

LMU's Allen earns top honors for chemistry research

By Parker Estes

Lincoln Memorial University

Bell County graduate Meredith Allen is only in her first year at Lincoln Memorial University (LMU), but she is already gaining recognition for research that connects chemistry and real-world problem-solving.

Allen, a biology major on the pre-health track, earned first place in the Chemistry division and second place overall in oral presentations at the Eastern Collegiate Division Meeting of the Tennessee Academy of Science (TAS). The conference was held at Walters State Community College's Niswonger campus in Greenville, Tennessee. Her travel was supported by LMU's Department of Biology & Chemistry.

Her research focused on microwave-assisted organic synthesis, a technique that speeds up chemical reactions and reduces waste. Allen applied the method to recreate luminol, a compound commonly used in forensic science to detect traces of blood.

In traditional lab settings, synthesizing luminol can take up to four hours, making it difficult to use in undergraduate classes with limited lab time. Allen's project aimed to make the process faster and more efficient so it could be completed during a standard two-hour organic chemistry lab.

"Microwave-assisted organic synthesis is a resourceful way to recreate molecules in a time-efficient manner," said Allen. "It allows reactions to happen faster, with less waste and often with a purer product. That efficiency is why it is being explored more in medicine and everyday applications."

Allen traced her interest in the project back to her first-semester organic chemistry course, where she learned about the research interests of her mentor, Dr. Thomas Shell, an associate professor of chemistry at the LMU College of Mathematics, Sciences and Health Professions.

"I knew Dr. Shell was interested in medicinal chemistry and using chemistry to help people

through their health," Allen said. "That really stood out to me."

After approaching Shell about joining his research, the pair spent many hours in the lab refining the synthesis process until it could be completed within a single lab period.

"Meredith is a precocious research student," said Shell. "Her research in chemical education and organic chemistry resulted in a laboratory exercise that will be utilized in the Organic Chemistry II Laboratory course at LMU."

A pre-health student with plans to become a physician, Allen is enrolled in LMU's Guaranteed Professional Admission (GPA Pathway). The program is designed to provide motivated students with a clear, structured route from undergraduate study into professional programs while maintaining high academic standards.

The GPA Pathway offers opportunities across multiple disciplines, including osteopathic medicine, law, occupational therapy, physical therapy, physician assistant studies, veterinary

medicine, and dental medicine. For students pursuing medicine, the pathway allows participants to complete all required prerequisite coursework approved by LMU's DeBusk College of Osteopathic Medicine (DCOM) while working toward a bachelor's degree. Students who meet the established academic benchmarks receive a guaranteed interview with the medical school.

Allen said studying pre-health on the same campus as a medical school has made her future goals feel more tangible.

"It is extremely beneficial," she said. "You can run into medical students just walking to the student center or the gym, and they are always willing to give advice. It helps you picture where you are headed."

Her interest in medicine began in high school after taking her first biology class and participating in Health Occupation Students of America (HOSA). Through the organization, she developed an interest in family medicine and rural health care. That interest continued to grow after she shadowed a



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Meredith Allen earned first place in the Chemistry division and second place overall in oral presentations at the Eastern Collegiate Division Meeting of the Tennessee Academy of Science (TAS)

general surgeon in a rural community last summer.

Presenting her research at the state conference was both exciting and challenging, especially as a first-year student.

"At my first conference, I realized I was the only freshman there, which made me nervous," said Allen. "But I learned that it is okay not to have every answer. Everyone is there to learn and support one another."

Now, Allen sees her

early research success as confidence-building and motivating.

"As a student in Appalachia, resourcefulness and efficiency matter," she said. "Being able to apply those values through research and see how they connect to medicine has been incredibly meaningful."

Meredith is the daughter of Waylor and Angela Allen.

SMIDGEN

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asleep, concealed in a body cell, or flows through one's veins or central nervous system.

The Bible tells us to believe by faith (Ephesians 2:8). Faith is believing in something that cannot be proven or that common sense tells us cannot be true. Faith is a steadfast belief in something's truth.

Can we understand in a world of skepticism why so many are turning to

non-belief?

A question asked was, "Why do you believe in God?" Can anyone give a logical or reasonable explanation for why we exist?

To believe that something came from nothing (on its own/spontaneous generation), or that order came from chaos, takes more faith than believing in a Creator God.

Granted, religionists cannot prove God, but the evidence is overwhelming. How much evidence does it take to make a fact? The

answer to that is with the individual.

The non-believer must also ask the question "What if I'm wrong?" Whereas there is no (court of law) proof of God, there is no such proof of evolution.

The non-believer must think we, the planet, the atmosphere, the universe came from somewhere. Since there is no such thing as spontaneous generation of matter, where and how did all things begin?

What makes sense to you? Why do you exist?

Why do we think, have emotions, or die?"

Our Creator (John 1:3) was also subjected to numbers. He was born the person Jesus 2026 years ago, lived to the age of 33, was on the cross for 6 hours, in the grave for 3 days, and lived after His resurrection for 40 days before ascending into Heaven.

Even Jesus can't escape measurements and numbers. So, how long is eternity? The most reasonable answer is "It's a time that cannot be

measured!" As a smidgen cannot be measured, neither can eternity.

Proverbs 3:5 "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding." Is our ability to think a curse or a blessing? Whichever it may be, we must not let it mislead us.

An old Cherokee proverb states: "There is a fight like two wolves going on inside you, one is evil; one is good." The question asked was, "Which one will win?" The answer: "The one you

feed!"

The Bible teaches that there is only one eternal salvation. That is by a faith-based belief (Ephesians 2:8) that Christ Jesus was crucified (Matthew 27:35) for the remission of sin (Romans 4:25), resurrected (Matthew 28:6), and ascended alive into Heaven (Acts 1:9).

Van Yandell is a retired Industrial Arts teacher, an ordained gospel evangelist, and a missionary. His email is vmy3451@gmail.com

Your COMMUNITY Your CALENDAR

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29

A Study of the Book of Genesis, Æ Living Hope Church: 6:45-8 p.m. Living Hope Church, 347 Shawanee Rd. Free.

Beth Meadows Art Exhibition: 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Paul V. Hamilton Center for the Arts, Art Gallery, calendar.lmunet.edu

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Come & Play Time: 11 a.m.-12 p.m. Grace on the Hill, graceonthehill.churchcenter.com

Crew412 Youth: 5:30-7:30 p.m. 1632 Cumberland Falls Hwy. graceonthehill.churchcenter.com

FiA: 6-7 p.m. Harrogate City Park, 150 Hwy 63. Free. www.facebook.com

THURSDAY, APRIL 30

\$2,000 GTD PRIZE POOL - \$50 Buy-In NL Holdem Tournament: 6-11 p.m. 13475 Cumberland Gap Pkwy. www.facebook.com

Administrative Council meeting: 6-7 p.m. Grace on the Hill, graceonthehill.churchcenter.com

Beth Meadows Art Exhibition: 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Paul V. Hamilton Center for the Arts, Art Gallery, calendar.lmunet.edu

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Bibles & Basketball: 7-8:30 p.m. Grace on the Hill, graceonthehill.churchcenter.com

Honey Bee Candle Holder and Cork Flower: 6-8 p.m. The Winery at Seven Springs Farm, \$36.98. www.eventbrite.com

LMU Concert Band Concert: 7 p.m. Duke Hall of Citizenship, Sam & Sue Mars Performing Arts Center, calendar.lmunet.edu

MHS Softball vs. Knox Central: 6 p.m. Knox Central, www.mboro.k12.ky.us

MHS Tennis vs North Laurel: MHS, www.mboro.k12.ky.us

MMS Baseball vs Campbell Co. , ðæ: 6 p.m. Campbell Co, www.mboro.k12.ky.us

Story Hour: 3:30-4:30 p.m. Harlan County Public Library , 107 North 3rd Street. Free. www.harlancountylibraries.org

FRIDAY, MAY 1

83rd Annual May Day Festival: 7 p.m. The Corbin Arena, 500 Arena Drive. www.facebook.com

Beth Meadows Art Exhibition: 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Paul V. Hamilton Center for the Arts, Art Gallery, calendar.lmunet.edu

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Commencement 2026: Graduate Students: 1 p.m. University of Cumberlands, www.facebook.com

Commencement 2026: Graduate Students: 4 p.m. University of Cumberlands, www.facebook.com

Food Truck Fridays: 5-8 p.m. 325 Grainger County Park Rd. www.graingercochamber.org

How to Seduce at Friday Events - Dating for Singles - Waynesville: 7-8 p.m. Middlesboro. www.eventbrite.com

International Paranormal Day True Crime & Ghost Tour: 6-8 p.m. The Harlan Center, 201 S. Main St. www.harlancountytrails.com

Lincoln Memorial University Baseball vs South Atlantic Conference - Opening Round: Imurailsplitters.com

LOW COST VACCINE CLINIC: 9 a.m.-4 p.m. 1220 Cumberland Falls Hwy. www.facebook.com

Morristown Golf Classic: 7:30 a.m. The Country Club, 1686 Doyal Dr. www.facebook.com

Ms. Betty's Toddler Storytime: 10-11:30 a.m. Whitley County Public Library, 285 S 3rd St. Williamsburg. www.whitleylibrary.org

Southeastern Kentucky Piano Festival 2026: Union College, 310 College St. www.facebook.com

SATURDAY, MAY 2

4th Annual Redhound Rumble: 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Corbin High School, 1901 Snyder St. www.facebook.com

Blaine Farmers & Artisans Market: 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m. 220 Indian Ridge Rd. www.graingercochamber.org

Commencement 2026: Undergraduate Students: 10 a.m. University of Cumberlands, www.facebook.com

Commencement 2026: Undergraduate Students: 1 p.m. University of Cumberlands, www.facebook.com

Commencement 2026: Undergraduate Students: 4 p.m. University of Cumberlands, www.facebook.com

Downtown Farmers' Market - CLAIBORNE COUNTY: 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Downtown New Tazewell, www.cumberlandgapregion.com

Lincoln Memorial University Baseball vs South Atlantic Conference - Opening Round: Imurailsplitters.com

May Pick Up Party: 12-8 p.m. The Winery at Seven Springs Farm, Free. www.eventbrite.com

Sleepy Hollow Invitational Tournament: www.harlancountytrails.com

Steven Arthur & Friends: 7-11 p.m. Kenny's: The Other Rogers, 4672 5th St Rd. www.facebook.com

SUNDAY, MAY 3

Communion Sunday: Grace on the Hill,

graceonthehill.churchcenter.com

Lincoln Memorial University Baseball vs South Atlantic Conference - Opening Round: Imurailsplitters.com

Sleepy Hollow Invitational Tournament: www.harlancountytrails.com

MONDAY, MAY 4

Food Pantry: 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Grace on the Hill, graceonthehill.churchcenter.com

Mexican Mondays Men's Fellowship: 5:30-7 p.m. Santa Fe, 1885 Cumberland Falls Hwy. graceonthehill.churchcenter.com

MHS Baseball vs. Williamsburg , ðæ: 6 p.m. Williamsburg, www.mboro.k12.ky.us

MMS Baseball vs Bell Co. , ðæ: 5:30 p.m. MHS, www.mboro.k12.ky.us

Teacher Appreciation Week: www.mboro.k12.ky.us

TUESDAY, MAY 5

Lego Night: 4 p.m. Evarts Public Library, 104 Harlan Street. events.timely.fun

Lights Out Dinner in the Dark: 6-8 p.m. The Corbin Center, 222 Corbin Center Drive. \$12.51. www.eventbrite.com

MHS Baseball vs. Barbourville , ðæ: 5:30 p.m. MHS, www.mboro.k12.ky.us

MHS Softball vs. Harlan Co. CLONE: 6 p.m. Harlan Co, www.mboro.k12.ky.us

MHS Tennis vs Knox Central: MHS, www.mboro.k12.ky.us

MMS Baseball vs Bell Co. , ðæ: 5:30 p.m. Bell Co, www.mboro.k12.ky.us

State Fishing Tournament: www.mboro.k12.ky.us

Teacher Appreciation Week: www.mboro.k12.ky.us

Do you have an event you would like published?

Please go to our website www.middlesboronews.com and click 'Calendar', there you can click on 'Add Event' for free inclusion in the online calendar.