Thirty six year old Darnell and Fale McNeil of Whiteville recently received their associate’s degrees from the University of Mount Olive at Wilmington. The couple, who has been married for 16 years, decided to earn their degrees together and inspire their six children. “The reason I decided to go back to college was for my kids. I was always telling them that education is the key to success,” said Darnell. “One day my son challenged me and said, ‘Well, you don’t have your degree.’ When he said that, it sparked something in me, and that’s when I began my journey towards my degree.”

To see the McNeil’s story, click here.

Brian Rooney of Wilmington believes that the key to success is to believe in yourself and know what you are capable of achieving. This very statement motivated him to pursue an education at the University of Mount Olive and achieve a degree in business management. “There were many times where I wanted to quit and not pursue my degree,” shared Rooney. “Luckily, the University of Mount Olive has helped me turn my goal into a reality. Receiving my degree is the first step in achieving my goals. This process at UMO has taught me to never give up.”

To see Brian’s story, click here.

Brandy Fillingame of New Bern knows first-hand about the struggles of returning to college. However, she recently walked across the stage at the University of Mount Olive to receive her bachelor’s degree. “It has been a pleasure being a student at UMO! With this degree, my career options are increased. It is absolutely never too late to return to school. My son will be at my graduation, and, every time I think about him watching me graduate, it brings me to tears. I want my son and stepchildren to realize that you can accomplish anything when you work hard.”

To see Brandy’s story, click here.
A college journey can signify something completely different to every student at the University of Mount Olive. For Allison Kee of Concord, it marks a complete transformation. After battling personal hardships, Kee received her bachelor’s degree on May 2. When reflecting on her journey at the University of Mount Olive, Kee attributes her success to her trials, professors, and experiences at the institution.

To see Allison’s story, click here.

Kasyn Sturgill of Pink Hill is excited to soon be graduating from the University of Mount Olive (UMO). After completing four years in the Biology Department, Sturgill is sure that his hard work and dedication in the classroom will help him persevere in life. Sturgill said, “I also selected UMO because it is a small university, and I get more one-on-one time with my professors. It is not too far from home and it offers a lot of scholarship and research opportunities. So, UMO has been the perfect fit for me.” Sturgill has applied to numerous graduate physical therapy schools, as his ultimate goal is to become a physical therapist.

To see Kasyn’s story, click here.

Chad Wise, a first generation college student at the University of Mount Olive, grew up in Charlotte, NC. After graduating, Wise attended other institutions in both North Carolina and Florida. However, he didn’t feel like he had the right fit until he transferred to the University of Mount Olive. “The people at the University of Mount Olive have always been invested in my education,” he said. “I am more than a number, I am a person. My education has meant so much to me, and I want to give other people the same advantages that UMO has given me.”

To see Chad’s story, click here.