Lamar University has dreams yet to be fulfilled. And we’re dreaming big. Our students deserve to see those plans come alive. Alumni and friends of Lamar deserve to see Lamar prosper. Our campus is more beautiful than ever, yet some needs remain unmet. New construction is part of the Campaign for Lamar, and it is more—and means more—than just bricks and mortar.

As greater numbers of alumni return to campus each year for special events, Cardinal athletics, reunions and celebrations, a comfortable place to gather takes on even more significance. There is currently no place for alumni to call their own. The proposed alumni center would be such a space, a symbol of the lasting, beneficial connection between alumni and the university—a “home” for those who visit campus to gather, a place to stop and rest, to chat, to find out about the latest at Lamar, to meet and enjoy alumni from their own era and connect with others.

Imagine arriving at the entry to Lamar University and seeing a signature building—a “gateway” to the campus—that serves as home base for alumni, as well as a welcoming place for students who want to learn more about the achievements of alumni and who can see the value of staying connected to Lamar when they graduate. Such a building creates a venue for many important functions—a comfortable location for that tailgate party before the game, the reception for honorees, the center of hospitality for Lamar alumni and friends. The plans include intimate spaces for conversation and larger spaces for events, celebrations and reunions. The main lobby would showcase the history of Lamar through the stories of its alumni and former students. An outdoor patio will host fall and spring events and be a lovely spot for alumni to enjoy the campus at twilight, remembering their favorite Lamar experiences.
Join with us in moving Lamar University to a new level of excellence by investing in the future at Lamar University. We imagine how this region and our world will change when we toil together to make such an investment in the future unparalleled in the history of this great university.

As they toiled and invested their last dollar, Patillo Higgins and Anthony Lucas could not have imagined the impact their success at Spindletop would have on the world. Neither can we imagine how this region and our world will change when we toil together to make such an investment in the future at Lamar University.

Guiding us in this worthy endeavor is a campaign cabinet of exceptional caliber—accomplished women and men who have come alongside Lamar University to provide outstanding leadership and set the example for us all.

We are so thankful for the participation and generosity of those who have set our campaign squarely on the path to success (many of whom you will read about in this issue of Cardinal Cadence). We are emboldened as more and more individuals step forward, deeply captivated by the renewed vision of the university and discovering the role they can play in bringing it to fruition.

We are all partners in investing in the future. All gifts move us toward the goal—major gifts, planned gifts, annual gifts—these options and many more are all ways you can participate. Join us in moving Lamar University to a new level of excellence by investing in the Future, today.

Sincerely,

James M. Simmons
President
Lamar University

From the President

Just a few days ago, hundreds of students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends of our great university gathered in the Mонтagne Center for a wonderful evening of music and celebration. At that event, I had the tremendous pleasure of announcing that Lamar University has raised $46 million in the first two years of our first-ever comprehensive campaign—a thrilling start toward a very ambitious—but achievable—goal of $100 million.

That $100 million will be the catalyst for turning possibilities into realities—a bold investment in the future unparalleled in the history of this great university. As they toiled and invested their last dollar, Patillo Higgins and Anthony Lucas could not have imagined the impact their success at Spindletop would have on the world. Neither can we imagine how this region and our world will change when we toil together to make such an investment in the future at Lamar University.

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President
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A remarkable group of alumni and friends of Lamar University has led the way toward an unprecedented beginning toward a stunning $100 million goal. The campaign and the news that the university had raised $46 million in the two-year “silent phase” well-orchestrated evening before an audience of several thousand that President Simmons announced as assembled a great orchestra for the Jimmy Simmons and Friends Encore concert. It was during this in the Montagne Center. Jimmy Simmons, the popular president of Lamar and talented musician assembled a great orchestra for the Jimmy Simmons and Friends Encore concert. It was during this orchestra that the university had raised $46 million in the two-year “silent phase” toward a stunning $100 million goal.

Calling the response in the silent phase “an unprecedented beginning,” President Simmons praised the leadership of the campaign cabinet and the generosity of donors who have made historic gifts. He paid special tribute to Camille Mouton, vice president for university advancement and her staff and noted that every member of the university’s senior leadership have made significant personal commitments as well.

“Investing in the Future: The Campaign for Lamar University” is a direct result of President Simmons’ leadership, which inspired so many people to make significant philanthropic investments according to Elvis Mason, honorary chair of the campaign.

Simmons became Lamar’s 10th president in 1999. Since then, the university has been transformed physically as well as academically. A walk across campus today reveals a university on the move with physical manifestations of change: four Cardinal Village residence halls housing more than 2,000 students, state-of-the-art dining and recreational facilities, and ongoing renovation of academic buildings. With a robust student body, enrollment has grown 35 percent.

At the same time, Simmons was leading fundamental changes in academic programs and support for faculty and students. Four new doctoral programs have been established. Significant progress has been made in student recruitment and in support for students through enhanced scholarships, including the M. Rabbeau Scholars—a Simmons initiative that recruits top academic talent, a hallmark of a strong university. Other scholarships that lighten the financial burden for students continue to grow as well.

Simultaneously University Advancement has led a sustained effort to identify, engage and seek support from alumni and friends. Several key organizations embraced the Simmons vision and helped create the transformation: the LU Foundation board, alumni board, Cardinal Club, Friends of the Arts, and college and department advisory councils.

Lamar is a remarkable story. From humble beginnings as a junior college, Lamar became the place of opportunity for bright and ambitious young men and women who sought an education as a path to a better life. Many of those former students are today’s entrepreneurs, inventors, CEOs of global companies, lawyers of international acclaim, doctors, teachers, nurses and others who change lives and enhance communities. At the same time, Lamar has become a cultural and economic force for Southeast Texas.

Lamar is where it is today because of people. Caring faculty, ambitious and engaged students, and dedicated staff create an enduring place where students can achieve their dreams. Lamar has benefited from the right leadership in critical times: presidents like John Gray, who inspired community confidence and had great vision, and Jimmy Simmons, who came from the faculty to lead Lamar in unprecedented positive change and a bold vision for the future.

This vision captured the imagination of a remarkable group of alumni and friends who enthusiastically agreed to lead and support this historic campaign to raise $100 million for faculty, students, programs and facilities that will move Lamar to national prominence in the years ahead.

I stress private philanthropic support is essential to the “margin of excellence” that will sustain and enhance the impressive success of the past 10 years.

A goal of $100 million is exceptional for a relatively young university. The heart of the campaign and a building momentum is the success of the past 10 years.

As you read this issue, you’ll discover many alumni and friends who have committed to making it happen.

Sheila and Walter U. Umphrey gave a transformational gift, enabling Lamar to make lasting contributions to the region and to the world through its many outstanding programs, research and graduates. In recognition of their generosity, an extensively renovated and expanded building on campus was named the Sheila U. Umphrey Recreational Sports Center. This new campus centerpiece has significantly increased the quality of student life on campus. Alumni and friends committed to higher education are making Lamar a more powerful and effective university.

Mak ing it Happen

There are a few of the many people who have committed to strengthening Lamar’s future.

The Beaumont Foundation of America established 16 new endowments creating Southeast Texas Legends Scholarships honoring local citizens and contributed significantly to the endowment supporting the Judge [wrt.] Joe J. Fisher Lecture Series at Lamar University.

David Beck ’61 created the David J. Beck Fellowships. Lamar’s most prestigious award to students. Beck hopes the fellowships will give outstanding undergraduate scholars with financial need, who are above-average, high achievers, even more opportunity than he had as a student—opportunity to study and research in their chosen field and accept internships or the educational enrichment of travel rather than relying on an outside job, sometimes more than one, unrelated to their major.

Judy and George D. Dishman ’49 established an endowment that was a milestone for Lamar—its first named department—The John Anne Gay Dishman Department of Nursing. Their generosity will allow the department to grow, meeting a critical need in a vital field. The gift, which will benefit future generations of nursing graduates, reflects the commitment of Judy Dishman and her mother, Edna Horn Gay. Lamar educates the vast majority of the area’s nurses.

As past chairman of the College of Engineering Advisory Council, Phil Drayer ’67 is helping guide the college in a new era of growth. H e and his wife, Karen, will transform the electrical engineering program through their gift, in thanks for which Lamar named the Phillip M. Drayer Department of Electrical Engineering. Drayer said, “My goal is to do what I can to move the Lamar College of Engineering and the electrical engineering department to national prominence for research... and to see it produce top-notch graduates who can make a big contribution for many years to come.”

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Remarkable opportunity to strengthen Lamar and to have a positive impact on the lives of thousands of students.
—ROY STEINHAGEN
President, Lamar University Foundation

For a campaign critical to a pivotal time in Lamar University’s history, the 85-year-old institution needed leadership to match and found it in the confidence and dedication of a remarkable group of alumni, former students and friends. Recognizing Lamar is at an unprecedented threshold, these loyal volunteers helped define strategic and significant goals to ensure Lamar University has the resources to forge ahead. Inspired by the steady transformation of Lamar during the last nine years of leadership under President James Simmons, cabinet members are working to enable Lamar to take its place as a resource for the future of Texas, capitalizing on the visible signs of progress and the rising reputation of Lamar’s academic programs.

“Toward Goal 6 36:1 MAY 2008

“it has become the most important institution in Southeast Texas and is vital to our area’s future growth. Now, more than ever, we have a remarkable opportunity to strengthen Lamar and to have a positive impact on the lives of thousands of students.”

President, Lamar University Foundation—ROY STEINHAGEN

The campaign cabinet would be the envy of any university, comprising men and women whose successes and reputations span the nation and the globe. Many cabinet members and alumni express the value of Lamar University to their lives. Their experiences are the inspiration for current and future faculty, students and staff. “It is unprecedented for Lamar to have this caliber of talent leading the university’s first campaign,” said Camille Mouton, vice president of university advancement.

“At the very heart of it is the fact that everyone believes in what we are doing. This is the most important institution in Southeast Texas and is vital to our area’s future growth. Now, more than ever, we have a remarkable opportunity to strengthen Lamar and to have a positive impact on the lives of thousands of students.”

President, Lamar University Foundation—ROY STEINHAGEN

The breakdown shown by the chart reflects only gifts received to date. The campaign is a dynamic, evolving endeavor. Donors who choose to give to Lamar create gifts specific to the things closest to their hearts. Each person is inspired to give for a different, very personal reason. A diverse group of alumni, former students and friends.

“I admire what Lamar University has accomplished in recent years, and I see renewed respect for the university from potential donors who have this caliber of talent leading the university’s first campaign,” said Camille Mouton, vice president of university advancement.

“We invite you to join us at this historic time for Lamar University and have your name associated with our campaign for our students. It is a proud time to be a Lamarian,” Mouton said.

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“The transformation at Lamar and the esteem in which it is held today is due to Jimmy Simmons and the team he assembled. His legacy will be the most remarkable in Lamar’s history.”

— ELVIS MASON ’59

Orchestrating success

by Brian Sattler

A baton is raised. Suddenly, from cappuccino-brilliant symphony to dissonance dissolves into harmony. This happens not by chance, but by design. The maestro marks cadence, and a certain magic results.

When Jimmy Simmons discovered his love of music—as a young man—he knew he had found his passion. He honed his skills as an undergraduate at Memphis State. Now with more than 30 years of experience, Simmons is someone people like and want to follow. He solves problems and creates harmony with a seeming effortlessness and a gentle touch that is embraced and appreciated.

“When I first met him in his role as president, the easying but very sincere, very concerned nature got my attention right away,” said Dan Smith ’69, retired chairman and CEO of Lyondell Chemical Co. “His enthusiasm for the university seems to come through in the first five seconds.”

A man whose modesty is genuine, Simmons seemed truly surprised when a study to test the feasibility of a campaign revealed that every prospect interviewed believed Lamar University deserved and needed a comprehensive campaign and that it HAD to happen while he was president. With the perspective of an alumnus whose relationship with the university spans more than the past decade, Simmons Honorary Chair Elvis Mason ’59 put it this way: “I had lost hope for Lamar to reach its potential until Jimmy Simmons became president. The transformation at Lamar and the esteem in which it is held today is due to Jimmy Simmons and the team he assembled. His legacy will be the most remarkable in Lamar’s history.”

His full partner in Lamar’s transformation is his sweetheart and first lady Susan (Williams) Simmons ’68. Although he didn’t graduate from Lamar himself—he joined Lamar’s faculty in 1970—Jimmy often says he “did the next best thing by marrying Susan,” a devoted Lamar alumna. She has spent countless hours helping mold campus interiors and exteriors into the vistas and spaces current students and alumni can claim with pride.

Today, Simmons could bask in his success as a musician and as a president, but his energy and drive to improve things plays on. “He has a clear vision of where he wants to take the university,” Smith said. “In my experience in the business world, I’ve seen that most leaders lack a clear vision. A truly successful leader clearly knows where they want to go. With their enthusiasm, they can aggregate people around them who bring all the other skills to make things happen.”

“He really has the ability to draw people together, and that’s an uncommon trait, a real gift to be able to get people energized and working for something,” said Jerry Reese ’66, retired founder of Bo-Mac Contractors Ltd. and a member of the campaign cabinet.

“Jimmy has done a fantastic job of picking the right people for the right jobs,” Aldredge said. “The orchestra is tuned up, and it is performing fantastically.”

Simmons’ appearances as a talented musician are always played before a packed house. He still performs regularly at concerts and other campus productions, in “gigs” with faculty and friends, and in special concerts like “Jimmy Simmons and Friends Encore” held in the Montagne Center May 3, at which Lamar’s landmark campaign, with a $100 million goal, was announced.

His achievements as president have made him a symbol of leadership for southeast Texas. He is a member of the Texas State University System. Under his leadership, an outstanding campaign cabinet gladly signed on to help complete the transformation begun by Simmons by raising more than $46 million to date toward the $100 million goal.

“Dr. Simmons has excited someone in everyone who has any interest in Lamar University,” said Greg Thompson, co-chair of the campaign committee with Aldredge. “You go around the campus, and you see it is a beautiful place now. The dorms are second to none. The cafeteria is second to none. And the education is now realized to be second to none. People are excited about the possibility of investing back into Lamar University and making it grow better.”

Academically, Simmons continues to enhance the university with new programs like construction management, endowed departments in nursing and electrical engineering, and the new research and sponsored programs office. To support enrollment and enhance campus life, Simmons has guided the process to return football to the university in part, he jokingly says, because of “the 350-piece marching band.” A new partnership with H. I. Hogg Industries has garnered national attention and is permitting Lamar to offer high-quality master’s degrees in educational leadership to teachers and administrators across Texas. This kind of innovation comes naturally to a man who can play jazz in totally new ways.

“Op response to such innovation has been the steady growth, from 8,149 in fall 1999 to 10,379 in fall 2007, a trend that has picked up tempo despite the damage wrought on the region by Hurricane Rita in 2005. During this crisis period, Simmons shines brightly bringing together a team that restored the campus and, with the hard work and sacrifice of the entire campus community, salvaged a semester that seemed lost.

Not lost on the community is Jimmy and Susan’s dedication to Southeast Texas. During the years, the couple has been devoted to community activities and organizations — from the Neches River Festival, Symphony of Southeast Texas and Art Museum of Southeast Texas to the Rotary Club of Beaumont and Junior League as well as arts, athletics and other endeavors at Lamar.

“Susan is right there with him,” said Sheila (O’Hara) Reese ’65, an advocate for Lamar and wife of Jerry Reese. “They make a wonderful couple to lead Lamar. They’ve been a partnership.”

Susan has played a leading role in the campus renovation, drawing on her considerable experience in the real estate business. “She’s been very involved in the landscaping, and it’s just beautiful now,” Sheila Reese said. “She’s been right there with him on decisions on the dorms, the dining hall, and the Sheila Umphrey Center. She’s always opening her home for different events, and I think she makes almost every meeting and luncheon and dinner that he makes. She’s been a really good first lady of Lamar.”

When the history of Lamar University is written, Jimmy Simmons will hold a singular place. Future presidential searches at Lamar and elsewhere may find the job description reading, “University seeks talented musician with excellent conducting skills… Of course the people of Lamar know there is only ONE Jimmy Simmons and, truly, he is ours.”
Banking on Lamar’s future

by Louise Wood

From the small town of Vivian, La., to the highest echelons of the banking industry, Elvis Leon Mason ‘59 has achieved success beyond the greatest dreams of childhood. Timing and circumstance directed him to Lamar University, whose influence on his life, he says, is “total.”

“I give Lamar credit for everything I’ve done in my professional career because I was there,” Mason said. The foundation I derived from attending Lamar has been wonderful – and I say that from the perspective of a 52-year relationship,” said Mason, now retired and living in Dallas with Joan, his wife of 47 years, just a few blocks away from one son and two of their three grandchildren.

The relationships I developed at Lamar directed me toward banking, toward John Gray,” he said. “I stayed in Texas and married a Texas girl, so I guess you would say my entire life flowed from my being at Lamar.”

The impact of Mason’s life on Lamar University has been phenomenal. He served on the Lamar board of regents from 1974 to 1978, when he was named an outstanding alumnus; he subsequently served as charter president – and was inducted into Delta Sigma Pi business honor society and Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society. In 1958, he was crowned “King of Lamar Tech.” Mason earned his bachelor of business administration in economics and went on to receive a Rotary International Fellowship, spending a year at Rhodes University in South Africa.

Mason’s value his opportunity not only to pursue a degree but to become his mentor and friend. “I went to the bank and had a visit with him, and he was so gracious. He asked me if I could spare the time to go to lunch with him – and obviously I could.”

Lamar University is the epitome of a university that really adds to people’s lives. This campaign can make the difference between an average university and what it can become when it has the funds available to supplement its overall academic mission.”

After Mason returned from abroad and joined American General Insurance as branch manager, Gray asked if he had considered banking. Mason decided the time was not right, but, two years later, while working in Corpus Christi, “I decided banking would be an arena that would fit me better than the one I was in.” So Mason got in touch with Gray.

“She’s been involved with Lamar for a long, long time, through me, so she feels like she belongs to Lamar. She has been a marvelous wife and a wonderful mother.”

The Masons have three children, Ross, of Dallas; Greg, of Athens, Texas; and Joel, of Durham, N.C.; and three grandchildren. Greg is a 1991 Lamar graduate with a degree in applied arts and sciences.

Mason has served on the board of regents “almost from the start,” he said. “When I came back to Beaumont and joined the bank, I began to pick up things going on at Lamar and began working with the Alumni Association. I later served on the board of regents with an appointment from Gov. Dolph Briscoe. Even before that, I knew (regents chairman) Otho Plummers well. My involvement with Lamar flowed through all of those activities.”

Mason served on the board with two of his best friends, George O’Dyman and Mark Steinhagen. “He has always had a warm spot in his heart for Lamar,” said O’Dyman, his friend of 40 years. “He was always a promoter – of Beaumont, the Chamber of Commerce, Lamar University – doing anything he could to improve the life of the community.”

Mason’s steadfast support of Lamar has spanned more than half a century. He believes the university’s impact will span centuries to come. Lamar occupies a unique position in the region, and the time is right to ensure that it can continue to offer a wide range of scholarship opportunities.

“When alumni provide financial support for a university dependent on public funds, they do everything from enhancing the quality of the faculty it can attract and retain to providing a wide range of scholarships,” said Mason. “Private funds are essential, and Lamar is a great investment because it means investing in students.”

Lamar University is important in Southeast Texas for almost every reason you can think of – economically, culturally, government relations, and as a place where the next generation of leaders can be taught a collective planning that affects the entire region. I believe this is the right time for a comprehensive campaign because it is in such a positive period of growth and development.”
Michael Aldredge
Co-chair, Investing in the Future: The Campaign for Lamar University

Mike Lyle and Pat (Peterson) Aldredge ’61 are among the great benefactors of Lamar University, in terms of their love for the institution, their continued involvement and their financial contributions covering more than three decades. Mike and Aldredge now serves as co-chair of the university’s comprehensive campaign.

“During my stay at Lamar, three of the greatest things of my life happened,” Aldredge said. “I got a fantastic education. I got an opportunity to join a company that ended up being a wonderful career, from clerk to CEO and chairman. I also met the greatest earthly blessing of my life, my wife Pat.”

A Grimal native who earned a bachelor’s degree in industrial engineering from Lamar, Aldredge worked his way from clerk to service man to sales engineer, then to vice president, board member and, ultimately, chairman and CEO of Puffer Sweven, a Houston-based distributor of process instrumentation. When Mike retired from Puffer Sweven, he moved to the Bellville area farm they now call home. Today, Aldredge operates Hill Haven Farms and is general partner in Mill Creek Land & Cattle Co.

He served as a member of Lamar’s alumni association board from 1988 to 2004 and as its president from 1992 to 1995. Aldredge has been a trustee of the LU Foundation since 1989 and serves as its president from 1995 to 1997. He also serves on the College of Engineering Advisory Council and the College of Arts and Sciences Advisory Council. He was named a Lamar University Distinguished Alumnus in 1999.

The couple established the Patricia and Michael Aldredge Presidential Scholarship in Industrial Engineering and the Michael E. and Patricia P. Aldredge Chair in Engineering. They have contributed to scores of other scholarship endowments and programs.

“I owe a debt of gratitude to Lamar for an education,” he said. “I really find joy in giving back to Lamar. It’s not something that is a requirement. It’s a joy to participate and help others. There are people who made things good before us. Now it’s our turn.”

Greg Thompson
Co-chair, Investing in the Future: The Campaign for Lamar University

“I’ve been fortunate enough to go to schools in Austin, Boston and Beaumont,” said co-chair Greg Thompson. “I attended the University of Texas Law School, and H andard Business School, but my very first college experience was at Lamar University. What a great experience; it really set the stage for my later success.”

Thompson, a lawyer and mediator in Beaumont, holds a bachelor’s in accounting and a juris doctorate from the University of Texas, as well as an M.B.A. from H andard University.

Greg and Jennifer (H ebert) Thompson ’84 recently gave a generous gift to renovate the facilities for Lamar’s tennis program—creating the Thompson Family Tennis Center—including an electronic scoreboard, awnings to shade the fans and improvements to the existing tennis building.

Thompson has high praise for Lamar’s foundation board and the campaign cabinet. “I’ve never been a part of a board that has been more successful, more energized, more involved than the Lamar University Foundation and the campaign cabinet. We’re seeing everybody roll up their sleeves, trying to do their best so that Lamar University can be the very best that it can be.

“We all have a lot of love for Lamar University,” he said.

Thompson has been a trustee of the LU Foundation since September 1999, chaired its special projects committee from 2000 to 2002, and served as its president from 2004 to 2006. He also serves on the board of the National Catholic Educational Association and is past president of the Three Rivers Council Boy Scouts of America. He serves on the board of the Southern Region Boy Scouts of America. Greg and Jennifer have served as chairs of the Bishop’s Faith Appeal for the Diocese of Beaumont.

If the campaign, Thompson said, “people are starting to come out and say I want to be a part. I want to help. I want to invest. They’re asking how they can help Lamar University move forward. They know that by helping Lamar move forward, they’re going to help Southeast Texas move forward.”

Don Lyle
Co-chair, Investing in the Future: The Campaign for Lamar University

When a financial planner asked Don ’63 and Maryann (Johnson) Lyle ’65 several years ago to consider what institutions they felt personally indebted to, two sprang instantly to mind. The Boy Scouts of America taught Don Lyle that he could take care of himself. Lamar University gave him the tools he needed for a successful career as a technology businessman and instilled in Maryann an appreciation for lifelong learning.

“It was at that point that I decided I would attempt to help others by establishing some scholarships at Lamar,” said Don, who attended Lamar as an electrical engineering major from 1958 to 1963 and received an honorary doctorate in 2006.

After becoming involved as alumni in 2001, the couple created the Don M. Lyle Regents’ Scholarship in Engineering and the Maryann Lyle Scholarship in Education. Since their initial gift of more than $400,000, the Lyles have given generously each year. Additionally, they have made Lamar the beneficiary of a $2 million estate gift and continue to look for ways to help. Don was the first chairman of the College of Engineering Advisory Council, on which he continues to serve. He also serves as a trustee of the Lamar University Foundation and sits on the cabinet of Lamar’s Investing in the Future campaign, to which the couple has generously contributed. Maryann is a charter member of the College of Arts and Sciences Advisory Council. Don and Maryann continue to challenge themselves and others. It was Don who strongly championed a “big hairy audacious goal” of $100 million for the campaign.

Reconnecting with Lamar University is just one way the Lyles give back. The couple has worked to improve educational opportunities for promising students. Don serves on the boards of San Diego’s Reuben H. Fleet Science Center, and of Sally Ride Science, which encourages young girls to sustain an interest in math and science. A member of the board of directors of numerous public and private companies and non-profits, Don is principal of Technology Management, a management consulting firm, and holds several patents for his innovations in computer architecture. Maryann, who credits her Lamar education degree with opening doors for her beyond teaching, has worked with a Mexican-American education agency for the past 25 years in Southern California.

“We realized that one of our core beliefs is that the way to get ahead in life for 99 percent of the people in the world is education,” Don said. “Virtually all of our charitable work, and in fact very much of my time nowadays, is involved with contributions to further education.”

Boosting students to success

All universities produce graduates, but not all of them care so deeply about each individual student.”

Don Lyle

Their involvement comes from a desire to help young people lay a foundation for future successful, productive and happy lives. “I personally remember how difficult it was for both of us financially to get through school even in the days when things were a lot cheaper,” Maryann said. “I look around for areas to help kids, not necessarily the brilliant kids who might have it a little easier financially, but other kids who are willing to work hard enough to go to school, and all they need is a little push, just a little boost.”

With their gifts to Lamar, the Lyles hope to create a path to the same type of good education they enjoyed for students who might otherwise face insurmountable financial obstacles. “Maybe in some small way we’ll help the university continue with its first-class education and add programs when it’s possible to make things even better,” Maryann said.

One of the reasons the Lyles have come to value Lamar so much is because they have seen firsthand the way Lamar professors and administrators value each student. Don Lyle experienced it nearly 50 years ago when the late Lloyd Cherry, then chairman of the electrical engineering department and later dean of the College of Engineering, took a personal interest in helping him balance his full-time work schedule with his classes.

When Don asked in articulating the vision for the College of Engineering a few years ago, one of the core values the group came up with was “the success of each student really matters to us,” Don said. “I believe that is a Lamar University characteristic in general, which makes it very exceptional.”

All universities produce graduates, but not all of them care so deeply about each individual student, he said.

During their renewed relationship with Lamar University, the Lyles believe they have seen their alma mater awaken from the doldrums.

“With the new administration, Jimmy Simmons and the people he has put together around him, the place just got re-energized,” Don said. “It’s as if the lights have been turned on, just in the years we have been involved in it. I’ve witnessed a transformation. Even the physical appearance of the place is different. It’s just a very exciting time.”

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Don said. “It’s as if the lights have been turned on, just in the years we have been involved in it. I’ve witnessed a transformation. Even the physical appearance of the place is different. It’s just a very exciting time.” — BG
"My experience at Lamar was probably similar to what a lot of young people are seeing today," he said. "We didn’t have a lot of money. I needed to make a little money to help pay for things, so I co-oped. I was among the first students to co-op at the university."

As a Lamar chemical engineering student, his co-op assignment began with the former Atlantic Richfield Company (ARCO) refinery in Port Arthur and culminated in permanent employment after he graduated.

"That co-op was a tremendous experience because I saw the value of what I was getting," Smith said. "I knew that what I was getting in education was comparable with what others were getting elsewhere because I worked with them."

Piloting through numerous assignments in two of Arco’s divisions and corporate headquarters, Smith became a vice president of Lyondell Chemical Co., a petrochemicals and refining operations company, in 1985. He was named chief financial officer and executive vice president of Lyondell when it became a public company in 1989.

"My decision to come back and get involved with Lamar was precipitated by (engineering dean) Jack Hopper. He is a very persuasive individual. But when I saw what he was doing, when I met Jimmy Simmons and saw what he was doing, I thought it was a great opportunity to make a difference," Smith said.

"The advisory council for the College of Engineering has been a great experience for me because I’m working with some highly successful graduates from Lamar and with a really enthusiastic staff there."

"The university knew where it wanted to go, but having the enthusiasm of all these former students has helped give us the momentum to really take off," Smith said. "I’m proud that we’ve made some real progress."

Dan F. Smith ’69, a distinguished alumnus of Lamar, grew up in Port Arthur. Recently retired as chairman and CEO of a global company, he credits his start to the education he received at Lamar University and the opportunity to participate in cooperative education with local industry.

"I think that when people first think about Lamar University, they think about Southeast Texas, the Golden Triangle and the industrial complexes. I don’t think they truly appreciate the global impacts that the university has," Smith said. "The preparation that you get with an education at Lamar will allow you to compete very effectively with anybody anywhere else on the globe. And that influence was being spread around the world.

"The other fact that I think we lose track of sometimes is that we bring in many international students. So we bring in students from all over the world, they get the education at Lamar, and then they take it back out into the world. So, it really is a global-impact university, not just a regional university," Smith said.

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—DAN SMITH

"I got a very solid foundation from Lamar. If I can come back and help Lamar give other people a solid foundation, that makes me feel good."

—DAN SMITH

Today, Smith lends expertise to Lamar as a member of the College of Engineering Advisory Council and is a member of the university’s campaign cabinet.
Building boom
Construction management program begins with generous gift

by Brian Sattler

Thanks to the generosity of Jerry '66 and Sheila (O'Hara) Reese '65 of Beaumont, students at Lamar University can pursue a degree in construction management beginning in Fall 2008. The couple contributed $1.25 million to establish the program at Lamar.

The new Reese Construction Management Program offers a bachelor of science degree focusing on the business aspects of construction engineering from the University of M I asouri-Rolla. He is a licensed professional engineer and land surveyor.

Reese founded Bo-Mac Contractors Ltd. in 1966. Today, after selling the company in 2007, his son Jordan is chief operating officer. His idea of helping Lamar begin the program had its genesis in father and son conversations over a number of years about needing to build up college graduates locally who were experienced in plant expansions and billions of dollars are poured into plant expansions and new projects.

Steven McCrary, an experienced engineer and college educator, will direct the program. McCrary holds a Ph.D. in engineering management from the University of M I asouri-Rolla. He is a licensed professional engineer and land surveyor.

Reese founded Bo-Mac Contractors Ltd. in 1966. Today, after selling the company in 2007, his son Jordan is chief operating officer. His idea of helping Lamar begin the program had its genesis in father and son conversations over a number of years about needing to build up college graduates locally who were prepared to lead major construction projects. Jordan Reese "was the instigator" in talking to President James Simmons about the idea, his father said.

"There really is a need in this area for education that fits the demands of the construction industry and the petrochemical industry," Reese said. "Lamar's colleges of engineering and business provide the program jointly. Students must complete 48 credit hours of general education core courses and 72 credit hours of required and elective business and engineering courses.

The program will give graduates a strong background in construction engineering while at the same time providing the business background that will help graduates in working with corporations, budgets and contracts, Reese said.

Lamar’s new program is one of a "very few programs that offer this combination of civil engineering, business and construction management. The timely nature of the program could not have been planned any better, with construction projects for the Golden Triangle being announced at $20 billion, the job market will be at an all-time high in this area for the next 10 years or more," Hopper said.

"I think the person who will be attracted to this degree wants to be involved in the construction industry, but doesn’t want to be a specific type of engineer," said Reese. "If she wants to be involved in the engineering process and the building. They like being outside; they like being involved in the construction."

Graduates with the new degree would typically start employment in the field managing several areas of a project, "keeping up with the drawings and the progress and, if they’re sharp enough, they’ll move up and eventually become project managers controlling entire projects. They’ll understand the engineering side, and they’ll also have the business background," Reese said.

Jerry Reese’s dedication to Lamar University has been expressed in myriad ways. He has served as a trustee of the Lamar University Foundation since 1987, twice as president, in addition to serving as an officer in several other capacities. He has served as a member of the College of Business Advisory Board since its inception in 2003, and he was inducted into the College of Business Hall of Fame the same year. He was honored at Le Grand Bal in 2002, and he and Sheila serve on the Friends of the Arts Board.

A successful entrepreneur and adroit businessman, Reese has demonstrated leadership throughout his career. During his days at Lamar University, he and two friends founded Collegiate Diamonds of America, an endeavor selling engagement rings at a time when about 28 percent of all college students got engaged or married each year.

One of those diamond rings went to his high school sweetheart and bride, Sheila. At Lamar, Sheila was active in Delta Zeta Sorority and was homecoming queen. She graduated in 1965 with a bachelor’s degree in secondary education. An active supporter of Lamar University and the community, she has filled vital roles in education and the arts.

"Jerry and I are both from Beaumont, so it’s nice to be able to give back to our university and to our hometown," Sheila said. "Lamar gives so much to this area; it’s such an important part of our life here."

It wasn’t business, but basketball that first brought Jerry Reese to Lamar. Having played as a point guard at Beaumont High School, he was a walk-on when Billy Tubbs was freshman coach under Jack Martin. "I wish I could have stayed, but we were having so much fun with the business things we were doing, and those practices that Billy Tubbs put on weren’t the easiest things in the world," Reese said.

Basketball may have drawn Reese to Lamar, but it was the friendships and the college environment that made the deal stick. While still a full-time student and in the second business, Reese also operated a flight school from 1963 to 1965 at the Beaumont Municipal Airport. He landed a more down-to-earth business after he graduated in 1966.

Jerry grew up around the construction business run by his father, and he parlayed that experience into running Bo-Mac. At first, he focused on services to the oil fields, but, through four decades, the business evolved, expanding to pile-driving, paving and civil construction for the oil- and gas-refining industries, Texas Department of Transportation, and, through its marine division, construction of dock facilities from New Orleans to Corpus Christi. Today, under the leadership of his son Jordan, Bo-Mac continues to grow.

The couple has three grown children, Jordan and daughters Rachel Lawrence and Stacey Henningsen. They have 10 grandchildren. After four decades in the construction business, Jerry and Sheila are glad to have more time to share in the lives of their children and grandchildren.
It was all about love

by Louise Wood

I have guardian angels kept watch over Southeast Texas and Lamar University. They flew on the wings of Julie and Ben Rogers. And if ever one person symbolized the soaring spirit of entrepreneurship, it was Ben Rogers. “It wasn’t about them. It was about the community they loved, and it was about working closely together for the benefit of everyone,” said their daughter, Regina. “It was all about love.”

Ben Rogers’ father died at the age of 29 during a flu epidemic in Chicago and left six children, ranging in age from 6 months to 9 years. Their mother could not read or write English, and she soon lost the leather-manufacturing business her husband had started.

When he was 8, Ben was out on the street selling newspapers. He went on to work as a janitor and laundry man. “Dad never forgot his roots and people who were unable to succeed because of their limiting circumstances,” Regina said. “He always felt that having an education would have enabled him to accomplish more.”

Nonetheless, he and his brothers went on to extraordinary success, with hearts even bigger than their business ventures. Now, the Rogers family has established the Ben J. Rogers Chair in Entrepreneurship at Lamar’s College of Business. It is a gift from the grateful children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Julie and Ben Rogers: Drs. Arvey Rogers ’55 of Miami, Fla.; the late Dr. Bernard Rogers ’55; and Regina Rogers of Beaumont; and Arvey’s grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Julie and Ben Rogers.

The chair serves not only to advance the region but also to recognize the role Lamar has played in the Rogers’ lives. “We know how important raising money is to implementing services and providing incentives to students,” Regina said. “We want to attract as many people as we can to Lamar, so we felt it was important for our family to provide a lead gift, particularly in the College of Business—an area where Dad had such an impact on Southeast Texas.”

The Ben J. Rogers Chair in Entrepreneurship is the pivotal phase of a long-range plan to make entrepreneurship an area of excellence for the college, said Enrique “Ency” Venta, dean of Lamar’s College of Business. “The next step is to bring in a leading teacher-scholar. The generous support of the Rogers family will enable us to attract a high-visibility individual who will provide curricular guidance, teach some of the courses and conduct research.”

“We are very much aware of the legacy of their grandparents and their relationship to Southeast Texas. This is being done by our family in honor of Dad—a gentleman who, although he didn’t have a college education, believed strongly in the ability of young people to forge ahead and become leaders in their communities, as well as successful businessmen and women,” Ency said.

The chair is also to honor the couple, who were preserved. “He always felt that having an education would have enabled him to accomplish more.” Nonetheless, he and his brothers went on to extraordinary success, with hearts even bigger than their business ventures.

The late Dr. Bernard Rogers ’55; and Regina Rogers of Beaumont; and Arvey’s grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Julie and Ben Rogers.

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“My family was very close to M ary and John Gray, whose lives were devoted to Lamar,” she said, “and we spent many wonderful occasions together.”

More important, Regina said, was the feeling her parents had, early on, that Lamar was an invaluable resource for Southeast Texas, that collaboration between Lamar and the region’s communities should be enhanced and the relationships nurtured—benefiting everyone involved.

“When Dad was president of the Chamber of Commerce in the 1960s, he made Lamar a major focus,” Regina said. “He used to say, ‘It goes to Lamar, so go to Southeast Texas.’ They’re linked so closely that one’s success is dependent on the other. Lamar is the catalyst to

Ben Rogers with one of “Ben’s kids” including integrity, loyalty and compassion. He was a man of his word, and if he said he was going to do something, you could bank on it. His goal was for a project to succeed, and money was never the bottom line. It was its success in terms of what it meant to the region, whether it was Gateway Shopping City, Parkdale Mall or any of the endeavors in which he and my uncles were involved.”

Ben Rogers and his brothers—Sol, Nate and Vic—founded Texas State Q ualified and were involved in projects in other areas of the country. Regina said, “but their real allegiance and their devotion was to Southeast Texas.”

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Lefler bequeaths $900,000

Even without a direct tie to Lamar University, Kay Lefler’s recognition of the intrinsic value of an education and a family tradition of helping make others’ lives better led her to bequeath more than $900,000 to the M. L. Lefler Sr. and Bessee Lefler Memorial Scholarship as a final token of her life-long support of Lamar University.

Kay and Buddy Lefler Jr. first established the scholarship in 1978 in memory of his parents. The bequest came after Kay died May 1, 2006. Buddy preceded her in death on April 28, 1994. With this bequest, the endowment is now valued at $1.1 million. “Buddy was known for being three things: honest, giving and highly intelligent. We grew up taking care of people, so it was an easy decision for Buddy and Kay to support Lamar,” said Beaumont attorney and longtime friend Lindsay Walker. “Buddy’s love and concern for others were positive influences in students’ lives, she and her husband, Murray, endowed the Virginia Anderson Presidential Scholarship in Family and Consumer Sciences. M. L. Lefler Jr. was known for being a man who helped others. He was a man who always wanted to help others and to improve the lives of others.” —LA

Dr. Arvey Rogers with wife and great- grandson Benjamin Edebon (at the dedication of the Benjamin J. Rogers Regional Visitors Center)

LARRY ACKER

Anderson continues to look out for students

V

irginia (Norris) Anderson made an indelible impression on the lives of hundreds of students during her 33 years as a faculty member in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences. To recognize that and continue to be a positive influence in students’ lives, she and her husband, Murray, endowed the Virginia Anderson Presidential Scholarship in Family and Consumer Sciences. M. L. Anderson is a Marine veteran of WWII, a Charter Life underwriter and a financial advisor. He has been an active community leader in Beaumont for 50 years. The scholarship is intended for students concentrating in teacher certification, general studies and family studies. The initial award—in fall 2007—coincided with the couple’s 60th wedding anniversary.

“I consider the Family and Consumer Sciences Department to be one of the most important programs on the Lamar University campus,” Anderson said. “This program teaches young women and men how to live their lives. I hope it brings recognition and more outstanding students to the program that has meant so much to me over the years.”

Anderson joined the faculty in 1965 as an instructor and retired in 1993 as an associate professor of home economics. She assisted in the development of several courses and curricula, including vocational certification, the family studies specialization and interior design specialization, and participated in the development of the graduate program. “I think students perhaps best remember her for the class she developed and taught for more than 30 years—Human Intimacy, Marriage, and Family Relationships. She particularly enjoyed counseling students about their academic programs.”

When asked what she would tell anyone considering establishing a scholarship at Lamar University, she simply states, “It’s one of the most satisfying things I ever did.” —LA

Julie was born April 6, 1914, and died Feb. 12, 1998. Ben Rogers was born June 5, 1913, and died Dec. 14, 1994. Virginia (Norris) Anderson made an indelible impression on the lives of hundreds of students during her 33 years as a faculty member in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences. To recognize that and continue to be a positive influence in students’ lives, she and her husband, Murray, endowed the Virginia Anderson Presidential Scholarship in Family and Consumer Sciences.

M. L. “Buddy” Lefler Jr. earned a law degree from University of Texas Law School in 1939. He and Catherine “Kay” M. Lefler married in 1943. In 1946, Buddy began a successful career as a financial services officer, insurance agent, real estate appraiser and property manager and investor. Kay supported the business by keeping the accounts. The couple liquidated the business in 1986 and spent their later years touring the U.S. and Europe. Both were members of the First United Methodist Church of Beaumont and great supporters of Lamar University.

Kay thoroughly enjoyed her relationships with the students who received the Lefler Scholarship. The endowment has helped dozens of students achieve their dreams since the late 70s and will continue to do so in perpetuity. We are most grateful to the Leflers for including Lamar University in their wills,” said Camille Mouton, vice president of university advancement.

Wayne and Randy Anderson

LARRY ACKER

It was always about how we could help

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Dr. Arvey Rogers and his grandson Benjamin Edebon

Ben Rogers (grand-publisher and nævastu)

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Ben Rogers (grand-publisher and nævastu)
From business to bulls, Bart and Martye Simmons have blende...
W hen Dr. Tamerla Chavis’ best friend asked her to try out for Lamar’s cheerleading squad during her freshman year, she wasn’t overly enthusiastic. The 1979 valedictorian of Beaumont’s H. Ebert High School was more of a “background person,” she said. But Sharon Goodwin, a chemistry classmate, dreamed of being a cheerleader and really wanted her friend with her for moral support. Chavis ’83 acquiesced and made the squad. Goodwin didn’t. Was that the end of the friendship? "No,” Chavis said. "We stayed friends for the rest of our time at Lamar.”

Back then, Chavis was probably one of those girls other girls would love to hate, but just couldn’t. She was nice, smart, and pretty, and her peers recognized that by crowning her homecoming queen in 1980. “That memory will stay with me forever,” she said. Ever extracurricular activity she became involved in, Chavis noted the caring attitudes of her professors, including Kuang Wu Li in chemical engineering. And even though Chavis was involved in many extracurricular activities, Hansen said she never missed class and was always prepared. “Her academic prepa- ration was her top priority,” he said.

Sometime between her freshman and sophomore year, Chavis decided that she wanted to become a doctor—about the same time her older brother Cyril ’82 (mechanical engineering) decided that he also wanted to pursue a medical degree. Today, he specializes in diagnostic radiology in Virginia Beach, Va. She knew she was suited for a career in medicine because “it is more personal,” she said.

During her clinical years, she completed a rotation in neuro- surgery and decided to follow that path. She earned her medical degree in 1987 and continued there with her internship and resi- dency. After 10 years in San Antonio, she moved to New York for a fellowship in endovascular neurosurgery at the University at Buffalo—The State University of New York in affiliation with Millard Fillmore Hospital. When she completed her fellowship, she moved to Chicago and joined a group practice. After four years, the Beaumont native wanted to come home. She moved back and opened a solo practice in 2000. Her family members, including her two younger siblings, Iran ’90 (computer science) and Jaylon ’92 (biology), give her “a lot of emotional support.”

After her return, Jack H. opper, dean of the College of Engineering, was reading an article in the Beaumont Enterprise about a man who had suffered a severe brain injury in a car accident. In the article was a quote from the injured man’s wife praising Dr. Tamerla Chavis for saving her husband’s life with emergency brain surgery. “I can’t believe that,” Chavis groaned. "I do it every day.”

There are only eight neurosurgeons listed in the Beaumont telephone directory, and Chavis is the only woman. "When I first start- ed, I was truly one of a few,” she said. “It’s getting better.” As far as being a role model, she hopes she encourages women to evaluate their professional choices.

As for getting involved, again, with Lamar University, Chavis said, “It was just a matter of time.” Not long after her return to Beaumont, she was contacted by the Lamar Alumni Association and became involved in the Giddy-Up Gala fundraiser, where she spon- sored a table. She joined the alumni association and served as the advisory board’s president in 2004. She is now a trustee of the Lamar University Foundation and has pledged a gift to establish the Dr. Tamerla Chavis Scholarship in Engineering. “I understand the importance of education,” she said. “I understand what having a scholarship meant to me.”

She believes that giving back to her alma mater is the right thing to do. “It has given so much to so many,” she said. She tells her friends who went to Lamar that if they had not had the opportunity they wouldn’t be in the position to give back to Lamar. “We need to support the institutions that have allowed us to achieve,” she said.

To others living in the Beaumont area who are not Lamar gradu- ates, she says Lamar is a good investment for their community and businesses. The more educated the community, she believes, the bet- ter able it is to function.

Chavis is very thankful to Jimmy Simmons and his team for the positive changes that have been made at Lamar. When the former band director became president, good things started happening. “They have increased the number of endowed chairs,” she said. “They have beautified the campus and added new programs. It’s been a phenomenal transformation.” And she believes now is the time for even greater national recognition because of Lamar’s out- standing academic programs.

Considering Lamar’s future, Chavis said she’d like to see her alma mater continue to grow as an educational resource for Beaumont and the surrounding communities. She is impressed with the numerous and diverse speakers taking part in the Academic Lecture Series and wants that to continue. She is proud of the Dishman Art Museum that familiarizes students with great art, and the Ku- yen Li in chemical engineering and the late Margaret Cameron in organic chemistry. “They were interested in my personal as well as my academic development,” she said.

As for getting involved, again, with Lamar University, Chavis said, “It was just a matter of time.” Not long after her return to Beaumont, she was contacted by the Lamar Alumni Association and became involved in the Giddy-Up Gala fundraiser, where she spon- sored a table. She joined the alumni association and served as the advisory board’s president in 2004. She is now a trustee of the Lamar University Foundation and has pledged a gift to establish the Dr. Tamerla Chavis Scholarship in Engineering. “I understand the importance of education,” she said. “I understand what having a scholarship meant to me.”

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“It’s easier for me to support education,” Chavis said, who also gives to St. Anthony Cathedral School where her two nieces attend second grade and fourth grade. “It’s the foundation for success.”

"We need to support the institutions that have allowed us to achieve." —DR. TAMERLA CHAVIS
In the business of supporting education

If not for Lamar University, Dan H. Hallmark ’65 never would have found a successful career in banking. He has worked to return the favor for years. “I guess almost from the day I graduated, I’ve been a contributing alumnus of the association,” said Hallmark, who earned a B.B.A. in management. “I owe Lamar so much. Anything I can do to return the favor, return the support that I’ve had, I would certainly be willing to do.”

Hallmark paid for his education with a scholarship from American National Bank and a loan from First Security National Bank, both attained with the help of Lamar administrators. Still, he had no interest in banking as a career until his senior year when Dan J.D. Landes urged him to interview for a management training program at American National Bank. Out of respect for Landes, Hallmark met with bank leaders. He decided banking sounded interesting after all. “I worked for the bank in that same building for 38 years,” Hallmark said. H. almark spent the majority of his career at Texas Commerce Bankshares. He eventually retired as chairman and chief executive officer of the Southeast Texas region from JP Morgan Chase and then from Hibernia National Bank as regional president.

Through his work in banking and community affairs, Hallmark knows strong leadership, and he sees it at Lamar University. He served on the search committee that unanimously chose James Simmons as president nearly a decade ago. “It’s just remarkable,” Hallmark said. “It all goes back to leadership. It’s unquestionably the respect of the community.”

During his work at Texas Commerce Bank, Hallmark met with bank leaders. He decided banking sounded interesting after all. “I worked for the bank in that same building for 38 years,” Hallmark said. “It’s been such a success story to watch him and watch Lamar University and what’s happened since he’s been president, the quality of the deans he’s attracted and the programs that have been put in place.”

A distinguished alumnus and past president of the Lamar University Alumni Association, Hallmark has worked to strengthen Lamar programs as well. As a member of the College of Business Board of Advisors and created the Dan S. Hallmark Endowment in Business to provide the dean with a flexible fund the dean can use to recruit and retain top-notch professors and keep Lamar competitive. “Not only would it make the faculty stronger and more competitive with other universities, but, with a continued addition of stronger faculty it’s going to produce stronger graduates,” Hallmark said. — BG

For Bill ’57 and Katherine (Fanette) Fouts ’50, a legacy of giving to Lamar University goes back to their days as students in the late 1950s. Bill, who earned a bachelor of business administration in marketing, and Katherine, who graduated with a bachelor of science in home economics, both served in student government and were named to Who’s Who. Both were leaders in Greek life, Bill as president of Alpha Chi Omega and Katherine as president of Alpha Chi Omega. They look back fondly on their student days, remembering friendships, fun and the joy of meeting each other. And like those friendships formed on campus, their ties to Lamar have remained strong.

The Fouts both became life time members of Lamar’s alumni association when they returned to southeast Texas in 1967. Both were asked then to serve on an advisory committee for Lamar and did so gladly. “We thought we had a contribution to make from the standpoint of service to our community,” Bill said. “We did more of that through voluntary work than we were able to do financially.”

After their children were grown and Bill’s career unfolded at UBS Financial Services, from which he is retired, the couple decided to make a financial gift to organizations they cared about, and Lamar topped the list. Today, Bill is a trustee of the Lamar University Foundation. “I think Lamar’s position in the community of Southeast Texas is critical,” Katherine said. “We’re privileged to live where there’s a university accessible for all people. It’s important that it grows. It contributes directly to the quality of life.”

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With the William E. and Katherine Fouts Endowment in Business, the couple hopes to strengthen the College of Business by providing a flexible fund the dean can use to recruit and retain top-notch professors and keep Lamar competitive. “Not only would it make the faculty stronger and more competitive with other universities, but, with a continued addition of stronger faculty it’s going to produce stronger graduates,” Bill Fouts said. — BG
Homecoming 2008 brought together alumni, students and friends Feb. 22-24 for a weekend of reunions, receptions, recognition, athletic action and other activities. Highlights included the 50th Anniversary reunion of the Class of 1958, the 45th Anniversary reunion of Zeta Tau Alpha sorority and a reunion of computer science alumni (see photos in Class Notes). The Music Hall of Honor inducted its second class of award recipients (see photos in Arts and Culture), and the Homecoming basketball game featured performances by band and choir alumni.

“Reunion is a great opportunity for our alumni to return to the campus and see for themselves the extraordinary changes to their alma mater,” said J. van Zabala, executive director of alumni affairs and advancement services. “Alumni are among the university’s strongest assets, and having alumni here and involved adds to the incredible momentum at Lamar University.”

For the homecoming game, the Cardinals took on the Demons of Northwestern Louisiana State and won, paving the way to a shared SLC Conference victory, Lamar’s 13th, which tied the school record held by the 1961-62 team. Music alumni performed with the Pep Band during the game.
Students share the benefits of being Mirabeau Scholars

Exceptional students become Mirabeau Scholars at Lamar University, recipients of the most prestigious scholarships offered at the university. Mirabeau Scholars receive “full” scholarships of $15,000 per year consisting of tuition, fees, on-campus room and board and a book stipend. Awarded each fall to first-time-in-college freshmen, the scholarships carry a four-year value of $60,000. The Mirabeau Scholarships are made possible through the commitment of extraordinary donors who have chosen to recognize exemplary students and help them make the most of their college experience and opportunity to study. Current scholarship holders include the Mike and Martha Grimes Mirabeau Scholarship, Josephine and Wilbur Huetert Mirabeau Scholarship and Beatley and Chuck Mason Mirabeau Scholarship. On these pages, six of the more than 40 scholars share their stories.

Daniel Whitton, sophomore, history

When it comes to how the Mirabeau Scholarship has most affected Daniel Whitton’s college experience, even he has a hard time deciding. The sophomore said, like so many other students, he is paying his own way, and the scholarship has enabled him to stay devoted to his two passions: history and acting.

“This scholarship has so far kept me from having to get a job to pay for my living expenses, so I have had more time to devote to school work and being involved in the community. I greatly appreciate those who have donated to this scholarship and their efforts to improve Lamar and the community,” Whitton said.

Active in the community players in his hometown of Buna, Whitton remains focused on his dream of directing One Act Play as a high school teacher. The scholarship freed him from the time constraints of a job, so he can complete the classroom hours required to work toward his goals.

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Valerie Juarez, sophomore, computer science

Preserverant. Hardworking. Muddled. Those are three words that easily describe Mirabeau Scholar Valerie Juarez. During her first semester, the Sour Lake native applied and was accepted into the INSPIRED (Increasing Student Participation in Research Development Program), where she conducts research on artificial intelligence in robots, acts as a tutor to her fellow students in computer science courses and participates in other outreach activities.

“The Mirabeau Scholarship has enabled me to achieve my goal of one day studying abroad,” Juarez said. The scholarship affects her life in so many little ways that when they are combined, the effects are great she said. Without the scholarship, she said she would be living at home, which would limit her active involvement in the student population.

“It also releases my parents and me of a financial burden that could have held me back from taking advantage of different opportunities that Lamar has to offer,” she said.

“Many of the opportunities granted to me for which I am thankful include the Mirabeau Scholarship,” Juarez said. The scholarship enabled her to attend the Republican National Convention in Minneapolis.

“As an extremely talented and diligent math major from Port Neches, many would say there’s no reason why Jill Hamilton would lack confidence in her collegiate career; however, she herself said it was receiving the Mirabeau Scholarship that gave her the confidence to begin her career at Lamar University. Like many of her cohorts, Hamilton has embraced undergraduate research, her forte being graph theory.

“It may sound lofty, but it’s kind of cool finding something that nobody’s ever found before,” Hamilton said. “This research that I’m doing opens many doors for me regarding finding a job or a graduate school.”

With the scholarship allowing her to spend time taking “extra” courses, she said taking classes not required for her degree makes her feel she’s receiving a more well-rounded college experience. In her second term as a student representative on a university committee, Hamilton said she knows that her recognition as a Mirabeau Scholar helped her win the opportunity.

“Chosen to attend the Republican National Convention in Minneapolis at the end of August, she will be able to see the political process at its zenith. She attests that the Mirabeau Scholarship has opened the door to the convention, as well as many others for her.

“Obviously, the Mirabeau donors care a great deal about future generations and the education that those generations receive,” Hamilton said. “Lamar prides itself on the fact that it cares about the undergraduates; the donors of the Mirabeau Scholarship are a prime example of that notion.”

Dana Guy, sophomore, mechanical engineering

Less than a year ago, Dana Guy had her college years all planned; she was going to study business at the University of Texas in Austin. Then came the Mirabeau Scholarship. Today, the Port Neches native is a mechanical engineering major at Lamar, she said she is excited to be there, as it has allowed her to find what truly interests her. Remembering when she was awarded the scholarship, she said she felt like a huge weight had been lifted and that ever since then, her life has changed.

“It’s enabled me to meet new people and become more involved to an extent that I don’t think is possible living at home,” Guy said. “In addition, it also helped me get to know some of the professors at Lamar, which is important because I am looking to get involved in some undergraduate research.”

Currently in her second semester and studying mechanical engineering, she also plans to attend physical therapy school to become involved in the research and design of prosthetics and instruments for physical therapists. She is also interested in participating in Research Experience for Undergraduates (REUs). The program ties physical therapy and mechanical engineering together in a very interesting way, Guy said. If she does not pursue the physical therapy program, she plans to get her master’s degree in biomechanics or neural engineering.

“The people who donated to Lamar’s Mirabeau Scholarships are tremendous people to do so,” she said. “Their gifts are really helping to change my future along with the other Mirabeaus.”

Brittney Zenos, junior, nursing

All it took was a phone call informing her of a new scholarship at Lamar University for Brittney Zenos of Bridge City to know the Mirabeau Scholarship was made for her. Counting it as one of the greatest blessings in her life, the junior, who is studying nursing, said it has been an “amazing gift,” allowing her not only to study at Lamar, but also to make it her home. Citing the diversity at Lamar as one of the best things the campus has to offer, she said she knew she would attend college here, but also to make it her home. Citing the diversity at Lamar as one of the best things the campus has to offer, she said she knew she would attend college here, but also to make it her home. Citing the diversity at Lamar as one of the best things the campus has to offer, she said she knew she would attend college here, but also to make it her home. Citing the diversity at Lamar as one of the best things the campus has to offer, she said she knew she would attend college here, but also to make it her home.

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J oel Toutloff, junior, physics

For Joel Toutloff, receiving the Mirabeau Scholarship was more than a means to an education. It also has given him a title that he says faculty of the university respect. Though not involved with the Honors Program when he began at Lamar after graduating from Hamshire-Fannett, the sophomore physics major said the award encouraged him to take part in the program, which—through involvement in academics and events—has helped him find the right path for his college career.

“The Mirabeau Scholarship was made for me. I’ve put a lot of work into helping set up the proposal and put together the experiment, which is still in the works. It feels great to have all of that work pay off.”

Currently working on research on the behavior of the meniscus of water in the absence of gravity, Toutloff will be flying the experiment in a microgravity aircraft in June.

“It’s going to be a completely new experience to me and something I’ll probably never forget,” he said. “Especially because I’ve put a lot of work into helping set up the proposal and put together the experiment, which is still in the works. It feels great to have all of that work pay off.”

In terms of his future career, Toutloff said he doesn’t know if he may work to work for NASA one day or if he would rather teach. If he decides to teach, he would like to teach math and science to middle school and high school junior students. He says the donors have given him the chance to further his education.

“I am so grateful to them,” he said. “I find it so amazing that someone would just give their money so people like me could get the best possible college experience. I feel that giving to others when available is a wondrous virtue, and the donors are great people because of it.”
In a unanimous decision at its February meeting, the Texas State University System Board of Regents approved the athletic fee Lamar students voted to assess themselves that was ultimate to restoring the sport—terminated in 1989—to campus. A head coach is expected to be hired by August, and the first recruiting class can be signed in February 2009. A realistic timetable for beginning Southland Conference play is 2011.

Results seen by universities recently starting football for the first time or reviving dormant programs indicate benefits are increased student enrollment, renewed alumni support, and significant growth in the number of donors and total dollars in contributions. Intangible benefits could rekindle collegiate spirit in the fall semester, encourage student involvement with campus life activities and provide a traditional homecoming setting again. Other bonuses include expanded media exposure to strengthen name identity, a boost to the men’s track program and Lamar’s ability to regain equal footing with its peer universities.

Testimonies from individuals long associated with Lamar football endorse the potential values. A product of the Lamar Junior College era, special correspondent sports-writer John DeVillier observed the program for many years. “Positives? Sure, in an area, state and nation where sports are an integral part of the psyche, Lamar won’t be recognized—fair or not—as a complete, big-time university until football is restored and prospers to some degree,” DeVillier said. “Southeast Texas is in the midst of the greatest industrial boom since the Spindletop gusher, and every plant is expanding or modernizing. . . . There has never been a better time to add college football to the mix.”

Leonard views the positives from a different perspective. Leonard was an active student-athlete on campus and has since become a successful entrepreneur and high school teacher and served Mont Belvieu as a city council member. “I can’t imagine the Lamar campus without football for the past 19 years,” Leonard declared. “I just had a blast on campus when I was there (1972-75). Football is an event for the fall. Students are accustomed to being involved with football in the fall. It will add an intrinsic value to the student body.

“Football gets students involved when they arrive on campus and leads into support for other sports and activities,” Leonard praised the value of his football opportunity, saying, “My education at Lamar has served me well. I never had a job interview where my diploma didn’t match up with others from other schools. Relationships developed as a student-athlete later led to shared business opportunities.”

After his graduation, Doug Matthews, a record-setting running back for the Cardinals from 1969 to 1972, was employed by the city of Galveston for 21 years, including 11 years as city manager. He was eventually appointed to the Lamar board of regents and voiced strong opposition to discontinuing the football program. “Playing football at Lamar created my first job opportunity,” said the Galveston native and director of external relations for UTMB-Galveston. “The Galveston city manager at that time took notice of me only after reading articles provided by the sports information department.

“We had great coaches who truly cared about the athletes getting their degrees and becoming good citizens,” Matthews said. “They motivated me to succeed. That is the ultimate value of football.”

The pigskin skinny

From its inception as South Park Junior College in 1923, football was a part of Lamar’s history. It was discontinued in 1928 because of a lack of common opponents but was revived again in 1932 by the renamed Lamar College. Coach John Gray led his charges to records of 8-1 that season and 8-1-1 in 1934 before the program was discontinued again in 1942 and did not resume again until the end of World War II. In 1946, the first football scholarships were offered.

“I got up at 3:30 each morning to sweep out classrooms to apply for tuition at the college,” recalled Jake Verde, in a 1973 interview. The star back for the 1932 Cardinals finished his football career at the U of the

FOOTBALL IS RETURNING TO LAMAR UNIVERSITY.
GET READY FOR THE BOOMING SOUND OF THE RENOWNED BIG RED MARCHING BAND, CHEERLEADERS AND ALL THE HOOPLA THAT SPARKS A COLLEGIATE ATMOSPHERE.

by Joe Lee Smith

Artist rendering: Cardinal Stadium renovation

Artist rendering: Athletic Complex

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Texas. “But, without Lamar College, most of us would not have been able to receive a college education.”

Football was restored in 1946, when Lamar posted an 8-2 ledger. The 1948 club (8-4-0) won two bowl games, and the 1949 outfit won an all-time school record 10 games and another bowl trophy as the school bade farewell to the junior college era.

Lamar Tech entered the senior-college arena in 1951 in the highly competitive Lone Star Conference, a National Athletic Intercollegiate Association (NAIA) league. The Cardinals didn’t have a winning season until a super 8-0-2 season in 1957 ignited a string of 11 consecutive winning campaigns. Just as the Cardinals were becoming a perennial contender in the Lone Star loop, school officials moved the athletic program forward into the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) college division ranks in 1963 via the Southland Conference.

Football peaked with three straight SLC grid titles (1964-66) and a second-place finish in 1967. A year later, the school’s athletic program embarked on another challenge by upgrading to the NCAA Division I level. Each transition strengthened the athletic program overall. Lamar’s baseball, basketball, golf, track and volleyball teams notched impressive successes against Division I elites while football experienced a downturn. The Cardinals posted just one winning record in 11 years (1975-86), finishing with 10 consecutive losing campaigns. Football went independent when Lamar left the SLC in 1987 to join the basketball-flavored American South Conference.

Typically senior colleges Institutes appeared to last beyond-expectations delays and provided the bottom line fodder for five new appointees to the then-Lamar board of regents to pull the football program at their first official session. Attendance was stable until the continuous ten-year lean. Lamar averaged 12,000 patrons through 1974, drawing a then record 16,226 against arch-rival McNeese State to Cardinal Stadium in 1972. It trickled to a 3,500 norm in the final season.

Fans responded when then coach Larry Kennan delivered a 6-3-2 club in 1979; Lamar set an all-time attendance record 16,380 avg. Games against Louisiana Tech (17,600) and West Texas State (17,250) ranked second and third, respectively, behind the 3-2 club in 1979; Lamar set an all-time attendance record 16,380 avg. Games against Louisiana Tech (17,600) and West Texas State (17,250) ranked second and third, respectively.

On the horizon

Challenges exist for the new coaching staff, and chief among them will likely be establishing relationships with local high school coaches in the greater Golden Triangle. Nine players from Southeast Texas were on the last football roster. Many of the area’s top local talent currently reside on rosters at other Southland Conference institutions, so recruitment of local prep athletes will be a top priority.

Dan Ray Hooks was a graduate assistant on the Lamar staff for two years while earning his master’s degree. He is an elite in the coaching profession and ranks among the state’s winningest high school coaches during a 27-year tenure at West Orange-Stark. “If they can get it going, I think football will succeed at Lamar this time,” predicted Hooks. “Successful Lamar program can help high school teams continue. They will have lots of work to do.”

Gill’s take on the coaching situation at Lamar was some-what the same. The veteran observer said, “The potential for success is there to be tapped by a dynamic head guy and a staff that can establish rapport with Southeast Texas coaches.”

Fortunately, the Cardinals’ new coach can deal with area high school head coaches with longterm Lamar connections. They include H.ooks, former standout Lamar gridders Thomas Brooks (j-j sceptre), Matt Burnett (Port Neches-Groves), Larry H.aynes (Hardin) and Larry Neumann (Nederland). Dan Price (Barbers Hill) starred in track, and Ronnie Thompson (Port Arthur Memorial) served as a former assistant coach.

Lamar, the only four-year institution east of Houston and south of Nacogdoches, has served the Southeast Texas school system well by providing educators. And while Lamar continued during the last 15 years to produce football coaches, athletic trainers and band directors, football will increase that potential and strengthen the experience those professionals will gain.

“It will benefit the region if Lamar produces coaches and trainers again,” Hooks said. “It’s not easy to get people from outside the region. At West Orange-Stark, we like to hire former students familiar with our program. If they graduate from Lamar, that is a bigger plus.”

At one time, the dynamic Lamar athletic training program was among the few educating licensed athletic trainers. Paul Zeek, who recently retired as Lamar’s associate athletic director, nurtured that respected curriculum from its inception.

“The vast majority of the athletic trainer students came to Lamar because of its reputation,” recalls Zeek. “We didn’t recruit, so dropping football made it harder to get new students to come to Lamar. That is because they could not get the repetitive experiences of seeing, evaluating, treating and rehabilitating football athletes daily.”

A Fresh Start at an Opportune Time

The dynamic rebirth of Lamar University this decade under President James Simmons’ direction has significantly strengthened the university’s connection with its alumni and the Southeast Texas communities. Lamar’s renaissance period features a sterling new campus skyline highlighted by the Cardinal Village housing facilities and the magnificent Sheila U. Mphrey Recreational Sports Center. Most significantly, individual Southeast Texas and alumni donors have made major multimillion-dollar contributions to enhance academics, scholarships and facilities.

Football adds another dimension to Lamar U’s university’s rebirth and is not the crown jewel, nor even the centerpiece of an overall successful athletic program. Simmons and Tubbs, both big-leaguers with noted reputations for significant career achievements, are not delusional about the task ahead for football. The Lamar leaders seek to make the program successful through long-range phases and have pointedly expressed the necessity for long-term support from the alumni and the Southeast Texas community.

“The coordinating board requiring 25 percent of renova- tion funding from private donations, community support is critical to this next step in further enhancing university life,” Simmons said.

The student fee is expected to generate $2 million annually for the athletic department and is mostly dedicated toward a bond debt to renovate Cardinal Stadium. Additional annual operating budget funds will come from ticket, concession, parking and program sales, revenues and from private contributions.

This is a historic start for the Lamar community and its future generations. It is a rare event to witness a football program develop from infancy to the playing field and be afforded the opportunity to forge new traditions and form a tight-knit relation- ship between students and alumni throughout the process.

Go Big Red!
Orchestrating the future

There was music. There was magic. And there was a star-studded overture to Lamar University’s future. The Jimmy Simmons & Friends Encore jazz concert May 3 brought more than 2,200 students, faculty, alumni and friends together in the Montagne Center for a spectacular evening of entertainment. Little did they know the crescendo was as yet to come. With First Lady Susan Simmons, the chair of the event, at his side, Simmons announced a goal of $100 million for Lamar’s first-ever comprehensive fund-raising campaign, with $46 million already raised. On the eve of the all-star event, campaign lead donors and university officials assembled in the Montagne Center for a special dinner in the University Reception Center. The world-class musicians who performed on stage for the Encore admire Simmons as their teacher, their band director and their mentor. Now, all of Southeast Texas—and beyond—admires him as the maestro who orchestrated an unprecedented new beginning for Lamar University.
Academe hasn’t shielded from technology. You’ll find plenty of high tech in campus laboratories and “smart classrooms” across the nation. You’ll also find lots of cutting-edge technology enabling growth in distance education.

What you won’t often find is the paradigm shifting, super-savvy application of technology like that of the novel public-private partnership between Lamar University and Higher Education Human Development (HEH) of Dallas. Together, Lamar and HEH are offering LU’s master’s degree in educational leadership with the same high-quality instruction at less than half the cost of traditional programs.

More than 200 school districts across Texas have enrolled in the program that began in October 2007. The response is ample evidence of unmet demand, according to Dallas entrepreneur and Lamar Distinguished Alumnus Randy Best, owner of HEH. The university’s spring enrollment was at its highest since 1991, due in large measure to response to the graduate program, officials said.

The program sets itself apart in cost-conscious programs at $4,950. Lamar’s program is less than half the price of most education master’s degree programs in Texas. Courses are taken in five-week blocks, and students finish the 12 courses in 18 months, the added, unique benefit of being able to study both online and offline.

The Lamar and the HEH Academic Partnership has lowered the cost of education through the adroit use of technology. “This is perhaps the first time in Texas that the cost of education has been significantly lowered,” said Stephen Doblin, provost and vice president for academic affairs.

The program is housed in the College of Education and Human Development and is expanding to include other programs in each academic college. Using HEH’s assistance with marketing, course production, dissemination and call center assistance, the program takes Lamar’s fully accredited degree program and delivers it electronically to individual teachers throughout the state. The method used is called distributive education, the latest and most cost-efficient model for distance education. It is the same degree offered on Lamar’s campus in the traditional face-to-face method. Whether offered electronically or face-to-face, the courses are taught by Lamar University faculty members. Students must meet the same entrance requirements as those entering the traditional program.

In developing the program, the university sought to help improve K-12 students’ learning through advanced training for their teachers and removed principal barriers to enrollment of in-service teachers in graduate education: high cost and inconvenience.

“Access, affordability and assistance with K-12 instruction are higher education concerns heard throughout the state and the nation,” Doblin said. “This innovative program directly responds to all three. Courses are available at the time and place of the student’s choosing; the degree program is the most affordable in the state, and high-quality, contemporary curricula add graduate-level skills and knowledge to the state’s teacher corps.”

The rigorous and highly intensive 36-semester-hour program is comprised of course materials delivered via DVD by HEH with content developed by Lamar professors. Support staff members provide academic services. Access to Lamar’s digital libraries, embedded readings and full-text holdings is provided through the Internet. Communication takes place via e-mail, online discussion groups and cohort study groups formed by students themselves.

Early assessments indicate the program is academically rigorous and well-received by teachers and administrators, Doblin said. “Lamar continually monitors and evaluates the program over time to ensure we are providing the highest-quality program possible.”

Becky Allmendinger, a Richardson ISD teacher, said, “The Lamar University Academic Partnership program has been such a great experience for me. Course topics are relevant to current teaching experience and provide immediate application to the classroom setting. The course software is easy to navigate, and my academic coach is always available to answer any questions that may arise. Discussion boards allow for collaboration between participants, while providing real-time interaction with a small-group feeling. As I complete my first course, I look forward to continuing my graduate program.”

Through these partnerships, school districts use Lamar University’s high-quality master’s programs to recruit, retain and enhance the effectiveness of the very best teachers and administrators. The delivery is extremely flexible. Educators work in their schools or in the convenience of their homes. “It allows me to work at my own pace on my master’s degree and still be a teacher, wife and mother,” said Jessica Sandoval, a teacher in Birdwell school district. “It allows the opportunity to work from your home and get feedback from your classmates who are experiencing what you are; it is wonderful.”

Two master’s degrees are available, the Master of Education in Teacher Leadership (pending final approval of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board) and the Master of Education in School Administration. Both programs have a common core of courses then specialize in later courses.

The teacher leadership program is a non-thesis master’s degree program fully aligned to national teaching standards. The program is designed to develop effective instructional leaders who can implement a vision of learning. This includes designing curriculum, implementing research-based instructional strategies, motivating students, using assessment for learning, managing effective classrooms and engaging the larger community to support learning.

The school administration program is a non-thesis principal certification master’s degree program fully aligned with the Texas State Exam (TExES) Competencies and the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) standards. The program is designed to develop leaders who can build inclusive communities that support learning for all students in cultures of continuous improvement.

The application-based curricula of both programs meet the practical needs of educators and school districts through relevant, research-based content.

“The Lamar Master of Education in School Administration is challenging, and the expectations are high,” said Debbie Cotton, Richardson ISD. “But knowing that I’m finally back to school working on my goal, am pacing the way for future career opportunites, and am already able to apply new knowledge in my current teaching position make the effort worthwhile.”

I look forward to my fall course delivery every six weeks or, as my daughter puts it, ‘Mommy, your present is here.’ This opportunity truly is a gift,” Cotton said.

More information about the Lamar University Academic Partnerships is available online at www.academicpartnership.com/lamar.
Faculty notes

Professor Harley Myers, Mitchell endowed chair as well as chair of the Phillip M. Drayer Department of Electrical Engineering, visited Cairo, Egypt, to deliver the keynote on the convergence of information technologies at the University Technology Institute’s fifth International Conference on Information and Communication Technology. He is address, “Network and Media Convergence: Issues, Challenges and Trends” focused on technology issues associated with a new domain in telecommunications—that of network and media convergence—designed to provide a unified interface capable of supporting various services across the many types of delivery networks that are available. Richard Ashmore, adjunct instructor of geology at Lamar University and national award-winning photographer, exhibited work in an installation only fifth biennial exhibition of Texas Works at the Buddy Holly Center Fine Arts Gallery in Lubbock. This past December through February, Ashmore exhibited 22 photographs of scenes taken throughout the southern and southwestern United States, including three from a Bridge City cemetery and two of Hurricane Rita’s aftermath. The Sabine Area Restaurant Association dedicated Taste of the Triangle 2008 to Molly Dahm, director of Family and Consumer Sciences, has served as a member of the association’s board of directors since 1998. She is actively involved in the group’s education committee and the annual Chef’s Delight fund-raiser, which helps provide training, scholarships and equipment for Lamar students seeking careers in the hospitality and food service industries. Dahm has managed convention centers, hotels, casinos, private clubs and restaurants, including one for media mogul and philanthropist Ted Turner in Atlanta. ... Judith Walker Linsley, assistant professor of education, visited at the national historic home museum conference Nov. 1-3 in Beaumont on the topic “You Didn’t Go There to Sit Down: Domestic Employees at the McFaddin-Ward House”....

B.G.S. offered online

Lamar University has opened its virtual doors to traditional and non-traditional students by offering a general studies degree completely online. The program, which began in fall 2007, has 30 students in the process of earning a bachelor’s degree in general studies. Of fling this online degree has made it possible for more people to obtain higher education. Those in the military, those who don’t live in the area, and those who want to return to school are able to attend Lamar and enrich their lives, said Frances Morris, interim director for traditional students. Applications and additional information are available at www.lamar.edu.

Faculty notes, continued

J ulio Morales, assistant professor of health and kinesiology, received a $7,000 grant from the Texas Department of State Health Services for tobacco education, prevention and smoking cessation to promote the Great American Smokout around campus. Morales used the grant to inform Lamar’s population about the effects of tobacco and provide tools and advice on how to quit smoking. Additionally, a survey will be administered on campus to learn about perceptions of tobacco and smoking. ... The Okne Gay Dishman Department of Nursing recently held a campus visit from three members of the nursing department faculty from the College of Mainland in Texas City. The visiting faculty toured the nursing simulation labs at Lamar to learn about the innovative use of high fidelity simulations in nursing education. “We are sharing what we have learned with other nursing faculty” said Eileen D eggs Curt, chair of the department and president of the Texas Association of Deans and Directors of Professional Nursing Programs. “We see part of our mission as sharing the insights we have gained with other professors so they can benefit from the success we have had with our students.”

New appointments

Steven McCrary, engineer, project manager and college educator, will direct the new Reese Construction Management Program, which offers a bachelor of science focused on both the business and engineering aspects of construction. “Steve is familiar with the accreditation for construction management programs and the civil engineering curriculum,” said Robert Yuan, chair of the Department of Civil Engineering. McCrary earned a Ph.D. in engineering management from the University of Missouri-Rolla and is a registered professional engineer and professional land surveyor. Dave Mulcahy is taking the helm of Lamar University’s Small Business Development Center (SBDC) as director. Mulcahy earned an M.A. from Northwestern State University and possesses more than 10 years of experience in business consulting, including teaching business practices to current business owners and entrepreneurs and developing and teaching seminars about business start-up, market dynamics, price modeling, strategic planning and other necessary business skills. “I’m excited to be the director in a community that is moving forward at such a quick pace,” Mulcahy said. We have a lot of expertise to offer the future entrepreneurs of this area, and we can draw on the expertise of the regional, state and national networks to which the center belongs.” Lamar’s SBDC provides free one-on-one consulting and affordable training seminars. ... Daniel Bartlett ’97, ’99, is now director of developmental studies. “I’m very pleased to join the department,” Bartlett said. “It’s an opportunity to truly help a lot of students at the beginning of their college experience.” For four years, Bartlett has been helping first-year students in the student support program Foundations of Excellence. He is a writer and educator as well, teaching English classes. “It’s my passion for writing that pushed me,” Bartlett said, "and I believe it’s important for college students to find their own passion that motivates them to succeed.” Bartlett earned a Ph.D. in literary writing from the University of Texas at Dallas.

Enrollment climb

Final headcount and semester-credit-hour totals for spring 2008 are the highest since 1993. Headcount for spring stands at 10,562, an increase of 16.1 percent from the spring 2007 count of 9,908, and semester credit hours total 199,026, up 5.4 percent from the preceding year.

The growth is due in part to Lamar’s new master of education program that has attracted more than 1,500 distance education students since it began in October 2007 (See related story, this issue). Growth was seen in other areas as well, including the College of Engineering, which experienced a substantial increase in majors, up 9.1 percent from the previous spring.

Graduation rate rises

The graduation rate for first-time, full-time, degree-seeking freshmen earning a degree in six years has risen nearly 14 percent in the past 10 years. The overall number of minority graduates is also increasing. “The quality of students at Lamar has improved because of revised admission requirements, the numerous scholarships Lamar is proud to offer and the strength of our degree plans,” said Kevin Smith, senior associate provost for academic affairs. Additionally, the overall number of minorities graduating from Lamar has increased during the past 10 years from 205 in 1997 to 356 in 2007.

G R A D U A T I O N  R A T E S

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Truncale addresses one of largest classes ever

Beaumont lawyer Michael Truncale ’78, a recently appointed member of The Texas State University System board of regents, delivered the keynote address at December commencement. Four Lamar University students attained perfect 4.0 grade-point averages to become co-recipients of the Plummer Award, honoring them as the top academic graduates in Lamar’s class of December 2007. The female Plummer winners and their majors are Rachel Kauss of Fannett, English, and Luyen Thi Pham of Port Arthur, interdisciplinary studies. The male recipients are Andrew Blanton of Groves, political science, and James West of Mont Belvieu, interdisciplinary studies.

Lamar conferred 682 degrees, including three doctorates, to graduates from 12 countries, 17 states outside Texas and 84 cities in Texas—one of the largest graduating classes in Lamar history.

Truncale, a Lamar alumnus and a senior partner of Orgain Bell & Tucker in Beaumont and The Woodlands, “grew up” at Lamar, playing cello in musical groups, attending the first football game in Cardinal Stadium and sharing the college experience with his parents, the late Ruth and Joseph Truncale, both beloved faculty members. Truncale graduated from Lamar with high honors, earning a degree in economics. He earned a master of business administration in banking and finance from The University of North Texas in 1980 and a law degree from the Southern Methodist University School of Law in 1985.

Lamar proposal ranks first for new camp

gO W.E.S.T. Academy—or gO Women for Engineering, Science and Technology Academy—is a new summer camp open to 50 high-performing, underrepresented high-school females. The camp begins July 7, introducing young women to concepts that will promote their interest in science, technology, engineering and math.

The College of Education and Human Development and the College of Engineering designed the program. Dillia Uribana, executive director of the gO W.E.S.T. Academy and Ryan Underdown, associate professor in the College of Engineering, submitted the proposal to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s Engineering Recruitment Program. Lamar’s proposal was ranked first among those submitted by 16 Texas institutions. The program received a $20,000 grant from ExxonMobil and the Beaumont school district to conduct the camp.

Projects to fly

Two student teams have been selected to fly experiments aboard NASA’s C-9 reduced-gravity aircraft as part of the space agency’s Reduced Gravity Student Flight Opportunity Program. The two make the 10th and 11th Lamar University teams selected to fly since the program began in 1995. Flights at Ellington Field in Houston to conduct lunar gravity experiments were in April and will be in July.

In the first proposal, a student team will perform a study of “Vibrational Damping Effects of Grass-Like Crops in a Microgravity Environment.” As mankind explores the possibility of extended durations in space for manned spacecraft missions, the first essential requirement is the suppression of low-frequency space vehicle structural vibration, and the second is the sustainable production of the clean air, water and food needed by the crew. The research is supported in part by a New Investigator’s Program grant from the Texas Space Grant Consortium.

In the second proposal selected to fly, students will determine whether the geometry of a meniscus—the curve in the surface of a liquid that is produced in response to the surface of the container or another object—can be controlled in reduced gravity to form a variable focus reflective surface. A liquid space telescope is one possible space science application.

Students learn latest in SAP

Lamar University consistently adds new programs to keep students ahead of the competition. As a part of the SAP University Alliance, Lamar offers its students highly valuable training in SAP software, a comprehensive package used by many Fortune 500 companies and in demand by both employers and recruiters. Business students are required to take several courses that incorporate the SAP program into the curriculum, and there is a required second-year course devoted solely to SAP training. The Department of Industrial Engineering also offers a course with SAP training. Founded in 1972, Systems Applications and Products in Data Processing (SAP) is now the world’s largest business software company.

Academy hosts symposium

The 2008 Futurism Symposium organized by the Texas Academy of Leadership in the Humanities, focused on medical issues: Health for the Future Good of Humanity in February. “As our students began researching health issues this fall, their intense interest in the subject became obvious,” said Mary Gagné, director of the academy. “Not only are many of our students committed to a profession in medicine, but their leadership training here at the academy inspires them to understand the critical importance of health care in their future.”
Aida Paskeviciute, assistant professor in the Department of Government at the University of Essex in the United Kingdom, discussed the impact of immigration on European politics in a lecture April 2. “Democracy on the Move: Citizenship and Immigrant Political Participation in Europe,” Paskeviciute’s research and teaching experience focus on comparative political behavior in Europe.

Linda L. Ackerman, author and Pulitzer Prize winner Frank McCourt gave a lecture on his writing and teaching experience April 10 after answering student and faculty questions earlier in the afternoon.

Born in New York City and raised in Limerick, Ireland, McCourt put himself through New York University’s School of Education and went on to teach 27 years as a New York public high school teacher until he retired in 1996. He burst onto the literary scene at age 66 with a memoir of his childhood, Angela’s Ashes, which brings to life the hardships he experienced growing up in Limerick with humor and vivid description. The Spring Academic Lecture Series was hosted by the College of Education and Human Development and is paid for by student service fees.

David Clark of the State University of New York at New Paltz discussed “The EPR Experiment: Einstein vs. Quantum Theory” Feb. 12 as part of the Academic Lecture Series, funded by student service fees.

Only recently has technology developed to carry out a famous experiment developed by Albert Einstein and colleagues Boris Podolsky and Nathan Rosen. Contrary to Einstein’s expectations, the outcome upheld quantum theoretic prediction. This has forced scientists to accept a very counterintuitive reality at the subatomic level. Clark conveyed this thought experiment, and the bizarre conclusions that are drawn from it, during a short lecture using only very simple concepts.

Clark learned mathematics from his work in universal algebra, but learned to teach mathematics from the R.L. Mcone method of inquiry-based learning. He is co-founder with N. Test Mahaier, associate professor of mathematics at Lamar, of the Institute of Inquiry-Based Learning in Mathematics, a refereed journal publishing Moore style teaching materials.

Potential teachers visit Lamar

Nearly 300 local junior high and high school students interested in becoming teachers were on campus for a Celebration of Teaching April 7. Event participants were introduced to Lamar faculty and provided with admissions and scholarship information about the university. Breakout sessions included “Teaching with Heart,” “Who Wants to Be a Teacher?” and “Teacher Toolkit,” presented by Lamar faculty An Externship obil grant sponsored the event, hosted by the College of Education and Human Development.

Language skills tested in competition

The Department of English and Modern Languages and the Spanish Circle student organization hosted Lamar’s annual Modern Language Competition Feb. 16. More than 169 students from across Southeast Texas participated, said Norma Zarzosa, assistant professor of Spanish and coordinator of the competition. Competition ranged from poetry/prose, cultural displays and cultural art posters to one-act play, lyrical music and dance.

HISTORY CONFERENCE REMEMBERS GRAY

Legendary educator and Southeast Texan John Gray—twice president of Lamar University—was the focus of a program Jan. 19 at the 15th annual Beaumont History Conference. “Living a Legendary Life: Dr. John E. Gray” was the topic explored by presenters Ralph Wooster, distinguished professor emeritus of history and Robert Robertson, adjunct instructor in history Beverly Williams, a graduate student from Slidell, discussed “Eleanor Pearlstein Weinbaum: Poet, Author and Benefactor for the Arts.” Her philanthropy encouraged writing at Lamar through funding of poetry contests, establishing a room for reading and study endowing a scholarship and providing the funding for Pulse magazine, a Lamar publication that features poetry, short fiction and essays written by students. Gray was a major figure in 20th-century higher education, serving as the first chairman of what is now the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and also as president of the Association of Texas Colleges and Universities.

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Beyond classes

Trophies testify to talent . . . Twelve Lamar Advertising Federation students attended the American Advertising Federation student conference in Houston in November to gain hands-on experiences in creating a fully integrated advertising campaign. Each of 20 student teams was sent to a different host company in Houston and provided resources needed to complete a new and innovative media plan. Caitlin Kruger’s team completed a campaign for Hewlett-Packard and won first place. Jamie Bailey was on the second-place team, and Matt Fuller was voted MVP on his team. All are senior communication majors . . . Students, execs interact at Ad Fed conference members of the Lamar Advertising Federation traveled to Washington, D.C., to the national organization’s student conference. They attended lectures about the advertising profession, success in the National Student Advertising Competition and the history of America Online (AOL) advertising, among other topics, and networked with AAF members, fellow students and top business executives. Attendees were Jamie Bailey, Amy Bradberry, Dawn Katz and Caitlin Kruger of Beaumont; Adam Haynes of Buna; Jennifer Nerkowski of Nederland; Michael Shaham of Nederland; Chase Fraizer of Port Neches; Matt Fuller of Sour Lake; and Meagan Watkins of Vidor. “We will take the information and insight into how America Online thinks and use it over the next several months to plan and produce what we hope will be an award-winning campaign for AOL. Instant Messenger,” said Fuller, president of Lamar Advertising Federation. The AIM advertising campaign competed against campaigns from more than 150 colleges and universities across the nation . . . Angela Eargin recently received Lyondell Chemical Co.’s annual Operational Excellence Award in the area of efficiency. During her co-op at the Victoria High-density Polyethylene Plant, she realized poor lighting on the unit was a major safety problem, causing frequent and costly maintenance that created unnecessary traffic within the plant. Eargin coordinated replacement of all incandescent light bulbs with brighter, high-efficiency fluorescent bulbs that require less energy and last significantly longer, saving Lyondell approximately $100,000 per year. Eargin, a senior electrical engineering major, completed her third co-op at the Beaumont plant . . . Members of the Lamar University Student Government Association along with volunteer residents, city officials, neighborhood associations, firefighters and local law enforcement participated in the Neighborhood Clean Sweep Program, targeting litter and trash in Beaumont’s Peer Orchard Community. Volunteers combed the streets, collecting trash from ditches and yards and cleaning several small, unkempt cemeteries. The program is sponsored by the City of Beaumont, Peer Orchard Neighborhood Association, South Park Neighborhood Association, Tyrell Park Neighborhood Association and the Lamar University Community Outreach Program . . . Culinary arts students created gingerbread houses for their second annual competition to benefit Buckner Children and Families Services. Students worked a combined, estimated 400 hours to finish the houses. The Golden Triangle Chefs Association presented Buckner with a check for $250 and contributed prize money for first-, second- and third-place winners. Winners were Sendi Wilkins Gardner of Orange, first place; Tara Nicole Mayer of Groves, second place; and Melissa Mae Hamm of Groves, third place.

Comm students produce documentary

More than 8,500 elementary and middle school students attended JASON Monster Storms Jan. 22-Feb. 5, sponsored by the JASON Alliance of Southeast Texas (JASET). The two-week-long program offered information to fourth- through eighth-grade students about tornadoes, hurricanes and general applied sciences. It began with a viewing of the Monster Storms video, produced by Lamar’s communication and earth and space sciences departments. The film documents 28 middle and high school students from Southeast Texas as they visit Little Florida Beach and Holly Beach, two areas directly impacted by Hurricane Rita’s landfall. “The movie shows how weather information is obtained and relayed in a fun and interesting way. We spoke with local meteorologists and had the help of a producer from National Geographic, so the movie offers top-notch information,” said Daniel McLemore, junior communication major from Nederland and editorial producer of Monster Storms.

During the first week of the event, seventh- and eighth-grade students viewed Monster Storms and then spent time with area engineers, medical professionals and scientists who hosted small discussion groups about their respective professions. Fourth- through sixth-grade students participated in scientific interactive sessions during the second week.

O utreach program provides tax help

The Lamar University Community Outreach Program joined the Internal Revenue Service to increase earned income tax credit (EITC) awareness and education. Through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program, trained Lamar students provided free tax preparation for individuals and families, students, senior citizens and non-English speaking people in Beaumont. Lamar’s V.I.T.A. website also offers free electronic filing (e-filing).

Student designers plan boutique hotel

The interior design program has partnered with the Beaumont Main Street Association to help revitalize downtown through renovation of the historic Gilbert Building. Students are working with Beaumont Main Street’s executive director Carolyn Howard to create a boutique hotel in the downtown area. “This partnership has been fantastic,” Howard said. “It’s such a blessing to have these creative, young minds strategizing for downtown.” The students have put many hours into this project and, in turn, have gained valuable experience by getting what Howard calls “an in-depth look at adaptive reuse.” The vacant Gilbert building is on the national register of historical buildings and is headed toward new ownership. The student’s have presented a plan on how a boutique hotel would fit into the parameters of the historic building and highlighted the economic benefits such a hotel would bring to Beaumont.

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Cooper joins Japanese team in hunt for lunar resources

Adjunct Professor Bonnie Cooper, with Oceaneering Space Systems at NASA’s Johnson Space Center, joined the science team of the Lunar Radar Sounder (LRS) instrument, currently in orbit around the moon, at the invitation of Japan’s Kaguya LRS instrument designers led to the invitation. “It is important to know about the subsurface of the moon because it will tell us where to look for lunar resources,” Cooper said. “Oxygen can be found in some rock formations. We need to make oxygen on the moon so that we can make rocket fuel. If we can re-fuel our spacecraft on the moon or in lunar orbit, we can go on to Mars. We can also build resort hotels on the moon, and it will become affordable for just about anyone to spend a week’s vacation on the moon.” Cooper’s focus areas are lunar In-Situ Resource Utilization (ISR-U) and dust toxicity research in support of human missions to the moon.

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O utreach program provides tax help

The Lamar University Community Outreach Program joined the Internal Revenue Service to increase earned income tax credit (EITC) awareness and education. Through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program, trained Lamar students provided free tax preparation for individuals and families, students, senior citizens and non-English speaking people in Beaumont. Lamar’s V.I.T.A. website also offers free electronic filing (e-filing).
Mary Bolton - 86 second from left, Michelle Hebert, Gina Hinson and Melanie Dishman ’88 were among the travelers participating in an odyssey to Greece in fall 2007 pictured with guides. Lamar public radio KVLU, of which Dishman is station manager for advancement, sponsored the tour.

Doctoral candidates Pratistha Pradhan of Kathmandu, Nepal, Brian Robert Kilpatrick of Houston and Nathie Marbury of Austin have front-row seats at Lamar’s fall commencement. Pradham earned a doctorate in engineering, and Kilpatrick and Marbury in deaf studies/deaf education.

First Lady Susan (Williams) Simmons ’68 and President James Simmons congratulate Le Grand Bal honorees Gay (Duckworth) ’80 and Bill Scott ’70.

December 2007 commencement speaker Michael Truncale ’78, a Beaumont lawyer and member of The Texas State University System board of regents, joins his wife, Denise, and daughters Lacey, left, and Lauren at a brunch in his honor after the Dec. 15 ceremony.


Lori (Sourdello) Wemento ’64, Jennifer Herbert, Thompson ’64, Nelly Weaver and Pat Barnett took a stroll at the Le Grand Bal art auction.

December 2007 commencement speaker Michael Truncale ’78, a Beaumont lawyer and member of The Texas State University System board of regents, joins his wife, Denise, and daughters Lacey, left, and Lauren at a brunch in his honor after the Dec. 15 ceremony.
The sky was bright blue when the gusher blew, and the rainbow it cast added the colors of optimism to a picture-perfect day. Lamar’s Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum was back. At 11:37 a.m., heralded by Tracy Byrd’s Spindletop Song, the geyser of water erupted skyward through the derrick replica as the crew of oilfield re-enactors dramatized the event: Jan. 10, 1901, the day when black gold came in at Spindletop, ushering in the age of energy.

“No matter how many times I see that gusher, I still get chill bumps,” said one member of the museum’s grand reopening committee.

It was another big day for the university’s celebration of the Lucas Gusher. On Sept. 24, 2005, another force of nature—Hurricane Rita—threatened the boomtown, a Lamar landmark since 1976 when it was dedicated as Beaumont’s Bicentennial gift to the nation.

The museum celebrated its grand reopening Jan. 12, prompting reflections on another “Big Day”—Jan. 10, 2001—when the Spindletop Centennial Celebration attracted thousands, including keynote speaker George H.W. Bush and a host of dignitaries. Old Man Winter was an unwanted guest on that occasion, a cold, drizzly day whose chill will long be remembered.

“Mayor Lord (former Beaumont Mayor Evelyn Lord) takes credit for this wonderful weather today. I took credit for the weather in 2001,” said President James Simmons.

Lord, who came dressed as a schoolmarm, chaired the 2001 and 2008 celebrations. Unlike the rest of the boomtown, she said, the circa-2002 oil rig withstood the Category 3 winds of Rita.

“It never went down,” she said. “It was built to withstand hurricane wind, and it did.”

Keynote speaker Darrell Jacob, Total Petrochemicals Port Arthur plant manager, said that as a small-town Texas boy, he was honored to speak at the birthplace of the modern oil industry.

“It was that incredible spirit and drive of those early Southeast Texans that overcame the obstacles and delivered that great event of Jan. 10, 1901, the Lucas Gusher,” he said.

Jacob said Southeast Texas stands poised for another industrial boom. “Prospects for economic activity now appear the highest since the Spindletop days,” he said.

The grand reopening exemplifies a can-do spirit at Lamar, said Simmons, who noted that his grandfather began his 60-year jewelry business in a horse-drawn cart at Spindletop.
JIM WESTGATE started collecting fossils before he started kindergarten and got his first job in science education before he finished high school. It is decades of pursuing dual loves of paleontology and teaching have taken him from the Rocky Mountains in Utah to the rainforests of Panama, from the deserts of Chihuahua, Mexico, to the Channel Islands off the California coast.

“Some researchers spend their whole life in a 10-mile by 10-mile area,” Westgate said. “My tendency is more to jump around and go to new places. It’s sort of a challenge for me to learn new things.”

Always-learning and always teaching, Westgate has won the respect of his peers and his students in 19 years as a professor of earth and space sciences at Lamar University. He has previously received awards for teaching excellence and research excellence and has been honored as Distinguished Faculty Lecturer and University Scholar. To his long list of accolades, he adds the title of 2008 University Professor, the highest faculty award conferred by Lamar’s academic community.

In nominating him for the honor, College of Arts and Sciences Dean Brenda Nichols wrote that Westgate “epitomizes the teacher-scholar model we want all faculty to emulate.”

Lamar has been a good career fit, Westgate said, because both teaching and research are valued and rewarded. His research interests have been boosted by grants, including a dozen research enhancement grants from Lamar, to support field work in foreign locales and closer to home. Some of those research trips have turned into adventures in the truest sense of the word.

“The first of Westgate’s four trips to Panama was relatively tame and civilized, but he flirted with danger on later journeys. Since 2001, he has been the science advisor and associate director of the JASON Alliance for Southeast Texas, a science education program for elementary and middle school students. In 2004, he took a group of JASON trainers to Panama to study the rainforest, coral reef and mangrove habitat. Their guide mentioned that his boss had a large fossilized shark’s tooth, which piqued Westgate’s interest, and led to a return trip for research. Working with other scientists, he found a fossil site estimated at 10 million years old near Colon at the Caribbean entrance to the Panama Canal. They also headed upriver toward Colombia and the isolated area where the 20-million-year-old shark’s tooth had been found. There, they became celebrity curiosities to dozens of school children who had never seen white men before.

On a subsequent return trip to the river basin with a Mexican archaeologist accompanying and translating and no Panamanian guide, Westgate and his colleagues got within 15 miles of the Colombian border in their duffle boat. When they told the director of the Panamanian Geological Survey about the trip later, he was amazed. “He said the last time he went into that area, he took eight guys with machine guns with him.” Westgate said. The area is dominated by two extreme groups of Colombian guerrillas, both of which finance their operations by kidnapping people and holding them for ransom. “We were able to sneak in and sneak out without any problem,” Westgate said. He knew about previous kidnappings in this potentially fossil-rich area, but “we figured we weren’t going to be in there that long.”

Field work in Chihuahua to excavate duck-billed dinosaur bones has brought adventure of a different flavor. Summer research trips to this Mexican research site across the Rio Grande from Big Bend National Park have at times been incredibly physically stressful. With typical daytime temperatures of 110 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, staying hydrated is a challenge. On one trip, a College of Charleston student had to make a detour to an Alpine hospital for saline due to dehydration. But the hot sun is not the only enemy. Because field time is precious, Westgate and his team normally work until daylight is gone and they can no longer see what they are doing.

“We started doing that at this site and realized as well come back in the dusk, the rattlesnakes would have come out by then. It took us about two days to figure out we needed to quit about an hour before sunset instead of pushing it to the edge,” Westgate said. “They’d start rattling, and they’re pretty camouflaged.” Luckily, no one was bitten on those dark hikes back to camp.

Because of the remoteness of the sites where Westgate and his teams work, accommodations often consist of tents and sleeping bags. In Chihuahua, the excavation site is a 100-mile, six-hour drive from Ojinaga, the Mexican sister city to Presidio. In the Urrita Basin of Utah, they work in the Badlands during the day and camp in a semi-forested area at a high elevation at night. The joy of being outside and documenting the place and work photographically have become part of the pleasure of field work for Westgate.

“We get different levels of success paleontologically. I guess a lot of the gratification is going to new places that I haven’t worked before and getting to learn new stuff,” he said. “A learning curve keeps it interesting.”

Every field trip might not yield breakthrough discoveries, but some certainly have. So far, Westgate counts his most significant paleontology contribution as a site at Laredo dating back about 40 million years. The location was the first discovered on the North American coastal plain where marine and mammal fossils of the era were found together. The site allowed scientists to link together time scales for marine and mammal evolution, which previously had a discrepancy of about 5 million years.

“This allowed us to synchronize the events and understand how our geologic resources like oil accumulated,” Westgate said. Fossils found at the site about a decade ago also led to the identification of four new species and three new genera of small primates previously unknown to science.

On the education front, Westgate is proud of the field courses he has created for pre-service and in-service teachers that allow them to experience science in the real world rather than just reading about it in a classroom. “Hopefully, that encourages them to create those kinds of experiences for their students,” Westgate said. “I think a lot of students get turned off by science because it’s taught as a literature course and not as a doing course. Science should be considered a verb, not a noun.” — JIM WESTGATE

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course. Science should be considered a verb, not a noun.” Westgate started doing science as a child in Arlington, Va. Summer enrichment science programs when he was in junior high reinforced his interest. Then, the summer before his senior year in high school, he started working to hook others as a teaching intern in a science program for fifth- and sixth-grade students. His science opportunities expanded just before he started college when he found a whale fossil in the Potomac River bluffs near Chesapeake Bay, which led to a four-year summer research internship with the Smithsonian Institution. Along with juggling research and teaching interests, Westgate balances family time and community service. He has been known to turn research trips into family vacations or sneak a little research into a family outing. Daughter Erin, a Reed College student, and son Jeffrey, a West Brook High senior, both sneak a little research into a family outing. Daughter Erin, a Reed College student, and son Jeffrey, a West Brook High senior, both

Despite decades of devoted work so far, Westgate's love of scientific learning and teaching has not diminished. In teaching teachers, he is motivated by a desire to help underpaid professionals learn more and do a better job of educating the next generation. With paleontology, the drive comes from the same type of curiosity that sent him outside to pick up fossils from railroad beds as a child. The fossils are out there, Westgate said, just waiting to be discovered. “If you get there too soon, they’re not exposed yet. If you get there too late, nature has not only exposed them, but destroyed them. It’s a challenge to get out in the field and catch them at the right point.”

MONICA BELLON-HARN—assistant professor of speech and hearing sciences
Bachelor’s from McNeese State University, master’s and Ph.D. from Louisiana State University. Projects include an autism workshop, summer language enrichment program for children with disabilities and a Lamar partnership program with Part Arthur Independent School District that assists children with disabilities. Serves as a consultant for language and reading programs for children with speech and language disorders. Member of the Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists. Licensed by the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association.

“Her work is well with all students and has become a magnet for attracting people to the program.” — RUSS SCHULTZ, dean, College of Fine Arts and Communications

EDYTHE KIRK—assistant professor of psychology
Bachelor’s and master’s from Lamar University, Ph.D. from University of Oregon. Areas of expertise include research methods and statistics. Served as Student Research Symposium for the past five years. Mentored eight McNair Scholars and supervised seven honors students. Named 2003 McNair Scholars Program Faculty Member of the Year. Served as manuscript reviewer and president of Sigma XI. Received a Lamar Research Enhancement Grant. Authored or co-authored five refereed articles, two statistical textbooks and 13 paper presentations.

“Dr. Kirk’s teaching activities involve going above and beyond normal expectations and speak volumes about her commitment to student research opportunities for hands-on learning.” — RANDOLPH SMITH, department chair, psychology

JIANG JIANG “JANE” LIU—assistant professor of computer science
Bachelor’s degree from Beijing University of Posts & Telecommunications, master’s and Ph.D. from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Area of expertise is computer architecture design for chip micro-processing and embedded systems. Uses the latest animation, graphics and simulations to illustrate course materials. Co-director of the INSPIRED and WIRE programs, which aim to mentor underrepresented groups in computer science concepts. Has published 17 refereed papers…has participated in Mathfest, Open House, Week of Welcome, West Brook Career Day and Rotary’s Career Day.

“Dr. Liu is a fine teacher; a person who has dedicated herself to her work at Lamar and to the field of computer science…” — LARRY OSBORNE, department chair, computer science

JOHN PAYTON—associate professor of health and kinesiology
Bachelor’s and master’s from Prairie View A&M University. Regularly offers workshops on officiating…serves as a consultant for the Texas Association of Sports Officials…member of BISO’s Athletic Council…inducted into the African-American Hall of Fame, Texas High School Basketball Hall of Fame, Lamar University Cardinal Hall of Honor and Southeast Texas Coaches Association Hall of Honor…co-directed a $55,000 grant to support the National Youth Sports Program…faculty sponsor of Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity…has published three articles and three coaching guides. “Students who have taken John Payton’s classes praise his expertise, his accessibility and his attention to their personal learning needs.” — HOLLIS LOWEY-MOORE, dean, College of Education and Human Development

**BELLON-HARN, LIU, KIRK AND PAYTON EARN 2008 MERIT AWARDS**

Lamar University has recognized four faculty members as University Merit Award recipients for their outstanding commitment to education.

MONICA BELLON-HARN—assistant professor of speech and hearing sciences
Bachelor’s from McNeese State University, master’s and Ph.D. from Louisiana State University. Projects include an autism workshop, summer language enrichment program for children with disabilities and a Lamar partnership program with Part Arthur Independent School District that assists children with disabilities. Serves as a consultant for language and reading programs for children with speech and language disorders. Member of the Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists. Licensed by the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association.

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— HOLLIS LOWEY-MOORE, dean, College of Education and Human Development

"I named a scholarship in memory of my daughter, Shar Zaloom McCabe ’89 as a tribute to her. She was very motivated to get the best education available and chose to study at Lamar University. She helped support her own education by working part-time and received a small scholarship. It made a big impression on her, and she would have wanted to help other students in the same way. By creating an endowment in memory of Shar, this scholarship will help future students for as long as Lamar University exists."

— VIC ZALOOM

Endowed scholarships at Lamar University are a unique and powerful way to honor friends or loved ones and for alumni and friends of the institution to ensure that their own connection to the university lives on in perpetuity. Endowed scholarships enable generations of students to obtain degrees that open doors and offer opportunities to create better lives.

Lamar University works with donors to establish endowments that benefit students, faculty, Lamar University itself and the larger community. To discuss ways you can contribute to the life of the University and create a lasting legacy, please contact us at (409) 880-2117.

**NAMING OPPORTUNITIES**

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NEA funds Deaf artists

by Amanda Rowell

During a month-long exhibition in April, the Dishman Art Museum housed more than 40 works of art by eight Deaf artists from around the country as part of the Deaf Artists in the Community and Schools project, which delves deeply into the culture, the inspiration and the drive behind the artists’ desire to create.

The artists convened at the Dishman for a panel discussion led by Brenda Schertz, a professor of Deaf Studies at the University of Southern Maine who has curated five national Deaf artists exhibits. Joining her was Deborah Sonnenstrahl Meranski, nationally known Deaf cultural specialist, and the artists who focused on how they evolved as artists during the past decade and how their being Deaf inspires their work.

“Artists typically work in isolation. This exhibition provides a forum for Deaf artists to discuss their work with each other as well as discuss Deaf art with an audience from the university and local community including the Deaf community,” said Jean Andrews, professor of Deaf studies and Deaf education at Lamar University.

The panel discussion is one of three components of the Deaf Artists in the Community and Schools project. Added to the exchange is “the obvious combination of three languages,” Lokensgard said. “English, American Sign Language and art—that, in a great combination.”

The second component of the project allows artists to make presentations about their work, giving the audience a unique opportunity to learn the artist’s perspective about being a Deaf individual using visual art to communicate. The third component—DVD production—will add long-term educational benefit to the program. “We’re going to videotape the panel discussion and our artists are also going to talk about their work in interviews with us,” Andrews said.

The resulting documentary DVD of the exhibits and dialogues produced by graduate students in art and in deaf education will be distributed to the 60 schools for the deaf nationwide free of charge and to an additional 1,000 mainstream programs in Texas for their art education curriculum. The multimedia product will document the events through ASL movies, animation, graphics, captioning in English, digital photographs, graphics and English text. An American Sign Language and English DVD with audio and captioning of Schertz providing an introduction to the Deaf artists and their work will be included.

A website for teachers and students will be created for the sharing of artwork, and a teacher’s guide will be available to assist teachers in replicating the project.

“Today more than 80 percent of deaf children are educated in public school where they may not get the opportunity to learn about their Deaf culture until they are older and go into the adult Deaf community. Our DVD will introduce them to this Deaf identity, Deaf pride and the celebration of their identity as bilingual learners of sign language and of English through the Deaf Artists’ exhibition,” said Andrews, a researcher in reading for deaf children.

“Deaf Art expresses the values of the Deaf culture: the beauty of sign language and its oppression, the joys of deaf bonding, communication breakdowns, the discovery of language, community and the history of deaf people.”

—BRENDA SCHERTZ, nationally known art curator and educator

Andrews has been a teacher of reading for deaf children and has prepared deaf teachers and educational researchers in deaf education since 1983. She is director of graduate programs in deaf education at Lamar University and has co-authored two books on psychology and Deaf people, published more than 35 articles in peer-reviewed journals and made more than 40 presentations at conferences related to language and literacy and deaf education teacher-training issues.

Having authored five children’s books, she has also published 10 CD-ROMS that present reading materials to deaf students in multimedia formats in ASL, Spanish and English. She has co-authored and managed more than $11 million in Department of Education grants to support deaf teachers and doctoral-level leaders in deaf education and has secured funding to create multimedia technology literacy materials for deaf students.

Lokensgard has taught numerous courses on art of all types and was instrumental in adding a museum studies specialization to the graduate curriculum at the university. She has served on art juries and curated more than 20 shows and exhibitions. As a writer specializing in the arts, she has written an introductory chapter to a philosophy textbook and numerous other related projects such as biographical entries for artists, catalog descriptions, art reviews for magazines, journals and exhibition brochures. Having published panel discussions on art, she also has served on state and local art boards in Southwest Texas. She has written and managed grants from the Southwest Texas Arts Council, the private sector and from Lamar University.

After five years of planning, the dream of the exhibition became reality. Selected artists are Ann Silver of Seattle, Wash.; Randy Garber, Newtown, Conn.; Susan Duper, Lake Geneva, Wis.; Chuck Baird, Bee Cave; Tony McGregor, Austin; Tony McGovern, the Arts Council, the private sector and from Lamar University.

Following the exhibition, Andrews and the Deaf Artists in the Community and Schools project will travel to Houston and Austin communities, said Andrews, who is a professor of Deaf studies at Lamar University and has co-authored two books on psychology and Deaf people, published more than 35 articles in peer-reviewed journals and made more than 40 presentations at conferences related to language and literacy and deaf education teacher-training issues.

Lokersgaard hope to do some professional work for the exhibition, which traveled to the Houston and Austin communities, said Andrews, who is a professor of Deaf studies at Lamar University and has co-authored two books on psychology and Deaf people, published more than 35 articles in peer-reviewed journals and made more than 40 presentations at conferences related to language and literacy and deaf education teacher-training issues.

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L
ike a blank canvas to Picasso, the classroom has held an irresistible attraction for Richard L. Price since childhood.
Now 76 and retired for more than a year from his post as associate professor of mathematics, Price cannot escape the magnetism of books and chalkboards and the joy of being surrounded by learning.

A Beaumont native, Price grew up in an environment that valued education. It is father was his high school principal and his church pastor. Along with the promise of education and religious life, the elder Price taught his six sons and six daughters to appreciate a strong home life, political life and community involvement.

Richard Price knew he would continue his education after his 1949 high school graduation, but he could not consider enrolling at Lamar because integration was still seven years away. Decades later, he turned out to be a very positive thing.

After a year in the Lamar classroom, Price requested and received a leave of absence to study religion at the Yale Divinity School. It is 40th birthday—a self-imposed deadline for formal education—was approaching, so a year at Yale earning a master’s degree in religion was his last chance. ‘74–’40, 1 was getting that degree.

That had been a dream of mine for some years. Then, okay, anything I want to do now education wise, I’ll pick up the book,” Price said. “Otherwise, I would still be back in school today.”

Price’s days as a student are in the past, but an atmosphere of learning always seems to surround him. He returned to Lamar after receiving his Yale degree and spent more than 30 years teaching students inside the classroom and out. Rena Clark ’84 remembers Price as “an incredible teacher. You would walk into his class, and you knew that his primary goal was to make certain that everybody who sat in his classroom left with an understanding of whatever the topic was that day.” He would do whatever it took to make that happen, including removing his shoes and using a shoestring to illustrate some mathematical concept.

Price’s influence outside the classroom was equally impressive. He advised the campus chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers and had a prominent role in the national organization, which honored him with its Golden Torch Award for lifetime achievement.

Clark—a principal in a private-equity firm in Boston—became reacquainted through her church with a former national student president of the National Society of Black Engineers. “The first words out of his mouth were ‘Dr. Richard Price’ and ‘Hi! we are hi!’” Clark said. Clark’s friend recalled Price’s thoughtfulness, intelligence and aptitude for developing student leaders. “It was everything I had experienced as a student on campus,” Clark said. “I enjoyed my experience at Lamar a great deal, but I am not sure it would have been the sort of experience I reflect so fondly on today had it not been for the encounters I had with Dr. Price.”

Price did more than work with black engineering students at Lamar. He drew many of them to the university. For most of his Lamar tenure, he served as director of minority recruiting and retention for the College of Engineering. The need for the position was apparent in the early 1970s. In his early years at Lamar, Price did not teach a single black student. After recruiting and finding scholarships for minority engineering majors, Price walked into an 8 a.m. differential equations class one day and saw several black students. “The first thing I did was turn around. I must be in the wrong class,” Price said. “But no, those were students I had recruited. They had made their way up to differential equations.” He continued to see many of his recruits in classes, but not all of them.

“Some would say, ‘No Doc, I’m going to go somewhere else,’ because my standards tended to be kind of high, kind of tough.”

Despite demanding expectations, students found him a warm and welcoming presence on campus. “We all remember having him greet us with ‘Oh, child,’” said Beaumont neurosurgeon Dr. Tamera Chavis ’83. “He was just a wonderful person. He was very approachable. He would tutor you any time of the day you came to his office whether or not you were taking his class. He was a wonderful asset to the university.”

Minority recruiting turned out to be a good assignment for Price. By starting with a few students and helping them succeed, he created a network he could use to attract other promising students and built a track record he could tout to capture more scholarship money. The job started with a request from Cherry, but the appeal of opening doors to individuals of less conventional background goes back further, to words Price heard from a high school teacher. “She told me one time, ‘R ichard, you’ve got to make it in life, why? Because if you make it, I think we can get a whole lot of other youngsters that will make it.’ That is something that has stuck with me over the years,” Price said. “It opened doors for his students during 36 years at Lamar, he is beginning to see them find their own ways to assist young students coming of age today. Although Price retired from Lamar in August 2006, he could not day away from the classroom long. He spent about four months as a retiree. Each day, he would get his teenage son off to classes at Ozem High School. Then, he would take a long ride on one of his bicycles and come home to read. That lasted until January when an Ozem teacher asked Price to help students prepare for the mathematics portion of an academic decathlon. On campus or for the one-day commitment, Price was asked by Ozem’s principal, James Broussard, to consider teaching a few classes. He agreed to teach four, two Advanced Placement calculus classes and two Advanced Placement pre-calculus.

“To the classroom, it doesn’t matter if these are graduate students or undergraduates or high school,” Price said. “I don’t mind going down and finding out where you are and starting at that level if you’re going to let me raise you up because I’ve got my standards. I haven’t had to compromise my standards. It’s an environment where they’re expected to go to the board and do some things. You see the light that comes into their eyes when they can say ‘Oh, I see what you’re doing Doc.’”

It is work with young students doesn’t stop at Ozem. Saturdays this spring, Price coached Southeast Texas students for a math and science competition sponsored by the Texas Alliance for Minorities in Engineering. Price and Annie Carter, chair of Golden Triangle Texas Alliance for Minorities in Engineering, have taken students to state and national competitions for years, and other attendees always notice Price, Carter said. “It’s an amazing event when he’s there,” she said. “Folks immediately know who he is. He is pretty humble about it.” She called Price an icon throughout Southeast Texas and in engineering circles around the country. She honored that iconic status by establishing an endowed scholarship in Price’s name to mark his 70th birthday. Through January gifts from friends and former students had boosted the fund to more than $45,000.

Price dismissed the question of what it meant to him. “The main thing is that it creates an opportunity for another youngster to go to school. It’s nothing personal about it. I can take it or leave it. But if it’s an avenue that gets another youngster to say ‘I can get a scholarship and go to school,’ Price said, smiling, his meaning clear.

For Price, the emphasis has always been on making available opportunities to learn. “It’s something he stressed in his family and his classroom, whether the ‘yes, child’ he addressed was related by blood or affinity. In addition to his son, Price has three adult daughters, two granddaughters and a great-granddaughter. It is family of former students. If he always told his Lamar students “in four years, two grandsons and a great-granddaughter. It is family of former students is larger. He always told his Lamar students “in four or five years I want to see you gone,” but his connection with them did not end then. Like a proud father, he watched his students attain advanced degrees and increased professional responsibilities. He traveled to attend graduation exercises and weddings and to welcome children of former students into the world. “They stay in touch with me. They still will call and say ‘Doc just checking on you,’” Price said. “I’ve been fulfilling.”
The opportunity to solve medical puzzles that she sees in the hospital has been a rewarding job for Shannon. "I decided that pathology was the best fit for me," she said. "I have been very happy with that decision." Pathologists stay up-to-date on the current pathology literature and knowledge about new treatments, and they need to be able to interpret medical and laboratory data. "The work itself is very challenging," she said. "There are many diseases that I diagnose by looking at tissues under a microscope. It’s a very rewarding job to be able to make the diagnoses so that the patient can get the right treatment."

Shannon has served as chief of pathology and medical director of the hospital’s pathology laboratory since 2000. In 1989 after completing medical school and a residency at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston, Shannon used skill and experience to turn medical puzzles into solutions. It is more than an intellectual exercise. The answers she discovers guide her team to make the right treatment decisions.

"The physicians here have an excellent reputation, so it’s been an honor to serve as the chief of staff," she said. "The specialty of medical technology was very important in providing me a good baseline for learning medicine and pathology," she said. "The education in medical technology was an excellent foundation for my continued education."

An education at Lamar University has been an important part of the life of just about everyone who works there, including the president of the hospital. Shannon's father, Melvin Cole '65, received the first doctoral degree ever awarded by Lamar, a doctor of engineering in 1973. Her mother, Betty (Bumby) Cole '77, '81, graduated as an education major in the 1970s and returned later to earn a master's degree in history. Her sister, Anita (Cole) Harman '75, '83, earned bachelor's and master's degrees in elementary education, and her brother, Dr. Mel Cole Jr. '77 is a surgeon practicing in Lufkin. Shannon's husband, Ted Shannon '79, also graduated from Lamar University with a bachelor of business administration degree. They met prior to enrolling as LU students.

From her foundation at Lamar University, Shannon has built a strong and respected career as the lead physician in the indispensable laboratory of St. Luke's Hospital. A little one-on-one interaction with patients, it requires communication with medical colleagues from a wide spectrum of specialties. The staff at St. Luke's Hospital includes well-known physicians in numerous areas, including cardiovascular, pulmonary and gastrointestinal specialties. Shannon has built solid relationships with the hospital’s other doctors, as evidenced by her election as chief of staff beginning in January 2006. She recently completed her two-year term in the challenging volunteer position.

"The physicians here have an excellent reputation, so it’s been an honor to serve as the chief of staff," she said. "The new doctors are not the only ones learning in the process. They certainly ask many questions, and being able to teach helps pathologists stay up-to-date on the current pathology literature and current technology so we can share the most current information with residents," Shannon said. "It provides an additional stimulus to stay up-to-date on my own reading." Not that Shannon needs much prompting to continue exploring her chosen field. The intellectual stimulation of the profession was what first attracted Shannon to medicine, and particularly to the specialty of pathology. At Lamar University, Shannon earned a bachelor’s degree in medical technology, a program offered through the biology department. After graduation, she worked as a medical technologist at Baptist Hospital, primarily in the blood bank. That exposure to a pathology lab and to the pathologist who worked there deepened her interest and provided the push that propelled her to medical school.

"While I was in medical school, I did consider other specialties, but I decided that pathology was the best fit for me," Shannon said. "I have been very happy with that decision." Although pathology is a very much a laboratory-based discipline, Shannon has had a chance to work with many medical colleagues from a wide spectrum of specialties. The staff at St. Luke’s Hospital includes well-known physicians in numerous areas, including cardiovascular, pulmonary and gastrointestinal specialties. Shannon has built solid relationships with the hospital’s other doctors, as evidenced by her election as chief of staff beginning in January 2006. She recently completed her two-year term in the challenging volunteer position.

"The physicians here have an excellent reputation, so it’s been an honor to serve as the chief of staff," she said. During her tenure, Shannon was responsible for ensuring that the hospital maintained and improved its standards of care. She was also involved in the implementation of new rules related to documentation for Medicare and for the government agencies that regulate hospital accreditation.

"The physicians take care of the patients extremely well, but we have to document everything we do in certain ways to show the evidence that we’re doing what we need to be doing," Shannon said. Educating physicians about required changes to comply with new rules was a primary focus of her time as chief of staff. "Sometimes it means the physicians have to change the way they’ve practiced for many years. It’s hard to change practices."

In addition to those volunteer duties, Shannon maintained her demanding long-term responsibilities for the hospital’s laboratory. In 2007, St. Luke’s had more than 33,000 admissions, more than 29,000 emergency room visits, more than 207,000 outpatient visits and performed 3.4 million lab tests.

Shannon believes the education she received in her hometown at Lamar University prepared her for the challenging career that followed. "The specialty of medical technology was very important in providing me a good baseline for learning medicine and pathology," she said. "The education in medical technology was an excellent foundation for my continued education."

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From her foundation at Lamar University, Shannon has built a strong and respected career as the lead physician in the indispensable laboratory of St. Luke's Hospital. Although she dedicates many hours to training the next generation of pathologists, her own work is nowhere near its end. She still has more patients waiting for answers than she can find by studying their tissues under a microscope, much less solve than an intellectual exercise. The answers she discovers and experience to turn medical puzzles into solutions. It is

Luke’s Episcopal Hospital in Houston, Shannon uses skill how each piece fits together. As chief of pathology at St. Lon...
No continent unexplored

by Larry Acker

They rode out a hurricane on a cruise ship in the Tasman Sea, faced a SARS outbreak in China, endured political unrest in parts of Africa, not to mention the frustration of delayed flights and lost luggage, but nothing has deterred Edward ’62 and Patti Hurwitz from pursuing one of their greatest loves—travel. The couple lives in Houston, where Ed enjoys a scaled-back work schedule as one of the state’s leading dermatologists.

“Patti and I have enjoyed traveling over the years, both on land and sea, and have visited six continents,” the biology major shared. “We have traveled extensively both pre- and post-9/11 and recognize the need to be cautious because of instability in the world.”

Hurwitz received his M.D. in 1966. From there, he performed his internship in internal medicine and surgery at Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, D.C. He earned board certification from the American Board of Dermatology in 1973 and served as a clinical instructor of dermatology at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston from 1973 to 1981 while he continued to serve as a clinical assistant professor in dermatology. He began his private practice in dermatology in 1972.

The Hurwitz family migrated to Houston in 1890 from Pennsylvania, becoming some of the city’s earliest residents. His father graduated from Rice University as a chemical engineer and moved the family to Port Arthur, where he spent his career working for Texaco. Born in Port Arthur, Hurwitz graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School and shared classes with an as-yet undiscovered Janis Joplin. He recalls participating in the Math Slide Rule Club with the future rock star, a precursor to the Port Arthur native maintained a private practice until 2000 when he allowed two colleagues to assume responsibility for the management of his practice. There are currently eight dermatologists practicing at the clinic, which is the largest in Houston. While still officially with the clinic, a self-prescribed abbreviated work week allows him the opportunity to travel and pursue other interests.

Aside from travel, Hurwitz enjoys sports and served for several years as the dermatologist for the Houston Rockets basketball team. Hurwitz supports the mission of Lamar University by having established the Edward and Patricia Hurwitz Scholarship in 2004 for pre-medical and nursing students. Contributions to Lamar also include gifts of his time and talent as a trustee of the Lamar University Foundation, and the couple enjoys attending Lamar events such as the annual La Dolce Vita. Hurwitz has served as the vice president of Congregation Beth Israel in Houston and has been active with the Houston Symphony and Houston Museum of Fine Arts.

The Houston couple has three children, all living in Texas. Their seven-year-old granddaughter, Sarah, has brought additional enjoyment to their lives, whether having lunch at McDonald’s or playing on the beach in Galveston.

When asked about their favorite travel destination, the couple replies that all the trips they’ve taken over the years have been memorable. They agree that their last trip in November, to India, is their favorite, but they also confess that it is mainly because the trip still so fresh in their minds. They have a cruise planned for the summer along the coast of Norway to view the spectacular fjords of that region. When asked about other future travel plans, Hurwitz debates a moment and then says he’d like to travel to Antarctica, the only continent they haven’t visited.
Through her travels from Afghanistan to Germany, diplomat Karen Johnson has learned to take a long-term view.

Even before her Lamar graduation, Karen Johnson ‘70 knew she wanted to see the world. In 20 years as a U.S. State Department foreign service officer, Johnson has circled the globe repeatedly while keeping reminders of home nearby.

“I am happy that my journey through life has exposed me to many cultures. At the same time, I am very, very proud to represent my roots in Southeast Texas around the world,” said the Port Arthur native, who keeps a Texas flag on her desk and serves Texas barbecue at official receptions.

Johnson has circled the globe repeatedly while keeping a Texas flag on her desk and serves Texas barbecue at official receptions. "That summer was my epiphany that there was a big world out there to see and experience," she said. After graduation, a Rotary Foundation Fellowship from Southeast Texas Rotary Clubs allowed her to study in Austria for a year at the University of Vienna. In 1972, she was hired by the Department of Defense to manage recreational programs for American soldiers stationed in Stuttgart, Germany. She met and married her husband, Michael Mitchell, in Germany, and their two sons, Peter, 33, and Matthew, 31, were born there. She also earned a master’s of education degree in counseling and human services from Boston University while in Germany. Returning to the U.S. in 1978, she taught in El Paso for a few years and worked as a marketing and communication director for H Capitol Corp. of America. Then, after the birth of her daughter, Kate, in 1985, she decided it was time to pursue her State Department goal.

“This is the career I always wanted. It just took time," Johnson said. In the early 1970s, the State Department hired few women, and those who made the cut faced numerous restrictions, including a mandate to resign if they married. Even at the Defense Department, Johnson’s supervisor requested her resignation when she married in 1973. The same supervisor was not happy a year later when “I had the audacity to have a child,” so Johnson took only two days of maternity leave.

“Diplomacy is what I always wanted to do. I just had to be patient,” she said. To receive her commission in 1988, Johnson joined a field of 10,000 people who took a once-yearly written test, became one of 2,000 invited for interviews and was one of 200 hired that year.

Her first posting was to Seoul, South Korea, during the 1988 Olympics. As a consular officer, she made more than 300 split-second decisions daily about who would obtain visas to enter the United States. “I had about a minute and a half for each person who stood in front of me to determine Is this person trying to immigrate illegally or are they coming back to Korea? Two years later, in 1990, she and her family moved to Munich, Germany, where she served as the management officer for the U.S. Consulate. She coordinated the official visits of high-ranking government officials, including then-President George H. W. Bush. Later, she transferred to Geneva, Switzerland, to work in multilateral affairs at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. "Negotiating with diplomats from many countries on issues of universal concern, particularly human rights issues, was professionally very rewarding," she said. After 20 years and numerous assignments, including a year at the National War College in Washington, D.C., where she earned a master’s degree in national security strategy, Johnson is unable to narrow the list of most interesting or most fulfilling posts to one or two. “I have to say all of them because each one has been very different,” she said. “They all built on each other.”

The work representing U.S. interests as a State Department foreign service officer also builds on what Johnson learned as a Lamar student. “I thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated my four years at Lamar. I was active in student government and my sorority (Kappa Delta). The leadership experiences and skills I gained at Lamar have proven useful throughout my adult life,” Johnson said. Her background in Southeast Texas has also given her a ready rapport with those she meets on the job. “The Germans love Texas,” Johnson said. When she arrived in Hamburg to serve as the U.S. Consul General last September, newspaper headlines consistently proclaimed, “Texas Woman Named Consul General,” she said. “Anybody who knows me in Hamburg, Germany, knows quite well that I’m a proud Texan.”

“Anybody who knows me in Hamburg, Germany, knows quite well that I’m a proud Texan.” —Karen Johnson

U.S. Consul General in Hamburg

At home around the globe

by Beth Gallaspyp
Robert L. Collins '53, B.A. accounting, is retired from Sun Oil Co. and lives in Port Neches. His twin sister, Galena Delmore '53, earned her master’s degree in 1980 and lives in Houston with her wife, Betty.

Jerry Stockholm '55, B.B.A. accounting, is retired from the Illinois Central as vice president of sales and lives in Bloomington, Ill., with his wife, Frances.

James Beard '64, B.S. physics, lives in College Station, Texas, with his wife,大纲. He is an assistant professor at Texas A&M and lives in Irving with his wife, Kay. Frank Phillips '66, B.B.A. office management, is retired from the Reynolds and Reynolds Company in Houston, where he lives.

M. Michael Cough '70, B.S. business, is a founder of Cornerstone Financial, service organization, sports group, social or honor organization.

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Four join Educator Hall of Fame

Four Lamar University alumni were inducted into the Educator Hall of Fame Nov. 8. These inductees have led distinguished careers in education, showing a commitment to the field that deserves recognition.

Janice (Clark) Babin, 1974, B.S. education, is a teacher, conductor and has been married to her husband, Bill, for 32 years and have one son.

Michael Shelton, 1976, B.S. health and physical education, is a teacher, consultant for the Texas State Teachers Association, teaches in the Vidor school district and lives in Bridge City with his wife, Betty.

Kathy (Dean) Hayes, 1976, B.S. health and physical education, is a teacher, conductor and has been married to her husband, James Duncan, live in Orange with their daughter, Barbara. They have three children: a 26-year-old son, a 20-year-old son and a 19-year-old daughter.

Lee Morrison, 1976, B.B.A. accounting, is retired and lives in Port Neches-Groves with her husband, Bob.

Nechosha Simmons (Guerin) Simmons, 1975, B.A.A.S. administration, is an executive assistant with Devereaux Texas Treatment Network in Orange. She has taught for 23 years and lives in Rosenberg with her husband, James.

Karen (Derouen) Scalco, 1976, B.S. education, is a community relations coordinator for the Orange County Criminal Justice Department. She lives in Orange with her husband, John.

Karen (Scott) Ruckstuhl, 1976, B.S. education, is community relations coordinator for the Orange County Criminal Justice Department. She lives in Orange with her husband, John.

Dr. Frank Mason, 1977, B.S. education, is an assistant professor at the College of Saint Elizabeth. He is an associate professor of applied science, is an executive assistant with Devereaux Texas Treatment Network in Orange. She has taught for 23 years and lives in Rosenberg with her husband, James.

Deborah (Kea) Prihoda, 1974, B.S. health and physical education, is a teacher, conductor and has been married to her husband, Bill, for 32 years and have one son.

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Attendees also enjoyed a pre-game anniversary during a Homecoming reunion class notes.

Larry Haynes '80, B.S. health and physical education, is athletic director and head football coach at Hardin High School. He lives in Nederland. His wife, Camille.

Brian Magnes '89, A.A.S. refrigeration and air conditioning technology, is a unit maintenance supervisor for the El Centro Unit of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. He lives in Willow Park.

Rudy Martinez '84, A.A.S. radiologic technology, works at Lufkin Indian Hospital.

Betsy (Tobin) Nelson '80, B.S. education, is athletic director and head foot- ball coach of Hardin High School. He lives in Nederland. His wife, Tish.

Cynthia (Jenkins) Parrott '83, B.A. psychology, works as a human resources manager at the Medical Center of Southeast Texas. They have two children.

Donna Mazzola '80, B.A. accounting, is on the executive committee of the USTA Texas Tennis Association. She lives in Houston with her husband, Todd.

Jennifer Perrin '89, B.B.A. accounting, is primary ident of Lonestar Industries in Lumberton where she lives. She has two children.

Jason Tortorice '81, A.A. welding, is executive director of Lectims Industries in Liberty, where he lives. He also owns and operates several businesses that contribute significantly to the vitality and strength of the economy.

The Lamar chapter of the national business honor society nominated Tortorice because of his outstanding business practices and involvement with the university. Tortorice serves on the board of advisors of the College of Business.

"I am delighted that he has been chosen as a recipient of the Medal for Entrepreneurship," said Dr. Henry Venta, dean of the College of Business. "In the last five years, only two individuals nationwide have received this prestigious award. This is a tremendous recognition for Joe, his business, and as Joe would surely say, all of the people that have helped him along the way. We are proud to call Joe one of our own at Lamar University."

Tortorice founded Jason's Deli in November 1976 when he opened the original location in Beaumont's Gateway Shopping Center. He is still president and CEO of the chain, which owns 100 locations and is headquartered in Beaumont. The remaining 80 locations are franchise-owned.

Tortorice earned an M.B.A. from Lamar in 1971, after completing his bachelor's degree in marketing in 1969.

The Beta Gamma Sigma Medal for Entrepreneurship honors outstanding individuals who combine innovative business achievement with service to humanity; it provides recognition to individuals and businesses that contribute significantly to the vitality and strength of the economy.
The Department of Computer Science has escalated over the years, despite the ever-evolving nature of the industry. It has offered thousands of students a state-of-the-art education and practical experience in the field.

Alumni celebrate these accomplishments at the first-ever Computer Science Alumni Reunion, Feb. 23 during a breakfast, campus tour, reception and dinner. In the late 1970s, a group of seven students in the Association for Computing Machinery met with then-Lamar President John Gray. The meeting led to the hiring of Bill Nylen as an associate professor of computer science in the mathematics department. Nylen became the dean of the newly created computer science program.

He went on to serve as an administrator executive vice president and vice president, and operations, 64,000 students across the University system.

NYLEN (Black) Denovan ’94, B.A.S. nursing, is a registered nurse supervisor for Heart Institute in Beaumont. She lives in Sulphur.

Thomas Glenn ’94, B.S. political science, has joined Environmental Consulting as the base energy policy specialist for the Gulf Coast area.

Shane Ronder-Harderson ’94, B.A.S. applied arts and sciences, teaches first grade in Beaumont schools and lives in Lumberton with her husband, Craig.


Melinda Reilly ’94, B.S. fashion retailing and merchandising, is senior territory manager for Bristol Myers Squibb and lives in Houston.

Ramey Sumpreanu ’94, M.E. electrical engineering, is chief architect for Fifth Third Bank in Cincinnati, Ohio. He and his wife, Kaitlin, live in Houst., Ohio.

Clint Taltart ’94, B.S. mechanical engineer, is a senior project engineer with ValueLine. He lives in Houston.

Jason Black ’93, B.S. meteorology and institutional foods, is a general manager for Papasole Restaurant. He and his wife, Christian (Thorpe) ’93, B.S. political science, live in Lumberton with their children, Audri and Parker.

Dr. Christopher Drum ’93, B.S. nursing, practices as a psychiatric nurse in Galveston and earned his graduate degree in pediatric medicine in 2000. He lives in Beaumont with his wife, Lisa, and their two sons, ages 2 and 17. He is the 2004 Buna school district, where he lives with his wife, Michelle.

David May ’95, B.S. marketing, is vice president of corporate sales for the Orange branch of Community Bank. He lives in Bridge City with his wife, Kari. Joe Yeh ’92, B.B.A. general business, ’90, B.B.A. business administration, is an operations supervisor for the Wilson Group. He lives in Port Arthur with his wife, Anna (Segal) ’94, B.A. criminal justice.

Chris Shafer ’91, B.S. psychology, M.P. psychology, does human resource and operations management for Gulf Transportation Services in Dallas. She lives in Plano.

Nicky Selby ’91, B.S. chemical diesel mechanics, lives in Orange.

Jena Sims ’90, B.S. English, lives in Beaumont. She earned a master’s degree from Southern Oregon University in 2000 and works for Intel Corp.

Anne (Segal) ’90, B.A. criminal justice.

Karen (Greer) Baker ’90, B.S. English, teaches in Beaumont schools and lives in Lumberton.

Ramana Suryadevara ’90, B.S. mechanical engineer, is lead architect for Fifth Third Bank in Cincinnati, Ohio. He earned a master’s degree from Southern Oregon University in 2000 and works for the AT&T in Houston. He resides in Cypress, Texas.

Brian Bartlett ’90, B.S. computer science, is a family resource guide that focuses on race, ethnicity and culture. He and his wife, Jennifer, live in Lumberton.

Shani Henderson ’90, B.A.S. applied arts and sciences, works in San Antonio.

Mary (Sanchez) Castro ’97, B.S. theater, lives in San Antonio and supports the Theatre Company of San Antonio.

Josephine (Cox) Aaron ’97, B.S. criminal justice.

Mona (Wallace) Dawson ’94, A.A.S. nursing, lives in Orange.

Kristin (Simonton) Bertles ’96, B.S. criminal justice.

Karen (Gage) Harris ’94, M.B.A. business administration, is an opera- tion manager for Radiology Consultants. She and her husband, Yufeng, live in Sugar Land.

Anna (Sanchez) Castro ’96, B.S. English, is a health information systems, is a business analyst for SAP in Sugar Land.

Misty (Sampson) Roche ’97, B.S. English, is a health information systems, is a business analyst for SAP in Sugar Land.

Donna Cheadle ’90, B.S. exercise physiol., is a respiratory sales specialist for ResMed. She and her husband, Craig, live in Beaumont.

Suzanne (Vicknair) ’89, B.S. criminal justice, works for Region V in Beaumont.

Tara Dubuisson ’90, B.S. English, was an editor for The Wilson Group. She and her husband, Eric, live in Lumberton.

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We will miss...
Lady Cards Tennis wins first-ever SLC title

The Lamar women’s tennis team defeated two-time defending SLC champion Louisiana-Lafayette 4-2 April 27 at Nacogdoches, claiming its first-ever SLC Tournament title and earning the league’s automatic entry to the NCAA Tournament.

Lamar tallied wins at Nos. 2, 3 and 6 for the victory, as sophomores Manami Kuroda of Tokyo, Japan, and Katrina Harbuzi, from Germany, both came from a set down to win their matches. The victory gives Lamar their first SLC Tournament crown and boosts their record to 24-3-2-1, two wins shy of the season record of 26 wins set by the 1983 team.

Additionally, five Lady Cardinals were named to the All-Southland Conference team. After posting a perfect 23-0 record for the year and going undefeated in league play, Mariyami Gutierrrez, a freshman from Venezuela, earned first team all-conference honors.

No. 2 singles and was named the conference Freshman of the year. She also picked up second-team, all-conference honors at No. 1. She played with partner Andrea Ariztegui, a senior from Mexico. Harbuzi joined Gutierrez on the first team and was tabbed to the second team at No. 3. Doubles with partner Salina A. Randa, a Kiryivsky freshman. Kuroda recorded a spot on the second team at No. 6. Singles.

Thanks to Greg and Jennifer (Heberth) Thompson ‘84, bennies, Lamar now has a renovated tennis court, new scoreboard and an awning to shade the fans.

Kenny Davison

Cardinals court success: Win first conference title in 24 years

The Cardinals made a big step in returning the program to the success it enjoyed in the 1970s and early 80s as they went 19-14-3 and 3-3-3 in their first 11 conference championship seasons in school history and their first since the 1983-84 season. The 13 league victories tied the school record set in 1961-62. Lamar has had consecutive victories from late January to the end of February, marking the fourth-longest streak in school history and the longest conference winning streak ever. Along the way, the Cardinals have claimed five SLC road wins and 14 home victories—both of which rank second all-time.

The Cardinal faithful continued to pass through the turnstiles at the Montagne Center in droves as Lamar realized the Southland Conference in attendance for the fourth consecutive year. With 23,838 fans saw Lamar defeat Northeastern State on Homecoming—marking the eighth-largest home crowd in school history. Lamar had three players earn all-conference accolades, led by junior Kenny Dawkins, H-0ily Springs, Miss., and senior Lamar Sanders. Hickey Flat, Miss., earning first-team mention, with senior Daron Hinkle, Baltimore, Md., claiming H-0ily M/frame etion honors. Dawkins was named Newcomer of the Year.

Honor of Honor welcome six

The Lamar University Cardinal H of Honor, which annually recognizes former students—athletes and administrators for outstanding contribution to the university through athletics, invited six new members representing six sports in an annual induction banquet Feb. 2 honors are Luis Baradi, men’s tennis, 1970-73; Tony Mack, baseball, 1984-87; Fabio Meloni, men’s soccer, 1978-80; Jayme Stenger, men’s basketball, 1967-70; and Susan Smith, women’s basketball, 1969-73, and softball, 1972.

Cardinal Cadence | 36:1 May 2008
Lady Cards enjoy most successful season since 1992

The Lamar University women’s basketball team put together the most successful season since 1992 and came within one game of advancing to the NCAA tournament for the first time since 1991.

Lamar opened post-season play with a 60-48 win over No. 5 seed Stephen F. Austin and followed that with a 63-50 win over Texas A&M-Corpus Christi to follow that with a 63-50 win over Texas A&M-Corpus Christi to advance to the championship game before falling to UTSA 65-56 in the final. For their parts in the LU tournament run, freshman Tamara Riddle and senior Nikki Williams, White Castle, and junior Nikki Williams, Williams, White Castle, La., were named to the all-tournament team. A labile led the way for Lamar in scoring all season as she was named first team All-SLC and was Freshman of the Year after averaging a team-high 16 points and 7.1 rebounds per game. Nikki Williams was named third team all-conference. Sophomore Brittney Williams, Spring, also garnered third-team honors.

As a team, the Lady Cards shot .397 from the field and were averaged 63.8 points per game while allowing 62.3 points per game. Lamar also won the battle on the boards, out-rebounding their opponents 39.2 to 36.9.

Mens golf rolls to SLC Championship

Lamar played the first seven holes five-under par and cruised to a 28-shot victory and its second Southland Conference Men’s Golf Championship April 16 at Gray Plantation in Lake Charles.

LU shot two-over for the day and finished the 54-hole tournament at 866, well ahead of second-place Sam Houston State and Texas State at 894. During the same stretch that Lamar was firing on all cylinders, Shedd Was five-over and Texas State two-over.

Sophomore Huges Joannes of Belgium led the Cardinals with a 69 on the final round to finish third at 217. He had three bogeys on the day after birdying three of the first five holes, had a birdie on the 12th and chipped in for an eagle on the 15th. Junior Justin H anding, Cape Town, South Africa, and senior Russell Helson of Georgetown, Texas, each finished a stroke back at 218, tying for fourth to give Lamar three of the top five finishers.

Senior Casey Clanderson of Katy was named to the All-SLC First Team, H anding and Joannes to the Second Team and H Helson to the Third Team, while second-year Head Coach Brian White ’89 was named Coach of the Year in as many seasons. The Cardinals will participate in one of three NCAA Regionals, May 15-17.

SLC Indoor Track Championships: Cardinals grab four individual titles

The Lamar University mens’ and women’s track teams wrapped up the 2008 indoor season with a pair of fourth-place finishes at the Southland Conference Championships.

The mens fourth place finish is the highest finish in an indoor conference meet for Lamar since the 1993 team finished in fourth place in the Sun Belt Conference. It’s the highest Southland Conference finish for an LU team since the 1986 team finished in second.

Senior Clerc Koenck, Anacoco, La., anchored the mens distance medley relay (DMR) to help freshman Karanee Lutteroth, Spring; senior Toni Sylvester, Sour Lake; and freshman Merci Bungei, Kapchorwa, Uganda, win the title. Koenck easily won the mile and the 3,000-meter run as well. For her efforts, she was honored as the Indoor Track and Field Women’s Athlete of the Year and Outstanding Track Performer for the second straight year.

Francis Kagugule, a sophomore from Uganda, earned the title Outstanding Track Performer after winning the mile, finishing second in the 3,000 and anchoring the DMR to their second straight SLC championship. Junior Frank Bwambale, Nakifuma, Uganda; freshman Julius Kaule, Kampala, Uganda; and junior Ewan Simpson, Kincardine, Scotland, joined him on the DMR. Simpson also claimed the top spot in the 800-meter run.

Two women set school records. Anusha sophomore Brittany Pollard’s 400 sprint and H umbie junior Jesseka Johnson’s prelim 60-meter hurdles.

Vincent-Beck’s new face

From the latest in turf to a state-of-the-art hitting facility

Friends and alumni who are visiting Lamar’s campus for the first time or after a long absence will see new buildings and current construction projects throughout campus—and that is also true for the athletics venues—most notably at Vincent-Beck Stadium.

In the winter off-season, the venerable home of the Lamar baseball program received a $250,000 renovation to the playing surface. In a span of six weeks, the existing natural grass infield was replaced with a synthetic surface known as Olympia Turf.

For those who have seen games this season, they have raved about the clean lines and smooth play that has come about with the laser-leveled field.

And as much as the fans have enjoyed the new field, the Lamar coaching staff has enjoyed it even more. “It’s been spectacular both from a playing standpoint and more importantly a development because there is so much more we can do on that compared to natural grass because the sideline area is historically a no touch zone,” said head coach Jim Gilligan.

“But with what we have, it’s just the ultimate for the practice sessions.”

Some traditionalists may be asking why a did Lamar need a new infield? What was wrong with the grass they had been playing on for so many years? Gilligan alluded to the fact that with today’s game, the opportunity to play on television and recruit the elite student-athlete, a field that drains and doesn’t need to be covered with a tarp during rain delays can yield immediate returns in terms of not missing any games.

“We’re trying to keep up with the trends in baseball,” said Gilligan, who in his 31st season as the LU coach. “The first

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ArtsCulture

Music Hall of Honor inducts Laird, Rollins

Musicians Hall of Honor Inductees | Jeff Laird and Don Rollins, center, pose with Barry J. Frason, vice president for student affairs, and President James Simmons.

Two of Lamar’s most renowned music alumni took their places in the MusiC HALL of Honor Feb. 23: Jeff Laird ’82, ’84 of Spring and Don Rollins ’93 of Nacogdoches, Tenn.

Laird is in his fourth year as director of secondary performing arts for the Aldine school district, after serving for 18 years as Aldine’s director of bands. Rollins is an educator, musician and Grammy Award-winning songwriter who worked for 17 years as a band director in Texas schools before moving to the Nacogdoches area.

The Music Hall of Honor, which inducted its inaugural class in 2007, recognizes artists for their significant and musical careers, their status as mentors for other aspiring artists and teachers and their dedication to their art.

“I am greatly honored,” Laird said. “In my many years in both the music education and performance fields, I am constantly reminded of what a valuable education I received from Lamar. My educational and practical experiences at Lamar prepared me for more than I could have ever imagined at the time and continues to serve me well on a daily basis.”

响应他的号召, Rollins said: “What I treasure most about my days at Lamar was the freedom I had to chase my own music. In retrospect, I see that there was a songwriter trying to emerge from the saxophone guy, but the reality was that my teachers, especially Jimmy Simmons, gave me chances to do more things with my musical self than harness it in a syllabus.”

Laird supervises 155 teachers of band, orchestra, choir, theater and dance in all 105 schools. Under his direction, the Aldine High School Band was named outstanding ensemble at the Texas UIL Band and Orchestra contest and grand champion at band contests nationwide. The band made two appearances in Washington, D.C., marching in the 52nd Presidential Inaugural Parade in 1993 and the national Independence Day Parade in 1999. Aldine was the only band from Texas invited to those parades. Laird is a past president of the 8,000-member Texas Music Educators Association, the world’s largest music educators’ organization. In 2004, he was inducted into the Lamar Educator Hall of Fame.

A musician since his teens, Rollins directed bands in Humble, Little Cypress-Mauriceville, Huffman and Vidor while continuing his career as a saxophonist. He achieved superior ratings in UIL events and led the Vidor High JAZZ Band to victories in regional festivals. While continuing his career as an educator, musician and songwriter, Rollins landed a publishing deal in 1997 with Warner/Chappell Music — one that would last more than 10 years. Rollins recently signed a new publishing agreement with First State Music Group of New York. He moved to Nashville in 2001 and co-wrote It’s Five O’clock Somewhere in 2003. The piece became a chart-topper for Alan Jackson and Jimmy Buffet, earning such honors as Vocal Event of the Year from the Country Music Association, Single of the Year from the Academy of Country Music and the Grammy for Best Country Song. He landed two songs on Reba McEntire’s D’uts album, one by McEntire and Faith Hill III and another with McEntire and Carole King.

Creative kudos

Kurt Dyrhaug, associate professor of art, has been awarded the Franciscana Sculpture Park residency fellowship, leading to the creation of a major work at the park. Dyrhaug will design and build a large-scale, outdoor sculpture this June at Franciscana Sculpture Park in Franciscana, M inn.

Founded in 1996, the park works to nurture artistic growth, creativity and interaction between emerging, mid-career and established sculptors in an outdoor, rural setting. Dyrhaug is one of nine fellowship recipients — and the only one from Texas — another honor came Dyrhaug’s way when his sculpture, Tonka Wing, evoked a first-place purchase award in the 42nd annual National Drawing and Small Sculpture Show at Del Mar College in Corpus Christi.

A Lamar faculty member since 1999, he won the D’ishman Art Museum’s interna-
tional D’ishman Competition in 2005.

At the D’ishman Art Museum: Frolic

H umor and Mischief in New Taiwanese Art featured works in all media by 27 emerging Taiwanese artists. The D’ishman Museum was the first stop on a national tour of the exhibition, curated by Thalia Vrachopoulos, based in New York, and Jane Ingram Allen, based in Taiwan. The curators say contemporary Taiwanese art has a sense of fun and mischief, distinguishing it from other Asian art, which is more serious in tenor and themes. Vrachopoulos presented a lecture before an opening reception and question-and-answer session Feb. 15. The museum introduced the first in a new series of exhibitions Jan. 18, exhibiting Department of Art faculty and select other works from the permanent collection and private collections. This first show, Selected by Faculty Xenia Fedorchenko, Her Work, He & She: Student and Her C-direction, features Xenia Fedorchenko, associate professor of art, who specializes in drawing and printmaking. Fedorchenko chose pieces from the permanent collection to “dialogue” with her pieces, juxtaposing images so the viewer could make interpretations and comparisons. Fedorchenko’s personal collection was displayed on the second floor of D’ishman Art Museum. The Senior Thesis Exhibition, Nov. 30-Dec. 13, featured works by 12 students earning bachelor of fine arts degrees. The graduates are Cody Bess, Lacey Carpenter, Nate Goodman and David Grant of Beaumont; Larry Griggs, Cedar Lake; Deborah Feister and Karen Sweet, Port Arthur; Destiny Romero, Port Neches; Amy Graves and Conner Kissinger, Silsbee; and Patrick Owens and Brittany Ragsdale, Vidor. At the opening reception, each student presented his or her thesis, which consists of the visual work, and summarized the written sections of the thesis. The Lamar Dance Company presented its spring dance concert April 4 and 5, featuring new and original dance works from faculty choreographers Lou Arrington, Michelle

Ozmun and Golden Wright. Arrington created dances in ballet, jazz and tap. Her Spanish-style classical ballet work featured soloist Kristen Stil of Beaumont. Wright created a modern dance based on restricted and bound movement, as influenced by costumes designed by Kelly Draper, associate professor of theatre. Spain will be the destination in September for the annual European tour hosted by KVLU, member-supported public radio at Lamar University. The trip departs Sept. 18, including stops in Madrid, Bilbao and Barcelona, plus other cities in Northern Spain. The tour, a Smithsonian Journeys Travel Adventure, will focus on historic sites, art and architecture, said Melanie Dishman, KVLU station manager for advancement.

About 20 adventurers had made reservations by the April deadline, Dishman said. Last fall, KVLU sponsored a trip to Greece . . . A film co-written by Lamar alumni Williometta Pittman T72, ’79 premiered Feb. 6 at Lamar. The Satzer Student Center and Lamar Allevet hosted a reception and showing of There’s One in Every Family. Pittman is a Jasper native who grew up in Beaumont and graduated from French High School. She earned her bachelor’s degree with a double major in speech and drama and her master’s in speech/public address. Pittman directed her first play as a student at Lamar, where she earned major acting and technical awards for participation in Lamar Theatre productions. She met her co-writer, Barbara Hudson, at the University of Houston-Downtown. There is

One in Every Family is their second play. Pittman teaches theater to at-risk students in the Allief school district and is an adjunct theater lecturer at the University of Houston Downtown . . . The College of Fine Arts and Communication hosted Israeli film maker Niki Tal at 6 p.m. when she screened her 2007 release The Girl from Brazil and led a discussion. Tal is a veteran journalist, documentary film maker and producer. Her most recent film captures the stories of four Israeli women in the search for their birth parents in Brazil. Since 1967, she has produced more than 20 films, earning an Israeli Academy Award nomination and other honors . . . Mark your calendar for June 10 when LU-Baby of Broadway crosses the boards for the 16th year. The community talent-fest, directed by Adonia Piccette, benefits Lamar theater scholarships. Festivities begin with a 6:30 p.m. reception in the Studio Theatre, preceding the performance in the University Theatre. Call (409) 880-8037 or 880-2250 for reservations.
Lamar scholars bring Texas history into 20th century

John Storey ’61 and Mary Kelley have provided scholars and history lovers alike with a new take on Texas history – one that focuses on the state’s transformation during the 20th century.

The result is Twentieth-Century Texas: A Social and Cultural History, published by The University of North Texas Press.

While standard histories of Texas traditionally focus on political, military and economic topics, with emphasis on the 19th century, Storey and Kelley have compiled and edited 15 essays covering a diversity of topics, from ethnic groups, women, music, literature, film and art to philanthropy, education, the environment and science and technology.

“I spend a lot of time in my class covering the founding period of Texas but came to the realization that 20th-century history is rather sparse,” said Kelley, an associate professor of history. “We’re very different than we were in the 19th century because so much demographic change has occurred. I developed the concept of focusing on society and culture because traditional history is political, economic and military.”

She approached Storey, regents’ professor and history department chair, and he urged her to proceed. “I told Dr. Storey the only way I would do it is if he would serve as co-editor – so this was a collaboration. We were able to find 15 experts on various social and cultural topics. They wrote the essays, and our job was to edit them and produce an anthology focusing on the important social and cultural topics of the 20th century.”

Storey is pleased that a diverse array of historians and scholars is represented – from across and outside Texas. From Lamar, essayists include Kelley, Storey and Ralph Wood, distinguished professor emeritus of history. Their essays are “Private Wealth, Public Good: Texans and Philanthropy” (Kelley), “Pagodas amid the Steeples: The Changing Religious Landscape” (Storey) and “Over Here: War on the Homefront” (Wood).

“The Schmieders have achieved global success, but they have never forgotten Beaumont’s kindness, and they have always held a special place in their hearts for this Southeast Texas community,” said Ellen Rieser, a friend and fellow violinist.

A larger-than-life fantasy of crowns and castles provides the backdrop for the Night & Day Orchestra.

Wild about Harry

Trumpets ruled when the Lamar Jazz Band presented a Tribute to Harry James March 4 in the Julie Rogers Theatre. Nostalgia reigned among Lamar alumni patrons and trumpet virtuosos who grew up in Beaumont. Kerry Coleman of Beaumont, soloed on a medley, Wild About Harry, drawing applause when announcer Byron Balentine introduced Coleman is a veteran of three tours of duty in Iraq. Cameron Wolfe of Houston added touch to James Sleepy Lagoon, while Amber M. Antil of Dayton soloed on Cherry. Matt Byers of Lumberton and Kirtby Tanner of Nederland complete the band’s trumpet section.

TMEA hosts band

The Lamar Band performed Feb. 15 at the Texas Music Educators’ Association annual clinic and convention in San Antonio. The prestigious engagement came at the invitation of TMEA, the largest music educators’ organization in the world.

The 50-member ensemble, under the direction of Bradley Kent, performed George Gershwin’s classic Rhapsody in Blue, featuring Nick Rissman, associate professor of music, on piano. Raise the Raft, by American composer M. Isaac Daugherty, featured faculty member Gary Parks on timpani. Other faculty artists performing with the band students included Raul Ornelas, bass; Betsy Hines, piano; and Gary Mizener, clarinet. Barry Johnson, vice president for student affairs and former director of bands, guest-conducted.

TMEA is the largest gathering of music educators and professionals in the world, with more than 20,000 attendees.

A homecoming

Internationally renowned musician and pedagogue Eduard Schmieder, a former Lamar faculty member, returned to Beaumont after an absence of 25 years to perform in concert April 7 at Temple Emanuel.

Schmieder, now Carmell Distinguished Professor of Violin at Temple University, returned “home” to honor his friends and colleagues.

Schmieder came to Beaumont with his wife, Laura, and 4-year-old daughter in 1980, just a few months after the family emigrated from the Soviet Union to Chicago. They brought $90, a few clothes and pieces of furniture and an ordinary violin and piano, having been forced to leave their fine instruments behind.

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Alexander in retrospect


While the Houston museum organized the exhibit, which originally opened last year at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C., and was expanded for the Houston show, the exhibition, which continues through June 22, is the first full-scale exhibition of the artist’s three-decade career. Featuring 61 oil paintings and 36 works on paper from the late 1970s through 2007, the installation represents the full range of Alexander’s prolific artistic activity.

John Alexander ’68 with art museum board member Judy Black, left, and Lynne Castle, executive director.