Now is the time to invest in Lamar, invest in our students, invest in the future of Southeast Texas...

Encore CD available now

Tracks include:
- How High The Moon
- My One And Only Love
- Take The 'A' Train
- The Girl From Ipanema
- Proud Mary
- I'm Gonna Sit Right Down
- And Write Myself A Letter
- The Lady Is A Tramp
- Crazy

Last May, the Jimmy Simmons & Friends Encore concert made history as it accompanied a Lamar University landmark announcement: the launch of Investing in the Future—The Campaign for Lamar University. Loyal alumni and friends of the university are working to help Lamar reach an overall, historic $100 million goal.

Concert-goers enjoyed an evening of spectacular entertainment as an all-star lineup of alumni musicians lit the stage, with audience-pleasing selections that ran the gamut from big-band, ballads and blues to country and contemporary. More than 20 top talents graced the stage, representing five decades of musical excellence at Lamar.

Recapture the exciting sounds of the evening with this two-CD set. ONLY $25.00

Call today to order.
(409) 880-8921 or (800) 298-4839
Lamar.edu/alumni

Couple’s $6 million gift prompts chemical engineering, press box name gain

$4 million gift from law firm, couple spurs stadium naming

Putting the bite on super bugs, researcher probes alligator immunity
From the President

These are exciting days at Lamar University. We have again set an enrollment record, possible because of steady on-campus numbers and incredible growth in the education master’s program offered in partnership with Higher Education Holdings.

The response to Lamar’s Investing in the Future campaign has been phenomenal—with $84 million raised toward the $100 million goal—and enthusiasm remains strong despite the economic challenges of late.

We recently celebrated a $3 million gift from Provost-Umphrey Law Firm and an additional $1 million gift from Walter and Sheila Umphrey. In recognition of the generosity of the partners, football will return to Lamar in Provost-Umphrey Stadium.

Future reports of the gamesmanship of the Cardinals on the gridiron will be dispatched way—and there is more to come. From renovation to new construction, it has been decades of the Red and White.

The campus community joined in remembering the legacy of long-time educator, administrator and former LU interim president W. Brock Bentzinger, who died Feb. 19. His association with Lamar began in 1969 as dean of the School of Fine Arts and continued with service as interim president in 1992. He later shared his experience and insight as a special associate with Lamar began in 1969 as dean of the School of Fine Arts and continued with service as interim president in 1992. He later shared his experience and insight as a special associate with Lamar.

Thank you for all you do for Lamar University. Your support makes a real difference!

With Cardinal Pride,

James M. Simmons
President
Lamar University
The Lamar engineering faculty has produced one of the strongest and most successful women in the petroleum business. Anita Riddle helped start her career as a chemical engineer in Texas in the early 1990s. She has contributed to her alma mater in several areas, including endowed scholarships, and she has continued to support Lamar in retirement. She was named U.S. manufacturing procurement manager and global advisor for ExxonMobil in 2015. She is a member of the College of Engineering and executive associate at the University of Arizona, and she has been a member of ExxonMobil’s Women’s Development Council since 2006.

Riddle graduated from Cornell with a chemical engineering degree in 1993 and completed her master’s degree in engineering management in 1995. She returned to Lamar in 2003 and served as the acting executive director of the Lamar Development Foundation for three years. She is an active member of the Lamar Foundation and has served on the Lamar University Foundation Board of Trustees since 2007.

In 2016, Riddle was named a “Woman to Watch” by the Society of Women Engineers, and she was named one of the “Women of Distinction” by the Lamar University Women’s Center. She is also a member of the Lamar University Women’s Center Advisory Board and has served on the board of directors for the Lamar University Women’s Center since 2012. She is a member of the Lamar University Women’s Center Advisory Board and has served on the board of directors for the Lamar University Women’s Center since 2012.

Riddle has been heavily involved in Lamar University’s Climate Action Plan and has been a key supporter of the university’s efforts to address climate change. She is a member of the Climate Action Plan Steering Committee and has served on the Climate Action Plan Implementation Task Force. She is also a member of the Lamar University Climate Action Plan Steering Committee and has served on the Climate Action Plan Implementation Task Force. She is also a member of the Lamar University Climate Change Committee.

Riddle has made significant contributions to Lamar University’s Development Foundation, and she has been a member of the Lamar University Development Foundation Board of Directors since 2012. She is a member of the Lamar University Development Foundation Board of Directors and has served on the board of directors for the Lamar University Development Foundation since 2012.

Riddle has been heavily involved in Lamar University’s Climate Action Plan and has been a key supporter of the university’s efforts to address climate change. She is a member of the Climate Action Plan Steering Committee and has served on the Climate Action Plan Implementation Task Force. She is also a member of the Lamar University Climate Action Plan Steering Committee and has served on the Climate Action Plan Implementation Task Force. She is also a member of the Lamar University Climate Change Committee.

Riddle has been heavily involved in Lamar University’s Climate Action Plan and has been a key supporter of the university’s efforts to address climate change. She is a member of the Climate Action Plan Steering Committee and has served on the Climate Action Plan Implementation Task Force. She is also a member of the Lamar University Climate Action Plan Steering Committee and has served on the Climate Action Plan Implementation Task Force. She is also a member of the Lamar University Climate Change Committee.

Riddle has been heavily involved in Lamar University’s Climate Action Plan and has been a key supporter of the university’s efforts to address climate change. She is a member of the Climate Action Plan Steering Committee and has served on the Climate Action Plan Implementation Task Force. She is also a member of the Lamar University Climate Action Plan Steering Committee and has served on the Climate Action Plan Implementation Task Force. She is also a member of the Lamar University Climate Change Committee.

Riddle has been heavily involved in Lamar University’s Climate Action Plan and has been a key supporter of the university’s efforts to address climate change. She is a member of the Climate Action Plan Steering Committee and has served on the Climate Action Plan Implementation Task Force. She is also a member of the Lamar University Climate Action Plan Steering Committee and has served on the Climate Action Plan Implementation Task Force. She is also a member of the Lamar University Climate Change Committee.

Riddle has been heavily involved in Lamar University’s Climate Action Plan and has been a key supporter of the university’s efforts to address climate change. She is a member of the Climate Action Plan Steering Committee and has served on the Climate Action Plan Implementation Task Force. She is also a member of the Lamar University Climate Action Plan Steering Committee and has served on the Climate Action Plan Implementation Task Force. She is also a member of the Lamar University Climate Change Committee.

Riddle has been heavily involved in Lamar University’s Climate Action Plan and has been a key supporter of the university’s efforts to address climate change. She is a member of the Climate Action Plan Steering Committee and has served on the Climate Action Plan Implementation Task Force. She is also a member of the Lamar University Climate Action Plan Steering Committee and has served on the Climate Action Plan Implementation Task Force. She is also a member of the Lamar University Climate Change Committee.

Riddle has been heavily involved in Lamar University’s Climate Action Plan and has been a key supporter of the university’s efforts to address climate change. She is a member of the Climate Action Plan Steering Committee and has served on the Climate Action Plan Implementation Task Force. She is also a member of the Lamar University Climate Action Plan Steering Committee and has served on the Climate Action Plan Implementation Task Force. She is also a member of the Lamar University Climate Change Committee.

Riddle has been heavily involved in Lamar University’s Climate Action Plan and has been a key supporter of the university’s efforts to address climate change. She is a member of the Climate Action Plan Steering Committee and has served on the Climate Action Plan Implementation Task Force. She is also a member of the Lamar University Climate Action Plan Steering Committee and has served on the Climate Action Plan Implementation Task Force. She is also a member of the Lamar University Climate Change Committee.

Riddle has been heavily involved in Lamar University’s Climate Action Plan and has been a key supporter of the university’s efforts to address climate change. She is a member of the Climate Action Plan Steering Committee and has served on the Climate Action Plan Implementation Task Force. She is also a member of the Lamar University Climate Action Plan Steering Committee and has served on the Climate Action Plan Implementation Task Force. She is also a member of the Lamar University Climate Change Committee.

Riddle has been heavily involved in Lamar University’s Climate Action Plan and has been a key supporter of the university’s efforts to address climate change. She is a member of the Climate Action Plan Steering Committee and has served on the Climate Action Plan Implementation Task Force. She is also a member of the Lamar University Climate Action Plan Steering Committee and has served on the Climate Action Plan Implementation Task Force. She is also a member of the Lamar University Climate Change Committee.

Riddle has been heavily involved in Lamar University’s Climate Action Plan and has been a key supporter of the university’s efforts to address climate change. She is a member of the Climate Action Plan Steering Committee and has served on the Climate Action Plan Implementation Task Force. She is also a member of the Lamar University Climate Action Plan Steering Committee and has served on the Climate Action Plan Implementation Task Force. She is also a member of the Lamar University Climate Change Committee.
Cardinal Stadium reborn
Provost Umphrey fashions new facade

by Beth Gallaspy

When the Lamar University Cardinals return to the gridiron, it will be thanks in large part to the generosity of donors like Walter Umphrey and his partners at Provost Umphrey law firm.

“It’s very clear to all of us that we would not be talking about football if it wouldn’t be for the wonderful support we’ve received from our friends, donors and alumni from this region and across the state,” said President James Simmons. “You have to single out this gift as the cornerstone of the project. Some wonderful people have also stepped in to help us get to the total we needed to make it possible.”

In recognition of a $3 million gift from the Beaumont-based law firm and an additional $1 million from Umphrey and his wife, Sheila, the name “Provost Umphrey Stadium” will grace the soon-to-be-renovated facility where fans will cheer on the Cardinals. The gifts are part of LU’s $100 million Investing in the Future comprehensive campaign.

Umphrey, a Port Arthur native who founded the law firm in 1969 with David Provost, said he and the five senior partners all agreed that making the donation was a valuable investment in the region.

“We feel that Lamar University is the future of Southeast Texas, and, to have a complete university, you have to have a complete athletic program,” Umphrey said. “It attracts students and creates interest. It’s a stimulant for them to live on campus.”

A former athlete himself, Umphrey received a football scholarship to Southern Methodist University, where he began his studies before finishing his undergraduate and law degrees at Baylor University. Sheila Umphrey, who owns The Decorating Depot Inc., studied art at the University of Colorado and at Lamar. The couple had nothing but praise for recent progress at Lamar University, where he earned a few English credits in summer classes and where their son graduated.

“Jimmy Simmons has done a heck of a job since he’s been president,” Umphrey said. “He has done magnificent things in regards to having several dormitories built, the recreation center, the president,” Umphrey said. “He has done magnificent things in regards to having several dormitories built, the recreation center, the physical conditioning room, and a large trainers’ area for taping up players and rehabilitation of injuries, McCaig said. Storage for field equipment and players’ gear will be inside the athletic building. The building will house football coaches’ offices, a sizable weightlifting and physical conditioning room, and a large trainers’ area for taping up players and rehabilitation of injuries, McCaig said. Storage for field equipment and players’ gear will be inside the athletic building.

Both the stadium project and the construction of the new athletic complex are expected to take 12 to 14 months. During the renovation, the facility will get all new bench seating, new restrooms, new concession stands and a new walking surface beneath the bleachers. A major component of the project will involve making the stadium more accessible for the disabled. Ramps will be modified to lower the slope, making movement easier for those in wheelchairs. Additional seating for the disabled will be part of the finished facility. Throughout the stadium, concrete surfaces will be repaired, and insulation will be replaced. The playing field will see improvements, including artificial turf for the field, new goalposts and a new scoreboard to keep track of Cardinal touchdowns. New lighting will be installed throughout the stadium. Gerald McCaig, associate vice president of facilities management and operations said fans who visit the stadium after the upgrade “will definitely see the difference.”

The dramatic stadium upgrade is expected to take 12 to 14 months. During the renovation, the facility will get all new bench seating, new restrooms, new concession stands and a new walking surface beneath the bleachers. A major component of the project will involve making the stadium more accessible for the disabled. Ramps will be modified to lower the slope, making movement easier for those in wheelchairs. Additional seating for the disabled will be part of the finished facility. Throughout the stadium, concrete surfaces will be repaired, and insulation will be replaced. The playing field will see improvements, including artificial turf for the field, new goalposts and a new scoreboard to keep track of Cardinal touchdowns. New lighting will be installed throughout the stadium. Gerald McCaig, associate vice president of facilities management and operations said fans who visit the stadium after the upgrade “will definitely see the difference.”

The stadium project goes hand-in-hand with construction of a new athletic complex. Construction of the new building will follow the same timeline as the stadium renovation. Home and visitors locker rooms will be inside the athletic complex. The building will house football coaches’ offices, a sizable weightlifting and physical conditioning room, and a large trainers’ area for taping up players and rehabilitation of injuries, McCaig said. Storage for field equipment and players’ gear will be inside the building as well. Plans for the new facility include several meeting rooms for studying game films and playbooks and for players to focus on their academic studies. Together, the two projects to provide a home for Cardinal football will cost an estimated $26 million, of which $7.5 million has come from private donors, including Provost Umphrey law firm.

“We didn’t give the gift necessarily for football. We did it for Lamar University,” Umphrey said when the gift was announced. “(The partners) thought it was a great idea.”
Football fans

Charline Dauphin loves young folks, football, and big, good-looking coaches and athletes. So when she met Lamar University’s head football coach, Ray Woodard, last year at a function in Silsbee, where he has his home and where she has lived for more than 40 years, she immediately had a soft spot for him. “He’s just a sweetheart,” Dauphin said. “I loved Ray immediately.”

She knows Ray Woodard so well that she and her daughter, Robin Dauphin, decided to make a donation to help revive the Cardinals’ football program after a 20-year absence. In honor of their gift through the Sidney and Charline Dauphin Foundation, LU’s new athletic complex will include the Charline and Robin Dauphin Football Office Suite. The $200,000 gift is part of LU’s $100 million Investing in the Future comprehensive campaign. Dauphin created the Charline and Sidney “Chief” Dauphin Cancer Screening & Prevention Center at Memorial Hermann Baptist Beaumont Hospital. She also has generously supported M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, where she serves on the University Cancer Foundation Board of Visitors with former president George H.W. Bush. She and other board members have been guests of the Bush family in Kennebunkport, Maine.

Along with her gift to LU’s football program, Dauphin last year provided support to Silsbee High School to build the Sidney “Chief” Dauphin Silsbee Tiger Field House, a gift she knows would have pleased her husband, who coached at the school. “I hadn’t even planned that,” she said. “I’m pretty spontaneous.”

Dauphin sees athletics as an important part of education at both the high school and college levels. “I’ve seen so many kids as my daughter was growing up and when Chief was coaching that if they didn’t participate in sports, then they were out on the streets—smoking, drinking, whatever,” she said. “If students play a sport, they will learn some discipline and, with any luck, be too exhausted to get into trouble, she said. Dauphin had no interest in playing sports when she was a student, but her lengthy practices as a Rangerette at Kilgore College were an "endurance test." She said, "I would have done the same thing, but then we worked out for three hours every day . . . . " she said, recalling being too tired to move, much less run out to party. Athletics—whether football or some other sport—taught her the geometry of liquid surfaces in conditions of weightlessness. "A willingness to work hard and learn from others is critical to success in any field," Dauphin said. "This is a wonderful opportunity not only for me but for future students who want to do something extraordinary and experience something that they might not be able to do if it wasn’t for his contribution. He’s making so many people’s dreams become reality," Mikel said.

"This is a wonderful opportunity not only for me but for future students who want to do something extraordinary and experience something that they might not be able to do if it wasn’t for his contribution. He’s making so many people’s dreams become reality," Mikel said.

Four finalists for the fellowship also were recognized at the ceremony.

Michael Hennigan, a physics major from Anahuac, proposed a research trip to a NASA test site in Ohio to further his ongoing study of the geometry of liquid surfaces in conditions of weightlessness. Rajee Jana, a chemical engineering major from Baytown, proposed traveling to East China University of Science and Technology in Shanghai to work as a research assistant studying the molecular assembly of surfactants in water and air interfaces. Garrett Roy, a nursing major from Groves, proposed traveling to South Africa for a six-week AIDS/HIV education and awareness internship through Cross Cultural Solutions. Cynthia Alissa Weber, an international business major from Sugar Land, proposed spending the summer at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., to take professional studies courses and immerse herself in deaf culture.

Applications for the fellowship will be due each year. Twelve officers with fellows named each November. For more information on the David J. Beck Fellowship, visit lamar.edu/beckfellowships or call (409) 880-8400. —BG
$6 million gift benefits engineering, athletics

Welcome to the Dan F. Smith Department of Chemical Engineering

by Brian Sattler

A s president and chief executive officer of Lyondell Chemical Co., Dan F. Smith ’69 supported Lamar’s chemical engineering department through scholarships and saw that his company provided a leader in providing internship opportunities for promising students. He considers his own co-op experiences while a student at Lamar a valuable tool that enabled him to gain first-hand application of the concepts and practices he was learning in the classroom.

Beginning now, current and future students will develop their own prowess in the Dan F. Smith Department of Chemical Engineering. The department will bear Smith’s name in recognition of a $5 million gift from Dan and Sandra Smith to the College of Engineering, President James Simmons announced to an appreciative crowd gathered in the Cherry Engineering Building March 19.

Among those in attendance were their daughter, Brooke Lenker; her husband, Matt; and their children, Ethan, Charles and Abigail Kate, of Kingswood; The Smiths’ son, Andrew; and his wife, Lindsay, of Van Nuys, Calif., were unable to attend.

The couple gave an additional $1 million gift to the university to assist in the return of football to Lamar (see sidebar story). The combined $6 million gift adds significantly to the university’s investing in the future $100 million campaign, which has now reached the $54 million mark. Smith serves as a member of the university’s campaign cabinet.

“I’ve seen the department come a long way over the past few years under the current leadership both at the college and university level,” said Smith, who serves on the College of Engineering Advisory Council. “I’d like to see them continue to excel. I hope to help in that regard with the gift.”

Smith served as president, CEO and chairman of Lyondell from 1996 to January 2008 when Lyondell Chemical Co. became a subsidiary of LyondellBasell Industries AF S.C.A. Before the merger, Lyondell was North America’s third largest, independent, publicly traded chemical company and a global leader in the manufacture of chemicals and polymers. At the time of the sale, Lyondell’s combined assets totaled approximately $20 billion with sales of more than $30 billion annually.

Unfortunately, the new owners sought Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in January 2009 for its U.S. operations and for Basell Germany Holdings GmbH, one of its European holding companies, amid a heavy debt load and plunging sales. Chapter 11 bankruptcy allows a company to restructure debt and continue operating.

During Smith’s tenure at the helm of Lyondell, the company was recognized in 2007 by The Princeton Review as one of the nation’s best companies for college graduates to begin their careers. Entry-level employees are trained quickly into essential and important projects thus providing exciting challenges for young minds.

When Smith retired from Lyondell, he accepted a position as chairman of the board of directors for Kraton Polymers LLC: a private company owned by two equity firms. Kraton polymers are used in a wide range of applications including adhesives, coatings, consumer and personal care products, sealants, lubricants, medical, packaging, automotive, paving, roofing and footwear products. Kraton production facilities are located in the United States, Germany, France, The Netherlands, Brazil and Japan.

“I’ve been doing that over the course of the last year and three months,” Smith said. “At the same time I’ve been looking at other opportunities in the investment world, including the possibility of running another company, but I haven’t found what I’m looking for yet.”

Lyondell provided funding support for the Advanced Process Control Lab that is now a part of the curriculum for chemical engineering majors. In the lab, Lamar instructors can recreate the control room environment of a chemical processing plant to provide hands-on experience without ever leaving the classroom. Students gain experience monitoring the functions of the control room and get practice in solving problems that will occur. With this equipment, instructors can program specific types of process failures, which the students must recognize and resolve.

“We can simulate a chemical process plant’s control-room environment, including those dynamic interactions, without the actual facility,” said Petron Richmond, associate professor in the chemical engineering department at Lamar. “Those operator consoles are central to operating any type of chemical facility.”

The Dan F. Smith Department of Chemical Engineering offers the Bachelor of Science degree, two options for the Master of Science degree, the Doctor of Engineering degree, and in 2007 graduated Lamar’s first Ph.D. student in the new doctoral program in chemical engineering. The program was ranked first in the nation in 2006 for the total number of master’s degree graduates and second in the nation in 2007.

“Dan Smith has been a long-time huge supporter of the College of Engineering in many ways,” said Jack Hopper, dean of the college. “This generous endowment will provide the opportunity to make great strides in the intellectual capacity and cutting-edge research in the chemical engineering department. This gift will give the department a high profile across the nation because of the name recognition of Dan Smith.”

View from the Press Box

Crowds of exuberant fans at Cardinal Football games will cheer on the Red and White on the W.S. "Bud" Leonidas Field … overhead, legions of sports reporters will gather the latest stats, analyze the strategies and capture spectacular highlights in the Dan F. and Sandra A. Smith Press Box in the newly named Provost-Umphrey Stadium.

The genesis of the $1 million gift toward football was a conversation where President Simmons "brought me up to date on what was going on with football and campus life," Dan Smith said. "My wife and I dated for a short period of time before we became engaged and that was during basketball season; and we made good use of those student passes," Smith said. "For poor students like us that was our date.”

While the sport is different, making the connection in a slam dunk. Enjoying athletics together became a part of their shared college experience and one they would always treasure, he said. "Earl Dow played on the team that year, and they beat the University of Houston (71-65 in overtime) after UH had beat UCLA. So that was a pretty neat year.”

"If you're missing out on sports then you're probably missing out on some students you could recruit who are looking for that as a part of student life," Smith said. Not having a football team has created a "hole since we discontinued it.”

"Students will really enjoy having football as a part of student life," Smith said.

I got my start in business with the degree I earned at Lamar. —Dan Smith

THE CORRIDOR / LUMBerton ACADEMY
LU strengthens admissions standards

Beginning Jan. 1, 2009, Lamar University strengthened its admissions standards for students entering from high school to include more stringent requirements for scores on either the College Board’s Scholastic Aptitude Test, better known as the SAT, or the ACT college entrance exam. The chart shows the current standards.

Students presenting GEDs, those graduating from high schools that do not provide, class ranking and those who are home schooled must have a minimum ACT score of 20 or SAT combined math and critical reading score of 930 for unconditional admission.

Under the previous standards, no minimum scores were required on the ACT or SAT for applicants in the top half of their graduating classes. For applicants in the third quartile, ACT scores of 21 or SAT scores of 1000 were required. For applicants in the fourth quartile, a minimum ACT score of 24 or SAT score of 1100 was required for unconditional admission.

Additional requirements for unconditional admission or individual approval admission are available on the web at www.lamar.edu/admissions.

Nursing grads get perfect score

The JoAnne Gay Dishman Department of Nursing at Lamar University is leading the way for the nursing community by preparing students for careers in health care. The department’s May graduates were the first cohort to complete the new bachelor of science in nursing curriculum implemented in spring 2006. After completing degree requirements through didactic courses, laboratory assignments and clinical experience, graduates must meet criteria established by the Texas Board of Nursing in order to practice professional nursing.

Under the direction of Eileen Deges Carl, chair of the Dishman Department of Nursing, 100 percent of the graduates passed the state board exam for RN licensure. “This is an outstanding compliment to our department faculty and clinical agencies, as well as validating the quality of our new curriculum,” Carl said.

In addition, two of the recent graduating classes pursuing associate degrees attained a 100 percent pass rate on their state board exams.

More than 600 shift tassels

Lamar University conferred 629 degrees during fall commencement Dec. 20. Graduates numbered 625, with four earning two bachelor’s degrees each. Trisha Pollard, vice chairman of The Texas State University System board of regents, delivered the keynote address. Six students attained perfect 4.0 grade-point averages to share the Plummer Award honors as the top academic graduates in Lamar’s class of December 2008. Hurricane Ike interrupted classes for 10 days in September, but the ceremony went on as scheduled, thanks to a compacted class schedule.

Earning the Plummer Awards were Lacy Nicole Gallier of Lamberton, who earned a degree in sociology; Jason Lee Holliday, Beaumont, general studies; Cynthia Jones, Nederland, interdisciplinary studies; Breonna Sue Pickard, Nederland, biology; Natasha Davis Tidwell, Beaumont, psychology; and Cynthia Renee Wyatt, Orange, interdisciplinary studies.

Spring Open House previews college life

More than 2,200 high school students, their parents and college transfers learned about all Lamar University has to offer—from the classroom to campus life—during Spring Open House Feb. 21.

“This day really is an informative and fun day for anyone interested in a college career, particularly at Lamar University,” said Jim Rush, director of academic recruiting. “All aspects of the university are represented—academics, financial aid, clubs, athletics. It’s a golden opportunity to do it all in one Saturday morning.”

Lamar also hosts a Fall Open House, which attracted more than 1,900 students and guests.

Astronaut Sally Ride and ExxonMobil invite girls to explore science

Sally Ride, physicist and America’s first woman in space, touched down on campus Feb. 28 to inspire local girls to dig into hands-on science at the Sally Ride Science Festival. The festival brings science to life and inspires upper elementary and middle-school girls to think about the vast range of careers in science.

Co-presented by ExxonMobil and Lamar University, the festival brought together hundreds of students, parents and teachers for a day of science and socializing. The festival featured an inspiring talk by Ride and discovery workshops for students given by local scientists and engineers. Parent and teacher workshops shared ways to support students’ interests in science and math.

Since 2001, Sally Ride Science has been hosting festivals across the country at college campuses like California Institute of Technology, Rice University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. These unique events support and sustain girls’ natural interests in science and technology and help catalyze a change in cultural perceptions of girls and women in these endeavors.

More than 600 shift tassels

Lamar University conferred 629 degrees during fall commencement Dec. 20. Graduates numbered 625, with four earning two bachelor’s degrees each. Trisha Pollard, vice chairman of The Texas State University System board of regents, delivered the keynote address. Six students attained perfect 4.0 grade-point averages to share the Plummer Award honors as the top academic graduates in Lamar’s class of December 2008. Hurricane Ike interrupted classes for 10 days in September, but the ceremony went on as scheduled, thanks to a compacted class schedule.

Earning the Plummer Awards were Lacy Nicole Gallier of Lamberton, who earned a degree in sociology; Jason Lee Holliday, Beaumont, general studies; Cynthia Jones, Nederland, interdisciplinary studies; Breonna Sue Pickard, Nederland, biology; Natasha Davis Tidwell, Beaumont, psychology; and Cynthia Renee Wyatt, Orange, interdisciplinary studies.

Spring Open House previews college life

More than 2,200 high school students, their parents and college transfers learned about all Lamar University has to offer—from the classroom to campus life—during Spring Open House Feb. 21.

“This day really is an informative and fun day for anyone interested in a college career, particularly at Lamar University,” said Jim Rush, director of academic recruiting. “All aspects of the university are represented—academics, financial aid, clubs, athletics. It’s a golden opportunity to do it all in one Saturday morning.”

Lamar also hosts a Fall Open House, which attracted more than 1,900 students and guests.

Astronaut Sally Ride and ExxonMobil invite girls to explore science

Sally Ride, physicist and America’s first woman in space, touched down on campus Feb. 28 to inspire local girls to dig into hands-on science at the Sally Ride Science Festival. The festival brings science to life and inspires upper elementary and middle-school girls to think about the vast range of careers in science.

Co-presented by ExxonMobil and Lamar University, the festival brought together hundreds of students, parents and teachers for a day of science and socializing. The festival featured an inspiring talk by Ride and discovery workshops for students given by local scientists and engineers. Parent and teacher workshops shared ways to support students’ interests in science and math.

Since 2001, Sally Ride Science has been hosting festivals across the country at college campuses like California Institute of Technology, Rice University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. These unique events support and sustain girls’ natural interests in science and technology and help catalyze a change in cultural perceptions of girls and women in these endeavors.

Promote Program covers tuition, fees

Lamar University will fund all fall and spring tuition and fees for undergraduate students who have a family income of $25,000 or less.

Eligibility for the Lamar Promise Program in the 2009-2010 academic year requires incoming freshmen to be Texas residents, be admitted to the university, be Pell Grant-eligible and have completed the financial aid application process by April 1, 2009. After April 1, 2009, students who have met the required conditions will be awarded grant assistance on a funds-available basis.

To cover additional expenses, such as textbooks and room and board, students may be eligible for additional funds through federal or private loans and the Federal Work-Study program.

To participate in the Lamar Promise Program, applicants must be dependent students per Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) dependency requirements and have a household adjusted gross income, per IRS regulations, of no more than $25,000. More information on the Lamar Promise Program is available by contacting the admissions office at (409) 880-8888.
Faculty notes

The American Journal of Physics will publish a paper written by Christian Bahrim, associate professor of physics and electrical engineering, and electrical engineering doctoral student Wei-Tai Hsu. The paper, "Precise Measurements of the Refractive Indices for Diode-Electrons Using an Improved Brewster Angle Method," describes how they designed a relatively inexpensive setup to reach a measurement precision of the index of refraction for electronic materials that is 100 times better than the most accurate experiments available until now. At the 26th annual Reamont History Conference, John Storrey ’61, professor and chair of the Department of History, discussed "Religion in Texas in the 20th Century," and Mary Kelley, associate professor of history, spoke on "Philanthropy in Texas in the 20th Century." Both topics are derived from their recent book, Twentieth-Century Texas: A Social and Cultural History, Judy (Walker) Linsley ’77, director and instructor of history at Lamar, developed the program. Lindsey is chief of interpretation and education at the McFaddin-Ward House. Prince Thomas, associate professor of art, has been invited to sit on the panel, "The Position of the Artist in a State of Plurality," in conjunction with a group exhibition showing his works at the Queens Museum in New York. Thomas’ work is also scheduled to open at the National Library of Argentina as part of an exhibition titled, The Big Book Project. Kay Abemathy ’88, associate professor of educational leadership, is the recipient of three appointments: chair of the School Administrator Technology Task Force of the National Council for Professors of Educational Administration, national examiner for Educational Technology Facilitator Programs for the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, and chair of the Louisiana Computer Using Educators Awards Selection Committee. Undergraduate student teams in the Department of Marketing and Management course in entrepreneurship develop business plans for products with commercial potential. A recent team directed by Jeff Dyson, instructor of marketing and management, developed a business plan for "no mor-clog," a drain modification for ice hockey fields. The science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics: Talent Expansion Program (STEP) grant funds Lamar’s Students Advancing through Involvement in Research Student Talent Expansion Program (STAIRSTEP) program for $800,000 over four years, with additional fifth-year funding possible. The STEP program was developed in response to several trends recognized in the American Competitiveness Initiative. Art released by the U.S. Congress in 2006. About half of the nation’s science and engineering workforce is older than 40, and increasing numbers are nearing retirement age. Concurrently, there is growing demand for scientists and engineers in emerging technologies. The U.S. must produce more graduates to remain competitive with countries that are surging in their production of scientists and engineers. Lamar’s STAIRSTEP program is designed to increase the number of students receiving baccalaureate degrees in computer science, chemistry, physics, geology, earth science and mathematics at Lamar. The program engages and develops students through an undergraduate experience that includes research, mentoring, tutoring, outreach, and other activities designed to enhance the students’ learning experience. This includes women and minorities underrepresented in science and technology fields, as well as low income and first-generation college students. STAIRSTEP seeks to engage and develop these students through an enriched undergraduate experience and transform them into a powerful force for recruiting other students into these important fields," said Peggy Doerschuk, professor of computer science and program director. STAIRSTEP students are paid to perform research and outreach for an average of 10 hours per week and will work in teams under the direction of science faculty who serve as mentors. STAIRSTEP students will gain experience in teamwork, leadership, writing papers and making professional presentations. More information on the STAIRSTEP program is available by contacting Doerschuk, (409) 880-8782.

LU receives $800,000 NSF grant

America needs more leaders in science, technology, engineering and math to stay competitive globally. Thanks to a new grant from the National Science Foundation, Lamar University will be able to play a bigger role in recruiting talented students into these high-demand, high-paying fields. The Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics: Talent Expansion Program (STEP) grant funds Lamar’s Students Advancing through Involvement in Research Student Talent Expansion Program (STAIRSTEP) program for $800,000 over four years, with additional fifth-year funding possible. The STEP program was developed in response to several trends recognized in the American Competitiveness Initiative. Act released by the U.S. Congress in 2006. About half of the nation’s science and engineering workforce is older than 40, and increasing numbers are nearing retirement age. Concurrently, there is growing demand for scientists and engineers in emerging technologies. The U.S. must produce more graduates to remain competitive with countries that are surging in their production of scientists and engineers. Lamar’s STAIRSTEP program is designed to increase the number of students receiving baccalaureate degrees in computer science, chemistry, physics, geology, earth science and mathematics at Lamar. The program engages and develops students through an undergraduate experience that includes research, mentoring, tutoring, outreach, support and other activities designed to enhance the students’ learning experience. This includes women and minorities underrepresented in science and technology fields, as well as low income and first-generation college students. Lamar’s STAIRSTEP program is designed to increase the number of students receiving baccalaureate degrees in computer science, chemistry, physics, geology, earth science and mathematics at Lamar. The program engages and develops students through an undergraduate experience that includes research, mentoring, tutoring, outreach, support and other activities designed to enhance the students’ learning experience. This includes women and minorities underrepresented in science and technology fields, as well as low income and first-generation college students. STAIRSTEP seeks to engage and develop these students through an enriched undergraduate experience and transform them into a powerful force for recruiting other students into these important fields,’ said Peggy Doerschuk, professor of computer science and program director. STAIRSTEP students are paid to perform research and outreach for an average of 10 hours per week and will work in teams under the direction of science faculty who serve as mentors. STAIRSTEP students will gain experience in teamwork, leadership, writing papers and making professional presentations. More information on the STAIRSTEP program is available by contacting Doerschuk, (409) 880-8782.

LU teams up with LIT for critical-care simulation

The JoAnne Gay Dishman Department of Nursing and Lamar Institute of Technology collaborated in learning experiences to emulate real-life critical-care situations Nov. 11 and 18.

The nursing department implemented the program as an innovative way for Lamar nursing students to learn about interdisciplinary healthcare collaborations, said Eileen DeGus Carl, chair of the Dishman Department of Nursing. The department invited LIT emergency medical technicians, paramedics and respiratory therapy students to participate in the simulations with LUT nursing students. LeAnn Chisholm, simulation coordinator in the nursing department, developed simulated experiences patterned after real-life emergencies.

The computer simulation was projected onto a large television screen in Room 103 for peer reviews. The nursing department is gathering evaluation data from all student participants for later dissemination.

Lecturer speaks about bionic ear

Sigma XI, the Lamar University chapter of the Scientific Research Society, hosted Emily Tobeey, the Sigma Xi 2009 National Distinguished Lecturer, Feb. 10. Tobeey, professor and Nelle C. Johnston Chair in communication disorders for the School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences at the University of Texas at Dallas, presented a lecture titled, “The Bionic Ear: Intersection of Technological Advances, Communication and Societal Change.”

Tobeey is currently examining the development of speech in cochlear–implanted children and cortical responses to auditory signals through functional brain imaging techniques. Her laboratory also conducts a number of basic and applied studies regarding technology for persons with hearing impairments.

Lamar University is one of 722 four-year colleges and universities across the United States to participate in the National Survey of Student Engagement this year. The survey gathered information from randomly selected first-year and senior students at each institution.

“We’re using the information to design and implement programs to help faculty get students more seriously engaged in their learning at Lamar University,” said Tom Matthews, assessment coordinator.

According to survey results, 54 percent of LU freshmen report engaged in serious conversations with students of other races or ethnicities, which were classified as “enriching educational experience,” compared to 51 percent at other southwestern public universities. Among seniors, 64 percent of LU students reported such conversations compared to 56 percent at peer universities in the Southwest. Lamar also received high marks for relationships between students and faculty members. Among seniors, 81 percent of LU students positively rated their relationships with faculty members compared to 73 percent at other southwestern public universities.

As part of its accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Lamar University is required to implement a program to improve the student learning experience. Matthews said the survey results would be a valuable tool in developing such programs.

Survey shows diverse student learning environment at LU

Results from a national survey of college students are helping Lamar University identify areas of strength in engaging students and areas to focus on as part of continuing efforts to better serve students and the community. Lamar University was one of 722 four-year colleges and universities across the United States to participate in the National Survey of Student Engagement this year. The survey gathered information from randomly selected first-year and senior students at each institution.

“We’re using the information to design and implement programs to help faculty get students more seriously engaged in their learning at Lamar University,” said Tom Matthews, assessment coordinator.

According to survey results, 54 percent of LU freshmen report engaged in serious conversations with students of other races or ethnicities, which were classified as “enriching educational experience,” compared to 51 percent at other southwestern public universities. Among seniors, 64 percent of LU students reported such conversations compared to 56 percent at peer universities in the Southwest. Lamar also received high marks for relationships between students and faculty members. Among seniors, 81 percent of LU students positively rated their relationships with faculty members compared to 73 percent at other southwestern public universities.

As part of its accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Lamar University is required to implement a program to improve the student learning experience. Matthews said the survey results would be a valuable tool in developing such programs.
ExxonMobil Executives in Residence

The College of Business hosted alumnus Thomas Anderson ’78, ’80, president of Baker & O’Brian Inc., a professional consulting firm serving the oil, gas, chemical, pulp and paper, and power industries, as the ExxonMobil Executive in Residence. His focus at Baker & O’Brian includes mergers and acquisitions, plant performance evaluations, crude and products trading studies, litigation support, refinery LP analysis and improvement initiatives for petroleum processing facilities.

Anderson spoke Feb. 3 about “Vulnerabilities in the U.S. Petroleum Refining and Product Distribution Infrastructure,” sharing his 38 years of experience in the petroleum industry, including refining, natural gas-processing, petrochemicals, pulp and paper, and petroleum products distribution and marketing throughout the world.

Anderson’s refining career began with Gulf Oil, where he worked at refineries in Port Arthur and Cincinnati. Later, he worked for Saudi Aramco in Saudi Arabia, where his assignments included facility planning studies and expansion of crude oil export capacity by 3 million barrels per day. After joining Mobil Oil in 1977, he was involved in linear program optimization studies of Mobil’s refinery operations, including Beaumont. He also participated in Mobil’s task force to evaluate a $1 billion heavy crude expansion at the Beaumont refinery.

He holds a degree in chemical engineering from Texas A&M University and an M.B.A. from Lamar University.

Google infrastructure manager visits

The College of Business hosted Google’s websearch and video infrastructure manager Sandeepan Banerjee as speaker for the ExxonMobil Executive in Residence Program Oct. 23. Google is widely recognized as the world’s largest search engine, an easy-to-use, advertising-supported, free service that returns relevant results. Before joining Google Inc., he spent 10 years at Oracle Corp. and has won several awards for innovation and impact.

Administaff VP shares the value of intrapreneurs

Alumnus Randall McCollam ’68, ’69, senior vice president of strategic alliances for Administaff, the nation’s leading professional employer organization, visited campus Nov. 6 as an ExxonMobil Executive in Residence. His lecture was titled “The Value of Intrapreneurs in the Landscape of the 21st Century.” Administaff serves as a full-service human resources department for small and medium-sized businesses throughout the United States.

Before joining Administaff in 1997, McCollam was vice president and general manager of the corporate division of Niman Marcus. He also served as vice president of Tiffany & Co.’s corporate division and managed sales operations for Xerox Corp. He earned both his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Lamar University, where he led the football team as quarterback, leading the Southland Conference in passing. As a graduate assistant while earning his master’s, he helped coach both basketball and football.

PR professionals share solutions

The Department of Communication hosted its third annual “Public Relations Professionals Series” in November. “This is a great opportunity for anyone interested in public relations to meet three very different PR practitioners, learn about their backgrounds, the demands they face and the issues they confront daily,” said Paul Hemenway, professor of communication.

Art Museum of Southeast Texas Public Relations Coordinator Melissa Tilley discussed the challenges facing PR in a nonprofit organization. Dallas PR firm BlueCurrent partner Bob Martin spoke about the challenges facing PR in a boutique agency. Blue Current clients have included Shell Oil, T.G.I. Friday’s, Chili’s, Blockbuster and Dell Computer. Entergy Communications Specialist Deb Derrick ’91 discussed the challenges facing PR in the corporate and utility sectors. Derrick has served as a spokesperson for Entergy during hurricanes that have visited Southeast Texas.

Academic Lecture Series

Ice cream mogul shares taste of success

The College of Business welcomed Jerry Greenfield, co-founder of Ben & Jerry’s Homemade Inc., as a speaker for the Academic Lecture Series Feb. 17. Greenfield and long-time friend and business partner Ben Cohen are the men behind one of the most talked-about success stories in America. Together, they built a storefront venture into a $300-million ice cream empire by turning social responsibility and creative management into strengths instead of weaknesses. Greenfield delivered a rousing tribute to America’s entrepreneurial spirit, full of anecdotes and radical business philosophy, while sharing the great sense of fun that is the company’s hallmark along with samples of their famous ice cream during the free public lecture. With his best seller, Ben & Jerry’s Double-Dip: Lead with Your Values and Make Money, Too (co-authored with Cohen), Greenfield created both a rums-and-bolts guidebook to the promise and pitfalls of “values-led” business and an inspiring wake-up call about the growing international influence of the “social conscience” or “mission-driven” corporation.

Astronaut explores harvesting the moon

Harrison “Jack” Schmitt, a geologist, former U.S. Senator and NASA astronaut, spoke about a “Return to the Moon: Exploration, Enterprise and Energy” March 31 as part of the Academic Lecture Series.

Schmitt was the 12th person to walk on the moon, and, of the nine living persons to have walked there, he and his crewmate Eugene Cernan were the last two to do so.

“He is an ardent supporter of return lunar missions and actively contributes to science and engineering studies for the purpose of building a human outpost on the moon,” said Jim Jordan, chair of the Department of Earth and Space Sciences. Schmitt recently completed three years service as chair of the NASA Advisory Council, whose mandate is to provide technical advice to NASA Administrator Michael Griffin. Under Schmitt’s leadership, the council developed and submitted more than 100 recommendations to the NASA administrator in the areas of aeronautics, audit and finance, exploration, human capital, science and space operations. Schmitt is an adjunct professor of engineering physics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is the founder and chairman of Interlance Internars Initiative Inc., an organization to advance the private sector’s acquisition and use of lunar resources. A prime interest in returning to the moon is that it could be used as a source of helium-3, a rare isotope of helium that can be used as a fuel for nuclear fusion reactors. He was backup lunar module pilot for Apollo 15. On his first journey into space, Schmitt occupied the lunar module pilot seat for Apollo 17—the last scheduled manned Apollo mission—December 6-19, 1972. This last Apollo mission broke several records set by previous flights, including the longest manned lunar landing flight, longest lunar surface extra-vehicular activities, longest lunar sample return and longest time in lunar orbit.
Engineers design camera, escaladod

Ben Webb and Robert Adams.

The mechanical engineering team, Lamar Levitators—seniors Joshua Cherry of Bayou, Carl Ford of Vidoe, Jason Lewis of Dumas, Kristi Townsen of Nederland and Jacob Wallace of Dayton—won best meeting presentation and placed third in oral presentation. For the challenge, students propose, design and fabricate a solution to a topic of importance to NASA, taking the topic from idea to workable design. “The showcase adds the feeling of a new level of importance to our project by demonstrating to us what we are doing is more than just an exercise in engineering design,” Cherry said. “Rather, it is an approach to finding a solution to a real-life problem that is being evaluated and considered by those directly involved in those situations.”

Cherry’s team is designing a method to transport astronauts from the redesigned lunar lander to the surface of the moon during manned missions set to begin in 2020. During the lander’s redesign, the crew’s cabin was relocated, creating a 20-foot drop from the redesigned lunar lander to the surface of the moon during manned missions. The team’s solution, a cross between an escalator and a ladder, is called an ‘escaladod.” The escaladod would provide a unique solution to the issue of incapacitated crewmembers and has the added benefit over a typical fixed ladder by allowing transport of tools and light cargo from the airlock to the lunar surface,” Cherry said.

SoC3am’s design project is a portable camera capable of seeing beyond the visible spectrum, Rivers said. The camera can see reflected light not visible to the naked eye and gives astronomers the ability to determine an unknown material’s possible composition. The camera is designed to withstand ambient space radiation, a concern during space missions because it leads to the destruction of electronics not designed to withstand it. The camera, if implemented by NASA, could replace the current cargo bay cameras on space shuttles. “The current design is very bulky and has a very low image quality,” Rivera said. “Our new camera would be a fraction as large, have much better image quality and hopefully the same reliability in the space environment.”

The mechanical engineering team, Lamar Levitators—seniors Joshua Cherry of Bayou, Carl Ford of Vidoe, Jason Lewis of Dumas, Kristi Townsen of Nederland and Jacob Wallace of Dayton—won best meeting presentation and placed third in oral presentation. For the challenge, students propose, design and fabricate a solution to a topic of importance to NASA, taking the topic from idea to workable design. “The showcase adds the feeling of a new level of importance to our project by demonstrating to us what we are doing is more than just an exercise in engineering design,” Cherry said. “Rather, it is an approach to finding a solution to a real-life problem that is being evaluated and considered by those directly involved in those situations.”

Cherry’s team is designing a method to transport astronauts from the redesigned lunar lander to the surface of the moon during manned missions set to begin in 2020. During the lander’s redesign, the crew’s cabin was relocated, creating a 20-foot drop from the redesigned lunar lander to the surface of the moon during manned missions. The team’s solution, a cross between an escalator and a ladder, is called an ‘escaladod.” The escaladod would provide a unique solution to the issue of incapacitated crewmembers and has the added benefit over a typical fixed ladder by allowing transport of tools and light cargo from the airlock to the lunar surface,” Cherry said.

SoC3am’s design project is a portable camera capable of seeing beyond the visible spectrum, Rivers said. The camera can see reflected light not visible to the naked eye and gives astronomers the ability to determine an unknown material’s possible composition. The camera is designed to withstand ambient space radiation, a concern during space missions because it leads to the destruction of electronics not designed to withstand it. The camera, if implemented by NASA, could replace the current cargo bay cameras on space shuttles. “The current design is very bulky and has a very low image quality,” Rivera said. “Our new camera would be a fraction as large, have much better image quality and hopefully the same reliability in the space environment.”

Beyond the classroom

Engineers design camera, escaladod

Ben Webb and Robert Adams.

The mechanical engineering team, Lamar Levitators—seniors Joshua Cherry of Bayou, Carl Ford of Vidoe, Jason Lewis of Dumas, Kristi Townsen of Nederland and Jacob Wallace of Dayton—won best meeting presentation and placed third in oral presentation. For the challenge, students propose, design and fabricate a solution to a topic of importance to NASA, taking the topic from idea to workable design. “The showcase adds the feeling of a new level of importance to our project by demonstrating to us what we are doing is more than just an exercise in engineering design,” Cherry said. “Rather, it is an approach to finding a solution to a real-life problem that is being evaluated and considered by those directly involved in those situations.”

Cherry’s team is designing a method to transport astronauts from the redesigned lunar lander to the surface of the moon during manned missions set to begin in 2020. During the lander’s redesign, the crew’s cabin was relocated, creating a 20-foot drop from the redesigned lunar lander to the surface of the moon during manned missions. The team’s solution, a cross between an escalator and a ladder, is called an ‘escaladod.” The escaladod would provide a unique solution to the issue of incapacitated crewmembers and has the added benefit over a typical fixed ladder by allowing transport of tools and light cargo from the airlock to the lunar surface,” Cherry said.

SoC3am’s design project is a portable camera capable of seeing beyond the visible spectrum, Rivers said. The camera can see reflected light not visible to the naked eye and gives astronomers the ability to determine an unknown material’s possible composition. The camera is designed to withstand ambient space radiation, a concern during space missions because it leads to the destruction of electronics not designed to withstand it. The camera, if implemented by NASA, could replace the current cargo bay cameras on space shuttles. “The current design is very bulky and has a very low image quality,” Rivera said. “Our new camera would be a fraction as large, have much better image quality and hopefully the same reliability in the space environment.”

Students take prizes in gingerbread competition

Lamar University students won four of five top places in the 2008 Gingerbread Charity Competition benefiting Buckner Children and Family Services in December.

Jennifer Wittzel of Cleveland earned first place and took honors as best of show for How the Grinch Stole Christmas, Jose Perales, Beaumont, second place, Ginger Hacizade, and Sendi Gardner, Port Arthur, third place, Grant Hosue. The McFadin-Ward House hosted the competition, which was overseen by Charles Durr, chef instructor at Lamar. The Golden Triangle Chapter of the Texas Chefs Association and the Lamar University Hospitality Program sponsored the competition.

McNair Scholars present research at symposium

Fourteen McNair scholars presented the culmination of their year-long research projects to the university and the community at the ninth annual McNair Scholars Research Symposium Nov. 4.

The symposium, including the 15-minute time allotment, is designed to prepare students for their presentations at various national conferences, said Danielle Medley, executive director of the program. The 2008-2009 McNair Scholars are Lucas Brown of Woodville, Rachel Dennis, Keisha Gaudry, Christopher Jarmor and Rachel Quinn of Beaumont, Mary Guillory of Port Arthur, Sarah Hale of Nederland, Kristin Ips of Newport, Collie Summerlin of Groves, Felicia McAdams, Erysunmol Mulata, Travis Hickens and LaShanda Sullivan of Houston, and Luis Domínguez of Los Angeles.
Dan F. and Sandra Smith join their daughter, son-in-law, and grandchildren in front of new signage, unveiled March 19, marking the Dan F. Smith Department of Chemical Engineering at Lamar University. Pictured, from left, are daughter Brooke Lenker; Dan F. Smith; grandsons Ethan and Camden; Sandra Smith with granddaughter Abigail Kate; and son-in-law Matt Lenker. The Lenkers live in Kingwood. The Smiths’ son, Andrew, and daughter-in-law Lindsay, of Van Nuys, Calif., were unable to attend.

Betty Nellius, her son Marty, and friends to congratulate the new inductees.

Entrepreneur, venture capitalist, and Distinguished Alumnus Jack Gill ’58, ’79, and his wife Linda, extend congratulations to this year’s honorees.

A rare, before-Christmas snow early Dec. 11 blanketed campus and surrounding townscapes, covering all, including the dining hall, in a mantle of snow-white flakes.

Entrepreneur and long-time Lamar supporter Jack Gill ’58, ’79, and his wife Linda, extend congratulations to this year’s honorees.

A 2007 Distinguished Alumnus Clara Cooper ’89 and her mother, Beverly Drake, extend congratulations to this year’s honorees.

Trisha Pullard, vice chair of The Texas State University Board of Regents, delivered the commencement address during December’s graduation ceremony. Here, she joins President Jimmy Simmons and First Lady Susan (Williams) ’68 at a brunch in her honor following the ceremony.

Terence and Joe Vance are the guests of honor at the Red and White Le Grand Bal, hosted March 21 by the Lamar University Friends of the Arts to benefit the College of Fine Arts and Communication. Hundreds of guests joined in honoring them for their contributions to Lamar and the community. Albert Nolen chaired the event.

Entrepreneur, venture capitalist, and Distinguished Alumnus Jack Gill ’58, ’79, and his wife Linda, traveled to campus for the 2008 Distinguished Alumni Awards banquet.

Before leading the attendees in singing the alma mater as she traditionally does each year at the Distinguished Alumni Awards banquet, Charlene Leonard ’53, ’56, named Distinguished Alumnus in 2000, welcomed three new honorees into the elite group.

Trisha Pullard, vice chair of The Texas State University Board of Regents, delivered the commencement address during December’s graduation ceremony. Here, she joins President Jimmy Simmons and First Lady Susan (Williams) ’68 at a brunch in her honor following the ceremony.

Betty Nellius, her son Marty, and friends to congratulate the new inductees.

Dan F. and Sandra Smith join their daughter, son-in-law, and grandchildren in front of new signage, unveiled March 19, marking the Dan F. Smith Department of Chemical Engineering at Lamar University. Pictured, from left, are daughter Brooke Lenker; Dan F. Smith; grandsons Ethan and Camden; Sandra Smith with granddaughter Abigail Kate; and son-in-law Matt Lenker. The Lenkers live in Kingwood. The Smiths’ son, Andrew, and daughter-in-law Lindsay, of Van Nuys, Calif., were unable to attend.

A rare, before-Christmas snow early Dec. 11 blanketed campus and surrounding townscapes, covering all, including the dining hall, in a mantle of snow-white flakes.

Entrepreneur, venture capitalist, and Distinguished Alumnus Jack Gill ’58, ’79, and his wife Linda, extend congratulations to this year’s honorees.

A 2007 Distinguished Alumnus Clara Cooper ’89 and her mother, Beverly Drake, extend congratulations to this year’s honorees.

Entrepreneur and long-time Lamar supporter Jack Gill ’58, ’79, and his wife Linda, extend congratulations to this year’s honorees.

A 2007 Distinguished Alumnus Clara Cooper ’89 and her mother, Beverly Drake, extend congratulations to this year’s honorees.

Trisha Pullard, vice chair of The Texas State University Board of Regents, delivered the commencement address during December’s graduation ceremony. Here, she joins President Jimmy Simmons and First Lady Susan (Williams) ’68 at a brunch in her honor following the ceremony.

Terence and Joe Vance are the guests of honor at the Red and White Le Grand Bal, hosted March 21 by the Lamar University Friends of the Arts to benefit the College of Fine Arts and Communication. Hundreds of guests joined in honoring them for their contributions to Lamar and the community. Albert Nolen chaired the event.

Entrepreneur, venture capitalist, and Distinguished Alumnus Jack Gill ’58, ’79, and his wife Linda, traveled to campus for the 2008 Distinguished Alumni Awards banquet.

Before leading the attendees in singing the alma mater as she traditionally does each year at the Distinguished Alumni Awards banquet, Charlene Leonard ’53, ’56, named Distinguished Alumnus in 2000, welcomed three new honorees into the elite group.

Trisha Pullard, vice chair of The Texas State University Board of Regents, delivered the commencement address during December’s graduation ceremony. Here, she joins President Jimmy Simmons and First Lady Susan (Williams) ’68 at a brunch in her honor following the ceremony.

Terence and Joe Vance are the guests of honor at the Red and White Le Grand Bal, hosted March 21 by the Lamar University Friends of the Arts to benefit the College of Fine Arts and Communication. Hundreds of guests joined in honoring them for their contributions to Lamar and the community. Albert Nolen chaired the event.

Entrepreneur, venture capitalist, and Distinguished Alumnus Jack Gill ’58, ’79, and his wife Linda, traveled to campus for the 2008 Distinguished Alumni Awards banquet.

Before leading the attendees in singing the alma mater as she traditionally does each year at the Distinguished Alumni Awards banquet, Charlene Leonard ’53, ’56, named Distinguished Alumnus in 2000, welcomed three new honorees into the elite group.

Trisha Pullard, vice chair of The Texas State University Board of Regents, delivered the commencement address during December’s graduation ceremony. Here, she joins President Jimmy Simmons and First Lady Susan (Williams) ’68 at a brunch in her honor following the ceremony.

Terence and Joe Vance are the guests of honor at the Red and White Le Grand Bal, hosted March 21 by the Lamar University Friends of the Arts to benefit the College of Fine Arts and Communication. Hundreds of guests joined in honoring them for their contributions to Lamar and the community. Albert Nolen chaired the event.

Entrepreneur, venture capitalist, and Distinguished Alumnus Jack Gill ’58, ’79, and his wife Linda, traveled to campus for the 2008 Distinguished Alumni Awards banquet.

Before leading the attendees in singing the alma mater as she traditionally does each year at the Distinguished Alumni Awards banquet, Charlene Leonard ’53, ’56, named Distinguished Alumnus in 2000, welcomed three new honorees into the elite group.

Trisha Pullard, vice chair of The Texas State University Board of Regents, delivered the commencement address during December’s graduation ceremony. Here, she joins President Jimmy Simmons and First Lady Susan (Williams) ’68 at a brunch in her honor following the ceremony.

Terence and Joe Vance are the guests of honor at the Red and White Le Grand Bal, hosted March 21 by the Lamar University Friends of the Arts to benefit the College of Fine Arts and Communication. Hundreds of guests joined in honoring them for their contributions to Lamar and the community. Albert Nolen chaired the event.
There is a battle raging, a life-and-death struggle against an adaptive, elusive, unrelenting enemy. It’s not the war on terror. It is man against microbe in a world war where opportunistic invaders have been aided and abetted by careless overuse of antibiotics and one-time wonder drugs that have lost their potency against pathogens. It is a war against time.

Today, science is desperately searching for new immunological approaches both in high-tech laboratories and exotic locales. New answers are sought in virgin rainforest and deep ocean swells, but it could be that the next big “secret weapon” in this war is lurking in the bayous of Southeast Texas and Louisiana.

Alligators might make most people think of life-threatening injuries, but to biochemist Mark Merchant ’88, they could yield new ways of healing. Merchant has found that alligators—and their immune systems—could someday help us in our fight against infection.

The grandson of a Cajun rice farmer, Merchant grew up hunting and fishing along the Louisiana and Southeast Texas coasts, and he has seen plenty of alligators. Now an associate professor of biochemistry at McNeese State University in Lake Charles, La., he has great admiration—and healthy respect—for these fiercely territorial reptiles.

“They fight,” Merchant said. “They tear limbs off each other, and it’s very common for us to catch alligators that are missing limbs. Despite the fact that they live in this environment with all these microbes, they heal very rapidly and almost always without infection.”

Virtually unchanged for more than 175 million years, the reptiles’ aggressive lifestyle puts a selective pressure on them. “You adapt, or you die. You either have to back off your lifestyle, or you adapt by developing some kind of immune system to fight the bacteria that you live around, because if you’re going to have a lot of these terrible wounds and be exposed to all the bacteria in the area, you’re going to need to have very good defense mechanisms.”

“We think that part of that defense mechanism will be able to help us as humans and that modern molecular medicine should be able to benefit,” Merchant said.

Powerful infection-fighting proteins—short chains of amino acids known as antibiotic peptides—could help fight against antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Active proteins extracted from alligators’ white blood cells have been found to kill a variety of bacteria and fungi. Merchant has shown that peptides can kill the herpes simplex virus, as well as fungal diseases and a broad range of bacteria, including MRSA (methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus) the lethal “super bug” that is becoming increasingly resistant to current antibiotics. He presented his findings at the annual meeting of the American Chemical Society.

“We’re taking advantage of millions of years of Mother Nature’s product development. We do need a new class of drugs. That’s what is exciting—this wouldn’t just be a new drug, but potentially a new class of drugs that work by a completely new class of mechanisms,” Merchant said. It may be difficult to meet the challenges of adapting peptides for clinical use, but, despite this, antibodies containing alligator-blood-derived proteins could be on our shelves in 10 years, Merchant said.

Interest in immunology

Researching alligators wasn’t Merchant’s focus, just one of several areas of interest when he first came to McNeese. But after fruitless Internet searching on the topic of alligators and infection, he soon realized that he had found an opportunity. “I kept thinking I wasn’t putting in the right research terms, but it became apparent that no one ever broached this issue.”

“They always say in research that all the good ideas have already been taken,” Merchant said. “That’s not necessarily true. I landed on a gold mine. We started collecting publication-quality data from day one.”

Today, Merchant’s discoveries have drawn an unprecedented international spotlight to the university and have resulted in scores of published papers, dozens of presentations and lots of media attention as well. As the knowledge base grows, Merchant’s research may yield “antibiotics that you take orally, but potentially also antibiotics that you could use topically on…”
scares, such as diabetic ulcers wounds, burns and things like that. Be it topical or internal, we hope that we can isolate some promis that has antibiotic activity that would prevent infection to give time to heal."

Merchant graduated from Nederland High School in 1984 and entered Lamar University pursuing a double major in biology and chemistry. He still lives in Nederland, where his wife, Jennifer (Cabra) Merchant, graduated in 1992, and then spent three and a half years as a post-doctoral fellow at University of Texas Medical Branch and two daughters, 15 and 6. "When I started my senior year at Lamar, I didn’t have any aspirations of getting a Ph.D. That was an 11-hour decision for me after professors, some Lamar faculty who had encouraged me because I had shown a propensity for research."

Merchant enjoys keeping up with his Louisiana professors—now colleagues in academe—and his high praise for them, especially for the late Hugh Akes, who sparked his interest in biochemistry.

"I worked in his lab as an undergraduate," Merchant said. "I was going to get a job as one of the finest, but Dr. Akes said, ‘Hey, you’re really taking a shine to the research. Have you thought about going to grad school?” Merchant graduated from Nederland High School in 1984 and entered Lamar University. He attended graduate school at Texas A&M, graduating in 1992, and then spent three and a half years as a post-doctoral fellow at University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. "I sometimes joke that I’ve got a 100-mile rope around my neck," Merchant said. "I got to go into the lab and do alligator research. That’s not work. I can teach students 10 times more in the lab than I can in the classroom."

Merchant said. "You can really see the light bulbs come on in the lab. That excites me to no end." Eight undergraduates and two graduate students work with alligator-related projects in Merchant’s lab.

"For several years, we looked at innate immunity and acquired immunity!” Merchant said. "Innate immunity is the branch of the immune system that does not require prior exposure. It is the first line of defense, always in a semi-active state ready to go to work. It is less specific in its target but more quick acting, designed to hold an infection at bay to allow acquired immunity opportunity to gear up.”

Much of Merchant’s research is on blood drawn from populations, not from individual animals, typically pooling about 50 samples from 10 or 15 samples and taking averages. They have also looked for variations within a population, Merchant said. While a captive population of alligators is readily available across town, most collection from the wild is done in the summer or during winter breaks.

One current study focuses on phospholipase A2, an enzyme providing innate immunity in alligators that is also present in humans. Interestingly, the enzyme isn’t found in newly hatched alligators, but, by one year of age, it is a part of their repertoire of resistance. Merchant, with his undergraduate and graduate assistants, is studying the development of the serum-complement system using three groups of hatchlings under differing conditions. Thus far, they’ve found that slower-growing, outdoor-hatched hatchlings develop the enzyme much faster, while their heat-lamp-hogging counterparts grow up to six times faster, but develop the immunity much later. A third group in the latest round of experiments has the addition of ultraviolet light. The results are pending.

Merchant’s research interests are finding funding from a variety of sources, including the university and the National Science Foundation. A National Institutes of Health grant, with co-investigator at LUMC, is pending.

In 2002, Merchant was introduced to the Crocodylia Specialists Group, a worldwide research consortium concerned with crocodilian conservation, preservation, management and research. Since that time, he has been a frequent presenter at meetings around the world and has linked with colleagues in the U.S., Australia, France and Bolivia, setting up collaborative research with croc-expert Adam Brett of Big Gecko, a wildlife consultancy in Darwin, Australia, and cayman expert Luciano Verdade and Pablo Siroski in Brazil and Argentina respectively. In doing research in comparative biochemistry, Merchant is finding more similarities than differences between the species. In just three years, he has made presentations in 11 countries on four continents. Merchant enjoys sharing findings with “people who really care about this stuff, and that has opened up all these collaborations and sources of funding outside the country.”

"You have a stark contrast in new modern molecular medicines and these ancient reptiles, a pretty interesting contrast.”

—MARK MERCHANT

"I truly want to provide for people and be someone they can count on.”

KAYLA NGUYEN

Nguyen receives help in achieving her goals from the Joint Admission Medical Program. The program was created in 2001 by the 77th Texas Legislature to assist highly qualified, economically disadvantaged students pursuing careers in medicine. The program provides a variety of services to participants, including mentoring, assistance in preparing for medical school, stipends to attend summer internships, undergraduate scholarships, guaranteed admission into Texas medical schools and scholarships for medical school.

Nguyen completed a summer internship at the Texas A&M Medical Health and Science Center in 2008. During the six-week program, she shadowed physicians and took classes in neuroscience and organic chemistry. “This experience was unforgettable, and I would not have had the opportunity to participate in the program without JAMP,” she said.

Nguyen enjoys recreational activities such as sports, photography, reading and scrapbooking, but she is also committed to giving back to her community. She volunteers at Memorial Hermann Baptist Hospital on the pediatric floors and serves as a religious education assistant at St. Joseph’s Church in Beaumont.

Nguyen will graduate from Lamar in December 2009 and plans to attend medical school immediately. After completing her residency, she hopes to open her own pediatric clinic. —CE
Navigating new horizons

By Brian Sattler

When his great-uncle opened his suitcase, A.L. (Tom) Giannopoulos ’62 knew his ship had just come in.

Growing up in the city of Tripolis in the Peloponnesian region of southern Greece, Giannopoulos knew that his father’s shoe store business, while able to provide a good life for the family, offered little hope of fulfilling his dream of attending college in America.

As a teen, Giannopoulos dreamed of coming to the United States. A good student, he enjoyed watching American movies and playing basketball and was becoming somewhat “Americanized.”

The Greeks had suffered not only through the ravages of World War II, but also through bitter fighting between democratic and communist forces. The nation’s economy began to improve in the 1950s, Greece saw growth exceeding Europe at large and even rivaling that of post-war Japan. Educational opportunities, however, were still limited.

Giannopoulos was seeking sponsorship—a requirement at the time for international students seeking study in America. After he passed the requisite language tests, Giannopoulos made the trip, arriving in Houston in February 1958.

That is when he discovered that his great-uncle had “zero dollars” to his name. He worked at the Schooner Restaurant in Nederland. He picked up the help from Port Arthur and the adjoining area in the company car. He didn’t own a car, and he lived with other employees in a house behind the restaurant.

While the situation was not as he had imagined, Giannopoulos did have his sponsor, the restaurant’s owner, Jim Megas. “It was a lot of luck on my part that Mr. Megas decided to support me,” Giannopoulos said. “He was my meal ticket to the States.”

Culture shock continued when Giannopoulos came on campus to register. “When I arrived, everybody was dressed in cowboy things—boots, jeans, hat and chaps,” Giannopoulos said. “I thought, ‘What have I done?’ Then I discovered it was ‘Western Week,’ and I was a little happier about my choice.”

For the first six months, Giannopoulos lived with his great-uncle in the home behind the Schooner, hitchhiked to Lamar to attend morning classes, then worked afternoons and evenings at the restaurant. On weekends, he worked as a night watchman at a steel forging shop. “I didn’t sleep at all,” he said. “I needed the money. I couldn’t take the job (and that the author of his worthless acceptance letter was no longer employed there). He made the long drive back to Texas.

“By that age, you never give up,” Giannopoulos said. “I started writing letters to all those companies, and Westinghouse was the first that came back with an offer.”

He soon found himself in Pittsburgh, Pa., and became reacquainted with several Lamar graduates who preceded him in landing spots with the $10 billion company. Second only to General Electric, Westinghouse was one of the top 15 American companies in revenue. Giannopoulos entered its demanding training program, soon heading to his first assignment at Westinghouse’s large motors division in Buffalo, N.Y. “It was the dead of winter, and I had never seen so much snow, ever, not even on the top of mountains in Greece,” Giannopoulos said. Instead, sought a position with the company’s division at the forefront of computer systems and software and hardware development.

As an electrical engineering major, Giannopoulos remembers well the college dean, Lloyd Cherry, and Lyle Bohrer, then assistant professor, as well as the cadre of students with whom he helped establish Lamar’s chapter of Eta Kappa Nu international honor society for electrical engineers.

“My father and my family gave me the work ethic that made me a good student, but that continued with Dr. Cherry and the faculty I met at Lamar,” Giannopoulos said. “It continued too with the other students that I was close to. If you look at the names of that first group of Eta Kappa Nu members, there are some potent individuals. I owe Lamar a lot.”

As graduation neared, Giannopoulos attended a campus job fair and interviewed with recruiters from a number of leading companies—General Electric, Boeing, Collins Radio, Westinghouse—but what interested him most was NASA. Uncertain whether he could work at the agency without U.S. citizenship, Giannopoulos asked the question and was repeatedly assured that it would not be a problem. With acceptance letters in hand, he drove to Virginia, only to learn from the human resources director there that he could not take the job (and that the author of his worthless acceptance letter was no longer employed there). He made the long drive back to Texas.

“By that age, you never give up,” Giannopoulos said. “I started writing letters to all those companies, and Westinghouse was the first that came back with an offer.”

As an electrical engineering major, Giannopoulos remembers well the college dean, Lloyd Cherry, and Lyle Bohrer, then assistant professor, as well as the cadre of students with whom he helped establish Lamar’s chapter of Eta Kappa Nu international honor society for electrical engineers.

“My father and my family gave me the work ethic that made me a good student, but that continued with Dr. Cherry and the faculty I met at Lamar,” Giannopoulos said. “It continued too with the other students that I was close to. If you look at the names of that first group of Eta Kappa Nu members, there are some potent individuals. I owe Lamar a lot.”

As graduation neared, Giannopoulos attended a campus job fair and interviewed with recruiters from a number of leading companies—General Electric, Boeing, Collins Radio, Westinghouse—but what interested him most was NASA. Uncertain whether he could work at the agency without U.S. citizenship, Giannopoulos asked the question and was repeatedly assured that it would not be a problem. With acceptance letters in hand, he drove to Virginia, only to learn from the human resources director there that he could not take the job (and that the author of his worthless acceptance letter was no longer employed there). He made the long drive back to Texas.

“By that age, you never give up,” Giannopoulos said. “I started writing letters to all those companies, and Westinghouse was the first that came back with an offer.”

He soon found himself in Pittsburgh, Pa., and became reacquainted with several Lamar graduates who preceded him in landing spots with the $10 billion company. Second only to General Electric, Westinghouse was one of the top 15 American companies in revenue. Giannopoulos entered its demanding training program, soon heading to his first assignment at Westinghouse’s large motors division in Buffalo, N.Y. “It was the dead of winter, and I had never seen so much snow, ever, not even on the top of mountains in Greece,” Giannopoulos said. Instead, sought a position with the company’s division at the forefront of computer systems and early stages of digital controls. There, he helped in the move from analog controls to digital controls in major applications, including power plants, wastewater treatment plants, nuclear power plants, electric utilities and train controls.

He worked in the division about five years as an engineer, then development engineer at the forefront of software and hardware development. “We started incorporating our...
We've become a major player in the three industries: restaurants, hotels and retail.

—TOM GIANNOPoulos

There is a considerable shortage of certified speech therapists in this region and throughout Texas.

—MONICA HARN

Grant hones treatment, helps children

Southwest Texas is rich in cultural diversity. The confluence of dialects among cultural and ethnic groups such as African-American, Cajun and Hispanic, as well as the Texas's legendary drawl, make for an interesting mix of language nuances and speech patterns in children. Unfortunately, language impairment in Southwest Texas children isn't restricted to any dialect or cultural background, and clinical therapists must account for these factors when diagnosing and treating the disorder.

Monica Harn, associate professor of speech and hearing sciences, is the principal investigator for a National Institutes of Health grant to determine the effectiveness of a specialized manual treatment intervention. The $150,000, two-year grant is directed toward testing and providing therapeutic treatment for pre-school and elementary students who have difficulties with forming words, word order and linguistic meaning.

“The speech and hearing department has satellite clinics in Port Arthur and Orange, where our graduate students are working with language-impaired students,” Harn said. “The research project is progressing very well because the special-education directors, principals, teachers and speech-language pathologists have been so positive and helpful in Port Arthur ISD and Little Cypress-Mauriceville CISD.”

The research seeks to gauge the effectiveness of a treatment intervention known as Addressing Multiple Aspects of Language Simultaneously. Lamar speech and hearing graduate students will administer the intervention therapy to a targeted population of 50 students in this unique randomized clinical trial. The approach has rarely been used for language impairment interventions, and this research will significantly contribute to the body of knowledge in the field.

“There is a considerable shortage of certified speech therapists in this region and throughout Texas,” Harn noted. “This pervasive shortage means speech therapists must know what treatments and interventions are most effective in the least amount of time possible.”

The intervention therapy holds great promise for therapists to seek to help language-impaired students efficiently and effectively. Lamar students engaged in this research collect and analyze data from the interventions and extrapolate those findings to the broader population of students. The knowledge and experience graduate students gain by conducting these interventions will help them become more skilled in serving diverse cultures in their professional careers. Addressing the needs of children with language disabilities in regions where dialects are spoken meets a primary goal of reducing health disparities across different segments of the population," Harn said. "This research is so important because it promotes the health of people with disabilities, prevents secondary conditions derived from language impairment and eliminates disparities between people with and without disabilities."—LA
This is an exciting time, seeing all the traditions about to be brought back.

—BRENDA GRINER

Catch Cardinal spirit . . .

B reneda Griner ’87, ’03, has fond memories of the spirit and traditions that surrounded Lamar University football. Now, she eagerly anticipates a new and exciting era of Cardinal spirit.

Griner is the artistic director of Lamar’s Spirit Team—a group that is spreading its wings in preparation for the return of football in 2010.

“I am truly a Cardinal, and, when I attended Lamar, we still had football,” said Griner, a Port Neches resident who earned a bachelor’s degree in dance and, later, a master of science degree. “This is an exciting time, seeing all the traditions about to be brought back. It’s wonderful for campus—and the community—to experience Lamar’s growth.”

And, Griner said, Southeast Texas dancers and cheerleaders have a golden opportunity to be part of the action.

“If you were here in the ‘80s, you remember that time. I can’t wait to see how this affects the look and spirit of the university. It will bring a lot of new opportunity to be part of the action.”

Griner, her assistants and Spirit Team officers are visiting area high schools as the quest for new team members expands. Lamar also is offering Spirit Team “prep” classes to Lamar students as well as to middle school and high school dancers and cheerleaders.

After one season of scrimmages, the Cardinals will launch their first official season in 2010. By then, plans will be in place for the new Spirit Team with its various divisions, such as a dance team and cheerleaders. More auditions are scheduled between now and then, adding to successful expansion that began with tryouts in fall 2008.

The current Spirit Team is an elite Division I dance team that performs at all home basketball games as well as various community events.

In addition to serving as the Spirit Team’s artistic director, Griner is associate director of programs for Lamar Recreational Sports. She has performed as a professional dancer and choreographer all over the world.

Her career as an entertainer includes movies, VH1, cruise ships, musicals and opera companies.

Additional information is available from Griner at bggriner@my.lamar.edu.

If you were here in the ‘80s, you remember that time. I can’t wait to see how this affects the look and spirit of the university. It will bring a lot of new opportunity to be part of the action. 30

The new Spirit Team “will have to do it all,” Griner said. “We have a lot of talent. We’re looking for dancers who cheer and cheerleaders who dance.”

Griner, her assistants and Spirit Team officers are visiting area high schools as the quest for new team members expands. Lamar also is offering Spirit Team “prep” classes to Lamar students as well as to middle school and high school dancers and cheerleaders.

After one season of scrimmages, the Cardinals will launch their first official season in 2010. By then, plans will be in place for the new Spirit Team with its various divisions, such as a dance team and cheerleaders. More auditions are scheduled between now and then, adding to successful expansion that began with tryouts in fall 2008.

The current Spirit Team is an elite Division I dance team that performs at all home basketball games as well as various community events.

In addition to serving as the Spirit Team’s artistic director, Griner is associate director of programs for Lamar Recreational Sports. She has performed as a professional dancer and choreographer all over the world.

Her career as an entertainer includes movies, VH1, cruise ships, musicals and opera companies.

Additional information is available from Griner at bggriner@my.lamar.edu.

This is an exciting time, seeing all the traditions about to be brought back.

—BRENDA GRINER

“Football will bring back not only the memories of the spirit and traditions about Lamar,” Deppe said. “But it will bring back a special place.”

The expert in the schools is with the band directors themselves, who are almost all from around here and are former Lamar band students, he said. The band directors are spreading the word that the marching band is coming and that opportunities are available for their students.

Meanwhile, Deppe is putting on another hat, as uniform designer, and he’d like to come up with “cutting-edge” marching attire. “Uniforms have gotten really flashy. Cutting-edge to me is something simple and striking.”

After meeting with uniform companies, he will bring final designs back to the university for a decision.

Deppe is also shopping for instruments, with the first influx coming soon. “We have nothing for marching band, so we have to get percussion, and we have to get sousaphones. That’s exciting.”

As for entertainment, Deppe promises: “We don’t want to do the same-old same-old. We want to create something new and inventive to all.

“We’re looking to be innovative. We’ll do several shows a year to appeal to different crowds, and we’ve talked about different genres of music,” Deppe said.

One idea is to revisit Lamar’s most recent football era with tunes from the 1970s and ’80s—the style, the music of the time, to spark some memories for alums.”

Halftime performances would integrate aspects of music, drill design and choreography.

“That’s going to be a major upheaval of style,” he said. “We want to bring back old standards . . . find tunes current with students now—and come up with some cheers and moves in the stands that will become the new Lamar tradition.”

As a longtime high school band director, Deppe had occasion to visit with scores of band directors from throughout the region, “and they were awestruck when they spoke so fondly of Lamar University. “Through ups and downs, the alumni are proud of Lamar. They convinced me to come to Lamar, that it was a special place.”

Drum major Lanny Ross Graham ’09 from 1906 Lamar yearbook.
1. Mary Smith and BeBe (Ford) Robinson ’79
2. Toni (Huch) ’77 and David Bost ’76
4. Celeste Sahbah ’78, ’91, left, and Tamara (Bonsen) Spell ’92
5. Melinda (Fortune) Johnson ’83, and Miranda (Fortune) Walker ’87
6. Laura (Taylor) McMurray ’66 and Connie Berry
7. President Jimmy Simmons and Paul Jones ’70, ’76, Kevin ’85, ’93, and Jill (Taft) Roy ’80 and Sharon (Smith) McCabe ’83, ’89
8. Anthony ’72 and Phyllis (Freeman) Stewart ’67
9. Luther Childress ’59, Jerry Zoller ’59, ’64, and Elvis Davis ’50, ’55
10. Charles ’59 and Elaine Garrott with Vice President for Advancement Camille Muxton
11. Ray Wool ’56 and Wayne ’60 and Beverly (Dell) Saye ’58
12. Trust Smith ’59, Dean Jack Hooper and Luther Lamaruch ’59
13. Sally McDonald Hoss ’55, ’75, President Jimmy Simmons, First Lady Susan (Williams) Simmons ’58 and Dot (Tucker) Cogswell ’53, ’90
14. Mayor Becky Ames, Head Football Coach Ray Woodard, Perko Woodard and Rodney Ames
15. Odis -68 and Lois Booker
16. Don ’55 and Mary Kay Coleman
17. Elwyn Seay ’58, John Zerko ’58, Lee Jackson ’59, and Larry ’63 and Miki Augburger
18. Guard Skyler Williams sinks the ball.
19. Homecoming court: James Mores, an electrical engineering major from Beaumont; Mandy Anderson, kinesiology, Beaumont; Queen Esther Gyambibi, health, Houston; King Marlan Parker, criminal justice, Houston; Natalie Griffith, communication, Port Arthur; and Kary Jackson, marketing, Houston
21. Pat and Billy ’58 Tubbs
22. Forward Ashton Hall helps hold off Northwestern, leading the Cards to an 89-67 homecoming victory
23. The Spirit Team honors the play.
24. Big Red thanks a young fan for cheering the Cards to victory.
25. Kurt David ’98 and Jenny Placette ’01
26. Spirit Team honors the play.
27. Cardinal player Skyler Williams, Lady Cardinals’ Assistant Coach Kendra Austin-Lamb, ’84, ’90, Cardinal player Skyler Williams, Lady Cardinals’ Assistant Coach Myrland Iguru, player T.J. Riley, former trainer Dan Shaddock ’82 and Cardinals basketball alumnus B.B. Davis ’81, Lamar’s Big Red mascot is in the foreground.
22. Pat and Billy ’58 Tubbs
23. Forward Ashton Hall helps hold off Northwestern, leading the Cards to an 89-67 homecoming victory
24. The Spirit Team honors the play.
25. Big Red thanks a young fan for cheering the Cards to victory.
26. Kurt David ’98 and Jenny Placette ’01
27. Spirit Team honors the play.
28. Cardinal player Skyler Williams, Lady Cardinals’ Assistant Coach Kendra Austin-Lamb, ’84, ’90, Cardinal player Skyler Williams, Lady Cardinals’ Assistant Coach Myrland Iguru, player T.J. Riley, former trainer Dan Shaddock ’82 and Cardinals basketball alumnus B.B. Davis ’81, Lamar’s Big Red mascot is in the foreground.
22. Pat and Billy ’58 Tubbs
23. Forward Ashton Hall helps hold off Northwestern, leading the Cards to an 89-67 homecoming victory
24. The Spirit Team honors the play.
25. Big Red thanks a young fan for cheering the Cards to victory.
26. Kurt David ’98 and Jenny Placette ’01
27. Spirit Team honors the play.
28. Cardinal player Skyler Williams, Lady Cardinals’ Assistant Coach Kendra Austin-Lamb, ’84, ’90, Cardinal player Skyler Williams, Lady Cardinals’ Assistant Coach Myrland Iguru, player T.J. Riley, former trainer Dan Shaddock ’82 and Cardinals basketball alumnus B.B. Davis ’81, Lamar’s Big Red mascot is in the foreground.
The picture is a social commentary on poverty and race in America.

KEITH CARTER

He has exhibited in galleries around the world, but finding a home in the permanent collection of the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C., is an honor that holds a special place in Keith Carter’s heart.

Carter, University Professor of Art, earned this distinction when the gallery recently acquired three of his photographs of the late playwright and screenwriter Horton Foote. A native of Wharton, Foote won Academy Awards for the screenplay of Tender Mercies and the adaptation of To Kill a Mockingbird for the big screen.

Carter will be honored this April with the prestigious Texas Medal of Arts Award presented by the Texas Cultural Trust in order to celebrate the creative excellence, diverse talents and stellar artistic contributions of Texans. Honorary chair Gov. Rick Perry will award this year’s recipients at a ceremony on April 7 at the Long Center for the Performing Arts in Austin. Past Texas Medal of Arts Award winners include Van Cliburn, Tommy Lee Jones, Willie Nelson, Walter Cronkite and Bill Wittliff. Perry will award this year’s recipients at a ceremony on April 7 at the Long Center for the Performing Arts in Austin. Past Texas Medal of Arts Award winners include Van Cliburn, Tommy Lee Jones, Willie Nelson, Walter Cronkite and Bill Wittliff.

The photograph of an African-American woman standing in a cotton field is imbued with deep meaning. Carter took the picture, titled Garfield, as part of a series made possible through the Exchange-Taylor Prize from Duke University. He received the grant for his proposal to document the poorest county in the United States, which at that time was Tumbia, Miss.

“The picture is a social commentary on poverty and race in America,” he says of Garfield, which has long been one of his personal favorites. “The woman in the photo had just yanked stalks of garlic from a subsistence garden she maintained when I took the picture. It speaks volumes about our new president that this type of documentary portrait is what he and his family display in their home.” —SF

FOOTNOTE

Footnote’s other honors include the Pulitzer Prize for Drama for his play The Young Man from Atlanta. In 2000, President Bill Clinton awarded him the National Medal of Arts. “Horton was a national treasure,” says Carter. “He was a wonderful guy, a sweet, civilized, intelligent man.” The two had been friends since 1987, when Carter interviewed him for the American Journey of Barack Obama. Foote was an active participant in the national debate over the possible inclusion of a U.S. president in the American history books.

Michelle, an afro of his work. “It’s an amazing story,” Carter says. “When I was a college student, one of the books that would have been a part of the curriculum was, in fact, his.”

**OTHER RECENT HONORS**

- 2009 Artist of the Year Award, Southeast Texas Arts Council
- 2009 Artist of the Year Award, Cultural Arts Council of Houston
- Juror, Texas Photographic Society’s 52nd Annual Members Only Show
Lamar's A Cappella Choir joined an elite group of ensembles last fall in performing at the National College Music Conference. The Organization's biannual conference at Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music. It was the first time in Lamar history that a choral ensemble was selected to perform at a national convention—and just 10 schools were represented nationwide. The Choral Music of the Americas program featured compositions from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Cuba, Mexico and the United States.

Eduardo Garcia-Novelo conducted the ensemble in its final role as Lamar's director of choral activities. The Department of Music, Theatre & Dance is hosting veteran Houston trumpet player Dennis Donston as artist-in-residence for 2008-2009. Donston is conducting a series of jazz workshops and also was featured at Lamar's fall jazz concert Nov. 28 when his combo joined Lamar Jazz Bands “A” and “B” for the performance. Donston has played professionally for 40 years and is active in jazz and commercial circles. He has performed with the Houston Symphony Orchestra and is a saxophonist on numerous recordings. He teaches at the University of Houston and Houston Community College. A unique exhibition by December graduate Tommy “T.J.” McRight of Orange cast a series of dazzling computer-generated images on the walls of the Dishman Art Museum’s upper and lower galleries. Titled Simulacrum, McRight’s senior thesis addressed the assimilation between fine art and graphic design and the ephemeral nature of digital art. The artist presented the work to Dec. 12, with an archived presentation available to museum visitors the subsequent week. R.S. “Sam” Gwynn, professor of English, placed second in a national competition of poems commemorating the inauguration of President Barack Obama. Conducting a “Poem Challenge” on its Web blog, The Best American Poetry invited poets across the country to participate. Gwynn’s An Inaugural Prayer finished “a strong second” in the competition, according to the Web posting of the winners. To be eligible, each poem had to consist of four quatrains, had to include at least three words from a prescribed list (honor, integrity, faith, hope, change, power) and had to lift from The Best American Poetry 2008. Mark Strand, a former guest editor of The Best American Poetry, judged the 50 poems submitted. A solo exhibition by award-winning photographer Richard Ashmore, instructor of earth and space sciences, showcased Ashmore’s work Oct. 25-Nov. 11 at Orange Savings Bank. Beyond the 100th Meridian, Panoramic View of the Americas, presented photo-graphics from Texas, New Mexico, Colorado and Utah—images from scientific explorations of the Southwest. The exhibition marked the second time he has exhibited in his hometown. Since 2006, Ashmore has presented his work in 22 exhibitions, including six national juried exhibits in which he earned two first-place awards. Lamar public radio KVLU will join Collette Vacations next fall to host a travel tour of Ireland. The 10-day Shades of Ireland tour departs Sept. 27 for the Emerald Isle and will include such destinations as Limerick, Killarney and Dublin, along with stops at the Blarney Stone and Kingscourt castle. April 27 is the deadline to register for the tour. For additional information, call Melanie Dishman at (409) 880-8164. In other news, KVLU news, The Radio Reader has returned to the airwaves. The program, hosted by Dick Estell, airs from noon to 12:30 p.m. weekdays, replacing Day to Day, which on National Public Radio cancelled because of budget shortfalls. Jason Miller’s Afternoon Jazz moves up to 12:30 p.m. . . . Prompted by the rising popularity of dance—thanks, in part to television reality shows—the Lamar Repertory Dance Theatre presented a program and lecture on the history of American ballet. Nov. 23, sponsored by the Texas Artists Museum in Port Arthur. The program took the audience on a tour of dances that span the 20th century, including post-modernism, ballet, modern dance, jazz dance and tap. Under the direction of assistant professor Michelle O’zman, Lamar’s newest dance company is dedicated to educating dance artists, fostering dance art appreciation in the community and expanding dance arts experiences. The Lamar University Dance Company presented Dance Technologies—an evening of dance works from faculty, students and guest artists—Nov. 20 and 21 in the University Theatre. Dancers from Tarrant County College Northwest Campus joined Lamar artists for an evening of ballet, modern dance, jazz, tap and world dance forms . . . Lamar Theatre presented David Auburn’s Pulitzer Prize-winning drama Proof Feb. 12-17 in the Studio Theatre. The play explores themes of trust, genius, insanity and love . . . Poet Chelsea Ruthburn, whose first full-length collection was the 2005 Richard Wilbur Award, read from her work Dec. 3 in the Dishman Art Museum lecture hall. Sigma Tau Delta, English honor society, hosted a reception where Ruthburn signed her award-winning poetry collection, The Shifting Line. The volume has earned praise as “a remarkable debut” and “exceptionally fine and dry writing.” Ruthburn’s poems have appeared or are forthcoming in Poetry, The Atlantic Monthly, The New Criterion, Hudson Review and Ploughshares. A Miami native and marketing writer by trade, she lives in Atlanta.

Student-athletes earn Academic All-Conference honors

Volleyball seniors Shalayne Blythe and Ashley Todd have been named to the 2008 Southland Conference Volleyball All-Academic Team. Blythe, an interdisciplinary studies major, posted a 3.20 grade-point average. The senior earned All-Southland Conference honors in volleyball. Todd, a senior exercise science major, was named to the second team.

That group includes a player from the Golden Triangle region of southeast Texas. A total of eight players (11 if you count the three from Livingston) are from the historically talent-rich area, including four from Beaumont. An additional 11 are from the greater Houston area and one each from the Dallas area, Mississippi and New York. A group of seven mid-year junior college signees were announced in December.

Pauline Ashmore kicks off Lamar’s first football-signing class in 25 years

Lamar University Head Football Coach Ray Woodard and his staff announced the signing of 25 student-athletes have signed National Letters of Intent to play football at Lamar beginning in the fall of 2009.

In what Woodard describes as a “tremendous” group which included 13 combined offensive and defensive linemen, the defense gained the most with 14 players, while the offense added 11 to its side of the ball.

“I thought our coaches did an outstanding job, and I was proud of the way they represented Lamar University in the schools and homes of the recruits and their families,” Woodard said. “They are all to be commended for their efforts.

“I like the fact that we have a lot of players up front,” he added. “I think we got the best 25 players available to us. I like the mix of local and Houston-area players. There is a good mix of junior college and high school guys among the 25 total signees. It’s only a start, but a great start.”

From the day he was announced as Lamar’s head coach in May, a point of emphasis was recruiting from the Golden Triangle region of Southeast Texas. A total of eight players (11 if you count the three from Livingston) are from the historically talent-rich area, including four from Beaumont. An additional 11 are from the greater Houston area and one each from the Dallas area, Mississippi and New York. A group of seven mid-year junior college signees were announced in December.

Standout named SLC Student-Athlete of Year

Cross country standout Samuel Kogei has been named the Capital One/Southland Conference Men’s Cross Country Student-Athlete of the Year.

Kogei, a native of Kapchorwa, Uganda, and health major, posted a 3.20 grade-point average. The senior earned All-America honors with a 37th-place finish at the NCAA Championship Nov. 24 in Terre Haute, Ind. He covered the 10,000-meter course in a time of 30:09.4 to become the third All-American in school history.

Kogei won the conference championship Nov. 3 and was named the Southland Conference men’s cross country athlete of the year. 
Don Bryson, B.B. Davis and Clarence Kea are the first honorees in school history among the all-time leaders in school history in several categories. He is the school's all-time leader with three games in which he scored 20 or more points and grabbed 20 or more rebounds. Bryson helped Lamar post a 19-17 (.765) record during his senior season in 1964-65. Lamar compiled an 88-34 (.721) overall record and a 33-8 (.825) mark in SLC games during his tenure.

Kea, a four-year starter for the Cardinals from 1957-60, helped Lamar win those three SLC championships and accumulate a 105-37 (.756) record under Southern Conference head coach and school Athletics Director Bob Main. Kea was a three-year letterwinner from 1958-60. Kea is the school's all-time leader with 926 rebound totals in school history. He led the team in field goal percentage all four years he played and in rebounding twice.

Bryson helped Lamar compile a 75-46 (.619) overall record and a 31-17 (.650) mark in SLC games during his career. The Cardinals captured SLC titles in 1979, 1978 and 1980. Lamar, which posted a 22-11 record in 1978-79, advanced to the NCAA Tournament during its tenure. The Beaumont native's name graces several categories in the record book. His 75 blocked shots in the 1978-79 season still ranks as the best single-season total in school history. He is the only player in school history and currently one of 98 Division I NCAA players to score 2,000 points and grab 1,000 rebounds in a career. Davis helped Lamar post an 18-9 record in 1977-78 and win the SLC championship. The Cardinals posted a 23-9 ledger in 1978-79, won the SLC title and advanced to the Division I NCAA Tournament for the first time in school history. Lamar was 22-11 in 1979-80, won the SLC championship and advanced to the NCAA Sweet 16 after defeating No. 4-ranked Oregon State, which is still the highest ranked team the Cardinals have defeated in school history. The Cardinals posted a 25-5 record in 1980-81, won the SLC title and advanced to the second round of the NCAA Tournament. Lamar compiled an 88-34 (.721) overall record and a 33-8 (.825) mark in SLC games during his tenure.

The retirement of jerseys is long overdue.

“...The retirement of jerseys is long overdue.”

—BILL TURBS
CARDINAL CADE 3/17 APRIL 2009

Distinguish Alumni Awards nominees requested

The Distinguished Alumni Awards are the highest honor presented to Lamar University alumni. Each year, the Alumni Advisory Board approves an awards selection committee to review all nominations and make the final selections. All Lamar University alumni and friends are eligible to submit nominations for Distinguished Alumni Awards. Eligibility requirements are as follows:

- The candidate must be a graduate of Lamar University who is distinguished in his or her chosen profession or life's work;
- The candidate must be someone of such integrity, stature, and demonstrated ability that faculty, staff, students and alumni will take pride in being associated with his or her recognition; and
- The candidate must be an individual who, in deed and in action, recognizes the importance of his or her education at Lamar and whom and whose interest and loyalty are evident.

The deadline for nominations for the 2009 Distinguished Alumni Awards is April 30, 2009. Please send your nomination to:

Lamar University Distinguished Alumni Awards Committee Office of Alumni Affairs
PO Box 1000
Beaumont, Texas 77705

Via e-mail: Alumni@lamar.edu • Via fax: (409) 880-8924

sherry (harman) levett, 73, b.a. commercial art, is retired from the Houston Chronicle. You may reach her via phone: 713-999-8115.

paul simon, 75, b.a. management, is retired from the Better Business Bureau of Southeast Texas, where he served as executive director. He lives in Orange.

jim gunnar, 75, a.a. social science, is a counselor at Lamar University's Counseling Center in Beaumont.

diane (darville) abshier, 76, b.a. sociology, is retired from the Better Business Bureau of Southeast Texas, where she was owner and president. She lives in Lamar.

rick nelson, 76, a.a. business education, is owner of The Entrepreneur in Jasper.

stacy caperchick robbins, 76, b.a. elementary education, is retired from the Beaumont school district. She lives in Orange.

stacy caperchick robbins, 76, b.a. elementary education, is retired from the Beaumont school district. She lives in Orange.

stacy caperchick robbins, 76, b.a. elementary education, is retired from the Beaumont school district. She lives in Orange.

stacy caperchick robbins, 76, b.a. elementary education, is retired from the Beaumont school district. She lives in Orange.
grades. She is pursuing a master of education in mid-level studies in leadership with a specialization in instructional leadership. She is also working toward her second doctorate degree in education with a specialization in special education.

Four Lamar University alumni who have distinguished themselves in education and teaching were induced into the Educator Hall of Fame Nov. 13. Honorees for 2008 are: Paula Kay Hussey ‘77, Don Davis (Kirkpatrick) Sims ’70, Kathy Lyn Finch ’77, and Charles T. Starcke ‘77.

Hussey earned a bachelor’s degree in interdisciplinary studies with a specialization in early childhood and was an exemplary kindergarten teacher. She received first-grade gifted and talented students at Langham Elementary in Nederland. In her years of teaching, Hussey has taught first, third and fourth grades. She is pursuing a master of education degree at Lamar. “This is what I was born to do,” she said. “I feel it comes very naturally to me to have a positive effect on children. I want to make a difference in their lives.”

Sims earned a bachelor’s degree in elementary education in 1970 and the master of education in 1976. She teaches fifth-grade science at Cypremont Intermediate School in Cosnro. Sims is the science department team leader and has developed the science scope, sequence curricula and benchmark testing for fifth-grade science. “I seek to inspire and teach my students to be lifelong learners, and my students will inspire me to keep teaching all my life,” she said.

Finch received her bachelor’s degree in education from North Texas State University and then earned a master of education degree from Lamar in 1997. She completed her superintendent’s certification at Lamar in 2001. She has taught second through fifth grade and is director of elementary curriculum and instruction for Linic Cypress-Mauveville Consolidated ISD. Finch was twice named Teacher of the Year at Jones Elementary West Orange-Cove ISD and nominated for District Teacher of the Year. She has coordinated and designed electronic lesson plans for teachers and is responsible for the Acceleration and Title 2 grants. Each position has been very different in many ways but has given me the opportunity to work with the teachers, students and the community,” she said. “I absolutely love what I do.”

Starcke earned a bachelor’s degree in mathematics from Lamar in 1961 and was a football letterman. Before retiring, he taught math at Port Neches-Groves before transferring to South Park High School to teach math and was named principal of South Park High School during his tenure. South Park High School interfered, who is an independent sales representative with Mary Kay cosmetics and lives in Vidor with her husband, Kathy Lyn Finch. He lives in Vidor with his wife, Leslie.

Katherine (Wallace) Dushan ’70, B.S. chemical engineering, is owner of Dushan Engineering, which has served to challenge all levels of students. He received a doctorate degree in engineering, is a professor at Lamar and lives in Brookeland. Mary (Schmitt) Sautter ’77, B.S. health education, is associate director of the school district. She is president of O.C. Services Inc. in Brandon, Miss., and lives with her husband, John.

Terry Goll ’77, B.S. biology, M.D., M.S. public administration, is general manager for DuPont, a global science-based technology company, with headquarters in Wilmington, Del. He lives in Wilmington with his wife.

Chuck Komeny ’77, M.B.A. business administration, is a consultant for O’Gle in Design in Irving Heights, Miss., where he lives.

Katherine (Wallace) Dushan ’70, B.S. chemical engineering, is owner of Dushan Engineering, which has served to challenge all levels of students. He received a doctorate degree in engineering, is a professor at Lamar and lives in Brookeland. Mary (Schmitt) Sautter ’77, B.S. health education, is associate director of the school district. She is president of O.C. Services Inc. in Brandon, Miss., and lives with her husband, John.

Terry Goll ’77, B.S. biology, M.D., M.S. public administration, is general manager for DuPont, a global science-based technology company, with headquarters in Wilmington, Del. He lives in Wilmington with his wife.

Chuck Komeny ’77, M.B.A. business administration, is a consultant for O’Gle in Design in Irving Heights, Miss., where he lives.

John (Schnabel) Drumm ’79, M.D. supercomputing, is professor emeritus of computer science and director of the National Science Foundation’s Computer and Information Science and Engineering (CISE) Division. He is a founding member of the ACM, Inc. He has received numerous awards in recognition of his contributions to computer science and information technology. He is editor-in-chief of the Journal of Computer Science and Technology.

Margaret Finch ’70, B.B.A. accounting, is district director of special education and a member of the Texas Association of School Psychologists. She is a licensed professional counselor and lives in Pearland, Tex.

Pamela (Hinton) Choate ’79, B.A. English, is an associate foreign professor at Loyola University of Maryland and instruction for Little Cypress-Mauriceville Consolidated ISD. Finch was twice named Teacher of the Year at Jones Elementary West Orange-Cove ISD and nominated for District Teacher of the Year. She has coordinated and designed electronic lesson plans for teachers and is responsible for the Acceleration and Title 2 grants. Each position has been very different in many ways but has given me the opportunity to work with the teachers, students and the community,” she said. “I absolutely love what I do.”

Starcke earned a bachelor’s degree in mathematics from Lamar in 1961 and was a football letterman. Before retiring, he taught math at Port Neches-Groves before transferring to South Park High School to teach math and was named principal of South Park High School during his tenure. South Park High School
Lamar University Alumni will be "cocktail" out at Venture Stadium before the Lamar vs. UT Arlington baseball game.

All Lamar alumni are invited to come join the fun in the ballpark picnic area.

Talenti 5:30 Game time 6:30 pm May 4, 2009 Venture Stadium

For further information or to RSVP, contact the Office of Alumni Affairs (409) 880-8921 • (281) 298-4839 rvsofa@Lamar.edu

Lamar University Alumni are invited Reception 6 pm • June 18, 2009 Butterfly Room • Houston Museum of Natural Science followed by a program and tour of the Chinese Terra Cotta Warrior exhibit.

$10 registration fee.

More information and RSVP: Office of Alumni Affairs (409) 880-8921 • (281) 298-4839 rvsofa@Lamar.edu

Terra Cotta Warriors: Guardians of China's First Emperor

After building the first Great Wall of China, what do you do for an encore? Re-invent China.

Dr. Peter K. Emery, the First emperor, who built the universe in 221 BC and began construction of the first Great Wall, was not only obsessed with building but also a fanatic about after death. After experimenting with potions to prolong his life, the megalomaniac king returned himself to his own tomb. Beginning at age 13, for the next 38 years, he assigned 700,000 workers to build an enormous mausoleum with life-size terra cotta warriors to protect him throughout eternity.

Now, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston presents the largest exhibit of Empress Qin’s Terra Cotta Army ever seen outside of China. This terra cotta army of soldiers, servants, musicians, musicians and animals silently remained undisturbed for two thousand years. Until 1974, Chinese farmers digging a well made the startling discovery of a terra cotta head.

Now you can be in a lifetime opportunity to see one of the 20th century’s greatest archaeological finds, often referred to as the Eighth Wonder of the Ancient World.

Sharon Abbott, B.A., B.B.A. accounting, is a general sales manager for e+Healthcare. She lives in Beaumont with her husband, Martin.

Carolyn Cosa, B.S. business administration, works at Stone Partners Inc. in Houston, where she lives.

Cyndi Daniels, B. A., B.B.A. general studies, works at Stone Partners Inc. in Houston. She lives in Spring.

Dawn Stout, B.B.A. marketing, is an account executive of media/publicity for Broadcast Operations and Imaging of Imaginuity Creative and lives in Orange.

Rachel Wall, B.S. B.A., B.A.S. business administration, also works at Cornerstone Media Group, where she lives.
Tina Darden ‘98, B.S., chemical engineering, is a senior research scientist for Shell in Houston, where she lives.

Amanda Rowell ‘06, B.A. psychology, died Dec. 8, 2008.

**We will miss...**

**80s**


Yosea Holy “Yo!” Woman ‘85, B.S. general business, died Nov. 9, 2008.

Diovana (Westman) Millman ‘97, B.A. family and consumer science, died Dec. 6, 2008.


**90s**


Faculty, Staff and Friends

Joseph Baj, Jr., retired, died Jan. 9, 2009.


*Lauretta Dennis Sr., retired, died Jan. 15, 2009.


Martha Reid, retired, died Dec. 29, 2008.


Charles Landry ‘84, B.S. psychology, died Apr. 29, 2008.


*George (Mike) Marsh Jr. ‘86, B.S. and criminal justice, died Dec. 6, 2008.


*Melanie (Barr) Yarrington ‘89, B.S. business administration, died Jan. 9, 2009.

*Lamarissimo!

**1990-2000**

William Beck Brentlinger took personal responsibility for Lamar University’s mission of service to the community over four decades, died Feb. 19, 2009, at the age of 82.


“It is a rare gift to experience even the briefest association with an individual of Brentlinger’s caliber. He falls into the category of individuals who are integral, leadership, wisdom and quiet — yet monumental — talent for innovation and accomplishment,” said Lamar President James Sullivan, his former colleague-in-arms who joined the faculty of Brentlinger’s college in 1970.

“Lamar University is richer for his service, and I will cherish him being a mentor, role model and friend.”

As dean of fine arts and communication at Lamar, Brentlinger led the growth of Lamar’s educational programs, conservation education, and the world-renowned speech and hearing programs. In 1971, he initiated efforts to establish Lamar’s Friends of the Arts to encourage the work of talented young artists, musicians and actors, to increase public awareness and understanding of the arts, and to expand the cooperation between an educational institution and the various communities supporting Lamar University.

Brentlinger’s leadership and vision laid the foundation for the annual Le Grand Bal de Lamar, which has raised over $175,000 for the Doban Art Museum in 1983. He also was a fundraiser in 1975 and the dedication of the Dishman Art Museum in 1983. He also was interim president in 1992-93 and assistant to the president from 1993-94 and the official commencement in December 2005.

Memorial contributions may be made to Lamar University Foundation, PO Box 11502, Beaumont, Texas 77710. Indicate individual being honored on check. (003-019-0422)

Memorial contributions may be made to Lamar University Foundation, PO Box 11502, Beaumont, Texas 77710. Indicate individual being honored on check. (003-019-0422)

We will miss...
A former Lamar softball player, Huff had an athletic build that prompted employ- ees in the personnel office to ask if she was applying for the firefighting job. She had not planned to, but the ensuing conversa- tions convinced her to pick up two applica- tions. She got hired. Her brother-in-law did not, instead, he went back to school and became an elementary school teacher. Huff stuck with her new career choice and rose steadily through the ranks. Being the only woman in a department of more than 200 firefighters—a distinction she held then and now—has been difficult at times. Some of her co-workers either discriminated against or patronized her. Others, some of whom are now retired, earned her respect and appre- ciation by being more “humane.”

“They treated me like everybody else, which is all I ever asked for,” Huff said. “There were those few who were willing to stand up at that time, which was unpopular to do. The culture said get rid of her, run her off. They didn’t treat me that way.”

Before being named chief in March 2008, Huff served as chief training officer for 10 years. As she has achieved higher rank and greater seniority, she said, she has been treat- ed with more respect by fellow fire- fighters. Appropriate behavior in the workplace is the greatest concern, but Huff also would like to see a change in mindset both within and outside the department about the place of women in occupations such as firefighting. “I think that for male- dominated professions, it’s going to take more of an influx of qualified women to change the mindset,” she said. “We need a number of qualified women to come in and show people that women can do this job. It’s not a job that any woman could do, but it’s not a job that any man could do either. When we have those women in the work force, I think slowly, over time, attitudes will change.”

Already, she is working to make posi- tive changes within the department. Huff, who also holds a master’s degree in admin- istration, said she favors participatory leadership rather than a dicta- torial management style. For that reason, she has involved the entire department in current efforts to plan for next year’s budget and to rework many policies and proce- dures. An advisory group she established has begun developing safety training to be required for all firefighters, including rapid intervention training to improve skills neces- sary to rescue downed firefighters. “The guys have done an outstanding job cus- tomizing this training for our personnel,” she said. “We’re in the middle of doing that right now, and I’m really proud of that because it’s something that’s long overdue.”

Additionally, chief officers are writing tacti- cal standard operating guidelines detailing how to respond to each of the varied types of incidents the department faces. “They’ve never researched and developed anything like that, so it’s a really new thing for them,” she said. “But they’ve got their work groups at their stations and districts, so it’s a team effort.” After drafts are completed, all fire- fighters will have an opportunity to com- ment and add their suggestions before guidelines are finalized, Huff said.

“Through all the changes happening now and those she would like to incorporate in the future, Huff’s goal is to develop a well-trained, well-educated work force of firefighters who feel empowered to suggest good ideas and take responsibility for mak- ing them happen. “When you’re in an occu- pation that you have to work in a time- compressed environment where there’s extreme danger, if you can’t think on your feet well, you’re asking to get somebody hurt or killed,” she said. “We have to teach people to think. . . I want our people to think so much that we’re having construc- tive debate and constructive criticism on every problem in a professional way.”

In time, she hopes to work with the union to secure more city funds for additional education for firefighters and to include higher educational require- ments in departmental job descrip- tions. Huff said her ability to do her job well is enhanced by all aspects of her educational background—from the management courses she took for her master’s degree to the things she learned about people in her art and education courses.

Beaumont City Manager Kyle Hayes described Huff as bright, hard working, conscientious and, by far, the best applicant for the chief’s job. What impressed him and other members of the interview committee most was her plan for the future of the fire department. “Everything she laid out in that plan in that interview she’s made progress toward,” Hayes said, listing enhanced communica- tions and training as examples. “She’s already made great strides in the past 10 months. I think over the next year or two is when you’re really going to see the difference in a well-trained department and better morale.”

Huff, the adoptive mother of a 6-year- old daughter, said the fire service turned out to be the right job for her because of the combination of skills it requires. She liked the athleticism required, along with the fast pace and the danger. She also was attracted to the mental aspects of planning and exec- utes a strategy to handle any type of emergency event from a fire to a hazardous materials incident to a technical rescue.

“I love my work. I love the fire service. I think I finally found a career that I’m supposed to be,” she said. “It’s what I was supposed to do when I grew up, I just didn’t realize it.”

By Beth Gallasp By Beth Gallasp
Now is the time to invest in Lamar, invest in our students, invest in the future of Southeast Texas...

Encore CD available now

Tracks include
- How High The Moon
- My One And Only Love
- Take The 'A' Train
- The Girl From Ipanema
- Proud Mary
- I'm Gonna Sit Right Down
- And Write Myself A Letter
- The Lady Is A Tramp
- Crazy

Call today to order.
(409) 880-8921 or (800) 298-4839
Lamar.edu/alumni

Couple’s $6 million gift prompts chemical engineering, press box name gain

$4 million gift from law firm, couple spurs stadium naming

Putting the bite on super bugs, researcher probes alligator immunity