better reason than just resume boosters. Her story: Up until the end of her junior year of high school she had the full intention of playing college golf with the hopes of turning pro. University of Southern California was really interested in her and she wanted to play for them as well. However for the past three year she was battling some un-diagnosed health issues, it just kept getting worse and worse, and it wasn't until her junior year that she was finally diagnosed. Her dream of playing for USC was only that, a dream. She would never be able to play sports again let alone take part in any sort of physical activity. Mareon was diagnosed with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, EDS and Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome, POTS. These are two very rare chronic diseases that affect the victim's everyday life while making simple tasks really difficult. Neither EDS nor POTS have a cure. Knowing she will be living with this constant hurdle

in her life, Mareon, changed her course of action from professional golfer to business. Her doctors advised her to take a few years off but Mareon insisted on going to college.

"I think they knew that I would have gone mad sitting still for a few years," said Mareon.

Mareon grew up in South Africa and loves interacting with people of different cultures, as well as traveling, so she decided to focus on International Business, leading her to Belmont. Being a Christian affiliated school appealed to her as well. Belmont was a last minute decision because she was going to attend Dallas Baptist University in Texas. However, because of her illness she couldn't stay on campus and the university wouldn't accommodate her medical needs. That wasn't much of a problem though because the second she stepped onto Belmont's campus during a visit she knew this was the school she wanted to attend.

"When I stepped on campus I felt this calm sense of peace inside and I knew I was meant to be here," she said.

Mareon does not let her health conditions stop her from living and experiencing college like everyone else. The December before she came to Belmont was an especially hard time for her. She was in the hospital for two weeks and nearly died. Going through something like that really changes a person.

“To be honest, I joined all of the organizations I mentioned earlier because I want to make a difference at Belmont and walk away after four years without any regret,” said Mareon. Each and every one of the organizations she is in has in some part something she is interested in or something that matters to her and they can help her grow as a person.

“I want to show the world that despite being faced with so much adversity I can still make a

difference and be a part of my college community,” said Mareon.

Now, that is the Face of Belmont.

It is amazing stories like these that get overshadowed by the important, but excessive, reports of what so and so organization is doing or which face of Belmont the organizations represent.

Necessity and excessiveness is the problem with today’s news. Everything, well almost



everything, they report on is in absolute necessity, however, it is used in excess. Instead the unremarkable are ignored and seen as shadows, never to be shined on. We see this everywhere.

As you scroll through the news, tabloids or magazines you always see what you expect, celebrity break ups, Grammy nominees, who murdered who, the next victim of Ebola leading to the zombie apocalypse, fear, drama, and negativity. Yes, some of this is necessary. But should it take up the entirety of the news?

Every student makes the choice to be involved in what they are to make a difference. It may be on the smaller scale of things but it is still a difference that should be noticed. Sometimes the smaller differences make the biggest differences in the long run and as a society we should not overshadow them with the

higher rankings of organizations. Yes, they are very important to make Belmont be Belmont but there is so much more beneath the surface that we, as students, need to recognize and see that everyone has a story.

There are students with an array of backgrounds and contributions that are more often than not ignored and not reported about. The limitations of defining one image, or group, as the defining image of Belmont is just that, limiting. Each and every student at Belmont University has a niche, a contribution and a story. The “face” of Belmont is an ambiguous term. It is a term not to be solidified into one category of people. For the “face” of Belmont is all around us and it can not be defined as one “face.”







