

CARDINAL

CADENCE

THE MAGAZINE OF LAMAR UNIVERSITY

VOL. 48, NO. 2 | WINTER 2020



| FROM THE **PRESIDENT** |



Each of us has made the most of 2020. Some of us have worked from home while others served critical roles in hospitals and in law enforcement. We have all social distanced, worn masks and done everything we can to keep ourselves and those we love safe and healthy. We have persevered. This issue of *Cadence* tells just a few of the many stories of perseverance during 2020 in the face of disruption and uncertainty.

Southeast Texas has proven to be one of the most resilient communities in the country, simultaneously overcoming numerous hurricanes and working through a global pandemic. In this same vein, hosting the first Resilience and Recovery Summit here at LU made sense. This new annual conference will bring together current and pertinent issues surrounding crises and revival in the aftermath of whatever regional and national challenges we face.

While virtual learning is not a new concept to Lamar University, transitioning over to fully online classes this spring, and a combination of online and hybrid learning this fall, was a new process. Read about the innovation LU used to bring all classes online as well as how we continued to engage students in this modality. Engaging students in the online space is the challenge all K-12 teachers are facing. Three education professionals and alumnae were first responders in the educational dilemma of 2020 and are now role models in our new normal.

Despite the challenges of 2020, LU students graduated; many were able to find employment, like Marcus Rodgers, who is now working for NASA. Other graduates, like Cade Johnson, chose to go on to medical school or graduate school to further their educations.

On campus, while having a record enrollment of more than 17,000 students during the fall semester, departments and programs were more creative than ever in their efforts to serve students. LU's Disability Resource Center held its annual Transition Fair virtually; the Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music hosted its annual Texas Music Education Association All-State Choir Camp fully online; our student-athletes continued to practice while confronting changes daily in their routines; and our student reporters for LUTV and University Press received good hands-on training for handling crises and making sure they stayed afloat. In this issue, we also highlight our Student Health Center, our Facilities Management team and how our campus met the challenges of this year.

LU faculty, staff and alumni have all played various roles within their own communities and workplaces during the pandemic. Manasseh Miles went from playing football during his college career at LU to mentoring at-risk youth at Hope Farm in Fort Worth. Ann Die Hasselmo, who attended and taught at LU, now gives back to our faculty while also serving as a senior consultant for Academic Search. Rebecca Boone was named the first Dr. Ralph and Edna Wooster Endowed Professor, and Shelly Richter, who has served LU for 35 years and is now senior director of IT compliance, faced the challenges of 2020 by offering solutions and inspiration.

Enjoy this issue of *Cadence*, and I wish you the best in 2021.

With Cardinal Pride,

Kenneth R. Evans, President



LAMAR UNIVERSITY

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CARDINAL CADENCE
THE MAGAZINE OF LAMAR UNIVERSITY
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Desmond Davis, freshman criminal justice major from Houston

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Cardinals are not short of perseverance or resilience. Between hurricanes and health concern responses, we've drawn generously from our reserves during the past few years. The individuals who form our community have managed the resulting changes from recent crises admirably, with determination and creativity. This issue focuses on some of these stories.



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LU EVERYWHERE

Last August, LU's first Resilience and Recovery Summit brought together diverse researchers with local leaders in government, healthcare, industry, science and business to discuss their investigations of and experiences with disaster recovery from Hurricane Harvey through the current pandemic. A key outcome of the summit was to enhance future preparedness, but just as important were the studies and discussions of the indomitable strength and solidarity of Southeast Texan individuals and communities coming together in times of crisis and uncertainty.

Because nothing is quite so onerous as Southeast Texas roads in the rain, Liv Haselbach, professor and chair of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and a team of area engineers and specialists formed a committee to address stormwater infrastructure that could reduce flood risk, increase public safety and protect the environment in the event of the next flood disaster. The committee looked at placing permeable pavement systems with underground aggregate storage to mitigate flash flooding. To test its efficacy in the region's soils, a group of senior LU design students in 2018 implemented such a system at LU's South Park Community Garden and found it effectively drained runoff—the kind that inhibits our communities during typically heavy rainfall flooding parking lots, streets and access/frontage roads. Their research promises the possibility of safer access during rainfall events that might otherwise isolate us from the people and resources we need.

Jim Lee, director of the South Texas Economic Development Center at TAMU-Corpus Christi, looked at the impacts of Harvey (and Irma) on sales by industry and socioeconomic factors including population, employment and recovery spending. Lee showed data from Aransas County, Texas, where Harvey made landfall, and Monroe County, Florida, where Irma made landfall, and found that in terms of socioeconomic indicators, both counties showed surprisingly high resilience and recovered to pre-hurricane levels in less than two years. He talked about the strong civic organizations in Rockport, Texas, and how people came together to support each other and to rebuild. The big lesson in the data, Lee said, was that “policy relief has a significant impact on recovery.” We are truly stronger together—recovery is not possible without help from our neighbors, our organizations, our governments—and our ability to depend on those people and systems impacts our resilience.

Ruthie Robinson and Cynthia Stinson, associate professors in the JoAnne Gay Dishman School of Nursing, found that our resilience is not impervious to mental distress, especially when we become caregivers. When disaster strikes, we are called upon to care for others in ways that distract us from caring for ourselves. Their research focused on compassion fatigue in first responders and health care providers who “take on the emotional strain and burden of the victims.” Their data

showed—through interviews of caregivers, first responders and patients—that prolonged or repeated exposure to trauma, the stress of time constraints and lack of access to necessary supplies and equipment amplify compassion fatigue and can both cause and trigger PTSD, depression and anxiety. They looked at tools to measure this fatigue and discussed self-care strategies—specifically, being aware of symptoms and asking for help when we are struggling with mild-to-severe mental illness that can overwhelm our lives.

Jim Mann, associate professor of criminal justice, and Brian Williams, assistant professor of political science, conducted focus group research with area law enforcement and government officials to discuss emergency plan implementation and its challenges during Hurricane Harvey. As Mann said, these personnel must “expect the unexpected and prepare to do more with less.” This study highlighted the extraordinary burden our first responders bear and our area's deep dependence on their expertise, organization, steadfastness and compassion. Williams talked about how communication failures, physical barriers and isolation, and even fast-traveling rumors made planners' jobs challenging during Harvey. A key implication of the research, he said, and the way they were able to overcome challenges, was that “networks (of industry-government-nonprofits-communities) are vital to solving problems that have not been solved before.” Participants talked about the liability of directing and accepting volunteer help, but they also credited individual volunteers, nonprofit organizations and even private industry for stepping into relationship with governments, and those relationships helped us to recover as successfully as we did.

The conference included panels dealing with the pandemic, including a presentation by Praphul Joshi, associate professor of health and kinesiology, on public health infrastructure and disaster preparedness during the COVID-19 crisis. His data can be integrated and meaningfully applied for handling future public health disasters. Other area officials addressed the current crisis, including Sherry Ulmer, Beaumont Public Health director. The implications of their work further reveal—whether we are recovering from hurricane-force winds, tropical deluge or a public health catastrophe—how much we rely on each other at individual, organizational, governmental and global levels to survive, to recover and to move forward with new knowledge and strength.

Visit lamar.edu/resilience-recovery to view archived presentations from the 2020 Resilience and Recovery Summit and information on the 2021 summit.

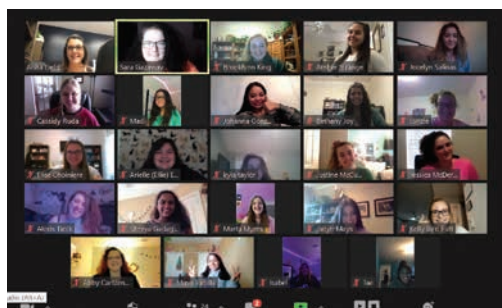
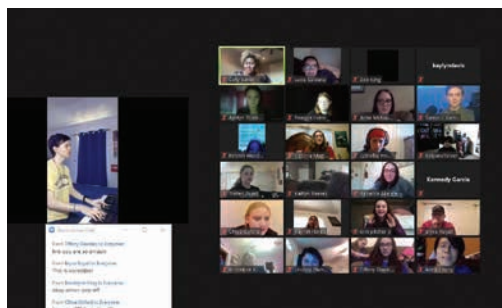
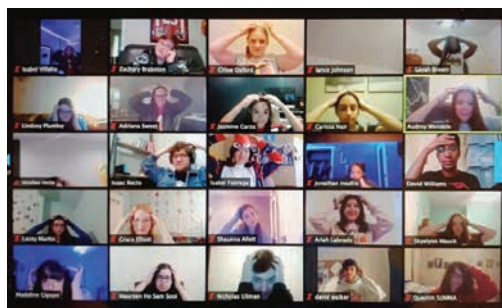


Relationship: THE KEY TO RESILIENCE

by Casey Ford

FINDING THEIR *song* THROUGH A PANDEMIC

by J.T. Robertson



“It was a tear-dropping moment for everyone to see how much we care for others and to confirm that we will not give up anything because of this pandemic life.”

—James Han

There’s an old saying; those who wish to sing always find a song. That saying proved true when the Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music’s annual Texas Music Education Association All-State Choir Camp thought they might lose their “song” due to COVID-19. As most events were being canceled, the All-State Choir Camp persevered and became one of only three schools in the entire state of Texas to host a virtual camp.

“This year in March, after the pandemic began, we started discussing the idea of a virtual choir camp option. After much solid planning, we were ready to put the plan into action around the middle of May,” said James Han, associate professor and director of choral activities with the Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music. “It was a huge endeavor as we were faced with challenges we had never experienced before, but the clinicians and staff members were all in agreement that our singing and learning must go on.”

One of the largest hurdles was how to replicate a camp that for the last 10 years has earned a reputation of excellence for high-quality music education and invigorating activities. Everyone involved in the camp wanted to carry on this tradition, even with the adversity of changing the format because of a pandemic and having to think creatively about how to bring this same caliber of quality to the students through a virtual platform. The original plan was to cap the maximum number of participants at 160 campers, but as a result of high demand, registration had to close early and ended with a final total of 185 campers who were excited and ready to embark on their virtual journey.

“We usually have around 200-250 students attend camp from the Southeast Texas and Houston areas. Because we were one of the few schools offering this virtual option, we had students attending from across Texas, including Abilene, Amarillo, El Paso, Dallas and San Antonio,” said Han. “This was a great way to introduce them to LU!”

Each year, the LU All-State Choir Camp offers full learning opportunities of the entire TMEA audition repertoire, as well as sight-reading skills development training and invigorating afternoon activities. This year was no different. The Virtual All-State Choir Camp proceeded with a combination of synchronous and asynchronous methods; asynchronous through pre-recorded masterclasses that facilitated relevant independent study and synchronous through live virtual classes that included interactive aspects. By creating recorded content, the instructors were given the unique opportunity to not only use the content to benefit the students within the structure of the camp, but to also make it available to the students after completion of the camp.

“Our most favorite moment of the camp was our welcome session where we all witnessed how much our students missed their friends and their classes. It was a tear-dropping moment for everyone to see how much we care for others and to confirm that we will not give up anything because of this pandemic life,” said Han.

The finale presentation from the camp may be viewed at lamar.edu/choircamp.



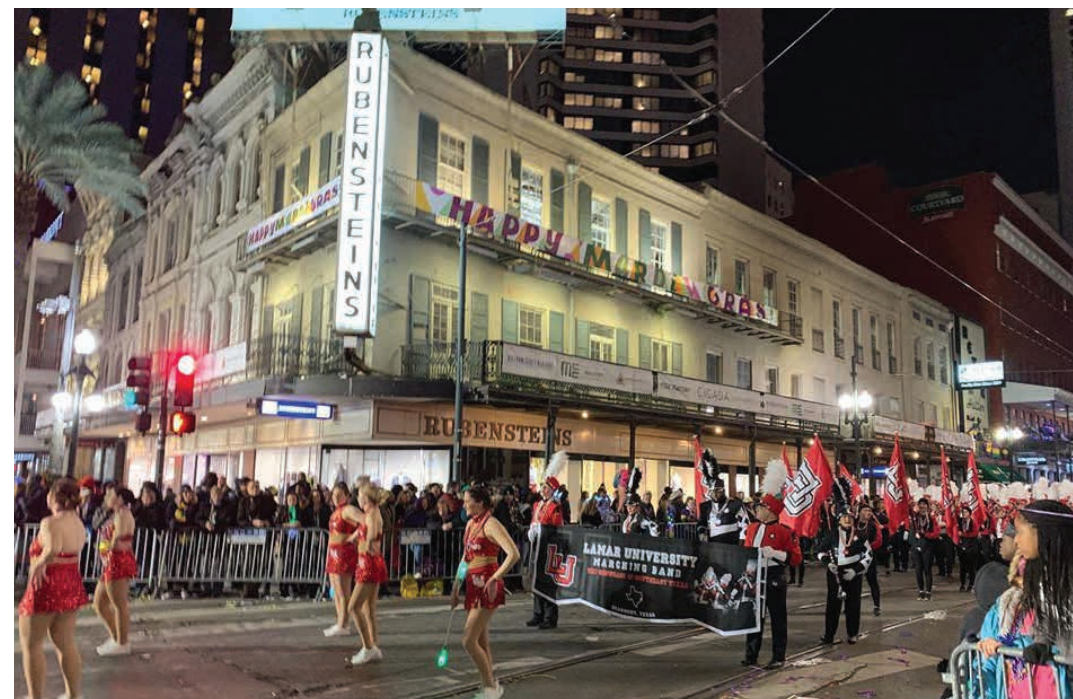
Communication and Media student makes history

Rene Horne, a Department of Communication and Media junior, was awarded The LAGRANT Foundation scholarship for ethnically diverse college and university students across the nation, the first LU student to receive this honor. In celebration of its 22nd anniversary, the foundation awarded a total of \$200,000 in scholarships to 67 students.

“I am a confident person. It’s just this was completely out of my league. As a transfer junior who just left the Navy, everything was new to me, and I didn’t feel my voice had weight compared to others. What changed the tide for me was reading the testimonials from other students on LAGRANT’s website and how much this experience affected them personally and professionally,” said Horne about her national recognition.

Horne, who decided to write her scholarship essay not just for herself but for other students who felt or feel similar to how she did in that moment, wrote on scraps of paper while in transition between classes or via Notes on her phone.

The LAGRANT Foundation is a nonprofit organization based in Los Angeles established in 1998 by Kim L. Hunter to address the lack of diversity in the advertising, marketing and public relations fields. It provides scholarships, career development workshops, professional development, mentors and internships to African American/Black, American Indian/Native American, Asian American/Pacific Islander and Hispanic/Latino undergraduate and graduate students.



LAMARdi Gras: The Showcase of Southeast Texas performs in New Orleans

The Showcase of Southeast Texas had the distinctive honor of marching with the Krewe d’Etat in a Mardi Gras parade in New Orleans in February 2020, the first time in Showcase history.

Under the direction of Eric Shannon, the LU marching band performs for thousands of fans and alumni each year at home football games and select away games as well as major exhibitions.

“This trip is a reward to our students for their efforts as marching band members,” said Shannon, director of athletic bands, associate director of bands and assistant professor of music with the Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music. “It gave them a once-in-a-lifetime experience of carnival season in New Orleans and also helps market and recruit for LU in the state of Louisiana.”

The band performed numerous musical numbers including the debut of “Mardi Gras,” a selection they performed at LU’s final football game against McNeese. The Showcase performed three original drum cadences by LU’s percussion professor, Francisco Perez, as well as “Cold Hearted,” by Paula Abdul, “I Like It,” by Cardi B. and “Do Watcha Wanna,” a New Orleans-style favorite by the Rebirth Brass Band. The Showcase of Southeast Texas hopes to perform at Mardi Gras again.



LU and school for the Deaf collaborate

The Department of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education now offers its Master of Science degree at the Texas School for the Deaf in Austin. The collaborative program offers two tracks—teacher certification and a thesis option.

► Prokop performs COVID-19-inspired dance Travis Prokop, assistant professor of dance, was selected to showcase a work as part of “Bedroom Monologues,” a live virtual performance series created in response to COVID-19. The live, one-time performance was viewed via Instagram.

► Work presented at NASA Audiology student Grecia Garcia and Assistant Professor Lilian Felipe presented at the NASA Human Research Program Investigators Workshop with poster sessions on “Space Radiation & Cochlear Function” and “Social Aspects of Hearing Loss in Space.”

► Hyatt recognized The National Art Education Association named Joana Hyatt, assistant professor of art education, recipient of the 2020 Western Region Higher Education Art Educator Award, which recognizes the exemplary service and achievements of an outstanding member.



In Lamar University's effort to ensure no disaster prevents students from attaining their degrees, a key factor lies in adaptability. In uncertain times, decisions made by faculty and staff today may be the difference between success and failure in the future. At the apex of the coronavirus pandemic, the pressures of this reality are significant, yet familiar, to the staff at the Student Health Center, with Director Shawn Gray at the helm.

"Our mission has always been to promote the health and wellness of the campus population by offering quality medical and psychological services," said Gray, who holds a Master of Science in nursing. "We know students are excited about returning to campus, seeing their friends and engaging in college life."

Prior to closure of campus in the Spring 2020 semester, the questions that require important decisions began to circulate; questions on how to keep the students safe for the impending semester.

"What was my role as a healthcare provider in educating, treating and protecting the community against this virus we knew very little about?" Gray said of her internal dialogue probing the situation for answers. "What was my department's role in doing the same for the campus community?"

Her primary concerns for the Student Health Center included the ability to meet the needs of the students and the campus community while adhering to government mandates designed to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Once the center focused on reducing the spread of the disease—which goes back to basic hygiene practices—the staff implemented the necessary changes.

"Treatment protocols would come as the medical community evaluated the data, but my job was to continue as before," said Gray. "Assess, diagnose, treat and educate."

Medical staff immediately began assessing physical and procedural changes. The check-in process was modified to meet CDC recommendations and the waiting room arrangement and appointment scheduling were modified to keep students

ADAPTABILITY: THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUCCESS AND FAILURE

by Daniel Houston

safe through social distancing and separation of sick patients from well patient visits. Testing supplies, special equipment and PPE (personal protective equipment) were purchased through support from university administration in order to function safely and effectively, along with the addition and implementation of telemedicine practices.

"The awesome staff at the Student Health Center not only want to create a safe environment where students have easy access to medical and counseling services on campus, but also work on providing health education to students," said Stefany Rico, sophomore and student worker at the center. "I work as a peer health educator, where we help give presentations on topics such as stress, mindfulness, sexual health and relationships."

Rico's main concern in returning to campus was whether or not students would adhere to the CDC guidelines in place to protect themselves and others from COVID-19, such as social distancing and mask usage, to prevent a spike in cases and cause a campus closure.

"If I were to get sick and go home, I would expose my loved ones with weakened immune systems to the virus," said Rico. "While I have seen great news regarding ways to reduce symptoms and help strengthen the immune system, personally, I have also seen friends and family members who have been hospitalized or even lost a loved one due to the virus."

This year, Rico and the center started Wellness Wednesdays, where they hold virtual presentations on different topics every other Wednesday.

"COVID-19 is still a major issue here in the United States," said Rico. "I personally think it's important to still social distance and wear a mask—properly, over your nose—to keep our students safe and healthy. Even though at times it may not seem like much, a little goes a long way to protect those around us." In regard to student health in the near future, Gray maintains an optimistic outlook. "Many students and employees have reached out to us for guidance and treatment," she said.

"We are excited about how engaged students and employees have been with actively monitoring their health habits and routines and following the university's health and safety protocols."

"Our mission has always been to promote the health and wellness of the campus population by offering quality medical and psychological services."

—Shawn Gray

| STAFF PROFILE: **SHELLIE RICHTER** |

KEEPING US *connected*

*leaning on a strong
network and serving others*

by Hannah Snodgrass



When Lamar University hired Shellie Richter 35 years ago, students walked building to building, registering for classes on paper. Internet wasn't vital to the university's operations and her current position didn't exist.

A 1985 alum with a B.S. in computer science, Richter has witnessed numerous changes in technology. She was on the information technology team when internet became an integral part of operations. "It was slow, and we only had so many dial-up lines, but any new technology has hiccups." Today, as senior director of IT compliance, she ensures software and technology that departments use are accessible, secure and compatible with LU systems. "I spend a lot of my time reviewing and approving requisitions before people buy new technology and software."

With natural disasters, recessions, leadership changes and now a pandemic, each challenge has helped the Division of Information Management and Decision Support (formerly Division of Information Technology) improve processes. COVID-19 has affected every facet of life, especially education. In March, institutions transitioned coursework to online platforms. Fortunately, Lamar University was

prepared; LU began offering online courses in 2005 and is a model for higher education online learning. Richter states, "We've handled hurricanes, why not COVID-19? I'm proud of how we've built resilient systems and adapted to change. Those resilient systems are due to experiences we've been through together." Richter is a Cardinal through and through—Doug ('06), her husband of 38 years, and their children (Elissa '10 and Eric '12) also are alumni.

Emphasizing that despite structural changes and effects of COVID-19, Richter says everyone on the IT team wants to work together. "I would like IT to be in business areas as or before people make purchases. We want to know how we can help. I would like people to view IT as a 'place' they can go for advice and consulting, especially in this time with fewer staff, rather than making decisions from an individual perspective."

Richter is no stranger to challenges. Growing up on a farm in Woodville, her grandfather raised her and her twin sister, and they didn't have much money. When LU offered summer courses for students affected by Social Security Legislation in 1981, she grabbed the opportunity to pursue a degree and made the drive to Port Arthur every day for class. Later in life came another

challenge. Richter is a breast cancer survivor, diagnosed in October 2012 with stage three after a self-examination—she urges everyone to frequently perform self-examinations. "It doesn't matter if you're a man or woman or what age you are." At that same time, she had a kidney tumor and underwent chemotherapy, surgery and radiation. Happy that she still has her hair, she exclaims, "Any hair day is a good day!" Richter attributes that positivity to her faith, leaning on scripture from the book of James, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance."

In these unprecedented times, we have to find joy. What brings Richter joy? "I love growing flowers and tending to plants—and people." At Beaumont's Friendship Baptist Church, Richter leads the children's group AWANAs and teaches children's church. She fundraises for the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation—recently donating \$4,040. As pandemic concerns continue, she misses hospitality and being around others. "I love cooking for people and having a full house, eating and playing games together." She emphasizes, "I can't wait to hug again!" Until then, she's keeping us connected while apart.

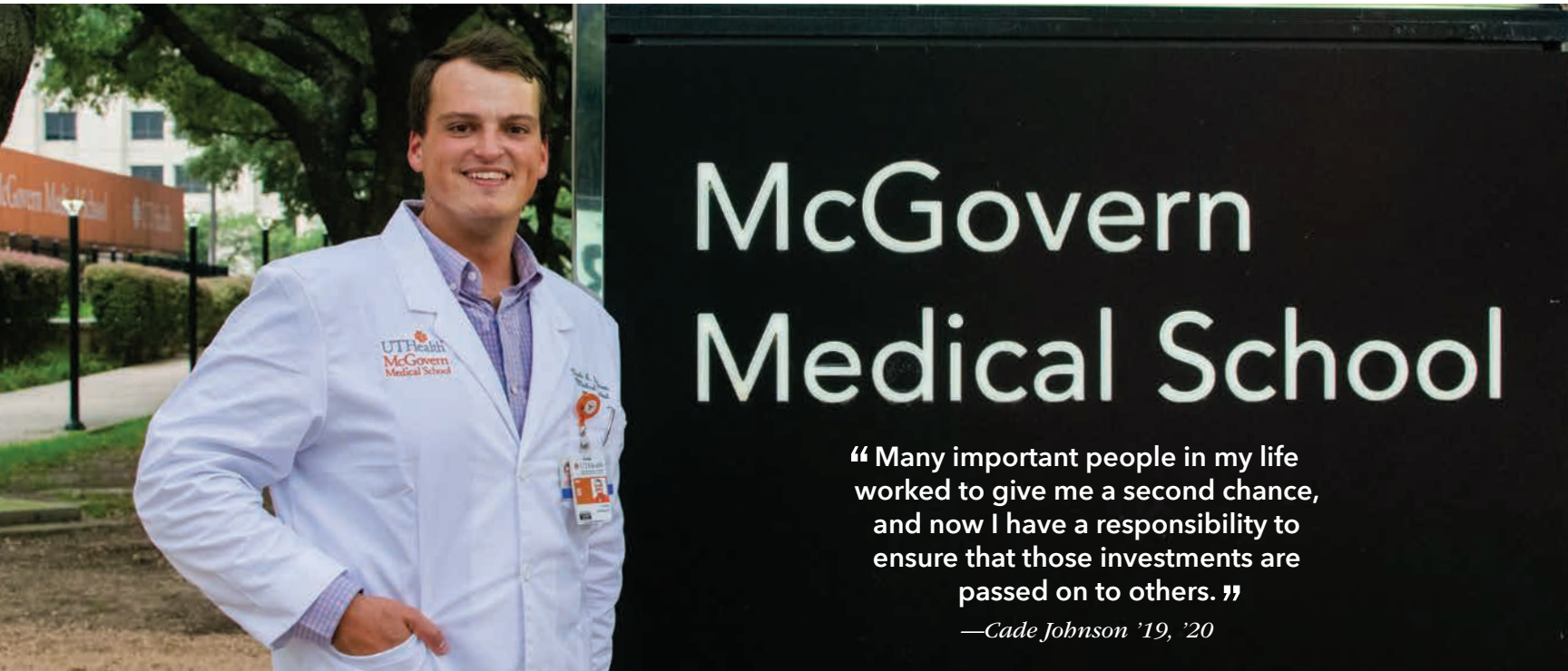
A FORCE *for* POSITIVE CHANGE

by Brooke Barnett

When Cade Johnson '19, '20 was 11 years old, he won his battle with acute lymphoblastic leukemia, a rare childhood cancer that affects white blood cells. It was that life-changing experience that inspired him to pursue a career in medicine. "For me, the opportunity to attend medical school is about paying it forward," he explains. "I wanted to become a force for positive change in the lives of others." His motivation to become a doctor centers around being able to give families more time together, whether it's an additional year or an entire lifetime.

"I have a desire to help others because so many people invested their time, effort and love into helping me and saving

Lamar University Ambassadors and President's Circle dinners. "The community and people at Lamar University sacrificed more time and energy for my gain than I could have possibly ever deserved," he says. "The willingness of LU's faculty to provide experiences in which students can be challenged and grow academically is unlike anything I have ever seen." During his time at LU, Cade earned a Bachelor of Science in exercise science and fitness management and a Bachelor of Science in biology in 2019, as well as his M.B.A. in leadership in 2020. "My professors consistently pushed my intellectual and academic curiosity forward, which forced me to mature and grow," he adds.



my life," he reflects. "Many important people in my life worked to give me a second chance, and now I have a responsibility to ensure that those investments are passed on to others."

Originally from Lumberton, Cade chose to pursue his education at Lamar University due to outstanding scholarship opportunities and the appeal of smaller class sizes. "It was important to me that I get the opportunity to know my professors, and that was something that LU certainly provided me the chance to do," he explains. "My advice to anyone considering higher education would be to just go for their dreams. It may not always be easy, but it is certainly worth it."

Reflecting on his experiences at LU, Cade fondly remembers the friendships that he made through Alpha Tau Omega, the

Cade is currently a first-year medical student at McGovern Medical School in Houston and is working toward a Master of Public Health degree, with a focus on healthcare management and policy. "Lamar University provided me with the academic, professional, leadership and social experiences that I needed to develop into someone worthy of taking that step from a four-year university to medical school," he explains.

Cade plans to become a pediatric hematology oncologist, with the ultimate goal of practicing medicine at Texas Children's Hospital. "I know my education will ultimately allow me to give children a second chance at life," Cade concludes. "That makes it all worthwhile to me."

| COLLEGE SNAPSHOT: BUSINESS |



Scholarship established in memory of esteemed staff member
The Lamar University community honors the life of College of Business staff member, **LaKisha R. Thomas**, who died Apr. 15, 2020. In her memory, colleagues, family, friends and other donors worked to endow the LaKisha R. Thomas Memorial Scholarship. The scholarship will support incoming freshman students majoring in general business with any concentration under general business.

Thomas worked at LU for 16 years, having served as administrative associate, and more recently coordinator, for the general business program. At the time of her passing, she was working towards her B.B.A. in general studies at LU, and throughout her time at the university, she championed academic success, shepherding many students through the hurdles of obtaining their B.B.A. She also was a guiding beacon for LU's chapter of the Beta Gamma Sigma National Honor Society, serving as a mentor for all members. The LaKisha R. Thomas Memorial Scholarship will award its first recipients in fall of 2020, and it is hoped that through this scholarship students will have that great sense of passion Thomas had for helping students.



First Annual Dean's Award for Excellence in Engagement, Innovation and Impact
On May 15, 2020, **Dan French**, dean of the College of Business, announced the first recipients of the annual Dean's Award for Excellence in Engagement, Innovation and Impact. This year's recognition award carried with it a stipend of \$1,000. Award recipients include:

Kakoli Bandyopadhyay, department chair and professor of information systems and analysis, brought MIS students, both past and present, under one umbrella. Bandyopadhyay received recognition for a series of collaborative learning techniques, including the formation of an MS-MIS alumni network through LinkedIn, using YouTube as a teaching tool and producing more than 200 videos for remote learning.

Clare Burns, instructor of accounting and business law and director of the MSA program, facilitated two accounting events, "Sound Bites for Success" and "Employer Informational," to encourage engagement among accounting students. For each event, partners from international, mid-market and local accounting firms provided students with professional development tips for their future careers.

Komal Karani, associate professor of management and marketing, provided students with engagement in the Southeast Texas community through real-world experience. Karani worked with her students on research projects with several local small businesses including family-owned, eco-friendly bath and body company, Beau-tanicals. With innovation in mind, she changed the structure of her MGMT-5340 course to include more roundtable discussions among students. Karani continues to help enrich the LU community by serving as faculty advisor to three student organizations: American Marketing Association, Sigma Sigma Rho and Friends of India.

In the spirit of shared learning, **John McCollough**, associate professor of economics and finance, engaged students through a series of group projects and live online lectures. McCollough creates a stress-free learning environment for his students during exams. "If a student has an average test score, I will select five random exam questions, and we have a mini test after that student has had a chance to review the material," McCollough said. "This reinforces what they've learned from the exam while greatly impacting their learning environment."

Heather Boler-Doornbos, instructor of management and marketing, uses the innovative response platform TopHat. "TopHat utilizes a student's personal mobile device to participate and improve engagement, critical thinking and comprehension," she said. "TopHat empowers every student to have a voice." Boler said she motivated her students to participate by meeting with each one to establish personal objectives, build strong relationships and encourage the full potential of each student.

- **Michael G. Weinert Entrepreneurial Lecture Series presents innovation chief Justin McCullough '02** currently serves as chief innovation and product officer at Facility Solutions Group, one of the nation's largest single-source providers of lighting and electrical products, electrical services, electrical construction and energy management solutions.
- **New construction management scholarship established** The **Hargrove Foundation Inc.** has established an annually funded scholarship for students enrolled in the **Reese Construction Management Program**. The leadership team of Hargrove Engineers and Constructors in Nederland presented a check in the amount of \$10,000 for the Hargrove Foundation Scholarship fall award.
- **College hosts first dean's forum** On Jan. 29, 2020, the College of Business Student Advisory Council hosted its first "Donuts with the Dean" open forum. Students, faculty, staff and college administrators were invited to network with the dean, learn more about college initiatives, offer feedback and grab a sweet treat.

Making the transition:

How the Disability Resource Center promotes success for all students

by Brooke Barnett

Nurturing a strong community is a core value of Lamar University, and perhaps nowhere it is more visible than in the university's diverse student body. Providing innovative, authentic learning experiences for all students is the goal of LU's Disability Resource Center, which brings educational awareness to disability issues on campus in order to create positive experiences for everyone who wants to attend LU.

The center provides important accommodations for students with all types of disabilities, including physical, mobility, learning, neurological, blind or low vision, deaf or hearing loss, psychological, severe illness and more. Working directly with students, center staff offer specially designed accommodations, academic adjustments and assistive technology to ensure that all students have access to an authentic and meaningful education.

One highlight of the center's efforts is the annual Transition Fair, which allows junior and senior high school students with disabilities an opportunity to discover community resources and explore post-secondary educational options.

The event began with 60 attendees six years ago and has grown to include nearly 300 students from 15 different school districts. Students who attend the Transition Fair have the opportunity to tour campus, explore available resources and meet with staff. The event's popular Resource Fair allows students to create a support network of campus and community resources, with the goal of easing the transition from high school to college.

Freshman Casey Lieby attended the Transition Fair twice, in 2018 and 2020, as he was making college plans and preparing to graduate from Spurger High School. "My high school counselor brought me and several other students, and I found the fair to be very interesting and helpful," he reflects. "I decided to attend the event because I wanted to learn about what was offered at Lamar University, especially since I had always planned to attend there and had several family members who attended. When my counselor asked me if I wanted to go to the Transition Fair again, I jumped at the chance."

Lieby's experience at the Transition Fair helped him to understand the



"...the willingness of professors to help their students have proven invaluable to me and many of my classmates."

—Casey Lieby

accommodations offered by the Disability Resource Center, including extended time on exams, note-taking services, audio recorders and other assistive technology. "The willingness of the LU community to assist each other, the option to attend class in person or remotely, and the willingness of professors to help their students have proven invaluable to me and many of my classmates," Lieby said.

For high school students with disabilities considering

LU for their college education, Casey offers one piece of advice: attend the Transition Fair and learn how much Lamar University has to offer. "Even if your disability does not heavily affect you academically, it can still be useful to know and understand the options the DRC can provide," he concludes. "Even if you are self-conscious of your disability, you should still learn about all the support that LU can give to help you succeed."

| COLLEGE SNAPSHOT: ARTS & SCIENCES |



Research drones lift GIS certificate program

Jim Jordan, professor and chair of the Department of Earth and Space Sciences, received his FFA drone pilot's license and can now train students to be drone pilots. The department has three drones, all must have an FAA drone-certified pilot present when flying. The drones are operated for geospatial research and are equipped with cameras and sensors.

"The drones are capable of extensive research in environmental geology, mineral discoveries, plant health and a variety of other uses," said Jordan. "The capabilities of the drones range from mapping and methane gas detection to roof leakage, thermal anomaly and economic mineral deposits detection."

The Department of Earth and Space Sciences also has introduced a new certificate in GIS, or Geographic Information Systems, with an emphasis on geospatial technology. GIS technology includes an integrated framework that allows for gathering, managing and analyzing spatial geographic data that is used in a variety of fields. Students can enroll in the certification program as an undergraduate or graduate student. The beauty of GIS is it's wide-ranging application. Therefore, students who have certificates in GIS can secure future careers as geoscientists, geospatial analysts, environmental consultants, GIS analysts, data managers, GIS technicians and project managers.



Social work is a helping profession

The global pandemic during the last year has highlighted many issues facing individuals, families and groups as well as the importance of human relationships. Skilled in the dynamics of these connections, social workers help people in stressful times, and despite COVID-19 challenges, services that ensure physical and mental wellbeing are needed now more than ever.

Cassidy Ricker, current social work major and president of the Social Work Student Association, has made it a point to stay connected with her fellow SWSA members and the local community. Ricker attended Houston Community College in 2016 and gave birth to her micro-premature son while finishing her degree. During her son's extended five-month stay in the NICU, she met her social worker, Marci, who gave Ricker hope for her future. It was then that Cassidy decided social work was the career path she felt

called to pursue. As SWSA president, she stayed connected to her organizations members virtually through the spring and summer semester. She also encouraged them to communicate about any resources or assistance needed during the pandemic, exhibiting social work's helping-profession spirit.

Ricker shared that her positive perspective of social work has increased dramatically during the last year. "Social work is considering the entire system's ecological perspective and helping a client learn ways to help themselves. The reward comes from seeing people learn to live life at its fullest potential." Ricker plans to graduate next May.

Ja'neria Ross found being a social work major during the peak of a global pandemic extremely difficult but rewarding. "Trying to learn and practice the importance of human relationships through Zoom isn't the most exciting way to learn, but in social work, we learn to roll with the punches," Ross said. She shared that while working through the pandemic, she saw "education and teaching methods altered, adoptions of new forms of technology, and learned more about helping people self-care than ever before."



Dishman School of Nursing graduate defeats the odds

Recent **JoAnne Gay Dishman School of Nursing** graduate, **Hannah Gerald '20**, never let the fact that she was born with one arm limit her. Hannah was born with a healthy right arm and a left arm that ends before the elbow. As a young child, Gerald would go to The Shriner's Hospital and prosthetic limb facilities quite often, and her positive experiences with those nurses helped inspire her pursuit of a career in nursing.

Gerald took advantage of the resources LU offers and successfully completed all of her nursing requirements and then some. Once she was accepted into the nursing program, Gerald contacted LU's Disability Resource Center. The staff helped her coordinate accommodations that

enabled her to work closely with nursing faculty to ensure that she could successfully practice and master the skills she needed to become a nurse. Her main concern, as a student, was being able to find a way to adapt and be safe while performing meticulous nursing skills. "She spent countless hours practicing in the lab to attain the dexterity required for some vital procedures that nurses perform routinely," said **Gina Hale**, assistant professor and director of Undergraduate Nursing Studies and Student Retention.

"Hannah graduating is a significant achievement for Lamar University because it shows the university's commitment to opportunities for everyone, despite a disability or a challenge. LU is a place where you can achieve your career goals and dreams, even if you face adversity," said **Kyle Mutz**, director of the Disability Resource Center. After graduation, Gerald hopes to work in an ICU. "I surprised myself throughout my time at LU," she said. "I would always say, 'Can I do this; am I going to make it?' It's been a long ride, but I'm excited for what's next."

➤ **Associate deans announced**
Tim Roden, associate professor of computer science, and **Xiangyang Lei**, associate professor of chemistry, assumed duties as associate deans of the College of Arts and Sciences in June 2020. Roden oversees programs within the college while Lei manages recruitment and retention.

➤ **Seniors honored**
The Seniors of Significance Award recognizes students who have excelled in scholarship, leadership and service. These students have made a positive impact at LU: **Afsana Islam, Govin Kaggal, Haya Alani, Jordan Curl, Katelyn Meaux, Madison Boudreaux, Mary Kim, Muskaan Ali, Omar Hamza and Raegan Minaldi.**

➤ **Nursing faculty are innovative**
The Texas Organization of Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Education honored Assistant Professors **Stacey Knight and Cynthia Pipkins** of the **JoAnne Gay Dishman School of Nursing** with its Teaching Innovation Award. The award recognized their study abroad trip where students led health screenings in the Dominican Republic.



THE STATE OF PLAY

by Shelly Vitanza



amazing job in this time of need and treated us as people and not just athletes.”

Fortunately, LU soccer played an exhibition game and one conference game against Texas State University and won. A spring season has been planned. “We’ll get more time with each other,” Hebert said. “It’s been a growing experience to have things thrown at you that you were not expecting. I really think it helped us face the unexpected.”

Spring competition is at the forefront of Garza’s mind, too. “I’m excited to have a spring season and be able to compete for a conference title,” said Garza.

Despite the challenges hurricanes and COVID-19 have caused, LU athletes are thriving and looking forward to the spring. Athletic Director Marco Born attributes the success to a collective effort and team approach to problem solving. “We are very proud of our entire athletic department and how our student-athletes, coaches and staff have handled the uncertain times during COVID-19,” said Born. “We have persevered through the ever-changing landscape of college athletics and the NCAA with the disappointment of the postponement of our fall seasons, but we are excited about the beginning of basketball season in November and playing our fall sports in the spring.”

The most unpredictable and perhaps disappointing fall in college sports could be followed by the most anticipated and the busiest spring of competitive play. “We can’t wait to see our Cardinal alumni and fans at our sporting events this spring,” Born said.

"Go Cards!"

Later, it became a weekly task. “We had to get tested every week, which stinks, but we’re used to it now. It’s not the best thing to get a stick up your nose, but it could be worse,” said Hebert, who served on the return committee.

Overnight, LU’s Dauphin Athletic Complex adjacent to Provost Umphrey Stadium, which houses locker rooms, workout facilities, training equipment and is essentially the athletic hub of campus, was converted into a sectioned-off maze with drapery hung to create separate spaces, entrances and exits to accommodate screening and social distancing. Hand sanitizer stations were set up at every door and in hallways. Throughout the semester, athletes were tested weekly but also screened daily prior to entering the building.

“Personally, I felt safe, especially in the weight room because we were all split up,” said Garza, a management and business major from LaGrange. “All in all, I thought the complex was safer than going to the grocery store.”

Hebert, like Garza and their cohorts, learned to expect the unexpected and became accustomed to wearing a mask while inside and even outside if not distanced six feet from one another. The athletes also were trained to properly sanitize each workout station in the training room after use.

“My coaches checked on us, too,” said Hebert. “They stayed in touch with me and asked, ‘How’s my team? Are you mentally okay?’ They really do care. It is a tough time with a lot of added stress—learning online when we’d rather go to class and hurricanes that interrupted everything, but the coaches have done an

August. It’s the month that college football players anticipate. In fact all college athletes who play fall sports—volleyball, soccer, cross country and football—begin reporting back to school for summer workouts that quickly roll into team training. But that was not the case in August 2020.

Fall 2020 will go down in history as the most erratic season in college sports. Due to COVID-19, players didn’t know from one week to the next if they would be training or even have a season.

“There was a lot of uncertainty that was disappointing, especially for seniors like me,” said Ali Hebert, a soccer player from Lumberton. “We’re going into our last semesters trying to figure out our next step of life. So, there’s a lot of change, and then it got even more tough with COVID.”

Practically daily, as more and more was discovered about the virus, new requirements were established for athletes. “It was crazy,” said John Garza, senior football player and president of the Student Athletic Advisory Committee, a group comprised of two athletes from every sport that meets regularly to discuss LU athletics and the issues facing athletes. “Everyone had a lot going on—personal things and adapting to online school—but we have slowly rebuilt.”

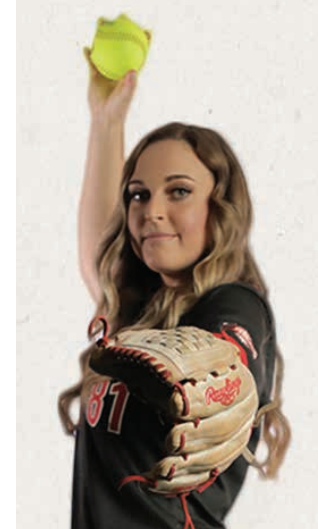
Varying staff members of Cardinal Athletics were assigned tasks to keep up with the ever-changing environment, and a committee of coaches, staff and students was created to determine guidelines for students’ return to the program. “There were so many starts and stops, and then the NCAA came through with requirements for all athletes to be tested contingent on the tier level of play,” said James Dixon. “We had to set up COVID screening for our athletes every day.”

| ATHLETICS NEWS |

Lewis earns CoSIDA Academic All-America honors

College Sports Information Directors of America honored senior Jade Lewis ’20 for her academic and athletic accomplishments with a placement on the CoSIDA Academic All-America Second Team.

Despite the cancellation of spring competitions because of the coronavirus pandemic, CoSIDA moved forward with their sponsorship of the Academic All-America awards program. Due to the shortened season, career statistics were used for the selections. To be nominated, a student-athlete must be a starter or important reserve with at least a 3.30 cumulative grade point average (on a 4.0 scale) at his/her current institution. Honorees selected first-team Academic All-District advanced to the CoSIDA Academic All-America ballot. Lewis was named to the CoSIDA All-District 7 First Team May 14, joining Sarah Ragsdale (2016) as the only Cards to receive All-District honors in their careers.



Lewis made program history, becoming the first Cardinal to receive CoSIDA Academic All-America honors.

Lewis racked up more than 90 community service hours with the Cardinals this season, while maintaining a 4.0 grade-point average. She graduated from LU in May with a bachelor’s degree in exercise science.

“Jade continues to leave her mark on the university and the softball program,” said head coach Amy Hooks. “It amazes me what she has done in just a short amount of time. Lamar softball is very proud of everything she has

accomplished and will continue to accomplish.”

Lewis ranks second in program history in batting average (.337), third in slugging percentage (.493) and fourth in on-base percentage (.424). During the shortened 2020 season, she was the Cardinals’ most productive player, leading the team with a .422 batting average with five runs and 10 runs batted in. She also led the team with a .644 slugging percentage and eight doubles.

Baseball Reaches 100 Pro Cards in 2020 Draft



With the recent unrestricted free agent signings of Austin Faith and JC Correa, Lamar University baseball had its 99th and 100th student-athletes extend their careers and join the ranks of professional baseball players.

Faith, who signed with LU in the 2019 class and pitched for Big Red in the 2020 season shortened by COVID-19, finished his Cardinal career with four appearances, all starts. He went 0-1 through 14.1 innings of work, striking out 10 while walking nine and allowing 15 hits and 14 earned runs. He pitched a career-best 5.0 innings against Rhode Island on Feb. 16 and struck out a career-best four batters against Stephen F. Austin on March 8. In his junior

college career, Faith had a 15-4 career record through 29 appearances, including 28 starts, and holds a career ERA of 3.84 through 138.1 innings of work. He struck out 143 batters while allowing just 86 walks, a 1.66 strikeouts-to-walks ratio, and led his team to a third-place finish in the NJCAA World Series in 2019 with a 41-18 record. Faith signed with the New York Mets.

Correa came to LU in the 2018 signing class after being drafted by the Houston Astros in the 33rd round of the 2018 MLB Draft. In 2019, he was Second Team All-Southland Conference Shortstop after starting 53 games at either shortstop or designated hitter. He led the team in batting average (.332), hits (74), doubles (14), home runs (10) and RBIs (44) his junior season while slugging at a .529 clip with a .381 OBP. Correa drew 17 walks while striking out just 26 times in 223 at-bats (an average of 9.31 plate appearances per strikeout) and was 11th in the SLC in batting average against conference opponents, hitting .359. He ended the 2019 campaign with one of the hottest bats in the NCAA, hitting .410

LU Student-Athletes Excel in the Classroom

Less than a week after 36 student-athletes tossed their caps, and only three days after receiving a strong report from the NCAA based on the Academic Progress Rate May 22, Lamar University celebrated a record-setting performance in the classroom. LU athletics set a school record with 50 student-athletes recording a 4.0 grade-point average during the 2020 spring semester, breaking the previous mark of 42.

In addition to the 4.0 GPAs, the student athletes also recorded 120 GPAs of at least a 3.5, and nearly 200 student-athletes recorded at least a 3.0 or higher.

“For many, the 2020 spring semester will be remembered for the adversity that all students faced due to the COVID-19 outbreak, but our student-athletes didn’t allow that to affect their work ethic,” said Director of Athletics Marco Born. “I’m very proud of the hard work by our student-athletes during some very unique situations. I’m also very proud of our coaches and support staff in their attention to detail when it came to our student-athletes.”

The women’s tennis team—one of the many spring sports that had 2020 seasons cut short because of the precautions surrounding COVID-19, recorded a team GPA of 3.81, which was a program best. The netters were just one of two spring sports who managed to set new program benchmarks. The men’s golf team closed the semester with a team-record 3.76 GPA.

in his final 10 games with 16 hits, including three doubles and three homers, slugging at a .718 clip with a .455 OBP. He scored seven runs and drove in 10 RBIs in that time and was drafted by the Astros again in 2019 in the 38th round. In the 2020 season, he was a 2020 Preseason First Team All-Southland Conference shortstop and a 2020 Preseason First Team Perfect Game All-SLC member, and chosen as a D1Baseball Top 150 Hitter. He was projected as a 15th-round draft pick before the season began and started all 14 games he played in with appearances at second and third base. Correa hit .245 for the Cards with a .321 SLUG and a .317 OBP in 2020 with 13 hits, including four doubles, nine runs scored and five RBIs. Correa signed with the Astros.

With the additions of Faith and Correa to the pro-ball community, 100 Cardinals have now gone on from Lamar University to sign a professional baseball contract. Of those 100 signees, 11 went on to play in the Majors including World Series champions Kevin Millar (2004, Boston Red Sox) and Clay Hensley (2012, San Francisco Giants).



ALL-IN

by Daniel Houston

Looking at the journey of Manasseh Miles '17 thus far, it's evident he's no stranger to hard knocks—both in life and on the field. From Arizona to Indiana to Texas, Miles attributes all of the success he's experienced—from his ability to persevere and his talent in sports—to his unwavering faith. Now, he's dedicating his time to helping other kids go from pee-wee to the big leagues.

"Growing up in Indiana, I've always had a knack for sports, and been, as my mom would say, 'hardheaded'," Miles said. "I'm the youngest of 5, and having two older brothers who played sports kind of gave me that drive."

It was after the transition from Mesa, Ariz., to Indiana when 6-year-old Miles was introduced to 'metro' football, a full contact alternative to pee-wee football, where no tackling is allowed. With metro being closer to football he saw on TV, he convinced his mother to sign him up, mostly excited to tackle somebody.

"From then on, I kinda just fell in love with the game, fell in love with playing, fell in love with the challenging parts that it gives you, what you have to overcome and the demands of it," he said. "I've got something here as far as using this as a way to better myself, to learn teamwork and all the different things that come with playing a sport."

Cultivating his football talent into high school, Miles accumulated many awards and accolades while guiding his team to a 32-4 overall record before his transfer to Cy Falls in Houston, Texas. While there, he led his new team to a 10-2 overall record, ending the season with a first-team all-conference selection. With graduation fast approaching, a



situation with high school credits as a result of his transfer presented itself as a stumbling block—being short on credits meant he would have to attend a junior college instead of a big university.

Miles spoke to the offensive line coach for Trinity Valley

Junior College, where he was told that they didn't have any scholarship money available, and while he'd be a welcome addition to the team, he'd have to join as a walk-on. "Not knowing much about JUCO, I felt like I was belittled," he said. "It was that defining moment right there where I had to humble my pride and say, 'If God is calling me to go JUCO for a greater good, then I'll go JUCO.'"

Miles didn't like the idea of being a walk-on; in his entire career, he'd never been a second-string player. He'd always played varsity and was always a starter. Feeling his abilities demanded better,

he decided to prove a point by only going to practice with the team, forgoing the separate practice for walk-ons like himself. "I didn't do anything with the walk-ons," said Miles. "I decided myself that I'm going to work out with the team to prove a point."

Miles described the defining moment—three months later, in August 2013—of this turbulent period resulting from his hard work on the field and the trust he gained from the coaches and staff at Trinity Valley—his scholarship reward. "It was a hard-nosed day of practice, coach called us up and said there's two guys that have shown themselves worthy, trustworthy and all-in. I was one of those guys," said Miles. "It was very emotional for both of us, knowing that we both came from the same background."

That year, following Miles' arrival and with a losing season before that, he led the football team to a 10-2 record, and the year after that, he led his team to a perfect 12-0 season. Only five sacks away from leading the JUCO nation in sacks, his efforts paid off as college interest began to flood in; however, he was still unsatisfied with the offers of walking on or grey-shirting with unguaranteed scholarships, albeit from bigger universities. Along with these negatives, Miles was especially uncomfortable with moving so far away from his family in Houston, believing there had to be something better in store. While weighing his dwindling options against a wish for something better, he received a surprise phone call.

"We've been watching your film, we like how you play, we like the grit, and we like the tenacity that you have. Can you meet us at your high school in about two weeks?" It was the voice of then-LU assistant coach Craig McGallion, notifying Miles of a tryout that would be occurring five minutes away from him at Cy Falls High School. It was a week after these tryouts that he received an offer—a full-ride athletic scholarship, which Miles attributed to God's plan for him. "I bring up my faith because that's a big essence of who I am and how I operate," he said. "I made the decision to go to Lamar

University, and it was a peaceful one. I was only an hour and a half away from my family in Houston. I can still make a statement and prove my point. That's what led me to go to LU."

In hindsight, taking into account the great experiences along with new trials and tribulations during his time at LU, he recounts his Cardinal journey as 'edifying.'

"It taught me a lot of maturity. Coming from a two-year school to a university, there were a lot of challenges as far as adjustments and making relationships," he said. "To me, it was a family atmosphere that I truly enjoyed. I wish I was there at the start of my freshman year, but the three years that I had there were edifying."

Miles came to Lamar University with high expectations. Unfortunately, his first season would be cut short after a foul play on the field resulted in his right leg being injured in the middle of the LU versus Baylor game. "It was very draining, I thought it was a dislocation of my patella," said Miles. "The head trainer rushed over to my aid, and it was so weird because the whole stadium, thousands of people yelling and cheering just get quiet—still hearing cameras clicking. It was saddening."

After waiting two days for the swelling to go down, the team doctors diagnosed he'd torn every ligament in his knee except for his LCL. He had to be issued a medical redshirt, with a long nine-month road to recovery before he could think about stepping back on the field. He'd had minor injuries before, but nothing so severe or significant that his entire football career was paused. "During that time, a lot of people were saying, 'Don't you wish you could do this/that, don't you hate that this happened to you,'" said Miles. "Me being a man of faith, a man of God, I couldn't hold on to that. It wasn't going to help me heal or move on, having those thoughts."

He concluded that this had happened for a reason, to bring clarity and maturity. Although he was on crutches for three months, he was grateful to get another year of playing due to the redshirt. He had two motivations that drove him in recovery, one being reclaiming his sense of normalcy. "I wanted to be able to walk again. I wanted to be able to play and be normal, get back to what I was doing before," said Miles. "I couldn't just have an injury and hang up the cleats."

His second motivation was his mother, who was diagnosed with Guillain-Barré—a rare disorder in which the immune system attacks the nerves—before he and his siblings were born. She was told by doctors that she would suffer from lingering injuries and wouldn't be able to walk or have kids, but after being paralyzed for three years, she regained her ability to walk and was able to have five healthy kids, including Miles. Seeing his mother struggle, yet persevere, with this disorder as he grew up played a large part in cultivating the resilience he exhibits to this day.

"There were times where I had low self-esteem. There were times when I was depressed. There were times where I wanted to give up," he said. "But God has placed these individuals in my life to encourage me."

Miles recovered in time to play 11 games in his junior season, earning starts for eight of those games. In his final season, he gained a 2017 Academic All-Southland Conference selection as well as a 2017 Athletic All-Southland Conference honorable

mention. He felt as if being a professional in the NFL was the next big thing for him, but after training in Fort Worth and preparing for an athletic event that scouts didn't show up for, he was disheartened. "I was kind of lost," he said. "Should I go back down to Beaumont to be a graduate assistant for the football team? Should I stay in Fort Worth and work?"

After graduation, he worked in the car industry for eight months. During this time, he volunteered at Hope Farm in Fort Worth, a Christ-centered after-school leadership program focused on guiding at-risk boys who are raised by single mothers. As a volunteer, Miles helped out in the kitchen with snacks and dinner, assisted with recreational activities, helped with homework and was essentially plugged in wherever the organization needed him. Eventually, while out for lunch with a director, he was offered a permanent position.

"Now I'm doing the same thing but more enhanced—I'm not just working with one child, I'm mentoring all the kids in our program," he said, "building up that relationship, helping young men become great men in society. It's a daily process."

Miles attributes his success in ministering to patience and peace. Understanding his own background in relation to the hills and valleys he had to go through in his personal life, he views the privilege of being able to invest in the next generation as extremely rewarding.

"When [Manasseh] speaks, our boys listen and gather close to hear what he is saying. He builds our boys up whether he is giving a compliment or providing a disciplinary word," said Dr. Becky Ringer, public relations and communications director for Hope Farm. "He is calm, positive, self-reliant, peaceful, capable and secure."

Miles has been with Hope Farm on staff for two years; he's the leading program mentor on the Morningside Campus which serves the largest number of boys among Hope Farm's three campuses in the DFW area metroplex. "He leads by example and speaks life into the kids he leads," said Ringer. "Hope Farm is a better ministry because Manasseh is a part of it."

From a junior college walk-on to a full-ride athletic scholarship at Lamar University, from injury and low self-esteem to a higher purpose in supporting the lives of children, Manasseh Miles' journey is a testament to the very virtues he instills in his pupils at Hope Farm. Whether he is on the field or contributing to the success of the mentees in his program, he is always described as "all-in."

"My belief in Christ, that's where it all stems from," said Miles. "My mentality, my understanding, my maturity, it all comes from the word of God."

"...I'm mentoring all the kids in our program...building up that relationship, helping young men become great men in society."

—Manasseh Miles '17



NASA chooses LU for project collaborations
Lamar University is one of seven university teams chosen to partner with NASA to develop innovative designs that will help the agency execute its Artemis program objectives. NASA awarded a team at LU a \$49,000 grant to design an electric excavator arm for lunar mining and construction, which mechanical engineering student and project lead **Kevin Peterson** has been thinking about for the past year. As a senior capstone project, design, building and testing began in August and will continue through May 2021. The goal is to design a mini-excavator boom, arm and bucket using a bidirectional pulley system. The substantial project, which will be fabricated in LU's Measurements Lab and assembled in the Science and Technology Building's Makerspace, comes with some unique challenges that Peterson has already started working through. "If successful, this could be the enabling technology for our sustainable future in deep space," Peterson said.

Nicholas Brake, associate professor of civil engineering, is the project mentor for a group of students from Lumberton High School seeking to design a science experiment to be performed in space. As part of the Student Spaceflight Experiments Program through the National Center for Earth and Space Science Education, the students submitted their proposed project in December and were chosen out of hundreds of submissions for their experiment in strengthening concrete in space. Working with Brake, the team is preparing a sample that will stay on Earth and one that will go into space for experimentation.



Chief operating officer at CHRISTUS **Ryan Miller** reached out to LU to inquire about the possibility of making 1,500 ear savers for CHRISTUS employees. **Nathan Rose**, a makerspace junior from Tomball majoring in mechanical engineering, created the laser cutter file and ran the machines to produce the needed quantity.

The College of Engineering also created alternative battery packs for powered air purified respirator suits. CHRISTUS has approximately 15 PAPRs that keep its staff safe when working with COVID patients; however, the hospital only had battery packs for five of the suits, rendering the additional suits useless. Miller again sought help from LU. Electrical engineering professors **Gleb Tcheslavski** and **Hassan Zargarzadeh** connected CHRISTUS to a supplier who offered a temporary solution, and Zargarzadeh provided a long-term solution by re-engineering the batteries so they could be powered by plugging them into an electrical outlet inside the patient room.



making to support the State Flood Plan as well as launch a networked, information team in Southeast Texas to support information exchange and emergency response. Ideally, the collaborative effort of data collection and shared resources will result in flood mitigation and sensor technologies in Southeast Texas and a maintenance plan for a Southeast Texas Flood Coordination Group. "Through our efforts, we can provide better data so that the modelers can make better decisions to mitigate flooding," Haselbach said. "If data is updated, then during the events modelers can predict flooding likelihood and help emergency responders know how to re-route emergency supplies to areas most in need." (see related story, pg. 4-5)

Engineering students make PPE during COVID-19 response
Engineering students and faculty helped meet the need for personal protective equipment early in the COVID-19 pandemic by putting their engineering skills to work. When **Ian Kennard**, a mechanical engineering major, learned that healthcare workers were in need of PPE, he used the makerspace 3-D printer to make face shield frames and ship them to the nonprofit Masks for Docs. When LU announced transition to online instruction Kennard moved the operation home to Houston and continued to make 20 face shields per day.

Engineering receives industry donations to initiate flood mitigation study
College of Engineering received \$200,000 from the Lower Neches Valley Authority and the Sabine River Authority of Texas to help initiate the Southeast Texas Flood Coordination Study, a collaborative project designed to help the region improve its resiliency during large-scale flooding events. Led by **Liv Haselbach**, chair of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, a core team of research organizations will seek to gather data and coordinate storm water modeling and decision making to support the State Flood Plan as well as launch a networked, information team in Southeast Texas to support information exchange and emergency response. Ideally, the collaborative effort of data collection and shared resources will result in flood mitigation and sensor technologies in Southeast Texas and a maintenance plan for a Southeast Texas Flood Coordination Group. "Through our efforts, we can provide better data so that the modelers can make better decisions to mitigate flooding," Haselbach said. "If data is updated, then during the events modelers can predict flooding likelihood and help emergency responders know how to re-route emergency supplies to areas most in need." (see related story, pg. 4-5)

► **New director named**
LU has named **Thomas Kalb** director of the Center for Midstream Management and Science. The three reasons Kalb cites for initially choosing an energy industry career are Texas, the people and the dynamics. He brings to the position established relationships and a trusted reputation to bridge the gap between industry and LU at a time of industry challenges that faculty can help meet. He is developing a midstream certificate for students and professionals.

► **Mariner Safety Research Initiative receives grant**
LU's Dean of Engineering **Brian Craig**, who also serves as the Director of the Mariner Safety Research Initiative, in collaboration with the American Bureau of Shipping and the University of Houston, received \$1,440,330 from the National Academies of Sciences' Gulf Research Program's Safer Offshore Energy Systems Grants to develop an integrated offshore energy industry safety culture evaluation, benchmarking and improvement toolbox.

► **Oil and gas industry dialogue**
The Center for Midstream Management and Science hosted Texas Land Commissioner **George P. Bush** and Texas Oil and Gas Association President **Todd Staples** for a Lunch and Learn March 6. Students and faculty, along with community and business representatives, heard discussion about the oil and gas industry's role in driving Texas education. In a May webinar, the center hosted industry experts to discuss the post-pandemic future of oil and gas.

NASA EXPERIENCE: RESOLVE MEETS SUCCESS

by **Daniel Houston**

When Marcus Rodgers '20 first arrived at Lamar University in the fall of 2014, he'd already done his research on all the big universities in Texas but decided on LU because of its scholarship opportunities and its longstanding reputation in specific programs. Upon his graduation in May 2020 with a Bachelor of Science in mechanical engineering, he began his career in another longstanding program—NASA to be exact.

Rodgers took interest in theater, football and his science classes during his high school years in Lumberton. "I was a big nerd, and took physics three different times," he said. "I came into Lamar University with over 30 credit hours, technically a sophomore, due to dual credit and AP classes."

From the moment Rodgers stepped on campus as an official Cardinal, he hit the ground running both academically and socially, taking advantage of opportunities to get involved and broaden his LU experience. "I got all of my internships, and my eventual job thanks to the university. My first internship at WestRock, the paper mill in Evadale, then Covestro in Baytown and finally NASA."

Representing LU Ambassadors at donor events, studying culture and agricultural technology in Japan, and studying abroad in South Korea are only a couple of experiences that prepared Rodgers for his future.

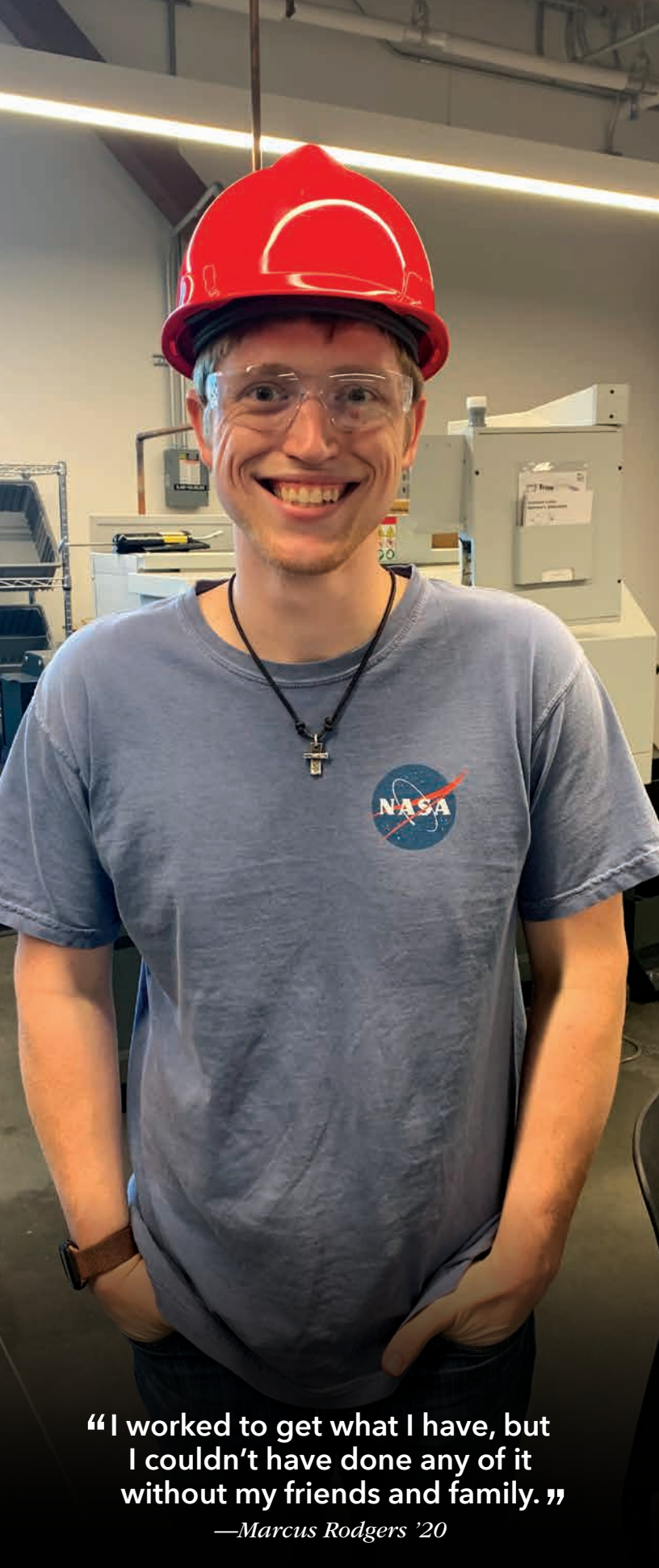
"I was always told I had an 'engineering mind,'" said Rodgers. "I went to an engineering camp one summer, and I was hooked. I have always wanted to take things apart, and tried, sometimes unsuccessfully, to put them all back together."

Intrigued with electronics and mechanisms, Rodgers wanted to pursue a dual major in mechanical engineering and electrical engineering but decided on taking electrical engineering classes for the experience as well as art classes. "It didn't count towards my major, but it kept me sane, and let me make some great friends, and learn some great techniques that I still use today," said Rodgers.

In January of 2018, Rodgers began his internship at the Johnson Space Center, which would prove to be a life-changing experience for him. "My NASA experience was a dream come true. Ever since I was little, I always dreamt of working there. It was the pinnacle of engineering in my mind," said Rodgers. Once he got the opportunity to work there, he recognized it as his niche, the place he was born to work. "I learned how to fail. I spent a whole semester prototyping and trying to get a design approved. I never got one completely correct, but I learned what to pay attention to and what matters in a design." Rodgers would eventually win an award for being one of the top interns at the Johnson Space Center.

Rodgers' first full-time job at NASA is engineer in the aircraft operations division at NASA Johnson Space Center, facilitating science missions and doing analysis on equipment going into planes, or upgrading and keeping the planes operational.

"I have done a lot, but I like to have fun and try to be very laid back," said Rodgers. "I worked to get what I have, but I couldn't have done any of it without my friends and family. They support me and have given me so much more than what I could have done by myself."



"I worked to get what I have, but I couldn't have done any of it without my friends and family."
—*Marcus Rodgers '20*



The grapevine of information for any university begins in its communication department, the heart of the campus for students of journalism, media, broadcasting and similar disciplines. The student body at large relies on LUTV and the University Press, the communication engines responsible for the circulation of information relevant to our Cardinal community. While the insurgence of COVID-19 threatened to derail operations, the directors of these programs along with communication-related majors have worked diligently to ensure this train stays on track.

“Our student media is important to our student body, as well as our faculty and staff, because it is the first place we go to hear ‘our’ stories,” said J.T. Robertson, marketing communications coordinator for the College of Fine Arts and Communication. “Our student media serves as a lab for our future journalists and storytellers.”

In existence since LU’s origins as South Park Junior College in 1923, the University Press is an avenue for students to display diverse skill sets in direct parallel with LUTV, whose goal has been to give those interested in broadcasting

the opportunity to learn more about the industry through hands-on experience in news and media production. According to Andrew Coughlan, director of student publications and advisor to the University Press, the student newspaper has evolved with the changing media landscape. Students are now expected to be multifaceted and experts in not only writing but also video, photography, audio and social media.

“Being an alumnus of the Department of Communication, my goal when I started working at [LUTV] in 1999 was to give students that choose to participate opportunities and experiences that I did not have as a student,” said Gordon Williams ’98, studio operations manager and instructor at LUTV. “In the past, University Press media contributors have participated as volunteer news anchors, producers and contributors for our program ‘After LUTV News,’ where students discuss topics from politics to pop culture.”

In March of 2020, the coronavirus pandemic introduced itself as a looming threat not only to public health, but to the operations of these two organizations, the lifeblood of which was the student body.

“As someone whose job involves keeping abreast of news from around the world from multiple sources, COVID-19 was worrying,” said Coughlan. “There were rumblings before it arrived on our shores, but early on it was apparent it would have a significant effect.”

Already in discussion to prepare for any eventuality, the UP had published a print edition up to spring break; however, the speed of the shutdown was unexpected. Fortunately, an active website allowed them to quickly shift to an online format.

“I had a talented group of seniors who would not have the opportunity to enjoy the comradery and experience in working together for their final five news broadcasts,” said Williams of LUTV. “With all the uncertainty that was happening in the world, how do we keep that togetherness and maintain bonds that have been created while informing the campus and community on important information?”

During this time, there was no access to the television studio, equipment or editing facilities. Mobile journalism, Zoom utilization, and cell phones became the tools of the trade for students in order to create news content.

The multimedia journalists of LUTV rose to the occasion.

The University Press prepared for the return to campus this fall with the specific goal of protecting student editors, making an indefinite switch to online-only, with writers having the option to edit in-person by appointment, in an office kept locked at all times. “Masks are worn with any interaction,” said Coughlan. “We also have the option to edit by Zoom. It is important that the stories are edited with the writer.”

Due to the online shift, the stories are posted as soon as they are edited, foregoing the usual hiatus between print editions. With the students spread out across campus and working remotely, a big challenge for the UP is getting the staff as involved as they were traditionally.

“Add in a couple hurricanes and it has been difficult, to say the least,” said

before the semester’s start to introduce interested students to LUTV News and the broadcasting field, allowing them to embrace mobile journalism with equipment purchased exclusively with social distancing in mind for content creation.

“LUTV News is producing socially distant newscasts, so students are able to safely learn what they need to develop as broadcasting professionals,” said Williams.

Olivia Malick, student editor for the UP, oversees both online and in-print production and guides students in their reporting, assisting on the angle of the story, tracking down sources, and connecting them with photographers or other resources necessary to complete assignments. “Our main purpose has always been to get students information that they need in a concise way,” said Malick. “Whether it’s new school

especially hard on my mental health—I know I’m not alone in that,” she said. “It’s something I’m working on each day. All I know is that I’m glad to be here, and I am optimistic about each day.”

Nowadays, there are fewer people present in the office, as communication between UP correspondents becomes largely virtual. However, it is important for Malick to be present in order to support her staff members and contributors, intending to make it clear that anybody who comes in to work with the UP can reach out to her for help with issues UP related or otherwise.

“It has been quite the learning curve trying to figure out how to move forward with a smaller, mostly virtual staff,” she said. “The spring semester ended abruptly for us, so we were not able to make many plans beforehand—we kind of rolled with the punches.”

Malick believes it’s hard for incoming freshmen to get involved off-campus, but with the implementation of new procedures, the chances of spreading the virus are reduced.

“We will continue to provide accurate, credible and objective information for the students, faculty and staff at Lamar University,” said Malick. “Universities without a student press do not serve their students to the best of their abilities; that is something that should always be remembered.”

The University Press continues to maintain a fine reputation for its work; the students involved in its success have won a phenomenal amount of rewards, and even though times are challenging, the goal remains the same—to report on and keep the LU community aware of events.

“Flexibility is a key part of journalism,” said Coughlan. “The UP will carry on because that’s what we do, and have done since 1923.”

Additionally, LUTV is committed to navigating the current uncertainty of our region and the world. “Throughout the semester we have faced setbacks, hurricanes, and students having to quarantine due to the pandemic,” said Williams. “Broadcast journalists are asked to inform the public, no matter the situation. We plan to continue that mindset for the foreseeable future.”



Coughlan. “Fortunately, we have a small core group that has stepped up to keep it going.”

Loss of experience in a talented group of seniors and addressing coronavirus safety protocols were among Williams’ chief concerns for the fall 2020 semester. Safety measures were created regarding new procedures and social distancing standards in the television studio for production. A workshop also was held

guidelines, COVID cases or events, we aim to make sure that students have information to make decisions.”

Even after losing her job outside of the University Press due to the pandemic, dealing with the difficulties of the school closure and its residual effects, Malick considers herself on the luckier side of the spectrum in the grand scheme of things. “This pandemic has been



From left to right: David Martin, Doug Wilson, Grover Williams

WHEN TOUGH TIMES CALL, FACILITIES STAFF ANSWER

by Hannah Snodgrass

Their work is often unseen, unknown and underappreciated, but their contributions to Lamar University allow the campus to operate. The approximately 100 staff members on the Facilities Management team—comprised of maintenance, campus services and landscaping, custodial, fleet and administrative personnel—are hardworking and resilient. They keep the electricity and water on, floors clean, and grounds beautiful—all so that students, faculty and staff are happy, safe and productive.

David Martin, associate vice president of facilities management, has worked at LU since 2016 after retiring from a 30-year career in the Air Force. Grover Williams, manager of utilities, came aboard in 2009 after deciding he didn't like retirement life. Martin and Williams shared that while campus shut down to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, facilities

staff never slowed down. Their staff came to work every day, expending extra effort to maintain cleanliness throughout campus buildings. Summer, while most students are gone, is typically when campus facilities are deep cleaned; but even then, not every area receives the attention it deserves. The COVID-19 campus shutdown allowed facilities to focus on areas normally inaccessible while students are here. Because of the extra time they had, Martin said, "We saved about \$500,000 in what would normally be paid to contractors."

Amid growing concerns of COVID-19, facilities staff implemented preventative health and safety measures following CDC guidelines. They developed and adjusted cleaning protocols for when someone tests positive. Staff installed new air filters with maximum ability to capture air particles before the start of the fall semester. They placed hand sanitizer stations

throughout all buildings before the remainder of staff returned to campus and compiled a mask inventory. The same LU carpenters who always answer the call after a hurricane to repair leaks and other damage built plexiglass shields and placed them in the library, cashier's office and other high-traffic areas where social distancing is less feasible. Facilities staff worked with the Office of Marketing Communications to create signs that remind everyone to maintain social distance and help stop the spread of germs and placed those on floors, in bathrooms, at building entrances and in high traffic areas. When the pandemic began, Martin worked with Procurement and Payment Services to order hand sanitizer, gloves and cleaning equipment so they would have enough to last. Martin said, "We have tried to be frugal and good stewards of funding throughout this

time." While Facilities Management has limited personnel, they always meet the needs of the university.

The facilities team is usually the first to act when a natural disaster affects LU. On October 9, 2020, Hurricane Delta traveled through Southeast Texas, bringing tropical storm-force winds and heavy rain. Delta left tree branches and minor debris, damaged flags and blew out some of the windows on the eighth floor of the Mary and John Gray Library. "After Delta on Friday, we had to get campus ready for everyone to return on Monday. We had a full crew on campus Saturday and Sunday. All of them, maintenance and custodial, came in after just a phone call," said Martin. "When you returned to campus on Monday, you probably couldn't tell we had a hurricane come through only two days before." That's how good the facilities crew is at what they do.

Doug Wilson, senior facilities maintenance specialist, is exceptional at his job. He also has persevered through hardship. Two years ago, he was diagnosed with stage four lung cancer, which spread to other parts of his body. In spite of the diagnosis, his work ethic and dedication to his facilities team and LU never wavered. He took limited time off for chemotherapy. Martin said, "Usually people quit or don't come back after something like that, but not Doug." Williams, Wilson's boss, described him as "one of those guys that goes above and beyond. He'll never tell you no. He often receives calls late at

night from residence halls and never hesitates. He always puts the university first, with a 'service before self' attitude." During Delta, Wilson volunteered to ride out the storm, working for 16 hours straight to ensure the campus community, buildings and grounds were safe. For Wilson, that's just him doing his job, but Williams and Martin are quick to boast about their employee's extraordinary commitment.

How has Wilson faced adversity? "I just try to stay focused, keep everything one day at a time and take things as they come," Wilson answers. "The guys I work for really helped me out, they've held down my job when I haven't been able to work." The facilities staff cares about each other. Not only do Wilson's supervisors hold down his job for him while he is away, but Martin says, "We worry about him. Anytime he is not feeling well and can't come in, we worry." Wilson's love for Lamar University is clear when he emphatically shares, "I used to work at other places and sometimes I talk to people and tell them I work at LU. They want me to leave and go work somewhere else and I tell them no. I think I'll retire from LU. I'm comfortable, and students are respectful."

What's the most significant challenge the facilities staff has faced? Martin said, "For me, it's been burnout. When we have a positive [COVID-19] case, it affects the whole department. At one point, 40% of us were out due to a positive [test result] or contact tracing. You just have to move people around and do what you have to do to take care of everything."

Maintaining positive energy during tough times makes facilities staff resilient. "What makes me proud is that all of our guys always want to help, they want to make LU nice to come to," Williams said. He smiles, sharing that he has called some of his staff as they're sitting down to eat with family. "I've caught them while they're at a restaurant about to order and told them to eat first and then come in, and they say, 'No, I am on my way!'" Martin explained, "Facilities staff are all hourly workers and paid less than almost everyone else on campus. They never once complained about coming to work during all of this." He added, "We do what we can to make them feel appreciated. Every year, we have a department Christmas party and normally a barbecue in the summer. We're currently working with Jeremy Alltop [vice president of finance and operations and CFO] and President Evans to develop a centralized facilities office where we can all gather, have our offices in one place and build our team." Martin echoes Williams' sentiment of their staff's dedication, saying, "There is something to be said for having people who come out here because you call them. They don't have to be here, but they want to be."

“What makes me proud is that all our guys always want to help, they want to make LU nice to come to.”

—Grover Williams



VIRTUAL SOLUTIONS

by Shelly Vitanza

With a mandate to close but remain fully operational, Lamar University relied on technology and ingenuity through the pandemic shutdown to retain and recruit new students while using creative digital learning techniques to engage current ones as well as the community.

From March to June, most employees worked remotely, and there were few students on campus. The remarkable scenario was challenging to every aspect of university operations but likely the most confounding to recruitment efforts.

“Our primary objectives are to showcase Lamar University as a place where students can attain their life goals and to be available to support students through the enrollment process,” said Tracie Craig, director of the Welcome Center in the Office of Admissions and Recruitment. “We were not physically available to showcase LU, and it made me cringe to think that people could not come to our door for help and support.”

The admissions team’s first task was to ensure uninterrupted daily operations. They quickly pivoted to LU Crew student employees making calls via internet.

“I was worried about our student workforce, 21 students, because they count on the money they make working at LU,” said Craig. “I’m proud we kept them busy and proud of them for staying productive and helpful to keep their jobs.”

Additionally, a core group of students and staff came in each day to handle mailed transcripts so operations could continue processing applications from home which were followed by personalized acceptance packets.

Craig and her team considered their audience—tech-savvy high school and college students, comfortable with texting and online chatting. They quickly realized business could continue because their target market is very comfortable in the virtual space.

“It’s their comfort zone, so we met them where they are; we just had to get out of our comfort zone to do it,” said Craig.

LU’s chatbot, “Chirp,” which had launched in February, was immediately

expanded to allow all enrollment management departments to chat remotely with current and prospective students. This was complemented by text campaigns using a new texting platform.

“Before the pandemic, we only had one chatbot account for each department, but during the pandemic every individual had his or her own account and could operate live chat,” Craig said. “We had 96 people—student employees and admissions counselors—on chat.”

Practically overnight enrollment services produced a virtual Admitted Student Day. The event allowed admitted students to hear from and live chat with staff from every department involved in the enrollment process—Texas Success Initiative, advising, New Student Orientation, STAR Services, financial aid, scholarships and housing. The program also included the Student Health Center to address any health concerns and gave instructions to students about how to access their Banner accounts.

“Any topic we thought a student might have a question about was addressed through this virtual event, and there was a Spanish version,” said Craig. “We reached 441 students during the three live events plus an additional 165 through views of the recording of one of them.”

Enrollment services hosted virtual events titled “A Major Discussion” with individual academic departments, including a live chat Q&A so guests could engage with faculty. They also hosted graduate zoom sessions for several programs with thank-you gifts to those who attended.

Because the pandemic built so many new barriers to college entry, LU implemented ways to increase accessibility. The application fee was waived to help with financial concerns and a test-optional path to admissions implemented to allow students to apply without having to take a standardized test. The new approach to admissions also included normalizing GPAs to help make equitable decisions.

“Some LU programs waived the GRE and GMAT requirements for admissions

and allowed unofficial documents to be submitted when official documents were not available because schools were closed,” Craig said.

The planning, creativity and innovative ‘meeting-applicants-where-they-are’ approach was successful. While working remotely, enrollment services processed 4,152 undergraduate applications and 5,352 graduate applications for a total of 9,504, an increase of 24% over 2019 at the same time, and Craig says virtual engagement is the new normal.

“For people who can’t get here because they live in Dallas, we can give a virtual tour,” said Craig. “We’ve tapped into the virtual realm and can easily continue in the future. We’ve learned what we’re capable of and opened up a whole new realm of opportunity.”

Tapping into the virtual realm also expanded opportunities globally. Although traditional in-person education and exchange programs were cancelled for the summer, around the world, schools and institutions began using virtual exchange to help young people develop cross-cultural relationships and vital skills.

Lamar University’s JoAnne Gay Dishman School of Nursing received funding from the Stevens Initiative to participate in the Texas International Education Consortium’s Virtual Exchange for Undergraduate Nursing in Texas, Egypt and Jordan, one of 18 programs funded as part of the Stevens Initiative Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic. With this funding, the school of nursing will plan and implement a virtual exchange program based in the U.S. and in partnership with Middle Eastern and North African institutions.

“We are extremely excited for the opportunity to collaborate with nursing faculty and students from Tanta University in Egypt for this global virtual initiative,” said Stacey Knight, director of articulation and assistant professor of nursing.

Knight and Gina Hale, assistant professor of nursing, participated in a two-week intense orientation to prepare for and develop an innovative learning experience for the nursing students,

which will be implemented in the spring of 2021.

LU nursing students participating in the program will be among 4,500 participants from 24 states, 11 Middle East/North Africa countries, three tribal communities, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Washington, D.C. The students will engage with their peers around the world for summer programs that otherwise would not be possible due to the pandemic.

The pandemic could have deemed other LU programs impractical, like hosting a community-wide summit, the “Resiliency and Recovery: Building Tomorrow Summit,” but instead the entire event was moved to a virtual space, featured community leaders, multiple presenters, breakout sessions and a panel discussion.

Originally scheduled for April, the event, designed to bring community stakeholders and leaders together to discuss all aspects of resiliency and recovery related to a natural disaster, was postponed as a result of the COVID-19 response but then took place on August 4.

Approximately 6,600 people participated, more than could have been accommodated at an in-person event. The virtual platform made it easy for officials to join, including Texas State Representative Dade Phelan, Jefferson County Judge Jeff Branick, Emergency Management Coordinator Michael White and public health director for the Beaumont Public Health Department, Sherry Ulmer.

“The decision to provide the summit completely virtually was not made until a couple of weeks prior to the event,” said Judy Mann, associate professor of psychology and one of the team leaders of the summit. “The amazing professionals at Lamar University were able to convert the summit format rapidly and effectively to allow this event to move forward in a manner that far surpassed our expectations. Participants have compared the summit to top-level national events.”

At the end of the day-long summit, attendees were asked to complete surveys.

Everyone who completed the survey said “the summit provided information useful to their organization,” and 87% reported that they were “extremely satisfied” with the summit.

The outcome of the virtual meeting was so positive, the summit team will continue a virtual approach in the future.

“We are currently planning to host the second annual Resiliency and Recovery Summit on April 9, 2021,” said Mann. “Coordination with professionals from across Lamar University has already begun to provide this second summit both virtually and face-to-face.”

Human relationships, including face-to-face contact, are at the core of LU’s social work program. When the pandemic began, the Social Work Student Association launched an initiative using social media as the platform to keep students in the program connected.

“Knowing they were going to be physically separated, our students knew they needed to stay emotionally and socially connected.”
—Ginger Gummelt

“They created solidarity circles for self-care, to connect with one another, meditate and identify ways to serve the greater community,” said Ginger Gummelt, associate professor and director of the social work program. “Knowing they were going to be physically separated, our students knew they needed to stay emotionally and socially connected.”

Human connection is not only the crux of social work, it’s required to graduate. Every LU social work major must complete 50 hours of volunteer work and another 400-hour placement or internship in order to graduate. In the spring semester, 24 social work students were in the middle of their internships and another 28 were lining up placements for the summer.

“The accreditation agency said we’d have to figure something out; they weren’t going to allow students to graduate without the in-person placement hours,” said Gummelt. “We had to figure out what to do to allow our students to finish safely and in a meaningful learning experience where hours spent match competencies and give students the opportunity to put their skills to work.”

The “figuring out” fell on Lori Wright, a sociology and criminal justice instructor. Wright worked with agencies like Child Protective Services, Communities in Schools, Catholic Charities of Southeast Texas, The Garth House and others to identify ways that students could fulfill their requirements to graduate. And while other universities postponed or halted their social work programs until the end of the pandemic, LU worked with administration and the Texas State

University System to ensure its social work students fulfilled their degree requirements. All students continued with the program with the exception of three, who postponed their internships until this fall.

“Students were ready to start working and didn’t hesitate because this is what we do when people are in need,” said Wright. “Students bravely walked out there, because the connection with people is what we need, and we found safe ways to do that.”

Gummelt said the connection with people during the pandemic was more vital than ever before and she believes this time of social distancing is also the advent of the social worker. “The need in the community skyrocketed. There were food, resource and job insecurities; domestic violence and child abuse increased; and the issues of social justice came up. With all of the isolation and/or being stuck with your family for long periods of time, we saw significant mental health issues,” said Gummelt. “And then we saw this transition start to happen, and the whole idea of social work to advocate, educate, intervene and deescalate recognized.”

| COLLEGE SNAPSHOT: EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT |



Associate Professor Mamta Singh develops Mason STEM initiative

Mamta Singh, associate professor of teacher education, developed the Mason STEM Initiative project proposal to recruit and retain science, technology, engineering and math majors as teachers. The overarching goal of the interdisciplinary project is to attract qualified STEM majors to a teaching pathway who otherwise would not have considered teaching as a career option and to increase the number of science-minded and science-trained STEM teacher candidates. A successful summer 2019 pilot case study led Singh, along with **Randall Terry**, chair and associate professor of biology; **Cristian Bahrim**, director of undergraduate research and professor of physics; and **P.J. Couch**, associate professor of mathematics, to implement the Mason STEM Initiative Project in summer 2020. The program survey results suggested that 100% of student participants from B.S. degree plans who exhibited teaching ability and an inquisitive nature had a positive K-12 teaching and learning experience, and 75% of the participants indicated the program increased their interest in becoming a K-12 science teacher.

Becky ‘71 and Chuck Mason ‘72 made the project possible through a generous gift, the largest ever given to the college, to establish the Becky and Chuck Mason Distinguished Faculty Fellowships, designed to address the critical shortage of quality science educators.



and the number of student work stations. And thirdly, the new equipment allows us to expand the range of dishes students can master. In a challenging industry, it’s crucial for chefs to continually experiment with new foods and new preparations. We’re lucky to be able to offer this to our young chefs.” A student earning a bachelor’s degree in hospitality administration with an emphasis in culinary arts learns everything needed to launch a career as a chef and, ultimately, a successful business owner in the food industry.

Professors conduct online blended-learning labs

During the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown, Department of Educational Leadership faculty **Dwayne Harapnuik**, clinical instructor, and **Tilisa Thibodeaux**, assistant professor, reached out to the broader community of educators, including recent graduates, alumni and local area teachers to offer online blended learning labs. The goal of the labs was to model and immerse educators in a synchronous session using digital tools that would augment and support instructional models for teaching online during the upcoming 2020-2021 school year.

More than 137 participants signed up for the three one-hour learning labs hosted via Zoom that allowed educators to connect with each other across the nation and learn how to effectively create significant digital learning environments for their students. Harapnuik and Thibodeaux have spent the last 15+ years co-developing a framework named Creating Significant Learning Environments plus Choice, Ownership, and Voice through Authentic Learning (CSLE+COVA), which was modeled during the summer labs. The framework also is used in the Digital Learning and Leading and Educational Technology Leadership Programs. Additional online blended-learning labs are scheduled for the spring 2021 school semester to include a variety of highly requested topics for discussion around digital learning. A **Becky and Chuck Mason Distinguished Faculty Fellowship** enabled the digital learning and leading professors to develop and conduct the labs.



Departments of Teacher Education, Counseling and Educational Leadership embrace new leadership

New leadership promising bright futures for three college departments includes Associate Professor **Freddie Titus ‘83, ‘86**, recently promoted to department chair of teacher education; Associate Professor **Belinda Lopez**, promoted to department chair of counseling; and Assistant Professor **Johnny O’Connor**, who will lead the Department of Educational Leadership.



QIANG XU JOINS ELITE GROUP OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS



Lamar University awarded Qiang Xu the 2020 University Professor title. Xu is professor of chemical engineering in the highly regarded College of Engineering's Dan F. Smith Department of Chemical Engineering. The professorship, awarded for life, is the most prestigious faculty award conferred by Lamar University's academic community.

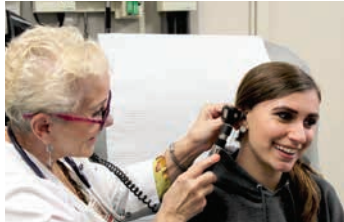
"The award is the

pinnacle of academic achievement at our university and is recognized by all as an emblem of highest merit," said Brenda Nichols, provost and vice president for academic affairs. "Recipients are selected by their colleagues and are chosen for their academic stature and achievements, honed in the demanding and competitive culture of higher education."

In addition, Xu will also become the Ann Die Hasselmo Scholar, an honor concurrent with that of University Professor and made possible by the creation and funding of the Lamar University Faculty Excellence Endowment by Ann Die Hasselmo, a 1966 graduate of LU. (see related story, pg. 30-31)

Xu has published nearly 100 articles in peer-reviewed journals and more than 200 peer-reviewed conference proceeding papers. He is also a corresponding author of a book chapter titled "Study for the Optimal Operation of Natural Gas Liquid Recovery and Natural Gas Production" in the book Natural Gas Processing from Midstream to Downstream. Xu has received the Lamar University College of Engineering Distinguished Faculty Research Award, 2019; the Anita Riddle Faculty Fellowship Award, 2017; and the Excellence in Process Development Research Award from the AIChE, 2016.

Xu teaches both undergraduate and graduate courses and has received grants from ExxonMobil, Lyondell Basell and the National Science Foundation. He has guided 17 doctoral dissertations and 10 master theses and is currently supervising 7 Ph.D. students and 1 master's thesis student. "I believe being a professor teaching at the college level is a privilege," said Xu. "What I like most is to see students very satisfied with what they have learned from my classes and to know their success stories during their career development."



Student Health Center earns accreditation

After a two-year process, the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care Inc. announced LU's Student Health Center meets the standards of care to join the ranks of accredited health centers across the nation.

"It's a big deal; it took us about two years to prepare for it," said Shawn Gray, director, Student Health Center and a practicing nurse practitioner.

"We're very proud of ourselves. We're excited about it because it speaks to the level of care that we provide to students as far as medical, counseling and health education services. We're not a 'first-aid station,' but are licensed, board-certified practitioners." Some medical staff have prescriptive authority and some counselors with additional certifications to treat addiction issues have malpractice insurance and are able to work in the community, but they choose to work on a university campus.

LU partners with Iron Horse Terminals

Lamar University has partnered with Iron Horse Terminals, a Southeast Texas rail transportation company, to develop software to optimize the organization's strategically located railyard. The collaboration represents one of the College of Engineering's critical strategic initiatives to increase and enhance industry/university partnerships and projects.

"This project represents the amazing capabilities of our faculty to enhance LU's positive influence on the Southeast Texas region and our nation's economy, while supporting the goals of the College of Engineering and the Center for Midstream Management and Science," said Brian Craig, dean of the College of Engineering.

Iron Horse Terminals, located approximately seven miles west of Beaumont with connectivity to two major rail lines along major trucking corridors, has access to one of the largest high-density and low-density polyethylene facilities on the Gulf Coast. The company is focused on streamlining processes to supplement strategic Southeast Texas regional growth opportunities.

Maryam Hamidi, assistant professor in the Department of Industrial Engineering and lead on the project, said, "We'll develop user-interface software using programming skills, database design and optimization techniques to increase efficiency."

Cardinals CARE Project visit isolated long-term care residents

Elizabeth Long and nursing student Makayla Brown of the JoAnne Gay Dishman School of Nursing have organized a 10-week project called Cardinals CARE (Cardinals Adopt Residents for Engagement) with a two-fold mission. The effort will connect residents in long-term care facilities with nursing students and provide nursing students with required community-based service learning hours prevented because of Stay Home, Stay Safe parameters.

Since late March 2020, no visitors or non-medical personnel have been allowed in long-term care facilities, and residents have been isolated in their rooms away from other residents. "Loneliness and social isolation was an issue for many older adults prior to the pandemic, both in long term care and in the community. The pandemic has compounded the issue," said Long, assistant professor of nursing and community-based service learning coordinator.

More than 100 students will correspond with residents in 13 different long-term care facilities and 711 nursing home residents across the Golden Triangle, whether letters, inspirational messages, artwork or other missives to brighten a patient's day. When restrictions are lifted, there will be an opportunity for face-to-face meetings.

Paleontology team receives grant for Utah excavation

LU's Utah paleontology team received a National Science Foundation three-year grant for approximately \$764,000. The grant will fund a multi-university collaborative project titled, "Collaborative Research: After the Bridgerian Crash: An Integrated Analysis of Mammalian Paleocommunities and Paleoecologies During the Middle Eocene" to excavate and study 40 million-year-old mammal and associated reptile fossils in the Uinta Basin near Vernal, Utah.

James Westgate, former LU professor of Earth and Space Sciences and Regents' Professor Emeritus of Earth & Space Sciences, has been working with the team to achieve the grant for the past eight years. He and several students have explored the 40-million-year-old Uinta Formation exposed as "badlands" southeast of Vernal, Utah, as well as the tropical rain forest at Tortuguero, Costa Rica, to compare the two regions.

"This project is especially important to LU's undergraduate majors because it gives them real world research experience in the field and a chance to present discoveries at scientific conferences," Westgate said.



Tokgoz awarded multiple patents

Cagatay Tokgoz, assistant professor in the Phillip M. Drayer Department of Electrical Engineering, was awarded a patent in May 2020, his fourth since 2018, related to state-of-the-art embedded and wireless sensors for additive manufacturing, nondestructive testing, load and motion monitoring, and wireless sensor network applications in the aerospace industry. Prior to joining Lamar University, Tokgoz was a staff research scientist at United Technologies Research Center where he led research on modeling, simulation, testing and fabrication for embedded and wireless sensors as well as electrical connector fault detection for numerous externally and corporate funded projects. "My ongoing research generates computational tools that help eliminate wireless communication interference issues encountered in both commercial and military applications," Tokgoz said.

Lian honored as 2020 faculty mentor

Associate professor of biology Ian Lian, the sixth faculty member to earn the Office of Undergraduate Research's most prestigious award, was selected for his outstanding achievements mentoring undergraduates in research and creative activities. The award is given to the faculty member who demonstrates a history of supporting undergraduate students in their research efforts including publishing research, attending conferences and meetings and contributing to students' overall professional development.

Lian, one of five nominees, began supporting undergraduates early in his career. "I started my involvement in research while I was an undergrad student at the University of California at San Diego and benefited from this experience tremendously," said Lian. "One of the main reasons I joined LU is its unique balance in teaching and research, which allows me to conduct research and pass on this experience to the students through the mentoring activities."

"Dr. Lian has inspired many students to achieve great academic performances," said Cristian Bahrim, professor of physics and director of the Office of Undergraduate Research.

Researchers map 30 years of change in Breton Sound Basin

Reda Amer, assistant professor of geology and director of LU's Geospatial Center, and Christopher Potter, a senior research scientist at NASA Ames Research Center, recently published research that documents changes in coastal land area and vegetation. More than three years of meticulous research that analyzes records of land loss/gain in the coastal wetlands of southeastern Louisiana during a span of 30 years culminated in the article. "The work of this research is to inform restoration planning to restore and protect the remaining wetlands in the Breton Sound Basin," said Amer.

SURF winners earn stipends

The Office of Undergraduate Research has announced 16 winners of the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF). The SURF program awards each winner a \$2,000 stipend, free on-campus housing for 10 weeks during the summer and \$1,000 for purchasing project materials. Inspired by the nationally recognized Research Experience for Undergraduates, the program allows undergraduate students at LU to have a rich summer research experience. "The program helps to improve students' awareness of what it takes to win in a competitive program and better prepares them for the next grant submission," said Cristian Bahrim, professor of physics and director of the Office of Undergraduate Research.

FACULTY EARN UNIVERSITY MERIT AWARDS



As honorees of the 2020 University Merit Awards, Stephanie Chadwick, Yueqing Li and Sujing Wang are recognized for their superior teaching, scholarship and service to the university.

Since joining LU in 2015, Chadwick, assistant professor of art history, has taught more than 1,200 students and has made it her mission to make art alive for all students regardless of their discipline. Through her connection to the local art community, Chadwick found opportunities for students to display their art; she engaged students in research projects, and she made assignments to help students improve their writing and research skills.

Yuequing Li is an assistant professor of industrial engineering, who teaches both undergraduate and graduate level courses. With LU for six years, he has incorporated modern teaching tools and undertaken special educational projects. Li is a successful researcher and founded the Human-Computer Interaction Laboratory and the Driving Simulation Laboratory at LU.

Sujing Wang joined the Department of Computer Science as an instructor in 2006, and now she is an associate professor, a respected and admired teacher, conscientious and dedicated to her students. Wang has developed eight undergraduate courses, eight graduate courses and eight online courses. She has been awarded seven instructional teaching grants and received five Quality Matters National Peer Course Review Certification Awards.

► Online MSN program in top five

NursingSchoolHub.com has ranked LU as offering the No. 3 most affordable online MSN program for 2020. The programs were ranked on reputation and quality, then ranked based on tuition cost. LU stood out from its competition because of its emphasis on nursing education and administration and its accelerated eight-week courses for students who want to graduate at a fast pace.

► Online engineering ranked No. 1

ONLINEU ranks LU's online Bachelor of Science in industrial engineering the best in the nation in two categories: the most affordable online bachelor's degree as well as the best online engineering degree. "All of our graduates are highly sought-after by a host of employers. We're graduating leaders, and that's what defines our success," said Brian Craig, dean of the College of Engineering.

► MBA in criminal justice program ranks high

Intelligent.com has ranked LU the 11th best online probation officer degree program in the nation out of 95 accredited universities evaluated on curriculum quality, graduation rate, reputation and post-graduate employment. LU's online criminal justice program is distinctive in its MBA in criminal justice degree, a unique curriculum of business and criminal justice courses all available online.

► Museum virtual tour now available

Spindletop Gladys City Boomtown Museum announces a new resource page on its website with fun, yet educational, activities for kids. The resource page features coloring sheets, a crossword, webquests and more. All ages can use them to enjoy learning about a seminal event in Southeast Texas. Families can enjoy a virtual tour by visiting lamar.edu/spindletop.



A LEVEL ABOVE:

EVER-CHANGING CHALLENGES AND THE SEARCH FOR LEADERS

by Shelly Vitanza

LU Distinguished Alumna Ann Die Hasselmo '66,

rattles off her career highlights like giving a 30-second elevator speech. She was a student at Lamar University, a faculty member and later tenured faculty member at LU, president of the Faculty Senate, the executive vice president for academic and student affairs, then a dean and associate provost at Tulane University, president at Hendrix College, managing director of a higher education executive search firm, founding president of a nonprofit higher education leadership development organization and is now a senior consultant for Academic Search. What Die Hasselmo's pragmatic and not-a-big-deal career synopsis doesn't convey is that she has devoted her career to "institution building" and it all started at LU.

Die Hasselmo, a Baytown native, who graduated from Silsbee High School and then attended LU, which was Lamar State College of Technology at the time, earned a bachelor's degree in psychology in 1966. She went on to earn a master's degree from the University of Houston in 1969 and a doctorate of philosophy from Texas A&M University in 1977 before returning to LU as a member of the faculty. During Die Hasselmo's years at LU as a student and a faculty member, she learned what she considers the most important leadership quality she teaches to this day.

"I had so many faculty—Ralph Wooster, Myrtle Bell

who taught me psychology and was a great department chair and later dean. I think of individuals who came before me and after me as Faculty Senate presidents who were great role models for leading the faculty. I think of Bob Kimball who was such an inspiration to me and Bill Franklin who was and other leaders on campus," said Die Hasselmo. "I felt extremely fortunate that I had, throughout my career, individuals who were willing to be mentors and to be leaders I could emulate."

Once Die Hasselmo moved into administration at LU, she was asked to speak to faculty members who wanted to have leadership roles in higher education. She became known in Southeast Texas as an executive coach and offered seminars on leadership to local businesses and the Chamber of Commerce. By the time Die Hasselmo accepted the position at Tulane University, she had helped design the state program TASP, the Texas Academic Skills Program—known today as the Texas Success Initiative—and spent a year as an American Council on Education Fellow at the College of William and Mary where she interacted with the president and the provost and other leaders on campus looking at higher education and how leaders function. From these experiences, she learned the importance of mentors.

"The singular most important thought I would want emerging leaders to take out of any program I run is they need to develop their

own network of mentors and not a single mentor. I teach that they (leaders) need to use each other, to learn to lean on each other, to ask questions of each other. My goal or counsel is to surround yourself with those you trust and admire and don't ever believe you can do these senior leadership roles—and I would say this would be true of CEOs of corporations as well—and be a leader of a very complex entity and be a lone wolf, just seeking your own counsel and your own thoughts."

Die Hasselmo advocates finding mentors and wise counsel at professional meetings, leadership seminars and conferences while also soaking up as much information about your area of leadership.

"You equip yourself with as much wisdom and knowledge from those who have come before, whether from articles, books, seminars, speakers, that you become a sponge and take in whatever you can because there will be some point in leadership you will need everything you've ever learned. There is really no recipe book or do-it-yourself manual on how to be Faculty Senate president or a department chair or a dean or a cabinet chair or a president, so I think the more people take advantage of leadership programs the better. The larger the stock people have in their storage room of leadership issues they will be able to pull, the better."

Still no one could have predicted COVID-19 and all of the challenges higher education faced this year.

Addressing the ever-changing challenges and adapting to all that higher education faced required leaders to pull from "all of their wisdom and training and to lean on all of their mentors," Die Hasselmo said. She analogizes the task of leaders to Mark Twain's navigation of the Mississippi River.

"Mark Twain wrote in *Life on the Mississippi* that one reason he was such a good river boat pilot was that he learned to pilot on the Mississippi River, and the Mississippi River was a river that was always changing. He learned to read the dark, opaque surface of the river to detect shallow water where there had been deep channels on the previous run. He had to learn how to find

"I felt extremely fortunate that I had, throughout my career, individuals who were willing to be mentors and to be leaders I could emulate."

—Ann Die Hasselmo '66

the channel as it shifted its course beneath the muddy river. He could never rely on nautical charts or what he had experienced on the previous run. Each trip was different. In every trip, the river had changed. He had to read the river itself and be prepared for whatever he found. Life is a lot like that, and careers and professions are as well."

As challenging as higher education is and has been, Die Hasselmo loves every aspect of her role helping develop emerging leaders from listening as institutions discuss the pros and cons of candidates for high-level

positions (although she remains neutral) to visiting campuses and learning the culture, people and mission in order to best recommend candidates. She enjoys working with provosts trying to find good deans and presidents searching for chief financial officers.

"I love all of it, and I love getting to address all of the great leadership challenges in the United States and internationally. Sometimes I will hear, 'Oh gosh, these jobs are just so hard. Who will want to do them?' And it's just a delight to meet fresh emerging leaders every year who have an aspiration to make a difference in higher ed, to lead higher ed in using their own knowledge and experience. I'm always

amazed at the talent in any candidate pool in any position."

One of the biggest challenges of Die Hasselmo's job is ensuring that leaders who don't receive job offers are treated professionally, civilly and compassionately. "Sympathy is important so they (leaders) don't become discouraged. Handling the bruised sense of self that the person has and trying to make sure they don't feel it's a failure in themselves is always something to be aware of."

Among the many awards and accolades Die Hasselmo has received throughout her

career, LU's 1986 Regents' Professor Award (now called the University Professor Award) and being named the Regents' Professor of Psychology are the honors she cherishes the most. In appreciation for these awards and her time at LU, both as a student and a faculty member, Die Hasselmo created and funded the Lamar University Faculty Excellence Endowment in 2012. Each awardee holds the title "Ann Die Hasselmo Scholar" for the academic year following their receipt of the award. The endowment created by Die Hasselmo also underwrites the ceremony at which the award is announced. That ceremony includes the announcement of the University Merit Awards.

Die Hasselmo said, "I just want to celebrate the incredible faculty who continue to bring the programs and academic instruction because I so appreciated the wonderful education, very personalized instruction and mentorship I got from so many faculty. And, then being a faculty member at Lamar University, I know the dedication and commitment of those who were my colleagues."

Although not leading a college campus, Die Hasselmo is ensuring the next cadre of leaders in higher ed are well-equipped to take institutions to the next level.

"Working in executive search, coast to coast, public and private, with very talented candidates," she said, "I'm still in some way institution building."



We hope you enjoy reading about former classmates. If you have news to share—a position announcement, milestone, achievement, wedding, baby—or know the whereabouts of a lost alumnus, we want to hear from you.

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50s

Harley Courtney '55, B.B.A. accounting, who also holds an M.B.A. and a Ph.D. in accounting, retired as professor accounting from the University of Texas at Arlington. After retirement, he spent the next four years living in and traveling the U.S. and Canada in a motor home. He and his wife, Ann, live in Dallas.

Gene Martinez Sr. '57, B.S. mechanical engineering, who also holds master's and doctoral degrees in mechanical engineering, retired in 1990 after serving as a professor in the LU Department of Mechanical Engineering since 1959. He was honored as a Regent's Professor in 1975-1976 and Piper Professor in 1980. Eugene is the owner and consultant of Energetics and he lives in Nederland with his wife, Carolyn.

60s

Gov. Abbott appointed **David Beck** '61, B.S. government, to chair the newly formed Texas Commission on judicial selection. Its 15 members are charged to evaluate the merits of alternative methods of judicial selection and produce recommendations to the legislature by Dec. 31, 2020. Beck is founding partner at Beck Redden in Houston, a premier litigation boutique firm. He lives in Houston with his wife, Judy.

Don Moseley '61, B.S. mechanical engineering, is a 15-year sailing veteran, certified captain and sailing/navigating instructor. He lives in Santa Fe, N.M., with his wife, Mary Jane.

Hugh Hayes '63, B.S. physical education, also holds master's and doctoral degrees in education, and is retired after a career in education. He served as a high school counselor, elementary school principal and assistant superintendent in his hometown of Liberty. Hayes also served as superintendent of schools for Lancaster, Texarkana, Ector County (Odessa), Katy school districts and Pascagoula school district in Miss. He also was deputy commissioner for the Texas Education Agency and has been on the Region 4 board for 13 years. He and his wife, Glenda, live in Katy.

Levy Dumas '66, B.S. civil engineering, holds an M.B.A. in operations management and

supervision, and is the executive vice president of SEGMA Engineering. He and his wife, Shereema, live in Sacramento, Calif.

Randy McCollum '68, B.S. physical education, '69, M.Ed. secondary education, retired from a career as a consultant, manager and venture capitalist and lives in Austin with his wife, Nancy.

Tarrant Boyd II '69, B.S. mechanical engineering, is a retired engineer and lives in Romayor.

Tim Mullally Sr. '69, B.B.A. management, is retired and lives with his wife, Arlene, in Dallas.

Reta (Craig) Warren '69, B.S. medical technology, is a medical technologist at KBR Inc., a medical and research laboratory in NASA/Johnson Space Center, where she has worked for 35 years. She and her husband, James, live in Dickinson.

Danny Williams '69, B.S. mechanical engineering, is a retired professional engineer who lives in Corsicana with his wife, Diana.

70s

Jose Berrios '70, B.S. elementary education, who also holds a master's degree in social work, retired from teaching sixth-grade reading. He spends his free time serving as an usher at Amalie Arena in Tampa, Fla., volunteering at a local senior assisted-living facility and as a eucharist minister at a local Catholic church. He and his wife, Jill, live in Tampa.

Wilfred "Buzz" Long Jr. '70, B.B.A. marketing, retired in 2002 after working as a pharmaceutical representative for Pfizer Inc. After graduating from LU, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy and served until honorably discharged in 1975. Buzz has played a major role with the LU Cardinal Club Board and served as president in 2005. He and his wife, Catherine, are involved in the Beaumont community, including the American Heart Association and the Rotary Club. They live in Beaumont.

Jody Chesson '71, A.A.S. drafting technology, is retired from the Department of Energy and his wife, **Janice (Saegert)** '73, B.B.A. office administration, is a retired teacher. They live in Lexington.

Deborah (Dunbar) Lowry '71, B.B.A. secretarial science, who also holds an M.S. in accounting, is an

academic advisor at Southeastern Louisiana University. She lives in Ponchatoula, La.

Paul Turner '71, B.S. mathematics, also holds an M.Ed. in educational administration, and retired in June 2018 from Austin school district after a 47-year career in Texas public education, which included his first position as a math teacher in Newton school district, two principalships at the middle and high school levels in Austin and his last position as executive director of facilities and planning. He and his wife, Falba, live in Austin.

Gene Blanchard '72, B.B.A. marketing, holds an M.B.A. in international business and retired from a marketing career at Rock Bit International in 2003. He and his wife, **Kathy (Williams)** '70, B.A. English., live in Spicewood.

Jim Broadway '72, B.B.A. marketing, is a tax director for Geospace Technologies Corp. He lives in Houston with his wife, Jeanne.

James Collins '72, B.B.A. accounting, retired as a comptroller and training manager from E.I. DuPont de Nemours and lives in Memphis, Tenn., with his wife Mary Louise.

Judy Hammond '72, B.S. communication, '82, M.S. speech, is a highway safety specialist for the U.S. Department of Transportation and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in Washington, D.C. She is responsible for assisting in regional operations and program delivery, delivering technical assistance for highway safety grant programs, managing child safety and highway safety grant programs and overseeing child safety seat inspection sites. Judy lives in Alexandria, Va.

Sam Biddle '73, B.S. chemical engineering, is retired and lives in Bridge City with his wife, Peggy. Their son, Wes '08, B.S. chemical engineering, is a production engineering and expertise manager at Dow Chemical and lives in Groves with his wife, Sherri.

Wilson Lee '74, B.B.A. accounting, is retired and lives in Kerrville with his wife, **Renee (Riegel)** '72, B.A. history, who is a former teacher.

Mike Pate '74, B.S. health and physical education, '93, M.Ed. education, retired after a career as superintendent for West Sabine school district. He lives in Nacogdoches with his wife, Susan.

Charles Grado '75, is a quality control analyst at ExxonMobil Chemical Co. He lives in Beaumont with his wife, Joanie.

Bob Oldham '75, B.B.A. marketing, is president of Oldham Fence Inc. and a U.S. Army veteran. He lives in New Braunfels with his wife, Loretta.

Sandra (French) Clark '76, M.A. English, also holds a law degree, and is a trial lawyer and shareholder/vice president at MehaffyWeber. She joined the company in 1980 and became a shareholder in 1985. In May 2019, she received the Blackstone Award from the Jefferson County Bar Association, which is the highest honor bestowed upon an attorney by peers. She lives in Beaumont.

Bobbie Patterson '76, B.B.A. office administration, is a former Beaumont City Council member and a marketing educational coordinator for the Beaumont school district. She lives in Beaumont.

Kerry Austin '77, B.S. secondary education, retired as master chief petty officer for the Navy. He is owner of Spurlock Rd. Boat & Mini Storage and lives in Nederland with his wife, Virginia.

Donald Brown '77, B.B.A. finance, is a GPM marketing and planning support contractor for ExxonMobil Corp. He lives in Nacogdoches with his wife, Mary.

Cynthia (Angell) Winney '77, B.S. geology, retired from ExxonMobil Chemical Co. after 37 years. She and her husband, Robert '74, A.A.S. drafting technology, recently moved to the Texas Hill Country in New Braunfels to be close to their two grandchildren. She enjoys gardening, special event cooking and time with family.

Morgan (Colburn) Chambellan '78, B.M., music, retired after teaching for 40 years and she lives in La Porte.

Cheryl (Boyd) Linscomb '79, B.S. elementary education, '84, M.Ed. Elementary education, is a first-grade elementary school teacher in Orangefield school district. Her husband, **Walker** '77, B.S. secondary education, is a middle school teacher at Orangefield Junior High School. They live in Orange.

Hyattye Simmons '79, B.S. government, holds a law degree and is a 2017 Distinguished Alumnus. He is a presiding judge in the municipal

court of Combine and associate municipal judge in Seagoville, Texas. He lives in Dallas with his wife, Tina.

80s

Louis Falgout '80, B.S. industrial technology, is vice president of Gulf Coast Fabricators LLC in Beaumont, Texas, where he lives with his wife, Becky.

Jill Scoggins '80, is director of external communications at University of Louisville, and lives in Louisville, Ky., with her husband, David.

Tony Sekaly '80, B.B.A. marketing, who also holds an M.B.A. in marketing, is the marketing director at Texas Class-Public Trust Advisors in Houston, where he lives with his wife, Shelly.

Julie (Mackey) Badger '81, B.B.A. accounting, is the executive director of the Eastern Shore of Virginia Community Foundation in Onley, Va. She and her husband, Henry, live in Melfa, Va., and have a daughter, Bess.

Joel Hannemann '81, B.S. health and physical education, '82, M.Ed. school administration, is an executive director of safety and security at Friendswood school district. He lives in San Antonio with his wife, Lisa.

Darrell Lee '81, A.S. law enforcement, '89, B.S. computer science, is a senior software engineer for Boeing and a published author. He lives in Friendswood with his wife, Yamilet.

Steve Grantham '82, B.B.A. finance, is vice president of commercial banking at Hancock Whitney Bank Trust and Asset Management in Beaumont. He and his wife, **Lorrilea (Kennedy)** '83, A.A.S. dental hygiene, have a daughter, **Raegan** '12, B.M. music—and a son—**Shannon** '16, B.S.N. nursing. Steve has served multiple terms on the board of the Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce and the Southeast Texas Economic Development Foundation, which he served as a chairman. He and Lorrilea live in Sour Lake.

Terry Morton '82, A.A.S. diesel mechanics, is the chief of the fire department in Nederland, where he lives with his wife, Tammy.

Terry Welch '82, B.S. electrical engineering, is CEO of Sinclair

Belgrave Energy in The Woodlands. He lives in Spring with his wife, Janelle.

In March 2019, LyondellBasell named **Randy Tatum** '83, B.S. chemical engineering, site manager of the Morris Complex in Morris, IL, where he oversees approximately 400 employees. Tatum has more than 35 years of experience in petrochemical manufacturing, previously holding manufacturing jobs from director level to business roles in the polymer business. Randy's wife, **Beth (Pratt)** '83, B.S. chemical engineering, is a retired pastor and environmental engineer. They live in Canyon Lake, Texas.

Lisa (Guidry) Crockett '84, B.S.W. social work, holds master's and doctoral degrees in educational leadership and is principal of Tyrell Elementary School in Port Arthur. She and her husband, **Melvin** '85, A.A.S. industrial electricity/electronics, '93, A.A.S. computer electronics & robotics, married on July 26, 2019.

Tim LaBonte '84, B.S. criminal justice, is Rolling Owner Controlled Insurance Program manager at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. He lives in Houston.

Lenny Matthews '84, B.S. chemical engineering, is a global HYCO technical manager at Praxair Inc. in The Woodlands. He and his wife, Danette, live in Conroe.

Sharon (Stokes) Oberst '84, B.S. dance, who also holds a master's degree in dance, retired in 2019 after 32 years of teaching and serving as the chair of the Theatre and Dance Department at Western Oregon University in Monmouth, Ore. She and her husband, John, live in Monmouth.

Allen Runte '84, A.A.S. middle management, '92, B.S. electrical engineering, is a senior maintenance manager at Total Petrochemicals USA in Port Arthur. His wife, **Terri (Nunez)** '84, B.S. elementary education, is an elementary school teacher for Groves Elementary in Port Neches-Groves school district. They live in Beaumont.

Ricky Ryan '84, M.Ed. educational supervision, is a math teacher at Little Cypress-Mauriceville High School and was named the school's 2018-2019 Teacher of the Year. He and his wife, **Demetria (Carter)** '02, live in Orange.

Monique (Decoux) Clark '86, B.S. elementary education, is a teacher and interventionist in the

Nederland school district. She lives in Nederland.

Terry (Roy) Deaver '86, B.S. elementary education, '95, M.Ed. administration, '96, educational diagnostician, was appointed in Nov. 2019 by Gov. Greg Abbott to the board of directors of the School Safety Center. She has 34 years of experience in education and 24 years as a school administrator. She is currently the principal of Silsbee Elementary and Laura Reeves Primary in Silsbee, where she lives with her husband, **Tommy** '84, B.B.A. accounting.

David Dial '86, B.S. mathematics, is a ranch foreman and an avid runner. He is ranked ninth in the U.S. with 203,000 miles ran as of August 2020 and has run in the Boston Marathon. David lives in Groveton, where he manages three cattle ranches with his father.

Beverly (Richard) Robinson '86, B.S. home economics, also holds an M.Ed. in educational leadership, and is the site coordinator at West Orange Stark Academic Alternative Center. She and her husband, Frederick, live in Orange.

Levi Williams III '86, B.S. criminal justice, who also holds an M.Ed. in counselor education, is a structured learning classroom teacher for Beaumont school district, and he lives in Beaumont.

Alan Bone '87, B.S. secondary education, is senior associate director of IT support for Uncommon Schools in New York, N.Y., where he lives with his wife, Melissa.

Lily (Simms) Fanning '87, B.S. elementary education, is an assistant principal in the Cypress-Fairbanks school district. She and her husband, Bob, live in Houston.

Lana (VanPelt) Hughes '87, A.A.S. dental hygiene, is a registered dental hygienist at Atascocita Modern Dentistry and Orthodontics in Humble, where she lives with her husband, Wayne.

Lisa Roedahl '87, B.S. special education teaches in the Port Neches-Groves school district. She lives in Nederland.

Helen Tangires '87, M.B.A. business administration, who also holds a Ph.D. in American studies, authored a book titled, *Movable Markets*, which details America's wholesale food business in the 20th century. She is also the author of *Public Markets and Civil Culture in*



Nineteenth-Century America and *Public Markets*. Helen is the director of the Center of Advanced Study in Visual Arts at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., where she lives with her husband, Dennis.

Tricia (Pope) Kimball '88, B.S. secondary education, is a science and chemistry teacher at Nederland High School. She and her husband, Kyle, live in Nederland. Their daughter, Bella, is a current student in the Reaud Honors College at LU.

Dawn (Vallery) Pollard '88, B.S. elementary education, is retired after teaching 32 years in the Beaumont school district. She and her husband, Sam, live in Beaumont.

Michele (Yennie) Smith '88, B.B.A. accounting, who also holds a J.D., received the Kenneth W. Lewis Professionalism Award from the Jefferson County Bar Association in May 2019. The award is given to a lawyer who exemplifies, by conduct and character, truly professional traits. Michele joined MehaffyWeber P.C. in 1993 and became a shareholder in 1999. Michele and her husband, Mitch, live in Beaumont and both serve on the board of numerous local organizations.

Lester Whiteing Jr. '88, B.S. family and consumer sciences-fashion retailing and merchandising, is community involvement coordinator for the City of Houston, where he lives.

Wade Armer '89, B.S. mathematical sciences, '90, B.S. secondary education, '92, M.S. mathematics, is vice president of engineering at Ohmstede Ltd. in Beaumont, and he lives in Hemphill.

Stephen Floyd '89, B.B.A. finance, is a senior trust officer and specialty

assets manager for American Bank in Corpus Christi, Texas, his 30th year in the financial services field. He lives in Calallen with his wife, Shelly.

Vicky (Beagle) Hartt '89, B.S. secondary education, teaches math in the Nederland school district and lives in Nederland.

Gerald Lasseigne '89, B.B.A. management, is an account manager for ABB in Port Arthur. He lives in Port Neches with his wife, Dorothy.

Mark Porterie '89, B.S. criminal justice, who also holds master's and doctorate degrees in education, has served as the superintendent of Port Arthur school district since 2014. In May 2019, the Port Arthur Cosmopolitan Masonic Lodge 872 awarded him with the 2019 Community Builder Award, citing his stalwart efforts to keep his school system afloat and functioning after Hurricane Harvey. Mark and his wife, Caffrie "Penny," have an adult daughter, Imani. They live in Port Arthur.

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Kristeen (Nichols) Davis '90, B.S. elementary education, is the special education campus coordinator for Northside school district. She lives in San Antonio with her husband, John.

Mark Kordelski '90, B.S. mechanical engineering, is a senior premier field engineer at Microsoft Corp. in Tampa, Fla., and he lives in Polk City, Fla.

Eva (Herndon) LeBlanc '90, B.S. health and kinesiology, '19, M.Ed. school counseling, is a college and career readiness counselor at



Beaumont United High School. She lives in Beaumont with her husband, Dennis.

Evelyn (Rodriguez) Miralles '90, B.F.A. graphic design, is the associate vice president for strategic information initiatives and technology at the University of Houston-Clear Lake.

David Rutledge '90, B.S. mechanical engineering, is serving his second term as mayor of Bridge City. He was elected to the board of directors of the Texas Municipal League and received the Certified Municipal Official Award from TML, one of only 45 awarded in Texas in 2019. David also works as a mechanical engineering consultant at Neches Engineers in Beaumont. He and his wife, Rebecca, live in Bridge City and have two grown daughters.

Amilcar Shabazz '90, M.A. history, holds a Ph.D. in history/African-American Studies and is a professor of African-American studies at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. He lives in Amherst, Mass., with his wife, Demetria.

Jerry "J.T." Toups Jr. '90, B.S. health education, teaches math at George Ranch High School in the Lamar school district. He and his wife, Angela, live in Rosenberg.

Leslie (Cobble) Pember '91, B.B.A. office administration, is an administrative assistant at CHRISTUS St. Elizabeth Hospital in Beaumont. She and her husband, **J. Craig** '93, B.B.A. finance, who works as a senior tech support analyst in the College of Education and Human Development, live in Beaumont.

Jeff Setliff '91, B.S. electrical engineering, is an electrical engineer for Chevron-Phillips. He lives in Port Arthur with his wife, Valarie.

Ray Smith '91, M.E. engineering management, is an engineering and physics professor of practice at Abilene Christian University after 43 years in the industry. He lives in Abilene with his wife, Sarah.

Krysti (Lamm) Dockens '92, B.S. communication disorders, '94 M.S. audiology/speech language pathology, is a speech-language pathologist in Beaumont school district. She and her husband John live in Beaumont.

Eric Hoeny '92, B.F.A. graphic design, is vice president of supply chain management at Alliance Project Services, headquartered in Leesburg, Va. He and his wife, SQUIPE, live in Magnolia.

Ken Mazzu '92, B.F.A. studio art, holds a master's degree in fine art and is a self-employed fine artist. He lives in Houston.

Cynthia Parra '92, B.A. political science, B.A. history, '17, M.Ed. teacher leadership, is the center manager at the Tutoring Center Corp. and she works in retail sales marketing for Acosta. She lives in Galveston.

Paul Gautier '93, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, is managing director of Cary Street Partners. In September 2019, the Association for Corporate Growth welcomed him as one of their 2019-2020 directors at large on the ACG Global Board. He and his wife, Carol, live in Austin.

Gambol (Dodge) Golden '93, A.A.S. computer drafting technology, is the owner of GDS—Golden Drafting Services, in Baytown, where she lives.

Michael Graves '93, B.A. sociology, holds an M.Div. and is an English, sociology and speech teacher in



Goose Creek school district. He lives in Baytown with his wife, Patricia.

Michael Leger '93, A.A.S. nursing, holds a B.S.N., M.B.A. and a Ph.D in nursing, and is an assistant dean, interim track administrator and associate professor for teaching at the University of Texas Medical Branch-Galveston. He and his partner, **Charles Hardy** '95, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, live in Galveston.

Jeff McKinnon '93, B.A. history, B.A. Spanish, '00, M.Ed. counseling and development, is a student data manager and district testing coordinator for Nederland school district. He and his wife, Brooke, live in Port Neches.

Stacie (Cummings) Augustine '94, B.S. political science, '98, M.P.A. public administration, holds a J.D. in law and is an attorney for Strong Pipkin Bissel & Ledyard law firm. She lives in Beaumont with her husband, Dwaine.

Lorrie (Whitley) Taylor '94, B.B.A. accounting, is executive port director and CEO of the Port of Orange. She became the first female to hold the position in Orange when she took the job in April 2019. Previously, Lorrie had been the finance director at the port since 2014. After graduating from LU, she had a 10-year career in public accounting at Cavett, Turner and Wyble. Lorrie and her husband, Claude, have two adult children and live in Orange.

Brook (Bowlin) Hughes '95, B.S. communication disorders, '97, M.S. deaf studies/habilitation, is a teacher/itinerant team leader at Plano Regional Day School Program for the Deaf in Plano school district. She and her husband, Jeff, live in Lewisville.

Jim Salles '95, B.A.A.S. applied arts & sciences, holds an M.Div. and is a retired ordained minister. He and his wife, Sue, live in Athens.

Jennifer (Bensky) Birdsong '96, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, also holds an M.A. in teaching, and is the director of advanced learning at FlightSafety International in Fort Worth. She and her husband, James, live in Denton.

Gordon Friesz '97, B.S. political science, a law degree and is an attorney at Wells, Peyton, Greenberg & Hunt law firm. His wife, **Shelly (Hudson)** '97, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, is a middle school teacher for the Nederland school district. They live in Sugar Land.

Johnna "Rena" (Eslinger) Guillory '97, B.G.S. general studies-liberal arts, is visual arts teacher at Marshall High School in Marshall, where she lives.

Danielle (Olivier) Jackson '97, B.A. political science, '03, M.A. English, is associate principal at Fort Bend-Marshall High School in Missouri City and was named Assistant Principal of the Year in 2019. Her husband **Scott** '94, B.S. criminal justice, '04, M.B.A. business administration, works for the Howco Group in Houston. They live in Nederland.

Stacey Knight '97, B.S.N. nursing, holds an M.S.N. in nursing and a doctorate in nursing practice. She is a director of articulation/assistant professor for the JoAnne Gay Dishman School of Nursing. She lives in Beaumont with her partner, Kami.

Jimmy Vallee '97, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, earned a law degree and is an energy commentator, mergers and



acquisitions attorney, and author who wrote *Giant Shifts: Energy Trends Reshaping America's Future*, which hit No. 1 on Amazon's energy best sellers list. He and his wife, **Kristina** '92, B.S. communication, live in Houston.

Bryan Graham '98, B.S. chemical engineering, holds an M.S. in systems engineering and is the vice president of Atlas Midstream in Houston. He and his wife, **Jennefer (Neely)** '97, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '09, M.Ed. teacher leadership, live in Midland.

Geri (Dauphine) Hotchkiss '98, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, is a third-grade teacher in the Nederland school district. She lives in Nederland with her husband, Jason.

Judith (Binagia) Taylor '98, B.S. kinesiology, is a physical education teacher at Port Neches Elementary School and is in her 23rd year teaching for the district. She lives in Port Neches.

Jason Viator '98, B.B.A. management information systems, holds an M.B.A. in information systems and works in the global people experience – new talent team at Walmart Stores Inc. He lives in Cave Springs, Ark.

Laura Eastep '99, B.S. chemistry, holds an M.D. in obstetrics and gynecology and works for Women Partners in Health as an OB/Gyn. She lives in Austin with her husband, Paul.

Alaric Harrell '99, B.B.A. accounting, who is also a CPA, is assistant controller at Cameron LNG in Houston. He lives in Richmond with his wife, Berdia.

Distinguished Alumni Awards—*Lamar University honored four outstanding alumni as 2020 Distinguished Alumni during a special awards ceremony Feb. 28.*

1. Larry Lawson '12, C.L. Ross '83, Elaine (Norman) Shellenberger '74 and Jimmy Singletary '72

LU Alumni Between-the-Games Basketball Party—*LU alumni and friends gathered Jan. 25 for a between-the-games party and cheered on the Lady Cardinals and Cardinals as they took on Stephen F. Austin.*

2. Baby Nolan Guidry, Julie (Mooneyham) Guidry '07, James Warner '64, '71, Linda (Solly) Warner '67, '75 and Andrew Guidry

TMEA Music Alumni Reception—*Feb. 14*

3. Music alumni and friends enjoyed an after hours networking social at the TMEA Conference in San Antonio

Secret to a Successful Side Hustle—*The Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce along with the Southeast Texas Young Professionals Organization teamed up with Lamar University to present a professional development panel discussion titled "Secret to a Successful Side Hustle" Jan. 30.*

4. Panelists Katie (Whitney) Celli '08, Roy West '83, Jevonne Pollard, Nikki Relford and Natasha Garrett with Moderator Brenna Smith

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Schmeka Andris '00, B.B.A. accounting, is a portfolio accountant at Holt Lunsford Commercial in Dallas, and she lives in Red Oak.

Callie Beauchamp '00, M.S. audiology, is an audiologist and owner of the Worth Hearing Center in Albuquerque, NM, where she lives.

JOIN US ON SOCIAL MEDIA to learn more about university news, alumni events, contests and prizes:

- **@lamarualumni** on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter
- **Lamar University Alumni** group on LinkedIn

ALUMNI SHARE FASCINATING STORIES—from artist John Alexander to broadcaster Larry Beaulieu—during our Digital Alumni & Friends Gatherings. Catch up at **lamar.edu/digitalalumngatherings**.

CARDINAL BUSINESS NETWORK
Are you an alumni-owned business? Call us to get your Cardinal Business Network decal!

John Boone '00, B.S. electrical engineering, is an airborne processor for Raytheon Co. He lives in Richardson with his wife, Dana.

Wendy (Woodall) Gray '00, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, is a teacher at Port Neches Elementary School. Her husband, **Robert** '92, B.S. biology, is senior environmental coordinator at Cheniere Energy Inc. They live in Nederland.

Jenny Richardson '00, B.S. communication, is a teen leadership instructor and head volleyball coach at Georgetown High School. She is also the P.E. and health department chair. In 2019, Jenny was named the Georgetown High School Teacher of the Year. Also in 2019, she surpassed 400 varsity career wins as a volleyball coach. She and her partner, Mike, live in Austin.

Shannon (Pier) Allen '01, M.Ed. school administration, '13, Ed.D. educational leadership, is the superintendent of Beaumont school district. Her husband, **Red** '90, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, is an artist and owner of Red Allen Cowboy Art. They live in Beaumont.

Sheri (Horn) DelMage '01, B.B.A. management information systems, '03, B.B.A. accounting, is an accountant and managing shareholder at Edgar, Kiker & Cross, PC. She and her husband, Douglas, live in Beaumont.

Max Dunlap '01, M.B.A. business administration, is a shareholder withand certified fraud examiner for Reimer McGuinness & Associates. He lives in Houston with his wife, Younghea.

Jennifer (McMullen) East '01, B.S.N. nursing, who also holds an M.S. in nursing, is a family nurse practitioner at Triangle Endocrinology in Beaumont. She and her husband, Matt, live in Nederland.

Michelle (Whitney) Judice '01, B.A. English, '03, M.A. English, '04, B.A. psychology, '18, Ed.D. educational leadership, is an associate professor of English and chair of the General Education and Developmental Studies Department at Lamar State College Port Arthur. In July, Judice was nominated as a Southeast Texas Unmasked Hero for using YouTube to bridge the gap and help her students during the COVID-19 shutdown. She and her husband, Al, live in Bridge City.

Nakisha (Myles) Burns '02, B.S. political science, '04, M.P.A., also holds a Ph.D. in educational administration and supervision and is the public and government affairs manager at Beaumont's ExxonMobil Co. She and her husband, Horace, live in Beaumont.

Alisa (Hicklin) Fryar '02, B.S. political science, is an associate professor of political science at the University of Oklahoma and has been teaching there since 2006. She lives in Norman, Okla., with her husband, Daniel.

Jeremy Hunt '02, B.M. music, holds an M.A. in counseling and an M.B.A. in management and is an HR manager at Yardi Systems Inc. He lives in Dallas with his wife, Annie.

Chris Kovatch '02, B.S. criminal justice, is senior vice president of Bridge City State Bank and was selected as Orange County Citizen of the Year by the Greater Orange Area Chamber of Commerce. He lives in Orange with his wife, Christi.

Vimal Nair '02, M.S. industrial engineering is an assistant division manager for facilities at Freese and Nichols. His expertise includes comprehensive utility audits and system assessments that help drive energy savings and reductions in operations and maintenance costs. Vimal lives in Grand Prairie.

Brian Stampley '02, B.S. psychology, '06, M.Ed. counseling and development, is a licensed professional counselor for Vidor school district. He lives in Vidor with his wife, Aspen.

Abby (Scott) Beebe '03, B.S.N. nursing, is a registered nurse at CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Hospital in New Braunfels. **Jarret** '01, B.S. psychology, is a science teacher and a coach at New Braunfels High School. They live in Canyon Lake.

Brooke (Smith) Deets '03, B.G.S. general studies, teaches math at Little Cypress-Mauriceville High School. She and her husband, Euger, have two sons and live in Orange.

Laura (Ramberg) McNeill '03, B.G.S. general studies, is a teacher for Oklahoma City Public Schools. She lives in Oklahoma City with her husband, Clay.

David Paul '03, M.S. applied criminology, is an assistant director for the Federal Bureau of Prisons in Philadelphia, Pa. He lives in Canton, Miss., with his wife, Pamela.

Charisma Popillion '03, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '07, M.Ed. school administration, who also holds a doctorate in education, is in her second year as principal of Beaumont United High School and her 17th year working in the Beaumont school district—the same district she matriculated through. Charisma began her teaching career as an English, language arts and reading teacher at South Park Middle School. Charisma and her husband, **Byron** -09, who is a police officer for LUPD, have three daughters, and they live in Beaumont.

Tiffany (Weatherford) Spivey '03, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, is a career and technical education family consumer science teacher in Nederland school district. She lives in Nederland.

Bianca (McCloud) Green '04, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, is principal of Oakmont Elementary School in Crowley school district. She and her husband, Christopher, live in Fort Worth.

Patricia (Eaves) Hackman '04, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, returned to the classroom as an elementary gifted education teacher in Illinois in fall 2019, where she lives with her husband, James.

Leatha (Hughes) Hallmark '04, B.S. mechanical engineering, is an operations manager at Marathon Petroleum Co. in Detroit, Mich. She and her husband, Kevin, live in Northville, Mich.

Kelly (Socha) Hansen '04, B.G.S. general studies, received her M.B.A. in 2019. She lives in Alexandria, Va., with her husband, Erick.

Josh Martin '04, B.B.A. marketing, received his superintendent certification in 2019. In Jan. 2020, Rowan and Littlefield publishing company released his first book, titled, *Turning a School Around: Key Considerations for Real Success*. Josh is a capital project manager at Flint Hill Resources. **Stephanie (Cox) Martin** '04, B.B.A. accounting, is an accountant at Richard L. Shorkey Center. The couple lives in Beaumont.

Renwick Johnson '04, B.S. communication, also holds an M.S. in education, is a teacher at Pathways Alternative Learning Center and also a coach in Beaumont school district. He and his wife, Hailey, live in Beaumont.

David Ochoa '04, B.A. political science, '15, M.Ed. counseling and development, is program coordinator at Region 5 Education Service Center, and he lives in Vidor.

Kristin Robbins '04, B.S. health education, '09, M.Ed. administration, '13, M.Ed. special education, is a diagnostician at Macarthur High School in Aldine school district. She lives in Bay City.

Chad Srader '04, B.S. criminal justice, is chief operating officer, and an assistant scout executive at Boy Scouts of America. He lives in Humble with his wife, Demetra.

Aimee (Lieby) Weatherford '04, B.S. criminal justice, '15, M.B.A. business administration, is a product integrity advisor at ExxonMobil Chemical Corp. In August 2019, the United Way of Beaumont and North Jefferson County awarded her with the James T. "Terry" Bourdier Spirit of United Way Award for her commitment to and service on the United Way Board. She and her husband, Eric, live in Beaumont.

Eric Williams '04, is the athletic coordinator and head football and basketball coach for Burkeville school district. He and his wife, **Rhonda** -09, have two sons, Evander and Melik, and a daughter, Trinity. They live in Beaumont.

Brett Winn '04, B.B.A. management, '04, B.B.A. human resource management, who also holds an M.B.A., is a manager of refinery human resources at Valero Energy Corp. in Houston. He and his wife, **Sharlee (Beiter)** -02, B.G.S. general studies live in Houston.

Kevin Barbay '05, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, is an assistant head coach and wide receivers coach for the Central Michigan University football team. He and his wife, Kacie, live in Mount Pleasant, Mich.

Kevin Hussey '05, B.S. criminal justice, works as a state trooper for the Department of Public Safety in Beaumont. His wife, **Robbi (Ackerman)** '06, B.S. psychology, is an eighth-grade science teacher at C.O. Wilson Middle School in Nederland school district. They live in Nederland.

Jesica (Bates) Sykes '05, B.S. family and consumer science-food and nutrition, '19, M.S. speech-language pathology, is a speech-language pathologist at 212 Therapy. She and her husband, Damien, live in Beaumont.

Whitney (Evans) Williamson '05, B.S. communication, holds an M.Ed. in educational leadership and is an inclusion and resource specialist in North East school district. She lives in San Antonio with her husband, Tyler.

Brad Boyette '06, B.G.S. general studies, is a teacher and coach for Weatherford school district. He lives in Weatherford with his wife, Sunnye.

Bharath Eaga '06, M.S. chemical engineering, is a safety and loss prevention engineer at SBM Offshore in Houston. He and his wife, Santhoshi, live in Katy.

Seth Irwin '06, B.S. mechanical engineering, is a maintenance and reliability engineer for Phillips 66 and co-owner of Irwin's Toy Box, a firearms business in Sweeny. He lives in West Columbia with his wife, Wendy.

Helen (Ward-Holt) Mitchell '06, B.S. family and consumer sciences-fashion retailing/merchandising, is a life skills teacher at Wharton Elementary School and a licensed vocational nurse. She and her husband, Benny, live in Damon.

Matthew Rhone '06, B.B.A. finance, B.B.A. management information systems, is a computer systems technician at Structure X in Lake Charles, La. He and his wife, Tammy, live in Sulphur, La.

Samantha Taylor '06, B.A. psychology, '15, M.S. criminal justice, is director of admissions at the University of North Texas. She lives in Denton.

Charlee Anne "Sissy" (Lemons) Yeaman '06, M.Ed. school administration, is principal of Highland Park Elementary School in Nederland school district. In May 2019, she was one of 20 school leaders state wide to receive the 2019 Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Award. Sissy lives in Bridge City and has a daughter, Jensyn.

Glenda (Chavis) Alfred '07, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, retired as a family and consumer science teacher in Port Arthur school district in 2018. She taught culinary arts and hospitality services. She and her husband, Johnny, live in Manvel and have two grown children.

Shane Cantrell '07, B.S. chemical engineering, is a staff planning and optimization engineer at Valero Energy Corp. He lives in La Marque with his wife, Ashley.

Elle (Barnard) Congelliere '07, B.S. psychology, is founder and CEO of Pavé, an international female social club dedicated to genuine connections, empowerment and community development. She is also a freelance special event planner. Elle and her husband, Noah, live in Dallas.

Julie (Mooneyham) Guidry '07, B.S. communication, is in her 11th year of her teaching career and is a fourth-grade teacher at Port Acres Elementary School in Port Arthur. She and her husband, Cole, have two sons and they live in Groves.

Angela (Hollier) Harrington '07, B.S. communication disorders, '09, M.S. speech-language pathology, is lead speech language pathologist at CHRISTUS Health Foundation of Southeast Texas. Her husband, **Allen** -07, is a former pro baseball player for the San Diego Padres and works in the water department for the City of Groves. They live in Port Neches.

David "Mark" Pickett '07, B.G.S. general studies, '18, M.Ed. educational technology leadership, is a life science teacher and instructional support specialist at Tarkington High School in Cleveland. He and his wife, Gloria, live in Thicket.

Kayne Smith '07, B.G.S. general studies, who also holds master's and doctoral degrees in education, is director of transportation for Cypress-Fairbanks school district. He and his wife, Emily, live in Houston.

Chris Swango '07, B.S. electrical engineering, is an aftermarket engineer at Sumitomo Drive Technologies in Lufkin. He and his wife, Angela, live in Huntington.

Ronnie Turner Jr. '07, B.A. psychology, who holds a J.D., is a trial lawyer at Provost Umphrey Law Firm and was named to the 2019 Texas Rising Stars list of top young attorneys, marking the fifth year he earned the honor. He is board certified in personal injury trial law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. Turner and his wife, Brianna, live in Beaumont.

Wesley Biddle '08, B.S. chemical engineering, is a production engineering expertise manager at Dow Chemical Co. in Orange. He and his wife, Sherri, live in Groves.

Nick Cioci '08, B.S. communication, received his doctorate in education in May 2019. He is the assistant registrar for online programs at LU. He and his wife, Sarah, live in Lumberton with their daughter, Blakely.

Kristy (Stanley) Cleveland '08, M.Ed. elementary education, is a P.E. and fine arts teacher at Lumberton Intermediate School and lives in Lumberton with her husband, William.

David Jones '08, B.S. family and consumer science- food and nutrition, received his master's degree in physician assistant studies in 2019 from the University of Utah College of Medicine. He lives in Saratoga Springs, Utah, with his wife, Danielle, and their two children.

Josh LeBlanc '08, B.B.A. accounting, is a CPA/shareholder for Edgar, Kiker and Cross PC. He lives in Beaumont with his wife, Cheryl.

Danielle (Hudson) Sutton '08, B.S. interdisciplinary studies-elementary education, is the creator and designer of Elle Inspired, her custom and handmade design business. Since graduating from LU, she has taught elementary school both in Abilene and in Beaumont. In addition to founding Elle Inspired, Danielle began a Facebook group called Blessed Mommas of SETX, which has grown to be a community for sharing family-friendly events happening in the area and opportunities for donations or service projects for children. Danielle and her husband, Lloyd, live in Beaumont with their three children.

Monica (SanMartin) Cabico '09, M.Ed. administration, is principal of Jefferson Middle School in Northside school district and lives with her husband, Roger, in San Antonio.

Yvonne Clark '09, M.Ed. administration, works in instruction technology support at Henderson High School. She and her husband, Bobby, live in Henderson.

Reginald Collins '09, B.B.A. human resource management, holds an M.B.A. in business administration and is a financial analyst for MD Anderson Cancer Center. He and his wife, **Shatoyia (Lewis)** '10, B.S. nursing, live in Houston.

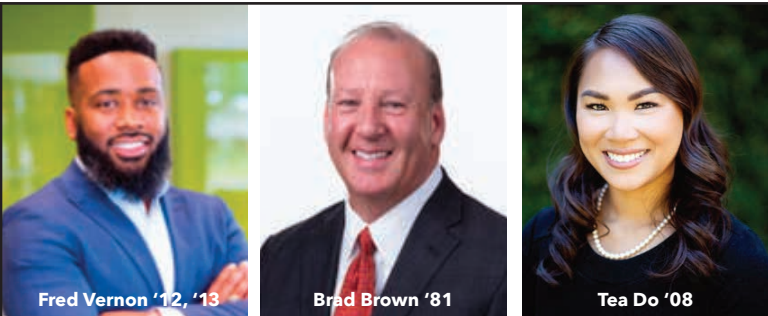
Robin (Shoemake) Hanssen '09, M.Ed. teacher leadership, is a teacher and coach in North East school district in San Antonio, Texas, where she lives with her husband, Rob.

Anne (Olivieri) Leal '09, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, holds an M.Ed. in bilingual education and is a senior special populations program specialist for the Houston school district. She lives in Crosby with her husband, Jesse.

Randi Rawls '09, B.S. psychology, '12, M.S. community psychology, works in children's mental health at Spindletop Center in Port Arthur. She lives in Bridge City.

Janai Sanders '09, B.S. criminal justice, '18, M.S. criminal justice, is the owner and CEO of Jaye's Joy Catering and Meal Preps. She lives in Humble.

Steven Srader '09, B.G.S. general studies, also holds an M.B.A., and is a distribution operations manager at Williams-Sonoma in Arlington. He and his wife, Tonya, live in Crowley.



The Lamar University Alumni Advisory Board has elected **Fred Vernon** '12, '13, to serve as 2020-2021 president. **Brad Brown** '81 of Beaumont will serve as past president and **Nga "Tea" (Nguyen) Do** '08 of Beaumont as president-elect. Alumni Advisory Board members serve three-year terms and support the Lamar University Office of Alumni Affairs as advisors, advocates and ambassadors.



Lamar letterman jacket (ca. 1938) is part of the Morris Cullen “Knobby” English (AA ’40) Collection donated at the first “Lamar 100 Project” digitization day.

Center for History and Culture Seeks Lamar Memorabilia

The Center for History and Culture of Southeast Texas and the Upper Gulf Coast at Lamar University wants your Lamar memories! The Center kicked off its “Lamar 100 Project” with “A Centennial Show and Tell” on Oct. 5, 2019. Alumni and members of the public brought LU memorabilia—mementos, documents, photos, memory books, clippings, testimonies—

for donation or digitization. This was the Center's kickoff event for LU's Centennial, which will be celebrated in 2023. “The event was a real success,” said Judith Linsley ’67, ’77, director of the center. Among other treasures, the center received a ca. 1938 Lamar Junior College football jersey and jacket, as well as a 1960s-era practice jersey (complete with grass stains) and several scrapbooks.

“We encourage people to look in their closets and in storage boxes and share their memories with us. We can also help them with identifying and preserving their treasures,” Linsley said. The center plans another event in spring 2021. The “digitization day” took place in the saloon at Spindletop-Gladys City Museum. Local museum curators assisted center staff with preservation and conservation advice for visitors. Memorabilia collected will be conserved and catalogued as the Lamar 100 Collection and will ultimately become part of Special Collections and the Lamar University Archive at the Mary and John Gray Library on campus.

Collection efforts are ongoing, and we would love to hear from you. For more information about sharing your LU memories, email jwlinsley@lamar.edu or call (409) 651-9802.

Abhilekh Thakur ’09, M.S. kinesiology, is lead physical therapist at Theracare Inc. in Fishers, Ind. He and his wife, Meeti, live in Valparaiso, Ind.

Jennie (Muse) Good ’10, M.Ed. administration, is director of accountability, assessment and special programs for New Caney school district. She and her husband, Mark, live in Porter.

Vamshidhar Kurapati ’10, M.E. electrical engineering, is a software engineering consultant at Mastercard International. He lives in Chesterfield, Mo., with his wife, Manasa.

Jeff Moreau ’10, B.S. electrical engineering, is a senior electrical engineer at Protect Controls Inc. He lives in Montgomery.

Derrick Brown ’10, M.Ed. administration, is the principal of Young Men's Leadership Academy at Phyllis Wheatley, San Antonio's first all-boys public school. The school emphasizes character development and leadership skills. Derrick lives in San Antonio.

Kim Dobie ’10, B.B.A. accounting, is a senior internal auditor at Sysco Corp. in Cypress. She lives in Waller with her partner, Tara.

Jenny (Brechtel) Theriot ’10, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, is an elementary school teacher at First Baptist Academy in Silsbee. She and her husband, Cody, have two children, and they live in Silsbee.

Ernesto Alvarez ’11, B.A. political science, who also holds a J.D., is an attorney at Clark Hill practice group in Houston, working with litigation and immigration law issues. He lives in Groves.

Zachary Celeste ’11, B.B.A. accounting, earned his law degree and is an associate attorney for Wells, Peyton, Greenberg & Hunt law firm. His wife, **Renee (Morris)** ’11, B.A. history, is an adjunct instructor at the Lamar Institute of Technology. They live in Beaumont.

Josh Davis ’11, B.S. criminal justice, ’15, M.B.A. business administration, ’19, M.P.H. public health, is senior director of major gifts for Legacy Community Health. His husband, **Thomas Davis** ’15, B.B.A. advertising communication, B.B.A. marketing, is the owner of Designer Deserts and a baker for Debbie's Delights. They live in Beaumont.

Robert Godinez ’11, B.S. civil engineering, also holds an M.S. in civil and environmental engineering and an M.B.A. in management, and is a facilities engineer at Chevron Corp. He and his wife, Jessica, live in Midland.

Katelyn Hartman ’11, B.S. nursing, received her master's degree in nursing in May 2019 and now works as an advanced practice nurse at Beaumont Emergency Medicine Associates. She lives in Silsbee.

Brannon Kidd ’11, M.Ed. educational leadership, is the principal of Weatherford High School in Weatherford, a role he began in 2019. He started his education career in 1997 and has been a teacher, coach and administrator. Brannon lives in Weatherford.

LaDonna Sherwood ’11, M.P.A. public administration, is the owner of L&L Transport in Beaumont, where she lives.

Revneet Singh ’11, M.E. mechanical engineering, is a facility manager for JLL Real Estate. He lives in Madera, Calif.

Ryan Taylor ’11, M.B.A. healthcare administration, is an administrative assistant at Pacific Post-Acute in Salinas, Calif., where he lives with his wife, Andrea.

Fred Williams ’11, B.S. communication, is a sixth-grade

teacher at Travis Middle School in Irving school district. He lives in Dallas.

Te’Nesha Austin-Jackson ’12, M.Ed. administration, is an assistant principal at Woodrow Wilson High School in Dallas. She lives in Forney with her husband, Courtney.

Brian Boudreaux ’12, B.G.S. general studies, is an environmental, health and safety manager at Fanatics Inc. He lives in Las Vegas, Nev., with his wife, Christie.

Lakeshia (Butcher) Boyd ’12, B.S. studio art, holds a master's degree in curriculum and instruction and is an AP art teacher for Houston school district. She lives in Rosharon with her husband, Brendon.

Mark Davis ’12, B.B.A. accounting, is an accountant at Sun Industrial Group in Westlake, La. He and his wife, Kelly, live in Lumberton.

Meghan Findley ’12, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, is a kindergarten teacher in Irving school district and she lives in Red Oak.

NaQuiyah Hodges ’12, M.Ed. administration, is an intervention specialist in the Fort Worth school district, and she lives in Arlington.

Matthew McGuinness ’12, B.B.A. management information systems, is a business analyst at American Omni Trading Co. in Katy, where he lives.

Jasmine (Castillo) McMullin ’12, B.S. dietetics, is a nutrition consultant for Galveston County Health District. Her husband, **Andrew** ’15, B.B.A. general business, works for the Astros Foundation in Houston. They live in League City.

Henry Rauschenberger ’12, M.Ed. administration, also holds a J.D. and is an attorney at Jones Walker Waechter Poitevent Carrere & Denegre LLP in Baton Rouge, La, where he lives with his wife, **Abby (Davis)** ’06, B.S. communication.

Lauren (Sandefur) Shockley ’12, B.S. criminal justice, ’17, B.S. Sociology, ’19, M.P.H. public health, is a legal assistant at Hohl Law Firm in Spring, where she lives with her husband, Ryan.

Kimberly Adams ’13, B.A. English, is a planning specialist for FEMA. Her family consists of 17 LU alumni spanning three generations. She lives in Pflugerville.

Aleiya (Samad) Bartlett ’13, B.S. chemical engineering, is a process safety engineer at Chevron Phillips

Chemical Co. in Baytown. She married her husband, Andrew, on Sep. 7, 2019, and they live in Humble.

KaNani Coleman ’13, M.Ed. school counseling, is known by her students as Coach Coleman and she is the seventh-grade girls' physical education teacher at Lake Olympia Middle School in Fort Bend school district, where she has taught for more than five years. KaNani coaches seventh-grade volleyball, girls' basketball and girls' track. She lives in Houston.

Jani (Henson) Golightly ’13, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, is a literacy coach in Clear Creek school district. She and her husband, Clay, live in Seabrook.

Lauren (Plaia) Goodhue ’13, B.S.N. nursing, received her M.S.N. in 2019 and is now a family nurse practitioner. She works at Diagnostic Group Integrated Healthcare System in Beaumont, where she lives with her husband, John.

Amy (Vell) Hederman ’13, B.S.N. nursing, received her master's degree in nursing in May 2019, and she works for HCA Healthcare as a nurse. She and her husband, **Michael** ’16, live in Richardson.

Amy (Linscomb) Lakich ’13, M.Ed. school counseling, is a sixth and seventh grade math and science teacher at AIM College and Career Preparatory Academy in Galveston. In the spring of 2019, she was named Teacher of the Year at her school as well as Galveston school district's Secondary Teacher of the Year for 2018-2019. Amy and her husband, Matthew, have a son and a daughter, Andrew and Valerie and they live in La Marque.

Amy Lovoi ’13, B.B.A. general business, ’15, M.B.A. business administration, is senior manager of sourcing and apparel development at Bauer Hockey in Exeter, N.H., and lives in Portsmouth, N.H.

Michael Parrish ’13, B.S. mechanical engineering, is a project engineer at Alliance Engineers & Project Consultants in Beaumont. He and his wife, Holly, live in Orange.

Mandy (Chatagnier) Thompson ’13, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, is a seventh-grade math teacher at Central Middle School in Nederland and was named the school's Teacher of the Year for the 2018-2019 school year. She and her husband, **Michael** ’14, B.S. kinesiology, live in Nederland with their three sons, Cole, Liam and James.

Nicole (Quebedeaux) Toney ’13, B.S. graphic design, is the marketing director at 5 Under Golf Center in Beaumont. She and her husband, Matthew, rescued a dog, Layla, in March 2019 who was featured in a Facebook post that went viral. They live in Bridge City.

Ronnie Wright Jr. ’13, M.Ed. administration, ’15, Ed.D. educational leadership, is a teacher at Dayton High School. He lives in Dayton.

Estela Alvarez ’14, B.S. civil engineering, is a project engineer at RJN Group in Houston, and she lives in Baytown.

Marisol (Sanchez) Barajas ’14, B.B.A. management information systems, is an IT support specialist at Gulf Credit Union in Groves. She and her husband, Javier, live in Port Arthur.

Edward Beck ’14, M.Ed. school counseling, is principal of Wellington Junior High School in Wellington, where he lives.

Kasie (Murff) Dockens ’14, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, and her husband, Jason, welcomed a daughter, Aubrey Lynn, on Feb. 28, 2019. They live in Beaumont.

Ryan Dollinger ’14, B.S.W. social work, holds an M.S.W. in social work and an M.P.A. in public administration. He is a social worker for Hospice Plus and an online instructor for Texas Southern University. He lives in Beaumont with his wife, Amber.

Scott Finley ’14, B.S.N. nursing, is an RN case manager at Compassion Hospice in Jasper, where he lives.

Alice SuAn (Watson) Ingison ’14, M.Ed. educational administration, is an instructional specialist for the Dallas Regional Day School Program for the Deaf in Dallas school district. She lives in Denton with her husband, Steven, and their two sons, Jason and Adam.

Bridget Soden ’14, B.B.A. human resource management, is a human resource generalist at Oxbow Calcining in Port Arthur and she lives in Orange.

Todd Spillers ’14, B.S. criminal justice, is a state trooper for Texas DPS. He lives in Portland.

Julia Stephen ’14, M.Ed. administration, was named principal of Coronado High School in Lubbock school district in May 2019. Prior to beginning her position, she was associate principal at Kennedale High School and assistant principal

at Kennedale Junior High School, southeast of Fort Worth. Her husband, Shane, is the athletic coordinator and head football coach at Lubbock High School, and they live in Lubbock.

Rupali Agarwal ’15, M.S. family and consumer sciences, is CEO and founder of Enhance Your Palate, a healthy vegetarian cooking website where she provides recipes and hosts culinary events. She and her husband, Akhil, live in Mandeville, La.

The Texas Public Safety Commission voted unanimously in May 2019 to appoint **Phillip Ayala** ’15, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, to the position of Texas Department of Public Safety inspector general. He began the role in December 2019. He lives in Leander.

Justin Brock ’15, B.S. kinesiology, ’16, M.S. kinesiology, is a U.S. history teacher and a coach at West Brook High School and he lives in Beaumont.

Doug Curry ’15, B.S.N. nursing, is an R.N. in the Intensive Care Unit at Baptist Hospitals of Southeast Texas. In Jan. 2019, he received the Baptist Way Award for his service above self. On April 13, 2019, he married **Morgan (Hodge)** ’14, B.S.N. nursing, who is also an R.N. at Baptist Hospitals of Southeast Texas. They live in Nederland.

Taylor Duck ’15, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, is an operating room nurse in level 1 trauma at Texas Medical Center in Houston, and lives in Spring.

Ashwin Gaddam ’15, M.E. industrial engineering, is a salesforce consultant at DVG Tech Solutions and he lives in Hillsboro, Ore.

Autumn Hardin ’15, B.S. biology, received her doctor of physical therapy from Angelo State University in 2019. She lives in Deweyville.

Kerri Kalina ’15, M.S. kinesiology, is an associate athletic trainer at East Texas Baptist University and lives in Longview.

Murali Meka ’15, M.E. electrical engineering, is a project engineer at FEV, and he lives in Auburn Hills, Mich.

Vaughn Ogrydziak ’15, B.S. chemical engineering, is a reliability engineer at IKO Industries, a roofing manufacturing business, in Hagerstown, Md., where he lives.

Ashley Patterson ’15, B.S.W. social work, holds an M.S.W. in social work and is a recruiter/adviser at

Lamar State College - Orange. She lives in Groves.

Evan Rawls ’15, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, is a teacher at Lumberton Middle School, and received the school's award for Teacher of the Year in April 2019. He lives in Nederland.

Krista (Adams) Whitmire ’15, B.S. fashion retail merchandising, works in procurement at TXDOT. She lives in Bridge City with her husband, Tyler.

Brady Byars ’16, B.G.S. general studies, is the Kountze High School Lady Basketball head coach. His wife, **Ellen (Rodges)** ’13, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, is a kindergarten teacher at Laura Reeves Primary in Silsbee school district. They live in Silsbee.

Franchelle (Hill) Davis ’16, B.S. communication, is the head girls track coach at Summer Creek High School in Humble school district. She and **Trevon** ’15, B.S. criminal justice, married on March 10, 2019. He is a probation officer for the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department, and they live in Houston.

Robert Ehrlich ’16, B.S. chemical engineering, received his J.D. in May 2019 from Texas Tech University. He works as an attorney for Fish & Richardson P.C. in Dallas. **Emily (Blanke)** ’16, B.B.A. marketing, works as an eCommerce supervisor for United Supermarkets, part of The United Family. The couple welcomed their son, Oliver Robert, on July 8, 2020, and they live in Dallas.

Melonee Fife ’16, B.A.A.S. applied arts & sciences, is a kindergarten teacher at Kountze Elementary School and was named Teacher of the Year for the school in 2019. She and her husband, Brian, live in Kountze.

Chris Hagner ’16, B.S. mathematics, is a business intelligence analyst for the Oklahoma City Thunder NBA team and lives in Oklahoma City, Okla.

Laura Kemp ’16, B.B.A. general business-industrial engineering, is a junior project manager at USA Environment, and she lives in Conroe.

Jacob Martin ’16, B.B.A. management, received his J.D. in May 2019 from Pepperdine University. He works as a financial services professional at Capstone Partners Financial and Insurance Services. His wife, **Harley (Rayburn)** ’17, B.B.A. marketing, is a marketing

| CLASS NOTES |

communications manager at Burdge and Associates Architects. The couple welcomed a daughter, Margot Abigayle, on Aug. 31, 2020.

Abigail Maxwell '16, B.S. exercise science & fitness management, is a registered dental hygienist, and lives in Sour Lake.

Rhonda Meredith '16, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, is a kindergarten teacher at Mae Smythe Elementary School in the Pasadena school district. She and her husband, Scott, live in Houston.

Debra Neville '16, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, attended the Region 5 Teacher Education Program and received her Special Education Certificate to teach. She spent 14 years as a paraprofessional working with special needs students. She lives in Beaumont.

Ebubekir Orsun '16, Ed.D. educational leadership, holds his bachelor's and master's degrees in industrial engineering. After being inspired by a teacher, Orsun started teaching in 2006 and became an assistant principal in 2007 at Harmony Public Schools. After 12 years there, he then served as a district director of talent and engagement for HPS in Austin. Orsun accepted a position in July 2020 in El Paso as assistant area superintendent of college and career for Harmony Public Schools. He and his wife, Secil, live in Horizon City.

Jaclyn Patronella '16, B.S. criminal justice, is a police officer for the City of Orange, where she lives.

Alexander Sanchez '16, M.Ed. teacher leadership, is a K-12 multilingual compliance coordinator for Spring school district. He lives in Cypress.

Sarah Toben '16, B.S. criminal justice, B.S. sociology, holds a law degree and is an associate attorney for Devadoss Law Firm. She lives in Dallas.

LaDonna (Raney) Waters '16, B.S. civil engineering, is a project engineer and engineering assistant at the Texas Department of Transportation. She lives in Beaumont with her husband, Travis.

Ivonne Yuarta '16, M.B.A. business administration-finance and leadership, is an account executive at UPS in Seattle, Wash. She lives in Mercer Island, Wash.

Lacey (Lemons) Baxley '17, M.Ed. administration, is a fifth-grade teacher at Nocona Elementary School. She lives in Nocona with her husband, Jeb.

Caleb Buxie '17, B.S. electrical engineering, is an instrument engineer at ExxonMobil Corp. in Beaumont. He and his wife, Kimberly, live in Nederland.

Joseph Garcia Sr. '17, B.S. criminal justice, is a sergeant with the Palmer Police Department. He lives in Waxahachie with his wife, Maria.

Michael Hegwood '17, B.S. criminal justice, is a concierge for Cambria Health Solutions. He lives in Olympia, Wash.

James Henderson '17, M.Ed. administration, is an assistant principal at Cameron Junior High School. He lives in Cameron with his wife, Adrienne.

Kristy Hixon '17, M.Ed. school counseling, is a third-grade teacher at Lone Star Elementary School in Keller school district. She and her husband, Kevin, live in Fort Worth.

Leah Klemcke '17, M.Ed. administration, is an instructional coach in the Victoria school district. She lives in Victoria.

Manisha Patel '17, B.S. chemical engineering, holds an M.S. in environmental engineering. She works as a process engineer at TechnipFMC in Houston, and she lives in Katy.

Ray Scifres '17, B.A.A.S. applied arts & sciences, '19, M.S. criminal justice, is sheriff with the Hockley County Sheriff's Office. He and his wife, Ashley, live in Levelland with their daughter, Riley.

Alexandra Sokolova '17, B.S. corporate communication, is a drug control and crime prevention intern for the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime in Vienna, Austria.

Carlee Stork '17, B.S. kinesiology, is a mathematics teacher and a coach at Middle School South in Barbers Hill school district. She lives in Baytown.

Phee (Sterling) Thompson '17, B.G.S. general studies, '18, M.S. criminal justice, is a juvenile supervision officer at Brazos County Juvenile Services. She and her husband, Clifton, live in Bryan.

Shiblee Ahmed '18, M.B.A. business administration, is a sales development manager at Parkland USA. He lives in Charleston, S.C., with his wife, Linia.

Javonda Allen '18, M.Ed. school counseling, is in her second year as a school counselor at Golden Meadows Elementary School in Garland. In Aug. 2019, she was named the 2018-2019 Teacher of the Year for her school, having taught prior to transitioning to a counselor role. She lives in McKinney.

Bryce Angell '18, B.S. computer science, is a systems developer at Reynolds and Reynolds in Houston, and lives in Katy with his wife, Ashley.

Nirav Arora '18, M.S. computer science, is a senior developer at Maryland State Retirement and Pension System. He lives in Baltimore, Md.

Ashley Bray '18, B.S. industrial engineering, is a quality engineer at Dow Chemical Co., and she lives in Vidor.

Stephanie Coolidge '18, B.S. mechanical engineering, is a fixed equipment maintenance engineer at BASF in Freeport, where she lives.

John Ellis '18, B.S. computer and information sciences, '19, M.B.A. business administration, is a project management and operations representative associate at Lockheed Martin Aeronautics. He lives in Fort Worth.

Katrina (Routon) Jarvis '18, M.Ed. school counseling, is the district counselor for Rotan schools. She and her husband, Chase, have two sons and live in Rotan.

Chenera Johnson '18, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, is a region supply coordinator for Citgo Petroleum Corp. in Houston, where she lives.

Alvin Lugod '18, M.S. criminal justice, is an assistant probation officer at the Nebraska State Probation Office in Omaha, Neb., where he lives.

Nirav Makadia '18, M.E. mechanical engineering, is a design engineer for Gigawatt Inc. He lives in Poma, Calif.

A.H.M. Noman '18, M.S. computer science, is a software engineer at Datos Technologies in The

Woodlands. He and his wife, **Siham** '18, M.S. computer science, live in Houston.

Karlee (Wilkes) Ogden '18, B.S. psychology, is an admissions counselor at LU. She and her husband, Garrett, had a son, L.A. William, on Feb. 22, 2019, and they live in Kountze.

Charuhas Yogesh Patil '18, M.E. chemical engineering, is an engineer at Validation Associates LLC. He lives in Reston, Va.

Chris Pousson '18, M.Ed. digital learning and leading, is a real estate investor. His wife, **Shannon (McClendon)** '17, B.S. sociology, is a real estate advisor, and they live in Port Neches.

Isaiah Robinson '18, B.S. biology, is a sample analyst at Worldwide Clinical Trials in Austin. He lives in Pflugerville.

Lisa Salyer '18, M.Ed. educational technology leadership, is a math specialist at Oakwood Intermediate School in College Station school district. She and her husband, David, live in College Station.

Amrita Sapkota '18, M.S. computer science, is a software developer at Hazlnut in Jacksonville, Fla., where she lives.

Shelby Strickland '18, B.S. communication-journalism, is the marketing director for Dana Simmons Real Estate. She was featured in a Voyage Houston story on Feb. 27, 2019, talking about her love for photography, especially wedding photography. Shelby lives in Beaumont.

Barbara Thompson '18, M.Ed. school counseling, is a professional school counselor for Polk County Schools. She lives in Kissimmee, Fla.

Autumn Thrasher '18, B.S.N. nursing, is living her dream as a labor and delivery registered nurse at CHRISTUS Southeast Texas Hospital-St. Elizabeth. She credits her nursing instructors for pushing her to be the best nurse she could be. Autumn lives in Raywood.

Tyler Ellis '19, B.S. electrical engineering, is an instrument engineer at ExxonMobil Corp. in Spring., where he lives.

Brenda Hernandez-Iglesias '19, B.S. chemical engineering, is an associate production engineer at Cheniere Energy in Corpus Christi, where she lives.

Ricky Huggins '19, M.Ed. clinical mental health counseling, who also holds an M.B.A. and master's and doctoral degrees in divinity, is a counselor at Your Best Journey in Poteau, Okla. Ltd. and Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. He lives in Heavener, Okla.

Kevin Hunter '19, M.Ed. administration, is an assistant principal in the Bankburnett school district. He lives in Bankburnett with his wife, Kacy.

Kaylee Konidis '19, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, is a fifth-grade reading, language arts and social studies teacher at Port Neches Elementary School. She lives in Groves.

Laura Nunez '19, M.S.N. nursing education, is assistant dean of student learning in the Chamberlain College of Nursing in Pearland, where she lives.

Emily Ochoa '19, B.S. chemical engineering, is a chemical engineer at ExxonMobil Chemical Corp. in Beaumont, where she lives.

Monica Ozuna '19, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, is a sixth-grade science teacher at Cedar Bayou Junior High School in Goose Creek school district, the district she graduated from. She and her husband, **Angel Pedraza** '20, B.S. chemical engineering, live in Baytown.

Kevin Phillips '19, M.B.A. business administration, is the senior director of group sales and ticket operations for the Texas Legends G-League basketball team. He lives in Plano.

Jessica Ringo '19, M.S. kinesiology, is an assistant athletic trainer for men's and women's cross country/track at McNeese State University. She lives in Lake Charles, La.

Ashley Simoneaux '19, B.B.A. management, is a client care consultant at Velosio in Houston, and she lives in Spring.

Stephen Tanton '19, B.S. mechanical engineering, and **Brooke (Crowell)** '14, B.S. speech and hearing sciences, '16, M.S. speech-language pathology, married on March 16, 2019. Brooke is a speech language pathologist at Kids Therapy Set in Vidor. They live in Lumberton.

Ahmad Walton '19, B.G.S. general studies, is a senior project manager at Harris Health System in Houston. He lives in Spring.

In Memoriam

MICHAEL ARLEN LAIDACKER '63, '64

Associate professor of mathematics Michael Arlen Laidacker, 80, of Beaumont, died May 29, 2020. Michael was born Jan. 27, 1940, in China, Texas, to Nelson and Willora Laidacker. After graduating from China High School, he attended Lamar University, where he received his B.S. in physics and his master's in mathematics. He later attended the University of Houston, where he earned his Ph.D. in mathematics. Laidacker worked at NASA for one year and taught at SFA for a short period of time before returning to Beaumont and Lamar University, where he taught for more than 50 years. He was a loving husband to Camilla (Croak) Laidacker '66 for almost 49 years, a devoted father to Monica Pavlich and Margot Laidacker, and a doting Papa to his grandchildren, Riley Sellers and Luke Pavlich. He is survived by his brother, David Laidacker and sister-in-law Becky Laidacker of Fannett; sister, Rosemary Laidacker '69, of Houston; sister, Jolene Hancock and brother-in-law Bill Hancock, of Beaumont; brother Gary Laidacker and sister-in-law Crystal Laidacker of Fate, Texas; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Memorial contributions in his honor may be made to the Lamar University Physics Excellence Fund, P.O. Box 11500, Beaumont, Texas 77710; KVLU radio station, P.O. Box 10064, Beaumont, Texas 77710; Alumni Affairs Lamar University, P.O. Box 10005, Beaumont, Texas 77710; or the Lamar University Mathematics Department, P.O. Box 11500, Beaumont, Texas 77710.

WILLIAM S. “BUD” LEONARD

As a beacon of Lamar's light, William S. “Bud” Leonard '50, '53, '76, will be missed, by family, by friends, by a community and by Lamar University. Leonard, 90, died June 29, 2020. He lit up the stands and the field playing football, first as an offensive guard before earning the leadership spot as co-captain of the Cardinals' 1949 Southwest Junior College Championship team, witnessing Lamar's growth into a four-year college.

He and his wife, Charlene (Matthews) '55, lit each other's lives during their 65-year marriage, which began in 1953. Soon after, Leonard became an aircraft pilot for the Navy, rising to the rank of lieutenant, and light shone on the Wings of Gold he earned from service in California, Hawaii, Guam, Japan and the Philippines.

After his military service came a long career in advertising, but he always kept a light on Lamar, from announcing at football games and

FRANK THOMAS

Lamar University's sixth president Frank Thomas Jr. died Aug. 6, 2020, at the age of 96. Thomas served Lamar University with honor and distinction from 1958 through 1972. He began his academic career in 1951 when he joined the staff of Georgia Tech as an instructor. Thomas came aboard Lamar Tech in 1958 as professor and head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering. In 1961 he was named dean of the School of Engineering, and in 1967 he was promoted to vice president of academic affairs. After the death of Richard Setzer in 1969, Thomas was selected as university president.

When taking the role of president, Thomas told the regents: My ambition is that Lamar, through its service to the community, Texas and the nation will become the pride and joy of every person who lives in our region just as it now is for you, the regents, our faculty, administration and student body.”

Thomas served until 1972, when the Board of Regents distinguished him as the university's first “Regents' Professor.” His family, which includes his spouse, Dorothy (Havens) Thomas '72 and his daughters, Sarah (Thomas) Tutt '71 and Nancy (Thomas) Mclean '73, *wishes for benevolences in his memory to be directed to the General Scholarship Fund at Lamar University online at lamar.edu/give or by check to Lamar University Foundation, PO Box 11500, Beaumont, TX, 77710.*

working untiringly with LU's Office of Alumni Affairs to serving in a number of university administrative roles during the years—easily spotted in his Lamar red polo or jacket. He co-founded the Cardinal Club, serving as its second president in 1970-71, and helped organize the Friends of the Arts, LU's College of Fine Arts and Communication support group. He was inducted into the Cardinals Hall of Honor in 1974.

In 2008, an anonymous donor made a major gift to name the field at Provost-Umphrey Stadium in his honor.

Leonard was without fail a bright light to others—lifetime friends, community volunteers, his church family, LU fans on the sidelines and fellow alumni. He was a beloved guiding light to his son Will, daughter Joni, grandchildren Anne and Claire, and multiple nieces and nephews. *Memorial contributions may fittingly be made to Lamar University athletics.*

In March 2020, 90% of the world's schools closed in 185 countries, which left 1.6 billion children out of school. Overnight, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, all educational institutions everywhere were challenged with providing curriculum in different modalities.

Providentially, Lamar University had already ventured into the online learning space. When Hurricane Ike hit Beaumont only three years after being devastated by Hurricane Rita in 2005, LU began taking degree programs online.

With over a decade of experience in online delivery when the pandemic hit, LU made a smooth transition to online learning. Moreover, its graduates in education, online learners themselves, became the front-line leaders helping K-12 schools across the country move to a digital platform.

"LU became a wellspring of resources with our students, faculty and staff doing amazing things that are helping in all aspects and areas of education during this unprecedented time," said George Saltsman, director of the Center for Educational Innovation and Digital Learning and research associate professor of educational leadership. "With so many of our former students having first-hand experience in online education, they were able to quickly implement similar programs in their school districts when the pandemic hit. As a professor, it is so rewarding to see our students now replicate the quality learning environments we collectively worked so hard to create for them at LU."

LU alumna working in K-12 leadership Barbara Ybarra '16, an associate superintendent of teaching and learning at Bryan ISD in Bryan, Texas, helped her entire district adopt and implement a virtual program practically overnight.

Bryan ISD, a district that generally serves a lower socioeconomic status demographic where a high percentage, 76% of the population, receive free and reduced lunch, had no learning management system in place when the pandemic hit.

The first week of the pandemic, the district purchased Schoology, a program that automatically integrated with the district's student information system. More than 1,200 teachers were trained in a 48-hour period and were completely launched and teaching students online within two weeks.

"We had been researching systems for several years and planned to bring the top companies back this spring for implementation in 18 months," said Ybarra, who also is an adjunct professor in the digital learning and leading program at LU. "We purchased the system within the first week and had it enrolling students by the second. Five weeks in, we have 93.5% of 16,000 students online."

The district created a lead trainer program to train teachers district wide, all virtually, through Google Hangouts. Through slide deck and on-demand video series, the teachers were fully immersed.

"We said to the teachers, 'This is what you're faced with now; we've got to keep going.' They actively rose to the occasion," said Ybarra, who earned her doctorate in educational administration and leadership degree from LU in 2016.

The district did provide content for courses in a starter kit and provided a consistent structure for all classes, which Ybarra learned from her work at LU was essential to helping parents and students navigate in the new online platform.

"First and foremost, I was a student in an online program, and I know what worked for me and really appreciated how courses were structured and the consistency from one course to the next," said Ybarra. "I'm thankful I learned how to develop an easily accessible course."

Bryan ISD's pandemic experience is documented on Facebook at @bryanisd and Twitter at @bryanisd.

| LU EVERYWHERE |

LU LEADS: Teaching and learning online

by Shelly Vitanza

Patience Blythe Creech, a computer science pathway teacher at Elgin High School, Austin Community College Swift coding mentor and LU graduate student, volunteered to help her district when the pandemic broke out. As District Teacher of the Year and with knowledge from her participation in the Apple Community Education Initiative at LU, she wanted to help the district with structuring the remote learning environment.

"I presented ideas and options emphasizing simplicity and ease and access," said Blythe Creech. "I wanted to be a vector for communication more than anything else and created an online video presenting the opportunities that this wild situation presented."

In Blythe Creech's four-part video discussing best practices for teaching online, she encourages teachers not to be intimidated but to "keep calm and carry on teaching," focusing on "engagement and equity." Blythe Creech gives instructions for creating structure in the online environment and how to efficiently and effectively create a digital classroom with clear and concise

objectives and expectations, telling educators they don't need to be coders to offer quality curriculum online but also that there is more to teaching online than offering worksheets as PDFs.

"Teachers need to mind the gap and remember no one is an island. Teaching online exposes gaps in the students' learning habits and behaviors, and so teachers have to be flexible and open to talking to students and helping them reach out for support," said Blythe Creech. "However, online learning brings the world into the classroom, and resources are everywhere. The potential as an online educator is limitless."

While encouraging other educators to keep teaching creatively during the pandemic, Blythe Creech began envisioning education anew. She dreamed of a world where her under-resourced children, many living in rural areas without internet, could connect with school children on different continents and learn about people in different countries, cities and states. Her new educational system of connectivity would invite research and cultivate

interests beyond the classroom and without the pressure of high-stakes tests.

"We have to create this meaningful experience and show students the world through the power of the internet," said Blythe Creech. "We need to connect outside life with inside life in schools. Imagine presenting the whole world through the internet instead of 'do your worksheets for English.' If students are more engaged, they might do better."

In this new educational world, all children would have internet connections and all teachers would know how to use the latest technology tools. "If I was queen of the world, I would make internet a utility," said Blythe Creech. "When I think about how students

fared during this time, I think it hasn't been good. A real barrier is access to internet."

Because Blythe Creech is so familiar with online teaching tools, she assumed other teachers are also, but she learned during the pandemic that many technology tools are used very little. She considers educators' lack of knowledge about available tools one of the 'cracks' in society exposed by the pandemic.

"What's really important to student outcomes is the role of the adults in the room," said Blythe Creech. "The biggest disservice to our kids would be if we went back to doing everything the same. We need to commit to technology as a methodology to see significant improvements. These tools exist so how do we make it work better for kids?"

For more information visit Blythe Creech's blog at blythedesignededucation.wordpress.com.

Until the internet becomes an essential utility, companies like T-Mobile are providing school-age children with free connectivity and LU Cardinal Kiesha Taylor '18 is at the center of the wireless company's initiative.

Taylor, who graduated from LU with her doctorate in educational leadership, is the national education administrator for T-Mobile overseeing, among other initiatives, the Project 10 Million, a 10-year commitment to students designed to provide free internet service and free Wi-Fi hotspots to 10 million student households in need across the country.

"T-Mobile has made a pretty tremendous commitment in the educational space," said Taylor. "We'll infuse \$10.7 billion into student connectivity, which emphasizes access and academic achievement, attendance, acquisition of vocabulary and building literacy."

Project 10 Million is designed to give underrepresented students access to be educated online. T-Mobile also has unlimited data options for school districts to purchase for minimal monthly fees of \$12 to \$15.

"The impact is bigger than just the student; it's the whole community," said Taylor. "We're giving access to parents who can now look for jobs; single moms and dads can apply for government assistance and look up bus schedules; and grandparents can access telehealth."

To date, T-Mobile's Project 10 Million has given 1.7 million school children across the country in 3,500 school districts free internet connectivity, including 19,000 connected students in Beaumont ISD. Additionally, the company has leveraged its buying power as a Fortune 100 company to provide families in need with at-cost Wi-Fi and at-cost Chromebooks, PCs and tablets to families whose children are eligible for Project 10 Million in their school districts.

"There is no cost to parents," said Taylor. "I talk to groups who can't believe what we're doing is real, but it is. We're shipping out millions of devices and working in strategic partnerships to impact whole communities, not just the child."

For providing two million students across the country with vital mobile connectivity during the pandemic, the Federal Communications Commission commissioner honored Taylor as a 2020 Digital Equity Innovator.



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Boone honored as first Wooster Professor

by Shelly Vitanza



Rebbecca Boone, professor of history, is the recipient of the first Dr. Ralph and Edna Wooster Endowed Professorship. Boone will hold the position for two years.

The Wooster Professorship was established, first, to honor Ralph A. Wooster, a gifted teacher who served LU as a faculty member and as dean of faculties and associate vice president for academic affairs, and, secondly, to promote excellence in teaching and research among faculty in the Department of History.

"This is a great honor," said Lynn Maurer, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. "Dr. Boone was chosen for her well-rounded approach to service, teaching and research at Lamar University."

Like Wooster, Boone teaches history and is chair of the department. She has been a member of the LU faculty since 2002. "Dr. Wooster was a kind man of integrity who inspired the best in people. I am honored to continue his legacy as the first Dr. Ralph and Edna Wooster Endowed professor," Boone said. "Being named the first Wooster professor inspires me to be a better historian, teacher and administrator."

Boone teaches courses on the Renaissance and Reformation, Early Modern Europe, the French Revolution and Napoleon, the Atlantic World, Witchcraft and the Occult, Ancient

Greece and Rome, and the History of Food, among others.

Boone's "Issues in World Cultures II" course was cited as exemplary by the Center for Educational Policy Research. An intellectual and cultural historian, Boone researches the relationship between information and state power in the early modern world. Her books include *War, Domination, and the Monarchy of France: Claude de Seyssel and the Language of Politics in the Renaissance*, *Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of the Spanish Empire and Real Lives in the Sixteenth Century: A Global Perspective*. She also is the general editor of a five-book series on global history, *Real Lives in Global Perspective*. In 2018, Boone was awarded a grant from MIT and the Andrew Mellon Foundation to complete a module for the Global Architectural History Teaching Collaborative.

Boone plans to use the resources of this endowed professorship to conduct two major projects in the field of global history. She will use a semester course release to resume work on editing the five-volume series, which is under contract with Routledge and is intended for undergraduate students in world history courses. She also will use the professorship to continue original research on a global history of apocalypticism, which will enhance a course she currently teaches on the era of the witch trials as well as another course she is developing on world revolutions.

"Through teaching global history, I have endeavored to bring the world to our students and to bring our students into the wider world," said Boone.

Wooster earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Houston and

his Ph.D. from the University of Texas. He joined the LU faculty in 1955 after serving in the U.S. Army's Historical Division where he was given top secret and cosmic (NATO) clearance while stationed in Heidelberg, Germany.

While at LU, Wooster received several teaching awards and was renowned for never referring to notes in his lectures. In addition to more than 70 scholarly articles and more than 100 book reviews, he wrote or edited 11 books. The latest edition of his textbook, "Texas History" (2016), was the most widely adopted seventh-grade Texas history text in public schools.

After serving as chair of the History Department in 1976, Wooster became dean of graduate studies, and later served as dean of faculties and associate vice president for academic affairs. He was a fellow of the Texas State Historical Association and former president of the East Texas Historical Association, the Texas Association of College Teachers and the Texas State Historical Association. Upon his retirement following fifty-two years of teaching, Wooster was named Distinguished Professor of History Emeritus by the Texas State University System Board of Regents in 2006.

Wooster's son, Robert, established the professorship in memory of his father who died in 2019.

"For years I went to lunch with Professors Wooster, Sutton, Anderson and Serrat at Kampus Korner every Tuesday, and I still cherish the stories and warm hospitality shown by these amazing colleagues, many of whom I miss dearly," said Boone. "I strive to bring that sense of camaraderie, goodwill and unity of purpose to the faculty and students in the History Department."