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Greetings TAS members and *Journal* readers,

In this journal the new TAS president annually provides the membership with a biographical sketch. This year, however, I feel it more important to focus my comments on the academy and what it has to offer to you as a professional. With that in mind only the beginning of this letter will sketch my background; I will end with what you can do to enrich both the Academy and your professional life.

For the past 15 years I have been a professor of biology at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU). That role is probably very similar to the professional roles of a majority of our membership. Unlike most members, I additionally co-direct the MTSU Center for Environmental Education (CEE). The Center is a branch of the department of biology and runs entirely on the 'soft money' provided by numerous grants and contracts. CEE educational efforts range from a series of public service TV and radio advertisements on water quality, a "Tools of Science" loan program to schools, conservation ecology staff development programs for pre- and in-service educators, school assembly programs, video-conferences on wildlife and resource management, curriculum/multi-media development on exotic species, to providing a home for the statewide Tennessee Amphibian Monitoring Program. If you

are interested in an autobiographical account of my activities, awards, and efforts, simply go to the MTSU CEE website—http://www.mtsu.edu/-mtsucee/Center_Staff.htm—and access that information.

The Tennessee Academy of Science has a long history of promoting not only the accomplishment of scientific research but also the dissemination of scientific knowledge. TAS provides a forum for communication between those of us engaged in scientific work, as well as a venue to recognize excellence in both research and education at the pre-college, collegiate, and professional levels. These efforts are fostered in a number of ways.

1) *The JOURNAL of the TENNESSEE ACADEMY of SCIENCE*

The *Journal*, published either quarterly or semiannually depending on submissions, provides a way to share the work of our members with a wide audience. Published since 1912 and peer-reviewed, it provides a vital medium to disseminate the work of researchers in Tennessee. It is an important publication of the Academy and can only continue through the efforts of the membership, both by submitting manuscripts and by reviewing the manuscripts of others. You may become a more active member by contacting our new editor, Dr. Stephen Stedman, and submitting your own manuscripts or serving as a reviewer.

2) PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS FOR THE MEMBERSHIP

The Academy sponsors a number of meetings statewide. Our last Annual meeting was held at Volunteer State Community College and featured a morning symposium given by Dr. Linda Slakey, the National Science Foundation's Director of Undergraduate Education, and a plenary session presented by Mr. Kent Syler, Chief of Staff for U.S. Representative Bart Gordon. The afternoon offered 11 different technical sessions, some of which were split between rooms because there were so many submissions. Dr. J. Michael Redding consistently provides excellent coordination of each meetings and this year's local arrangements chair, Ms. Nancy Morris, developed a program that was widely attended by both members and student researchers. If you have not recently attended an annual meeting, please consider attendance this coming November. It will be held in Nashville and will be a joint meeting with the Tennessee Science Teachers Association. This meeting promises to be another excellent conference.

Additionally, under the able direction of Dr. Fred Matthews, the Academy sponsors a yearly Collegiate Division Meeting in each grand division of the State. These meetings, designed to support and to foster the next generation of researchers and educators, are increasingly well attended. The Collegiate Division Meeting is another way in which you and your students can become more involved in TAS.