Join in a Standing Ovation as we honor Jimmy and Susan Simmons
March 2, 2013
Details page 45

Be part of the momentum that is propelling Lamar University forward!

We are experiencing growth like never before. With record-breaking enrollment and new and innovative programs, the possibilities are infinite!

Lamar’s excellence is attracting the highest caliber students, like the ones featured here. They are drawn to the innovation that is a hallmark of Lamar.

The generosity of alumni and friends like you helps Lamar keep this momentum going. Make a difference by giving to the annual fund.

Your support of the annual fund helps make our innovative programs and quality education available to Lamar University students.

Together, we can give our students a future filled with infinite possibilities.

Please send your gift today, or to make an immediate impact, make your gift online at www.LUAnnualFund.com.

"I give a lot of credit to my mentors here at Lamar for their support and input. They guide us and make us into who we are."

— Humberto Hernandez, LU senior Biology major

"The classes are small enough that you can have personal relationships with your professors. Getting to know the professors personally helped me to figure out who I am as a person and what I want to do with my life."

— Christine Zabala, LU senior English & History major

"As a student-athlete, I’ve had to become more disciplined in my studies, and throughout my courses at Lamar, my professors have really pushed me academically. My experience at Lamar has prepared me to succeed in graduate school and other future academic pursuits."

— Joshua Raglon, recent LU grad, Psychology major

"Texas Roots. InfinitePossibilities."

Layfield—TSUS Foundation honor benefits engineering

An excellent run: Alumni salute Simmons era
As we round the corner to 2013 and Lamar University’s 90th year, we can look back on 2012 as another great time in our history. We have seen growth on many levels, from record enrollments to a major milestone in the comprehensive campaign, to name but two. Lamar posted record enrollment again this fall, despite raising our entrance requirements. Lamar’s 20th class day headcount was 14,675, up 2 percent over fall 2011. And, by the time this semester ends, even more students will have started and completed online courses bringing the total number of students enrolled at LU during the fall to around 15,000.

Earlier this fall, Lamar’s Investing in the Future comprehensive campaign topped more than $100 million raised thanks to the incredible support of so many alumni and friends, and it continues to grow. We are so thankful to everyone who is making the future of Lamar University better for all.

A few weeks ago I announced that I would be stepping down from the presidency effective at the end of this academic year. That will take place sometime before the fall semester. I will gladly do so, for there are many exciting things on the horizon. Lamar University is stronger than ever, and even though challenges remain, there is incredible momentum and enthusiasm across the campus.

After taking a leave of absence, I look forward to returning to the faculty of the Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music to pursue my first loves—teaching and music.

In the meantime, the Chancellor has assembled an exceptional team and the search process is underway for Lamar’s 11th president. I am confident they will find the right person for the job and that Lamar University’s greatest days lay ahead.

With Cardinal Pride,

James M. Simmons
President
Lamar University

T H E  T E X A S  S T A T E  U N I V E R S I T Y  S Y S T E M

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The Stuff

President
Lamar University
DeWayne Layfield, TSUS Foundation honored with $2 million LU scholarship

Students in the College of Engineering will benefit from scholarships thanks to the combined generosity of The Beaumont Foundation of America and The Texas State University System Foundation.

The two joined in creating the L. DeWayne Layfield–Texas State University System Foundation Scholarship by contributing $1 million each. The $2 million endowment will provide scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students majoring in engineering. Layfield ’87 is a Beaumont attorney and Lamar graduate.

“We are grateful to the Beaumont Foundation and the TSUS Foundation for their support in establishing the DeWayne Layfield–TSUS Foundation Scholarship,” said President James Simmons when the scholarship was announced. “It’s wonderful that these two foundations have joined in supporting Lamar University.”

This is, without question, the largest gift the TSUS Foundation has ever given by far and an extraordinary gift for the university,” said regent and TSUS Foundation trustee Kevin Lilly.

“Mr. Layfield has distinguished himself in the practice of law, and we are proud to count him among the outstanding alumni of Lamar University,” Simmons said. “It is fitting that his name will forever be associated with opportunity for countless students as they too realize their own personal dreams through higher education.”

“The dream or hope of exaltation comes from the occasional graduate who becomes a state or national leader. DeWayne Layfield is the dream of exaltation made real at Lamar University as a state and nationally recognized legal professional in the area of complex litigation,” said Beaumont Foundation President Frank Newton.

“Scholarships like the one we announced today are vital,” said Jack Hopper, dean of the College of Engineering. “Thanks to the Layfield-TSUS Foundation Scholarship, countless young men and women will excel in engineering at Lamar University, graduate and become the leaders, innovators and entrepreneurs of tomorrow.”

Larry DeWayne Layfield graduated summa cum laude from Lamar with a degree in chemical engineering. The top male graduate in his class, he enrolled in the University of Texas School of Law, where he was elected to Chancellors, the most prestigious honor society, as well as the Order of the Coif, and served as editor in chief of The Texas Law Review.

Layfield financed his law school education through a combination of summer work and a stipend paid for his service to The Texas Law Review.

After earning his law degree, he immediately began his clerkship with the Honorable Thomas Gibbs Gee, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. He later began work on complex environmental and multi-plaintiff chemical exposure litigation for Vinson & Elkins in its Houston office. In 1994, he became senior litigation counsel to Bridgeston/Westone Inc., a position he held until he began a private practice in 1997.

“Throughout my 40-plus years at Lamar, we have had a large number of exceptionally talented engineering students,” Hopper said, “however, without a doubt, DeWayne Layfield is one of the most scholarly and talented individuals to ever graduate from Lamar. It is very appropriate to have a scholarship endowed in his honor.”

An expert in the areas of civil litigation and class action/mass torts, Layfield was instrumental in the historic class action settlement against Toshiba Corp. and Hewlett-Packard Corp. In creating the perpetual scholarship in his name, Beaumont Foundation directors Wayne Reaud and Buddy Low sought to recognize Layfield’s outstanding contribution to the successful resolution of the landmark case.

In 2004, Layfield was named to the “Texas Super Lawyers” list representing the top five percent of attorneys in the state. He has recovered or assisted in the recovery of more than $1 billion in cash and more than $2 billion in cash and non-cash benefits for his clients.

Layfield’s connections to Lamar go beyond his own to include the fact that his wife, Carol, also graduated with honors from Lamar, and that Carol’s son, Jason Cox, is pursuing a degree in electrical engineering. Their daughter, Savannah, began attending the Texas Academy of Leadership in Humanties this fall.

“I’m very honored to have this scholarship named after me, and I am extremely grateful to the Beaumont Foundation of America and the TSUS Foundation for making funds available to create this scholarship,” Layfield said. “It will touch the lives of hundreds, perhaps thousands of students over the course of its future.

“Lamar was the only university I considered going to because I knew I would have to work while going to school,” Layfield said. “I was extremely happy with the education I received here.

“Twenty-five years ago, by coincidence, I had the opportunity to stand in this room because I got the Plummer award,” Layfield said. “I said then, in general, that I was so happy for the opportunity I had been given by the teachers and administrators at Lamar. It’s a wonderful campus, a wonderful experience. The students at Lamar receive skills from the teachers, staff and administration that stand them in good stead to compete with anyone.

“I hope that the students of Lamar and the community will realize that Lamar does an excellent job,” Layfield said. “There is literally nothing you can’t do with an education from Lamar University.”

The Texas State University Foundation was organized in 1977 as a Texas non-profit corporation for charitable and educational purposes. It has focused largely on supporting special services and programs of the component institutions of the TSUS system and for the faculty, staff and students of those institutions. As the oldest multi-campus system in Texas, TSUS plays a critical role in the educational and economic development of the state. The Beaumont Foundation was organized in 2000 as a Texas non-profit corporation for charitable purposes. The Beaumont Foundation has focused its charitable and social activities on gifts and grants that foster the development of knowledge, advance human welfare, nurture individual creativity, strengthen institutions and contribute to the well-being of the less fortunate in society.

The Beaumont Foundation of America, organized in 1977 as a Texas non-profit corporation, is dedicated to supporting special services and programs that benefit from the combined generosity of the Beaumont Foundation of America and The Texas State University System Foundation.
The financial future of Lamar. This scholarship will be open to all majors. University Investing in the Future Campaign cabinet to honor the current vice Dr. Grace (Davis) England ’55 and husband, Bill England, established the University Press will be available to voice or vocal performance majors. Family, friends, students and colleagues established the publications for nearly four decades, inspiring thousands of student journalists at her nursing career. This is the second scholarship established at Lamar University. During her 22-year tenure, she taught studio voice, language diction, structure and function of the voice, and graduate vocal methods. The scholarship will be awarded to the editor of the University Press each year.

The Dr. Barbara Mathis Vocal Scholarship was established with donations from students, colleagues and family in honor of Mathis, former professor of music at Lamar. During her 22-year tenure, she taught studio voice, language diction, structure and function of the voice, and graduate vocal methods. The scholarship will be awarded to vocal performance majors.

Dr. Grace (Davis) England ’55 and husband, Bill England, established the Anna England Crow Memorial Scholarship in Nursing in honor of his sister. Anna England Crow graduated from the Hotel Dieu School of Nursing in Beaumont and later attended Lamar. She served at several medical facilities in Beaumont during her nursing career. This is the second scholarship established at Lamar University through the England’s generosity.

The Camille Mouton Scholarship was established by the members of the Lamar University Investing in the Future Campaign cabinet to honor the current vice president for university advancement for her tireless and selfless commitment to the success of Lamar’s first comprehensive campaign. Mouton has worked at Lamar University for fifteen years as a dedicated development officer ensuring the financial future of LU. This scholarship will be open to all majors.

A passion for music and the visual arts will result in a permanent legacy for Southeast Texas art patrons Mary Jane Garth—a gift that will enrich the lives and cultivate the talents of students at Lamar University. The Mary Jane Garth Regents’ Scholarship has been established in the Lamar University Foundation to benefit undergraduates majoring in music or art at Lamar University.

“Mary Jane Garth is a true patron of the arts. We are so fortunate that she has returned to our community,” said Russ Schulte, dean of Lamar’s College of Fine Arts and Communication. “One of her most wonderful traits is her desire to share with people the excitement of art by showing her extraordinary collection of paintings that adorn her home. She remains actively involved as a trustee for the Symphony of Southeast Texas, as well as the Art Museum of Southeast Texas. In all these roles, she has elevated the level of culture and quality of life in our community.”

Mouton said one of the things she most admires about Garth is that she became very involved in the community in a short period of time after returning to Beaumont. “A vibrant cultural environment provides a better quality of life to the community and provides the opportunity to attract new businesses and residents,” Garth said. “Art enriches the lives of people in all communities.”

During her time in Aspen, Garth was actively involved in many business and charitable activities. She became an integral part of the Aspen art community, where she met and actively dealt with up-and-coming young artists and their work. This became the starting point of my love for art,” Garth said.

“My passion for contemporary art began as a collector and evolved into a business as I bought, sold and traded art work. I continue to sell some of my collection by more established artists and to invest in young artists,” Garth said.

Now, the Mary Jane Garth Regents’ Scholarship will turn her passion into a legacy—LIV
An excellent run
Simmons announces end of an era

by Brian Satter

News that President Simmons plans to resign the presidency spread quickly just as rapidly returned heartfelt comments from alums and friends who described LU’s longtime leader as a positive influence, the best cheerleader, a humble man showing great depth of character, and an outstanding leader. The collective assessment of the tenure of his tenure: we needed so much of what he has been able to provide. He leaves Lamar well positioned for the future and prosperous. His are big shoes to fill.

Indeed. For 13 years—an exceptional period for a university president—Dr. James M. Simmons has led Lamar in an era of dynamic growth. His impressive tenure will reach 14 years, as he will continue to serve as Lamar’s 10th president until a successor is chosen and can assume the top post in 2013. After spending some well-deserved time with family, Simmons plans to return to the faculty of the Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music.

Accepting the presidency was not an easy decision, Simmons has said, for few knew better the challenges the university faced when he took office as president on Sept. 1, 1999. His Lamar career had already spanned nearly three decades, so few knew better the heart and soul of the university and the promise that could be realized by tapping into its greatest strength, its people.

At his investiture, Simmons chose a theme—Building Strength through Community—and through that strength drawn from the campus, community, alumni and friends of Lamar he has accomplished far more than anyone could have imagined.

He previously served as dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communication and as executive director of university advancement. He began his Lamar career in 1970 as an instructor and director of the marching band. He quickly rose through the ranks, serving as director of bands and as chair of the music department.

A great uniter and friend to all
Simmons took the university from a time of seemingly insurmountable struggles to create a culture of excellence that permeates faculty, staff and students.

He brought the campus together. When agendas were at odds, he helped find common ground and created a shared vision that always featured an unwavering focus on doing what was best for the student.

It is clear to see how his musicianship and teaching experience in classrooms, on stage, in the band hall and on the marching field helped shape him. His leadership was robust, but adaptive. His vision focused, but flexible. Decisive, but always inclusive.

Simmons has led Lamar through a period of incredible growth—from 7,810 students in the spring he was selected to become president to 14,675 students this fall, setting numeorous records along the way. Even in the wake of two major storms—Hurricanes Ike in 2008 and Rita in 2005—Simmons and his team kept classes and graduation on schedule, restoring the campus after substantial damage as well as adding state-of-the-art facilities.

Simmons implemented a master plan to enhance the campus through landscaping and buildings, most notably the five Cardinal Village residence halls, which today accommodate more than 2,500 students. The dining hall, which opened in spring of 2006, and the Sheila Umphrey Recreational Sports Centre, dedicated in spring of 2007, further contributed to campus life. Renovations and expansions of several major academic buildings have been completed, and are under way or in planning. Lamar has also enhanced its athletic facilities, with the crown jewels including Provost Umphrey Stadium and the Daughan Athletic Complex. Vincent-Beck Stadium and McDonald Gym have seen major upgrades, and the LU Soccer Complex opened in 2009.

Simmons knows the importance of private philanthropy. In spring 2008, the university began the public phase of its comprehensive campaign, “Investing in the Future,” with $46 million raised in an effort that has now surpassed $100 million. Impact of the campaign is far reaching—to include endowments for four named academic departments, gifts to support revival of the Cardinals’ football tradition, establishment of a major student fellowship program and tremendous growth in scholarship and faculty enhancement funds.

Under Simmons leadership the university has made significant strides in academics, with the addition of new master’s and doctorate programs for named academic departments, gifts to support revival of the Cardinals’ football tradition, establishment of a major student fellowship program and tremendous growth in scholarship and faculty enhancement funds.

Under Simmons leadership the university’s arts have made significant strides in academics, with the addition of new master’s and doctorate programs for named academic departments, gifts to support revival of the Cardinals’ football tradition, establishment of a major student fellowship program and tremendous growth in scholarship and faculty enhancement funds.

Recognizing that online programs are vital to the university’s future, Simmons has continually sought growth in that area. Today, more than 30 percent of LU’s credit hours are generated through online courses; nearly 4,200 of the university’s students learn entirely online, and LU is a recognized leader in online education. The university has continued its online leadership with the first entirely online doctoral program in Texas.

By working closely with area chambers of commerce, local government, business and industry leaders, Simmons helped make Lamar a much stronger catalyst for economic growth in the region.

Simmons is also a leader in community service, having garnered dozens of awards and accolades. He has attracted acclaim as an orchestra leader and as a performer on clarinet, saxophone and piano. Because of his leadership role, those pursuits have taken a back seat, but he often says music is his first love, and he continues to grace the stage.

Simmons is known as an administrator with a strong sense of direction and a keen ability to attract and cultivate talented faculty. His innovative approaches to the pursuit of academic excellence and his winning rapport with students, faculty and staff and the community are defining qualities.

Simmons was the right man for the job when Lamar needed a champion in 1999. He has guided Lamar through one of the brightest periods in its history and has positioned the university for even greater days as it enters its 90th year.

“Jimmy Simmons leaves a university that is much stronger, more resilient and more capable than it was before he became its president.”

—TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM CHANCELLOR BRIAN MCCALL

HONORS ACCORDED PRESIDENT JAMES M. SIMMONS

Phi Beta Mu Texas Branchdeter Halle of Fame, 2012
Honored, with Susan, at 24th annual Chief’s Delight, sponsored by Sabine Area Restaurant Association, Dallas Trinity Club Association and Lamar Family and Consumer Sciences, 2012


Phi Alpha Sinphora Signumet Sinfoniet, 2010

Honored by Christus Health Foundation as “Beaumont’s own king of farms” at 60th anniversary gala, 2010

Beaumont Jazz & Blues Festival, Inaugural Dr. Paul Orosko Lifetime Music Achievement Award, 2005

Chief Executive Leadership Award from District 4 of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), which includes Texas, New Mexico, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Mexico, 2009

Honored, with Susan, by the Beaumont Chapter of the American Heart Association with the D. E. Crager Award, bestowed on individuals whose endeavors exemplify making Beaumont a better place to live, Feb. 2007

Honored by the Masonic Grand Lodge of Texas with the Mildred B. Lamar Award, 2003

Honored by the Epilepsy Foundation at annual fund-raiser, 2003

Selected Mr. East Texas by the Tyler County Dogwood Festival, Woodville, 2002

Houston River Festival’s King Nichols XXII, 2001, and Mr. Teen of the Year, 2000

Honored by American Red Cross at annual “Hurricane” fundraiser, 2000

Honored by The Art Studio Inc., 2000

Executive of the Year, Sales Marketing and Executives Clubs of Southeast Texas, 2000

Establishment of the annual Jimmy Simmons Artist Scholarship by Young Audiences, 1983

Inducted into Phi Beta Mu, National Honorary Music Educators Fraternity, 1988

Rotary International Paul Harris Fellow, 1997

Outstanding Achievement by an Artist, Southeast Texas Arts Council, 1998

Crematorium Outside the Classroom, Lamar Student Organizations Office, 1980

Outstanding Young Man of the Year, Beaumont Jaycees, 1978

Blue Key Honor Society, elected by student acclimation to honorary society, 1978

Lamar University Regents’ Most Award for Distinguished Teaching, 1974
It’s who I am

Call Susan Simmons the first lady of Lamar University. Call her a fearless, tireless leader in campus transformation. Call her for change – tangible and intangible – that has shaped Lamar for more than 42 years.

Boldly, she championed a worldview look for the Marbeaum’s eatery in the Setzer Student Center by taking out the ceiling. Louisiana-style architecture at Cardinal Village. Pores on the dining hall so it looked and felt like home. Just the right red in the D auphin Athletic Complex. And the exact shade of green on the eye of the Cardinal in the Sheila Umphrey Recreational Sports Center.

Susan (Williams) Simmons ’68, has played a leading role in campus landscaping and building design. “That came from the real estate business,” she said. “You’ve got to have curb appeal, or you’re not going to entice anybody to come inside.”

When Jimmy Simmons announced he would step down as president in 2013, he thanked his family – especially Susan. “They say that behind every man stands a woman,” he said. “Well, Susan doesn’t stand behind me. She stands right beside me. You will never know how much impact she has had on my presidency and what she has done for this university.”

Assessing her husband’s accomplishments is relationship with one another. “There are so many. He’s totally rebuilt this university from the ground up. I mean, we didn’t have suitable dorms. We didn’t have a dining hall, except for an old, underused cafeteria. We didn’t have a rec sports center at all. We didn’t have an athletic complex. There’s no way to name it.”

In terms of intangibles, Susan points to Simmons’ leadership ability: “It looks like a giant funeral home.” So we went to battle over the porches, and I finally won. I have a thing for porches. I love porches because they invite people in.”

With sleek, clean lines, the use of metallic finishes and surfaces and a light, airy feel, the dining hall is a campus attraction. One source of pride is the original art gracing its walls. “We have a budget for art, and I told the decorator, ‘Instead of spending money in Dallas or Austin, why don’t you come to the art auction at L e Grand Ball and buy student and faculty art? ’” More student and faculty art adorns Cardinal Village.

For ‘The Sheilas,’ we came up with a design based on what was there in the beginning – the steel work and all … I told the designer I wanted Carlodias everywhere, a lot of red, and one day a woman in there and saw she had some of the doctoral logo in the tile on the floor. It was wonderful.”

Susan’s current project is restoring the garden between the Music Building and Science Auditorium “so it will be a pretty, pretty place for our students to sit and read and study.”

Jimmy Simmons has said many times he considers the students his greatest legacy, and Susan naturally shares his view. “That’s when your investment is,” she said. “If you’re going to invest in something, you’re trying to graduate students who come out of here and contribute to society. That’s the most valuable thing that comes from a university.”

Animated and expressive when recalling the excitement of each of her many projects and life at Lamar in general, she becomes silent, pensive and almost tearful when asked what her many years at Lamar, including those as first lady, have meant to her.

“It means a lot. It means getting emotional,” Susan said. “It’s been 42 years – my entire married life. It’s what our kids are, what our relationship with one another is. “It’s part of your being. All the history.”

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James Simmons: A uniquely LU tenure

1964 Graduates Memphis State University

**What a wonderful legacy by a GREAT president. He has made me even more proud to be a Lamar alumna.**
- Patricia (Clyde) Dukett ’89

1968 Marries Susan Williams

**I am proud to be a LU grad under Dr. Simmons. He will be missed but not forgotten. We should make a statue of him.**
- Matt Prie ’72

1970-1978

**Director of marching band—The Grandest Band in the Land—and instructor/assistant professor of music Lamar University

1979 doctorate in education McNeese State University

1978-1983

**Assistant professor of music
• Owner and manager, Coda Inc. and D.G. Inc.

1983-1985

**Director of bands and assistant/associate professor of music, LU

1985-1992

• Chair, Department of Music and Theatre, LU
• Associate professor/professor of music

**Dr. Simmons will forever be in my LU memories. Sweet man, fantastic leader.**
- James Ramirez Mulvahill ’89

1992-1999

Dean, College of Fine Arts and Communication, professor of music

**He loved Lamar, but Jimmy is the reason I was there in the first place. He was and is one of the most important people in my life.**
- Miles Kropper ’76

Sept. 1, 1999

**James M. Simmons begins tenure as 10th president**
• Enrollment: 7,810

2000

**It would be very difficult for anybody in a few words to say what Jimmy’s meant to Lamar. We call him a turnaround specialist. He’s really done a super job at Lamar, and he’s laid the groundwork for continued growth.**
- Regent Bill Scott ’70

1996 Interim executive director of Institutional Advancement

**Jimmy Simmons had a tremendous effect on my career. He was a great jazz band teacher in college and a mentor and friend to me since.**
- Gary Wildson ’74

2001

• Spindletop Gladys City Boomtown Centennial Celebration
• Cardinal Village Gentry Hall built
• TMEA landmark concert

2002

• Cardinal Village Morris Hall built
• Archer Physics building renovated

1990 Founded Lamarissimo! Concert Series

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Sept. 1, 1999

**James M. Simmons begins tenure as 10th president**
• Enrollment: 7,810

2000

**It would be very difficult for anybody in a few words to say what Jimmy’s meant to Lamar. We call him a turnaround specialist. He’s really done a super job at Lamar, and he’s laid the groundwork for continued growth.**
- Regent Bill Scott ’70

1996 Interim executive director of Institutional Advancement

**Jimmy Simmons had a tremendous effect on my career. He was a great jazz band teacher in college and a mentor and friend to me since.**
- Gary Wildson ’74

2001

• Spindletop Gladys City Boomtown Centennial Celebration
• Cardinal Village Gentry Hall built
• TMEA landmark concert

2002

• Cardinal Village Morris Hall built
• Archer Physics building renovated

1990 Founded Lamarissimo! Concert Series

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James Simmons: A uniquely LU tenure

2003
- Office of Alumni Affairs est.
- Doctorate in Audiology est.
- Chemistry building renovated
- Social and Behavioral Sciences renovated

2004
- Doctorate in Educational Leadership est.
- Cardinal Village Combs Hall built

2005
- Ph.D. Chemical Engineering est.
- Dining Hall built
- Hurricane Rita recovery
- Geology building renovated
- Online education—multiple full degree programs in education—online enrollment reaches 4,100

2006
- B.A. American Sign Language est.
- Sheila Umphrey Recreational Sports Center opens
- Jimmy Simmons & Friends concert
- First named department: JoAnne Gay Dishman Department of Nursing
- Southeast Texas Legends Scholarship Program est.
- Office of Research and Sponsored Programs Administration opens

2007
- David J. Beck Fellowship est.
- Phillip M. Drayer Department of Electrical Engineering named
- Cardinal Village Campbell Hall built

2008
- Tower Construction Management program est.
- $46 million raised
- Investing in the Future Campaign public phase begins
- $100 million goal announced
- Jimmy Simmons & Friends Encore
- Hurricane Ike recovery

2009
- Provost Umphrey Stadium named
- Dan E. and Sandra A. Smith Press Box named
- Dan E. Smith Department of Chemical Engineering named
- W.S. “But” Leonard Field named
- Rollie Christopher Drive upgraded
- Thompson Family Tennis Center named
- Soccer and Softball Complex built
- Vernon Glass Field of Champions named
- LU named one of “Great Colleges to Work For” by Chronicle of Higher Education

2010
- Football, marching band, cheerleading returns to LU
- Basketball: Lady Cardinals advance to NCAA Tournament
- Morgan Luxury Suites built
- EducationFirst Federal Credit Union Scoreboard built
- Steinhaugen Global Fellows program est.
- Cardinal Village Monroe Hall built
- LU SACS accreditation reaffirmed

2011
- $100 million topped
- Goal raised to $125 million
- Dauphin Athletic Complex built
- Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music est.
- LU becomes Carnegie Doctoral Research University, one of only 29 public schools in the nation with that designation
- Fecel Financial Center est.
- Charles & Eleanor Garrett Engineering Center est.
- Dyer Geosciences Innovation fund est.
- Music Building renovated

2012
- L. Dewayne Layfield-TSUS Scholarship program est.
- Success initiatives launched
- First online doctorate: Ed.D.
- President James Simmons announces pending resignation
- Enrollment: 14,675

2013
- 50th anniversary
- New era begins

“Dr. Simmons is a wonderful president. He came at a very difficult moment. He contributed enormously—unbelievably.” —Valentin Andreev, associate professor of mathematics and former president of Faculty Senate

“I am so proud of Lamar and the growth and prosperity it’s seen under Dr. Simmons. He’s definitely a strong leader and the University’s best cheerleader.” —Judy Flannery ’72, ’82

“Dr. Simmons is a educational leader in the state of Texas and nationally. He leaves a tremendous legacy and a university that is poised for even greater things.” —Reyent Huaman Salazar

“Very much appreciate Jimmy Simmons as a friend and educator. He was vital to my formative years and continues to be an inspiration.” —James Marshall ’83

“Jimmy has more talent in his little toe than the rest of us have in our entire body.” —Jana Harris ’60
When they started the firm, Alan envisioned growing into a small company with about six employees. After about six months, they hired their first part-time help. A year later, they moved out of their home into leased office space, where they expanded to a staff of six. The firm now employs more than 90 people. Many times over the years, Peggy has reminded him that he far exceeded his initial goal.

“We have a mixture of both engineers and scientists. Being in the environmental field, I feel like it’s extremely important to have both the scientific skills as well as the technical skills to meet our clients’ needs,” Plummer said. Along with experts in chemical testing, the scientific staff at Alan Plummer Associates includes biologists with expertise in aquatic plants. One of the areas in which the firm has become a leader is designing and constructing natural systems or constructed wetlands for wastewater treatment and water reuse. “That’s proven to be an extremely beneficial approach. The natural polishing that goes on in the wetlands is beneficial for cleaning the water. At the same time, the wetlands provide wildlife habitat so that the wetlands have served multiple purposes. These wetlands are frequently used by hunters and birdwatchers.”

Plummer was an early advocate of using such innovative methods as part of developing a sustainable water supply in Texas. About 30 years ago, his firm developed and designed a water reuse project working with the Trinity River Authority and the Dallas County Utility and Reclamation District to provide water for golf courses, landscaping and water features at Los Colinas, a large development in Irving. Since then, he has worked with numerous other clients and water planners throughout Texas on developing plans for water reuse and conservation. Technology from 20 to 30 years ago produced reclaimed water suitable for non-potable uses such as irrigation and industrial needs. Now, professionals are studying how to expand water reuse technologies to cautiously supplement strained drinking water resources, something Plummer sees as the next step. “The treatment technologies have greatly increased over the last 30 years. Also the level of recognition of the value of water has increased. People just took it for granted that it was going to be there, particularly in the East Texas region with heavy rainfall. Plummer’s leadership in his field has drawn the recognition of his peers. He was an original member of the North Texas Section of the Water Environment Association of Texas and served as president and vice-president of the state organization. The group honored him with its Lifetime Achievement Award in 2004 and in 2011 established the Alan H. Plummer Environmental Sustainability Award, naming him the first recipient. Plummer is also a longtime leader of the Texas Water Conservation Association, having served as president, a board member and on multiple committees. The association dedicated its 2004 convention to him in recognition of his contributions. He is a past president of the WaterReuseAssociation Texas and winner of its award of merit. Plummer shares his knowledge with his alma mater as a member of Lamar’s College of Engineering Advisory Council and previously served on the civil engineering advisory boards for both Lamar and for the University of Texas at Arlington. Now 71 years old, Plummer has stepped back from his managerial work. He currently serves as chairman emeritus of the board of directors of the employee-owned company he founded. Another Lamar engineering alumnus, Alan Tacker ’83, serves as president. “I’m focusing my attention on getting involved in some of the technical aspects of projects and also helping with business development and just being available to some of our clients,” Plummer said. “I’m enjoying being away from some of the administrative aspects of the business.” He’s also enjoying having more time for his family. The Plummer’s daughters, Jamie and Dani, and their families live nearby, allowing the couple to spend time with their grandson and three granddaughters. Alan has been an avid runner for about 30 years, logging three miles a day at 5 a.m. Monday through Thursday and six to eight miles on Saturdays with his running group, the Dawn Patrol. His daughter Jamie and 15-year-old granddaughter Macenzi often join the group. “It’s pretty special to have three generations running together at 5 a.m. We’re really blessed to have them so close.” Plummer also has three half-marathons to his credit. The most recent one, to celebrate his 70th birthday last year, was a family affair with Jamie, three out-of-town relatives and Dunn Farm members joining him in the run. Alan and Peggy Plummer credit Lamar not only with providing them a good education, but also with helping them find each other. Additionally, he credits Lamar for providing a good foundational education to his two brothers, Edward Plummer ’67 and Ralph Plummer ’67, which has been critical to their successful careers in sales. Alan and Peggy met when she served as student secretary in the civil engineering department while he was a student. Soon before they started dating, a staff secretary in the department predicted that Peggy and Alan would marry. Back then, social time often meant studying together at her house after their classes and their part-time job at Mobil Chemical. “Both of us were focused on working and school ing,” he said. “I think we were encouraging each other to do what we needed to do to get through school.” That encouragement and partnership have continued for nearly 50 years, leading to success in both business and their personal lives. They moved to operate the company they founded together based on the principles of their Christian faith. The logo for Alan Plummer Associates shows “a tree firmly planted by streams of water,” a passage from Psalm 1, from which they took inspiration. That foundation—combined with planning, preparation and appropriate caution—seems to have served them well.

“We have a mixture of both engineers and scientists.”

—ALAN PLUMMER ’64

With the flow:
From living room to leader

By Beth Gallaspy

Alan Plummer, a 1978 Lamar alumnus and business owner, shares his story of starting Plummer Associates Inc. has grown into a leader in environmental engineering and water resource management. The company’s projects have included water and wastewater treatment plants throughout Texas and innovative constructed wetlands and wastewater reuse systems. But when Plummer first broached the subject of starting his own consulting engineering firm, his wife, Peggy (O’Pry) Plummer ’65, did not embrace the idea.

When he brought up the idea again, she agreed they could pray about it. “We did, and some doors opened up that really gave us the confidence that that’s what we should do,” Plummer said. Alan Plummer Associates Inc. opened for business in the living/dining room of their Arlington home. Alan’s engineering department occupied one side with Peggy’s secretarial and administrative department on the other, separated by bookcases.

An English major at Lamar who had experience as a teacher and secretary, Peggy served as the firm’s secretary, bookkeeper and editor for numerous reports. “She made some real contributions in the early years of the company,” Alan Plummer said. “One of the specific principles she emphasized, not being a risk taker, was she wanted us to be on a cash basis. She initiated that operating principle, and the firm has continued to benefit from that.” She initially agreed to help Alan get the company started for the first year or two. After eight years, she decided to leave the company and return her focus to their family. “I really got in trouble with her when she found out how much it was going to cost to replace her relative to what she’d been paid,” he said.

As the company grew and added staff, Peggy focused on w orking and school ing,” he said. “I think we were encouraging each other to do what we needed to do to get through school.” That encouragement and partnership have continued for nearly 50 years, leading to success in both business and their personal lives. They moved to operate the company they founded together based on the principles of their Christian faith. The logo for Alan Plummer Associates shows “a tree firmly planted by streams of water,” a passage from Psalm 1, from which they took inspiration. That foundation—combined with planning, preparation and appropriate caution—seems to have served them well.

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Bite-sized goals lead to global-sized firm

by Beth Gallasy

As co-founder and managing principal of MFR, one of the largest accounting and advisory firms in Houston, Roland Rodriguez’74 feels thankful to have attained the success he has and feels compelled to help others succeed. Rodriguez enjoys working with college students and encourages them to see the bright future ahead and to take the right steps to get where they want to go. “I tell people success is a choice and decisions that you make have consequences,” Rodriguez said. “They have to believe in themselves. Based on what they want to try to accomplish that faster and more profitably. We are quite cognizant that their success is our success. We try to build a team relationship with them. As they grow their businesses, there will be more opportunities for us as well.”

During the course of his career, Rodriguez has worked with business leaders at all stages of development, from start-up ventures to companies navigating downturns to established entrepreneurs seeking exit strategies to generate family wealth. “The economic climate was such that many companies were looking for good value. They were price sensitive,” Rodriguez said. He and his partners have worked for over 40 years with a large international firm and had established strong relationships throughout the Houston area. Within five years, this new firm led by two Hispanic men and a woman had grown into one of the top 25 largest firms in the city, as ranked by the Houston Business Journal. Last year, the journal recognized MFR, which now employs about 120 people, as the city’s largest Hispanic-owned firm. Rodriguez also believes his firm to be the largest Hispanic-owned accounting firm in the country. “Our business centers on three sectors – audit, tax, and business advisory and consulting.”

Roland Rodriguez and his partners from the beginning. Today, the firm has business around the globe, and employees at the firm speak 14 different languages. “Operating in the global economy is not a luxury, it’s a necessity,” Rodriguez said. “In today’s environment you have to have that mindset. Even small companies now are being impacted directly or indirectly by the global economy. Either they’re trying to export or they’re trying to build international strategic alliances.” As businesses attempt to build those cross-cultural relationships, Rodriguez and his colleagues stand ready to help.

When he moved away from auditing, Rodriguez turned his focus to business consulting, and advising. “I’ve always pictured myself as an entrepreneur who happened to be a CPA. That’s not a bad combination,” Rodriguez said. “I’m intrigued by entrepreneurs. It’s been interesting to learn their stories, to hear about how they made it, and to really work with them. Based on what they want to try to accomplish with their business, my job is to help them accomplish that faster and more profitably. We are quite cognizant that their success is our success. We try to build a team relationship with them. As they grow their businesses, there will be more opportunities for us as well.”

During the course of his career, Rodriguez has worked with business leaders at all stages of development, from start-up ventures to companies navigating downturns to established entrepreneurs seeking exit strategies to generate family wealth. “The economic climate was such that many companies were looking for good value. They were price sensitive,” Rodriguez said. “I’ve always pictured myself as a top-level executive. He realized at the time, however, that he had not acquired the experience he needed. He returned to KPMG for five more years to focus on his professional development. Then, he was ready for his next step.

Rodriguez and two colleagues—Gasper Mir and Carolynne Fox—left KPMG and started their own firm in January 1988 with a total of five people, the three partners plus two new hires. At the time, they believed that a Houston accounting firm led by Hispanics or women could fill a niche in the community. “When we started the firm we were going into a recession, which was actually beneficial to us. The economic climate was such that many companies were looking for value. They were price sensitive,” Rodriguez said. He and his partners began their new company with a 40-year-old accountant and a 40-year-old administrative assistant. They did that, spending a total of 10 years with time he began his accounting studies at Lamar University. He knew that he wanted to get his degree to help you accomplish your goals. I definitely come back to ‘If I did it, you can do it.’”

“It’s been a great journey. I’ve been very blessed, and Lamar was obviously a cornerstone to that process,” Rodriguez said. “I’m not changing the ring anymore. I’ve transitioned to how can I be a coach to make sure other people are successful.”

With his own proven record, he is ready to achieve his new goal of helping others succeed.

One advantage of MFR’s international business interests has been the opportunities for travel Rodriguez and his wife, Lindsy Gonzalez, have enjoyed. “We’ve been to different countries, always trying to study economic models and see how people and businesses make money. It’s been a phenomenal experience to have had the luxury of traveling the way we have. We’ve traveled, of seeing so many interesting places,” he said. There is, however, probably no place that Rodriguez and Gonzalez enjoy traveling to more than their home in Costa Rica. “Thanks to today’s technology, he manages to work efficiently answering calls and e-mails from his home there just as easily as from his home or office in Houston. “It’s really a paradise. It’s a great place to spend time with friends and family.”

In addition to spending time with his wife, who recently retired from her own CPA practice, Rodriguez enjoys time with his daughter, who recently completed her M.B.A. at Rice University, where he has served on the Council of Overseers for the Jones Graduate School of Business. “His interest in education has also led to serving on the board of the University of St. Thomas as well as participating in mentorship and scholarship programs. Building relationships with Lamar University students also is important to him. Rodriguez spoke to a student group at Lamar this spring and invited the students to visit his Houston office, which they did this fall.

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With his own proven record, he is ready to achieve his new goal of helping others succeed.
Delivering
in the midst of disaster
by Andrew Strange

Earth Wallace, assistant professor in the Zuyme Gay Delaman Department of Nursing, is a well-traveled woman. Her hometown of Cagayan de Oro on the Philippine island of Mindanao, to Austria, to the Texas Gulf Coast, Wallace has worked and taught in several corners of the globe. Now, with continual advancements in delivering online education, Wallace can teach her own students at Liceo de Cagayan University from abroad using the Blackboard system. Wallace already had experience teaching online courses, and technology provided a way to continue her work when her 91-year-old mother needed her to come to the Philippines to help with family business. Eileen Carl, chair of the nursing department, suggested Wallace use the online Blackboard system to teach her class from abroad to enable her to both help her mother with the disaster efforts in her hometown. She helped set up clinics so that patients could be assessed and diagnosed. When Wallace arrived in Cagayan de Oro, she discovered that an old classmate, Ramon Nery, a CEO of provincial hospitals, was in charge of organizing relief efforts. He told Wallace the people there needed more than money—they needed the help of someone who knew them. “So I stayed and went to work helping set up clinics,” Wallace said.

While the idea was well conceived, its execution presented a number of challenges. About six weeks before Wallace’s arrival in Cagayan de Oro, the area was hit by a severe tropical storm. Tropical cyclone Washi made landfall between Dec. 15 and 18, 2011. Named Typhoon Sendong by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration, the storm killed more than 1,200 people and displaced more than 285,000. Wallace was aware her hometown had been one of the hardest hit by the typhoon. Cagayan de Oro is situated on the Cagayan de Oro River. The already swollen floodplains swallowed many families’ homes during the storm.

“The houses weren’t there anymore, especially on the banks of the river,” she said. “There was a small island where there were once houses and people, but it was completely gone.”

Upon her arrival, her first priority was to find an Internet connection. But with devastation from the storm, this was easier said than done. Wallace began searching for Internet cafes where she might get her work done.

“Computers are not in most homes in the Philippines,” she said. “The cafes are open 24 hours, so teenagers are there at all hours playing games and being noisy. Here you are trying to concentrate, and the minute school lets out the place fills up with students. I had to figure out which cafes to go to at what time of day to get the most work done. I found a café in the city, a little further away from my mom’s house, so I had to stay until I finished everything for the day.”

The next obstacle she faced was bandwidth limitations on the island. With fiber-optic lines out, running late became very slow, and computers would simply log off if they became bogged down processing information. Simply opening Blackboard, the program used for Lamar’s online courses, became an insurmountable challenge at many of the Internet locations on the island. After three weeks of long nights at the cafes, Wallace finally attained connectivity at her mother’s house.

Being in a different time zone, Wallace had to keep odd hours to be available for her students’ questions and e-mails. The 13-hour gap between Wallace and her students meant that to address questions or concerns regarding an assignment due at 5 p.m. in the U.S., she had to be awake no later than 4 a.m. the following morning in the Philippines.

“If they have questions before the assignment is due, I have to be up even earlier to deal with those issues before they turn their assignments in,” she said. Despite being connected at her mother’s house, the issues with bandwidth persisted. In a classroom setting, questions can be addressed in person when the entire class can hear both the question and response. But in an online class, this is not always the case. “The students want to feel like they are being addressed personally,” she said.

With the help of a financial donation sent by Wallace’s church, First United Methodist in Nederland, the clinics were able to serve as many as 300 patients. Having maintained a relationship with the dean of her graduate school program at Liceo de Cagayan University, Wallace often takes opportunities to give guest lectures or present research there. Much like universities in the U.S., universities in the Philippines are also attempting to reduce their expenses while simultaneously increasing programs for students. The faculty at Liceo de Cagayan University was very interested in Lamar’s method of online education.

“That mindset of an Internet course is to put everything on YouTube and use e-mail,” she said. “They don’t really understand the interconnectivity of American online education.”

Wallace began to explain how to use Blackboard to deliver presentations, links to videos and PDFs, as well as the various ways students can interact with the instructor and other students in the class. “After they saw what I was doing, they began to ask questions,” she said. “They were in awe of the extent of the organization.”

While the online infrastructures at Liceo de Cagayan University has a long way to go before being able to deliver courses through a program like Blackboard, seeing how Lamar does it gave the faculty there an idea of the type of technology and funding needed to provide a similar product to their students.

Despite the challenges she faced, Wallace said teaching an online course from abroad is doable—even in a disaster zone. “We are spoiled by the technology we have in the States,” she said. “When you get somewhere and it takes more than 30 seconds to load a page, you think ‘Wait a minute, something must be wrong.’ But it is doable. You have to have patience and just do the work.”

Wallace’s students have little to no knowledge of the lengths she went to in delivering her courses. “I never announced to the students I was overseas,” she said. “I told them I would be without the Internet for a couple of days so I would answer their e-mails once I had connectivity. When managing an online course, you need to feel like your professor is there for them, so I didn’t tell them I had left the country.”

Through all of the challenges she faced, Wallace maintained her dedication to her students and her responsibilities as an instructor. “That is what online faculty does,” she said. “It was a unique situation, but you do the best you can to give your students the best you’re able.”
1. Freeman King, second from left, a Lamar University deaf education faculty member from 1978-1988, was a special guest at Lamar commencement Aug. 18. He is pictured with Curt Redfern, SmithMem.; Charlene Edwards, Roberson, Miss., and Damaris Paris, Salem, Ore., all of whom earned doctorates in deaf studies/deaf education, and Tony Martin ’79, ’80, chair of Lamar’s Department of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education. Paris joined the Lamar faculty this fall as an assistant professor.

2. Before commencement ceremonies Aug. 18, Present Stephen Dickin joins keynote speaker state Senator Robert Nicholas, R-Jacksonville, a 1968 industrial engineering graduate of Lamar, Regent Bill Scott ’70 and Dean Jack Hopper.

3. Lisa Jackson, administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, visited Lamar University Aug. 13 where she learned first hand about a number of university programs focusing on science, technology, engineering and math. Jackson made the university a stop in her travels after hearing about Lamar’s Governor’s School and other efforts in STEM education led by LU faculty members. During the visit, Jackson spoke and met outside with the Governor’s School, the Bernard Harris Summer Science Camp, STARSTEP program and several others by faculty and students who had participated in those programs.

4. Members of Phi Kappa Alpha, the Latino Fraternal Fraternity, visited managing partner Roland Rodriguez ’74 at the Houston offices of Mir, Fox, Rodriguez P.C., a certified public accounting and advisory firm. Rodriguez is profiled in this issue of Cadence.


6. President Jimmy Simmons honors John B. Stevens Sr.-48 for his many years of volunteer service to 4020 public radio.

You may be a University insider and not even know it.

If you have included Lamar University or the Lamar University Foundation in your estate plans, you have already earned membership in the prestigious Legacy Society. I invite you to let us know of your estate plans, so we can begin to recognize your generosity as a member of this society.

Leaving us know you have included Lamar in your estate plans is important. It helps us to ensure that your specific objectives are carried out as you wish. Estate gifts support faculty and research, provide scholarships and graduate fellowships, and keep our laboratories and facilities up to date. Make certain we know what you want your gift to do.

I am eager to welcome you into the Lamar University Legacy Society. You will receive invitations to exclusive University events and a Legacy Society pin. Please contact our director of planned giving confidentially at floyd.mcspadden@lamar.edu or call us at (409) 880-7895 and let us know about your estate gift. We would love to have the opportunity to thank you.

Your consideration of Lamar University, our students and our future is remarkable. You are part of a special group of people. Let us treat you like it.

“"I encourage my fellow graduates to look into creating their own legacy at Lamar."" —JIMMY BOOKER ’55, ’56
Bill Nylin ’65 describes meeting his wife, Libbie (Campbell) Nylin ’64, ’65, as “the classic nerd love story.” He saw her sitting in the front row of his Calculus I class at Lamar and “dove in right behind her.” Both mathematics majors at a time when few women at Lamar chose that field, Bill and Libbie quickly became friends and study partners in that class and others they took together. The best friends went to Lamar’s “prom” together their senior year and, as Libbie said, “the rest is history.” More than 50 years later, their connection to each other and to Lamar remains strong.

“We had a wonderful time, and student life was really fun then,” said Libbie, who was active in numerous clubs as a student to Lamar.”

Bill returned to Lamar to create the first computer science department at Lamar University and teaching at Southern Methodist University, Purdue University and teaching at Southern Methodist University, only through the mathematics and industrial engineering department. Bill taught at Lamar together.

They connection to Lamar, however, runs much deeper than their student days. Both Bill and Libbie returned to Lamar as longtime faculty members. Libbie, who majored in mathematics at Lamar thanks to the encouragement of her professors, taught math for 28 years at what became Lamar Institute of Technology. After receiving her Ph.D. in computer science at Purdue University and teaching at Southern Methodist University, Bill returned to Lamar to create the first computer science department on campus. Previously, Lamar had offered computer classes only through the mathematics and industrial engineering departments. In fact, Bill and Libbie took the first computer class ever taught at Lamar together.

“It was machine-code programming on a vacuum-tube computer,” Bill recalled. “It was the same era as the old Univac 1101 they would show on TV on the $64,000 Question in the 1950s.”

“It was enormous,” Libbie added.

Although Bill received his first exposure to computers as a Lamar student, his real interest in the burgeoning field developed after graduation while working for the aerospace company Pratt & Whitney in Florida. “The first thing they did was give me a stack of computer manuals,” he said. He found the work intriguing and decided to pursue a graduate degree at Purdue, which had started the nation’s first computer science department. There, he became close friends with fellow students who had earned bachelors’ degrees from Harvard, Cal Tech, Michigan, Minnesota, Kansas State, Purdue and Notre Dame. “My background was as good as every single one of them. That really gave me a great feeling because I knew that my education from Lamar was solid.” He continued to promote his confidence in the quality of Lamar’s programs to prospective students he encountered as a Lamar faculty member and administrator. “I had just smart, wonderful studen...” he said. “He really did have some outstanding students who he’s still close to today,” Libbie added.

When Bill accepted the faculty job at Lamar in 1975, Libbie began teaching in the College of Technical Arts, which later became LIT. Previously she had taught junior high and high school in Florida, Indiana and the Dallas area. “I loved teaching,” she said. “I really liked the students’ personalities and getting to know them. Some of them met success for the first time in math in my classes. That made you feel good.”

Each of the Nylins is quick to praise the other’s abilities and impact on students. The couple honored Libbie’s commitment to her students by creating an endowed scholarship at LIT in her name in 2002. Bill firmly students honored his contributions by surprising him in 2005 with an endowed scholarship in computer science at Lamar University in his name. “It’s a great thing,” Bill said. “I was able to go to college supplemented by scholarships that other people paid for. To be able to give a little bit back and help provide some scholarship funds for other students to make it easier for them to go through is just a wonderful, heartwarming thing to us. We get such nice letters from the students saying what it means to them to be able to have the scholarship funds.”

While Libbie’s career continued in teaching, Bill’s experience with computers led him from the classrooms into other areas. After teaching and then becoming the first director of computer science at Lamar, he rose through the university’s executive ranks. He served in a variety of roles including director of personnel and computer services, executive vice president of finance and operations, and deputy chancellor of the Lamar University System, before LIT joined the Texas State University System. In 1995, he left Lamar to embark on a new career as president and chief operating officer at Conn’s Appliances. He had previously served on the company’s board of directors and as a consultant. He remained at Conn’s until January of this year, serving in a number of roles during the years including chairman. Nylin’s experience with computers and finance at Lamar proved advantageous when he helped Conn’s implement new sales management and inventory systems for distribution. “The other side that translated well was Conn’s commissioned retail environment, which was competitive,” he said. “In high school and four years of college, I actually paid my way as a commissioned salesman, so I understand the environment. I think the background that I had going through those different areas, each step, even though they appear to be quite different, added to each other to help me.”

In recent years, both Bill and Libbie have taken the step from full-time employment to retirement. Libbie retired from LIT in December 2005. She continued part-time teaching briefly but has since left the classroom behind. Bill stepped down as chairman of Conn’s in 2010 and left the board of directors in January 2012. They now live in the Dallas area, about a 30-minute drive from their daughter, son-in-law, grand-daughter and grandson. They have found other interests in retirement, but “that’s the biggest one,” Libbie said. “We get to spend a lot of time with our grandchildren.” Bill said. “This grand parenting business is a wonderful, wonderful job.”

Additionally, they are enjoying traveling, making up for lost time after busy careers in which they never took more than a week of vacation at a time. So far, they have taken the grand-children on a Disney cruise and had fun on family trips to San Diego, Paris and London. Trips to other countries in Europe and together with old friends from Lamar to California have also added to the nine trips they have planned this year alone.

One thing that has not been part of their retirement agenda is keeping up with all the latest technology. A few years ago when Bill was named distinguished alumnus of Purdue’s computer science department, he gave a talk on five decades of computer history, from vacuum tubes to plasma televisions. He feels privileged to have worked through the first several generations of computers but more recent developments have passed him by. “Nowadays I don’t have to think about anything significant with computers. I now have my daughter and son-in-law as special consultants since I’ve been out of it for a while. It was wonderful and exciting, and I loved teaching it and loved doing it, and it has changed so much. It’s been wonderful to see.”

by Beth Gallaspy
JAMES ESSER traded tennis for industrial-organizational psychology and the heartland for the heart of Cardinal country. Along the way, he turned soccer fanatic and dethroned basketball fan while swapping seats. “The European backpacking forays for intensive, summer-long pilgrimages through Spain,” an accidental academic pursuit led him to Lamar University, where he is one of the university’s most honored faculty members.

Among many accolades, Esser is Lamar’s 2012 Distinguished Faculty Lecturer, having stepped to the University Theatre podium Nov. 13 to focus on “Negotiating with Terrorists”—the latest area of research in an impressive and diverse body of scholarly pursuits. He is a University Professor, the highest honor accorded an LU faculty member.

“Psychology was an accident,” Esser said. “Back in the day, all I really cared about was tennis. I didn’t care about academics.”

Home for Esser—back in the day—was Charles City, Iowa, population 10,000. He played basketball in the winter and tennis in the spring. When his father took a job in the Chicago area, Esser moved from a small town to a large suburban school where the tennis team had won the state championship the previous year. “All of a sudden, I wasn’t good enough to make the team,” he said. “I got better quickly and was No. 2 my junior year and then No. 1 during my senior year at Arlington High School in Arlington Heights.”

Esser went to the University of Iowa to play tennis, eventually earning scholarships and a No. 1 ranking in singles and doubles for the Hawkeyes.

A headline from a clipping he saved brings back a lot of memories: “Jim Esser, Iowa’s top singles tennis player, has been stricken with mononucleosis and may be forced to sit out the remainder of the season.” In fact, he returned in three weeks.

Although Esser entered Iowa in the honors program, he didn’t have a major and had no idea what he wanted to do. “When I took my first psychology class, I had already gotten bad enough grades not to be in the honors program.”

He signed up for a special section of an introductory psychology class open only to honors program students or psychology majors. It interested him because it included labs. “Supposedly, you learn a lot more. And it sounded interesting. I walked into the first class, even though I wasn’t really eligible, and the professor gave the scare talk that there were too many people in the class and he was going to throw everybody out, so you’d better be an honors student or a psych major. So I changed my major to psychology. I liked it enough that I stayed.”

But Esser still had not mapped a career path. When he was a senior, a professor recommended he attend graduate school and specialize in social psychology. Esser went on to earn a Ph.D. in the field from Indiana University, with minors in math psychology and business. “The business minor got me my job at Lamar,” he said. “I attended a psychology convention where Lamar recruiters were looking for somebody who would fit into the master’s program in industrial-organizational psychology—a specialty involving the application of psychology methods to the workplace.

That was 36 years ago, and, for Esser, the rest is history. “I like what I do,” he said. “I’ve been the face of industrial/organizational psychology, which makes up half of our graduate program.”

He loves his job, he said, first because “I like working with the students on a more individual basis at the graduate level. Second, I’m able to pursue what interests me in research, and that’s always a fun thing.”

An especially fulfilling part of Esser’s job is arranging and supervising practicums. Each semester, teams of graduate students under his supervision provide free industrial/organizational psychology services to local organizations, including cities, counties, hospitals, refineries, the local power company and other non-profit and nonprofit organizations.

“Recently, it’s been mostly non-profit, and that seems to work very well for us because they’re eager for assistance in view of budget challenges. We do things that, I think, are very valuable to them.”

Another high point is following the progress of his former students. “When I was in college, Ralph Miller was the basketball coach at the University of Iowa, and his team, when I was a senior, went undefeated in the Big Ten and made a good run in the NCAA tournament. When I moved to Indiana for graduate school, it was Bobby Knight’s first year at Indiana. So I was able to watch Bobby Knight build that first NCAA championship team.”

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Whenever he and Christine begin traveling in Spain, he said, “We would just see the sights. Soon, the trips involved relatives and, eventually, more interesting locales—not just the tourist attractions.”

“We’d gotten off the highways and onto the little back roads where, near the end of El Camino, we saw people coming out of the woods. It was raining, and they were all miserable. They were sopping wet and grubby, and Chris’s mother says, ‘Who are they? Do they have hobo signs in Spain?’ And Chris thought for a minute and said, ‘Oh, I know who they are. They are the people walking the Camino.’ Our reaction was, ‘Those poor slobs. We wouldn’t never do that.’”

“The next year, we were getting ready for our annual trip, and Chris says, I think I want to hike it. Our decision was to walk a long ways—longer than we should have, given the fact that we were beginners, and we didn’t know what we were doing. Our eyes got opened.”

Determined to hike the entire Camino the next year, they did some planning, with the help of guidebooks—and we’ve done it eight or 10 times since.”

Though American-born, Christine often says she has been Spanish in her heart all her life. She speaks Spanish fluently. While he is not fluent, James said, “I’m a lot better than I used to be. My specialty is men’s, wine lists and ‘Where’s the bathroom?’”

In summer 2012, Christine was teaching at the University of Salamanca, so the Essers involved her students in a sampling of the pilgrimage. Jim, armed with a laptop and a heavy load of reference articles, proceeded to work on his lecture.

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Turning a calling into a career

Quentin Jiles, Houston senior and social work major, was elected Student Government Association president for 2012-2013. Jiles has been president of Lamar’s chapter of the NAACP. He is also a member of the Alpha Kappa Psi Business fraternity and is a student director of student development in the Office of Student Engagement.

When Jiles first came to campus, he really only stuck with my three closest friends,” he said. “But after getting involved in various organizations, I began to meet people at a whole different level. I got to meet people of different backgrounds and with various interests, and it made the whole experience fun.

Jiles said that through this involvement, he has had the opportunity to hear what students think about the university and the quality of their experience. He said that his mission as SG A president is to be a voice for students and to help increase the quality of their college experience.

“I want everybody to feel included, feel like they are getting a quality education and feel like they are having a good time as well,” he said. “I love my school, and I want everybody to take pride in it.”

Jiles said that, above all, his goal is to serve the students and listen to their ideas. “I will talk to anyone,” he said. “At the end of the day, if your tuition goes up, so does mine. We are on the same level playing field—I am just a voice for you.”

Jiles said after graduation, he plans to pursue a Ph.D. in social work. He plans to put his education to good use through a career as an investigator for Child Protective Services.

“My ultimate goal is to build an agency that can get children adopted out to great homes, and that is something that I feel I will be able to learn through working with CPS,” he said.

“I have always wanted to work with children. When I was in the fifth grade, I saw this girl, who was in the second grade, crying. I asked her why, and she said that her sister wouldn’t give her half of the lunch money that her mother had given her for the lunch line and split my lunch money with her. After that day, she always sat by me at lunch, so I kind of adopted her as my little sister. I think that was the start of me trying to help people. It felt good. So why not try to turn that into a career and do something that I really love?”

Jiles said the Department of Sociology, Social Work and Criminal Justice at Lamar University helped prepare him for his professional future plans.

“They are always bringing in professional people to talk to you,” he said. “They also have volunteer days where you go to different agencies in the community—one day it may be at Boys’ Haven and the next may be a soup kitchen. It is a good feeling to be in the field doing volunteer work. It gives you an opportunity to give back to the community while you learn about your discipline. You get a chance to go to various places and see how the different social agencies work together for the benefit of the community. My department really helps prepare you for the field.” —AS

Discovering the story behind the story

Christine Zabala, senior English and history major, likes to get the whole story. While some are serial status updaters on their favorite social media site, Zabala’s interests lie with the thoughts and happenings of the past.

“English is something that I really enjoyed in high school,” she said. “So when I switched from biology to history, I loved English as a major because they complement each other so well.”

Many connoisseurs of composition celebrate the works of Jane Austen or Emily Dickinson, but Zabala has developed a taste for more macabre authors. “I like gothic fiction,” she said. “I am a big fan of Edgar Allan Poe. I like the overlap of horror and comedy. I did a research paper one time, comparing Virginia Woolf to George A. Romero’s ‘Night of the Living Dead.’ It was about ‘Mrs. Dalloway’ and the zombies of the Victorian Era who were more into living in society than actual living. They didn’t really think.”

Zabala came to Lamar on a Mirabeau Scholarship, which provides financial support for her undergraduate career at the university. She said the scholarship gave her the opportunity to focus on her studies without having to worry about tuition and student loans.

“Receiving the Mirabeau scholarship was an amazing opportunity for me,” she said. “I realize what a highly sought after scholarship the Mirabeau is, and I am truly thankful to have been chosen for such a prestigious honor.”

Now a senior, Zabala has become a member of the Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society, a Lamar Ambassador, and served as chairman of the community service committee and president of the Honors Student Association.

As a Lamar Ambassador, Zabala is one of the faces of Lamar’s student body. Ambassadors come from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds and attend community and university events as representatives of the Lamar student body. Zabala said the Lamar Ambassadors program is a great opportunity for students to network among leaders in the academic and local community.

“The Ambassadors were invited to dinner at Ellen Rienstra’s house,” Zabala said. “She is a prominent historian from this area, and a very inspiring connection for me as a history major.”

She said much of her academic success is a result of the supportive faculty at Lamar and the opportunity to build relationships with academic professionals.

“The classes are small enough that you can have personal relationships with your professors,” she said. “Getting to know the professors personally helped me figure out who I am as a person and what I want to do with my life. It’s good because I feel comfortable enough that if I have questions I can just go to their office and ask what they think.”

The faculty at Lamar create an environment where students can make important parallels between their courses. Zabala said she found to truly understand what people were writing about in her literature courses, it helped to have a good grasp on what she learned about the particular era in her history courses.

“Especially in literature, you have to know the background story,” Zabala said. “I have written several papers about how different circumstances shape the way books are written. There is no way to keep books separate from the period in which they were written.”

As a double major with a heavy coursework, Zabala decided to use some of her elective courses as an opportunity to get involved in something she had never experienced.

“It took a ballroom dance class,” she said. “I didn’t have any experience but I saw it in the catalog and thought, ‘You know, I’d like to learn to Waltz.’ So I signed up for it. Now when they have something like salsa right downtown on Crockett Street, I can go and know what I’m doing.”

After graduation, Zabala plans to attend graduate school to pursue a doctorate in literature and hopes to teach at the university level. —AS
The search for the university’s next leader began with President James M. Simmons’ announcement of his pending resignation of the presidency.

In September, Texas State University System Vice Chancellor Perry Moore visited campus to update faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends on the search process and to solicit comments on attributes these constituents sought in the next leader. Moore announced that the system has engaged R. William Funk & Associates of Dallas to assist in the search process. Funk & Associates (RWilliamFunk.com) is the “premier firm in Texas dedicated to higher education search consulting.” Moore also presented a timeline for the search that should culminate in the announcement of Lamar’s next president in late spring.

President Simmons, the 10th to hold the university’s top post, will remain in his position until the new president takes office. Simmons will then return to the faculty of the Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music.

A website (Lamar.edu/PresidentialSearch) has been created to provide information about the position and the search process. The site contains information about Lamar University, the search committee, the search consultant and the job posting. The site will be updated during the process and will include information on the three top candidates when the search committee announces them. The top three candidates will be invited to Lamar for on-site interviews, and those interview times will be posted on the website. Those who attend the on-campus interviews will have opportunity to submit comments, via the site, to the TSUS chancellor.

The final candidate will be selected by the chancellor and presented to the Board of Regents for approval.

PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH UNDERWAY

The following day, Weatherford flew with team mate Kirk Goza, a senior physics and mathematics major from Orange, a member of Lamar’s 14th group to fly an experiment in zero-G conditions, and was in the second of two groups of LU students to fly June 13-14 from NASA Johnson Space Center’s Ellington Field south of Houston.

Flying on June 13 were team leader Nicholas Allen, a senior chemical engineering major from Orange, Alexia Samad, a senior chemical engineering major from Nederland, and Jacob Wright, an electrical engineering and physics major from Beaumont.

The following day, Weatherford flew with teammate Kirk Goza, a senior electrical engineering and physics major from Vidor, and Jason Dogas, a 2001 LU alumnuus and electrical engineer at NASA.

All the team members were instrumental in developing the experiment proposal, a lengthy and detailed analysis required by NASA, as well as in building the experiment itself and the safety cage that contained it on the aircraft. The experiment examined resonant frequencies to determine how they differ in zero gravity.

“Gravity acts on the way waves disperse,” Weatherford said. “In engineering applications and construction, we know that resonant frequency can damage a structure. Take for example the well-known collapse of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge in 1940 and the lateral vibrations of the Millennium Bridge in London.”

“My 14 schools were selected to fly this year, down from as many as 96 schools several years ago,” said Jim Jordan, chair of the Department of Earth and Space Science. “That tells me that this research has some interest to NASA.” —BKS

“"It was nothing like what I expected," said Aaron Weatherford of his experience with reduced gravity aboard NASA’s Reduced Gravity aircraft.

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**Simmons focuses on students in convocation**

Lamar University President James Simmons had three words for faculty and staff attending the annual back-to-school convocation Aug. 20: Recruit. Retain. Graduate.

Students were the focus of Simmons’s state-of-the-university message, his last as Lamar president before his retirement in 2013. An audience of more than 500 gathered in the University Theatre for the convocation. Simmons had good news: Fall enrollment has increased from last year, despite greatly enhanced admission requirements.

“We’re a little surprised,” he said. “We were anticipating a decline because we raised the entrance requirements.”

Simmons said he anticipates a challenging legislative session ahead when legislators convene in Austin Jan. 8. But, he said, “Lamar University should be in better shape than we have in the past.”

This will depend on three things, he said: “Our ability to recruit students, because, however you look at it, the state bases the formula on numbers; our ability to retain students, and on our ability to graduate students because graduation rates are going to become ever more important as we look to the future.”

“The legacy of this administration is not the bricks and mortar but the students,” he said.

“…”I have had the honor of shaking hands with literally thousands of students who came to Lamar from all around the world who have walked across our stage (to accept degrees) and gone on to wonderful lives. That is the kind of legacy that most presidents want to leave behind.”

**Lamar confers 1,354 degrees**

World-renowned Houston trial lawyer David Beck, a Lamar University distinguished alumnus, received the honorary doctor of humane letters May 19, in Houston. Lamar conferred 1,354 degrees in two ceremonies. Graduates hail from 16 countries, 22 states outside Texas and 276 cities and towns in Texas. Lamar awarded 1,354 degrees to 1,340 graduation candidates—27 for doctorates, in addition to Beck’s honorary degree; 599 for master’s degrees, 704 for bachelor’s degrees, 14 of whom earned two degrees each, and 24 for associate degrees.

The honorary doctorate recognizes Beck’s many contributions to the university, including the prestigious David J. Beck Fellowship, which was made possible by his generous gift to the university’s Investing in the Future Campaign. Beck had previously established the David J. Beck Scholarship in Political Science and has been a longtime supporter of the Lamar Governor’s Honors Program.

Among honors and distinctions:
- USA Today reported Lamar is ranked ninth of 1,817 institutions nationwide in online education degrees awarded.
- The journal Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education reported that Lamar ranks No. 1 nationally in masters of education degrees awarded to Hispanics.
- Lamar’s MBA program was scored among the Aspen Institute’s “Global 100” ranking, Lamar’s third consecutive year among those top programs.
- Again, Lamar ranked No. 1 in the nation for awarding master’s degrees in chemical engineering.
- Reflecting Lamar’s designation by The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as a Doctoral Research University, LU now has 363 doctoral students, the most in the Texas State University System—and, Simmons said, “We are growing.”
- For the first time, the Southland Conference awarded Lamar the Commissioner’s Cup Men’s All-Sport Trophy, based on the number of places earned in all men’s sports.

And, Simmons added, these achievements have not gone unnoticed; alumni and friends have contributed more than $100 million to the university’s Investing in the Future comprehensive campaign.

**Smith-Houston Scholarship program opens doors to business degrees**

The Smith-Houston Scholarship program will become one of the most generous and prolific scholarship programs at LU, with six students beginning on the scholarship this fall in a program that will grow in numbers each year in the College of Business.

Smith-Houston scholars are funded at up to $14,000 per year for a maximum of four years. “The Smith-Houston program is unique in that both financial need and potential for academic success are considered,” said Henry Venta, dean of the college.

The program has been established at Lamar University for incoming freshmen pursuing business degrees. It is funded through an individual donor, who wishes to remain anonymous. All funding is provided through a private family foundation that makes no solicitations for contributions.

“We are grateful to the foundation for their support and their desire to grow the program in substantial ways in the years to come,” Venta said. “I feel that the program will have a strong impact in serving an important segment of our students.”

The program was started at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville in 1996. Today, about 70 students are on the scholarship.

“We are excited about expanding the Smith-Houston program to the College of Business at Lamar University and appreciate the warm welcome and assistance provided to us by Dean Venta and his staff,” said Robert E. Houston, a Houston banker who manages the program. Houston, a 1965 graduate of the Sam Houston College of Business, went on to say, “We have graduated 151 students from the program during the past 16 years at Sam Houston. This program has changed the lives of so many people and we look forward to the same long term success at Lamar University.”

“Smith-Houston has been a major source of financial aid to needy high school students in East Texas for some time,” said Lynn Godkin, professor of management and marketing at Lamar. “Now, Smith-Houston has become a major player in providing financial aid to students of limited financial means in Southeast Texas and greater Houston.”

The scholarship program focuses on graduating high school seniors who have academic potential and are unable to attend college without financial assistance. “Students unable to even consider college, will now be able to earn a B.B.A. degree from Lamar and graduate virtually debt free,” Godkin said.

“Smith-Houston provides on-going counseling, tutoring where needed, and motivational support to each recipient,” he added. Graduate students and upper-classmen provide the tutoring and are paid for their service by the scholarship program.

“The Smith-Houston scholarship is a significant addition to scholarship portfolios on the campus and a major boost to the scholarships offerings in the College of Business,” Godkin said.
Lamar University has set a new all-time enrollment record, according to LU officials. Official figures for the fall 2012 semester taken on the 20th class day show Lamar has the highest enrollment in the university’s history. More specifically, the university headcount is 14,675, up 2 percent over fall 2011. Semester credit hours totaled 139,503, the second largest total in LU history, up 5.9 percent over Fall 2011. By the end of the fall 2012 semester, more students will have started and completed online degrees, bringing the total headcount to more than 15,000.

The increase in headcount and semester credit hours comes despite an increase in tuition and raised freshman admission requirement, said Kevin Smith, senior associate provost and interim vice president for student engagement.

Lamar has seen an increase in new freshman, from 1,402 last fall to 1,686 today. The number of doctoral students has also grown, up from 262 to 363. The percentage of new freshman from the top quarter of their class has grown from 31 percent to 34 percent.

Research targets efficiency with $69,000 Entergy grant

Xianchung Li, associate professor of mechanical engineering, will undertake groundbreaking work in modeling complex power generation systems with an eye to increasing efficiency thanks to a $69,000 grant from Entergy Charitable Foundation.

Li’s work, “Gas Turbine/Steam Turbine Modeling and Optimization,” seeks to refine the performance and efficiency of a combined power system using both gas and steam turbines. The final goal is to maximize the power output or the thermal efficiency while considering the trade-offs in revenue, Li said.

Salleh Rainer, Entergy Texas president and chief executive officer, said, “My predecessor, Joe Domingo, was a vital link in obtaining this grant for the university and for good reason. The project clearly deserves a commitment from our company for the value of the work and because the partnership between Entergy Texas and Lamar is important to the welfare of Southeast Texas as a whole.”

Online M.Ed. achieves ‘Best Buys’

Lamar University’s master of education programs ranked No. 1 among the most affordable master’s degrees offered online in the U.S., according to a national consumer group.

The College of Education and Human Development earned three award badges from GetEducated.com for ranking as a top affordable option among online master’s degrees for teachers and educators.

The GetEducated “Best Online Colleges” data-driven ranking indicates LU’s programs were independently reviewed, compared to its national peers and found to be the “Best Buy” nationwide for teachers and educators for whom college affordability has become a critical issue.

LU’s Master of Education, Master of Educational Leadership and Master of Educational Technology were all ranked No. 1. Lamar University also ranked as the No. 1 most affordable online education school in the nation at about $6,450 for its online master’s for Texas teachers. The average overall cost for all master’s degrees in the online learning survey was $16,731.

Notably absent from the “Best Buy” list were online education degrees from for-profit colleges, most of whom charge consumers higher than average tuition and fee rates, including the University of Phoenix Online, which charges about $18,000 for its online education master’s degree compared to Lamar’s state resident rates of about $6,450 and national rates of about $8,460.

“In a time when college costs have reached startling levels, Lamar models how instructional technology coupled with sound administrative policies can help America’s colleges solve the cost crisis that plagues higher education,” said Vicky Phillips, founder of GetEducated.com.

The GetEducated Best Buy rankings are based on a comprehensive review of 367 online education masters offerings mastered by 129 regionally accredited universities.
Students and employees can now charge electric vehicles for free at a new charging station at the Montagne Center. The Montagne Center location is the fifth charging station Entergy has put in place in Texas.

Entergy Texas, LU add electric vehicle charging station

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Entergy Texas will collect usage data for research about the chargers’ impact on consumers and the electric grid. The charging stations are capable of providing a full charge to any electric vehicle on the market. They were donated by Entergy and paid for by Entergy shareholders.

Cheerleading team earns seven awards at UCA

The cheerleading team brought home seven awards from the July Universal Cheerleaders Association College Camp in San Marcos. The Lamar team included 19 women, seven men and two mascots who competed against more than 25 teams from different conferences. LU earned first place in cheer, third place in sideline, fifth place in fight song, the Most Collegiate Team Award, the Most Improved Program Award and the Best Game Day Plan Award. The LU mascots also earned first place in their Home Skit, which they prepared before the camp.

Kristyn Henderson, Lamar cheer and mascot coordinator, said the goal of the UCA is to make sure teams are game-focused, doing what they are supposed to do for the school and properly representing the school in the community. “They want to get you game ready,” she said, “and want to make sure you always look professional and you are getting the crowd involved.” The team has made more than 100 community appearances this year.

LU ranks among nation’s best

Diverse: Issues in Higher Education magazine, for the second consecutive year, has ranked Lamar University No. 1 in the nation for graduating Hispanic students earning master’s degrees in education. The national education magazine, in its June 7 issue, also ranked Lamar among the Top 10 universities nationwide in six additional categories.

The rankings include fifth for total number of minority graduate students in education, fifth for the most Asian-American master’s graduates in physical sciences and sixth in the nation for the most Asian-American master’s graduates in communication disorders. The annual rankings also recognized Lamar as the seventh highest institution for graduating the most African-American master’s degree students in education, ninth for Hispanic master’s graduates in all disciplines and ninth for the most African-American master’s graduates in communication disorders. “We are very proud of our faculty and staff, whose collective commitment to diversity, a Lamar University core value and a central component of our strategic plan, has once again resulted in national recognition, which is significant. It makes their education much more affordable.” For more information about military service recruitment contact military@lamar.edu or call (409) 880-2138.

LU tapped military-friendly school

Lamar University was added recently to the 2013 list of military-friendly schools by G.I. Jobs magazine. The military-friendly school designation places Lamar in the top 15 percent of all colleges, universities and trade schools nationwide that have successfully integrated service members into their campus and online offerings. “We are excited to announce that Lamar University is currently reaching out to more military service members than ever before,” said Ashley Sheehan, LU coordinator of military programs.

Financial assistance is open to active service members only. Service members can take advantage of online courses or face-to-face classes offered at Lamar. “When we say ‘active’ we mean Reserve and National Guard as well,” said Sheehan. “As long as they are currently serving in some capacity, they qualify. If they’re getting nation assistance, they’re eligible for the discount Lamar has agreed to give them on tuition, which is significant.” For more information about military service recruitment contact military@lamar.edu or call (409) 880-2138.

M.B.A. students travel to Beijing and Shanghai

Seven students in the M.B.A. and master of science in accounting programs traveled to Beijing and Shanghai, China, in May for an 11-day excursion to factories, historical sites and shopping hubs. Hyndia Moton, Oracle Software Systems, Lenovo Computer Co., the Shanghai Apple store, a food processing company and a state-owned iron and steel company, were some of the tours the students took during their stay in the Orient. Students also met with representatives of the Chinese Ministry of Commerce and visited the Shanghai Futures Exchange.

Making the annual trip were Clarke Baker, Grant Owens and Gary Hill of Beaumont; Apryll LaHaye of Port Neches; Chris Huibner of St. Louis, Mo.; Lauren Anderson of Port Acres and Fred Vernon of Port Arthur.

LU, SeoulTech exchange students and faculty

Lamar University and Seoul National University of Science and Technology formally entered a memorandum of understanding for student and faculty exchange and collaborative research prior to Steve Dobrin and SeoulTech representative Jin-Hui Lee, professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering, announced Aug. 2.

Up to five undergraduate or graduate students from each institution can participate for a semester or a full academic year per the agreement, Dobrin said.

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Audiology doctoral students further their competitive eight-week clinical rotation during summer 2012 at the House Ear Institute, a development of cochlear implants and other implantable hearing devices, Danielle Hummel was selected as a summer research assistant at the University of Southern Illinois, conducting animal research on ototoxicity and tinnitus; Michelle Johnson, a doctoral student in educational leadership, will present her dissertation, “Year Immigrants,” at the annual conference of the National Council for Family Relations (NCFR) as its annual EdTech Conference in Columbus, Ohio, at which she will present her work on the implementation of technology in the classroom to assist English language learners. Jameal McCausley’s master’s thesis, “Defining Family: Perspectives of Homeless Adults in Southeast Texas,” has been selected by the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) as its “National Thesis of the Year” . Mengian Wang, a Ph.D. student in chemical engineering, has won the highly competitive 2012 American Institute of Chemical Engineers Process Development Division Student Paper Award. The winning paper was co-authored with her doctoral advisors and is entitled, “Thermodynamic Analysis Based Energy Consumption Minimization for Natural Gas Liquefaction,” and was published in Industrial & Engineering Chemistry Research. Eli Lilly Inc. sponsors this recognition, which includes a plaque and cash award and selects only one student each year from among a large number of international nominations. Wang’s doctoral advisors are Ku-Yen Li and Qiang Xu. LU doctoral students have won this award in three of the last eight years . Samuel Choufany, a graduate student and Syed Mohiuddin, an undergraduate senior in the Drayer Department of Electrical Engineering, have completed a novel project that estimates possible energy extraction from vehicle suspension, a source of energy for the second generation of electric vehicles. The two co-authored a paper, “Estimation of Harvestable Green Energy from Vehicle Suspension,” which was presented at the 2012 IEEE International Conference on Vehicle Power and Propulsion Conference in Seoul, Korea. . Lamar University accounting students earned excellence awards at an April 26 program sponsored by the Southeast Texas Chapter of the Texas Society of Certified Public Accountants (TSCPA), Tyler Angulo of Orange, who will graduate this December with a master of science, received the Accounting Excellence Award and Tacie Chambers of Beaumont received the chapter’s TSCPA Endowed Scholarship. The chapter provides several additional scholarships to deserving Lamar accounting majors through annual fundraising efforts. The 2012 recipients include Emmanuel Amaonye of Cape Coast, Ghana; Smiley Bathla, Beaumont; Michael Carl and Jamie Ouller, Port Neches; Heather Rebert, Groves; Nicole Hay, Houston; and Joseph Klimar and Jonathan Webster, Vidor. Students accepted to the program receive two annual scholarships of up to $10,000 as supplementary income, reducing employment obligations for undergraduates in their last two years. ASCENT scholars will also receive extensive academic support including undergraduate research experience, multi-level mentoring and post-graduate placement and all students will be in a learning community. Lamar earns grant for ASCENT scholarship program The National Science Foundation has awarded Lamar University $590,000 in funding for the departments of mathematics and computer science for their scholarship program, “Addressing the Gulf Coast Region’s Graduation Rate Crisis in Mathematics and Computer Science” (ASCENT). This five-year grant program will provide 24 students majoring in math or computer science with considerable financial and educational support during the completion of their degrees, beginning this fall. The program targets students currently enrolled at Lamar with two years left in their math or computer science degree, as well as transfer students who have graduated from a community college entering Lamar’s math or computer science programs. It is part of an initiative to improve the six-year graduation rate among math and computer science majors at Lamar. Students accepted to the program receive two annual scholarships of up to $10,000 as supplementary income, reducing employment obligations for undergraduates in their last two years. ASCENT scholars will also receive extensive academic support including undergraduate research experience, multi-level mentoring and post-graduate placement and all students will be in a learning community.
English students place first in writing competition

Two Lamar University English students won first-place awards in the Texas Association of Creative Writing Teachers competition. Alaina Bray, Flanmair senior, and Ruth Grace Megnet, graduate student from Switzerland, presented their work at the association’s annual conference Sept. 28 at University of Texas Pan-American in Edinburg. Both are students of Jerry Bradley, professor of English and modern languages. Bradley and faculty members Gretchen Johnson and Jim Sanderson also made presentations at the conference.

Colleges and universities from all over Texas nominate student writers for under-graduate and graduate contests in fiction, poetry and essay on both levels. “We are graduate and graduate contests in fiction and publish her creative works.—AS

Bray plans to pursue a Ph.D. in English. She said she hopes to teach at the university level for her, is exceptional. “It is one challenge to write creatively with nuance and allusion,” she said.

Magnet holds a degree in literature, a master’s degree in fine arts and a master’s degree in visual arts from Lamar. She is an assistant professor of art at Lamar State College-Port Arthur.

Bray, a former Texas Academy of Leadership in the Humanities student at Lamar, won first place in the undergraduate fiction category for Durt, which tells the story of a young woman struggling for identity in her hometown. After graduation, Bray plans to pursue a Ph.D. in English. She said she hopes to teach at the university level and publish her creative works.—AS

passion from her past. “I didn’t realize it, but taking this class brought back a lot of that creativity in a way I never really planned,” she said.

Megnet holds a degree in literature, a master’s degree in fine arts and a master’s degree in visual arts from Lamar. She is an assistant professor of art at Lamar State College-Port Arthur.

Being a native of Switzerland, Megnet said she decided to take graduate courses in English at Lamar as a means of improving her language skills. “My hope is to one day write without an accent,” she joked.

The Tipitarivit is a reflection of a 10-year-old Megnet who received a typewriter for Christmas. Megnet said writing the story helped her realize and awaken a dormant
Simmons earns place in Bandmasters Hall of Fame

President James Simmons earned another elite honor with induction into the Phi Beta Mu Texas Bandmasters Hall of Fame. In selecting Simmons to become part of the 2012 class, the international bandmasters fraternity continues in tradition of “honoring outstanding Texas band directors whose dedication and devotion to their profession was paramount.”

Phi Beta Mu made the presentation July 22 at the Texas Bandmasters Association annual convention in San Antonio.

“This is very significant to me,” Simmons said. “As I stood before a room full of band directors and colleagues whom I had known throughout my career and for whom I have the utmost respect, being recognized in that manner was extremely touching and satisfying.”

An accomplished musician on clarinet, saxophone, and piano, Simmons continues an active performance and conducting career after rising through the ranks as a music educator and administrator to become Lamar’s 10th president.

Val Rose, a friend and colleague for more than 50 years, nominated Simmons for the honor. The two were roommates when Simmons began his college career in 1960; the two were fellow band members and Rose an early mentor.

“He was a very influential band director,” said Rose, retired Nederland High School band director. “His bands at Beaumont High and at Lamar – his marching band, concert bands and jazz bands – all were outstanding. He is widely respected for the success of those groups.”

“President Simmons’ credentials speak for themselves,” said Gary Wells, retired Hemphill-Fannett Band director and secretary-treasurer of the Phi Beta Mu Alpha (Texas) chapter. “What does not show up on any resume, he said, is the way Simmons helps talented students overcome obstacles.

Citing examples, Wells said, “Dr. Simmons took them under his wing, gave them the encouragement and resources they needed to succeed and then monitored them until they received their degrees. I believe these are the type stories that never end up in print but, nevertheless, reflect the character and caring of Dr. Simmons.”

‘Not your grandmother’s quilts at Dishman

F or more than 30 years, the biennial Quilt National exhibition has showcased the best and most exciting contemporary arts quilts being created around the world. Selections from the 2011 Quilt National show graced the walls of the Dishman Art Museum Sept. 24-Nov. 16.

Quilt National premiered in 1979 at the Dairy Barn Arts Center in Athens, Ohio, in order to promote quilt-making as an art form and to call attention to the transformations taking place in the world of quilting. Abstraction, variations of geometric design and nature are among prominent themes. The quilts selected for Quilt National had never been exhibited or published before their premiere showing at the Dairy Barn in May through September of 2011. The Dishman Art Museum was the only Texas venue to feature Quilt National ’11.

“These quilts range in size from small to quite large and showcase how quiltmaking is a vibrant art form today,” said Megan Young, director of the Dishman. “Contemporary crafting is really taking center stage in today’s art world, and we see craft being thought of as fine art. These are not your grandmother’s quilts.

Quilt National came to Lamar as part of an interdisciplinary view into the world of quilting, presented by the College of Fine Arts and Communication and funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.

In addition to the quilt show, the Department of Theatre & Dance collaborated with the Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music to present the musical Quilts! Oct. 11-14. Regional and national quilt artists presented a variety of workshops during the run of the exhibition.

Laumie Rimel, a quilt artist whose works were featured in the show, gave a public talk Oct. 6 to discuss how the integrates digital media into contemporary quiltmaking.

Textile conservator Melanie Sanford spoke at the Dishman Oct. 12 on the care of heritage quilts. The Spirited-Gravity City Boomtown Museum sponsored the talk.

The Dishman also hosted a hands-on quilt workshop Nov. 17, enabling participants to try their hand at quilting and to learn about a variety of quilting styles. The Blockheads Bee of the Golden Triangle Quilt Guild conducted the workshop.
We hope you enjoy reading about former classmates. If you have news to share—a promotion announcement, milestone, achievement, wedding, baby—or know the whereabouts of a lost alumna, we want to hear from you.

Send us your news:
Write to Cadence, P.O. Box 10011, Beaumont, TX 77710, e-mail alumni@lamar.edu or call (409) 880-6821.

40s

Annie (Bolton) Arvall ’44, A.A., general studies, graduated from California State University became a certified accountant in 1958. She lives in Portland, OR.

50s

Don Lee ’50, B.S. business administration, a partner in 24 Time Made—Adkins Golf Co in Galveston. He lives in Loews, CA with his wife, Joan.

60s

Gunnar Trepp ’60, B.S., secondary education, earned a master’s degree from the University of Houston, and retired as an administrator in the University of Houston and retired from the Denver school department, where they live.

class notes

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CHIRPS

JACK RANDORFF ’65, B.S. PHYSICS
PAM (DOWNEY) MOSER ’66, B.S. BIOLOGY

We dated for about two years while attending Lamar State College of Technology and then went our different ways. She moved to Houston, Ohio, and to many places, finally landing in Canyon, Texas. Thanks to your good efforts at the Lamar Alumni Affairs office, we were put in contact in 2011 after I called regarding her whereabouts. We are now engaged to be married. Thank you so much for playing a part in our reunion.

She lives in Beaumont with her husband, Gary.

Museum of Fine Arts Houston

Alumni enjoyed a tour of the Kempegowda House exhibit after a lecture on the paintings visited the collection delivered by Donna Mecart, professor or art, in the Glassell School of Art.

1. Ed ’66 and Renee Heathcock and George Moore
2. Shopify ’72 and Daphne Osborne; Jake and Brian Jensen
3. Nancy (Brooks) Beld ’79, Robert ’10 and Cameron Collier
4. Lue (House) Ritchie ’85, Joan ’85 and Karen Walker
5. Angela ’65 and Charlotte McCreary
6. Mike and Beth Hanks
7. Ernie ’70, Bruce ’76 and Linda (Embs) Moore
8. Erika ’74 and Sandy Dickerson
9. Karen and Joy Bernhardt ’07
10. Benetta Ernesteen and Michelle (Holbrook) ’90, B.S. computer science, ’90,

11. Luke ’74 and Sarah Cole and Linda (Bouma) Lillien ’75, 12. Mike Hinck ’76 and family
13. Janice Ypsilantis and Lisa (Gris) Stone ’82, 14. Stephen ’72 and Dana Håkansson

Museum of Fine Arts Houston

Class of 1965 Reunion

11. Luke ’74 and Sandy Dickerson
12. Mike and Beth Hanks
13. Janice Ypsilantis and Lisa (Gris) Stone ’82, 14. Stephen ’72 and Dana Håkansson

She lives in Beaumont. She is assistant superintendent for research, planning and evaluation at the Beaumont school district, where she lives.

Peter ’69, M.S. biology, studied a scientist in health administration at Tulane University International and was awarded one of the University of Texas Regents Outstanding Teacher Awards. He is associate professor and director of the graduate program in diagnostic genetics and -the molecular diagnostics program in molecular genetic technology at MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, where he lives.

S.C. ’71, B.S. industrial engineering, earned his degree from the University of Houston in Austin, where he lives. He works for the United Parcel Service as Area Pacific regional senior industrial engineering manager.

Liu Ting ’95, M.S. engineering sciences, is diesel locomotive analyst for SRAC in World LLC in Venice, Calif., where she lives with her aunt, Brenda ’94, M.M. music.

Loyal donors are the cornerstone of Lamar’s many successes. Support from alumni and friends of Lamar continues to be a critical component of our mission to prepare students for leadership and lifelong learning in a multicultural world.

In order to show our gratitude to Lamar’s most loyal donors, the Mirabeau Society has been established at Lamar University. The Mirabeau Society recognizes donors for the number of years they have given to Lamar. Donors are recognized in six categories, beginning with those who have given in five to nine different years to those donors who have supported Lamar in more than 30 different years.

Please visit advancement.lamar.edu/mirabeau-society to see the full list of Mirabeau Society members.
An evening of jazz

Jake Tortoreca ’76, owner of Rao’s Bakery and Coffee Café, hosted more than 100 alumni at the Beaumont Café for food, drink and jazz, courtesy of Lumar Jazz Band, July 26.


00s

Saulie Segal ’00, M.S., chemical engineering sciences, is senior product marketing manager for AMR. He lives in San Jose, Calif.

Cherie Sylver ’01, B.S. sociology, coaches the 2012 Outstanding Elementary Teacher in the state. She lives in Port Neches.

Stacey (Kight) McCall ’01, B.S. marketing, has been promoted to shareholding group truck rental manager for Enterprise in Tulsa. She lives in Bartlesville.

Jeffrey Dale ’00, B.S. manufacturing science, teaches in the Nederland school district. She lives in Pflugerville.

Lindy (McIntyre) Brand ’96, B.S. nursing, works for Northshore Urgent Care Center in Armon, where she lives with her husband, Joffrey.

Laurie Deak ’96, B.S. sociology, is an assistant football coach at East Chambers High School. She lives in Hamshire.

Beth (Phat) Daniel ’95, A.S. education, ’96, B.A.S. applied arts and sciences, earned an educational doctorate from Nova Southeastern University. She lives in New York, N.Y.

Lisa (Legg) Anderson ’98, B.S. social work, M.A. counseling and development, is director of social services for The Boulevard at Brookside in Lufkin, where she lives.

Carolyn (Bingman) Temple ’95, B.B.A. office administration, M.Ed. educational technology leadership, is a CTIE program coordinator for Region 9 Educational Service Center. She lives in Humble.

Stacey (Young) McCull ’97, B.S. nursing, earned a master’s degree in health care administration from LeTourneau University. She is a nursing supervisor at Lamar University and lives in Orange.

James Owens ’97, B.S. computer science, is a senior software engineer for Harman Eech and lives in Frisco with his wife, Christie.

Vince (Roush) Robel ’97, B.S. sociology, is director of community service and survival learning at Marymount Manhattan College in New York, N.Y., where he lives with his husband, Kenneth. They were married in Cape Coral, Fla., in July.

Lori Sugg Andrews ’98, B.S. general studies, is a senior solutioning consultant in Orange, where she lives with her husband, Travis.

Jeff Coles ’98, B.S. knowledge, earned a master’s degree from Stephen F. Austin State University and is a manager of the Research, Adv., school district, where he lives with his wife, Carla.

Tom Keith ’98, B.S. mechanical engineering, is a senior engineer for the American Bureau of Shipping in Houston. He lives in Humble.

Arthur (Michael) Squire ’98, B.A. English, earned a master’s degree in technical communications from Texas State University and is an applications writer at SageStreet. Milton Hamrouz and his wife, Annet, in Fort Worth, died 99, B.S. economics, ’98. He works for FedEx as a software architect.

Jalise Conner ’98, B.B.A. accounting, is a group truck rental manager for Enterprise Rent-a-car in Lewisville. His team was awarded the Exceptional Achievement Award for the second year. He lives in Frisco.

EARL THOMPSON ’61, B.S. PHYSICS

When I was at Lamar majoring in physics, we were required to also get a major in math. It also paid off well for me during my four years in the Air Force as a research engineer in aircraft navigation and guidance control systems and my 37 years at NASA as a flight controller in mission control for the Apollo, Skylab and Shuttle missions as a manager for major programs.

SERENA THOMPSON ’65, B.S. MATHEMATICS

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Treasures of Southern Africa
Cape Town, Robben Island, Themburuzi Game Preserve, Johannesburg, Roos Rail Journey to Victoria Falls
October 22 - November 5, 2013

Northern Spain
Barcelona & San Sebastian also including Penedes, Zaragoza, Bilbao and Pamplona
May 26 - June 4, 2013

Jewels of Antique Italy
—Cannes to Venice—
cruising the Ligurian, Tyrrhenian, Mediterranean and Adriatic seas
Parts of call along the French Riviera, Italy, Albania, Greece and Croatia
May 26 - June 8, 2013
Having worked for a free exploration and production oil and gas companies during my career, I am currently vice president of Bucksheter Petroleum LLC. I'm now retired and live in the Cranbrook Mountains of Kent County, Calif., on my 120-acre farm in Bakkenfield. I have four kids—three boys, one girl—and four grandkids. I enjoy the great outdoors: backpacking, fishing, the scenery, the wildlife on my ranch and working my animals, peppers, tomatoes, apricots, nectarine, cherry, prune, almond, walnut, pecan, blackberry, raspberry, and blueberry orchard. I'm also an avid car nut and usually drive one of my antiques—and 25 Chevy coupes, a 25 Chevy pickup truck road (400 + horsepower) 50 Ford 2-door sedan (the car I drove in high school...I still have it), and a 12’字符串 Larry, just as much as I enjoy my geology professors: Eveland, Trennison, Aronson, Davis. Regrettably, some have probably passed on by now, but they were tops! That’s why I have done so well throughout my career.


Claudia Ludwig’s first thoughts when contemplating her ultimate career path were directed toward the stars as an astronaut. Her career focus eventually shifted from those ninth-grade dreams of being an astronomer. Her career focus eventually shifted from those ninth-grade dreams of being an astronomer. Her career focus eventually shifted from those ninth-grade dreams of being an astronomer. Her career focus eventually shifted from those ninth-grade dreams of being an astronomer. Her career focus eventually shifted from those ninth-grade dreams of being an astronomer. Her career focus eventually shifted from those ninth-grade dreams of being an astronomer. Her career focus eventually shifted from those ninth-grade dreams of being an astronomer. Her career focus eventually shifted from those ninth-grade dreams of being an astronomer. Her career focus eventually shifted from those ninth-grade dreams of being an astronomer. 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O rlando C ervantes nam ed w omen’s soccer coach  

Orlando Cervantes

Athletic Director Jason Henderson nam ed Orlando Cervantes as head w omen’s soccer coach Aug. 16. Cervantes has spent the past two seasons as an assistant coach at Indiana University.

“We look forward to great things to come from Orlando and the w omen’s soccer program,” Henderson said. It is the first Division I head coaching job for Cervantes, who has been a head coach at NCAA programs Holy Names University and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

“It’s a challenge I’ve been waiting for. I w anted to be a head coach at Division I,” Cervantes said. He becomes the third w omen’s soccer coach in Lamar histo- ry. The Lady Cardinals are coming off their best season ever, posting a 9-8-2 overall record and finishing third in the Southland Conference with a 6-2-1 mark.

Prior to his stint at Indiana, Cervantes was an assis- tant coach at Cal Poly, where he helped the Mustangs win a Big West Conference championship. His first job as a head coach was at Holy Names University for three seasons. Cervantes led the team to a pair of top three conference finishes in his first two seasons.

T opper C ogan nam ed assistant w omen’s soccer coach  

Topper Cogan

Cogan comes to Lamar from Southland Conference rival Sam Houston State University, where he served as assistant w omen’s soccer coach for the past four seasons. He helped Sam Houston qualify for the Southland Conference tournament in three of his four sea- sons. Cogan played collegiate soccer at Miami of Ohio and Houston Baptist. At Houston Baptist, he set school records for career shutouts, consecutive shutouts and career goals-against average. Cogan earned his bachelor’s degree in psychology with a minor in health from Texas Tech in 2005. In addition to his duties at Lamar, Cogan serves as the head coach of the Texas Strikers, a professional indoor team that will play duties at Lamar, Cogan serves as the head coach of the Texas Strikers, a professional indoor team that will play in Beaumont starting in December.

Football exp ands horizons  

In 2010, Lamar faced the daunting challenge of fielding a football team for the first time in more than two decades. The challenge continued in 2011 when the Cardinals squared off against a full slate of Southland Conference competition.

Then came the 2012 season when Lamar upped the ante by tak- ing on Football Bowl Subdivision teams for the first time since reinstat- ing the program. Lamar opened the season at former conference rival University of Louisiana-Lafayette and then travelled to Oahu to take on Hawaii for the first time in school history.

While the two games proved to be tough on the field, the experience gained will not only help the Cardinals this year but in upcoming seasons as they compete against bigger schools.

The trip to Hawaii also allowed most of the players to experience a part of the world that they had never visited and might not otherwise have seen were it not for their association with Lamar football. For many of the players, it was also their first time on an airplane.

In addition to play on the field, the entire team also got a chance to visit Pearl Harbor and see history come to life at the USS Arizona Memorial. Head Coach Ray Woodard stressed the importance of visiting Pearl Harbor on the trip, and the players were able to take away an appreciation for the site.

Quick H its

As Lamar gets ready to host the 2012 Southland Cross Country Championships, the team will be getting familiar with a new distance coach as Head Coach Troy Clark announced the hiring of Darren Gauson in September. Gauson, a native of Edinburgh, Scotland, previously coached and competed for Butler, helping them to a 14th consecutive Horizon League Men’s Cross Country title. He’ll be looking to do the same in Beaumont as the Cardinal men have six in a row. He’ll also coach the women, who are looking to return to the form that helped them win three straight titles from 2004-06.

Jim Giligan and the Lamar baseball staff are excited about the 2013 season, and with strong summers from Jude Vidrine, Garrett Aukrey and Brad Picha, they have reasons to be. The trio turned heads in the Texas League and Valley League, and Perfect Game USA named them among the top prospects in their respective league. Vidrine starred for the Victoria Generals in the Texas League, earning a spot and homering twice in the All-Star Game. Both Aukrey and Picha competed for the Winchester Royals.

Senior golfer Julie Aime picked up her third career victory as she took home medalist honors at the ULm Fred Marx Invitational Sept. 25. A two-time, All Southland Conference selection, Aime finished with a 2-under-par 214 total at Bayou Desiard Country Club.

Aime continued her strong play with a tie for second place just one week later as the Lady Cardinals took home the team title at the Bob Hurley Auto ORU Shootout. Lamar won the tournament by 24 strokes over host Oral Roberts as Aime, junior Katelyn McDougal and sophomore NgHi Ngue each finished in the Top 10. It is the third tournament victory for Lamar in its last seven events.
Lady Cards hit it out of the park

The return of softball to Lamar University got off to a rousing start as a standing-room only crowd packed Ford Park Sept. 22 as the Lady Cardinals hosted Texas Woman’s University in an exhibition doubleheader.

Lamar, which will play a full schedule this spring as a member of the Southland Conference, earned a tie and a win against Texas Woman’s University in the doubleheader, the first softball games for the Lady Cardinals since Lamar dropped the sport after the 1987 season.

“It was like Christmas in September for me,” Lamar softball Coach Holly Bruder said. “I was so excited to finally be able to coach in a game again. It was a fantastic atmosphere, and I was happy with the way we played.”

The Lamar roster features 19 players from eight states. The Lady Cardinals have 11 freshmen and eight transfers from the junior college ranks.

“We’re definitely a young team,” Bruder said. “But what we lack in experience we make up for in work ethic and enthusiasm. We’re going to keep getting better.”

The Lady Cardinals are scheduled to play more than 50 games this spring, starting with the season opener on Feb. 9, when UTSA comes to Ford Park for a doubleheader. Lamar will play in-season tournaments at South Alabama, the University of Texas and UT Arlington. In addition to Southland Conference opponents, Lamar will face such non-conference foes as Houston, Louisiana-Monroe and Bucknell.

“I like our schedule,” Bruder said. “We have some big challenges, but I think we will be competitive. We are definitely going to be fun to watch.”

The LADY CARDINALS will play all of this season’s home games at Ford Park.

The Cardinals edged Stephen F. Austin 67.5-65.5 to win the Men’s All-Sport trophy. Combined with the 61.5 points scored by the Lady Cardinals, Lamar finished fourth overall in the Southland Conference Commissioner’s Cup standings.

“We are very proud of the year that all of our student-athletes had,” said Athletics Director Jason Henderson. “We are proud of the work done on the field and especially in the classroom by our student-athletes. It is a great sign of the quality student-athletes, staff, and coaches that we have at Lamar and the support of Dr. Jimmy Simmons and the entire Lamar family for our continued success.”

The Southland Conference all-sports trophies are awarded annually for men’s and women’s competition based on a 12-point system for all conference sports. Point values are 12, 11, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1, pending place of finish. Regular-season standings are used for sports that have a conference tournament. The Commissioner’s Cup is awarded to the university compiling the highest combined total of men’s and women’s all-sports points.

Lamar, which also picked up a third-place finish in men’s basketball, won its league-leading 24th title in men’s golf and its sixth-straight championship in men’s cross country. The Lady Cardinals were fifth overall in the Women’s All-Sport standings after getting third-place finishes in soccer, cross country and golf for their three highest league finishes.

Lamar will also be able to add points starting next spring when softball officially begins play.
From Wildcatter Weekends to daily forays into living history, Lamar’s Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum is the place to be for education and entertainment. Cardinal Cadence asked museum director Mark Osborne for an update on growth, outreach and innovations at the museum.

Q: What is the significance of the museum? 
A: The discovery of oil at Spindletop on Jan. 10, 1901, truly was epic. Texas emerged as an industrial powerhouse, fueling everything from cars to trains to ships and factories. The story we tell at the museum is also epic with great characters, like P tiltto Higgins and Capt. Anthony Lucas. While the ideas are somewhat early in development at the time, we will be growing in ways that, ultimately, will make us even more significant to the university and the surrounding community.

Q: What are the most important accomplishments since you became director in March 2017? 
A: The accomplishment that is most important to me is putting together a community of people who work to make the museum the very best. Besides our paid staff, we have a small, but active, group of volunteers. Plus, we have reconvened a museum advisory council, which will begin meeting in November. Then there are friends and advocates in the community like our museum and tourism colleagues who have supported and promoted what we’ve been doing.

Q: How has the number of visitors increased? 
A: By the end of fiscal year 2012 (August 2012), we counted 8,500 visitors – a 30 percent increase over fiscal year 2011. The increase is, in part, a result of a major increase in special events, advertising, media attention and a general openness, if you will, to be available as a meeting space, especially, to Lamar students, faculty and staff.

Q: What are some of the events you have instituted? 
A: When I arrived at the museum, I often heard that people didn’t know we were even open. So, with the help of our education coordinator, we put together the monthly Wildcatter Weekends, which centered on a theme, like buttons or cars or kites. This year, the Wildcatter Weekends are more about the Spindletop story. In October, we celebrated the Hamill Brothers, talking with children about setting goals and, like the Hamills, never giving up. Other events include the annual Spindletop Anniversary Celebration in January, which will have a novel twist in 2013; The Boomtown Ruckus in April celebrating Beaumont before the oil boom; and Great Outdoors Day in June will get families outdoors, flying kites, playing games and more.

Q: What is your vision for Gladys City? 
A: Ultimately, the vision for the museum will need to come from a conversation with our many stakeholders, but, for now I want us to be the very best we can be. Conservation efforts are a first step. Over the next year, we will be doing much to improve the overall guest experience through better exhibits and programming. In the long term, Gladys City can, and should be, a real asset to Lamar. I can see a day when the museum functions as a living laboratory for Lamar students and faculty across disciplines, including history; the arts, business, consumer science, engineering and education.

Preserving the past
The primary purpose of any museum is stewardship. “Our job is to care for the objects – and, in our case, buildings – so that they may continue to educate and be used by future generations,” said Mark Osborne. “Our goal this year is to improve all aspects of conservation and care.”

First, the museum repurposed the old information center/gift shop into a Conservation Lab, a semi-public space where museum staff can update collections records, perform minor cleaning and repairs of objects and educate guests on conservation efforts and challenges in the museum. In October, as part of this effort, the museum hosted a textile conservator who assessed the condition of more than 100 pieces of clothing, quilts, needlepoint work and more. “In early 2013, we plan to have a wood conservator on-site to assess all of the wood furnishings in the buildings,” Osborne said. “Likewise, in the spring, we will be installing high quality window shades in most of the buildings to cut down on the amount of UV light to which the objects are exposed.

Another Lucas ‘discovery’
A fortuitous discovery added a whole new dimension to a weekend honoring Capt. Anthony F. Lucas—namesake for the history-changing oil gusher that blew in Jan. 10, 1901, at Spindletop. During Anthony Lucas Day Sept. 8, Lamar’s Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum celebrated Lucas’s Sept. 9, 1855, birthday with an exhibit of some of his recently discovered correspondence and photos, dating from 1899 to 1910. Lucas was a mining engineer considered to be the father of modern petroleum reservoir engineering. “These papers had never been seen before by the public,” said Osborne. “It wasn’t until we started reading through them that we came across letterhead showing they were from other historical figures from Spindletop, including the Hamill brothers, who actually did the drilling.”
Preserving the art of printing

The heritage of T.A. Lamb & Son, Printers – founded six years before the Lucas gusher of 1901 – lives on in a new exhibit at Lamar’s Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum.

Thomas K. Lamb Jr., the last president of the family business, preserved a full set of printing and typeset machines in hopes of finding a place to display and educate future generations about a dying trade.

Four years ago, Lamb received support from the university to open a “print shop” in the museum and immediately began working toward that goal. The project received broad support, with contributions from individuals, members of the Lamb family, businesses and local foundations, including the Mamie McFaddin-Ward Heritage Foundation, Foundation for Southeast Texas and H.E. & Kate Dishman Foundation.

“It’s a great historical exhibit and it’s important to understand how the evolution of printing occurred,” said K.Lamb. “The exhibit features two-hand-fed Chandler and Price platen jobbing presses, a functional Linotype, two stone composition tables, the extensive engraving collection, as well as a binder, punch, perforator and other machines used in the print shop. The largest and most technologically advanced machine is the Linotype, which would create a casting of a full line of type in lead in a process known as “hot metal” typesetting.

“It is an absolutely amazing machine,” Lamb said. “Otmar Ungewitter invented it in the 1880s, and the newspapers were quick to snap up Linotype machines because it was so much faster. Thomas Edison is credited with calling the Linotype the eight wonder of the world.

As printing moved to offset, Lamb said, “You no longer needed all these cases of type and the great time it took to put together a printed piece.

“For future generations it will be important to understand how the evolution of printing occurred.”

—TOM LAMB

Doing things her way

A little more than 25 years of moving from associate to shareholder to department chair in other law firms, including a stint as assistant attorney general in the Finance Division of the Texas Office of the Attorney General, Elizabeth March ’91 unlocked her entrepreneurial spirit and established her own Austin-based law firm in 2010. The March Law Firm specializes in labor and employment law, however, specializing in such a broad field of law often leads to a natural overlap into commercial law as well.

“I enjoy the freedom of having my own boutique practice and running my own firm because I think it’s best,” the Port Arthur native said. “As a business owner and the wife of a business owner, I certainly understand the challenges my business clients face in today’s volatile global economy, and I am proud to be able to offer my clients the attentive service and expertise they deserve.”

A 1981 accounting graduate and a 1984 graduate of Baylor Law School, she isn’t the only Lamar graduate in her family. Two older siblings are also Lamar alumni—Nancy (Nissim) ’75, also an accounting major, and Earl Marsh ’71, ’82, who graduated with a degree in mechanical engineering. He returned in 1982 to become the third member of the Marsh clan to earn the bachelor of business administration degree in accounting from Lamar.

“We attended Lamar basically because it was close to home, but we later found out the individual attention and guidance we all received was invaluable for us,” she said. “The faculty in the accounting department in particular was such a positive influence on us in so many ways.”

Marsh is one of only a handful of attorneys who is board certified by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization in both labor and employment law and civil trial law, a designation that indicates she has specialized knowledge and a proven high level of experience and expertise. Her experience was a factor in gaining the highest AV Martindale-Hubbell ranking possible; a peer-reviewed ranking resource for “go-to” lawyers in cities across the country indicating high ethical standards and professional abilities. She has been recognized as a Texas Super Lawyer for the years 2003, 2004 and 2008-2012, a distinction that represents only the top five percent of all attorneys in Texas. Marsh also made the list of Texas Super Lawyers for the years 2009-2012 in the Corporate Counsel Edition.

Contemplating the future of the firm, Marsh says the next natural progression will be to hire additional attorneys to handle more cases. The recent recession and the resultant high level of unemployment have provided a significant increase in labor and employment law cases. The process of identifying attorneys with the credentials and experience the demands has already begun. Her goal is to expand the personnel at the firm during the first half of 2013. In preparation for the expansion, Marsh recently purchased an office building downtown, Austin that gives her firm room to grow and is conveniently located near the state and federal courthouses.

When time permits, she enjoys traveling with her husband, Bill Einhaus. He founded a successful company that imports and exports flooring products from around the world. His business has broadened Marsh’s legal practice and exposed her to a variety of interesting international legal and business customs, especially in China. They are looking forward to traveling to China early next year to attend the International floor show in Shanghai, one of the most unusual places they have visited, she said. Her most memorable excursion was their honeymoon in France. She described driving through the French wine country and the French Alps as a “magical experience.” A close second would be a trip to Scandinavia with her mother shortly after graduating from Lamar. Her mother’s Norwegian descent gave her the experience a special significance. Aside from also enjoying cruises with day trips to Honduras and throughout Central America and to Italy in the Mediterranean, they also enjoy traveling a little closer to home.

“We have always enjoyed taking the Harley for long rides through the Texas Hill Country in recent years,” she said with a chuckle. “But now that I have a convertible, the Harley has some serious competition.”

One of her many favorite memories about Lamar was a particularly influential Spanish instructor who was originally from Cuba, she said. She was invited to his home on several occasions for traditional Cuban meals with his family. Those experiences afforded her the opportunity to learn more about the Spanish language and culture. According to Marsh, that is just one of the many examples of how her Lamar education was so much more than just the traditional lessons in a classroom. —LA
Spark of invention burns bright
by Brian Sattler

It is an entrepreneurial epicenter— a world-class business with far reaching implications—found in unpretentious buildings that belie the cutting-edge research and state-of-the-art manufacturing within.

That business is Helena Laboratories Corp, whose research and product development has led to more than 200 patents, touched the lives of millions, and sparked break-through discoveries that have shaped modern medicine.

Helena Labs was founded by Tipton ’62 and Ann Golias and is the premier manufacturer of automated gel electrophoresis systems for serum proteins, immunofixation, cholesterol and hemoglobin analysis and more. Helena products have helped test a half-billion people for blood disorders.

Tipton Golias grew up in Galveston, and the family moved to Beaumont in 1956 where he began attending French High School. He graduated in 1959, and thanks to the generosity of well-known Beaumont entrepreneurs and philanthropists, the Golias family, he began attending Lamar on a chemistry scholarship. “I will always appreciate what the Rogers brothers did for me and for Beaumont,” Golias said.

Golias enrolled in Lamar’s pre-med program as a biology major. He’d married his high school sweetheart and with a growing family was eager to get through college quickly. He attended Lamar full time, worked as a lab technician afternoons and evenings at Hotel Dieu, a 175-bed hospital that was the precursor of Beaumont’s Christus St. Elizabeth Hospital, and took night classes. “I basically didn’t get any sleep,” Golias said.

He graduated in three years, but his responsibilities at home proved a stumbling block when he applied for medical school. Despite having the second highest score among the applicants, “They were concerned about my ability to finance my way through medical school with a family. They weren’t ready to take me under those conditions and wouldn’t let me attend and work at the same time. So I decided to go to work for a year or two and reaply later I never did.”

The family moved to Michigan where Tipton joined Aloe Scientific. He later worked for other companies in laboratory products before starting his own company in the basement of his Detroit suburb home in 1966. “I don’t know how I had the entrepreneurial spirit, but I did,” he said. “The company I worked for turned down my ideas. They had other interests that they thought were better for them, and they probably were.”

He named his company Helena Laboratories after his wife, Helen Ann. Not ready to relinquish the security a steady job seemed to provide, it took three discussions before she gave her blessing to Tipton’s desire to start the company. “The first answer was ‘No’, then ‘Maybe’ and finally, ‘Okay, just don’t let the kids starve,'” Golias said.

His first product was a hemoglobin electrophoresis buffer. Electrophoresis is the movement of dispersed particles in a fluid under the influence of a spatially uniform electric field.

“I introduced this product because it did not exist,” Golias said. “I packaged the chemicals ready to mix, making it very easy for a lab to have the very best. It was consistent, easy to use and the best anywhere.”

Three years later, with five employees, he discovered that he needed a very controlled environment to manufacture the cellulose acetate membrane needed for electrophoresis and that he would need to build his own building to make that possible. Realizing the significant investment it meant, he intended to build it only once in his lifetime, the location would be permanent.

“In the ’60s, California seemed to be the place that you ought to be,” Golias said. “Ann went along with the plan of California right up to the day before I would be taking a plane out to Los Angeles to look for a specific spot. But then, she just casually said would I mind mov- ing to Texas instead.”

Her question, prompted by a desire to live near family, prompted a ticket change. After meeting with a Houston architect, Golias drove to Beaumont to visit Ann’s parents for the evening. He shared the rough plans with his father-in-law, Ovary Moyes, who said he could build for half the cost in Beaumont. Golias took him up on the challenge and, after finding two lots off Lindbergh on Beaumont’s west side, construction began in late 1969. The building was ready in May 1970. Several rental truck trips later, Golias had moved the plant, and production in well-controlled conditions was underway.

When Helena Labs came to Texas it had about 50 products in its catalog. Today, the catalog offers more than 1,000 items. The two lots off Lindbergh have grown to 13 where the company administration and marketing is housed along with research, production and order fulfillment. Another facility on Washington Boulevard houses equipment manufacturing, electronic development and more research.

More than half of the company’s $100 million annual business is international, Golias said. Helena has been awarded the U.S. Secretary of Commerce’s “E” Award for excellence in contribution to the American economy through export operations. Helena has plants in England, Holland, Japan and Australia. The company facilities in England and Japan nearly replicate the Beaumont plant. Helena’s plant in Holland produces machines and supplies for capillary electrophoresis, while its presence in Australia is focused on sales and service. The company is also beginning to supply the Chinese market.

Several product areas drive the company. Foremost is electrophoresis. Helena makes electrophoresis products that “identify any disease state where you could see the process in a blood protein such as infectious diseases, liver diseases and some genetic diseases,” Golias said. “Many of these generate blood proteins that we can see that help us to diagnose or monitor the disease.”

Another important product is hemoglobin electrophoresis. Hemoglobin S, the type present in sickle cell disease, and Hemoglobin C, a type that does not carry oxygen well, are the most common types of abnormal hemoglobin that may be found by an electrophoretic test. “I developed the products that made sickle cell screening happen,” Golias said. “Before I got involved there wasn’t sickle cell screening. Those products started my company, and it’s still a major area today. My products and methods made sickle cell screening a reality.”

Golias is excited about the company’s work in lipoproteins, a promising area for accurately diagnosing the risks of heart disease or stroke by targeting specific lipoprotein cholesterol beyond the commonly known HDL and LDL.

“We have methods that allow laboratories to identify and assay various lipoprotein fractions,” Golias said. “‘We’re a leader in developing Lp(a) technology. It has taken the last 10 years or more for the medical community to recognize Lp(a) as a major risk factor but they are seeing it now. We are one of the leading companies in developing assays and monitors for Lp(a).”

In 2011, he was presented the coveted Lp(a) Award for specific improvements for lipoprotein electrophoresis methods. He also received the National Van Slyke Award in 2010, the highest award available in the field of clinical chemistry and laboratory medicine. An avid runner, Golias has also competed in more than 15 marathons and is a champion bridge player, competing with other champion card players via the Internet.

Golias cites two major reasons for Helena’s success—innovation and efficiency. And, he adds, “We treat our customers like we would like to be treated ourselves.”

“Stranger to innovation (his name is on 400 of the company’s more than 200 patents), he also recognizes that “you need great ideas for a product can come from an employee, a researcher scientist or a customer.”

“Our formula is really simple,” Golias said. “We believe in working hard. We are quick to develop and get a product to market. And, we back up our customers in the field.

“We have a lot of good people,” he said. He is quick to credit Lamar with a role in their excellence. Of around 450 employees in Beaumont, Helena Lab has 52 LLU graduates and many others who have taken courses, are currently enrolled, or have spouses or children at Lamar.

The company is also close to releasing a revolutionary new hand held device that can test a drop of blood for 10 different hemostasis assays. The device is steadily moving through the FDA approval process and the promise is very bright.

What does Golias expect for Helena Lab in the near future?

“We expect to see 50 percent growth or more,” Golias said. “There are very significant things ahead.”
JUDGE WILFORD FLOWERS ’72

Wilford Flowers was born in Port Arthur, Texas, and is married to Simone Talma Flowers. He earned his B.B.A. in economics from Lamar University in 1972 and his J.D. from the University of Texas School of Law in 1976. Judge Flowers served as assistant district attorney for Travis County, assistant attorney general for the State of Texas and first assistant county attorney for Travis County. He was in private practice in Austin until Oct. 1, 1987, the date of his appointment as judge of Travis County Court at Law No. 6. As the result of the 1990 elections, Judge Flowers began his first term as judge of the 147th District Court in Travis County on Jan. 1, 1991, serving until his retirement Dec. 31, 2010. He now serves by assignment in Texas as a senior district judge. In 1986, the Austin Young Lawyer Association named him Outstanding Young Lawyer; in 2009, he received the Outstanding Jurist Award from the Texas Bar Foundation; and in 2011, he received the Distinguished Lawyer Award from the Austin Bar Association. In 1991, the Alumni Advisory Board’s Distinguished Alumni Awards Committee selected five outstanding alumni as recipients of the prestigious annual award. These five exceptional Cardinals will be honored during a ceremony Feb. 22: Judge Wilford Flowers ’72, Bob Jones ’73, Jerry Reese ’66, Bill Scott ’70 and Susan Williams Simmons ’68.

Lamar University alumni and friends submitted nominations based on criteria that include notable accomplishments in the nominee’s chosen profession. The honorees also display integrity and character that inspire pride in the university and its alumni and have demonstrated recognition of the importance of Lamar in their careers, deeds and actions. The committee meets in mid-September each year to select the honorees; nominations are accepted year round at: Alumni@Lamar.edu.

LU salutes exceptional Cardinals

The Alumni Advisory Board’s Distinguished Alumni Awards Committee selected five outstanding alumni as recipients of the prestigious annual award. These five exceptional Cardinals will be honored during a ceremony Feb. 22: Judge Wilford Flowers ’72, Bob Jones ’73, Jerry Reese ’66, Bill Scott ’70 and Susan Williams Simmons ’68.

Bob Jones ’73

A native of Port Arthur, Bob Jones graduated in 1973 with a B.S. in civil engineering with the environmental track and later earned his master of engineering degrees from UT in Austin. The Texas Water Quality Board hired him in July 1973. Jones advanced at the state, eventually becoming chief engineer of the Construction Grants and Water Quality Planning Division. In 1976, Bob met and married Beth, his wife of 37 years. The couple has two children. Recognizing the opportunity to create a business helping industry and local governments deal with the ever-increasing volume of environmental regulation, Jones left the state in 1982 with another engineer and formed the consulting company, Jones and Nuese. By the early 90s, it was one of the largest independently owned environmental consulting companies in the state, with more than 280 employees in seven offices, including offices in Louisiana and Mexico. The company was purchased and merged with another engineering company, RMT. Jones stayed with RMT for two years, and, in 1997, Jones and a friend formed another consulting company, JD Consulting. JDC grew to be a preferred provider of environmental services to many Fortune 100 process industries, including most of the biggest industries in southeast Texas. In 2007, the London-based international consulting company RPS purchased JDC. Jones stayed with RPS until February 2012. In March, Jones formed RJ Consulting, and began working part-time for some of his long-time industry clients. During the last 20 years, Jones has been active in Boy Scouts, YMCA and Oak Hill Haiti Basebal, as well as in numerous other Austin-area organizations. He serves on the College of Engineering Advisory Council, as a trustee of the Lamar University Foundation, and was a member of the Lamar Board of Regents from 1993 until 1996.

Jerry Reese ’66

Jerry Reese is an entrepreneur who started his first business, Colton Companies, while he was still a student at Lamar University. Reese established Bo-Mac Construction Co. in 1966, the year he graduated from Lamar University with his B.B.A. in economics. He built the company into a hugely successful and diverse business enterprise, selling it in 2007. Reese has been actively involved at Lamar University since his graduation, both as a donor and a volunteer. He currently serves on the following Lamar University boards and cabinets: Investing In The Future Campaign Cabinet, Lamar University Foundation board of trustees, College of Business Advisory council, Friends of the Arts board, the Reese Construction Management advisory board. He and wife, Sheila, were the Le Grand Bal honorees in 2007 for their work with Friends of the Arts. Reese has also been an active member of the community and has served on the boards of the Beaumont Chamber of Commerce, St. Elizabeth Hospital and the Art Museum of Southeast Texas. Reese is also involved in dozens of business, cultural and social organizations in this region. In 2007, recognizing the need for market-responsive programs that reflect southeast Texas perspectives, Reese donated the funds to establish the construction management program at Lamar University. The unique nature of this program allows Lamar to provide construction management graduates with the education to compete nationally for careers in the field. The program was developed in response to regional market needs and as a way to further enhance the national reputation of Lamar University. The combination of Reese’s entrepreneurial spirit and his commitment to his alma mater led him to make his timely and generous contribution. The establishment of this program will have a lasting and profound effect on Lamar University: Jerry and Sheila Reese live in Houston. They have three children and 11 grandchildren.

Bill Scott ’70

Bill Scott earned his bachelor of science in government at Lamar University in 1970 and has maintained strong ties with LU as a member of the Lamar University Investing in the Future Campaign Cabinet, Lamar University Foundation board of trustees and the College of Business board of advisors. In 2010, the governor appointed Scott as a regent for The Texas State University System. In 2008, Scott and his wife, Gay, were recognized by their alma mater as Le Grand Bal honorees. Beginning with the startup of the railroad construction business in the mid-70s, Scott has for more than 30 years focused his time on identifying, developing, owning and operating marine bulk terminal facilities, serving companies including Shell Oil, Mitsubishi, ExxonMobil, Cenex, LyondellCigro Refining, Valero Refining, ConocoPhillips/PDVSA (M erey Sw eeny, L P ), V ulcan M aterials, M artin Energy, Conoco, ExxonMobil, and Kinder Morgan. Scott has been a tireless advocate for Lamar University throughout the community and has worked with faculty, students, alumni and friends of LU to enhance the impact of Lamar University on students’ lives and on the larger community. Simmons has dedicated thousands of hours and used her vast knowledge of decorating and design to ensure that remodeling and construction projects meet exacting standards and that individual project design and layouts have the greatest impact and serve to complement the campus as a whole. Her dedicated efforts have literally transformed the face of the University and have helped to create an unmatched university learning and living environment. She and Jimmy have three children and six grandchildren (with three more grandchildren due in early 2013).

SUSAN WILLIAMS SIMMONS ’68

Susan Simmons is a 1968 graduate of Lamar University. She earned a B.S. in elementary education, and, after graduation, taught at Lamar Elementary in Beaumont until she founded her own retail operation, The Caterpillar, a children’s specialty store that she managed for eight years. She then moved on to serve as vice president in charge of decorating and space planning for CODVA, the family construction company owned and operated by her husband, James. For the last 25 years, Simmons has been a highly successful Beaumont Realtor. Her most dedicated efforts and greatest impact, however, has been with Lamar University. She has been actively involved in the life of Lamar University since 1970, when her husband accepted his first teaching position at LU. The list of the areas that have benefited from her involvement and generous support is too numerous to name. She has served as a tireless ambassador for Lamar University throughout the community and has worked with faculty, students, alumni and friends of LU to enhance the impact of Lamar University on students’ lives and on the larger community. Simmons has dedicated thousands of hours and used her vast knowledge of decorating and design to ensure that remodeling and construction projects meet exacting standards and that individual project design and layouts have the greatest impact and serve to complement the campus as a whole. Her dedicated efforts have literally transformed the face of the University and have helped to create an unmatched university learning and living environment. She and Jimmy have three children and six grandchildren (with three more grandchildren due in early 2013).

The Lamar University Distinguished Alumni Awards are scheduled for Friday, Feb. 22, 2013. Tickets for the dinner will be available beginning January 7, 2013, by visiting Lamar.edu/Alumni.