

Artist, journalist, musician reflects on experiences

By **Kylie Stamper**
Staff reporter



As graduation quickly approaches, the questions I have been asked more times than I can count are “What are your plans after graduation? Do you have a job yet?” The answer to that is, “I have no clue,” as do most of my fellow graduates who will walk the stage with me in 11 days. I have a summer part-time job, but who knows what will happen after that.

Yes, I have applied for multiple jobs. My editors know this story and have been with me in support every step of the way. But really, I think the question of “What’s your next step?” is asked way too much.

I think a more important question is one my friend asked me out of the blue a couple weeks ago. “What will you miss the most about Southwestern after you leave?” Mind blank. I’m preparing to leave the place that has been my home for the past four years and I’m supposed to answer what I’m going to miss the most. How?

Of course I’m going to miss the atmosphere on campus and the friendships I have built over the years, but that’s boring. While I will miss that, there are other little things that I may not realize now but will be things that I will miss terribly in the upcoming year as I try to figure my life out.

Once I figure out what it’s like to get more than a few hours of sleep each night and not have to worry about homework, these will be the things I think about. They are the things that have shaped me over the past four years on this campus and they are what helps make SC home.

Newspaper and student media: I have been on the newspaper staff for seven of my eight semesters, although I have been writing for the newspaper all eight semesters. I have been on yearbook

for two years. The friendships and the relationships built in the basement of Christy are ones that have helped me grow as a person while also helping me fine tune my skills in writing, photography, videography, design, etc. I cannot thank the members of these staffs enough, both past and current, for helping me along the way, for supporting me, and for being a part of the little community that has been created in the newsroom.

Music: I have been playing viola for 12 years. When I was in high school, I was in a similar position as I am right now. I had no clue what I wanted to do with my future. But I did know I wanted to continue playing music. Coming to Southwestern gave me that opportunity. As a freshman, I was welcomed into the South Kansas Symphony and the music department and it has had a lasting impact on me. In fact, I will play in my 25th and last symphony concert on Sunday. I am also grateful that I was accepted into the department even without having to declare a music major or minor. I was allowed to just participate. Because of that I have also had the opportunities to join percussion groups, which I definitely did not expect myself to be a percussionist. But weird things happen in college. My hope is that wherever I end up in the near future I am able to find a musical outlet so I can further act on my love of music.

Worship Outreach: I have served as the student director for Worship Outreach for two years, and I have been the photographer for the teams for three. The amount I have learned from being a part of this group is unreal. They have helped me realize that patience is key, and that no matter what happens, things will be okay. They’re like another family on campus.

The little things: I’m going to miss the little things. The little quirks that make Southwestern unique. I spent the majority of my time in the basement of Christy either in the editor’s room or the tiny box that we call the equipment room. If I wasn’t there, I was probably in the basement of Darbeth or in Messenger. It is some of those little things

that will be the things that I will miss in the future.

Things like the heating/AC unit in the Messenger tech booth that gives off a devil-ish scream when it kicks on, or the “secret” door that leads out of the basement of Christy and under the top section of the 77 steps, or the noises each door in the basement of Christy makes (to the point where you can tell which door someone is using and where they are going), or how when you spend enough time in the basement of Christy that you begin to get a sense of when Dr. Frederick’s Persuasion or Theories of Human Communication classes have something due because of all the frantic activity between the printer, Becky’s office, and the elevator. I may even miss how the Messenger chairs squeak so bad it is almost an important part of chapel (“you may have a seat” *a chorus of squeaks from 50+ year old auditorium chairs*). I will miss free movie nights and bingo nights and “The Builder Family”, but I think the most important thing I will miss is the free t-shirts—only halfway kidding.

I met hundreds of new people each year, I learned things that high school me never would’ve even thought of, I traveled across the country (Philadelphia, Atlanta, and Chicago to name a few), I made lasting friendships, and I learned things about myself that have molded me into the person I am today.

Now that I have come to the end of my column I need to thank some people and I am so glad I get to do it this way. I want to thank my family first; the support from my parents and my sister and the rest of my family has meant everything to me. I want to thank my professors and those who have taught me how to be an adult and have cared for me every step of the way...no matter how many times I wanted to drop out of their classes; Stacy Sparks, Dr. Peterson, Martin Rude, Dr. Frederick, Jason Speegle, Ben Hanne, Ms. Kathy, and so many more that I am forgetting.

I want to thank all of the friends I have made over the years for being great friends and for putting up with my sass; Ashton, who was my first roommate, Carlene, who was the first friend I

met at Builder Camp, Eva, Kate, Kaitlin, Krista, Daniel, Chris, Garrett, Greg, Jaime, Scott, Taylor, Garrett, Hanna, and so many more that if I even tried to name everyone I would need an entire newspaper. I want to thank everyone I have been able to work with over the past four years in Worship Outreach, Green Team, Chapel Planning Team, Drumline, African Drum & Dance, Newspaper, Yearbook, Symphony/orchestra, Builder Camp, etc. Thank you for everything!

One of my favorite things—my favorite views—is a sunset. More specifically a Kansas sunset. I know it sounds cliché, but graduation will be a sunset on my time at SC. It will be like a beautiful sunset over the 77.

If you’ve never seen a sunset over the 77, make sure you do that before you leave this school. You see all the flat land and the

openness that the Kansas landscape offers. The sun will set on the evening of graduation, and when the sun rises again, I will wake up as a graduated woman.

After four years, thousands of dollars in tuition, hundreds of hours of schoolwork, and a few hours of writing this piece, it’s finally happening. I will get to cross that stage in 11 days, and I will watch the sunset and move on into the next step in my life.

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This column is dedicated to Kara McLain. Kara showed me what strength and courage looks like and I am proud to have been able to watch her grow, much like I did when I was a freshman. Her love of Disney movies and squirrels will never be forgotten.



Hanna House, communication senior, Kylie Stamper, communication senior and Taylor Forrester, communication senior, pose for a photo before they toss the first ‘Builder Media’ rock into the mound. (Ethan Ediger/Courtesy photo)