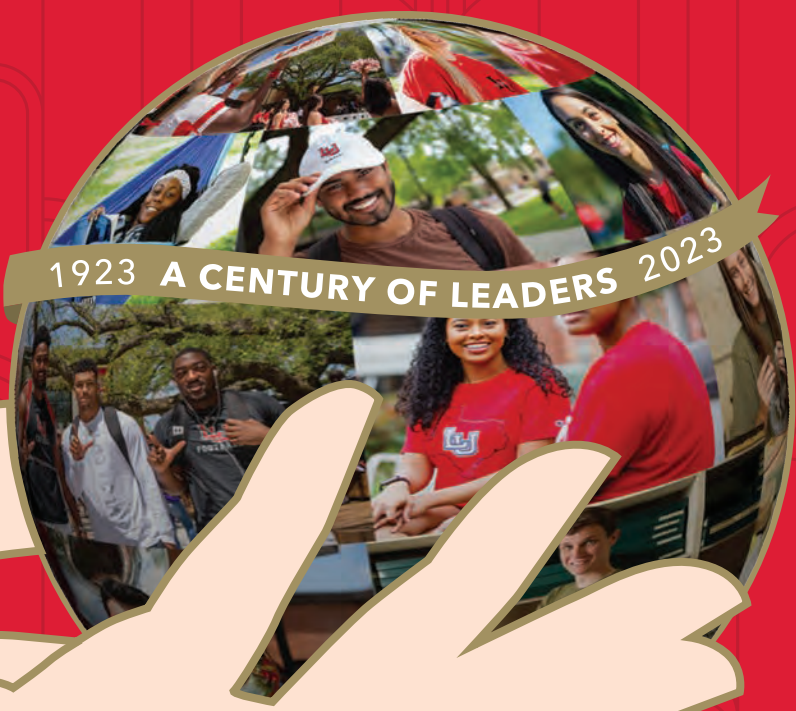


CARDINAL
CADENCE
THE MAGAZINE OF LAMAR UNIVERSITY

VOL. 51, NO. 3 & 4 | FALL 2023



| FROM THE **PRESIDENT** |



I hope you're as excited as I am to read this special Centennial Edition of *Cardinal Cadence*. In this issue, we're honoring Lamar University's founders, who set the stage for our success a century ago, as well as the countless visionaries whose work keeps propelling us forward into a promising future. You'll find several interesting feature stories about our history that you won't want to miss.

Lamar University has always been a place of big ideas and forward thinking. Our founders envisioned an educational institution where innovation could thrive and where young professionals could learn to lead. So our centennial celebration isn't just a trip down memory lane. It's our launch pad, focusing our gaze on the future and positioning us for a great second century.

With that centennial spirit in mind, I'm really excited to share the news of a transformative \$5 million gift from one of our alumni, Mrs. Carolyn J. Keating '67.

Mrs. Keating's generous donation is dedicated to finding, inspiring and preparing the next generation of engineers. She believes in supporting university outreach programs aimed at sparking the interest of middle and high school students in engineering careers. She also recognizes that undergraduate engineering majors need to hone both their technical skills and their communication skills through hands-on experiences that will set them apart in their careers. Stay tuned for a feature story in the next issue of *Cardinal Cadence* that will showcase the new Carolyn J. Keating Center for Academic and Career Success in the College of Engineering. The center will house a range of initiatives, programs and scholarships aimed at increasing the number of highly qualified engineers in the region.

This major gift isn't just a milestone; it's a catalyst for progress. Mrs. Keating's donation not only will improve engineering education here at Lamar University but will also boost our University's national reputation.

As we continue to celebrate our 100th birthday this year, I have to say "thank you" to each one of our alumni, donors and friends. Your support has been our compass. Here's to a future filled with opportunity and success.

With Cardinal Pride,


Jaime R. Taylor, President



LAMAR UNIVERSITY

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Class Notes

A CENTURY OF LEADERS

Once upon a time, it is said, a Brahma turned into a Cardinal—whether through some prognosticating wizard's twirling wand or through the sheer force of will transmogrifying a yearning to fly, we will never know. Regardless, that Cardinal harbored a yen to spread knowledge far and wide in the land. The King and Queen of Cardinal Country dubbed the Cardinal, Big Red, and his fair lady, Lu. Big Red and Lu dearly loved their village of Lamar, its young scholars, the wise tutors, devoted staff and many friends and family too numerous to count. Cardinal Country's guardian angel gifted Big Red and Lu with quickness and good cheer, and they appeared all around the land, bestowing on students prizes of great value, boons to the men and women who performed illustrious feats of daring on field and court and stage, rallying audiences with hurrahs in jubilation. To this great day, the people of Cardinal Country are imbued with a steadfast desire to encourage the health and wealth of every visitor to its land and a stalwart commitment to make ready each and every young graduate for a brilliant and triumphant good morrow, rousing in them a thirst for truth all lifelong. The once, current and future inhabitants of Lamar salute the 100 brimful years of yore and wave with merry salutation to welcome the coming 100 hopeful more.



1923

South Park Junior College opened Sept. 17, 125 students, 14 faculty; first mascot was the Brahmas with the school colors maroon and gray; first school newspaper called The S'Park Plug; students gathered at Wither's Pharmacy, then Highland Avenue Pharmacy before a student center was built; first men's social club was the Kollege Klub, which later became Sigma Nu



1923

1923

Louis R. Pietzch named president of South Park Junior College

The Navigator 1924 yearbook



1924

Carl W. Bingman named president; accredited by the Texas State Department of Education; first yearbook called the Navigator; first women's social club was the Rounders, later became the Revelers, precursor of Alpha Delta Pi



Student
John Gray

1925

John and Mary Gray danced the Charleston and Big Apple at Hotel Beaumont



Mary Campbell,
Dean of Women



Band, circa 1920s



Loyalty
Club

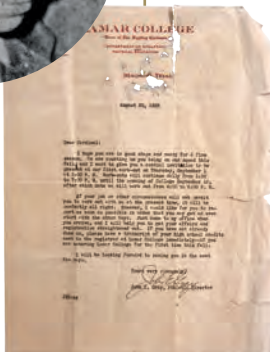
1939

Celeste Kitchen became first registrar

1930

1932

Separate facilities provided and South Park Board of Trustees changes name to Lamar College, John Gray hired as football coach and athletics director, changes mascot to the Cardinals and colors red and blue



1936

Library located in what is now Galloway Business Building, librarian was Julia Plummer for whom the University Reception Center 8th floor room is named

1938

Original 58-acre site of the current campus purchased from Texaco Oil Co. in 1938 for \$18,000

1933

Newspaper renamed Lamar Cardinal

1928
yearbook





1940

Newspaper renamed The Redbird



1944

Bess Gentry named Dean of Women, became second woman after Mary Campbell to have a building named in her honor

1951

Lamar College becomes Lamar State College of Technology; men's basketball, men's golf, and men's track and field added



1940



1941

John E. Gray named president

1942

Present-day campus purchased June 8, new quarters comprised five buildings, enrollment grew to 1,079, G.A. Wimberly Student Affairs built, Social Sciences building built, during WWII years vocational classes taught 24/7 with 15,000 people graduating from welding, shipbuilding and other short courses

1944-45

President Gray on active duty with Navy, O.B. Archer named acting president



1949

June 4, legislature approves bill supported by Congressman Jack Brooks and Lt. Gov. Allan Shivers to make Lamar College a state-supported senior college



1950



1952

F.L. McDonald named president; during his era, enrollment increased from 2,500 to 10,000 and campus size doubled with 25 buildings built including 17,150-seat stadium, Lucas Engineering, Home Economics; baseball and men's tennis added, the football field cannon named for him, Big Mac, celebrated scores until 1967

Big Mac to Celebrate Birthday With A Bang

It's the way to do names at your list

WE'VE GOT SICK

NO MORE

1953

Student Center built

1954

Academic designations become "Schools:" School of Arts and Sciences, School of Business, School of Engineering and the School of Vocations

1956

Desegregation opens enrollment to African Americans, Communication building built

1958

Geology building built, Art House built, Social and Behavioral Sciences built, Student Health Center built



1962

Graduate school established offering master's degrees in several fields; 127 students enrolled; Anthony Guillory becomes first black athlete in sports program

1963

Honors Program established, University Theatre built, volleyball added



1969

Frank A. Thomas named president, extension center in Orange opened, Eleanor Poetry Room opens, women's basketball added

1960



1959

The School of Education and the School of Fine and Applied Arts established, McDonald Gym built

1959

Lamar State College of Technology was created Sept. 1 and redesignated as Lamar College; Lamar was the first junior college in Texas to become a four-year state-supported college, School of Education formed, Music building built, Chemistry building built



1960

Administration Building built, Art building built, school colors changed to red and white

1965

Early Childhood Development Center, later Digital Learning Center, built

1966

Archer Physics built

1967

Richard W. Setzer named president, 300-lb bell donated by Santa Fe Railroad Co. and 1,000-lb bell donated by Beaumont Plating Works replace Big Mac canon



1968

Thomas M. Maes II building built, Science Auditorium built, Biology built, track facility named Ty Terrell Track



1970

School of Vocations becomes School of Technical Arts, Engineering III built, Women's Gym (later Health and Human Performance Complex A) built, Education building built



1971

Lamar State College of Technology, with enrollment of 10,874, officially becomes Lamar University Aug. 23; the designation "School" changes to "College;" extension center in Orange becomes Lamar University-Orange; first doctoral degree—D.E.—offered, The Redbird becomes the University Press



1976

Mary and John Gray Library dedicated, Spindletop Gladys City Boomtown Museum dedicated, Texas Academy and General Studies building built, McFaddin Ward Health Sciences built, Administration Building named Otho Plummer Administration Building, women's tennis added



1977

C. Robert Kemble named president, H.C. Galloway Business Building named, Engineering III named Lloyd B. Cherry Engineering, Student Center named Richard W. Setzer Student Center



1970



1972

John Gray named president for second term, Lamar University System establishes Regents' Professorship and Regent's Merit Awards

1974

College of Health Sciences established, Hayes Biology named

1975

Private Port Arthur College becomes Lamar University-Port Arthur, Speech and Hearing program established and building built



1981

Originally Cardinal Field, Vincent-Beck Baseball Stadium named; Dance Annex built; Visitor's Information Center built



1982

Theatre Arts building built

1983

Lamar University System established; Kemble named first chancellor, Dishman Art Gallery dedicated, John Gray Center built

1984

Andrew Johnson named interim president, Montagne Center built



1985

Bill J. Franklin named president, Charles A. "Pete" Wiley Rehearsal Hall named



1986

Texas Hazardous Waste Research Center established



1989

Center for Public Policy Study established, football programs adjourned



1995

Legislature approves bill merging the Lamar University System with The Texas State University System effective Sept. 1, 1995; Lamar University-Port Arthur, Lamar University-Orange and Lamar University Institute of Technology are designated separate institutions within the system; Regents' Professorship and Regents' Merit Awards renamed to University Professorship and University Merit Awards



1998

William R. Johnson named interim president, University Scholar Award established



1990

Two-year programs combined into Lamar University Institute of Technology



1991

John Idoux named interim president



1992

Brock Brentlinger named interim president, Rothwell Recital Hall named



1993

Rex Cottle named president; Ed.D. in Deaf Education established, Hydraulics Lab built

1999

James Simmons named president; Lamar University-Port Arthur, Lamar University-Orange and Lamar University Institute of Technology renamed Lamar State College-Port Arthur, Lamar State College-Orange and Lamar Institute of Technology

2000

Academic chairs established: Wade C., Sr., Della H. and Homer L. Walles Chair in Fine Arts; Conn Chair in Gifted Education; Jack Brooks Chair in Government and Public Service; William B. and Mary G. Mitchell Chair in Engineering; Texas Air Research Center established; Spindletop Gladys City Boomtown Museum Visitors Center built



2001

Academic chairs established: Michael E. and Patricia P. Aldredge Chair in Engineering, Andrew and Joyce Green Chair in Composites and Structural Engineering, Jack Gill Chair in Analytical Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, Cardinal Village 2,500-bed complex begun, current Gentry Hall built, current Morris Hall built

2003

Au.D. established



2007

David J. Beck Fellowship established, Phillip M. Drayer Department of Electrical Engineering named, partnership with Randy Best '67 established as Academic Partnerships, current Campbell Hall built, soccer added

2008

Reese Construction Management Program established, Richard L. Price Auditorium named



2009

Provost Umphrey Stadium named, W.S. "Bud" Leonard Field named, Dan F. Smith Department of Chemical Engineering named, Dan F. and Sandra A. Smith Press Box named, Coach Vernon Glass Field of Champions dedicated, Thompson Family Tennis Center named



2000



2004

Ed.D. in Educational Leadership established, current Combs Hall built

2005

Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering established, Brooks-Shivers Dining Hall built



2006

Investing in the Future: The Campaign for Lamar University launched with goal of \$50 million. Ben J. Rogers Chair in Entrepreneurship established, JoAnne Gay Dishman School of Nursing named, Sheila Umphrey Recreational Sports Center opens, B.A. in American Sign Language established

2010

Cardinal football program reestablished, Education First Federal Credit Union scoreboard built, Morgan Suites built, Beaumont Bone and Joint Sports Medicine Facility established, LU Soccer/Softball Field House built, Steinhagen Global Fellows Program established, Monroe Hall built, Florida Avenue renamed Jim Gilligan Way

2011

named Carnegie Doctoral Research University, Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music named, Dauphin Athletics Complex built, John Payton Academic Success Center created, Emma and H.D. "Tex" Strait Baseball Training Center built, Fecel Financial Center established, Charles and Eleanor Garrett Engineering Center established



2010





2013

Kenneth R. Evans named president, University Drive renamed Jimmy Simmons Boulevard, Susan and Jimmy Simmons Music Building named, Center for Death Penalty Studies established, softball reestablished

2014

Investing in the Future: The Campaign for Lamar University raises \$132 million, Rudy C. Williams Building dedicated, Herman Iles Building named, Reaud Honors College established, President's Circle established, Public Art Committee established, Office of Study Abroad created

2012

Charles and Eleanor Garrett Chair in Engineering established, first online doctoral degree established-Ed.D.



Lamar University has awarded more than 137,273 degrees and certificates in its 100-year history



2018

Richard W. Setzer Student Center and Quadrangle rebuilt, victory bell returns to W.S. "Bud" Leonard Field

2019

Science and Technology Building built, Center for Midstream Management and Science established, Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center founded, Dr. Don M. Lyle Distinguished Professorship of Electrical Engineering established, Dr. Ralph and Edna Wooster Endowed Professorship established, Robert G. and Phyllis C. Finch Endowed Professorship in Nursing established, Myrna J. and Milton J. Student Success Program established

2020



2015

Greater South Park Neighborhoods Partnership established, Center for Advances in Port Management established, President's Circle Giving Recognition established, C. W. and Dorothy Conn video screen installed at Montagne Center



2016

LU Softball Complex built, Center for History and Culture of Southeast Texas and the Upper Gulf Coast founded, Becky and Chuck Mason STEM Initiative established



2021

Jaime Taylor named president, Nancy and Kenneth Evans Welcome Center built, Center for Resiliency established, Emerson Advanced Technology Center opens

2022

Flowserve Learning Center opens, Holmes Family Endowed Professorship in Choral Activities established, William B. and Ladonna C. Schnick Pre-Med and Medical Program established

2023

Neches Federal Credit Union Arena at the Montagne Center established, Carole Keating Center for Academic and Career Success in Engineering established

2017

Wayne A. Reaud Administration Building and Honors College built, Center for Innovation, Commercialization and Entrepreneurship built, Center for Educational Innovation and Digital Learning opens, Mary Ann and Lawrence E. Faust Endowed Professorship established, Bobby and Herman Wilson Student Retention Success Center established





LAMAR UNIVERSITY
A CENTURY OF LEADERS

“Our Moment is Now!”

**Lamar University’s Centennial Campaign
Paving the way for the next 100 years**

by Jason Morton

“As we look toward our second century, now is the time to tap into our strengths and find ways to multiply their impact for the future. With each new strategic investment in research, academic programs, and internships and cooperative education, we extend the influence of Southeast Texas across the entire state and nation. We will need to think creatively about emerging economies to ensure our graduates are the trailblazers of the next century. What we do next will be transformative—because our moment is now!”

—PRESIDENT JAIME R. TAYLOR



As Lamar University celebrates a century of excellence, it embarks on an ambitious journey towards the next hundred years. Our Centennial Campaign, fueled by the unwavering support of former students, community leaders, corporate partners and individual philanthropists, aims to build upon the university's remarkable legacy and secure an even brighter future. Through our Four Pillars for Success, we strive to excel in Academic Excellence, Student Success, Strategic Growth and Championship Athletics. Lamar University seeks to create a transformative impact and empower its students and faculty to reach the highest of new heights.

Academic Excellence

At the core of Lamar University's mission lies a commitment to academic excellence. This campaign recognizes the need to continuously enhance the university's programs, facilities and resources to ensure students receive an exceptional education. Thanks to the generous support of donors, the campaign will enable the recruitment and retention of top-tier faculty who are experts and practitioners in their respective industries. By investing in faculty research, academic programs and internships, Lamar University prepares its students to be trailblazers of the 21st century, armed with the skills and knowledge to drive innovation and economic growth in Texas, the nation and abroad.

Student Success

Lamar University is dedicated to empowering students and nurturing their success. The Centennial Campaign emphasizes student success and support at the forefront of a vast array of industry needs, aiming to provide scholarships, mentorship programs and resources that enable every student to thrive in the ever-evolving disciplines of arts and sciences, education, healthcare and STEM (science, technology, engineering and math). Philanthropic support from our donors, both individual and corporate, will create opportunities for students to pursue their passions, engage in experiential learning and overcome financial barriers. By investing in student success, the campaign ensures that Lamar University remains a catalyst for upward mobility and an engine for progress across the state of Texas.

Strategic Growth

In a largely unpredictable world where students and faculty face steep challenges ahead, strategic growth will be vital for Lamar University to remain a leader in higher education. The "*Our Moment is Now*" Campaign envisions expanding the university's footprint, investing in world-class facilities and fostering partnerships

that propel our region into new frontiers. By embracing emerging economies and cultivating a culture of innovation, Lamar University prepares its graduates to navigate the challenges ahead, anticipating the future needs of industry in Texas and beyond. With each strategic investment, this campaign seeks to extend the influence of Southeast Texas, making it a hub of knowledge and progress for the next 100 years.

Championship Athletics

LU takes extreme pride in building champions through athletics, which cultivates a winning spirit on and off the field. To continue this tradition, the Centennial Campaign recognizes the importance of state-of-the-art athletic facilities. By providing the best resources, Lamar University can attract top-tier student-athletes, nurture their talent and build champions across all sports. The campaign's focus on championship athletics ensures that the university's athletic teams compete at the highest level, creating a vibrant campus culture and fostering a sense of community and pride throughout the Lamar family and all of Southeast Texas and across the state.

Over the past 100 years our former students and donors have laid a strong foundation for Lamar University's success, but sustaining that success over the next century depends strongly on the impact of giving. Corporate and individual philanthropic support will drive transformative change and provide opportunities for future generations to come. By investing in Lamar University, donors make an enduring positive difference, shaping the lives of students, supporting faculty excellence and building a stronger community. "*Our Moment is Now*" invites all to be part of this extraordinary journey and leave a legacy that will ripple through the next century and beyond. It takes all of us, so we invite all alumni and friends to consider how to make your everlasting mark on the history of this wonderful second home we all call Lamar University.



Finding *success* around the globe:

TOM LONG OF ENERGY TRANSFER

by Brooke Barnett

It was word of mouth that initially attracted Tom Long '79 to Lamar University in 1975. A good friend from his high school in Humble, Texas, had received a full scholarship to Lamar, and shared with Tom the outstanding quality of both the university and the business school.

"It was the right size college and the right type of education that made it the right fit for me," he reminisces. "The professors really made it a high-quality school. I could tell they cared about my success and preparing me for my career after college. It was very meaningful to have such outstanding mentors and people who cared about my future."

Tom fondly recalls the mentorship he received from Larry Spradley, an associate professor of business administration, was pivotal in preparing him for his career. Spradley connected Tom with internships and part-time jobs in Beaumont, which helped him gain hands-on work experience in preparation for the workplace.

"Dr. Spradley really took me under his wing. At that age, you don't even know all the things that you don't know," Tom laughs. "I always give him a lot of credit for making me feel like part of the Lamar family. He really helped me mature and grow up and gave me opportunities to gain real-life experience in business."

It was this real-life experience that Tom says set the stage for his future career in the oil and gas industry and set him on a

course for both personal and professional success. He recalls running different business scenarios in his classes at Lamar, which allowed him to learn what it actually takes to run a business. These simulations, plus his internships and work experience, helped prepare him for the working world.

"All my professors had the skill sets to talk about the real world. We had experience allocating capital, looking at sales and exploring different economic environments. It was truly the best possible learning experience. We looked at actual business scenarios and learned how the decisions you make can affect your outcomes," he recalls. "You can never be 100% prepared, but it helped me learn to listen and observe. I learned to ask the right questions, how to be a good team player and how to be a meaningful contributor to the greater good."

During his time at Lamar, Tom was a member of the Kappa Sigma fraternity. He was introduced to fellow Lamar student Meg Price at a Kappa Sigma event, a moment he says changed the course of his life. Born and raised in the Beaumont area, Meg '79 was pursuing an education degree with dreams of becoming an elementary school teacher. Tom and Meg became inseparable throughout their time at Lamar and married in 1979, just as they both were completing their degrees. Tom graduated with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting, and Meg earned a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education.

Meg also left LU well prepared for a successful career in the classroom. Lamar gave her a chance to tutor students at the university during her time as an undergraduate, which provided important experience and allowed her to help others. Meg served as a classroom teacher, assistant principal and principal in Texas public schools during her 17-year career.

Upon graduation, Tom became a certified public accountant and went to work for the Texas Eastern Gas Pipeline. The position offered him his first experience in oil and gas development, as well as his first opportunity to work internationally.

"I was born and raised in Houston, and hadn't spent much time outside of Texas," he explains. "Then, the next thing I knew, I was drilling a well in Sudan. It launched me into seeing that there is a bigger world out there. I grew up in a hurry and stepped into a lot of different roles."

That experience launched many significant projects that Tom worked on around the globe, including large projects in Saudi Arabia, Peru, Ecuador and Norway. His notable professional positions have included vice president and chief financial officer of DCP Midstream Partners LP and several executive positions with subsidiaries of Duke Energy Corp., one of the nation's largest electric power companies. Career highlights also include time as vice president and chief financial officer of Matrix Service Co. and executive vice president and chief financial officer of

Regency Energy Partners LP.

In 2015, Tom joined Energy Transfer Partners LP as the chief financial officer and became the group chief financial officer of Energy Transfer Equity LP the following year. In January 2021, he was appointed co-chief executive officer of Energy Transfer, putting him at the helm of one of America's largest and most diversified energy infrastructure companies.

"My focus is mainly on the operations and financial side of the business, including mergers and acquisitions," he adds. "I play a big role in looking at other companies in the energy infrastructure industry. We are seeing a lot of consolidation opportunities with smaller midstream companies, and I focus on evaluating and executing those opportunities for Energy Transfer."

Tom currently serves on the board of directors of Energy Transfer and USA Compression Partners LP as Chairman. He also sits on the board of directors of Texas Capital Bancshares Inc., the parent company of Texas Capital Bank. In March of 2023, he was appointed to a six-year term on the Texas State University System Board of Regents by Gov. Greg Abbott. The Texas State University System supports seven higher education institutions, including Lamar University, by providing centralized services including legal counsel, accounting, academic program planning and more.

"With all the wonderful opportunities I have had in life, it is truly an honor to give back in a meaningful way to the university system that I am so thankful for," Tom adds. "I know Gov. Abbott and the legislature take these nominations seriously and are very careful about who they choose, so it is a true privilege for me to serve. I am thrilled to be able to guide the students and educational system that plays a huge role in the success of our country."

Tom says he thinks the future of the oil and gas industry in Texas looks bright and offers encouragement to future business students at Lamar.



"Make sure you are pursuing your passion in life," he concludes. "If you are getting up every day and feeling a sense of purpose, everything else will work out. There is such a sense of accomplishment when you are working in an area you are passionate about. If you love what you do, success will follow."

Memories that last *lifetimes*

by Marilyn Tennissen



Maybe it was the soft lights in the smoky college ballroom, or the sounds of co-eds' crinoline skirts rustling as they danced to the melodies of Perry Como, but there was magic in the air that night at Lamar State College of Technology in 1955 that led to a family love affair lasting nearly 70 years.

Jimmy Edward Booker '55 was an engineering student at a fraternity dance when he met Merle Ann Merritt '59, a pretty art student. After graduating, they got married and started a family, but stayed connected to the school that started it all.

"Lamar was an integral part of their lives, from college until their deaths. My childhood memories are of First United Methodist Church and Lamar," said their daughter, Sherrie Booker Branick '81.

Sherrie and her husband, The Honorable Jeff Branick '81, established the Jimmy Booker Presidential Scholarship in Industrial Engineering in 2021 in honor of her father.

Jimmy was born in 1933 in Hemphill, Texas, where his father worked in the lumber business in the Piney Woods making turpentine. However, the family soon moved to Beaumont, with the senior Booker now using his knowledge of lumber to build houses. Working with him, Jimmy learned all facets of the building and construction trade.

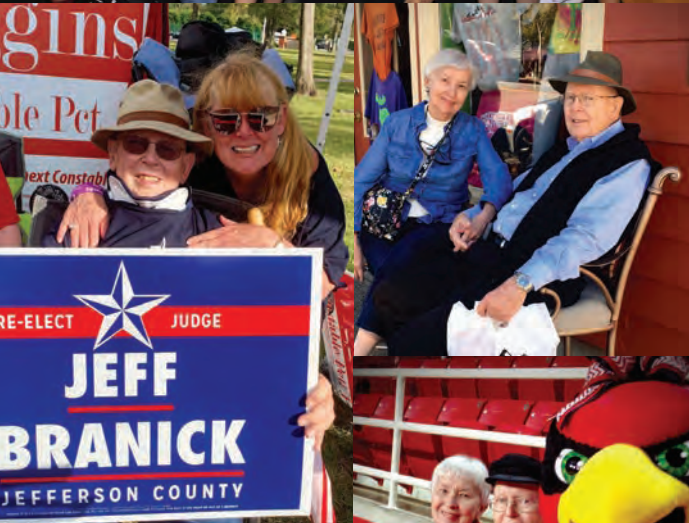
After graduating from South Park High School, Jimmy began studying engineering at Lamar Tech and graduated with two bachelor's degrees, first in industrial engineering in 1955 and then a degree in mechanical engineering in 1956.

As a student Jimmy was involved in several campus organizations, including serving as president of the Industrial Engineering Club, as well as on student council and as senior class representative. Sherrie said a group dear to her father's heart was the Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity.

The fraternity began as The Rogues and were known for their popular pie and coffee booth at the South Texas State Fair. When The Rogues were chartered by the national fraternity, Jimmy Booker was one of the original members of Sig Ep at Lamar.

"It was the night that they were having a dance to celebrate the Rogues getting the Sig Ep charter that my parents met," Sherrie said.

Merle Booker was born in Beaumont in 1937 and graduated from Beaumont High School. She was studying art at Lamar, and as an



active member of Alpha Chi Omega sorority, she would have joined the Sig Eps' celebration with the rest of the Greek community. That's when she met Jimmy. The couple would be married 60 years and have three children, Bryan, Sherrie and Cynthia.

In 1958 Merle earned a bachelor's degree in commercial art from Lamar and went on to own a successful antique business. She was involved in multiple local organizations including Beaumont Heritage Society, Beaumont Art League, Chambers House and the First United Methodist Church Estate Sale Committee. As a couple Jimmy and Merle were active at Lamar University through Friends of the Arts, the Lamar University Alumni Association and Cardinal Club.

"We attended lots of parades, we built floats, and Mom always decorated our house with cardinals," Sherrie recalled.

After college Jimmy worked at Gulf States Utilities and was later a consultant for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which involved him in the construction of the River Bend Nuclear Power Station north of Baton Rouge, La.

Sherrie added that while her dad worked for Gulf States, her mother got a job there too as art director.

"They were always a 'team' and made decisions as a team," Sherrie said. "And they both had such an incredible work ethic. It was instilled in all of us. And we saw how much they volunteered."

Jimmy and Merle also experienced difficult times, losing their daughter Cynthia to breast cancer in 1999. The family that had always given of their time and talent was then moved to begin their legacy of philanthropic giving to Lamar.

The family established a scholarship in Cynthia's memory. Cynthia was an artist like her mother, and in 2006, the Cynthia Booker

West Memorial Scholarship in Art was established to help art students realize their dream of a college education.

Jimmy also established the Merle Merritt Booker Scholarship for Art in May 2015 in honor of his wife. Merle died in February 2019 after 61 years of marriage to Jimmy. Her husband died less than a year later on Dec. 29, 2020.

As if the love story of Jimmy and Merle wasn't sweet enough, the tale of how their daughter Sherrie met her husband Jeff is more like a scene out of a romantic comedy.

Sherrie was an art student and an Alpha Chi, just like her mother.

Her sophomore year, the Greek societies were holding a competitive blood drive. Sherrie went to donate at the Setzer Student Center to help her group win the coveted pizza party prize for most donations. On the cot next to her was Jeff Branick, a member of Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity. She wasn't used to giving blood, started to feel woozy and then fainted.

Like a knight in shining armor, Jeff picked her up, and brought her orange juice and chocolate chip cookies.

Sherrie and Jeff have supported Lamar in many ways including as President's Circle members, Le Grand Bal underwriters, Alumni Board members and Friends of the Arts.

"Sometimes when we get older, we want things to stay the same and we forget how important it is to fund our youth," Sherrie said. "Sometimes people ask 'how will this benefit me,' or 'they can make do.' Well my parents were the polar opposite of that. They were always thinking of how to get more people involved and more youth involved. They understood the value of education, and the way it impacts entire families."

Dream Makers

We express our deep gratitude to the alumni and friends of Lamar University who have recently established endowments or made plans to endow gifts through estate plans. These gifts encourage students to pursue a college education and support faculty in creating innovative learning environments. An endowment creates a legacy that becomes a permanent part of Lamar's history. To learn more about how you can endow a gift to Lamar, we invite you to visit our website at lamar.edu/development or to start planning a gift through your estate, visit legacy.lamar.edu. In this issue of Cardinal Cadence, we are honored to recognize these Dream Makers.

by Mackenzie Linscomb

Cam Le '02 and Carla Pulumbarit '01 endowed the **Cam Le and Carla Pulumbarit Scholarship** for the benefit of students within the College of Engineering and the JoAnne Gay Dishman School of Nursing. Cam is a 2002 graduate of LU who earned his degree in chemical engineering. He was a member of Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity and works at Shell. Carla is also a graduate of LU, earning her degree in nursing in 2001. She currently works in the Texas Medical Center as a nurse.

Brian '97 and Sabrina Savoy established the **Brian Savoy Family Scholarship**. Brian Savoy is a *cum laude* graduate of Lamar University earning a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting in 1997. He was also a member of the Beta Gamma Sigma business honor society. Brian and his wife Sabrina are both native Southeast Texans and hope for

future generations to benefit from similar opportunities through the establishment of this scholarship.

Alzena and Bernard Bell met in Beaumont, Texas, and married in 1951. After serving his country as an Army staff sergeant in World War II, Bernard was a laborer for most of his working life. Alzena was a dedicated and inspirational mother and homemaker. Though neither had the opportunity to attend college, both understood the critical role that higher education plays in improving the lives of the underprivileged. Alzena and Bernard worked hard every day of their lives to ensure that their unfulfilled dreams of going to college could become a reality for their three children. Their daughter, Veronica, and sons, Ray and Ofay '86, all attended Lamar University. Veronica, Ray and Ofay established the **Alzena and Bernard Bell Memorial**

Scholarship to honor their parents' legacy and to help future generations of disadvantaged students achieve their dream of obtaining a college degree.

Mary Jo (Lampson) Broussard Ford '55 was born in Beaumont, Texas, June 30, 1934. Mary Jo contracted polio in 1948 at the age of 14 and was a patient at John Sealy Hospital in Galveston for two years. The disease left her totally paralyzed from the neck down. Unable to breathe, she survived in an iron lung for almost a year. Mary Jo returned to Beaumont in 1950, unable to walk, but determined to finish high school. She went on to attend Lamar State College of Technology. In 1952, she was voted Lamar's Homecoming Queen as a freshman. She graduated with degrees in social science and commercial art in 1955. Mary Jo went on to become a well-known artist in Southeast Texas. In 2000, she was honored as one of the

Distinguished Alumni of Lamar University. To honor Mary Jo's memory, the **Mary Jo Lampson Broussard Ford Scholarship in Art** was established by her son, Joseph E. Broussard IV.

Don '58 and Ann (Benton) Marshall '58 met at Lamar University in Accounting I and spent time together in the library where Ann helped Don do his homework and the pair fell in love. They both grew up near Lamar's campus so Don was able to walk back and forth to classes and work his job as a football manager. Ann was a member of Alpha Chi Omega and had a part-time job working for an accountant. They loved the campus, their classes and their professors. Because of their shared appreciation for Lamar University, which brought them together, Don and Ann established the **Don C. and Ann Benton Marshall Scholarship Fund** for the benefit of accounting students.

Hannah Elizabeth Willis '15 had a passion for the arts and was a popular face in the Beaumont art community. A native of Jasper and the Brookeland area, she moved to Beaumont, Texas, to attend Lamar University in pursuit of her dream of working in advertising. Hannah was employed by Cornerstone Advertising & Design of Beaumont and was scheduled to graduate in the summer of 2015. While living in Beaumont, she was involved in several organizations, including LU Outdoor Pursuits and Austin Slackline Association, and was a co-founder of the Beaumont Acro-Yoga community. Hannah was awarded her Bachelor of Science in Communication posthumously. Family and friends established the **Hannah Elizabeth Willis Memorial Scholarship** in honor of Hannah's vibrant spirit and desire to help others.

Jimmy Booker '55, '56 attended Lamar State College of Technology and graduated with two bachelor's degrees: industrial engineering in 1955 and mechanical engineering in 1956. He was a member of the Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity while a student at Lamar, and upon graduation he began working for Gulf States Utilities. Jimmy served on the Lamar University Alumni Association Board of Directors and the Cardinal Club Board and also was a

member of the Lamar University Industrial Engineering Advisory Council. In addition, Jimmy served on the Lamar University Foundation Board from 1996 to 2017. Sherrie (Booker) '81 and Jeff R. Branick '81 established the **Jimmy Booker Presidential Scholarship in Industrial Engineering** to honor Jimmy for his lifetime dedication to the electric utility and nuclear power industries and for his love of Lamar University.

Noah Rodriguez planned to major in aerospace engineering, fly jets for the military and travel the world. He was the ultimate student; he loved learning new things every day. He was also a kind and giving person, helping others in various classes by request. He once stated that his goal was to make the world a better place. Although Noah's time on earth was only 13 years, he continues to have an impact through a legacy of helping the dreams of others take flight via scholarships. His family created the **Noah Rodriguez Memorial Scholarship** to honor his love of learning and his kindness. His father, Jose '91, earned his bachelor's degree in civil engineering from LU.

The Zeta Theta Chapter of Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity was founded at Lamar University March 7, 1957, by Elvis L. Mason '59, who in later years earned the Lamar University Distinguished Alumnus Award and served as honorary chair of the Investing in the Future Campaign Cabinet from 2006 to 2013. The ATO chapter was active on campus for 53 years until the charter was revoked in 2010. At that time, the Alpha Tau Omega Alumni Association began work to establish a new and much improved Zeta Theta Chapter, which restored its charter in the fall of 2015. The chapter today is made up of young men who understand the importance of leadership, philanthropy and brotherhood. The Alumni Association of the Zeta Theta Chapter of Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity established the **Alpha Tau Omega Alumni Association Memorial Scholarship** in memory of two of their brothers, James Fredrick Kimmey '86 and Pete Elliott '74.

Victor Lovelady '85 was born in Port Arthur, Texas, July 31, 1955. After he and

his wife, Maureen, married in 1979, they settled down in Nederland, Texas. While working full-time, Victor started going to school four nights a week—two nights at electrician's school and two nights at Lamar University. In 1985, he graduated from LU with a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology. After working most of his life as an industrial engineer and master electrician, Victor moved overseas to work for British Petroleum (BP) and was tragically captured and killed in a terrorist attack. It is in Victor's memory and in honor of his work ethic, integrity and selfless actions to save those around him that his family established the **Victor L. Lovelady Memorial Scholarship** so that generations of students will have the opportunity to pursue a degree at Lamar University.

The friends of Eve Anderson '86 and CASA of Southeast Texas Inc. established the **Eve Anderson Memorial CASA Scholarship**. Evelyn Alicia Stadeager Anderson graduated from Lamar University in 1986 with a Bachelor of Social Work and in 1998 earned a Master of Education, eventually becoming a licensed professional counselor. She was proud of her practice at the Family and Psychological Center in Orange, Texas; her work with Girls' Haven; and her early work as a child advocate for CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates of Southeast Texas Inc.). To honor her work at CASA, this scholarship is established in her memory to benefit students who have been served by the CASA programs.

Todd Cross '03 was born in Beaumont, Texas, and earned a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from LU. At the time of his death in 2016, he was working with Farmers Insurance Group. As described by his sister Michele, Todd was "quick-witted, smart, adventurous and fun. He loved his family and friends and loved his daughter, Gracie, unconditionally and wholeheartedly." It is in Todd's memory, and with Gracie in mind, that Todd's friends and family honor his legacy by establishing the **Todd Cross Memorial Scholarship** to assist Lamar University students who have also suffered the loss of a parent.



JANIE AND MARK STEINHAGEN



INEZTROZA

STUDYING ABROAD:

Steinhagens spark the light of innovation and entrepreneurship

by Elizabeth Newman

Beginning in 2010, Lamar University and the College of Business having enjoyed the ability to provide students with an opportunity to broaden their horizons through the Janie Nelson and Mark Steinhagen Global Fellows Endowment. This fund generously established by Janie and Mark Steinhagen, allows students to study abroad at a minimal cost to the student. The Steinhagens' passion for philanthropy is well-known in Southeast Texas and at Lamar University. Mark Steinhagen, a long-time community and business leader, holds a strong belief in encouraging student potential and in the benefits of higher education and entrepreneurship to improve quality of life in Southeast Texas.

The Steinhagen family has a long history of support for Lamar University. Mark served as a regent for the Lamar University System from 1979 to 1985. In 1985, Mark's mother Thelma Steinhagen Edwards established a presidential-level scholarship honoring her late husband E. Harvey Steinhagen and her sons Harvey Jr. and Mark. In 2001, Mark made a gift to launch the Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies. This gift was a fundamental piece in the achievement and progress of the institute.



Summer in Spain 2022

Through their involvement with the College of Business, more opportunities to help students arose. The Steinhagens believe that the ability to travel and experience the global economy firsthand is a fundamental aspect of becoming a well-rounded business leader. Students and faculty can gain first-hand knowledge of the global marketplace and observe diverse businesses in person by participating in these opportunities. For students, this broadens their understanding of business, promotes innovative thinking and allows them to be more marketable in their future careers. Faculty also benefit from the ability to share these experiences and enhance their teaching in the classroom.

Since the fellowship has been established, the College of Business has sent hundreds of students abroad to locations all over the world. Students can choose from a variety of locations each year, including countries like Spain, China, France and Argentina. Students who receive the fellowship are selected by a committee whose choices ultimately are ratified by the dean of the college based on the quality of the applications. The applications are reviewed, along with the students' academic standing and achievements. While the original purpose of the award was to benefit graduate students, the fellowship has also been awarded to high-achieving upper-level undergraduate students as determined by the dean.

Over the years, the fellowship has been able to achieve its purpose and much more by providing students the experience of a lifetime. One particular trip made possible in large part by the Steinhagen family, is the College of Business study abroad experience in Alicante, Spain. In 2023, graduate student Graciella Ineztroza participated in the two-week journey to study at the University of Alicante. There she experienced the local culture through business, history and academics. Ineztroza, originally from Honduras, is pursuing her MBA in healthcare administration and had never traveled with business in mind before. "I had never traveled

for business specifically or visited companies the way I got to experience the field while on this trip. It really opened my mind to future business possibilities," she said.

The experience allowed Ineztroza and her peers to attend lectures by faculty of the College of Business and of the University of Alicante as well as speak with business leaders in a variety of industries that are prevalent in Spain. These included a tour through El Lobo, a turrón factory and museum dedicated to the Spanish Christmas treat made of honey and almonds; Distrito Digital, a hub for technology, film and gaming companies; and visits to a winery, doll factory, restaurants and more.



after returning from her trip. "Studying abroad was a literal dream come true for me. A first-generation student, studying abroad at 21, I still cannot believe it. Ever since then, I fell in love with the experience and I started to encourage others to study abroad. In doing so, I participated in the 9th annual HASBSEB Conference with my Alicante dorm roommate Miriam L. Chavez. We won first place," she shared. Alvarez traveled to Alicante in the summer of 2022 and then participated in the Humanities, Arts, Social and Behavior Sciences, Education and Business (HASBSEB) Conference in the following fall semester.

Charles Bohannon '23,



who also traveled to Alicante in 2022, was greatly inspired by the ability to connect with like-minded individuals and learn from professors of the University of Alicante. "Visiting European multinational companies, exploring historical Spanish cities, and attending international seminars in finance, management and marketing has provided me with a greater perspective and worldview that will undoubtedly be useful moving forward, not only in my academic and professional career but also in life," he said.

The legacy of giving that was started by Mark and Janie Steinhagen continues through their son Roy. In addition to continuing to facilitate his parents' gift for global learning at LU, he is also responsible for establishing the Janie and Mark Steinhagen Scholarship in Business.

"My parents taught me at an early age that everyone has the capacity to help others in some way, through your time, talent and/or treasure. I found that I could do all three by accepting then-President Simmons' invitation to serve on the Lamar Foundation Board. As I began to learn more about the Foundation and the impact it has on the lives of the students it provides scholarships to, it was an easy decision for [my wife] Kim and me to begin setting up our own scholarships at the Foundation. I was involved in the ask of Mom and Dad to set up the Global Fellows Scholarship and was pleased when they agreed to do so. I remember my father saying that 'a gift of any size to the Lamar Foundation means so much more to the University and its students than any gift to any larger university system.'"



VISIONARY LEADERSHIP:

South Park to Lamar University

by Darragh Doiron



Mrs. L.R. Pietzsch and John Gray

When young Don Warren stepped into Mrs. L.R. Pietzsch Sr. 6th grade classroom, he didn't imagine a relationship spanning nearly 50 years.

Her photo hangs in his Lamar University office for inspiration, along with a book she gave him: the Bible.

Warren observes that it is fulfilling to have worked with and been influenced by so many passionate people named on Lamar University's buildings. Warren is director of the School of Accounting and Information Systems in the College of Business. His Lamar memories could fill a book, and he ties many of them to his South Park origins.

Warren was in his 40s when he realized the Pietzsch family's influence went beyond J.L. Giles Elementary School, as L. R. Pietzsch Sr. founded the predecessor to Lamar University in 1923: South Park Junior College. It was in 1983, the celebration of the 60th anniversary of Lamar University, and Warren served on the Lamar University Alumni Board.

Mr. Pietzsch was honored to represent the first decade of Lamar University's history because it was his vision during 1919 after attending a course at the University of Chicago and noting the presence of junior colleges.

"In 1922, he observed colleges in Texas with the objective of determining the feasibility of a junior college in Southeast Texas. South Park Junior College opened its door to its first class of students on September 17, 1923," Warren said. He remembers that Mrs. Pietzsch was invited to speak about the early days of Lamar University and reflected on Mr. Pietzsch's enthusiasm and vision of a junior college in Beaumont. Also present that day, he recalls, was one of the first students at South Park Junior College, a star football player, but also a visionary leader who went on to serve Lamar University as its president twice: John Gray. "Dr. Gray's love for Lamar University as a student, alumnus and administrator is unquestionable," Warren said.

The Cardinal Era

Warren says a little-known fact about Gray is that during 1932 a contest was announced to determine the name that should succeed South Park Junior College. Otho Plummer, a former student and later a member of the Board of Regents, submitted the selected entry, "Lamar College," and Gray was responsible for naming the "Cardinal" as Lamar University's mascot.

Ties to Mrs. Pietzsch

Warren attended Lamar State College of Technology in 1963 and subsequently joined a federal agency in Washington, D.C. Mrs. Pietzsch often caught up with him when she visited her granddaughter, who was attending school there. He said she encouraged him to obtain a graduate degree at one of the universities in the Washington area. Upon completing his M.B.A. degree at George Washington University, Mrs. Pietzsch sent him a check and instructed him to purchase a book, which he has kept to this day. Another gift from Mrs. Pietzsch on one of her visits was the Bible presented to Room 33 of J. L. Giles Elementary by United Gas Co. The Bible was signed by all students in the class.

Jack Brooks' fight for Lamar

While in Washington, D.C., Warren reached out to The Honorable Jack Brooks who represented the congressional district that included Beaumont. "He was a graduate of Lamar College prior to going to the University of Texas. Congressman Brooks served our country in the Pacific theatre during World War II, and when he returned, he ran for a seat in the Texas Legislature. One of his goals was to have Lamar College become

a four-year institution and his first attempt in 1946 failed, but that did not deter Congressman Brooks," Warren said. "He reintroduced legislation in 1949 and was successful in getting the legislation passed." Lamar State College of Technology became operational on September 1, 1951. Congressman Brooks leadership and devotion to Lamar University continued throughout his life.

Boys in the band

During high school, Warren had a "rhythm and blues" band, and on a couple of occasions a student from another high school who played the saxophone would "jam" with the band. The guest was Jimmy Simmons. Both Warren and Simmons attended Lamar in the early '60s. In 1999, Simmons became the 14th president of Lamar University. "It was through his vision and leadership that Lamar University thrived as it entered the 21st century. The growth of Lamar University and the number of graduate and doctoral programs are direct results of President Simmons leadership," Warren said.

Life lessons

As Warren became an instructor, he continued his friendship with Mrs. Pietzsch until her death in 1992. "Each of my children met my sixth-grade teacher, and to this day, they understand the special place she holds in my life," he said. At age 60, Warren retired and went back to school and earned his Ph.D. In his dissertation dedication, he remembered her fondly: "My sixth-grade teacher—the late Sidney Pietzsch—for being a caring and inspiring teacher who taught me as a 12-year-old one of life's greatest lessons—you are never too old to learn."



The Green Book

Passion, history and rounds of kitchen table family editing went into the green book.

The South Park Story 1891-1971 and *The Founding of Lamar University 1923-1941* is Ray Asbury's research and history, published in 1972. From Spindletop kids to a place for students to learn trades, Asbury shares the formation of a proud group of "Greenies" that developed what has become Lamar University.

David Hall remembers his grandfather had worked on the project a long time and his grandmother, educator Grace Sparks, made sure those family editing sessions cracked down on grammar.

"He was very satisfied with the way the book turned out," Hall said.

Hall is director of a medical clinic in Houston serving BP (formerly British Petroleum) families. Over the years, he met many of the personalities noted in the book, including "master teacher" Miss Lucy, to whom the book is dedicated. "It's appropriate that this book left a very good legacy for my grandfather," Hall said.

Asbury's career included South Park assistant coaching, and Hall says his mother grew up attending scouting games and knew much about football.

When Hall's mother, LouAnn Asbury, died in 2021, he and his wife, Jeannette Hall, established the LouAnn Asbury Endowed Scholarship: Master's Program in Clinical Mental Health Counseling to honor her and help support students pursuing a degree in counseling within the College of Education and Human Development.

Ray Asbury was a history teacher who was instrumental in the naming of South Park Junior College in 1923, which became Lamar College in 1932, Lamar State College of Technology in 1951 and Lamar University in 1971.



Counting *Cardinal* Cousins

Five names, one family, decades of LU history

by Casey Ford

Ask any lifelong Southeast Texan for the names of some local business owners, and theirs will likely be listed among the first. They are the Messinas, the Tortorices, the Giglios and the Parigis. The name that connects them all, however, is Maceo. Rosario Maceo, an entrepreneur from Palermo, Sicily, and his wife, Josephine, immigrated in 1901 to Louisiana and later to Texas. Their epic journey from Italy through the early 20th century American South included the births of four daughters: Concetta was born in New Orleans in 1920, Sylvina (Luce) in Galveston in 1924, then Olivia (“Dimples”) and Theresa in Beaumont in 1926 and 1928, respectively.

Lovingly called “the Four Cardinals,” these women would become the matriarchs of the four families celebrated today as cherished members of the Lamar University community of alumni and patrons. Among them, they raised 19 children, 11 of whom are proud LU alumni, and they poured into the lives of their 46 grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren the importance of faith, generosity, community and education. The experience of interviewing four members of this remarkable clan was fascinating and fun, a peek behind history’s curtain at some of Southeast Texas’ most successful entrepreneurs and LU’s most successful, generous alumni and supporters. For this family’s centennial perspective, Cadence interviewed one Maceo cousin from each family: JoBeth (Giglio) Jenkins, Jake Tortorice, Frank Messina, and Gerard Parigi.

JoBeth is the middle child of Theresa Giglio and is married to Mike Jenkins, who graduated from LU with his BBA in 1972. As an undergraduate, Mike was vice president of the student government association and a member of Phi Delta Theta, and as an alumnus, he serves on the Foundation Board of Trustees. JoBeth, her brother Charles J. Giglio, and her sister Gerri Giglio own their father’s 68-year-old company, Giglio Distributing, and Mike owns 46-year-old Jenkins Construction, a custom homebuilding company. In addition to their rich professional lives, they are also active and generous alumni. Giglio Distributing is a major corporate sponsor and supporter of LU Athletics. The Jenkinses were significant donors to the recent renovation of the Montagne Center, and they perpetuate the Theresa and J.C. Giglio Regents Scholarship. JoBeth said they do this work because “it is important to us that we give back to the community that has given so much to us. Our family connection is strong, and Lamar has long been part of that.” She sees the university in Beaumont and the colleges in Orange and Port Arthur as critical because they



JoBeth (Giglio) Jenkins

offer a university education and better career pathways to local and regional young people who might not otherwise have means or access.

Frank, eldest of Olivia Messina's six sons, is married to Molly '70, an LU alumna and now-retired Beaumont school district librarian. He attended Monsignor Kelly High School and graduated from LU with his BBA in 1971. He was a football player and a member of Alpha Tau Omega and the Blue Key Honor Society, and each of his brothers—Joseph '73, Jude '76, Vincent '80, Thomas '82 and James '87—is also an LU alumnus. After a brief career in the newspaper industry, he decided to go into the liquor business. Over his long entrepreneurial career, Messina's company expanded at its peak to five Golden Triangle retail locations, and he was as active an alumnus as he had been while a student at LU. Among his many philanthropic endeavors over four decades, he has been a member of the President's Circle since 2020, served as past president of the Lamar University Alumni Association and served as past trustee of the Lamar University Foundation Board. He sat on the board of the Cardinal Club for more than 40 years, with two terms as its president and a strong focus on athletic scholarship fundraising and revival of the football program, which bore fruit in 2010. Also a member of the Sabine Area Restaurant Association, Messina played a critical role in that organization's 2012 gift of \$250,000 to the university's culinary arts program. He is a past board member of the American Red Cross, the Muscular Dystrophy Association and the Italian American Society of Beaumont. Lamar University Alumni Association was honored to designate Messina as a 2022 Distinguished Alumnus, an award that recognizes the contributions Cardinals have made to the university's reputation through their remarkable lives, careers and public service.



Frank Messina

Gerard '77, second-youngest of Luce Parigi's five children, is married to Cheri. His living siblings are Joe, Sam, and Connie, and his brother R.C. (1947-2021) was an active and proud 1970 alumnus of the LU College of Business. R.C. was the first CPA for Jason's Deli and had a long career as a prominent tax specialist in the region. Gerard attended St. Anne's and Monsignor Kelly High School and graduated from LU with his BBA in 1977. He is a former board member of the LU Alumni Association and past member of the Mirabeau Society. One of the three inaugural graduates of the then-new finance program at LU, Parigi's early professions were in hospitality and banking, and he retired from a long business partnership with his brother Joe. Today, though,



Gerard Parigi

he serves Catholic Charities of Southeast Texas as the director of Market to HOPE (Helping Other People Eat). Serving one of the several food deserts in Southeast Texas, this pantry—which is as large, inviting and organized as any local grocery store—is staffed almost entirely by volunteers from local communities and businesses and allows diverse individuals and families to shop for food items and other necessities based on dietary restrictions and cultural preferences. The program also offers a bustling curbside service, begun out of necessity during the pandemic but continuing as the program expands to serve more people in need. Parigi is a leader who is not only savvy, but kind, and his personal ethos is to not only serve people in a time of need but to preserve their hope and dignity through that service.

Jake, second-youngest son of Concetta Tortorice, has four siblings: Roseanne '64, Sam, R.C., and Tony '76. He attended St. Anne's and Monsignor Kelly High School and graduated from LU with his BBA in 1976. As were several of his brothers and cousins, Jake was and still is an active member of Alpha Tau Omega, and, during his time as an LU student, was deeply engaged in student social life and committed to forging social connections among people of all backgrounds and cultures. He was a member of the "top name" committee that brought well-known musical acts to campus, and he was selected as a member of President John Gray's Student Social Committee. As an alumnus, Tortorice has served as a past Alumni Association board member and currently participates in university advancement through committee work. He does all this, of course, when he isn't sourcing inspiration in Italy or running one of the longest-standing and most popular Southeast Texas restaurants. Rao's Bakery needs little introduction here—suffice it to say that the traditions and recipes of the "Four Cardinals" are delightfully alive and nourishing people from Port Arthur to Houston every day. A gallery of photos adorns the walls of the events room in the Dowlen Road location in perpetual celebration of these matriarchs, even as the cooks and bakers learn Concetta's recipes in the kitchens.



Jake Tortorice

There aren't words enough to express LU's pride in the connection with this important Southeast Texas family—even the ones who are Aggies and Bearcats and Longhorns, oh my. All four cousins stated outright they would prefer to talk more in this article about the family and less about them as individuals. Each one was equally humble and equally quick to shift focus away from themselves and back to their roots "in faith, family and food" and their still-strong bond. They each spoke poignantly about their mothers' recipes and family gatherings, but something else they shared was that they each have a sincere desire to see Lamar University continue to thrive, and each plays a critical role in helping ensure it happens and equipping the next generations of their family to do the same.



Securing fiscal future for tomorrow's students

by Stephan Malick

As the campus celebrates its centennial year, the Lamar University Foundation has been a supporting component since 1972 when then-President John Gray and then-Regent Chairman Otho Plummer organized university and community leaders to create an additional channel to its institutional mission.

Gray's vision was to promote stewardship by connecting alumni and friends to raise private gifts to fund and distribute to Lamar programs according to donor designations and managed endowments.

The Foundation staff is headed by CEO Juan J. Zabala '07 and COO Karen R. Nichols '83 with a Board of Trustees of industry and community leaders seeking to provide resources needed to attract and retain the best students and faculty and enhancing the educational experiences and services available to them.

The Foundation currently manages approximately \$123 million in assets represented by more than 650 endowments and non-endowed funds. These endowments and funds are all donor supported and guided by donor governing agreements.

"Lamar University is fortunate to have an extraordinary level of support from our alumni, donors and friends," Zabala said. "Additionally, the support we receive from corporate leadership across all industries is critical to the opportunities we can make available to our deserving students."

He added that for decades, the Foundation has played a pivotal role by accepting, managing and investing assets donated to Lamar University, and "impressive" success of the Lamar University Foundation in each of those areas is a testament to the leadership provided by the volunteers who make up the LU Foundation Board of Trustees.

"The LU alumni and supporters give a significant amount of time and expertise to ensure that the Foundation brings impressive value to the university," Zabala said. "We are all grateful to these volunteers for their

efforts, support and success."

Chairperson Becky (Dickson) Mason '71 leads the Foundation's board, marshalling up to 40 members committed to the success of Lamar University and the stewardship of the gifts managed through the Foundation. She had previously been elected vice chairperson of the board in 2021 and has served on the board since 2018.

Mason has held a variety of volunteer leadership roles, having served as a community representative to the 2015 Strategic Planning Committee, on the Alumni Advisory Board from 2005-2008, on the board of the JASON Project, and on the executive committee of the Friends of the Arts Board.

Mason said Lamar is critical to the success of Southeast Texas in many different ways and sees her commitment and mission to strengthen the university and the relationships it has across the region. "My real goal on the Foundation is finding other students that were like I was and wouldn't be able to go to college," she said. "Making a college education a possibility for students who otherwise wouldn't be able to go to college is huge for me. And that really drives my commitment to the Foundation and in finding ways that we can make a difference in these students' lives."

Mason's view illustrates how many of the Foundation trustees embrace their involvement in finding ways to support the University in providing the greatest educational benefits to the students. The volunteers who serve on the Foundation board have a great impact on our students and faculty through their fiduciary responsibilities in the management of donor gifts supporting students, faculty and University programs.

Nichols shared, "The foundation trustees' focus on the investment of gifted assets is crucial to maximizing the impact of those assets to meet the current needs of the University and ensure growth to support in perpetuity future generations of students."

2024-2025 OFFICERS

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What have you done for someone else *today?*

by Marilyn Tennissen

Regina Rogers, Beaumont activist and philanthropist, often is asked why she has remained in Beaumont, and she says it has given her the opportunity to fulfill her lifelong desire of helping underserved individuals, both adults and children, receive support that otherwise would be unavailable to them.

"I have been so blessed, and my greatest pleasure is performing acts of 'tikkun olam', a Jewish concept of 'repairing the world.'"

Rogers adds, "I love our small, friendly and welcoming community that gives everyone a chance to excel and thrive."

Rogers credits her parents with her desire to help others succeed.

"I have been fortunate to be able to continue my parents' legacy of compassion and love. They were wonderful role models, and I knew at a very young age that I wanted to emulate them. It is why I have dedicated most of my life to assisting the "four L's—the least, the last, the lost and the lonely."

Numerous facets of the community benefit from Rogers' work, especially Lamar University. She's a member of the President's Circle and also has established multiple scholarships.

Rogers has seen the university grow to an enrollment of more than 17,000 students, but still be recognized for making smaller class sizes available.

"Lamar allows students to have personal interaction with their professors and develop close friendships with classmates. The university has become a significant educational hub that attracts young people from around the state and internationally, as well. Lamar's growth is of special significance to Southeast Texas because it prepares thousands of individuals for important careers that are integral to the success of ever-expanding industry and other businesses."

When asked about her parents' backgrounds, she relates that her father, Ben Rogers, grew up in Chicago as the eldest son of six children, devastated by the death of their father, who was only 29 years old when he passed away in 1921 during the flu epidemic. Their mother, widowed at the age of 28, and the family were impoverished, without resources for food or shelter.

"As a child of eight, Dad began selling newspapers on the Chicago streets, barefoot in the ice and snow, and never forgot the kindness of a restaurant-owning gentleman who befriended him in downtown

Chicago and offered to buy him shoes.”

But destiny brought the Rogers family out of the cold and snow of the midwest to the warmer weather of Southeast Texas. In 1936, Ben and his brother Dr. Sol Rogers opened the first Texas State Optical in Beaumont, soon joined by brothers Dr. Nate and Victor. Sister Sara’s husband Dr. Irving Davis opened the Port Arthur offices, which son Dr. Barry Davis still operates today. The company grew to have several hundred locations and became one of the top optical retailers in the country before it was sold in 1979.

“I learned much about business from my father and how a handshake, honesty and integrity were more important than any written contract,” Rogers says. “He also taught me that financial success is of no value unless it is used to help those with limited income achieve human dignity and respect. His was a caring and gracious commitment to helping create a more compassionate and understanding world. ‘At a young age I was motivated by Dad’s nightly question at the dinner table, ‘What have you done for someone else today?’”

Rogers’ mother Julie was her “hero.” A talented violinist, she also was the child of immigrants, but through hard work graduated from law school at age 19 and was eager to use her knowledge to make a difference in the lives of others.

As a couple, her parents were both “passionate” and “benevolent,” says Rogers. “Mom stressed a strong belief in God and the importance of faith, gently directing and guiding my brothers and me to be tolerant and sensitive. Before cultural diversity was ever popular, she and Dad encouraged us to learn about others’ customs and to respect their differences because we all have the same hearts and souls. I can still hear her saying,

‘There but for the grace of God go I,’ and ‘Never judge another until you have walked a mile in his shoes.’”

In addition to her parents, whom she watched volunteer almost every day of their lives, Rogers says she was fortunate to learn from individuals, such as the late Joe J. Fisher, chief judge of the Eastern District of Texas, a “brilliant, articulate, outstanding jurist and a true southern gentleman” who employed Rogers as his first female law clerk when she graduated law school.

Rogers also was appointed as the first female to the Board of Regents of Lamar University and served on the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, where she chaired the Educational Opportunity Planning Committee for Minority Education in Texas. These efforts helped affirm Rogers’ belief that “educating our youth and particularly members of a multi-cultural society are the key to ensuring our future.”

This hope for the future was manifested in 1988 when Rogers, her mother and brothers established, in collaboration with Beaumont school district, the “I Have A Dream Program” at Lamar University in honor of her father’s 75th birthday. The initiative has provided scholarships and individual mentoring for underserved students for the last 35 years and currently offers \$1,000 a semester to 23 “dreamers” attending Lamar University. More than 450 students have benefitted from the program, and nearly 300 have been awarded scholarships.

Rogers says the community also has

embraced the Inspire, Encourage, Achieve Program (IEA), which was founded by her and her mother in 1997 to help children achieve dignity and respect through services provided with compassion, understanding and love. The organization offers counseling, tutoring and life-changing activities for juvenile justice-involved children who have experienced trauma in their young lives and have been detained in the Minnie Rogers Juvenile Justice Center and for those who are on probation. “With the endorsement and support of many, we have been able to help ‘save’ the lives of youth who otherwise would have gone into the adult criminal population,” Rogers said.

Additionally, when her mother Julie was diagnosed with advanced breast cancer and had a double mastectomy, Rogers reports that she never complained, but only expressed concern for those who could not afford necessary screenings and diagnostic care.

So in 1992, Rogers contributed funds to Baptist Hospital to provide 500 free mammograms for uninsured individuals who otherwise would be unable to receive medical care. “Miraculously, the one-time assistance became a major endeavor, the Julie Rogers Gift of Life Program, that has made available critical education and free breast and prostate cancer screenings for thousands of women and men, and helped extend the lives of more than 350 Southeast Texans,” says Rogers.

So for Rogers, Beaumont is the place to be.

“Fortunately, as the result of a prevailing spirit of philanthropy in our area, there are outstanding museums, other cultural destinations and the Symphony of Southeast Texas led by the extraordinary Maestro Chelsea Tipton. When friends visit from other parts of the country, they are amazed by the ambiance of Beaumont and the region. I remain so proud of our community and the wonderful people who live here.”



Regina Rogers, left,
with President Jaime
Taylor and Stacy Taylor

CARDINAL love stories

Gabrielle (Savoir) '15, '17 and Sean Smith '16

In 2015, I was an environmental engineering graduate student when I was setup on a blind date with an undergraduate computer science student who is now my husband. Our first date was at Starbucks followed by Rao's Bakery. We both came to the realization that we had seen each other prior to our date. We both worked in the library. I worked at the Writing Center as an English tutor, and Sean worked as a library assistant. We were married in January 2018, and we moved Huntsville, Ala., for me to start my career as an environmental engineer for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Sean works as a software engineer for AVNIK Defense. We look forward to what the future has in store for us, and we are so blessed to have met each other.



SMITH

Marla (Delafield) '90 and Rev. Michael Cooper '04

I saw her checking out books in the Student Setzer Center—one day to Red Lobster—and 34 years later and four kids, we are blessed. I stopped for 10 years to pay for college after we were married and then went back and finished. She is now a retired school teacher. I took an early retirement from Kinsel after being an executive automotive manager for more than 30 years. Also I am a local pastor and president of the NAACP Beaumont.



MALDONADO



COOPER

Noelle (Sanders) '00 and Phillip Maldonado '08

We met in 1995 in the Music Building at band auditions. I saw her waiting in the hall and fell in love with her eyes. It was not until we both played in the orchestra for the LU production of the musical "Oklahoma" it all began. That is when our journey started—in the orchestra pit at the Jefferson Theatre. We also had the honor of being nominated to Homecoming Court to represent the band at a basketball game. In November 1999 at our senior music recital, I proposed to her on stage at the end of the recital. I was so nervous when I got on my knee and asked her to marry me. I put the ring on the wrong hand, and she fixed it for me and said "Yes." We were married June 16, 2001, and have been happily married for the past 20 years. We are both band directors; Noelle is at Bridge City, and I am at Orangefield. So I thank Lamar University not only for my education and degree, but for being the place I met my best friend and wife.

Deja (Williams) '19 and Kyle Edwards '18

Kyle, a sophomore at the time, noticed me while I was signing up for the Psalm 150 Gospel Choir at freshmen orientation. Kyle was also a member of the choir and would try to make conversation with me after rehearsals. After two months of trying, he was finally succeeded. We began dating shortly after that and are still together over seven years later.



EDWARDS



FREDERICK



PEMBER

Miranda (Cartwright) '18 and Derek Cook '19

Derek and I met at LU soon after arriving as freshmen in September 2014. Derek became a member of Pi Kappa Alpha. We began dating in April 2015, and I became a Pike Little Diamond in 2016. We were just married December 2021!



McFADDEN

Linda (DeCuir) '72 and Murphy McFadden '71

Murphy and I were one year apart at Thomas Jefferson High School but really just knew each other's names. We met in the spring of '70 at the Newman Center on campus. I was an elementary education major and he was a political science/government major. I was also a member of the Lamar University Marching and Symphonic bands. We made many lifelong friends from our years at the Newman Center. We still lived at our childhood homes in Port Arthur and carpooled to classes with friends from high school for four years. We both drove our own red VW beetles to college. After graduation from Lamar, Murphy began working at Texaco Refinery, and I retired after teaching first graders at West Orange-Cove CISD for 30 years. We still follow Lamar activities and attend sports functions. I also attend theatrical productions and art shows. We both are proud Lamar Alumni and sing Lamar's praises any time we can! We celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary July 28.



LEE



COOK

Lauren (Anderson) '14, '20 and Blake Frederick '14

We met in high school and dated from junior year of high school and got married after we graduated college. Being Cardinals together kept us close and gave us another connection.

Catherine (Chu) '75 and Wea Lee '76

While at Lamar University, we met as fellow students from Taiwan. We were married Aug. 11, 1974, before we graduated.

Amy (Myers) '15 and Seth Emmons '17

We first saw each other in Dr. Rinker's psychology class, but met at the Lamar BSM. We gradually became friends through a group project in psych and hanging out at the BSM. We went on a date the next year, but then just stayed friends for a while.

When I finally convinced her to date me, we were together for a year before I proposed. We were married in the spring of 2017, two weeks after I graduated. We've been happily married for almost five years and have two kids.

Leslie (Cobbie) '91 and Craig Pember '93

We were introduced at LU in 1988 by a mutual friend by the parking lot attendant's booth outside the business building. We reconnected in 1990 when I walked into class the first day and there was Craig! We scheduled our remaining business classes together until I graduated in 1991. As they say, the rest is history! We married in 1995, and have two daughters. Craig is coming up on 28 years of employment with LU!



EMMONS



Submit your Cardinal Love Story at
alumni@lamar.edu

THE GENA AND ALBERT E. REAUD SCHOLARSHIP:

OPENING DOORS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

by Brooke Barnett



Wayne Reaud's '71 primary reason for

supporting Lamar University is as straightforward as it is powerful: he feels that if you are blessed by an institution, you have a duty to give back to it. His relationship with Lamar began when he was an undergraduate in the late 1960s, working towards a degree in political science.

"Although I had help from my parents, I still had to work my way through Lamar," he reflects. "One year, when I didn't have enough money to pay for the spring semester, I went to the vice president of student affairs and told him my situation.

"He actually gave me a job as a dorm mom," he continues. "The job included free room and board, plus \$150 each month. I kept that job for a year, and it was like manna from heaven. I made up my mind right then that I was going to give back to Lamar; that I wanted to give back to those institutions and people who had given to me."

Reaud made good on his promise and, over the next four decades, would become the largest donor in Lamar's history. In addition to accomplishing an exemplary career as an attorney, Reaud served on the Lamar University System Board of Regents for 10 years and was honored as one of the university's Distinguished Alumni in 2006. To date, he is the only alumnus for whom both a college and a campus building at the university are named. The Wayne A. Reaud Administration and Honors College building, which is located at the main entrance to the LU campus, houses important administrative offices and the Reaud Honors College.

Reaud's philanthropic efforts continue to make an impact on campus today through the largest scholarship ever created by an alumnus of LU, which is named in honor of his parents Albert E. and Gena Reaud.

"My parents were wonderful parents and wonderful people," he explains. "They loved my brother and me. There was nothing they wouldn't do for us. They believed that nothing is more important than their children, and they encouraged us to get as good an education as possible. I can't say enough good things about my parents. Not just because they are my parents, but because it is all true."

Wayne and his brother, Jon, manage the Reaud Charitable Foundation, which provides funding for the Gena and Albert E. Reaud Scholarship. The scholarship was established in 1979 in honor of Albert Reaud and was endowed and renamed in 2007 to honor both parents.

"Both of my parents believed in the value of education," Wayne explains. "Creating a scholarship in their names seemed like the logical thing to do."

Wayne and Jon's father, Albert Reaud, dreamed of becoming an architect. However, Albert Reaud had his higher education plans interrupted by World War II. Albert served his country in the armed services for four and a half years, including an overseas tour of duty. He was honorably discharged in 1946 and married Genevieve (Gena) Hawkins, a native of southwestern Oklahoma. While

Gena had little opportunity for education beyond high school, she knew the value of education and encouraged both of her sons to pursue degrees.

Throughout their lifetimes, Albert and Gena were strong supporters of higher education. The couple wanted their sons to succeed in life and knew that a solid educational background was crucial. They insisted that both children pursue higher education and provided them with the encouragement and support to reach their goals. Both Wayne and Jon received their undergraduate degrees from Lamar University, graduating in 1971 and 1988 respectively. Wayne credits his parents' commitment to higher education as being the instrumental force in his pursuit of both undergraduate and professional degrees.

Since its inception, the Gena and Albert E. Reaud Scholarship has empowered hundreds of students to receive a quality education at Lamar University. Many of those students credit the scholarship with providing crucial financial support that made their education possible.

LU alumnus Austin Miller '12, '20, who holds a B.S. in mechanical engineering and an MBA and who now owns Leo Weeks Photography, is the perfect embodiment of the vision behind the scholarship.

"Receiving the Reaud Scholarship helped turn the tide for me to go to Lamar," Austin explains. "It lightened the financial burden, and having financial support was a huge part of why I decided to go to LU. I was able to focus more on school and didn't have to worry about trying to keep a full time job or end up going into student loan debt. This scholarship helped make that possible."

John "J.T." Copeland '14, who earned a B.S. in computer science and is now a software engineer for ProMiles, says that support provided by the Reaud Scholarship helped make Lamar his only school of choice.

"The Reaud Scholarship was the biggest scholarship I received," John says. "It helped lessen the financial burden. During my senior year in high school, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do, and I even thought about going to trade school.

But, once scholarships started coming in, it gave me a sense of stability—the confidence of knowing that financial support was available and that I could pursue my degree without having to work full time."

The scholarship in honor of his parents is just one way Wayne gives back to Lamar University. He is a current President's Circle member, a Friends of the Arts member and, through his chairmanship at the Beaumont Foundation of America, has endowed 16 Texas Legends Scholarships that benefit LU students. "I started out wanting to give back to my community, and Lamar is the crown jewel of the community. It helped a kid like me get an education. I received a great education at Lamar, which helped me to successfully compete in the real world," he adds. "I've always believed that I have a duty to give back to the people and institutions that helped me achieve all that I have in life."

Reaud believes that from those to whom much is given, much is required. As the founder the Reaud, Morgan & Quinn law firm, he has represented clients for more than 30 years in significant cases involving personal injury, product and premises liability, toxic torts and business litigation. He is a former director of the Texas Trial Lawyers Association and a past president of the Southeast Texas Trial Lawyers Association. He is a Life Fellow of the Texas Bar Association, a Fellow of the International Society of Barristers and is listed in Best Lawyers in America. In 2011, he was awarded the Honorary Order of the Coif by the University of Texas School of Law.

"Lamar was great to me, and it is a great institution," he concludes. "I think it is important for people like me who have benefited from this institution, to give back. The cost of higher education is so great. If alumni don't give back, higher education will change in a way we don't want it to. I hope to be an example by continuing to support the very thing that was so important to my parents."

To see more about scholarships available to undergraduates at Lamar University, visit lamar.edu/myscholarships. For more information about giving back in support of Lamar, visit lamar.edu/advancement.

A FOREVER ECHO:

Students who received, *now give*

by Stephan Malick

Donors who generously give back to Lamar University do so with the intention of helping students reach their academic potential and access professional career development. There are many stories to tell in LU's 100-year history that demonstrate how far graduates can go with the support of scholarships.

Lamar alumni have always made their quality known wherever they go, and their impacts are far-reaching.

Yolanda Lee Conyers National Society of Black Engineers Award

When people think about security clearances and privacy procedures, they often think about a host of occupations like the military or maybe even the CIA or FBI. The U.S. government receives support from a variety of contractors and suppliers, and a journey into that world for one alumna happened, in part, because of a scholarship at Lamar.



Obinna "Obi" Emeh '22 works for Honeywell as a chemical engineer in one of the most sensitive jobs there is—nuclear weapons. Emeh can't speak to the specifics of his work, other than to say he is a process engineer working on non-nuclear components for the nation's nuclear stockpile of weapons. Emeh's path began with his physics teacher at Arlington's Juan Seguin High School who sparked his interest in science and in choosing LU to earn his degree. "I looked at a lot of universities in Texas with my father, and Lamar stood out as a great place to learn about chemistry," he said. "The area has a lot of oil and gas industry centered here, and I thought it would be a good place to go and develop my career."

Emeh said one of his most memorable achievements was being elected as President of the LU chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) and earning the Yolanda Lee Conyers National Society of Black Engineers Award in 2019. The local NSBE chapter awards this scholarship to one student to provide assistance in attending the national NSBE conference.

"With that scholarship, I was able to travel to the National Society of Black Engineers conference to network with employers and professionals," he said. "To have Miss Yolanda do such a thing shows that she cares about students being successful."

"Whenever I get to that level in my life, I will look back at what I was, and I'll give back to someone who wants to be where I am, so I felt really honored to have that scholarship, and I really appreciate the fact that she gave back to her community. That's how she chose to serve."

It has been that same enthusiasm and

desire to support students that has taken Yolanda Lee Conyers '89 across the globe and into the boardrooms of leading technology companies.

Conyers' international business experiences have led her to become a best-selling author and hold a seat on the independent board of directors at Seagate Technology LLC. Before this position, she was president of the Lenovo Foundation and chief development officer and vice president of global human resources at Lenovo—a journey begun as a computer science engineering student at Lamar.

One of the 2006 LU Distinguished Alumna's most formative experiences as a student at Lamar was the opportunity to attend the NSBE conference during her freshman year. That led to an internship at Texas Instruments and a full-time position upon graduation. She also worked at Dell Computers before accepting her role at Lenovo.

Conyers touchstone always involves interacting with people, at every level—a talent and skill she says is important not just in the global business environment but everywhere. "My passion is that I like to solve problems, and I like to bring diverse people together to make that happen," she said. She said global companies want to be able to understand customers' needs and wants, and businesses want people in their organization who can represent those different cultures and provide perspectives to sell products and services to everyone. This philosophy translates to her concepts of giving to Lamar students as well.

"It's rewarding to give back, and the scholarship is a story that I want to resonate with others and inspire others, particularly Blacks and Hispanics, brown

people and females,” Conyers said. “There is a low percentage of those groups that are participating in STEM, and you just can’t be what you can’t see. I’m a firm believer of that. And I believe that to open my story and successes can help to inspire others.”

Mary Katherine Bell Regents Scholarship in Mathematics

Groves native **Grace (Granger)**

Merino ’21, ’22, has bachelor’s and master’s degrees in mathematics and is



currently on the front line in what many consider one of the most challenging environments in the workforce—a high school classroom.

Having completed her first year at the Bob Hope School in Port Arthur, Merino teaches to inspire students’ interest in mathematics through algebra. It was during her own high school experience that she discovered her passion for math. “In school, nobody says they like math. It’s not cool,” she said with a laugh. I try to spark interest my students by relating math to the world around them and address the stigma that learning math sometimes has.”

Karen and Phil Drayer ’67 established the Mary Katherine Bell Regents Scholarship in Mathematics as a memorial to Phil’s junior high teacher and Lamar

instructor, Mary Katherine Bell. She was a highly decorated member of Lamar University’s faculty. Phil graduated from Lamar and is a dedicated alumnus, serving on the College of Engineering Advisory Council, the Lamar University Foundation Board of Trustees and the Investing in the Future Campaign Cabinet. He was also named Distinguished Alumnus in 2006 and provided the funds to name the electrical engineering department.

“The effects of a scholarship are both immediate and long-lasting for students,” Merino said. “I didn’t have to work extra jobs to pay tuition while I studied. For many students, not being able to pay thousands of dollars up front each semester means accumulating more and more student debt for later. Every scholarship helps.”

Robins Award for Excellence in Chemical Engineering

Katie Deaton ’18 always set high standards for herself and earned the Robins Award for Excellence in Chemical Engineering, which helped her go places she wouldn’t have been able to go otherwise.



“It literally opened the world to me,” she said. “It was my first trip out of North America, and it left an incredible impression on me and my experience at Lamar.” In addition to helping pay the cost of school, the scholarship enabled her participate in study abroad programs in China, India and Taiwan.

Those experiences, she said, prepared her for what would come after graduation. The Lumberton native now works for Samsung in Austin on projects involving the manufacturing of semiconductors for the company’s various products. “I can’t talk specifics of my work because of intellectual property concerns about it,” she said. “It’s a little bit more hands on than what I was able to do with oil and gas. I’ve increased my mechanical aptitude quite a bit. So, it’s been a fun and interesting challenge.” Deaton started at ExxonMobil in Beaumont and then their

facility in Corpus Christi before her time at Samsung.

The Robins Award gave Deaton confidence in her abilities. “I really wanted to make good on my scholarship and show that I was worth investing in. It felt really good to live up to those high expectations that were set, Deaton said.”

For Ron Robins ’66, an engineering degree took him on a different career path to intellectual property law, which generally requires practitioners to have an engineering or science degree because they are dealing with the many intricacies of technology. He said he would not have had his career without a degree in engineering from Lamar. He earned his law degree from the University of Houston.

Robins said no one in his family had ever gone to college, and although he was a good student and destined to go to college, money was hard to come by. Now he and wife Mary (Balawajder) ’66 are members of the Lamar University President’s Circle. They met on campus and were married on the same day she graduated from Lamar.

“I had absolutely no money to go to college,” Robins continued. “I went to Lamar because it was within commuting distance of our home in Port Arthur. And back in those days education and public universities were essentially free. It was just 50 bucks a semester plus fees. I worked part time all the way through school. Getting my degree took four years and three summers so I didn’t ever have any time off.”

The prestigious law firm of Vinson and Elkins had never hired a UH law graduate before, but Robins said it was his Lamar University engineering degree that got him the job.

“They took a chance on me and that’s where I stayed for my entire career, he said.”

Those experiences fostered Robins’ interest in giving back to students. He has one simple bon mot: “I like to give to someone just to recognize the accomplishment they had made by being the top student in a program like that and to show them that accomplishing hard goals should be recognized and appreciated,” he said.

SMITH-HUTSON SCHOLARSHIP:

A lifeline and a conduit to *success*

by Susannah Pate

Having completed its 10th year at LU, the Smith-Hutson Scholarship Program was established originally by “Mr. Smith,” an anonymous donor, and Robert and Sylvia Hutson, who, along with their assistant Dawn Wesneski, conduct interviews for selection and meet with recipients at events, offering guidance and encouragement. Each semester, the scholarship not only provides financial support to students studying in any major, but also forges strong connections among fellow recipients, fellow students, faculty, staff and alumni through social events, mentoring and networking across disciplines. “This tenth anniversary of the Smith-Hutson Scholarship Program at LU celebrates more than 100 students and their post-graduation success. The lives it has influenced for the better since its founding here in 2012 speak to both its need and its success. We look forward to the next 100,” said Jenea Nelson, scholarship coordinator.

LEVI SNOWDEN '19, *B.S. chemical engineering, B.S. physics*
R&D Lab Manager | Atmospheric Plasma Solutions Inc.
Apex, N.C.

I was excited to attend the scholarship dinners and meet so many amazing students from different backgrounds and fields of study. It was inspiring to see how they were achieving their goals and overcoming their challenges with passion and perseverance. I felt a sense of belonging and pride to be part of such a diverse and talented community. I always came away feeling motivated and grateful. The Smith-Hutson Scholarship gave me the freedom to pursue a lucrative career and discover new possibilities. Thanks to this generous scholarship, I was able to enroll in courses that challenged me intellectually, creatively and personally. I was able to take on a second degree and complete two bachelor's degrees concurrently.

The Smith-Hutson Scholarship gave me the unique opportunity to network with peers in other degree programs. With many other scholarships and at universities in general, you get grouped with people in your degree plan and don't get many opportunities to meet people outside of your little community. The ability to hear and understand diverse perspectives from across the university is a skill I use daily in my personal and professional life.

HANNAH CARLSON '19, *B.S. communication-corporate*
Head of Design | Brave Books | Conroe

As a Smith-Hutson student I was able to study abroad in Wales for a full year, which was an experience like no other. One of the most valuable things about being a Smith-Hutson Scholar were the opportunities I had to gain experience in different areas I was interested in, outside of my major. Although I did have multiple jobs throughout my years at Lamar, I didn't have the full weight of tuition costs on my shoulders. This allowed me

to spend time volunteering on projects that helped build my portfolio and knowledge in design, which has brought me to where I am today.

If I could share my thoughts to the donors, I would thank them. I would like to thank them profusely for their support in my higher education and allowing me to complete my degree without the stress of tuition. I was able to participate in countless activities, meet lifelong friends, make amazing memories and, of course, graduate! Additionally the trust they had in me to study abroad for a year while keeping the scholarship was immeasurable. I am truly so thankful for their support. Without the Smith-Hutson Scholarship I would not have attended Lamar University.

DALTON AVERY '22, *B.S. computer science*
Software Engineer | HEB | San Antonio

When I started looking for next steps in my career post-graduation, the Smith-Hutson program helped me immensely. I was able to meet with many people who helped me decide graduate school was my next step to achieve my career goals. The Smith-Hutson program was the reason I chose Lamar University; besides the financial assistance, meeting the people involved with the program played a large role in my decision. From my first interview with the panel I knew that I wanted to be a part of this program, everyone was extremely nice and supportive. I could tell that they genuinely cared about my future beyond anything I could have imagined.

The idea of the scholarship sounded great from the start, but I never imagined the support I would receive from the program coordinators and the donors themselves. It always felt like everyone involved with the program knew everyone and was able to connect with them on a personal level, which is something I never expected from a program of this size that spans across multiple universities.



SNOWDEN



CARLSON



AVERY



FIGUEROA



ROMO



TSAN

ANGELICA FIGUEROA '18, *B.S. family and consumer sciences-nutrition, dietetics, hospitality*, '19, *M.S. nutrition Quality Coordinator and Program Manager for Diabetes Education* | Christus Health Southeast Texas | Beaumont

My experience with this program was incredible. The program definitely helped me gain confidence in the professional world and prepared me for future endeavors. I owe a lot of my success to this program. I believe what was most valuable was the opportunity to meet other students like myself. We bonded over our similar stories and backgrounds but also bonded over our dissimilarities as well. The generosity of the donation to our degrees was an incredible help. I would often worry about the financial instability I would be in if I had to attend school without the help of this program. I have type 1 diabetes and insulin can be incredibly expensive. At the time, that was a huge concern for me, and often I wondered if I would even be able to attend school. But now, I am able to progress in my career and afford all of the medications and things I need without having to worry about drowning in debt.

I would first like to say thank you. Thank you for believing in me and my dream of attending Lamar and receiving my degree. Your commitment and generosity to this scholarship have provided opportunities for many deserving students. I count myself quite lucky to have been a part of such an incredible and supportive scholarship program. Your donation meant a lot to me and my family. I give thanks to you for being a part of my success.

YESI ROMO '21, *B.B.A. finance, B.B.A. economics*, '22, *M.B.A. Banking Analyst* | Texas Capital Bank | Houston

As a senior in high school, I did not expect to go to college as paying for it seemed overwhelming. Thanks to mentors in high school, I was encouraged to apply for the Smith-Hutson Scholarship, and it changed my life.

One of the most pivotal moments of my experience as a Smith-Hutson Scholar was when I attended the spring dinner as a second semester freshman. I remember sitting by Dan French, dean of the College of Business at the time. He told me all about the college's study abroad opportunities and encouraged me to sign up. In 2019, I travelled to Costa Rica and Panama with a great group of students, and it was a wonderful experience to say the least. Completing a bachelor's degree was already a large enough goal, but,

in that trip, a very successful LU alumnus encouraged us to consider graduate studies, and I decided that I would get my MBA. At the Smith-Hutson graduation dinner, everyone was announcing their acceptance to job offers. I had decided to pursue my MBA immediately after graduation, so I had not yet applied anywhere. At that dinner, Dawn Wesneski, mentioned that she worked at Texas Capital Bank. I had just completed an internship at MCT Credit Union, and I was interested in the financial services industry. When I decided to move to Houston and as I was thinking of places to work, Texas Capital Bank popped into my head. I applied, and after a few weeks I followed up with Dawn to let her know I had applied. She reached out to HR, and we found out that the algorithm had booted out my application due to an error. Thanks to Dawn, I secured an interview. I was offered a full-time position as a corporate banking analyst after successful completion of the training program within the bank. Today, I am part of a team that provides funding and other products to cities, counties, non-profits and the education sector throughout the state.

THANH TSAN '19, *B.S. mechanical engineering Senior Maintenance Engineer* | Dow Chemical Co. | Freeport

To the donors of the Smith-Hutson Scholarship, I want to express my gratitude and appreciation for investing in me. I still vividly remember being a young senior in high school. I remember the fear and anxiousness I had regarding college and how to fund it. I remember all the nerves I had right before the Smith-Hutson scholarship interview, sitting in the waiting area with numerous other applicants (one of which became my dorm roommate and now best friend). The previous years in grade school had all built up to that moment. The day I received the acceptance letter to become a Smith-Hutson scholar is one of the most memorable days of my life. On that day, I learned that working hard and earnestly will pay off in the future, and that along the way, I will meet some incredible people—strangers—who want to see me succeed.

The Hutsons, "Mr. Smith," and the organizers of the scholarship were fundamental in my growth at Lamar University as a mechanical engineering student. Besides financial assistance, the Smith-Hutson program provided mentorship with various deans of the university and previous alumni. The Smith-Hutson scholarship program has a vast network, and I know many fellow scholars who all work for Fortune 500 companies, including myself.

DAVID J. BECK FELLOWSHIPS:

Extraordinary. Unique. Created for Lamar University students.

by Mona Brittain

"Lamar University is, at its core, a university that values and promotes experiential learning. Students have opportunities for real-world training that prepare them to enter their professional fields or to move to graduate or professional programs with levels of experience beyond their non-LU colleagues. The David J. Beck Fellowship program is the flagship of these experiential learning opportunities. Since its inception, two dozen Beck Fellows have benefited from extraordinary and unique learning opportunities available only to Lamar University students. Those experiences have enriched their education along with those of their fellow students who benefit from the experiential knowledge that they bring back with them to the classroom."

—Juan Zabala '07, vice president for university advancement and CEO of the LU Foundation

On paper, a David J. Beck Fellowship provides a Lamar undergraduate a full academic scholarship for one year—including tuition, fees, books and on-campus room and board—along with up to \$10,000 to pursue a summer project proposed as part of the application. In practice, this fellowship makes possible a world of opportunities.

In 2009, David Beck '61 initially funded this prestigious fellowship, open to LU undergraduates in any major. Fellows are chosen based on the strength of their complete application packet, including proposed summer project, academic record and financial need.

Beck, a Lamar University Distinguished Alumnus, has served

as president of the Lamar University Foundation and a regent of the Lamar University System. He is the founding partner of Beck Redden LLP, a nationally recognized trial and appellate law firm. His honors include being named in Best Lawyers in America for the past three decades, being designated one of the 25 Greatest Lawyers of the past quarter century, and receiving the Award for Achievement in the Pursuit of Justice for All from the Center for American and International Law. Beck also served as president of the International Association of Defense Counsel, the American College of Trial Lawyers, and the State Bar of Texas.

The Beck Fellow alumni featured here share how the fellowship influenced their futures.



TYLER MARTIN '21

David J. Beck Fellow '20

Project: *Preston Innovation Laboratory, Rice University*

Tyler Martin says that he developed his interest in research during his second year as a mechanical engineering student. That interest became a fascination that continues to grow.

He received the Beck fellowship in 2020, which allowed him to work with the Preston Innovation Laboratory at Rice University. The following year, Martin was awarded a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship. Out of 40,000 applicants, Martin received one of 2,000 fellowships chosen. His project involved the development of a comfortable and portable energy harvesting system that would utilize human body heat to power wearable assistive devices like prosthetic hands. "The work was incredibly rewarding because it had real-world implications, and thanks to the Beck Fellowship, I was able to get hands-on research experience at one of the top universities in the world," he said. "Ultimately, I went on to present a summary of my work at the 2021 Texas STEM Conference where I received an award for my presentation."

Was your project a building block to your receiving a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship?

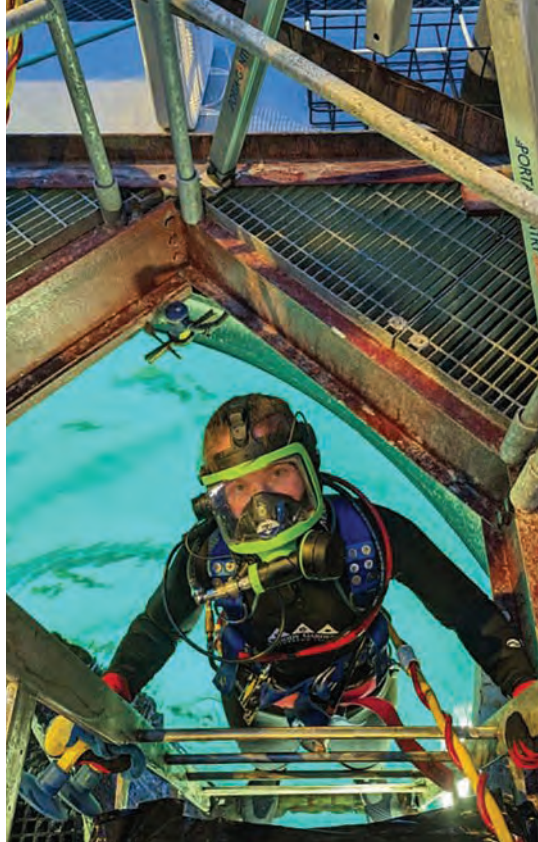
"The National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship is an outstanding way to kick off any student's academic career, but the process of applying for and being awarded a fellowship can be incredibly difficult. However, the Beck Fellowship application process is, in some ways, even more difficult. Students are required to prepare an application package containing two projects, a personal statement, budgets/timelines, and letters of recommendation. Then, the final candidates go on to interview with and present their work to the entire Beck Fellowship Committee. Preparing applications for graduate programs and fellowships was made so much easier after navigating through the Beck Fellowship selection process."

Last year you joined Universal Matter, Inc. in Houston as a process engineering technician. What are your responsibilities and what are you enjoying most?

"Universal Matter is an 'advanced materials' startup company out of Rice University that specializes in graphene. I joined the team in October 2022 to help out with the scale up of their production processes as they transition away from the research lab and towards industrial production. Getting in on the ground floor of such an innovative company has been a wonderful experience, and I've really enjoyed having the chance to play a key role in its growth."

In your engineering student blog at Lamar, one of the top three benefits of conducting research that you list is the opportunity to one day leave your mark on the world. Is that also your goal?

"Leaving my mark on the world is definitely a goal that is always in the back of my mind, but I think that it's also important to recognize that our 'mark' doesn't only come in the form of winning big fellowships or getting published in Nature. Some of the most important marks on my life came from the mentorship I received while at Lamar, and I hope that one day I can support and impact people in a similar way."



ELISABETH MAXWELL '13

David J. Beck Fellow '11, '12

Project '11: South African Shark Conservancy—learned about conducting field work, proper animal husbandry and designing research projects; completed first dive training and earned Open Water Diver certification.

After receiving a degree in biology from Lamar, Maxwell earned master's degrees in marine biology and marine policy from the University of Maine in 2017. While at UMaine, she participated in the Scientific Diving Program and completed several diver certifications including Divemaster and American Academy of Underwater Sciences (AAUS) Scientific Diver training. Her experiences diving along the coast of Maine revealed a passion for conducting work underwater, facilitating safe diving practices and helping others to be successful divers. Maxwell's enthusiasm for diving led her to accept a job as a dive officer at Moody Gardens in Galveston, where she oversees the staff dive program and daily operations. This non-profit facility includes a 1.5 million-gallon aquarium where exhibits recreate the habitat of the Gulf of Mexico, South Atlantic, North Pacific, South Pacific and Caribbean. Additionally, Moody Gardens has a robust field diving program and partners with institutions including NOAA, Texas A&M Galveston, Rice University and others.

What were your Beck Fellowship summer projects and how important were they to your career?

"Receiving my initial Beck Fellowship allowed me to spend the summer of 2011 in South Africa at the South African Shark Conservancy. There I learned about conducting field work, proper animal husbandry, and designing research projects. It was also through this support that I was able to complete my first dive training and earn my Open Water Diver certification. If I hadn't received that first award, I may have never had the opportunity to become a diver and pursue the career that I've grown to love. The second award enabled me to take my experience even farther. I spent two months in Mozambique at a remote field station run by the Marine Megafauna Foundation. We conducted field trials evaluating a non-invasive technique to sample genetics from manta rays (spoiler alert, it worked!). While there, I worked and dove alongside incredibly experienced field scientists and professional divers. They had a huge impact on my growth as a diver and showed me how to balance safe diving with accomplishing research goals. I didn't realize at the time that this was setting the stage for a (hopefully) long career in scientific diving. It wasn't all about diving though, I also learned an incredible amount about the logistics of conducting remote field work and what to do with the samples after the dive was over. When I came back to Lamar, I had several months of working in the lab with my advisor, Dr. Ana Christensen, to process the samples that were collected and learn how to make sense out of the data."

Looking back on my experiences through the Beck Fellowship, the thing that stands out to me the most is the people who helped me along the way. The experiences that I had were spectacular, because the people involved were phenomenal and helped me learn so much more than I was expecting."



Q: WHICH LU ALUMNA IS A PUBLISHED AUTHOR AND THE SISTER OF THE LATE MUSIC RECORDING ARTIST WHO PERFORMED THE WELL-KNOWN HIT SONG "ME AND BOBBY MC GEE"? A: LAURA JOPLIN '70

Q: Which LU Alumna was the production coordinator for the film *Fast and the Furious 7*?

A: Lark Bernini '72

Q: Which LU Alumnus invented the hardware for metal detectors used in most airports worldwide?

A: Charles Garrett '59, '11

Q: Which LU Alumnus is one of the illustrators for the *Amelia Bedelia* books by Peggy Parish and Herman Parish?

A: Lynn Sweat '56

Q: Which LU Alumnus has served as one of the official photographers for the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival?

A: Greg Noire (Oribhabor) '08

Q: Which LU Alumna is the Vice President for Community Relations and Events for the Houston Rockets?

A: Sarah (Pickens) Joseph '84

Q: Which LU Alumnus's photographs appeared in the 2000 film *"Where the Heart Is"* starring Natalie Portman?

A: Keith Carter '70

Q: Which LU Alumnus's home was a filming location for the 2001 film *"Spy Kids"* starring Antonio Banderas? The home, known as Villa del Sol in Austin, was the location for the wedding of Agent Gregario Cortez and Ingrid in the film.

A: Beau Theriot '70

Q: Which former LU student is the voice of Nosey Smurf in the 2017 animated film *"Smurfs: The Lost Village"*?

A: Kelly Asbury -80

Q: Which LU Alumnus served as an interior designer for musicians Kenny G and Rod Stewart?

A: Tom Allardyce '71

Q: Which LU Alumna is the VP of Global Brand Marketing for Indeed.com, a top job site that has over 250 million unique visitors each month?

A: Jennifer (Stilley) Warren '96

Q: Which LU Alumnus invented in conjunction with Frito-Lay, the automation equipment for the Scoop Chip?

A: Anthony George '88

Q: Which LU Alumnus played the role of the Odessa Doctor in the 2004 Film *"Friday Night Lights"*?

A: Tommy Kendrick '72

Q: WHICH LU ALUMNUS IS A WELL-KNOWN ARTIST WHOSE WORK HAS BEEN EXHIBITED IN THE CORCORAN GALLERY OF ART AND THE SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN ART MUSEUM AND WHOSE WORK IS THE PERMANENT COLLECTIONS OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART IN NEW YORK AND THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART IN LOS ANGELES? **A:** JOHN ALEXANDER '68

Q: Which LU Alumnus is a Texas State Senator who survived the 9/11 attacks in The Pentagon and upon retirement from the U.S. Army received the Legion of Merit?

A: Brian Birdwell '84

Q: Which LU Alumna serves as the Manager of Applied Sciences, Ford Research and Innovation Center at Ford Motor Company, holds 35 U.S. patents, and is a Fellow of the Society of Automotive Engineers?

A: Dr. Christine (Williams) Lambert '94

Q: Which LU Alumnus is a World Series Champion with the Boston Red Sox (2004) and made an appearance in the 2005 Film Fever Pitch?

A: Kevin Millar '93

Q: Which LU Alumnus and former Big Red was the costume performer for Baby Bop in the series Barney and Friends from Season 2 (1993) to Season 12 (2008)?

A: Jeff Ayers '90

Q: Which LU Alumnus served as a Secret Service Agent protecting six U.S. Presidents?

A: David Reynolds '73

Q: Which LU Alumna appeared in an episode of the reality tv show Extreme Makeover: Home Edition on ABC?

A: Kristi (Gillette) Heid '94, 2006 Episode when they renovated the theater of Sabine Pass School.

Q: Which LU Alumnus competed on Fox's Reality TV Show MasterChef?

A: Joshua "Cutter" Brewer '07, Season 5 in 2014, Came in 4th place

Q: Which LU Alumnus is a world-renowned Tsunami expert who developed a tsunami detection and forecast system that has dramatically increased warning times and forecast accuracy and decreased the risk of catastrophic loss of life?

A: Dr. Eddie Bernard '69

Q: Which LU Alumnus has earned the most degrees from Lamar University? (9: 1 Certificate of Completion; 1 Associates Degree; 5 Bachelors Degrees; 2 Masters Degrees)

A: Douglas Buffington '65, '70, '71, '72, '74, '91, '94, '98

Q: Which LU Alumnus was a quality engineer at Boeing who helped design the portable life-support system used in the Apollo 11 Mission for NASA that earned him the Astronaut Personal Achievement Award (also known as the Silver Snoopy)?

A: Don Bennett, Sr. '61

Q: Which LU Alumnus wrote the hit song "It's 5 O'Clock Somewhere" that received a Grammy in 2003 for Best Country Song and was sung by Alan Jackson and Jimmy Buffett?

A: Don Rollins '83

Q: Which LU Alumnus became the first person to surpass 300 mph in a modified sports car in 2008?

A: Dr. M. Bonner Denton '67

Q: Which LU Alumnus helped invent the HOV lane?

A: Levy Dumas '66

Q: Which LU Alumnus was a wide receiver for the Greenbay Packers in the 2020 and 2021 seasons?

A: Reggie Begelton '15

Q: Which LU Alumnus is a prominent, network sports broadcaster who has anchored network coverage of the Olympics, Masters golf tournaments, US Open Tennis Championships, and called NFL play-by-play for CBS sports?

A: Bill Macatee '78

Q: Which LU Alumnus previously served as Vice President of the country Honduras?

A: Elvin Santos Ordonez '90

Q: Which LU Alumna had her natural alcohol free unisex shaving solution picked up by major retailer Walmart in the U.S.?

A: Lyndsey (Merida) Brantley '08

Q: Which LU Alumnus was the first physician in Beaumont to perform the cochlear implant surgery and the BAHA implanted hearing device?

A: Dr. Jeremy Roebuck '96

Q: Which LU Alumni are Game Wardens who were featured on the show Lone Star Law on Animal Planet in 2021?

A: Raj Ataya '20 and Clint Caywood '03

Q: WHICH LU ALUMNUS PLAYED FOR THE BROOKLYN NETS IN THE NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION FOR THE 2020-2021 SEASON? HE WAS THE FIRST PLAYER IN NBA HISTORY TO GO FROM A TWO-WAY CONTRACT TO A REGULAR CONTRACT, ALL WHILE NEVER BEING SENT DOWN TO THE NBA G LEAGUE IN THE PROCESS. HE ALSO APPEARED IN THE 2022 FILM HUSTLE. **A: MIKE JAMES '12**

Q: WHICH LU ALUMNUS IS A WRITER AND PRODUCER KNOWN FOR DARK NIGHT OF THE SCARECROW (1981), CHILLER (1983), AND THE TWILIGHT ZONE (1985)? A: J.D. FEEGELSON '63

Peers, partners, *regular* people

Global leadership from hometown hearts

by Casey Ford

In a Zoom meeting, they seem like regular people. They're funny, genuinely warm, and talking to them is easy—one might forget for a moment they're talking to two veteran power players, one in global industry and another in Texas government, politics and economics. Lori Ryerkerk-Griffith and The Honorable Carl R. Griffith Jr. recently spoke with *Cadence* to share their thoughts on Lamar University's centennial anniversary, and it was a good time to catch up with them, thank them and celebrate their support of LU over the years.

Griffith, a native Southeast Texan, has a lifelong connection to LU, where his grandmother was a teacher and his first professional gig in law enforcement was as a 19-year-old campus police officer. He and his mother even studied at LU at the same time for their Master of Education degrees in counseling. His professional story, of course, is history most locals know well. After a long career with Jefferson County, including deputy sheriff, DA investigator, eight years as sheriff, and ten as county judge, he left public service and "retired" into consultancy. His firm Griffith Moseley Johnson and Associates Inc. represents clients that include international companies with a presence in Southeast Texas and across the Gulf Coast and his work focuses on economic development and site selection around heavy industry. Griffith has always served beyond the scope of what was required, supporting mental health initiatives, advocating for natural disaster survivors, chairing the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards, and working tirelessly for the social and economic welfare of Southeast Texas—both the region and its people.

Ryerkerk-Griffith, originally from Iowa, arrived in Texas around 2003; she says she got here as fast as she could. At the culmination of a splendid industrial career that evolved through various international, corporate leadership roles with ExxonMobil and Global Manufacturing (a Shell Downstream company), she was supposed to retire, too. She was called right back into the majors, though, by Celanese Corp. as its first woman CEO, and today she is one of fewer than 40 women to serve as CEO in the Fortune 500. In a company celebrated for its "corporate citizenship," Ryerkerk-Griffith stands out for her commitment to social responsibility and sustainability, so much so that *D CEO Magazine* named her CEO of the Year in 2020. In 2021, she was honored by the Iowa State University College of Engineering with the Anson Marston Medal, which "recognizes College of Engineering alumni for outstanding achievement

in advancing engineering science, technology or policy having national and international impact in academics, industry, public services, government or other venues." In 2022, she was chosen by international peers as the first woman recipient of the Chemists' Club Kavalier Award, a coveted honor in the global chemical industry that recognizes "the exceptional performance of innovators and disruptors of the status quo in the sector," according to the club.

The success of these two people, individually and together, has allowed them to share their gifts and resources with Lamar University for many years. LU recently honored Griffith with the 2023 Distinguished Alumni Award, which "recognizes extraordinary alumni who have enhanced the reputation of the university by distinguishing themselves in their careers or lives of service and have made significant contributions to their community, state and nation through professional service, public service and civic activities." Ryerkerk-Griffith has served on the College of Engineering Advisory Council and as an Executive-in-Residence, and she is currently a trustee on the Lamar University Foundation Board. They are members of the President's Circle, and their philanthropy has extended beyond Southeast Texas to the revival of Habitat for Humanity housing in the city of Dallas and to Ryerkerk-Griffith's alma mater, Iowa State University, where they established a faculty fellowship for women engineers.

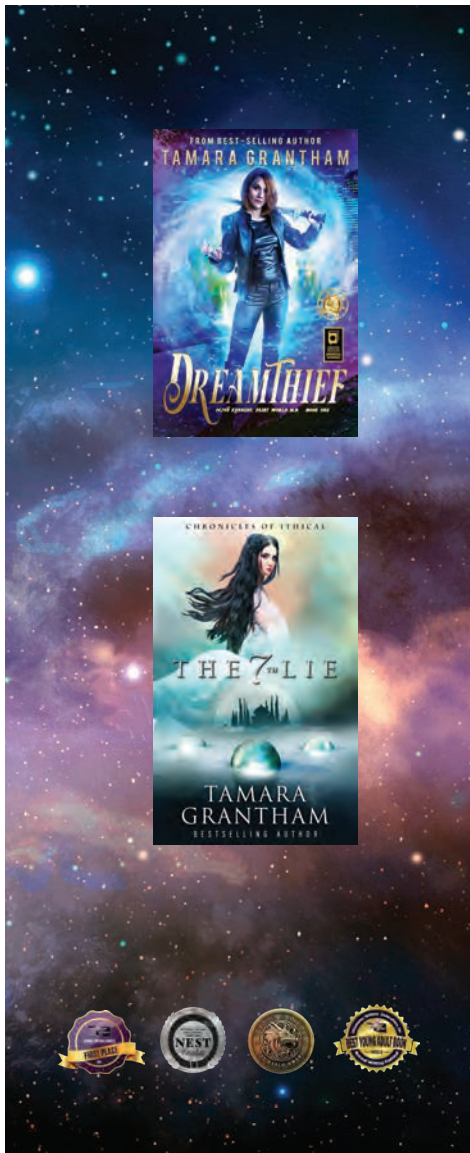
The couple are equally staunch believers in the mission of Lamar University as it relates to quality of education and impact on the economy of its communities. Ryerkerk-Griffith says she is proud of the university's long legacy of being a home not only to local people who have been here for generations but also brand-new immigrants to the country who are just beginning to make a home here. She remarked on the ways its response to adversity over the years has made the LU community resilient and increasingly impactful to local people and the international community of students and faculty who live on and around the campus. Griffith expressed his pride in the situation of the university as a research partner at the center of the coming revolutions in clean energy. He believes the community's future depends a great deal on LU's ability to maximize its influence and relevance in that transition and says those conversations are happening now under the leadership of key administrators and researchers on campus. He reported that business and industry leaders are preparing infrastructures in the region for this development, and LU will lead the charge through research on gas-to-hydrogen, fuel cell applications, CO2 injection and

other sustainable energy technologies.

Both believe at its centennial, LU is as relevant as ever and more so. In discussing the university's role in clean energy research, Griffith compares this cultural moment to the transformative years following Spindletop in 1901. Ryerkerk-Griffith agrees and says as the region and the world change rapidly, LU's ability to pivot and adapt will safeguard its place in the hearts of Southeast Texans. She invites our leaders to keep asking questions about how the university will meet the evolving needs of students—how they learn and what they prioritize in terms of their lives and careers. Both agree LU has had a succession of strong presidents who have made key impacts on its position as not an insular, local college, but a global-minded, welcoming institution for scholars from around the world.

Their enthusiasm and powerful belief in Lamar University is contagious, and as their interview came to an end, one had the sense that LU will not let them down. Not only are they not kidding around, the F500 CEO and The Judge, but they are also true and devoted friends of LU. They're sweet and proud parents and grandparents of an extended family of children. They have a ranch near Winnie, Texas, where they seem to feel most themselves. They occasionally finish each other's sentences but also listen respectfully to each other, signs it's a marriage of equals between two people who really like each other. LU is ineffably fortunate to have these two dynamic leaders and humanitarians on its side.





Building elsewheres

Grantham's sci-fi, fantasy novels
share roots with SETX trees

by Casey Ford

When award-winning fiction writer Tamara (Hanks) Grantham '05 started her English degree at Lamar University, she already knew she was a storyteller. Since early childhood, she had been telling and writing magical tales that emerged from all her time spent outdoors, riding her grandmother's horses and helping in her garden. But as she grew older, the idea she could write an entire novel seemed crazy to Grantham, no matter how much her Uncle Larry encouraged her to write one.

Turns out, Uncle Larry was on to something.

To date, Grantham has published more than 15 fantasy works, including the *Twisted Ever After* trilogy, three adaptations of classical fairy tales; two vampire novels in the *Legends of Crimson Hollow* series; a seven-book series called *Fairy World, MD*; and two novels, so far, in the *Chronicles of Ithical* series. A favorite of her fans and critics has been *The*



"You take people, you put them on a journey, you give them peril, you find out who they really are." —JOSS WHEDON, American screenwriter

Not-So-Chosen One, which was a finalist in both Oklahoma's NEST Contest and the Realm Awards and won best YA novel of 2022 at the annual Oklahoma Writers' Federation (OWFI) Awards. *Never Call Me Vampire* won best adult novel at OWFI for 2021. *The Witch's Tower*, in addition to launching as a No. 1 bestseller at Amazon and Barnes & Noble, won OWFI's best YA novel in 2020. *The 7th Lie* and *Dreamthief* also won prestigious awards in previous years.

Grantham, despite being such a prolific and successful writer, does not sit around in a room and write all day. She speaks often at authors' pavilion events and comic-cons, and she regularly visits schools, book clubs, libraries and writing conferences to speak to readers and writers of all ages. Like many of her heroic characters, she is a force for good. She donates 5% of all print and e-book sales to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP.org), an organization that advocates for mental health awareness and suicide prevention.

Also keeping her busy is her family with husband, Dr. David Grantham '05, whom she met at Lamar University during his undergraduate study. Both from small Southeast Texas towns—Tamara graduated from Evadale High School and David from Little Cypress-Mauriceville High School—they relocated when he was offered a position as a surgeon in Kansas. Before they were practicing surgery and writing novels, they bonded in Beaumont over science fiction and fantasy media and romantic dates at our infamous Haunted Hotel. They married in 2002 at the Houston LDS Temple, survived medical school in Galveston and a residency in Tulsa, and today, they have five children

and a rich life together in Wichita.

Even people with rich lives, though, sometimes struggle. Grantham openly shares her own mental health challenges as a human being and a parent, and she credits writing as being an escape and a source of light in dark places, even when the writing was difficult and she felt like quitting. Not only the practice and perseverance of writing but also her chosen genre have helped her navigate challenges in her own life by inviting her to imagine the rules for fantastic new worlds, then create characters and solve problems inside those worlds. This "worldbuilding," says the author Neil Gaiman, is empowering, but it is impossible if the writer isn't also constantly reading.

Reading and education seem to be cornerstones in her family; Grantham's grandmother, Willie Mae Waldrep Hanks '62, earned a bachelor's degree in education from LU and had a long teaching career in Orangefield school district. Grantham, like most great writers, says her deep love of reading came first. Stephen King says if someone doesn't read, they cannot have the tools they need to write. George R.R. Martin says writers need to read *everything*. Every kind of writing, from every kind of genre, whether good or bad, has something to teach other writers. Grantham agrees. Her first literary loves were C.S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia* and Lloyd Alexander's *Chronicles of Prydain*. Later she was enraptured by the work of Jane Austen and Thomas Hardy. Today, she reads every fantasy novel she can get her hands on.

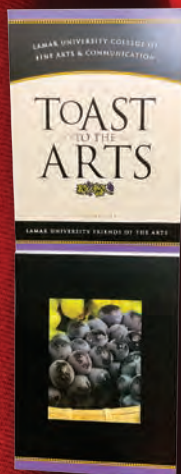
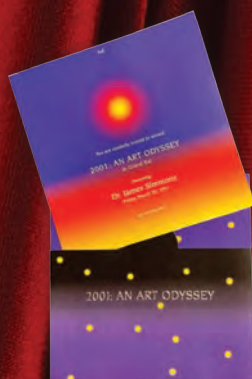
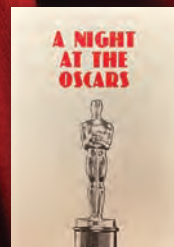
When asked about her writing process, Grantham mentions "planners versus pantsers." Martin calls them "architects

versus gardeners." Pantsers, or gardeners, fly by the seat of their pants. They start with the seed of an idea and write from it with no clear concept at first of what it might grow into. Planners, or architects, have a clear concept of the story's beginning, middle and end, and they write from a well-developed outline. It seems appropriate that in this context, our worldbuilder places herself firmly in the planner/architect category.

Woman. Writer. Worldbuilder. The writer Anne McCaffrey said, "a good story is a good story no matter who wrote it." It seems, though, that Grantham's "elsewheres," set in far reaches of space and time and imagination, started here in the trees and grasses of southeast Texas, and this makes them unique things no one else could have written. Lamar University is proud to call her friend and alumna, and the pride is mutual. Grantham credits her English professors for introducing her to the greatest writing from every era and place in the world and the university for introducing her to the man with whom she would make a life and a family.

Grantham's books are available for purchase through most major online outlets like Amazon and Powell's. Her web site, tamaragrantham.com, has plentiful information about her events schedule and subscribing to her blog and newsletter. *Cadence* invites the Cardinal alumni community to visit her site and see what worlds Grantham will build next.







Le Grand Bal

48 years of art, music-filled evenings and fine arts aficionados

by Caden Moran

In 1975, the first-ever Le Grand Bal took place at the Red Carpet Inn in Beaumont. Since then, the unique event has become a mainstay in the community, anticipated not only for the elegance of its swank-to-groovy décor, danceable music and art auction but also for its *raison d'être*: it has helped raise over \$3 million to benefit students in the fine arts programs at Lamar University.

Brock Brentlinger, founding dean of the College of Applied and Fine Arts, now the College of Fine Arts and Communication, established the Friends of the Arts shortly after arriving at Lamar University in the early 1970s. After the organization was set and plans were made, the first Le Grand Bal took place to support student scholarships and academic enrichment programs for students and faculty.

Susan (Williams) Simmons '68, named a Distinguished Alumna in 2013 and first lady of LU from 1999 to 2013, remembers the first Bal as very formal with the women wearing beautiful ballgowns, and she recalled two jazz bands performing throughout the night with one being led by her husband, President Emeritus Jimmy Simmons.

Over the years, the Bal outgrew the inn, so it moved to the Setzer Student Center, then to the Montagne Center, and recently back to the renovated Setzer Student Center, which allowed the event to occur on campus. Donna Meeks, professor and former chair of the art department, noted that the guests used to walk throughout the fine arts buildings in order to “connect to the lived experiences of students.”

A big component of Le Grand Bal since its beginning is the art auction, which was always Brentlinger's inspiration for his projects. Meeks recalled that for many years the auction followed a “salon style,” with more than 300 pieces of art packed in the Dishman Art Museum.

Le Grand Bal was created to raise needed support, involve the community and showcase Lamar University. In fact, Meeks called it “uniquely Lamar.”

Brentlinger wished to create an event of style, polish and significance, and almost 50 years later Le Grand Bal has a premier place of honor in the calendar of Southeast Texas fine arts.

History of Friends of the Arts

by Caden Moran

The College of Fine Arts and Communication is home to several immersive, innovative and successful programs.

Between both areas of the college, there is no shortage of opportunity for the Southeast Texas community to experience the work of dedicated students. On the fine arts side, which includes theatre, dance, art and music, a community exists with a heart for art in all its many facets. That community of alumni and friends of LU has spent decades working to support those areas and their students.

LU Friends of the Arts is a group of visionary individuals who work to bring awareness to the College of Fine Arts and Communication as they raise funds for scholarships and educational enhancements. Through this support, students have access to visiting artists and scholars and gain hands-on clinical experience. In addition, faculty members are afforded the ability to enrich their careers through academic and artistic workshops and research.

Under its former name the College of Fine and Applied Arts, founding dean of the College Brock Brentlinger became

inspired by the annual art sale that the art department hosted. After Brentlinger's arrival at the University in the early 1970s, he began the process of forming a group, and an event, to benefit students. So, in 1973, Brentlinger formed the Friends of the Arts.

"The Friends of the Arts and Le Grand Bal were both his brainchild," said Donna Meeks, professor and former chair of the Art and Design Department. "He was the founder, and one of his great initiatives was establishing a donor base for the arts."

At first, the group would occasionally meet at a member's house for dinner to come up with ideas and plan how to move forward. Now, the considerably larger group of board members meets three times a year, typically in one of the fine arts buildings on campus, where as part of their meeting they enjoy a performance or presentation from up-and-coming student artists and performers.

In 1975, two years after Friends of the Arts was founded, the first Le Grand Bal was held at the Red Carpet Inn, a former hotel in Beaumont.

During the establishment of the group,

Jimmy Simmons, now president emeritus of Lamar University but then a faculty member and later dean of the college, and his wife Susan (Williams) '68 quickly became involved and were instrumental in developing the group and growing its reach, implementing its programs and making Le Grand Bal an annual event.

In fact, following the discontinuation of LU's football program in 1989, the Simmonses decided to showcase the bands in other ways to help the community maintain access to stellar musicians and provide performance opportunities for students. With the help of Friends of the Arts, the *Lamarissimo!* Concert Series was created and sold a high number of tickets, leading to packed concerts at the Julie Rogers Theatre.

The Friends of the Arts organization has helped raise significant funding for scholarships and academic enrichment since its inception, and they don't intend to stop anytime soon. As the group continues to evolve, grow and adapt, the goal of assisting students with the help of the larger community remains the same.

To become a member of the Friends of the Arts, visit lamar.edu/friendsofthearts.



NURSE TO PATIENT:

The human *touch* makes the difference

by Susannah Pate

In the JoAnne Gay Dishman School of Nursing, class instruction and simulation laboratory practice are enhanced with on-the-ground training in the hospitals, accustoming students to the protocols and procedures of the workplace and preparing them for their futures in healthcare. LU partners with three regional systems—Baptist Hospitals of Southeast Texas, CHRISTUS Southeast Texas Health System and the Medical Center of Southeast Texas—to give students the opportunity to interact with patients and soon-to-be fellow professionals.

During their first semester in nursing school, students begin making weekly visits to hospitals. There, they are guided by preceptors and complete several assigned tasks. This routine is followed throughout their time in the program, and by their final year they will have developed clinical skills such as “critical thinking, health assessment, prioritization of patient care, communication with the healthcare team, administration of medications, intravenous insertion and more,” said Cindy Stinson ’75, ’80, chair of the JoAnne Gay Dishman School of Nursing.

Michelle Hammerly is the director of education for CHRISTUS Southeast Texas Health System. “Having students in our organization allows us to support our local schools and gives our preceptors the opportunity to teach and prepare the students for an exciting, rewarding career,” Hammerly said. In preparation for their license exam, the “combination of classroom, simulation and clinical hands-on” education provides students with comprehensive instruction, she added.

For LU nursing student Brittney Whittle, the idea of clinical rotations was daunting at first. However, during her clinicals she soon realized how much teamwork there is in healthcare as a whole and how nurses don’t have to rely only on themselves. “From watching heart surgery to seeing life come into this world . . . the hospital staff encouraged me to be confident in

my knowledge and skills,” she said. “They let me know that they have all been in my shoes and that I will continue to learn new things every day as a nurse with people there to support me.”

For Shelby Burton ’23 and Carolina Soto ’23, emotional bonding with patients led to a better understanding of care. Burton thanks the partnerships for giving her the opportunity to explore different specialties, and by interacting with the healthcare team, she said she developed a clearer picture of where she saw herself in the future. The more Burton communicated with and cared for patients, the more she “witnessed the positive influence that healthcare workers leave on their patients and the reciprocal effect patients have on their caregivers.” She appreciates how much she impacts others’ lives and how her caring professionalism will leave an impression that can last a lifetime. Likewise, Carolina Soto learned much from patient interactions, realizing how some of their needs are not always health-related, but emotional, which gave her a new perspective from the patient’s point of view.

Stinson shared that the clinical experiences provided by Lamar’s partners contribute largely to the students’ high scores on the national qualifying exam. The December 2022 graduating class had a 98% pass rate, and in the last ten years the school has received commendation from the Texas Board of Nursing for its pass rates. “LU nurses are highly sought after due to the excellent nursing program, and we recruit from each class,” says Katherine Degenstein-Gartman, chief nursing officer of Baptist Hospitals of Southeast Texas. “The personal relationships we have developed with Dr. Stinson, Dr. Hale, Dr. Robinson and others are invaluable to Baptist.” For students such experiential learning demonstrates the difference such partnerships make not only for their college success but also in the pursuit of excellence during their careers.



BURTON



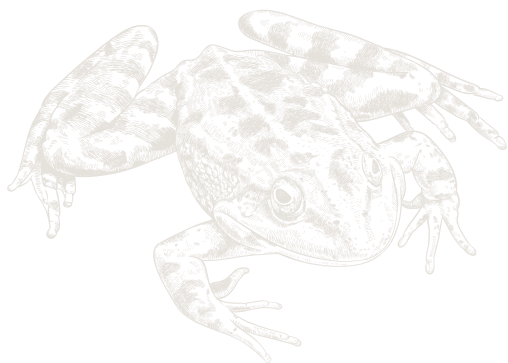
SOTO



WHITTLE

A working legacy creates the teachers of *Tomorrow*

by Amy Smith



When Chuck '72 and Becky '71 Mason's kids were young, Chuck used to let the backyard pool go in the winter so the family could hold their much anticipated annual "frog day" in the spring. On that day, when Chuck would drain and clean the pool, they'd find lots of frogs, perfect for studying and releasing to the wild or for dissecting. Chuck's lifelong love of biology was nurtured under the tutelage of Russell Long when Chuck was a biology major at Lamar University. His passion for exploring the natural world and for helping others attend to its wonders led him to found the JASON Alliance of Southeast Texas, a program providing hands-on science training to elementary and middle school students and teachers, and to help establish the Beaumont Children's Museum. Becky and Chuck Mason were named Distinguished Alumni in 2017 and have provided financial support for numerous scholarships, the Reese Construction Management Program and several other academic programs as well as faculty support in the College of Fine Arts and Communication. Becky Mason studied education at LU and taught first grade at Blanchette Elementary School before raising her children and



joining her husband in his construction business. Chuck's passion for hands-on science combined with Becky's experiential teaching strategies, inspired them to fund the Mason STEM Initiative.

The Masons challenged the College of Education and Human Development to create a program that would train more highly qualified STEM teachers for Texas schools and generously provided funding for original faculty-led projects and teaching fellowships. Mamta Singh, associate professor of science education in the Department of Teacher Education, answered that challenge, creating the Mason Summer STEM initiative. The program is a paid teaching internship that provides

students trained in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math the opportunity to explore the profession of teaching.

Singh designed the Becky and Chuck Mason Summer STEM Initiative to recruit and train majors in STEM fields, including biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics and engineering to prepare them to teach science or math at the primary or secondary school levels. The program aims to attract students with a passion for science and math who might not have considered a career path in teaching, with an overall goal of increasing the pool

of qualified STEM teacher candidates to serve in Southeast Texas. In the month-long program, which meets for three hours every morning, students prepare an inquiry-based STEM lesson plan in alignment with Texas educational standards. The first three weeks features intensive training in the nuts and bolts of teaching to prepare students to teach their lesson at Pietzsch-MacArthur Elementary School's Summer Enrichment Program in the final week.

When Mamta Singh was studying biology during her undergraduate years in Nepal, she planned to apply for medical school. Between graduating and awaiting acceptance, she found a temporary job teaching science. Even though she had no training in teaching—only training in biology—she found that she loved interacting with students and ultimately decided to pursue a career in teaching rather than medicine. When she entered a Ph.D. program in the U.S., she saw the need for a program that would introduce students in STEM fields to teaching as a profession, allowing them to envision other career paths for themselves while still earning their degree in a STEM field.

The Mason Summer STEM Initiative began operation in June 2020, but it had been planned in advance to operate face-to-face in the classroom, which was impossible with government-mandated COVID-19 restrictions. With no prior experience teaching online, Singh pivoted to running the program online that first year, and the transition was so smooth that students in that first cohort said they could not tell it was the first year of the program.

Itzanami A. Madrid heard about the program during her first semester at Lamar and was interested since her mother is a teacher. She was worried that she wouldn't be accepted to the prestigious program and so hesitated to apply until her sophomore year, 2022. Wanting to gain experience and understand teaching behind the scenes, she was excited to explore teaching as a career option. Madrid is currently earning

her alternate certification to qualify as a public school teacher. After participating in the Mason Summer STEM Initiative, Madrid said, "Getting to teach the little ones about solids, liquids and gases . . . that was really fun for me. Seeing them learning it, picking up on it was really fun." Chaley Cleckley shares that exuberant joy in the classroom, having wanted to be a teacher since she was little but later falling in love with biology in high school and choosing to major in that. Thanks to a part-time job, she realized she wanted to have a bigger and more direct impact on people's lives and that teaching was the best way for her to do that. After presenting her lesson plan at Mauriceville High School, she got a full-time job as an intervention aide in a local school and is finishing her degree online in preparation for teaching.

Participation in the program strengthens students' research skills and experience, as well. Cleckley developed a funded summer research project based on the lesson plan she designed and taught in the Mason Summer STEM Initiative and presented it at the annual meeting of the National Association of Research and Science Teaching in Chicago, the most prestigious conference in science education in the country, which is hardly ever open to undergraduate students. She said it "blew my mind" to be included among this level of science teachers, and her work on teaching science through argumentation and debate received a warm response. Madrid similarly pursued undergraduate research, creating a lesson on climate change to pre-service teachers and working on the MIND project, which looks at mental health and aims to increase mental health literacy among in-service K-12 teachers.

Supporting the mental resilience of teachers, teaching science through argumentation and debate, finding their passion in the classroom, teaching "the little ones about solids, liquids, and gases" . . . The legacy provided by the Masons lives on in the teachers of tomorrow.



The greatest move I've ever made

by Jeff Spoeri

Hard work and perseverance lead to success. That concept is central to all successful entrepreneurs, and Tracy Glende '90 is no exception. Upon graduating from West Orange-Stark High School, Glende sought to follow in the footsteps of his uncle, C.B. "Skip" Robak Jr. '73, who was the only member of Glende's family at that point to have gone to college. As Robak had studied engineering at Lamar, that was Glende's inclination as well. "My mom and dad insisted that both my brother [Jason Glende '98] and I go to college, so I chose to go to Lamar based on my uncle's experience but also the reputation of the engineering program," Glende recalled. However, while his uncle had majored in mechanical engineering, Glende opted for an electrical engineering concentration. "The things that led to electrical engineering just came easy for me," he observed, adding that he avoided civil engineering because "you would never want to drive across a bridge that I tried to build." He cited Prof. Robert Carlin '56 as one of the greatest academic influences on his life and career, saying that Carlin "made learning tough but fun ... you remembered everything about his course, which really kind of stuck with me."

Glende worked summers during college at the Owens-Illinois (later Temple-Inland and now International Paper) paper mill in Orange, Texas, where his father worked in the production department. Working in the electrical and instrumentation department at the paper mill allowed Glende to apply what he was learning at Lamar in real world settings. In particular, his computer prowess helped him gain experience on the Honeywell TDC-2000, the first distributed computer automation system for process control. This experience led to Honeywell recruiting Glende to work for them full-time after graduating from Lamar. He recalled that among several offers, he accepted Honeywell's because he would work in Phoenix, and the 85-degree desert sunshine that greeted him for his February interview there was immensely more attractive than the sleet and cold he endured on a similar interview with another company in Dallas.

Thus, it was at least in part a quirk of the weather that launched Glende's professional career, but he is quick to point out that it was also a wonderful opportunity because it allowed him to earn his MBA at Arizona State University while working and starting a family with his wife, Janet, and simultaneously providing him with a full introduction to Honeywell and the widely varied ways he could apply his knowledge there. "I was



part of a job rotation program called the Professional Excellence Program,” Glende recalled, “a pretty rigorous process ... developing the leaders of tomorrow.” Through this prestigious program, less than a year after graduating from Lamar, Glende spent six months as a member of an international team that included people from Belgium, Japan, Australia and more, and which exposed him to many cultures and experiences that shaped his future career and who he is today. “It was fascinating to me how you piece together people of different languages, different cultures, different perspectives, in a way that creates an incredibly positive outlook,” Glende explained. As a result of these two life-altering experiences—the MBA at ASU and the international program at Honeywell—Glende decided to focus his career on international business. He added, “I was always fascinated by how you get the most out of people in a cross-cultural, language-limited kind of environment,” and these important lessons have shaped his professional journey ever since.

Glende credits his Lamar education with preparing him extremely well for his career, including the challenges of that early international experience. “The education [at Lamar] is rigorous,” Glende

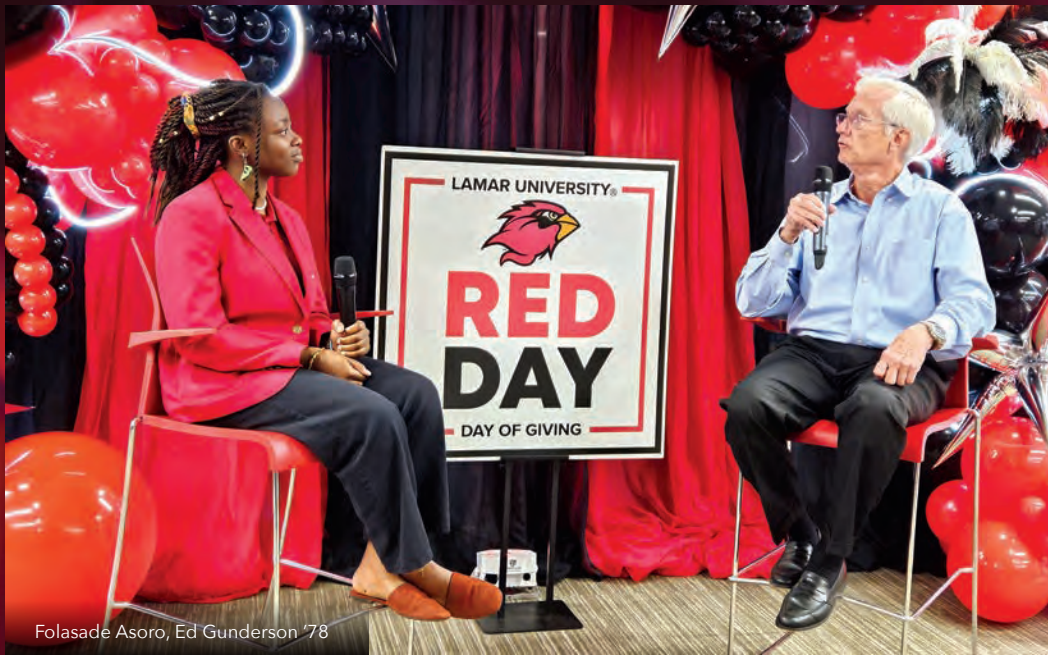
said, “but it is also practical.” While he struggled with some of the theoretical coursework, he admitted, the professors tailored the courses to be “as practical as possible.” “Things stick with you longer if they don’t just live in the world of theory,” Glende noted, “and when you have professors who work in the real world, do research, develop intellectual property, solve problems as a consultant—they bring a different perspective to education and help you close the gap between theory and practice.”

Glende moved up—and around, he emphasized—with Honeywell for 15 years, which he felt was a great place to learn how to run a business, but he eventually became dissatisfied with the work because, as he put it, “the company had grown so large that bureaucracy began to impede the ability to serve the customer in a highly responsive manner.” An older friend who retired from a similar career path had become an entrepreneur, and a conversation between him and Glende during a round of golf became another key point of inflection for a different future. As Glende recalled it, “He said, ‘you know, I only have one regret in my life.’ I said, ‘What’s that?’ and he replied, ‘I didn’t do what I’m doing now when I was your age. Why don’t you quit that corporate mess and come work with me? I’ll teach you to be an entrepreneur.’ I did that in 2005, and it was the greatest move I’ve ever made.”

Glende and his friend launched, developed and sold several businesses over the years, and after a brief detour to resurrect a failing publicly traded company, he has been immersed in the entrepreneurial world for the last decade, focusing on the aerospace and defense engineering industry. Currently, Glende manages a consulting business, Lincoln Aviation Partners, but the bulk of his time and energy goes toward building and running his newest start-up, APEX Space & Defense Systems. APEX manufactures a wide variety of mission critical components and subsystems that go into satellites, subsea and space-based communication systems and space-launch vehicles for customers like Starlink, SpaceX and United Launch Alliance, along with manufacturing and engineering mission critical components and subsystems for the defense industry, including land-based, marine-based and airborne military systems for companies such as AM General, Textron Defense, Boeing, Northrop Grumman and Lockheed Martin. “It’s a very interesting time to be in this business,” Glende conceded, chuckling.

Another of Glende’s connections to Lamar happened somewhat randomly, when he and his family purchased a house at Lake Sam Rayburn and met their neighbor, Distinguished Alumnus and former Lamar University Foundation president Jack Gill ’58. “We were having our immediate neighbors, who are lifelong friends of ours, over to our house for dinner, and they said, ‘You have to meet Dr. and Mrs. Gill!’” The Glendes and the Gills got together for dinner soon thereafter and discovered a mutual interest in wine as well as in Lamar and entrepreneurship, and they have remained close friends as well as lakeside neighbors ever since. Tracy and Janet Glende hope to be able to see the Gills more frequently, though, as they moved back to Texas in the summer of 2023 after living in Arizona and California for many years. The Glendes now make their home in The Woodlands, where they are closer to family, including their parents, Tracy’s brother Jason and his family, the older of their two sons (their younger son lives in southern California), and their first grandchild, born in August 2022.

Glende advises would-be entrepreneurs who seek to follow in his footsteps to begin “by focusing on getting results,” which he believes will instill behaviors and habits that demonstrate leadership potential. “As you grow through your career and do those things,” Glende continued, “you still have to deliver results, but you now have to lead others to deliver those results, because you can’t do it all yourself.” He acknowledged that at some point in his career, he lacked some detailed knowledge but his leadership side took over: “I don’t make the parts, and I don’t have the technical skills to run the engineering department. That’s not my job. My job is to hire the best people, put in really good processes and systems, and get out of their way.” Glende added that having confidence in one’s team is vital, particularly because he retains accountability for their success and that of the company—not to mention accountability to shareholders “who have high expectations.” He concluded that learning early on what one does well and concentrating on that provides the best outcomes. As Glende put it, simply and concisely, “I love what I do.”



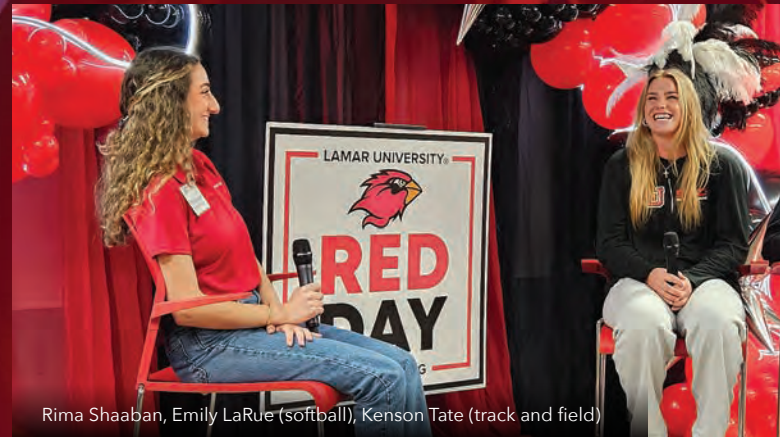
Folasade Asoro, Ed Gunderson '78



Mary Wernig, Jaelan Sherman, Julia Barrett



Zaid Mohammed, Madeline Tzul, Lori Mixson, Angie Laudig, Hetty Brown '79



Rima Shaaban, Emily LaRue (softball), Kenson Tate (track and field)

Red Day 2023 reached the highest number of donors in Red Day history, well-exceeding the goal of 500 individual donors.

4 out of 5 academic colleges increased the number of their Red Day donors, some more than doubling their donor counts from last year.

Red Day Champions—those who pledged to donate and spread the word about Red Day on social media—nearly doubled from last year.



Jayz'n Robinson, Vavah Kamasa-Quashie, Drake Rothenberger, Estrella Balderas, Rima Shaaban

ROLLING OUT THE RED CARPET FOR 100 years

25% of Red Day donations:
NEW DONORS TO LU



Red Day Giving
Challenges and Goals?
100% MET AND EXCEEDED



**NUMBER OF DONORS
TO ALUMNI AFFAIRS
MORE THAN TRIPLED
FROM LAST YEAR**



Red Day broadcast:
**OVER 50 LIVE GUESTS
AND INTERVIEWS, 3 LIVE
FACILITY TOURS**

Over 30 alumni and students volunteered to write thank-you notes, host interviews and updates, and to help out behind the scenes.

Each of the academic colleges competed to surpass their own donor counts from last year by the highest percent to win their place in the Red Day Top 3, with 1st, 2nd and 3rd place cash prizes, courtesy of the LU Foundation. This year's winners were the College of Engineering, the College of Fine Arts and Communication, and the College of Education and Human Development.

Kristin Hebert, Amarie Guillory

Red Day Gears

by Lauren Wilson

Red Day began as just an idea—to unite the University in celebrating philanthropy and calling on Cardinals everywhere to support LU students and programs with an annual giving day. Now, just three years since its debut, Red Day has become a showstopping event at Lamar University, not only because “Rolling Out the Red Carpet for 100 Years” necessitates going big, but because, despite its short history, Red Day has fast become an integral tradition at LU, one which brings the entire campus together for a single purpose.

“It is a special day, and it’s grown so quickly,” remarked President Jaime Taylor during the 2023 Red Day opening broadcast. “It’s taken off.” What began as just a handful of live guest appearances that first year has grown to be a jam-packed schedule of live interviews, news, performances, tours and much more from the academic colleges, athletics and programs all across campus. This year, more than 50 students, faculty, staff and donors came into the Red Day Command Center to share their perspectives on the impact that philanthropy has on the university, including the incredible opportunities that lead to remarkable achievements of LU students and alumni on campus and well beyond. “It’s a great way for individuals to get involved with Lamar University and to see how they can help our students,” said President Taylor.

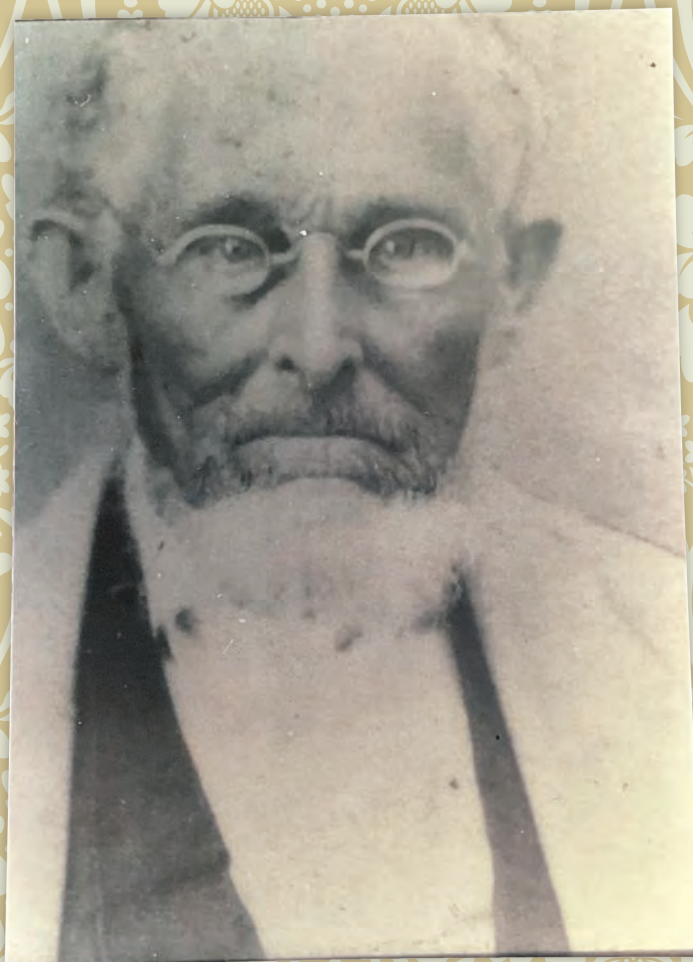
Donor and alumni support made a world of difference this Red Day, helping LU raise hundreds of thousands of dollars and to reach the highest number of donors in Red Day history, not only by donating, but also by sharing with their former classmates and communities, by volunteering and by creating giving challenges that made each donation go further, motivating others to join them in showing support. “I decided I needed to give back,” shared Ed Gunderson ’78, sponsor of one such challenge, “for how generous Lamar was to me, and this is one of my many ways of doing that.” In addition to hearing from LU students, faculty and staff via the Red Day broadcast, donor challenges like the one sponsored by Gunderson create an exciting motivation for donors, many of whom gave to Lamar University for the very first time this Red Day. “It makes it fun for the donors,” said current student, LU Ambassador and Red Day Cast member Vavah Kamasa-Quashie. “They’re having fun, and we’re also having fun.”



JOHN JAY FRENCH JR II



DAVID FRENCH



JOHN JAY FRENCH



DAVID FRENCH, later life



NANCY FRENCH

THE FRENCH FAMILY: A Legacy of Connection with LU

by Brooke Barnett



JUDY (WALKER) LINSLEY '67, '77



ELLEN (WALKER) RIENSTRA '62, '80



DAN W. FRENCH '73

Historians have long speculated on what brought pioneer John Jay French to Southeast Texas in the early 1800s. The trader and tanner may have been lured by the availability of untamed land, the pull of the pioneering spirit, or the dream of creating a better life in the wilderness that once existed where the city of Beaumont thrives today. John Jay French lived in Jefferson County for nearly 50 years, and his presence can still be felt in his historical home (now restored as the John Jay French Museum), as well as French Island, French Road and French High School.

While John Jay French became an integral part of the storied history of the area, three of his direct descendants continue his love affair with Beaumont today and have become an important part of the Lamar University legacy.

Local historian Judy (Walker) Linsley '67, '77, is descended from John Jay

French's son David. She is an alumna of Lamar and the former director of Lamar's Center for History and Culture.

"Looking back, I think Lamar is just in our blood," Judy reminisces. "One of my relatives—another of John Jay's descendants—Avie Vaughn (McDonald) Butler -25, attended South Park Junior College, as Lamar was originally known, the first year it opened and her picture is in the very first yearbook. My parents went there, too, and my elder sister Ellen [(Walker) Rienstra] '62, '80, graduated from there in 1962."

Ellen agrees. "Given our family's connection with and love of Lamar, I felt like it would be the most natural fit for me" she said. "And so it was, I am happy to say." Ellen earned both bachelor's and master's degrees in English literature from Lamar.

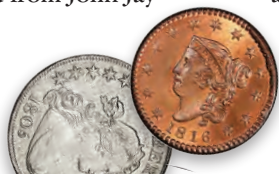
"So," Judy continues, "when I went to college, I wanted to follow in Ellen's footsteps, and it just felt like it was finally my time. Plus, I was dating a young man at the time who went to Lamar, so that

just sweetened the pot." Judy earned both a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish in 1967 and a Master of Arts in History in 1977 from Lamar.

The current dean of Lamar's College of Business, Dan W. French '73, is also a direct descendant of John Jay French's son David and is third cousin to Judy and Ellen. Like them, Dan is a Beaumont native and a graduate of French High School, as well as a 1973 graduate of Lamar. Dan also felt like Lamar was the best option for his undergraduate education.

"Growing up, I always knew about Lamar," Dan explains. "When I was a senior in high school, I knew I wanted to stay in Beaumont, so it was the natural choice. Judy and Ellen's father, Johnnie Walker '29, was an alumnus, and he was always doing things for Lamar and was part of Lamar's culture. He was a big part of the reason that I decided to attend LU. My brother also attended Lamar, so it truly came down through our family."

As a sixth-generation resident of



Jefferson County, Judy says that the descendants of the French family are numerous and that many still reside in the Beaumont area.

"The French family has been present in all phases of Lamar's development from the very beginning," she adds. "Many descendants have attended Lamar, so our family's history is truly woven into the fabric of the university."

Dan credits his experiences as an undergraduate at Lamar with teaching him how to think independently and come up with creative solutions. He says these skills have served him well throughout his 40-year career as an academic leader, teacher and researcher.

"I had so many eye-opening experiences at Lamar, taking classes that far surpassed what I had experienced in high school. I went right into graduate school, and the work I did as an undergrad at Lamar prepared me for my Ph.D. program," he explains.

Even after completing their degrees, Judy, Ellen and Dan stayed connected to LU both personally and professionally. In addition to her work with the Center for History and Culture, Judy served as an adjunct instructor in the history department. Ellen has served on various LU boards, including her current membership on the Lamar University Foundation Board. In 2018, Ellen was named a Distinguished Alumna. Judy and Ellen's parents, Esther Hooks '29 and Johnnie Walker, were both active in the alumni association throughout their lifetimes, and their father was awarded an honorary degree in 1980.

"Lamar was just a constant and consistent presence in our lives," Judy explains. "There was always something going on at LU that we wanted to be involved in. All of my and Ellen's children attended Lamar, with three graduating from LU. It has truly made a college education possible for generations of our family."

For Dan, accepting his role as dean of the College of Business in 2018 felt like coming full circle and returning to his family's roots.

"I always wanted to come back and teach at Lamar," he says. "When this opportunity came up, I knew it would allow me to be in a leadership capacity and give back to the organization. It was incredible to come back to a place where I already knew so many, and it felt like home."

In 2019, Judy became the Director of Lamar's Center for History and Culture in the College of Arts & Sciences, which allowed her to support interdisciplinary research that examined the impact and influence of the history and culture of the area.

"It felt almost like the position was tailor made for me," Judy recalls. "It was wonderful to be able to support the research that was happening in our area. I loved helping others to learn and discover things that I loved learning about. Even though I stepped down in 2021, the center continues to thrive and so many good things have come out of it."

While Dan recently announced that he is stepping down as dean of the College of Business, he continues to champion all that Lamar has to offer.

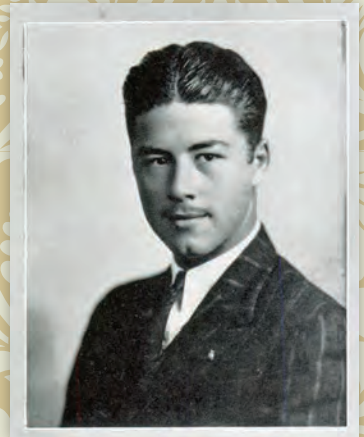
"We have made such great progress in achieving the objectives that I had in mind when I came to the College of Business. It has been so rewarding for me to be part of this era at Lamar," he says. "Lamar is truly an excellent institution of learning. We have created so many successful graduates in so many careers. We are fortunate to have such a diversified learning institution, right here in our town."

Judy says that, after a lifetime of connection to Lamar, she feels its success is tied to an ability to fit with the time it is in.

"It has adapted over the years to always fit each place in time," she concludes. "At 77 years of age, I am watching with enthusiasm. The university has survived a lot of hard times and will continue to be successful. Lamar constantly amazes me, and I am grateful that our family has been part of its history."



SALLY (MUNSON) FRENCH



JOHNNIE WALKER '29



ESTHER HOOKS '29

Editor's note: Cadence gives special thanks to John J. French Museum docent Matthew Sorrels for his help in providing historical photos. To schedule a tour, volunteer or donate, visit the Beaumont Heritage Society at beaumontheritage.org.

LU ALUMNI ADVISORY BOARD:

A history of Cardinal spirit and service



President
Sharita Gardner '12



President-Elect
Emily Everett Allen '98, '04



Past President
Lila Creamer Stevens '01

As we commemorate Lamar University's historic centennial, 2,119 LU students graduated in May on their way to making their own history. They join more than 109,000 current Lamar alumni in 65 countries, every state in the U.S. and every county in Texas.

The Office of Alumni Affairs is how and where alumni are woven into the tradition and future of Lamar. Its Alumni Advisory Board serves as a leading volunteer alumni organization. Created in 2003, Juan Zabala '07, vice president for university advancement and CEO of the Lamar University Foundation, explained that its roots run deep.

"The Alumni Advisory Board is a continuance of Lamar alumni's support and advocacy for the University and students through organizations dating back to 1939."

He noted, "Our mission is unchanged. We want to engage alumni in all aspects of the life of the University."

Director of alumni affairs Shannon (Copeland) Figueroa '02, '03, '07 added to the backstory. "The first president of a Lamar alumni group was John M. Green (1939-1942),

and 55 more followed. In 2003, the Lamar University Alumni Association became the Office of Alumni Affairs and part of university advancement. That year, Trent Devenzio '90 became the last president of the alumni association and the first president of the Alumni Advisory Board."

Today's board consists of 36 members. Zabala stated that they are a representative group of the alumni base, making them "key sounding boards and advisors."

According to Figueroa, the After School Special, an annual alumni art exhibition; the Past-Presidents' Council; and the Golden Circle Reunion honoring graduates from 50 years ago and beyond are just three examples of programs initiated by Alumni Advisory Board members.

Board members serve three-year terms and support Lamar University and the Office of Alumni Affairs by bringing their diverse professional expertise and passion for their alma mater to the board.

Figueroa concluded, "Together, they strengthen the bonds among alumni, students and the University community."

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alumni@lamar.edu
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Buckeye Partners funds \$100,000 research grant

Buckeye Partners L.P. has funded \$100,000 to expand a research project led by associate professors Maryam Hamidi, Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering, and Jing Zhang, Department of Computer Science, focused on deep learning-based defect classification and prediction. Initially funded by the LU Center for Midstream Management and Science, the project, through this partnership, will develop understanding of pump vibration to develop predictive algorithms helpful in maintenance and operation of large, industrial pumping systems in the midstream industry. Buckeye is a premier infrastructure and logistics provider based in Houston. It is one of the largest independent liquid petroleum products pipeline operators in the U.S. with operations in 27 states, Puerto Rico, St. Lucia, and the Bahamas.



PSRG and LU collaborate

Process Safety and Reliability Group and LU's Center for Midstream Management and Science have executed an agreement for LU to host the group's process safety, risk and process plant reliability training courses at facilities on campus. This collaboration enables industry in Southeast Texas, along with LU faculty and students, to access important and often required training from well-experienced, highly qualified PSRG instructors. PSRG is a premier, global, Houston-based company providing process safety, risk management, and process plant reliability consulting and training services and solutions since 1997.

Two awarded Texas Sea Grant

The U.S. Coastal Research Program awarded **Prof. Qin Qian**, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, and **Prof. Helen Lou**, Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, a Texas Sea Grant, totaling \$499,492, to study and enhance the resilience of energy and water supply infrastructures along the Texas coast against catastrophic coastal flooding.

The team is collaborating with the University of Texas at Arlington and Texas A&M University to collect data. The project expands the previous NOAA-funded effort to address spillover effects of flooding on energy infrastructure that supports the energy security of the nation. The team will make recommendations on infrastructure plans to state and regional governments that will improve the economic well-being of multiple communities.

In addition, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration awarded **Qin Qian**, professor of civil and environmental engineering, \$105,000—as part of collaborative research with Texas A&M University and the University of Texas at Arlington—to lead LU's research efforts to enhance the resiliency of energy and water supply infrastructures along the Texas coast against catastrophic coastal flooding. The four-year project, part of a \$500,000 proposal and supported by LU's Center for Resiliency, aims to enhance a climate-informed risk assessment framework by appraising the cost efficacy of a broad set of adaptation options. Potential disruptions of energy producers by flooding will also be evaluated.



Cole secures nuclear physics grant

The National Science Foundation, under its Research in Undergraduate Institutions initiative, awarded **Prof. Phillip Cole**, Physics Department chair, over \$300,000 in grant funding to probe the structure of nucleons (protons and neutrons) and to engage undergraduate students in nuclear physics research. Cole will build upon research conducted at the Electron Stretcher Accelerator at the University of Bonn in Germany, the Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility (TJNAF) in the U.S. and the Japan Proton Accelerator Research Complex (J-PARC). "We have three Lamar students who have been working this entire summer onsite at TJNAF learning how to build next-generation detectors. With this grant we have opened even more opportunities for understanding just how the structure of protons emerges from the assembly of quarks and gluons—one of the greatest intellectual challenges facing science," Cole said.

Fan wins international EuroSimE Award

EuroSimE, an annual international conference focusing on thermal, mechanical and multi-physical simulations and experiments to meet research and development needs in microelectronics and microsystems, awarded mechanical engineering **Prof. Xuejun Fan** its Achievement Award in Graz, Austria, for his fundamental research and industrial application in the field. The award committee selects from among the best and outstanding papers to present the award.

"It was a wonderful surprise to me to receive this call from the Netherlands. I felt honored and humbled knowing my colleagues and I are making significant contributions to the field," Fan said.

He specializes in the characterization, modeling and reliability of materials, components, and systems in micro-/nanoelectronics manufacturing and packaging.





Nursing receives \$90,000 from Baptist

The JoAnne Gay Dishman School of Nursing has teamed up with Baptist Hospitals of Southeast Texas to establish the Baptist Hospitals of Southeast Texas Innovation Fund. The \$90,000 fund will provide clinical faculty and experiential learning for nursing students. "As the demand for faculty continues to grow, the Baptist Hospitals of Southeast Texas Innovation Fund will supplement the costs to hire more clinical faculty," Chief Nursing Officer Kathy Degenstein-Gartman said. "The School of Nursing could only take on 60 or 70 senior-level students because of lack of clinical instructors. With this fund, we're going to be able to increase those numbers and create more nurses of tomorrow." The funding also aims to combat the nursing shortage that faces Southeast Texas.

"Southeast Texas will have the highest shortage of registered nurses in the nation in the coming years," chair of the Dishman School of Nursing Cindy Stinson said. "The fund will provide two clinical faculty to be stationed there at Baptist with the senior-level students to encourage them to stay in the area after their experience at Baptist."

Hale earns Beck award

Gina Hale '92, '04, associate professor in the JoAnne Gay Dishman School of Nursing and director of undergraduate research and student success, has been awarded the David J. Beck Teaching Excellence Award. Annually, the David J. Beck Teaching Excellence Award, established through a gift from LU distinguished alumnus David J. Beck, rewards one faculty member who excels as a teacher or otherwise brings significant honor to LU through innovative instructional pedagogy. The award carries with it a check of \$25,000. Hale has served LU for 18 years as a nurse educator.



Young lauded for influential work

The International Council of Professors of Educational Leadership has named Kenneth Young, associate professor of educational leadership, the 2023 recipient of the Theodore "Ted" Creighton Publication Innovation Award. The council established this award in honor of educational leader Ted Creighton and bestows it to recognize members whose innovative, impactful work serves the profession and ultimately the children and youth in our schools. Young approaches his work as a calling to invest his life in the lives of others. "I love and respect my students, the sacrifices they make to pursue an advanced degree, and their commitment to the education of others," he said. "We need educational leaders who are ethical, practitioner-scholars equipped to face whatever challenges arise in our field, and I work to provide them experiences and networks that allow them to make a difference."



Ruiz named dean

LU has announced Alberto "Bert" Ruiz as dean for the College of Education and Human Development. He comes to Lamar University with over 30 years of experience in higher education. "Dr. Ruiz brings a wealth of experience to Lamar University, and his knowledge of Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and Texas Education Agency policies will be incredibly valuable to our continued success in teacher education programs across our curriculum," said Dann Brown, provost and vice president of academic affairs. Ruiz arrives at LU having served most recently as associate athletic director of student-athlete excellence and as vice president for academic affairs at the University of Louisiana-Monroe.

Bringing robotics to Southeast Texas

From a young age, Christine Osborne '23, a recent graduate with a B.B.A. marketing, and senior Ryan Shugart, a triple major in electrical engineering, mechanical engineering and mathematics, have been interested in robotics. Both students recognized an opportunity that ignited a passion to make robotics a staple in Southeast Texas. Through trial and error, the two created Robotic Cardinals, LU's first ever robotics club.

"I believe robotics is important because it creates a variety of challenges though many fields like mechanical, electrical and computer engineering," Shugart said. "You learn all of this in class, but you can't apply it in everyday life until you have your career. Robotics competitions allow students to apply classroom learning in real experiences."

After Robotic Cardinals began, the Beaumont school district saw a need for automation education and reached out to Cardinal S.O.A.R., Student Outreach and Academic Readiness, for a partnership with LU. Cardinal S.O.A.R. contacted the two because of their impact on Project Engineer, an engineering robotics summer camp and asked Robotic Cardinals to mentor local teachers about starting a robotics program in their schools. Their hard work over the years led to the inaugural LU VEX Robotics Competition. VEX Robotics is an organization that brings robotic programs to students of all ages, and through it, Robotics Cardinals was able to host an official competition where a certified VEX Robotics judge was present. "Thanks to the help of the [Reaud] Honors College and TALH [Texas Academy of Leadership in the Humanities] for their volunteer help, we were able to make the LU VEX Robotics Competition happen sooner than we expected," Shugart said. "Seeing the students light up when their creations come to life was gratifying. I hope to see this continue to grow for years to come."

With a total of nine teams, the competition was a success. Silsbee High School, better known as Red Alliance, took first place in a close competition. The students upload software to manage the robot and are very involved in programming with a lot of trial and error to ensure dependability. This year's competition was a disc sport where the robot must toss discs into a chain basket for points. "This was beyond my wildest dreams. We've been wanting to do this since freshman year and seeing it come to life was amazing," Osborne said. "The students had so much emotion and devotion to their creations. This was their playoffs, and they came to play."

LU past, Cardinal present and Big Red future

More than 460 alumni share their time and talent with LU as employees. For some, LU pride is a family tradition and legacy. For all, it was a path to success in finding ways to be a positive influence in students' lives and encourage those students to fulfill their own ambitions.



David Short '97

University Registrar

It's part of a family legacy. LU is the reason my family moved to this area. My father worked here. My sister and my mother both earned their degrees here. LU has just always been home. Early in my career, working in recruitment, it was beneficial to draw on my recent experience as a student

to help incoming students navigate the process. Now, it's more a case of personal and professional pride. This is my alma mater. This school was there for me, now it's my turn to be there for the next class of students.

Karen Nichols '83

Director, Lamar University Foundation Inc.

The most pivotal moment during my time at Lamar University was during my second semester. I was a first-generation college student and had no idea what I wanted to do. I was taking a speech class and a young professor saw something in me and asked me about my major. When I shared that I was unsure—my original plans for college did not excite me any longer—she said, "I know who you need to talk to." She marched me (literally) over to Dr. Dewitte Holland, chair of the Department of Communication. As we were visiting in walked the force of nature I later learned was Dr. Mary Alice Baker. She became my mentor and talked to me about the many career paths that open with a Bachelor of Science in Communication. The rest, as they say, is history. From that moment forward I loved every class, every moment, every project at Lamar. I am friends with Dr. Baker to this day. The benefit of being an alumna from the university I attended—it's everything. I am a passionate person by nature, but being a small part of what makes Lamar University the treasure that it is—to have a small impact on students who have also chosen Lamar—makes my career at Lamar pure joy.



Vivian (Caloobanan) Arevalo '15

Academic Advisor, Undergraduate Advising

My degree means a great deal to me. It represents the culmination of years of hard work and dedication. It also opened up many doors for me, both professionally and personally. Being a former student and now working at the same university brings unique advantages. Having firsthand experience as a student here allows me to empathize with current students and better understand their needs and challenges. It also helps me establish a strong rapport with them, as we share a common connection and a sense of belonging. One of my most pivotal and special memories of being a student and employee was the time I spent as an Ambassador for the university—an incredible experience that left a lasting impact on me. I had the opportunity to engage with community and civic leaders, forging strong connections and partnerships that benefited both the university and the students. These interactions not only provided valuable networking opportunities but also showcased the exceptional talent and achievements of our university's students.



Kathryn (Walker) Washington '91

Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Leadership

Getting my degree from Lamar University gave me much pride in that I was a second-generation graduate. My mother received her degree in 1971, and 20 years later, I not only graduated, but also majored in education like my mother. I admired her resilience in completing her degree during the difficult times of the late 60s. Once I received my degree at Lamar, it spurred my desire to one day earn my doctorate to be able to teach on a collegiate level. I feel it is a full-circle moment to be able to fulfill my desire to teach on the collegiate level where it all began. The benefits of being a previous student are the relationships with



past professors, ownership of campus culture with a desire to make the next generation of Cardinals' experiences better than when I watched my parents, Rev. Oveal and Eller Walker III, be servant leaders, giving so much to the community that I feel inspired and motivated to do the same. It is hard to believe that Lamar is hitting the 100th year mark and that I am around to see it firsthand. It is my hope that Lamar continues to grow and produce productive people ready to lead it into another 100 years and continue to make a positive impact on the world.



Dimples (Chavis) Jones '10, '13

Director, Certifications and Testing,
Department of Teacher Education

As a proud alumna of LU, I'm glad to have obtained an associate, bachelor's and master's degree. I was able to evolve within my career to think critically, solve problems and learn new things that will continue for a lifetime. In the 23 years I have been with the College of Education and

Human Development, I learned more about LU and became acquainted with a large, diverse population of students, staff, faculty and administrators. My most pivotal memory was in 2019. We celebrated the 60th anniversary of the formation of the College of Education in addition to the 30th anniversary of the college's current name—Education and Human Development. I was honored to be recognized as a dedicated staff employee and was presented the "Lena Mae Francis Staff Award." It was an honor to work many years alongside Mrs. Francis, who guided me throughout my career.

Trey Clark '93, '95

Head Coach, Men's and
Women's Track

As proud as I am of my two degrees, I may be prouder of the fact that that my family has 13 degrees from Lamar University. There are several benefits to having been a student here before being an employee. First, you can relate to the experiences of current students; at least I like to think that my experiences were similar. Second, you have a real understanding of the campus and how it works. Lastly, as an alumnus, working here is more than a job. It is more than a line on a résumé. It's about being part of a legacy. One of the most pivotal moments for me occurred one day just before the start of my senior year when I met my wife, Laura (Hughes)



Clark '95. This year we are celebrating our 28th anniversary. I am proud to say that we are a Cardinal Couple just like my parents, who met as students at Lamar University in the spring of 1962.

Norma (Perez Melesid) Zarzosa '95, '97

Instructor, Department of English and Modern Languages
Coordinator, Global Studies and Study Abroad Program

The years I spent at LU shaped my personal and professional life. After graduation, I became a public-school Spanish teacher, and what prepared me was the way my professors challenged us to see ourselves as educators in a real classroom setting, rather than students only rehearsing material for the test. Thirty-one years ago, I joined the LU community as a student. Seventeen years ago, I joined the LU community again but this time as a faculty member teaching Spanish in the English and Modern Languages Department—a dream come true. It allowed me to challenge students to be their best version of themselves, providing them with the skills and the know-how to succeed in their chosen vocation just like my professors influenced me.



Gina Hale '92, '04

Assistant Professor, JoAnne Gay Dishman
School of Nursing

Director, Undergraduate Nursing Studies
and Nursing Recruitment and Retention

Igrew up in Port Arthur, and attending LU continued a family tradition as both of my parents are alumni. And now, my son and stepdaughters also attended LU. I have been a registered nurse for 31 years and a nurse educator at Lamar University since 2004. I have seen incredible positive growth at LU from the 1980s until now. There is an incredible sense of pride related to teaching at the university that I attended for undergraduate and graduate degrees. This instills in me an increased sense of responsibility and commitment to the integrity of our nursing program and the success of students enrolled at LU who will go on to serve as healthcare providers within our local community and beyond. I drive to work each morning grateful for the opportunity to work with incredible nursing faculty and motivated students who inspire me daily. I never imagined, early in my nursing career, that I would (or could) serve as nursing faculty. Overwhelming gratitude is how I would describe my employment at LU. Lamar University is a Southeast Texas treasure.



"I will always
be an ambassador
for Lamar."

—KRISTEEN REYNOLDS





More than just for kicks

by Mona Brittain

While attending LU, Kristeen “Kris” Reynolds ’16, ’17, said in a student profile that she was working on her bachelor’s degree, would like to receive her master’s in business administration and work in accounting to support her dream of starting a business.

Since then, Reynolds received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in accounting from Lamar with a 4.0 GPA, became a certified public accountant, worked in accounting and is now the co-founder and CEO of DrinKicks.

DrinKicks will produce sneakers made from recycled waste and biodegradable materials, including 100% post-consumer plastic drink bottles. The rollout will be this upcoming Christmas season. “I didn’t know what type of business I would eventually start, but I knew I wanted it to make an impact. DrinKicks is about education first—teaching sustainability and recycling. Our sneakers are climate-friendly, comfortable and made for everyone,” she explained.



The Plummer Award winner said she values her LU education. “My accounting professors transcended the classroom to give us the benefit of their real-world experiences. I really liked collaborative classes where we researched the positives and negatives of decisions and how they affect people . . . My favorite professors challenged me. I still hear the voice of Professor Burns telling me, ‘Don’t ever slack up before you hit the finish line. Finish it right.’”

She also joined many student organizations. “Looking back, I realize that I became ingrained in this great community called Lamar University,” she said. Among her activities, Reynolds was a Lamar University Ambassador. “It was an honor. I will always be an ambassador for Lamar,” she added.

Currently Reynolds serves on the College of Business Young Professionals Board where, she explained, recent business graduates offer networking and mentorship for students preparing for business careers, saying “It’s one way that I can give back to Lamar.”

What type of leader does Reynolds aspire to be? “I hope to be a servant leader. One that listens and hears. One worth following,” she replied.

Reynolds expressed that she believes in setting a goal, persevering, achieving it and moving on to the next goal. In her student profile, she noted that she wants to own a sports franchise someday. Asked if that’s a dream or a goal, she smiled and answered, “It’s a goal.”

About Lamar’s future, Reynolds remarked that she sees much potential for the Center for Innovation, Commercialization and Entrepreneurship, and she forecasts her alma mater “getting bigger and better in the next 100 years.”



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

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50s

Congratulations to **Sam Ebanks** '58, B.B.A. accounting, on his marriage to Peggy and move to a new home in Conroe. He was an accountant with Chevron and Gulf Oil Corp. before owning his own real estate firm.

60s

The Texas International Law Journal granted **David Beck** '61, B.S. government, '12, L.H.D. doctor of humane letters, who earned his law degree in 1965, the E. Ernest Goldstein Award. He is a founding partner of Beck Redden and lives with his wife, Judy, in Houston.

The Southeast Texas Coaches Association named **Dianna (Stovall) Caston** '69, B.S. physical education, a 2022 Coach of the Year. She coaches girls tennis for Kirbyville High School and lives with her husband, Charles, in Kirbyville.

Football and men's track athlete **Johnny Fuller** '69, B.S. physical education, '86, M.S. kinesiology, Cardinal Hall of Honor 1973, was inducted into the Museum of the Gulf Coast Hall of Fame Feb. 25. He lives in Lumberton.

Walt Hammonds '66, B.S. electrical engineering, who earned his master's degree in engineering in 1968 and his M.A. in biblical studies in 1992, retired as pastor of Grace Fellowship Church. He and his wife, **Myra (Hite)** '65, B.S. secondary education, live in Van Alstyne.

Michael Hatton '69, B.B.A. marketing, is executive vice president and advisor to the chairman of First Security Bank in Beaumont, where he lives.

The Catholic Diocese of Beaumont named **Sandra (Goff) Jordan** '66, B.S. elementary education, 2023 Teacher of the Year at St. Catherine of Siena Catholic School, where she teaches third grade. She lives in Port Arthur.

70s

Entrepreneur **James LaBove** '70, B.A. history, grew up in Sabine Pass, where he worked for Cotton's Seafood, a local commercial fishing venture operated by his father, Lazime "Cotton" LaBove, and enmeshed himself in a culture he refers to in his writing as "bayou Cajun," an often-overlooked branch of the descendants of Acadian settlers who came to live in the coastal salt marshes of Southeast Texas and Southwest Louisiana. His published works seek to highlight these people to help preserve their unique heritage: *The (Real) Gumbo Book: A Deep Dive Into the Lifeblood*

of Cajun Culture; Cotton's Seafood: A Cajun Autobiographical Cookbook; Sunrise Over Keith Lake: A Cajun Autobiographical Cookbook; Splendor in the Salt Grass: A Celebration of Untold Stories in Cajun History; Sketches of My Cajun Life.

Congratulations to **Gail (Cawley) Showalter** '70, B.S. speech, on the publication of her new book, *Living Learning Loving: Lessons of Insight and Encouragement on the Path of Motherhood*. She and her husband, Sam '66, B.S. biology, who is a dentist with his own practice, live in Nederland.

Paul Noland '71, B.S. geology, retired in February as vice president of exploration-Nevada with Calibre Mining Corp. He consults on a part-time basis for the mining industry in the western U.S. He and his wife, Paula, live in Spring Creek, Nev.

Congratulations to **J. Pat Parsons** '71, B.B.A. accounting, for being named one of 23 legendary bankers by the Texas Bankers Hall of Fame. He was recognized for 50 years of service May 17. Parsons is vice chairman of the board at Stellar Bank and is president of Parsons Management Co. He and his wife, **Melody (O'Reilly)** '71, B.S. elementary education, who owns Grand Finale, live in Beaumont.

The Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce presented **Joseph Fertitta Jr.** '72, B.B.A. marketing, and his family-owned company founded in 1921, Texas Coffee Co., with the 2023 Spindletop Award. He and his wife, Sandy, live in Beaumont.

Judy Hammond '72, B.S. communication, '82, M.S. speech, retired as a highway safety specialist for the U.S. Department of Transportation/National Highway Traffic Safety Administration after 31 years of service. She lives in Lake Frederick, Va.

Texas Coop Magazine's April 2023 issue featured the gourd art of **Roy Cavarretta** '73, B.S. art, and his wife Blanche in an article titled "Fruits of Their Labor." Texas Country Reporter also interviewed the couple for a show segment airing next season. They own Grave Road Arts and live in Hallettsville.

The National Pan-Hellenic Council-Golden Triangle honored **Gregory Pumphrey** '73 for his government service. He and his wife, **Beulah (Ford)** '76, B.A. chemistry, live in Beaumont.

Kathleen (McDaniel) Brent '75, B.S. elementary education, retired from teaching at Van Buren Elementary. She lives in Port Neches.

Ann (Hill) Daniels '75, B.S. elementary education, '91, M.Ed. special education, retired as counselor at Van Buren Elementary. She and her husband, William, live in Orange.

Governor Greg Abbott reappointed **Dick Scott** '75, B.B.A. accounting, as vice chairman of the Parks and Wildlife Commission. He is director and president of DS2 Land & Wild Game and lives with his wife, Dodie, in Wimberley.

Carolyn (Landry) Butler '77, Certif. office administration, '06, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, retired from Central Middle School with 20 years of service in the district. She and her husband, Michael, live in Nederland.

The Christus Southeast Texas Health System honored **Dr. Scott McKenney** '77, B.S. physics, who earned his medical degree in 1980, on National Doctors' Day 2023. He is a physician with Texas Oncology Associates and lives with his wife, **Joan (White)** '76, B.S. speech, in Beaumont.

Bridge City school district named **Marty (Peveto) Taylor** '78, B.S. secondary education, 2023 Middle School Teacher of the Year. She lives in Orange.

George Braud -79, who earned his bachelor's degree in computer science in 1980, married Beth Thompson May 7, 2023. He owns Braud Services after retiring with 41 years of service in aerospace software engineering at NASA Johnson Space Center. They live in League City.

Governor Greg Abbott appointed **Tom Long** '79, B.B.A. accounting, to serve on the Texas State University System Board of Regents. Long is co-chief executive officer for Energy Transfer Partners and director of Texas Capital Bancshares Inc. He and his wife, **Meg (Price)** '79, B.S. elementary education, live in Frisco.

Nutrition and Services for Seniors named **Susan (Hendrix)** '79, B.S. nursing, and her husband, Dr. Wayne Margolis, 2023 Deliver the Difference Honorary Chairs. Susan is a registered nurse with SETX Heart & Vascular, and they live in Nederland.

Jackie (Day) Riddle '79, certif. office administration, '82, B.B.A. management, retired from teaching fourth grade math at Groves Elementary. She and her husband, John, live in Port Neches.

The Evangelical Press Association recently honored **Linda (Evans)** '79, B.G.S. fine arts, as one of the leading women in the Christian publishing industry. Shepherd is director of



the Advanced Writers and Speakers Association, publishes *Leading Hearts* magazine, and has authored more than 38 books. She and her husband, **Paul Shepherd** '78, B.S. physics, live in Longmont, Colo.

80s

Congratulations to **Diane (Shaffer) Bass** '80, B.S. speech, '82, M.S. audiology/speech-language pathology, on receiving the T. Kelsey Lamb Sr. Award for Business Ethics from the Rotary Club of Beaumont Feb. 22. She is president of Advanced Pediatric Care. She and her husband, Donald, live in Beaumont.



Andrea Deaton '80, B.B.A. accounting, retired as CFO of Nutrition and Services for Seniors after 13 years of service. She lives in Beaumont.

Port Arthur school district named **Sebrena Washington** '80, M.S. mathematics, 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year at Woodrow Wilson Early College High School, where she teaches geometry. She lives in Beaumont.

Nutrition and Services for Seniors honored **Sherrie (Booker)** '81, B.A. art, and **The Honorable Jeff Branick** '81, social work and pre-law, at its 12th Annual Deliver the Difference Luncheon May 4 for their service. Jeff is Jefferson County Judge, and Sherrie is a freelance artist. They live in Port Neches.

Jackie (Graffagnino) '81, B.S. elementary education, retired from teaching history at St. Catherine of Siena Catholic School. She and her husband, **Kenneth Conley Jr.** '92, A.A.S. instrumentation technology, live in Beaumont.

Lisa (Brammer) Drago '81, B.S. home economics-interior design, '02, M.Ed. elementary education, retired as science teacher and network administrator at St. Catherine of Siena Catholic School. She and her husband, Jon, live in Port Arthur.

Donna (Simon) Laverne '81, B.S. elementary education, retired from Port Arthur school district as assistant principal of Lincoln Middle School after

42 years of district service. She lives in Port Arthur.

The Southeast Texas Coaches Association named **Gene McKinley** '81, B.S. health and physical education, 2022 Athletic Trainer of the Year. He is an athletic trainer with Christus Health Foundation of Southeast Texas and lives with his wife, **Cynthia (Clark)** '86, Certif. respiratory technology, '02, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, in Vidor.

Ken Wall '81, B.S.W. social work, earned his law degree and M.P.A. in 1986 and is Of Counsel with the Houston trial law firm Alavi Anaipakos. He lives in Houston.

Craig Landry '82, A.A.S. drafting technology, '03, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, '07, M.Ed. special education, retired from Silsbee school district after 15 years of service and 18 in education. He taught third-grade special education/resource-reading-language arts and math, and he and his wife, **Terry (Slovacek)** '00, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, live in Lumberton.

The National Pan-Hellenic Council-Golden Triangle honored **Delois Flemon** '83, B.S. home economics, for her government service. She teaches kindergarten at Martin Elementary and lives in Beaumont.

Zanthia Smith '83, B.S. speech-hearing therapy, '85, M.S. deaf education, '99, Ed.D. deaf studies/deaf education, is an associate professor in the Department of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education at Lamar University. She lives in Beaumont.

Congratulations to **Freddie Titus** '83, B.S. mathematics, '86, B.S. industrial engineering, for receiving the 2023 Educational Excellence Award at the Texas Black Expo's celebration of NBA legend Earvin "Magic" Johnson. He is vice president of strategic initiatives and community relations and lives in Beaumont.

Congratulations to **Roy West Jr.** '83, B.S. sociology, on being elected mayor of Beaumont. He served as a law enforcement officer in Houston and co-founded Patriot Security before earning a Master of Divinity and serving as an associate pastor, then founded the Beaumont-based Roy West Team of Guild Mortgage and hosted weekly radio shows on KIVI. He and his wife, Trisha, live in Beaumont.

Trier authors book

Clayton Trier '73, B.B.A. accounting, has written *The Outskirts of Redemption*, which is published by Defiance Press & Publishing and has achieved an Amazon rank of No. 1 Bestseller in Teen and Young Adult Nonfiction on Suicide Social Issues. The work chronicles the early life of Larry "Buddy" Torrence, from an emotionally scarring childhood event in 1965 when he and his best friend, Daniel, were seventh-grade classmates at a newly integrated school in Southeast Texas to the revelation of truth and forgiveness 21 years later. Trier began his career as an auditor with Arthur Andersen & Co., which led to a position as partner there before becoming CEO of a NYSE client company and then an entrepreneur and investor in multiple industries. He and his wife, Ginya, live in Houston.



Laurence Williams '83, B.S. communication, '87, B.S. physical education, retired as athletic director and dean at Monsignor Kelly Catholic High School. He and his wife, **Kim (Mallett)** '77, B.S. special education, live in Beaumont.

William Lamson '84, A.A.S. drafting, '88, B.S. industrial technology, retired from Port Arthur school districts CATE Stillwell Campus as an engineering design and presentation teacher after 35 years of service. He and his wife, **Pansy (Falcon)** '88, B.B.A. accounting, who is an accountant for TotalEnergies Petrochemicals and Refining USA. They live in Groves.

Rev. Marion Phillips III '84, B.S. communication, is senior vice president of community development and DEI for US News and World Report. Phillips is also the pastor of Mt. Sinai Baptist Church and lives with his wife, Rhonda, in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mary (Barlett) Stout '84, A.A.S. nursing, retired as a day surgery nurse after 21 years of service. She lives in Beaumont.

Evita Tezeno '84, B.S. graphic design, earned a 2023 Guggenheim Fellowship and opened her first solo museum exhibition in April at the Houston Museum of African American Culture. She lives in Dallas.

Sherrie (Scoggins) '84, B.S. elementary education, retired as assistant superintendent of human resources for Silsbee school district after 40 years of service. She and her husband, **David Thornhill** '81, A.A.S. mid-management, who is president of Southwest Building Systems, live in Silsbee.

The Southeast Texas Coaches Association named **Johnnie (Heard) Harrell** '85, B.S. kinesiology, a 2022 Coach of the Year. Harrell coaches girls golf for Little Cypress-Mauriceville High School, where she also teaches. She lives in Orange.

Cynthia (Stevenson) '85, B.S. elementary education, '90, M.Ed. elementary education, retired from Nederland school district as director of instructional technology after 31 years of service. She and her husband, **Michael Laird** '87, M.S. kinesiology, who retired in 2022 as assistant superintendent for

personnel and auxiliary for Nederland school district, live in Beaumont.

Ann (Montalbano) Lawler '85, A.A.S. childcare technology, retired from teaching pre-kindergarten at St. Anthony Cathedral School. She and her husband, Edward, live in Groves.

Kamie (Williams) '85, B.S. elementary education, retired as special programs, reading and math interventionist at St. Anne Catholic School. She and her husband, **Jorge Lopez** '89, B.S. kinesiology, who is a coach and Spanish teacher at Nederland High School, live in Nederland.

Rachel Provost '85, B.S. elementary education, retired from C.O. Wilson Middle School with 38 years of service in the district. She lives in Port Arthur.

Julie Rogers Gift of Life Program honored **Tim Sudela** '85, B.S. industrial technology, '92, B.S. mechanical engineering, with the Joe Tortorice Servant Leadership Award Feb. 9. He is president and CEO of American Valve and Hydrant, and he and his wife, Lisa, live in Beaumont.

Debra Cartwright '86, B.S. elementary education, '02, M.Ed. administration, is executive director of special education/dyslexia for Port Arthur school district. She lives in Beaumont.

Beaumont school district named **Mary Dages** '86, M.Ed. supervision, 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year at Paul A. Brown Learning Center. She lives in Beaumont.

Nederland school district named **Sherry Darder** '86, B.S. elementary education, 2023 Elementary School Teacher of the Year. She lives in Nederland.

Lucie (Aldridge) Fralicks '86, B.S. music-instrumental, '87, B.A. psychology, is an account manager with SWX Global Design and Production. She and her husband, Kevin, live in Argyle.

Carol (Tate) Green '86, B.S. elementary education, retired from Port Arthur school district as a fifth-grade social studies teacher at Travis Elementary School after 35 years of district service. She and her husband, Derrick, live in Port Arthur.

Moody Gallery presented an exhibition of new work by **Michael Kennaugh** '86, B.F.A. studio art, "*Telling the Bees*" in March and April, marking his tenth

LU Alumni Advisory Board gathered

LU Alumni Advisory Board members gathered for their spring meeting April 11, held at the Science and Technology Building where board members were able to take a tour. They participated in a networking activity called "Sleuth" where they were given a clue and had to find the board member who matched the clue. Later, they received an update from Pres. Taylor, learned about the Texas Academy from Tracie Craig, academy associate director, and learned more about the LU Foundation from Karen Nichols, COO.



Jacob Wills '22 and Pres. Jaime Taylor



Pinkee (Patel) Harley '09, '10, and Hetty (Green) Brown '79



Tilisa Thibodeaux, dean of the Reaud Honors College and director of Texas Academy, and Tea (Nguyen) Do '08, past president



Pres. Jaime Taylor and Chris Graham '90



Lila (Creamer) Stevens '01, board president, and Celine Do '18, '22



Meg (Baertl) Brown '15 and Marilyn (Arline) Smith '80



Maegan Collins '16, '18, '23, and Todd Senters Sr. '96

solo exhibition at the gallery since 2002. It featured five large-scale oil paintings and a stainless steel outdoor sculpture. He lives in Houston.

Gina (Watkins) '86, Certif. office administration, '87, B.B.A. office administration, '91, B.B.A. accounting, retired from Nederland High School with 31 years of service with the district. She and her husband, **Thomas McDonald '88**, B.S. biology, who is general manager of Jefferson County Water Control and Improvement District No. 10, live in Port Arthur.

Joseph Malbrough '86, B.S. communication, owns The UPS Store in Smyrna and recently graduated from Leadership Cobb 2023. He and his wife, Cara, live in Smyrna, Ga.

Judy (Franklin) Leleux '87, B.S. elementary education, retired as librarian at Edwards-Johnson Memorial Silsbee Middle School after 31 years with Silsbee school district and 36 in education. She lives in Lumberton.

The National Pan-Hellenic Council-Golden Triangle honored **Darius Linton '87**, A.A.S. mid-management, for his government service. He is a realtor with American Real Estate Beaumont and lives with his wife, Valerie, in Beaumont.

Kyle Segura '87, B.S. secondary education, retired from teaching physical education and American history at Port Neches Middle School. He and his wife, Crystal, live in Port Neches.

Laura Solis '87, B.B.A. office administration, '09, M.Ed. administration, retired from teaching touch system data entry at Port Neches-Groves High School. She lives in Groves.

Enservco Corp. appointed **Kevin Chesser '88**, B.B.A. accounting, to its board of directors. He has 34 years of experience as a senior finance executive for public and private company and has deep experience in the energy industry. He and his wife, Mita, live in Cypress.

Wendy (Wing) '88, B.S. elementary education, retired from teaching fifth grade at St. Anne Catholic School. She and her husband, **Thomas Eaves '11**, M.Ed. administration, who teaches at Vincent Middle School, live in Beaumont.

Nederland school district named **Nancy (Geoffroy) '88**, B.S. elementary education, 2023 Central Middle School Teacher of the Year. She and her husband, **Garry Hamby '95**, B.S. industrial technology, who works for Superior Energies Inc., live in Port Arthur.

SkinCure Oncology promoted **Steven Scott '88**, A.A.S. radiologic technology, '96, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, to chief strategy and innovation officer and executive vice president. He and his wife, Ellen, live in New Braunfels.

John Westmoreland '88, B.S. electrical engineering, owns Westmoreland Engineering. He and his wife, Audrey, live in San Jose, Calif.

Congratulations to Distinguished Alumna **Clara (Brown) Cooper '89**, B.S. sociology, for begin recognized as one of the region's Top Models (Maximizing and Demonstrating Excellence in Leadership) for 2023 representing the Greater Channel Chapter of Jack and Jill INC. She lives in Pearland and is executive director of L.I.F.E. Houston, which provides emergency food for babies.

The National Black Chef's Association recognized Beaumont school district's Career and Technical Education Center's culinary instructor **Bettina (Williams) Evans '89**, B.S. secondary education, for her work. Her district also named her 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year at Taylor Career Center. She and her husband, Oscar, live in Beaumont.

Mary (Binagia) '89, B.S. elementary education, retired from Bridge City school district. She and her husband, **Chip Heslep '04**, B.S. industrial technology, who is activity coordinator for DuPont Performance Elastomers of E.I. DuPont De Nemours, live in Orange.

Gina Mannino '89, B.S. elementary education, '98, M.Ed. administration, '14, Ed.D. educational leadership, retired as principal of Bridge City High School. She lives in Bridge City.

Hayley (Sistrunk) '89, B.S. elementary education, retired after 31 years of service with Silsbee school district and 33 in education. She taught second grade, and she and her husband, **Gregory McDonald '94**, B.A. history, who also retired after 29 years of service and taught Spanish and English as a Second Language at Silsbee High School, live in Silsbee.

Paul Miller '89, B.S. mechanical engineering, is principal mechanical engineer at Dimensional Energy. He and his wife, **Lisa (Meitzen) '92**, A.A.S. dental hygiene, who is a dental hygienist, live in Cypress.

Kathy Portie '89, B.S. communication, '94, M.A. visual arts, retired in March after 20 years as a reporter, photographer and editor of the *Big Bear Grizzly* newspaper in Big Bear Lake, Calif. An eight-time CNPA award winner in sports photography and coverage of prep sports, the environment and education, Portie was recently honored with a Golden Apple award from the Big Bear Valley Education Trust for her articles about the Ed Trust programs. Portie also received the Eagles of Excellence award from the Big Bear Lake Rotary Club in June for her contributions to the community in her extensive coverage of Big Bear charities and nonprofit organizations. She lives in Big Bear, Calif.

The Texas Association of Mediators named **Gene Roberts '89**, B.S. political science, the 2023 recipient of the Susanne C. Adams Award because the significant positive influence for two decades on alternative dispute resolution within the Dispute Resolution Center of Montgomery

Six named legendary coach

Beaumont school district honored six alumni as legendary coaches:

Marcus Blankenship '74, B.S. health and physical education, '93, M.Ed. educational leadership

Regina Myers '74, B.S. health and physical education, '82, M.S. kinesiology

Leo J. Nolan Jr. '69, B.S. health and physical education

Samuel O. Simon '81, B.S. health and physical education

Ruth VanNoord '72, B.S. health and kinesiology

Sharon Mansfield '77, B.S. health and kinesiology

County, where he is chair of the board, and throughout the state of Texas. He earned his law degree in 1998 and his doctorate in educational leadership in 2022 and is associate dean of students and director of Student Legal and Mediation Services at Sam Houston State University. He and his wife, Celeste, live in Huntsville.

Former head coach of LU golf **Brian White** '89, B.B.A. economics, is director of sales for the Houston Astros Golf Foundation and has taught on the PGA Tour since 2014. He and his wife, **Tanya** '04, B.B.A. general business, live in Houston.

90s

The National Pan-Hellenic Council of the Golden Triangle honored **Euphemia Davis** '90, B.S. sociology, for her service to the community. She is an investigator for Child Protective Services and lives in Beaumont.

Kristeen (Nichols) Davis '90, B.S. elementary education, retired as special education campus coordinator at Jefferson Middle School. She and her husband, John, live in San Antonio.

The Neches Federal Credit Union promoted **Danette (Davenport) Mangioni** '90 to indirect lending manager. She and her husband, Dennis, live in Port Neches.

Nederland school district named **Ericca (Barras)** '90, B.S. elementary education, 2023 Hillcrest Elementary School Teacher of the Year. She and her husband, **Andrew Mendoza** '90, B.S. criminal justice, live in Port Arthur.

Julie (Green) '90, B.S. elementary education, '10, M.Ed. counseling and development, '18, Ed.D. educational leadership, is superintendent of Schulenburg school district. She and her husband, **Masaru Motomura** '99, B.S. kinesiology, live in Buna.

Kim Vine-Guillory '90, B.S. elementary education, '99, M.Ed. administration, '09, Ed.D. educational leadership, is assistant superintendent of school leadership for Port Arthur school district. She and her husband, Rickey, live in Beaumont.

Congratulations to LU Alumni Advisory Board member **Gerard Celestine** '91, A.A.S. instrumentation technology, '96, B.S. industrial technology, for being named 2023-2024 president of the Southeast Texas Young Men's Business League. He is a maintenance Support Manager at Motiva, and he and his wife, Tieraney, live in Beaumont.



CELESTINE

Congratulations to **Lisa (Roach) Ford** '91, A.A.S. child care and development, and her husband, Steve, on the purchase of their new home in Beaumont. Lisa is retired as accounting associate for the LU Finance and Operations Department.

The National PanHellenic Council-Golden Triangle honored **Antionette Kelly** '91, B.S. psychology, for her government service at the 2023 Men's and Women's Day Program. She is a case manager for Marvelous Counseling and Therapy and lives in Beaumont.

Deena (Hebert) '91, B.S. elementary education, '04, M.Ed. educational technology leadership, retired from C.O. Wilson Middle School with 31 years of service in the district. She and her husband, **Johnny Krautz** '90, B.S. sociology, who is an operations TA coordinator for Motiva Enterprises, live in Port Neches.

The Southeast Texas Coaches Association named **Randy Ragsdale** '91, B.S. kinesiology, 2022 Official of the Year. He is a real estate agent for American Real Estate ERA Powered and lives in Orange with his wife, **Paula (McClelland)** '85, B.S. dance, who is also a real estate agent for American Real Estate ERA Powered.

Raymond Smith '91, M.E.M. engineering management, retired from Abilene Christian University's Department of Engineering and Physics after 43 years in industry and eight years at ACU. He and his wife, Sarah, have been married 50 years and live in Abilene.

Kathryn (Walker) '91, B.S. elementary education, who earned her master's

degree in curriculum and instruction in 1997 and her doctorate in educational leadership and administration in 2006, led the 38th annual conference of the Texas Council of Women School Executives. She is president of the organization and assistant professor of educational leadership at Lamar University. She and her husband, **Terence Washington** '91, B.B.A. accounting, who is assistant vice president of Service Corporation International, live in Porter.

Dana (Woods) '91, B.B.A. general business-law, who earned her law degree in 1995, was named a 2023 Texas Super Lawyer. She is a trial attorney with The Williams Firm, chief tribal court judge for the Alabama Coushatta Indian Reservation, municipal court judge for the city of Livingston, director and president of Polk County Criminal Defense Lawyers Association, director and treasurer of Children's Haven, and director of Make It Matter Inc. She and her husband, **Theron Williams Jr.** '93, B.B.A. marketing, who is co-owner of a diminished value specialist for Expert Appraisal Group, live in Livingston.

Jacqueline Wiltz '91, B.S. elementary education, '10, M.Ed. administration, is a RTI coordinator at Blanchette Elementary School in Beaumont school district. She lives in Hamshire.

The National League of Cities appointed the **Honorable Thurman Bartie** '92, B.S. political science, to serve on its Race Equity and Leadership Council for a one-year term. He is funeral director of Hannah Funeral Home and mayor of the City of Port Arthur, where he lives.



BARTIE

Jeffrey Lee '92, B.A. history, retired from Hardin-Jefferson after 19 years of service. He and his wife, **Jami (Long)** '98, B.S. mathematics, who teaches math at Hardin-Jefferson High School, live in Sour Lake.

J.R. Richardson '92, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, is a senior account executive in Texas for Consolidated Communication and received the company's Pinnacle Club honor for 2022. He and his wife, **Kaye Williams**, '91, B.S. health and kinesiology, '93, M.S. health and kinesiology, who earned her doctorate in clinical psychology and

is principal of Cinco Ranch High School in Katy school district, live in Katy.

Tatiana Morales '93, B.A. political science, '07, M.Ed. administration, '14, Ed.D. educational leadership, is assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction for Port Arthur school district. She and her husband, **Marc Owens** '18, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, who teaches at Thomas Jefferson Middle School in Port Arthur school district, live in Port Arthur.

Mike Stegall '93, A.A.S. fire protection technology, retired as assistant fire chief for the City of Port Neches after 33 years of service. He lives in Port Neches.

Byron Terrier '93, B.S. kinesiology, '03, M.Ed. administration, '10, Ed.D. educational leadership, is executive director at Region 5 Education Service Center. He and his wife, Ann, live in Sour Lake.

Lee Beaumont '94, M.S. biology, who earned his doctorate in organizational leadership in 2021 and his M.S. in facility management in 2023, is vice president of marketing and enrollment at Averett University. He and his wife, Carrie, live in Danville, Va.

Paula (Rinando) '94, A.A.S. childcare and development, retired from teaching pre-kindergarten at St. Anne Catholic School. She and her husband, **Kevin Driskill** '92, live in Sour Lake.

Paula (Fuselier) Hall '94, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, retired from Bridge City school district. She and her husband, James, live in Bridge City.

Halliburton Co. promoted **Shannon Slocum** '94, A.A.S. computer electronics and robotics, '96, B.S. industrial and systems engineering, to east hemisphere president. He and his wife, Kimberly, live in Tomball.

Associate professor of criminal justice **Patrick Webb** '94, B.S. criminal justice, earned tenure from Saint Augustine's University May 19. He lives in Raleigh, N.C.

Candis Zimmerman '94, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '99, M.Ed. counseling and development, counsels clients statewide for A Better Path Therapy telehealth services. She lives in Houston.

Kelly Brown '95, B.S. nursing, is a DAISY Award recipient at Christus St. Elizabeth Hospital, where she is a registered nurse. She lives in Vidor.

Katherine (Williams) Allen '96, B.A. interdisciplinary studies, '18, M.Ed. educational leadership, is principal of College Hills Elementary in College Station school district. She and her husband, Dean, live in Brenham.

Port Arthur school district named **David Barnes** '96, B.G.S. liberal arts, 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year at the Port Arthur Alternative Center, where he is a secondary instructor. He lives in Nederland.

Stephanie (Broussard) Hukill '96, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, retired from Silsbee school district after 26 years of service. She taught science at Edwards-Johnson Memorial Silsbee Middle School and lives with her husband, Ronald, in Silsbee.

Raymond McKinney '96, B.S. political science, retired from Silsbee school district after 26 years of service. He taught at Silsbee High School, and he and his wife, **Angela** '93, A.A.S. respiratory therapy, who is a nurse at Silsbee Elementary School, live in Silsbee.

Myndi (Miers) '96, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, teaches at Hillcrest Elementary School. She and her husband, **John Munoz** '00, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, who is a probation officer for Jefferson County, live in Nederland.

Hydrecht Technologies Inc. appointed **Dr. Jeremy Roebuck** '96, B.S. biology, who earned his medical degree in 2001, to its board of advisors. Roebuck is an otolaryngologist with Southeast Texas Ear, Nose & Throat and owns The Med Spa. He and his wife, **Jennifer (Samaha)** '96, live in Lumberton.

Lee Smith '96, B.B.A. marketing, is vice president of 4-Horn Industrial. He and his wife, Taryn, live in Port Arthur.

Gay (Broussard) Vela '96, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, retired from Bridge City school district. She lives in Orange.



Beaumont Convention and Visitors Bureau recognized **Morgan Walker** '96, B.B.A. marketing, as the 2022 Event Planner of the Year. He owns Southeast Texas Baseball Academy and lives in Orange.

Jennifer (Gore) Ferguson '97, B.S.W. social work, teaches at Laura Reeves Primary School in Silsbee school district, where she and her husband, Tommy, live.

Tamara (Saveat) Long '97, B.G.S. general studies, is principal of Pietzsch-MacArthur PK-8 Grade Center. She and her husband, Cory, live in Beaumont.

Beaumont school district named **Wynett (Matthews) Rideaux** '97, B.G.S. liberal arts, 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year at West Brook High School. She and her husband, Alexander, live in Beaumont.

Orangefield Elementary School named **Becky (Tennison) Sparks** '97, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, 2023 Teacher of the Year. She teaches fourth grade, and she and her husband, Cecil, live in Orange.



Mande Tucker '97, A.A.S. nursing, is dean of nursing and health profession programs at Lamar State College Orange. She earned her master's degree in nursing in 2019 and lives in Buna.

Katherine Whitney '97, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '09, M.Ed. secondary education, retired from Central Middle School with 26 years of service in the district. She lives in Nederland.

Fred Brent '98, M.Ed. educational leadership, retired from Georgetown school district as superintendent and is now chief of staff for Sport Clips Haircuts. He and his wife, **Terri (Miller)** '91, B.S. elementary education, '01, M.Ed. counseling and development, who is counselor for Anderson-Shiro Elementary, live in Georgetown.

Congratulations of Dallas attorney **Ben West** '98, B.A. history, on being named partner at Front Brown Todd, a national law firm with specialized expertise in the manufacturing industry. He is a litigation and appellate attorney who has focused on aviation, transportation, and general and complex commercial litigation, as well as state and federal appeals. He and his wife, Erin, live in Frisco.

The office of U.S. Representative Brian Babin honored **Gordon Williams** '98, B.S. communication, with special congressional recognition for his films, *The Example* and *They Will Talk About Us: The Charlton-Pollard Story*. He lives in Cleveland.

Desiree (Lovelady) Bryant '99, B.S. communication, is training and development advisor for Enbridge. She lives in Katy.

Beaumont school district named **Nikita Douglas** '99, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '13, M.Ed. elementary education, B.S. political science, 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year at Bingman Head Start. She lives in Nederland.

Diane (Tutt) Gallier '99, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '10, M.Ed. administration, is assistant principal at teacher at Helena Park Elementary School in Nederland school district, where she lives.

Brenda (Chatagnier) Richards '99, B.B.A. accounting, owns Billy Joe's Bar-B-Q, which is celebrating 50 years in

business. She and her husband, Garry, live in Port Neches.

Beaumont school district named **Cheryl (Christ) Spangler** '99, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year at Dishman Elementary School. She and her husband, William, live in Beaumont.

Laura (Duke) Zito '99, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, retired as a seventh-grade teacher from C.O. Wilson Middle School with 23 years of service in the district. She and her husband, Michael, live in Nederland.

00s

Michael Arnaud '00, B.S. kinesiology, married Michelle Wilson Jan. 21, 2023. Michael teaches industrial tech at Port Neches Middle School, and they live in Groves.

Beverly (Rider) Delahoussaye '00, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, retired from Bridge City school district. She and her husband, Randall, live in Orange.

Kelli (Maida) '00, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, teaches first grade at Pine Forest Elementary School in Vidor school district. She and her husband, **Larry Dial** '98, B.S. criminal justice, live in Orange.

Forbes and *SHOOK Research* has named **James Falcon** '00, B.B.A. finance, to its 2023 list of Best-in-State Wealth Advisors in Alabama. He is a financial advisor with Edward Jones, and he and his wife, Michelle, live in Huntsville, Ala.

Janell Howland '00, B.B.A. marketing, married Kevin O'Conner March 18. She is head women's golf coach for Lamar University and lives in Beaumont.

Texas Elementary Principals & Supervisors Association named **Jason Morgan** '00, B.S. kinesiology, who earned his master's degree in educational leadership in 2018, Region 5 TEPSAN of the Year for 2023. He is the principal of Lumberton Intermediate School and lives with his wife, Janet, in Lumberton.

Aman Quadri '00, B.S. psychology, B.S. biology, who earned his master's degree in physical therapy in 2002, is strategic advisor for MAPay. He lives in Austin.

Vidor school district named **Tara (Peel)** '00, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, 2023 Oak Forest Elementary School Teacher of the Year. She teaches second grade, and she and her husband, **Kory Stephenson** '02, B.S. criminal justice, who teaches science at Vidor High School, live in Vidor.

Lisa (Warner) Sterling '00, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, '04, M.Ed. administration, retired as instructional coach for Port Acres Elementary. She and her husband, Bobby, live in Port Neches.

Bridge City High School named **Arron (Atkinson) Conner** '01, B.S. health education, 2023 Educator of the Year. She and her husband, Mark, live in Bridge City.



Andy Coughlan '01, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, '05, M.A. English, received the top award at the Los Angeles Press Club's annual National Arts and Entertainment Journalism Awards. He is the director of the University Press at Lamar University and lives with his partner, Ramona, in Beaumont.

Jennifer (McMullen) East '01, B.S. nursing, who earned her master's degree in nursing in 2006, is nurse practitioner at Riceland Endocrinology. She and her husband, David, live in Nederland.

Dennis Johnson '01, B.A. French, was elected to the Science Teachers Association Board of Texas. He teaches fifth grade at Port Acres Elementary and lives in Beaumont.

Nederland school district named **Daphne (Nguyen)** '01, B.B.A. accounting, 2023 C.O. Wilson Middle School Teacher of the Year. She and her husband, **Andrew McIntire** '90, B.S. criminal justice, live in Port Arthur.

The Texas Association of Broadcasters granted **Jason Miller** '01, B.G.S. general studies, the 2023 Texas Broadcast News Award for Radio Documentary for his episode, *Alexander Strong Wind Perez: Karankawa Descendant*. He is station manager for KVLU Public Radio at LU and lives with his wife, **Courtney (Vick)** '03, in Vidor.

Congratulations to **Bianca Parr** '01, B.S. communication, and Steve Cain on the birth of their daughter, Charlotte Grace. Bianca is a pharmaceutical sales representative for Pfizer Inc., and they live in Houston.

St. Anthony Cathedral Basilica named **Hayley (Atkins)** '01, B.G.S. general studies, '04, M.Ed. elementary education, a Teacher of the Year for 2023. She is a librarian at St. Anne's Catholic School and lives with her husband, **Eric Reeves** '01, B.B.A. marketing, in Port Neches.

Judy Smith '01, M.S.N. nursing administration, who earned her Ph.D. in nursing in 2013, retired as associate professor of nursing at Lamar University after 23 years of service. She lives in Beaumont.



LU Ambassadors President's Picnic

President and Mrs. Taylor hosted a dinner at their home to welcome new student Ambassadors and to recognize graduating senior Ambassadors May 1, 2023.



Stephanie Barron enjoys a snow cone from Mabel's



Britney Brevell '23 and Pres. Jaime Taylor



Kristin Hebert, Caroline LeBlanc '23, Amarie Guillory and Stefany Rico '23



Dennis Tran, Jocelyn Maldonado, Sindi Castillo '23, Sara Barboza, Cristian Arevalo, Stefany Rico '23, Isaac Moreno, Kelvin Elgar, Stephanie Barron, Madeline Tzul, Sergio Mendez and Estrella Balderas



Vavah Kamasa-Quashie, Drake Rothenberger, DeAnna Gilmore, Estrella Balderas, Bryce Sheffield and Harvest Prater



Paul Ivory and Waverlee Cooper



Kalan Bonnette '23, Chloe Raczkovi, Jacob Murphy '23, Hannah Trash and Kristin Hebert



Cristian Arevalo and Isaac Moreno



Ashton Burch, Clara Schreck and Rima Shaaban



Kristin Hebert, Mary Wernig, Sergio Mendez and Julia Barrett



Dennis Tran, Alli Gross and Ryan Shugart



Andy Coughlan '01, '05; Robert Dandino '92; Amy Tolbert-Faggard '94, '13; Darrell Robins '15; Greg Busceme '79; Mark Nesmith '98; Dennis Kiel; Shannon (Copeland) Figueroa '02, '03, '07, director of alumni affairs; Amanda Smith '71, juror; and Kevin Tully, juror

After School Special: The Lamar University Fifth Juried Alumni Art Exhibition

LU showcased original works of art of its alumni at the Dishman Art Museum June 19-Aug. 5, 2023. Amanda Smith '71 and Kevin Tully, co-directors of A Smith Gallery in Johnson City, served as jurors. An opening reception was held with the featured artists June 19 at the museum.



Melanie (Modica) Young '90 and Kyle Young '90



Amy Tolbert-Faggard '94, '13



Hester (Briscoe) Bell '61 and Shannon (Copeland) Figueroa '02, '03, '07



Keith Carter '70, Cathy (Marshall) Spence '97, Kevin Tully, Amanda Smith '71



Greg Busceme '79



Mark Nesmith '98



Darrell Robins '15



Christi Grudier '10, Rachel Hellums '22 and Lauren Yates



Mark Nesmith '98 and LU Ambassador/SGA President Jonah Smith, a former art student of Nesmith, Port Neches-Groves High School



Dennis Kiel, director of the Dishman Art Museum; Lisa Brown; Dann Brown, provost and vice president of academic affairs



Robert Dandino '92



Andy Coughlan '01, '05



Amy Tolbert-Faggard '94, '13; Mike Cacioppo '77; Albert Faggard '03; Jamie Kessler '80; Clyde Drake '81

Jennifer Collier '02, B.M. music, is principal of Tomball Star Academy. She and her husband, Nate, live in Tomball.

Lance LaRue '02, B.S. communication, is president of 5 Under Golf Center. He and his wife, **Michelle (Poulter)** '03, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, who is a librarian for Lumberton Intermediate School, live in Lumberton.

Herb Lee '02, B.B.A. human resource management, received his M.B.A. degree in 2022. He is a human resource business partner with Chevron Phillips Chemical Co. and lives with his wife, **Adrienne (Trusty)** '93, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '17, Ed.D. educational leadership, in Manvel.

The Greater Orange Area Chamber of Commerce named **Heather Montagne** '02, B.B.A. general business, 2022 Chairperson of the Year. Heather is an insurance agent with her own agency, Heather Montagne-State Farm Insurance, and lives with her husband, Michael Mankopf, in Orange.

Lindsay Smith '02, B.S. earth science, '09, M.Ed. administration, married Chris Cavet Dec. 19, 2022. Lindsay teaches virtual science at Stride Inc., and they live in Poolville.

Michelle (Williams) '02, B.B.A. human resource management, earned her doctorate in education in 2015 and retired from Port Arthur school district after 20 years of service. She and her husband, **James Snodgrass** '14, B.S. nursing, who earned a Doctor of Nursing Practice in Family Practitioner in 2020 and is fire captain for the city of Port Arthur, live in Port Arthur.

Willie Broussard Jr. '03, B.S. family and consumer sciences—hospitality administration, earned his M.B.A. in human resource management in 2007 and is senior human resources generalist with Harris Health System. He lives in Houston.

Court Fruge '03, B.G.S. general studies, who earned his master's degree in business administration in 2011 and his master's degree in information systems management in 2012, is marketing technology consultant for Hero Digital. He and his wife, Janelle, live in Groves.

Belinda (Richardson) George '03, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '08, M.Ed. educational leadership, '15, Ed.D. educational leadership, is culture and experience director for Gulf Credit Union. She and her husband, Melvin, live in Beaumont.

Jason Jinkerson '03, B.G.S. general studies, is senior account manager at ChemTreat Inc. He and his wife, **Alicia (Wright)** '02, B.A. psychology, who is a family based safety services specialist for the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, live in Nederland.

The Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association named Little Cypress Elementary School administrator **Sommer (Di Dio)** '03, B.S. political science, Region V

Assistant Principal of the Year. She and her husband, **Danny Reynolds** '98, B.S. health and kinesiology, '04, M.Ed. educational leaderships, who is assistant principal of Vidor High School, live in Orange.

RaShawn Webb-Locke '03, B.S. sociology, '12, M.Ed. school counseling, is a realtor with American Real Estate Beaumont and owns Seven Mobile Marketing. She and her husband, James, live in Beaumont.

College Station school district named **Mindy (Grayson)** '04, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, Professional of the Year as assistant principal of Spring Creek Elementary School. She and her husband, **Xavier Chapa** '03, B.S. industrial technology, who is a sales specialist in resiliency services for IBM Corp., live in College Station.



The Arc of Greater Beaumont honored **Teri (Bayless) Hawthorne** '04, B.A. English, with its Lifetime Achievement Award April 21 for her many years of service. She is executive director of Christus Health Foundation of Southeast Texas and lives in Lumberton with her husband, Chad.

The Army promoted **Rachelle Las Sabe** '04, B.B.A. finance, to start a training management division in its G3. She lives in Bangersville, Ind.

Beaumont school district named **Alexis Pitre-Harris** '04, B.G.S. general studies, 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year at Blanchette Elementary School, where she teaches second grade. She and her husband, Rashad, live in Beaumont.

Jessica "Jes" (Bres) '04, B.G.S. general studies, is manager of community development for the City of Beaumont. She and her husband, **Jay Prince** '19, B.S. mechanical engineering, B.A. chemistry, live in Beaumont.

Tiffany Shelton '04, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, is president of Beaumont Community Partnerships for Children. She lives in Beaumont.

Emily (Cherry) Smith '04, B.S. sociology, teaches at Pine Forest Elementary School in Vidor school district. She and her husband, Tony, live in Vidor.



Cindy (Shelton) '04, B.B.A. finance, opened her new business in Nederland, The Cottage Quilting + Embroidery. She and her husband, **John Thomas** '81, A.A.S. drafting technology, who works for BASF TOTAL Petrochemicals, live in Port Neches.

Clint Walters '04, B.B.A. finance, '11, M.B.A. business administration, is president, CEO and chairman of First Security Bank in Beaumont. He and his wife, **Amye (Schneider)** '07, B.S. nursing, who earned her nurse practitioner certification in 2012 and works with Southeast Texas Ear, Nose and Throat, live in Sour Lake.

Texas Woman's University promoted **Beth (Yelverton) Whitley** '04, B.B.A. marketing, to director for student success and partnerships. She and her husband, Christian, live in Denton.

Felicia Alexander-Branch '05, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, owns Dependable Angel Services, teaching others how to save money in all aspects of life with multiple strategies and resources. She also owns Black Angel Publishingz and Media and designs book covers. She lives with her husband, Karl, in Port Arthur.

Kevin Barbay '05, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, who earned his master's degree in education-sport management in 2007, is offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach at Mississippi State University. He and his wife, Kacie, live in Boone, N.C.

Jesus Davalos IV '05, B.S. nursing, is a registered nurse in the Emergency Department at the Medical Center for Southeast Texas. He lives in Nederland.

Vidor school district named sixth grade English teacher **Teri (Lounsberry)** '05, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, 2023 Vidor Middle School Teacher of the Year. She and her husband, **Thomas Harvey** '04, B.G.S. general studies, M.Ed. administration, live in Vidor.

Hull-Daisetta school district named **Donyelle (McAdams) Jackson** '05, elementary Teacher of the Year. She teaches third grade reading and social studies, and she and her husband, Jeffrey, live in Thicket.

Jana (Furby) '05, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, teaches sixth grade at Central Middle School in Nederland, where she and her husband, **Jarred Lane** '05, B.S. communication, live.

The Josie Music Awards nominated **Brandon Morrell** '05, B.S. communication, and his podcast The Backstage Pass for Media Company of the Year. He lives in Beaumont.

Amanda (Savell) Nelson '05, B.S. nursing, is an oncology nurse at Christus St. Elizabeth Hospital. She lives in Kountze.

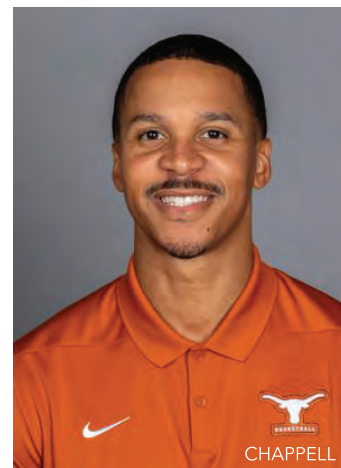
The Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration named **Kareem Nelson** '05, B.S. communication disorders, the Madeline K. Savoy Excellence in Education Honoree for 2023. He is the principal of Martin Elementary School in Beaumont school district and lives in Port Arthur.

The Beaumont Police Department promoted **Christopher Price** '05, B.S. psychology, to sergeant. He lives in Lumberton.

Port Arthur school district named **Emily (Stapleton)** '05, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, 2023-2024 Rookie Teacher of the Year at Travis Elementary School, where she teaches math. She and her husband, **Christopher Verdine** '07, B.A. history, live in Nederland.

Jeffery Williams '05, B.B.A. marketing, owns Juggernaut Payment Processing, which offers merchant payment analysis to streamline payment processing. He lives in Conroe.

Tony Wolfe '05, B.M. music, who earned his doctorate of educational ministry and leadership in 2016, is executive director and treasurer of the Southern Carolina Baptist Convention. He and his wife, Vanessa, live in Columbia, S.C.



Brandon Chappell '06, B.B.A. marketing, who earned his master's degree in educational leadership in 2016, is assistant basketball coach for the University of Texas. He lives in Austin.

The Beaumont Police Department promoted **Cody Courts** '06, B.S. psychology, to lieutenant. He lives in Lumberton.

Orangefield Junior High School named **Victoria (Bickham)** '06, B.S. family and consumer sciences–family studies, 2023 Teacher of the Year. She teaches eighth grade science, and she and her husband, **Timothy Erickson** '08, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, who is a coach with Orangefield Elementary School, live in Orange.

Thompson Institute selected **Amber (Baxter)** '06 as part of its advanced principal leadership program. She is principal of Little Cypress Elementary School, and she and her husband, **Scott Hawk** '08, B.S. kinesiology, who earned an M.B.A. in 2022 and is pastor of Praise Church, live in Beaumont.

The Southeast Texas Coaches Association named **Jason Hopson** '06, B.S. kinesiology, a 2022 Coach of the Year. Hopson coaches girls soccer for Lumberton High School and lives in Lumberton with his wife, **Ellen (Young)** '13, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, who teaches at Lumberton Middle School.

Beaumont school district named **Jennifer (Smith)** '06, B.S. studio art, 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year at Early College High School, where she teaches art. She and her husband, **Gary Janeczek** '95, B.M. music, who is director of secondary music education at Nederland High School, live in Beaumont.

Dawanna Jones '06, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, '11, M.Ed. educational technology and leadership, who earned her master's degree in public administration in 2015, is community engagement specialist at Bechtel and owns Senoj Professional Business Services. She lives in Beaumont.

Beaumont school district named **Chasetie (Kerr) Maloy** '06, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, Teacher of the Year for 2022-2023. Maloy teaches third grade at Regina Howell Elementary and is a realtor with Amy Chance Real Estate. She and her husband, Decarlos, live in Beaumont.

Cassandra Mitchell-Lyons '07, B.S. biology, published her children's book *"Nurses are Superheroes Too."* She is a clinical implementation manager nurse and lives with her husband, Cordell, in Perris, Calif.

Beaumont school district named **Amber Phillips** '06, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year at Fletcher Elementary School. She lives in Beaumont.

Dr. Amy (Williams) '06, B.S. nursing, who earned her M.S.N. degree in 2012, earned her doctorate of nursing practice degree in 2023. She is advanced practice leader at Christus Trinity Clinic and lives in Orange with her husband, **Zach Quinn** '11, M.Ed. administration, who

is director of secondary curriculum and instruction for Orangefield school district.

Congratulations to **Jena (Verrill)** '06, B.S. communication disorders, and **Brandon Still** '06, B.B.A. economics, B.B.A. management, on the birth of their son, Jonathan Matthew, March 30. She is a speech-language pathologist with Humble school district, and he earned a law degree from Harvard University and is a partner with Simpson, Thacher and Bartlett. They live in Humble.

Kristyn (Henderson) '07, B.B.A. finance, founded Core Realty Housing Solutions. She is leasing executive and renewal specialist for Albanese Cormier Holdings and lives in Beaumont with her husband, **Anthony Borgobello** '10, B.S. biology, who is environmental advisor for ExxonMobil Corp.

Jane (Morey) Champagne '07, M.Ed. educational leadership, '09, M.Ed. special education, is a professional school counselor at Antionette Reading Jr. High School in Richmond school district. She and her husband, Carl, live in Richmond.

Gerald Chandler '07, M.Ed. administration, retired after 29 years in education and two years at Silsbee school district. He and his wife, **Gabrielle (Oltz)** '11, M.M.Ed. music education, who is band director of Hardin High School, live in Lumberton.

Orangefield High School named **Ronald Chevalier** '07, B.A. English, '14, M.Ed. teacher leadership, 2023 Teacher of the Year. He and his spouse, Phil, live in Beaumont.

Thompson Institute selected **Ryan DuBose** '07, B.S. biology, '13, M.B.A. business administration, as part of its advanced principal leadership program. He is principal of Little Cypress-Mauriceville High School, and he and his wife, **Kayla (LeBlanc)** '09, B.S. biology, who is an elementary assistant principal in Orangefield school district, live in Orange.

Nederland school district named **Dana (Hufstetler) Franke** '07, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, 2023 Highland Park Elementary School Teacher of the Year. She and her husband, Seth, live in Nederland.

Congratulations to **Antoinette (Espritt) Mays** '07, B.G.S. general studies, '12, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, '16, clinical mental health counseling, on earning her doctorate in biblical psychology April 29. She lives in Beaumont.

Goodrich school district named **David Pickett** '07, B.G.S. general studies, '18, M.Ed. educational technology leadership, Goodrich Secondary School Teacher of the Year. He and his wife, Gloria, live in Thicket.

Beaumont school district named **Paula Pickett** '07, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, 2023-2024 Teacher of the

Year at King Middle School. She lives in Beaumont.

Chelsea Pigg '07, B.S. nursing, and **Aaron Meaux** '06, B.S. kinesiology, were married April 21. She is a registered nurse with IASIS Healthcare and he is production team leader with Motiva Enterprises. They live in Port Neches.

David Pool '07, B.B.A. management information systems, has expanded his Mid County Farm and Feed Supply and Edible Landscaping business to include lawn care, hardscape and outdoor lighting. He lives in Port Neches.

Beaumont school district named **Celia (Gage) Rideau** '07, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year at Pathways Alternative Learning Center. She lives in Beaumont.

Arnoldo "A.J." Rodriguez '07, B.B.A. general business, earned a law degree in 2012 and is an administrative judge with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. He and his wife, **Charity (Lemaire)** '05, B.B.A. general business–advertising, who is corporate account manager for Gold's Gym, live in Cibolo.

Michael Smith '07, B.S. political science, '11, M.B.A. financial management, is head of the Social Studies Department at Bob Hope High School. He lives in Lumberton.

Congratulations to **Ronnie Turner Jr.** '07, B.A. psychology, who is senior general attorney for Union Pacific Railroad, for being named the 2022 Young Baylor Lawyer of the Year. He and his wife, Brianna, live in Spring.

Lumberton school district named **April (Robbins) York** '07, B.G.S. general studies, the 2023-2024 Secondary School Teacher of the Year. She teaches special education at Lumberton High School and lives with her husband, Edward, in Silsbee.

The National Pan-Hellenic Council-Golden Triangle honored **James Arceneaux Jr.** '08, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, for his government service. He and his wife, **Cynthia (Ford)** '06, B.S. nursing, live in Port Arthur.

Chris Bates '08, B.G.S. general studies, who earned his master's degree in public administration in 2017, received the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. 40 Under 40 Award. He is a constable for Jefferson County and lives in Port Arthur with his wife, **Ariana (Jones)** '17, B.S. communication-broadcasting, '21, M.Ed. administration, who teaches second grade at Travis Elementary School.

Nickolaus Cioci '08, B.S. communication, earned his doctorate in education in 2019 and is dean of records at Texas Southern University. He and his wife, Sarah, live in La Porte.

The Southeast Texas Coaches Association named **Jamie (Minner)** '08, B.G.S. general studies, a 2022 Coach of the Year. Deshazo coaches girls track and field for Bridge City High School,

where she also teaches. She and her husband, **Robert Deshazo** '02, B.S. kinesiology, who coaches football for Lumberton High School, live in Bridge City.

The Southeast Texas Coaches Association named **Timothy Erickson** '08, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, a 2022 Coach of the Year. He coaches baseball for Orangefield Elementary School and lives in Orange with his wife, **Victoria (Bickham)** '06, B.S. family and consumer science-family studies, who teaches eighth grade at Orangefield Junior High School.

Kayla Fisher '08, B.S. family and consumer science-family studies, '12, M.B.A. business administration, married Christopher Clark March 18, 2023. Kayla is a realtor and real estate consultant for Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices, and they live in Beaumont.

Congratulations to **Megan (Shields) Kingrey** '08, who earned her associate's degree in radiologic technology in 2012 and her master's degree in 2018, and her husband, Chris, on the birth of their son, Myles Alexander, March 14, 2023. Megan is implementation manager at HeartFlow Inc., and they live in Beaumont.

Congratulations to **Jason Lambert** '08, Ed.D. educational leadership, vice president of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs at University of Houston–Victoria, for being chosen as a 2023 Mid-Manager's Institute director of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators Region III. He and his wife, Courtney, live in Victoria.

Congratulations to **Lyn (Williams)** '08, B.S. communication disorders, '10, M.S. speech-language pathology, and Keith Mayes on the birth of their daughter, Lynnie Rae, March 31. Lyn is a speech-language pathologist with Centre for Neuro Skills. They live in Webster.

Mallory Maunder '08, B.M. music, married **Robert Rose Jr.** -2020 March 18, 2023. Mallory teaches music at Highland Park Elementary School, and they live in Port Neches.

Allie (Crommett) McDaniel '08, B.A. history, is head volleyball coach and girls athletics coordinator in Port Neches-Groves school district. She married Deny Ross McDaniel Aug. 10, 2022. They live in Nederland.

Beaumont school district named **Rachel (Gunter) Street** '08, B.A. political science, 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year at Odom Academy, where she teaches eighth grade U.S. history and social studies. She and her husband, Shane, live in Beaumont.

The Beaumont Foundation honored **Stefanie Wright** '08, B.S. biology, who is Science Department head at Lumberton High School, with its 2023 Reaud Excellence in Education Award. She earned her master's degree in biology May 12, and she and her husband, Trenton, live in Kountze.

Bridge City school district named **Daniel Auchenbach** '09, B.S. chemical engineering, '14, M.Ed. educational technology leadership, 2023 High School Teacher of the Year. He lives in Orange.

Audrey (Bowser) Collins '09, M.Ed. educational leadership, is principal of Dishman Elementary School in Beaumont school district. She and her husband, James, live in Beaumont.

Nederland school district named **Holly (Neumann) Dainwood** '09, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, 2023 Langham Elementary School Teacher of the Year. She and her husband, **Mikel** '04, B.F.A. graphic design, who is a financial advisor with Merrill Lynch & Co., live in Nederland.

Jacob Garlinger '09, M.Ed., administration, '21, Ed.D. educational leadership, is principal of Griffin Middle School in Lewisville school district. He lives in The Colony.

Haley (Dickerson) John '09, B.S. family and consumer science-dietetics, '13, M.S. family and consumer science, is founder and managing principal of RH Capital Partners. She and her husband, Reji, live in Beaumont.

Josmery (Ramirez) Mulvahill '09, B.M. music, starred in the independent Christian film *The First Step* produced by Studio 220 Films. She wrote and sang two of the film's original songs and lives in Beaumont with her husband, Brian.

Lumberton school district named **Christopher Pampolina** '09, B.B.A. marketing, the 2023-2024 Elementary School Teacher of the Year. He teaches at Lumberton Intermediate School and lives with his wife, **Maggie (Credeur)** '08, B.S. communication disorders, '10, M.S. speech-language pathology, in Lumberton.

Ana Pereda '09, M.B.A. business administration, is executive director of workforce at Lamar Institute of Technology. She and her husband, Alberto Marquez, live in Beaumont.

Megan (Duhon) Pratt '09, B.G.S. general studies, is a registered nurse for Christus St. Elizabeth Hospital. She and her husband, Christopher, live in Lumberton.

Samantha (Turner) Robinson '09, B.S. industrial technology, is a safety advisor with ExxonMobil's Beaumont Polyethylene Plant. She lives in Beaumont.

The Southeast Texas Coaches Association named **Karen (LeJeune)** '09, M.Ed. administration, a 2022 Coach of the Year. Slack coaches softball for Liberty High School, where she is the principal. She and her husband, **Joe Slack** '03, B.S. health education, who also coaches for Liberty High School, live in Liberty.

Congratulations to **Johnna (Wagner)** '09, B.S. communication, '13, M.Ed. school counseling, and **Adam**

Westbrook '10, B.B.A. accounting, '11, M.S. accounting, on the birth of their daughter, Nora Jo. Johnna is junior counselor at the Nederland High School Guidance Department, and Adam is a certified public accountant with Mazur & Vernon. They live in Nederland.

10s

Beaumont school district named Robynn (Jamison) Brown '10, B.B.A. finance, 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year at Charlton-Pollard Elementary School, where she teaches third grade. She and her husband, Royce, live in Beaumont.

Congratulations to **Sandra (Juarez)** '10, B.S. family and consumer sciences—food and nutrition, '19, M.S. nutrition, and **Steven Frederick** '13, B.S. geology, on the birth of their daughter, Lucia Gabriella, Jan. 31. Sandra is a nutritionist, and Steven is a manufacturing engineer with Helena Laboratories. They live in Sour Lake.

Jeanetta Price '10, B.S.W. social work, '14, M.Ed. clinical mental health counseling, co-authored *The Write 2 Heal* and is CEO of Blind Girl Magic. She lives in Beaumont.

Naomi Showers-Doyle '10, B.A. political science, '12, M.P.A. public administration, is justice of the peace for Precinct 1 in Jefferson County and was recently inducted into the Beaumont Chapter of Jack and Jill of America Inc. She and her husband, Earnest, live in Beaumont.

Heath Wright '10, M.Ed. administration, is principal of Dyess Elementary in Abilene school district. He and his wife, Kimberly, live in Abilene.

Bethany Aiena '11, B.S. psychology, is associate director of the Behavioral Health Program and CBOC PDMHI psychotherapy supervisor at the Michael E. DeBakey Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Houston, where she lives.

Zach Celeste '11, B.B.A. accounting, who earned his law degree in 2015, was selected as a Super Lawyers Rising Star for 2023. He is a managing partner with Wells Peyton Partain Baldo & Lighty and lives in Beaumont with his wife, **Renee (Morris)** '11, B.A. history, '20, M.A. English, who is an instructor at the Lamar Institute of Technology.

Christopher Collier '11, B.S. communication, who earned his master's degree in public administration in 2012, is a government instructor at Tyler Junior College. He lives in Houston.

Port Arthur school district named **Jessica Cuellar** '11, B.S. criminal justice, 2023-2024 Rookie Teacher of the Year at Staff Sergeant Lucian Adams Elementary School, where she teaches third grade math. She lives in Port Arthur.

Mike Cacioppo & Lamar Legends Exhibition

Dec. 10, 2023 • 2-4 pm • Beaumont Art League

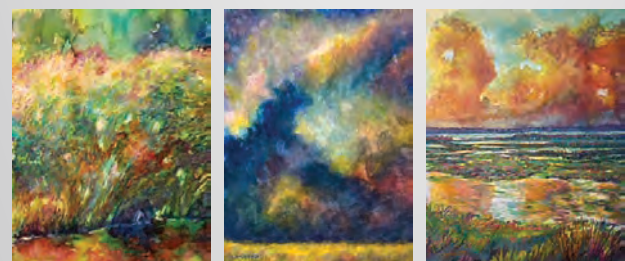
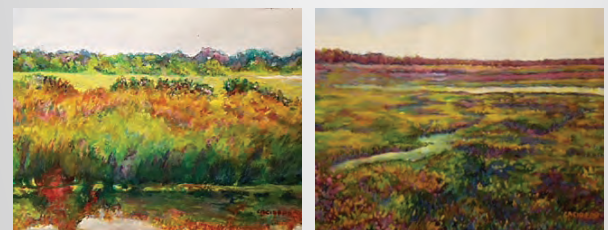
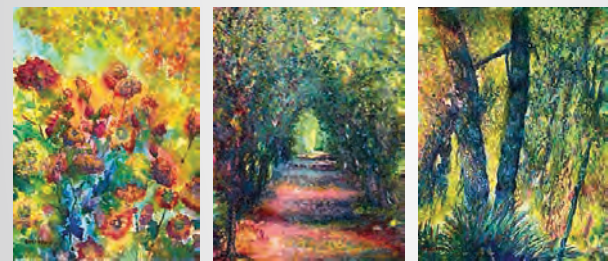
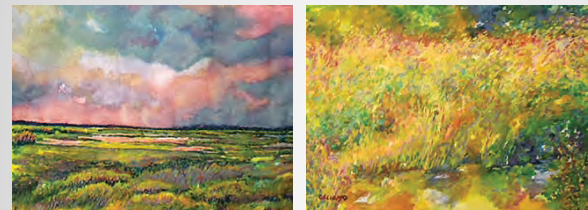
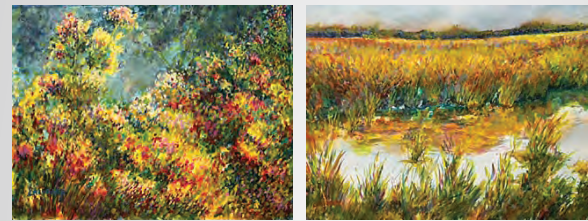
With this exhibition, artist Mike Cacioppo '77 has created a golden opportunity for art lovers to view works from 18 LU alumni and former faculty artists, along with his own. The exhibit will celebrate the the Department of Art in the 1970s and the talented artists it's faculty nurtured. "I studied all forms of art at Lamar, but was mainly an oil painter. In retirement, I rediscovered my watercolor skills, so that's the medium I enjoy working in these days," Cacioppo said. The exhibit will feature his watercolor series of cattail marsh, flowers and gardens alongside the works of these artists.

Curtis Black
Linnis Blanton
Joey Blazek
Greg Busceme
Sam Daleo
Albert Faggard

Jamie Paul Kessler
Sandy Laurette
Rosemary Mathis
Jeff McManus
Igalious Mills
Art Nations

Lynne Lokensgard, *Professor Emeritus*
Robert Madden, *Professor Emeritus*
Jerry Newman, *Professor Emeritus*
Robert O'Neill
Robert Rogan
Conn Trussell

Images of Mike Cacioppo's artwork



Congratulations to **Matthew Fischer** '11, B.B.A. general business, B.B.A. entrepreneurship, B.B.A. management, '14, M.B.A. business administration, on receiving the President's Club Award for 2022 from Connect Realty. He lives in Beaumont.

Virginia (Viverette) Flores '11, M.Ed. administration, is athletic director for Cy-Fair school district. She lives in Cypress.

Warren school district named **Natalee (Antoon)** '11, B.S. family and consumer science-dietetics, 2022-2023 District Teacher of the Year. She teaches at Warren Elementary School and lives in Village Mills with her husband, **Nicholas Foret** '08, B.B.A. management, who is a sales representative for PepsiCo Foundation.



JOHNSON

Jeralyn Johnson '11, B.S. family and consumer science-dietetics, '20, M.P.H. public health, is director of Coastal Gateway Health Center and teaches culinary arts at East Chambers High School. She lives in Winnie.

Brammer, Begnaud & Lattimore promoted **Melissa (Hill) Lundberg** '11, B.B.A. accounting, to partner. She and her husband, Kyle, live in Port Neches.

Congratulations to **Morgan (Jones)** '11, B.B.A. general business, '18, M.Ed. administration, and **Austin Miller** '12, B.S. mechanical engineering, '20, M.B.A. business administration, on the birth of their daughter, Addison Grace, Oct. 17, 2022. Morgan and Austin own Leo Weeks Photography, and they live in Port Neches.

William Paul Jr. '11, M.Ed. administration, is superintendent of White Oak school district. He and his wife, **RaKel (Rink)** '14, M.Ed. administration, live in Scotland, Texas.

Port Arthur school district named **Katie (Rich)** '11, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year at Staff Sgt. Lucian Adams Elementary School, where she teaches kindergarten. She and her husband, **Bryan Porter** '07, live in Nederland.

Tracie Rand '11, M.Ed. administration, is elementary curriculum director for Lindale school district. She lives in Lindale.

Linda Rankin '11, M.Ed. administration, '22, Ed.D. educational leadership, is superintendent of Miller Grove school district. She lives in Dike.

Ashlynn (LaLonde) Sanchez '11, B.S. communication, is a business development representative at Mobiloil Credit Union. She lives with her husband, Matthew, and daughter, Sienna, born April 24, 2022, in Beaumont.

The Neches Federal Credit Union promoted **Lisa (Laurie) Smith** '11, B.B.A. economics, B.B.A. finance, to human resources supervisor. She and her husband, **Shaun Smith** '12, B.M. music, live in Lumberton.

Congratulations to **Jessica (Brown)** '11, B.B.A. management, '12, M.B.A. business administration, and **John Sutton** '12, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, on the birth of their daughter, Lydia Sherwood, May 9, 2023. Jessica is recruitment operations manager at Outsource, and they live in Houston.

Terry (Echels) Thibodeaux '11, B.A.A.S. applied arts and science, retired from Port Arthur school district as a pre-k teacher for six years at Travis Elementary School. She and her husband, James, live in Groves.

Amy (Bernard) Crew '12, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, earned master's degrees in criminology, educational administration, and curriculum and instruction and is the special education administrator and ARD facilitator for Vidor school district. She and her husband, Ellison, live in Orange.

Congratulations to **Sharita Gardner** '12, B.S. communication, for receiving the Young Emerging Leaders Rising Star award from the Greater Port Arthur Chamber of Commerce. She is the public affairs and communications manager for the Port of Port Arthur and lives in Beaumont.

Melvin Getwood '12, Ed.D. educational leadership, is assistant superintendent for programs and post-secondary education at Port Arthur school district. He and his wife, Yolanda, live in Port Arthur.

Brittany Johnson '12, B.S. kinesiology, '17, M.Ed. special education, married **Major Goldman** '99, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, March 2, 2023. Brittany teaches physical education at Staff Sgt. Lucian Adams Elementary School, and they live in Beaumont.

Adrienne (Davis) Lott '12, M.Ed. counseling and development, is director of communication services for Port Arthur school district. She and her husband, Terence, live in Port Arthur.

Lan (Nguyen) Lee '12, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, teaches kindergarten at Hillcrest Elementary School in Nederland school district, where she and her husband, Christopher, live.

Matthew McGuiness '12, B.B.A. management information systems, is business intelligence manager at Buckland. He lives in Katy.

Renee Miller '12, M.Ed. administration, is principal of Creekside Park Junior High. She lives in Tomball.

Congratulations to **Madison (Davis)** '12, B.A. political science, B.A. history, and Lane Morrison on the birth of their daughter, Libby Ruth, Jan. 31. Madison earned a law degree in 2015 and is staff attorney at the Court of Appeals First District of Texas. They live in Kingwood.

Amy Pinnt '12, B.S. family and consumer sciences-nutrition, dietetic, hospitality, '16, M.S. health promotion, is director of economic development at the Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce. She lives in Nederland.

Michael Rose '12, B.M. music, married Teri Duhon March 14. He is band director for Orangefield Junior High School, and they live in Nederland.

Congratulations to **Le'Toria (Webb)** '12, B.S. psychology, '20, M.Ed. clinical mental health counseling, and **Treyvon Trahan** '15, B.A. history, on the birth of their son, Nehemiah Joseph, Dec. 19, 2022. They live in Beaumont.

Congratulations to **Kathryn (Vincent)** '12, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, and Jason Tucker on the birth of their son, Miles Henry Feb. 7. She earned her master's degree in library science in 2016, and they live in Cypress.

Rosaland (Richards) Turner '12, received the Lemon Grove School District Administrator of the Year Award as principal of Monterey Heights Steam

Academy. She is also a licensed realtor with Keller Williams Realty and lives in Chula Vista, Calif., with her husband, Webster.

The Beaumont Police Department promoted **Onafre Tyler** '12, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, '13, M.S. criminal justice, to captain. His wife, **Nichole (Pierre)** '13, B.S. nursing, who earned her family nurse practitioner master's degree in 2018, is a nurse practitioner with Elite Women's Healthcare, and they live in Beaumont.

Sherry Wells '12, Ed.D. educational leadership, retired as assistant vice provost for Lamar University after 31 years in higher education. She lives in Port Neches.

JoEllen (Locke) Wheeler '12, B.B.A. finance, B.B.A. economics, is vice president of credit administration with First Security Bank in Beaumont. She and her husband, Jonathan, live in Humble.

Elliot Abbey '13, B.B.A. general business, earned his master of jurisprudence degree in 2023. Abbey is tribal realty director for the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas and owns Pine Needle Work by ERA. He and his wife, Emma, live in Livingston.

Congratulations to **Aleiya (Samad)** '13, B.S. chemical engineering, and Andrew Bartlett on the birth of their daughter, Amelia, Jan. 23. Aleiya is a project engineer for Chevron Phillips Chemical Co. They live in Humble.

The Beaumont Police Department promoted **Trey Billingsley** '13, B.S. criminal justice, to sergeant. He lives in Beaumont.



Once a Cardinal, Always a Cardinal!

We love hearing stories of when our Cardinals serendipitously meet. Clinton McNair '07, doctoral student at University of Oklahoma; Periloux Peay '08, assistant professor of political science, Georgia State University; Alisa Hicklin-Fryar '02, associate professor of political science, University of Oklahoma; and Danny Chand '02, assistant professor of political science, Kent State University, recently reconnected at the Midwest Political Science Association Conference in Chicago April 13.

Thomson Reuters Super Lawyers voted **Garrett Brawley** '13, B.S. political science, who earned his law degree in 2016, a 2023 Texas Rising Star. He is an associate and trial attorney with Beck Redden and lives with his wife, Maranne, in Houston.

Rod Carroll '13, M.P.A. public administration, who earned his master's degree in criminal justice in 2015, is president of the Lamar Institute of Technology Foundation Board and chief of the Vidor Police Department. He and his wife, Kate, live in Beaumont.

Tania Castelan '13, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, opened a second location for her business, DAR Event Studio. She is a real estate agent with Connect Realty and received the firm's President's Club Award of the Year 2022-Platinum. She lives in Beaumont.

Lindsey Castille '13, B.B.A. accounting, is chief financial officer of First Security Bank in Beaumont. She lives in Groves.

MJ Daffue '13, B.G.S. general studies, qualified for his first US Open on the PGA Tour, where he is a professional golfer. He and his wife, **Kamila (Badeaux)** '13, B.S. speech and hearing sciences, live in Kingwood.

Armando Guerrero Estrada '13, B.A. Spanish, who is pursuing a Ph.D. in theology and education, received the Sacred Writes: Public Scholarship on Religion. He lives in Massachusetts.

LaDwina Flegeance '13, M.Ed. administration, published her book *"She's Bearing All Fruits: One Housewife's Journey to Find an Abundant Life Through Love, Self-Empowerment, and Faith."* Flegeance is the CEO of Flegeance Insurance Agency and founder of Fruits of HER Labor. She lives in Katy.

Congratulations to **Quentin Jiles** '13, B.S.W. social work, who earned his master's degree in social work in 2014, and his wife, Vanessa, on the birth of their daughter, Alayah Pearl, Aug. 31, 2022. Quentin is the CEO of Just Jiles Productions, and they live in Houston.

Rezvan Khoshlessan '13, Ed.D. educational leadership, is director of student activities at Lamar State College-Port Arthur. She lives in Beaumont.

Kalis Loyd '13, B.B.A. general business, B.B.A. management, B.B.A. entrepreneurship, retired from basketball. She has played in France with five different teams, in Spain and in Italy.

Brittany Parsels '13, B.S.W. social work, who earned her master's degree in social work in 2016, earned her Ph.D. in social work in 2023. She is a licensed clinical social worker at Legacy Community Health and lives in Beaumont.

Heather (Hiser) Reid '13, M.Ed. teacher leadership, is principal of Anderson Elementary in Lufkin school district. She and her husband, Brad, live in College Station.

Alyssa Rutty '13, B.S.W. social work, owns My Little Mercantile. She and her husband, Josh, live in Woodville.

Congratulations to **Dana Seymour** '13, B.G.S. general studies, on her adoption of Sierra and Braeden. She teaches at Port Acres Elementary School, and they live in Nederland.

Samon Tahir '13, B.B.A. human resource management, '15, M.B.A. business administration, founded The IG Rishta Auntie, a match making service. Tahir is a talent acquisition sourcer for Rimkus Consulting Group and owns Digital Couture Marketing Agency. She and her husband, Hammad, live in Katy.

Congratulations to **Lisa Topping** '13, B.S. psychology, '15, M.S. applied psychology, and her wife, Caleigh, on the birth of their daughter, Scarlett Ivy, April 5. She is business intelligence manager for EFL Trust, and they live in Leyland, Lancashire.

Christine Zabala '13, B.A. English, B.A. history, who earned her master's degree in literature in 2015 and her Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction in 2021, married Mike Eishofer March 18, 2023. Christine is a professor at the University of Iowa, and they live in Iowa City, Iowa.

Port Arthur school district named **Jada (Edwards) Botley** '14, B.S. biology, 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year at Booker T. Washington Elementary School, where she teaches first grade. She and her husband, **Darlin Botley** '12, B.S. health education, who is a pharmacy technician for Walgreens, live in Port Arthur.

Congratulations to **Ana (Montoya) Bottensek** '14, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, and her husband, Casey, on the birth of their daughter, Sophie Eliana, March 7, 2023. They live in Katy.

Emily Bourg '14, B.S. environmental science, and **Colton Wright** '20, B.M. music performance, '23, M.M. music, were married May 21. She is an environmental investigator with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. They live in Nederland.

Equifax Workforce Solutions promoted **Danielle (Sonier) Breland** '14, B.S. family and consumer science-nutrition, dietetics and hospitality, to client relations manager. She and her husband, Cameron, live in Katy.

Candye Carter '14, B.G.S. general studies, is assistant softball coach at Lake Creek High School. She lives in Montgomery.

Lance Carter '14, M.Ed. administration, is executive athletic director of Katy school district. He and his wife, **Jennifer** '11, M.Ed. administration, live in Houston.

Hallie (Baker) Clark '14, B.B.A. finance, is a technical buyer for BASF TOTAL Petrochemicals. She and her husband, Ricky, live in Nederland.

The Neches Federal Credit Union promoted **Jacob Devillier** '14, B.B.A. management, to vice president of member services. He lives in Port Neches.

Lachelle (Lavalais) Edwards '14, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, earned her master's degree in education and is activities director at Memorial High School in Port Arthur school district, where she and her husband, Jacoby, live.

Bridge City school district named **Jennifer (Spangle) Fall** '14, B.G.S. general studies, 2023 Elementary School Teacher of the Year. She lives in Orange.

Chapel Hill school district named **Loni (Lilley) Gaither** '14, B.S. graphic design, 2023 Chapel Hill High School Newcomer Teacher of the Year. She and her husband, **Matthew** '21, B.S. exercise science and fitness management live in Emory.

Lauren Harpe '14, B.S. health education, '21, M.Ed. special education, competed in Survivor 44, finishing in fifth place, which aired March 1, 2023, on CBS. She teaches fourth grade at Barbers Hill Intermediate School South, has two sons and lives in Baytown.

Congratulations to **Taylor (Miller) Henderson** '14, M.B.A. business administration, and her husband, Jason, on the birth of their son, Nathaniel Perry, Jan. 20, 2023. Taylor is a career advisor and lecturer at Texas A&M University, and they live in College Station.

Holly Imhoff '14, B.S. nursing, earned her family nurse practitioner master's degree in 2022. She is a patient care assistant at Christus Health Foundation of Southeast Texas and lives in Port Neches.

Sarah Irwin '14, B.S. political science, '16, M.P.A. public administration, who earned her law degree in 2019, is associate attorney with Clausewitz Reyes Attorneys at Law and a board member of Emerge and Rise. She and her wife, **Alora Berry** '13, B.S. communication disorders, who is co-founder and dog trainer for Lead the Way K9 Training, live in New Braunfels.

Taylor Jaynes '14, B.S. nursing, is a flight nurse with Southeast Texas Air Rescue. She lives in Orange.

William Jones '14, B.S. graphic design, owns Puzzles of Color, which was selected as a semi-finalist for the Fifteen Percent Pledge Achievement Award. He lives in Sachse.

Iriel Kelley '14, B.S. health education, who earned her master's degree in comparative and global education in 2017, married Justin Leggett Dec. 10, 2022. They live in College Station.

Bradley Kinney '14, M.Ed. administration, is principal of Blanco High School. He lives in Helotes.

Congratulations to **Alycia (Ulrich) Konvicka** '14, B.S. graphic design, and

her husband, **Wade Konvicka** '14, B.G.S. general studies, on the birth of their son, Kohen, April 23, 2023. They live in Richmond.

Beaumont school district named **Melissa Martinez** '14, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year at Sallie Curtis Elementary School. She lives in Beaumont.

Keri (Grozier) Reeves '14, B.S. nursing, is emergency services and education director at the Medical Center of Southeast Texas and president of the Golden Triangle Emergency Nurses Association. She and her husband, Bruce, live in Nederland.

Ashlyn (Lalonde) Sanderson '14, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, teaches second grade at Sour Lake Elementary School. She and her husband, Kevin, live in Sour Lake.

Congratulations to **Brittany (Veazey)** '14, B.S. speech and hearing sciences, '16, M.S. speech-language pathology, and **Kyler Segura** '14, B.S. kinesiology, on the birth of their son, Nolan James,

Allie Smith '14, B.S. mechanical engineering, was named Philpott Ford Teacher of the Year. Smith teaches engineering, robotics and career and technical education at Nederland High School and co-owns Two Southern Wildflowers Events. She lives in Nederland.

The National PanHellenic Council-Golden Triangle honored **Dr. James Snodgrass II** '14, B.S. nursing, who earned his doctorate of nursing practice in 2020, for his government service at the 2023 Men's and Women's Day Program. He is fire captain for the city of Port Arthur, and his wife, **Michelle (Williams)** '02, who earned her master's degree in education in 2010 and her Ph.D. in education in 2015, is monitoring review consultant for Danya International and adjunct instructor at Grand Canyon University. They live in Port Arthur.

Lindsey Sorrell '14, B.S. speech and hearing sciences, '16, M.S. speech-language pathology, is a speech language pathologist at 212 Therapy and as a PRN at Buckner Calder Woods. She lives in Beaumont.

Christopher Streeper '14, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, teaches at Lutheran East High School. He and his wife, Vauna, live in Spencer, Ohio.

Congratulations to **Brooke (Crowell)** '14, B.S. speech and hearing sciences, '16, M.S. speech-language pathology, and **Stephen Tanton** '19, B.S. chemistry, B.S. mechanical engineering, on the birth of their son, Andrew Glen, May 19. She is a speech-language pathologist with Kountze school district, and they live in Lumberton.

Shaun Thompson '14, M.Ed. school counseling, is dean of college prep at Uplift Education-Hampton High School in Dallas. He lives in Mansfield.

CLASS NOTES

Port Arthur school district named **Taylor Ward** '14, B.S. communication, who earned her master's degree in curriculum and instruction in 2019, 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year at DeQueen Elementary School. She lives in Beaumont.

Sharee Alston '15, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, '21, M.P.H. public health, teaches social studies at Bob Hope Middle School. She lives in Port Arthur.

Tracey Bell '15, M.Ed. school counseling, is superintendent of Hedley school district and lives in Vega.

Bailey (Goins) Blanchard '15, B.G.S. general studies, is an executive assistant with First Security Bank in Beaumont where she and her husband, **Michael** '11, B.B.A. general business-industrial engineering, live.

Congratulations to **Breia (Easley) Byley** -15 and her husband, Luke, on the birth of their daughter, Austin James, Dec. 27, 2022. Breia is a front desk receptionist and veterinarian assistant for EasTex Veterinary Clinic, and they live in Temple.

Aaron Chang '15, B.S. theatre, earned his master of fine arts in technical direction in 2023. He lives in Memphis, Tenn.

Doug Curry '15, B.S. nursing, is a registered nurse with Baptist Hospitals of Southeast Texas and recently spoke to the Lamar University Texas Nursing Student Association. He and his wife, **Morgan (Hodge)** '14, B.S. nursing, who is also a registered nurse with Baptist Hospitals of Southeast Texas, live in Nederland.

Fourth-grade mathematics and science teacher at Helena Park Elementary School **Jenna (Burnaman) Dean** '15, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '20, M.Ed. administration, received the Milken Educator Award Feb. 9. Recipients of this award are acknowledged for furthering excellence in education and given a \$25,000 unrestricted cash award. As one of 40 recipients nationwide, Dean is the first recipient from Nederland school district, where she and her husband, Joshua, live.

Hillary (Haynes) Gravett '15, B.B.A. marketing, is assistant economic development director for the City of Orange, where she and her husband, Greg, live.

The Neches Federal Credit Union promoted **Megan (Ogden)** '15, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, to business and community development supervisor. She and her husband, **Alan Hanks** '18, B.B.A. management information systems, live in Port Neches.

Tara Haworth '15, M.Ed. administration, is principal of Tays Junior High in Katy school district. She lives in Richmond.



Jeff Spoeri, associate vice president for university advancement with speakers Matt Kelleher, Kasey (Pattillo) Taylor '08, '15, Rebekah Maxwell '11 and Daylyn Turner '07.

Mentoring Matters

LU partnered with the Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce to put on a professional development event for alumni and area business professionals called Mentoring Matters July 20. Matt Kelleher, executive manager of Mike Smith Nissan, delivered the keynote, and panelists were Rebekah Maxwell '11, Kasey (Pattillo) Taylor '08, '15, and Daylyn Turner '07.



Dana Johnson, Personna Jones and Hetty (Green) Brown '79



Alesha Wells, Personna Jones, Gwendolyn (Johnson) Lacy '72, Hetty (Green) Brown '79 and Josh Davis '11, '15, '19



Stephanie Roberts, Nate Jennings, Ashley Washburn, Nicole Kyles-Burton '17, '19, '22, and LU Ambassador Jacob Smith



Lachelle (Lavalais) Edwards '14 and Susan Jackson



Josh Smith '06, Amy (Babineaux) Tarver '99 and Nate Jennings



Stephanie Roberts, Chris Partin and Sidnee Lewis

Floyd Hollins '15, B.B.A. human resource management, is lead business analyst at Energy Harbor. He lives in Houston.

Sandra Hughes '15, M.Ed. teacher leadership, is the president of Texas Chiropractic College. She lives in Pasadena, Texas.

Port Arthur school district named **Rayven Jefferson** '15, B.S. mathematics, 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year at Lincoln Middle School, where she teaches seventh and eighth grade math. She lives in Beaumont.

Dr. Kollin Kahler '15, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, earned his M.D. in 2023. He lives in Waco.

Congratulations to **Kelsey (Patrick)** '15, B.S. family and consumer sciences—nutrition, dietetic, hospitality, and **Dalton Locklear** '18, M.S. mechanical engineering, on the birth of their daughter, Claire Adeline, April 20. Kelsey is territory manager for Ayto BioScience, and Dalton is a mechanical engineer with Entegris. They live in Cedar Park.

Lauren (Stafford) Richardson '15, B.S. biology, earned a Ph.D. in cell biology and anatomy and is an assistant professor and director of the Tissue Engineering and Micro Physiology Lab at the University of Texas Medical Branch. She and her husband, Alex, live in Winnie.

Congratulations to **Hayley Rodriguez** '15, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '18, M.Ed. teacher leadership, and her fiancé, Jose Melecio, on the birth of their son, Ethan Joseph, February 26, 2023. They live in Universal City.

Kaila Spoonemore '15, B.M. music, '17, M.M. music, married Anthony Jackson Jan. 14, 2023. Kaila is the assistant band director at Bear Branch Junior High, and they live in Magnolia.

Anna (Bedford) Stanley '15, B.S. graphic design, is administrative assistant to the communications and community relations directors at Lamar Consolidated school district. She and her husband, **Reagan Stanley** '13, B.B.A. general business, B.B.A. management, live in Rosenberg.

Courtney (Laughlin) Stokley '15, B.S. biology, earned a master's degree in physician assistant studies and is a physician assistant in internal medicine for Christus Health Foundation of Southeast Texas. She and her husband, **Jordan** '14, B.S. political science, B.S. criminal justice, who is the boys athletics and physical education coach at St. Anne Catholic School, live in Beaumont.

Latoya Taylor '15, M.Ed. administration, is principal of W.B. Bizzell Academy and the Disciplinary Alternative Education Program and is also head volleyball coach in Navasota school district. She lives in Kyle.

Tammy Woosley '15, Ed.D. educational leadership, is director of programs and accountability for Conway Public school district. She lives in Conway, Ark.

Alvin school district named **Aja Baise** '16, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '19, M.Ed. administration, Teacher of the Year for 2022-2023. She teaches third grade at Glenn York Elementary School and lives in Pearland.

Robyn (Winkle) Burdette '16, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, is associate dean of student services at Lamar State College Orange and will be site administrator for Lamar State College Orange—Lumberton set to open this fall. She and her husband, **Christopher** '15, B.S. kinesiology, who is and teacher and coach with C.O. Wilson Middle School in Nederland school district, live in Groves.

Lance Campbell '16, Ed.D. educational leadership, is superintendent of Prairie Grove School District. He lives in Prairie Grove, Ark.

Pristine Carpio '16, B.B.A. management information systems, married J.T. Ramirez May 20. She is a trust associate with Westwood Holdings Group, and they live in Houston.

Devyn Coleman '16, B.B.A. management information systems, is band manager at Nabors Industries. She lives in Conroe.

Congratulations to **Maegan Collins** '16, B.S. political science, '18, M.P.A. public administration, '23, Ed.D. educational leadership, for earning her doctorate in education from LU. She is an instructor in the Department of Political Science at LU and lives in Nederland.

Port Arthur school district named **Dayna Cormier** '16, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '20, M.Ed. administration, 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year at Tyrrell Elementary School, where she teaches third grade math. She lives in Beaumont.

Hannah DeRouen '16, B.S. psychology, married **Spencer Shipman** '17, M.S. applied psychology, Dec. 31, 2022. They live in Little Elm.

Jakeb Goff '16, M.Ed. educational technology leadership, is principal of Redwater Intermediate School. He lives in Texarkana.

Congratulations to **Jocelyn (Causer) Hastings** '16, B.S. nursing, and her husband, Vincent, on the birth of her daughter, Riverlynn Reign, April 3. She earned her master's degree in nursing—psychiatric and mental health and is a nurse practitioner with Rio Vista Behavioral Health. They live in El Paso.

Eric Albaro Hernandez '16, B.S. psychology, is an instructor and lecturer in the Department of Psychology at the University of Alabama. He lives in Tuscaloosa.

Beaumont school district named **Vanessa Hernandez-Iglesias** '16, B.A.

modern languages, the 2023 Teacher of the Year at Caldwell Elementary School. She lives in Beaumont.

Courtney Jackson '16, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, '18, M.P.H. public health, is assistant director of health education at Lamar University. She lives in Orange.

Rickie Leck '16, M.Ed. administration, is executive director of safety and security for Cleburne school district, where he lives.

April (Howlett) Luquette '16, B.S. nursing, earned her M.S. degree in nursing in 2023. She and her husband, Cody, live in Port Neches.

Congratulations to **Caitlyn (Champagne)** '16, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, and Austin Odom on the birth of their daughter, Adley Elizabeth, May 24. Caitlyn teaches fourth grade math and science at Tom Wilson Elementary School in Katy school district, where they live.

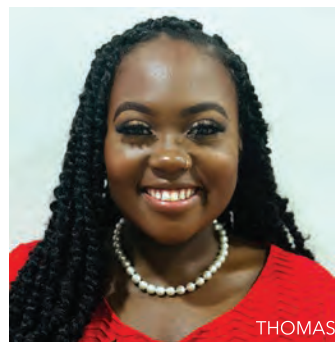
The Young Emerging Leaders of Port Arthur granted **Kristeen Reynolds** '16, B.B.A. accounting, '17, M.S. accounting, the "Heavy Hitter" Award. She is the co-founder and CFO of DrinkKicks and lives in Port Arthur.

LaTasha Richard '16, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, who earned her master's degree in healthcare administration in 2019, earned her M.B.A. degree in business management Dec. 16, 2022. She lives in Dallas.

Michael Slaughter '16, M.Ed. educational technology and leadership, is assistant principal of Princeton High School, an ordained minister and serves on the Texas School Safety Center Board. He lives in Wylie.

Tyler Sumrall '16, B.S. communication, is senior external communications specialist at Honeywell. He and his wife, **Morgan (Leblanc)** '17, B.S. nursing, who is a nurse at Texas Children's Hospital, live in Houston.

Vidor school district named Algebra 1 teacher **Joshua Tauzin** '16, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, 2023 Secondary Teacher of the Year. He lives in Vidor.



Aliyah Thomas '16, B.S. communication, is the volunteer and community engagement coordinator for

DePelchin Children's Center. She lives in Missouri City.

Vidor Elementary School honored **Maegan White** '16, B.A. English, '18, M.A. English, '21, M.B.A. business administration, with the 2022-2023 Rising Star Award. She lives in Vidor.

Bruce Wright '16, B.S. communication, is media services manager at Lamar University. He and his wife, **Megan (Croaker)** '16, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, who teaches first grade at Mauriceville Elementary School, live in Bridge City.

Congratulations to **Melanie (Bransford) Ayala** '17, B.B.A. accounting, '19, M.S. accounting, and her husband, Jesus, on the birth of their twin sons Jan. 25, 2023. They live in Beaumont.

Congratulations to **Naelyn (Mills) Carruth** '17, B.S. nursing, on earning her family nurse practitioner master's degree May 5. She is a nurse with Medical City Healthcare, and she and her husband, Bryant, live in Fort Worth.

Macy (Morehead) Daimler '17, B.S. nursing, earned her master of science degree in nursing in 2023. She is a NICU nurse at Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital and lives with her husband, Christian, in Anahuac.

(Davis) Dantin '17, B.S. nursing, is an emergency room registered nurse at Christus St. Elizabeth Hospital and president-elect of the Golden Triangle Emergency Nurses Association. She and her husband, Adam, live in Groves.

Madison Floyd '17, B.S. civil engineering, is deputy public works director for the city of Orange. She lives in Port Neches.

AVIO Consulting promoted **Timothy Gonzales** '17, B.S. computer science, to software architect. He lives in Lewisville.

Congratulations to **Braye Hardy** '17, B.G.S. general studies, on the purchase of her new home. She works for Fidelity Investments and lives in Allen.

Jennifer Jung '17, M.Ed. school counseling, earned her doctorate in education and is principal of Washington Elementary School in Jamestown, N.D. She and her husband, Greg, live in Dickinson, N.D.

The National Sports Media Association recognized former LUTV sports anchor and current sports anchor and reporter for WWL-TV Channel 4 in New Orleans **Brooke Kirchhofer** '17, B.S. communication—broadcasting, with the "Louisiana Sportscaster of the Year" award Jan. 9.

Kelsey (Burt) Love '17, B.S. speech and hearing sciences, '19, M.S. speech-language pathology, is a speech-language pathologist with Groves Intermediate School. She and her husband, Cameron, live in Port Arthur.

Marisol Lua-Figueroa '17, B.F.A. graphic design, is art director at Noodle

and is a freelance graphic designer with her own studio, Marisol Lua Design. She lives in Houston.

The Southeast Texas Coaches Association named **Aaron Manous** '17, M.Ed. administration, a 2022 Coach of the Year. He coaches boys power lifting for Lumberton High School and lives in Kountze.

Demetrius McCall '17, Ed.D. educational leadership, is superintendent of Sheldon school district. He and his wife, Candice, live in Humble.



Alexis Prudhomme '17, M.Ed. administration, '20, M.Ed. special education, is principal of Cornerstone Elementary School in Fort Bend school district. She and her husband, **Reggie** '17, M.Ed. school counseling, '20, M.Ed. administration, live in Missouri City.

Congratulations to **Jessica Rodgers** '17, B.S. nursing, and **Marcus Rodgers** '20, B.S. mechanical engineering, on the birth of their son, Lucas Robert-Lynn, April 28, 2023. Marcus is an aerospace engineer for NASA, and they live in Dickinson.

Lauren Rogers '17, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, who earned her doctor of chiropractic degree in 2021, married **Stephen Stewart** '18, who earned his doctor of chiropractic degree in 2021, Jan. 7, 2023. They live in Port Neches.

Congratulations to **Alyssa (Wood)** '17, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, and **Bradley Sorrell** '17, B.B.A. management, on the birth of their son, Collin James, May 11, 2023. They live in Kountze.

Congratulations to **Lauren Swisher** '17, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, and **Guy Sanford** '19, B.A.A.S. biology, on the birth of their son, Wesley James, March 30. Lauren is a photographer with Emily Michelle Photography + Film. They live in Lumberton.

Artur Tkachev '17, B.S. chemical engineering, is marketing communications manager for InDevr Inc. He and his wife, **Kaylynn (Thomas)** '15, B.M. music, who is a client success associate at Charity Footprints, live in Denver, Colo.

Kinney (Mitchell) VanDevender '17, B.S. psychology, '22, M.Ed. counseling

and development, passed her LPC exam. She is a qualified mental health professional for the Spindletop Center and lives with her husband, Julian, in Vidor.

The Texas Association of College and University Student Personnel Administrators appointed **Michael Wilkinson** '17, Ed.D. educational leadership, as vice president of education and research. He is senior director of the Student Services and Judicial Affairs Department at the University of Houston-Victoria. He and his wife, Rais'a, live in Victoria.

Congratulations to **Bekah (Wells)** '17, B.S. communication-corporate, '21, M.B.A. business administration, and **Adrian Woodard** '18, B.M. music education, on the birth of their daughter. Adrian is assistant director of bands for Magnolia High School, and Bekah is an admissions counselor for the University of Alabama at Birmingham. They live in New Caney.

Gregory Bower '18, Ed.D. educational leadership, published *A Man Reborn: A Jesse Coldtharp Western*, a novel about a man finding friendship and love during his life's journey. He is superintendent of Como-Pickton school district and lives in Big Sandy.

Brammer, Begnaud & Lattimore promoted **Rachel Brammer** '18, B.B.A. accounting, to partner. She lives in Groves.

Brooke Chilla '18, B.S. political science, is a lawyer and public defender with the North Dakota Public Defender's Office. She lives in Kulm, N.D.

Ryan Donina '18, B.S. environmental science, is environmental professional at Marathon Oil Corp. He lives in Houston.

Blake Fuller '18, M.Ed. administration, is principal of Ward Elementary School. He lives in Abilene.

Jennifer Gibson '18, M.Ed. educational technology leadership, is manager of financial operations for Pleasant Grove school district. She and her husband, Joshua, live in Texarkana.

Congratulations to **Krysten (Harvey)** '18, B.G.S. general studies, and Ethan Graves on the birth of their daughter, Laramie Dunn, Feb. 13. Krysten teaches second grade at Hillcrest Elementary School in Nederland school district, where they live.

Congratulations to **Rene Gutierrez** '18, B.S. family and consumer sciences-nutrition, dietetic, hospitality, and his wife, Esli, on the birth of their son, Lucan Daniel, April 4. He is warehouse coordinator for M&I Electric, and they live in Groves.

Lauren Hale '18, B.G.S. general studies, married Lance Louviere March 25, 2023. Lauren teaches eighth grade science at Marshall Middle School, and they live in Beaumont.

Congratulations to **Victoria (Wright)** '18, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences,

and Dillon Hebert on the birth of their daughter Savannah Louise Jan. 31. They live in Port Neches.

Ale (Avila) James '18, B.S. chemical engineering, is an environmental health safety specialist for ONEOK. She and her husband, **Jacob** '14, B.S. physics, B.S. mechanical engineering, who is a mechanical maintenance engineer with LyondellBasell Industries, live in Baytown.

Congratulations to **Jacey (deBretagne)** '18, B.S. communication-corporate, and **Jordan Johnson** '17, B.S. electrical engineering, on the birth of their daughter, Blakely Marie, Jan. 24, 2023. Jacey is senior national accounts coordinator at Apex Systems, and Jordan is senior electrical engineer at Haldor Topsoe Inc. They live in La Marque.

Congratulations to **Callie (Covington)** '18, B.B.A. general business, and **Dylan Knau** '19, B.A. history, M.S. management information systems, M.B.A. business administration, on the birth of their son, Beckham Aaron, Feb. 24. Callie is a proposal coordinator with Resource Environmental Solutions, and Dylan is senior district executive of Texas Skies District with Boy Scouts of America. They live in Sugar Land.

Brian Lilly '18, M.Ed. administration, is head football coach for James Lawson High School, Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools. He lives in Nashville.

Hannah LeTulle '18, B.S. communication-corporate, is director of communications at the Lamar Institute of Technology. She lives in Groves.

Congratulations to **Danielle (Wiggins)** '18, B.S. family and consumer science-nutrition, dietetics and hospitality, and **Jonathan May** '13, B.S. communication, on the birth of their daughter, Abigail Marie, Dec. 31, 2022. Danielle is an office associate with Bette H. Davidson State Farm, and Jonathan is senior creative designer for Broussard's Print Shop. They live in Port Neches.

Congratulations to **Shaina (Escobedo-Milan)** '18, M.B.A. marketing, and **Austin Milan** '18, B.B.A. accounting, '20, M.B.A. business administration, on the birth of their son, Malachi James, Feb. 21. She is marketing manager with the University of Houston, and Austin is a global technology analyst with ExxonMobil Corp. They live in Spring.

Torey Noel '18, B.G.S. general studies, is head boys basketball coach at Midwest City High School in Mid-Del school district. He lives in Oklahoma City.

Carly Olliff '18, B.S. communication-advertising, '21, M.B.A. business administration, is an employee benefits enrollment specialist for Cadence Insurance. She lives in Houston.

Kender (Myers) Prejean '18, B.B.A. accounting, '20, M.S. accounting, is corporate accounting analyst at RNWBL. She and her husband, Matthew, live in Houston.

Dominique Taylor '18, B.G.S. general studies, earned her doctor of chiropractic degree in 2023. She lives in Missouri City, Texas.

Congratulations to **Kamryn (McMillian)** '18, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, and **Aaron Uribe** '20, B.S. mechanical engineering, on the birth of their second Cardinal, John Thomas Aaron, Feb. 9. Kamryn teaches fourth-grade science and social studies in Beaumont, and they live in Beaumont.

Haili Villa '18, B.B.A. marketing, owns TWFG Insurance Agency in Groves. She and her husband, Arturo, live in Nederland.

Syed Ali '19, B.B.A. economics, B.B.A. finance, '22, M.B.A. business administration, M.S. management information systems, is technology risk consultant at EY. He lives in Vidor.

Seamless.AI promoted **Shelby (Bickham) Curl** '19, B.S. criminal justice, to culture and talent associate. She and her husband, **Jordan Curl** '20, B.S. biology, live in Lubbock.

Congratulations to **Aaron Desmond** '19, B.S. chemical engineering, and his wife, Morgan, on the birth of their daughter, Sadie. Aaron is an engineer for Dow Chemical Co., and they live in Groves.

Beaumont school district named **Zion Diggles** '19, B.S. communication-broadcasting, 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year at Vincent Middle School. He lives in Beaumont.

Sakurah Fisher '19, B.A. psychology, earned her master's degree in international peace and security in 2019 and is youth and families development promoter for the Peace Corps.

Amanda (Grund) Hollins '19, B.S. criminal justice, is vice president of operations for non-profit organization Cars for Kids. She lives in Arlington.

William Holman '19, B.S. political science, is an associate attorney with Sloan Firm. He and his wife, **Kimberly (Suire)** '18, B.B.A. general business, B.B.A. management, live in Longview.

Nicholas McIntosh '19, M.Ed. administration, is head baseball coach of the Statesboro High School Blue Devils. He and his wife, Amy, live in Guyton, Ga.

Congratulations to **Baylee (Burt)** '19, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, and Brendan McRae on the birth of their daughter, Macy Mae, April 25, 2023. They live in Orange.

Krysta Quiambao '19, B.S. theatre and dance, earned an M.F.A. in dance in May. She lives in El Paso.

Connor Raborn '19, B.S. political science, earned her law degree May 13. She lives in Houston.

Ashiqur Rahman '19, Ph.D. chemical engineering, is an engineering specialist with the Pennsylvania Department of

Environmental Protection and recently published his 25th peer-reviewed scientific article. He and his wife, Reshmi, live in Harrisburg, Penn.

Congratulations to **Karlee (Weaver)** '19, B.S. speech and hearing sciences, '21, M.S. speech-language pathology, and Dylan Richards on the birth of their son, Sullivan Jay, April 25. She is a speech-language pathologist with Christus Southeast Texas Health System. They live in Lumberton.

Congratulations to **Cheyenne (Ross) Shell** '19, B.S. chemical engineering, and her husband, Chad, on the birth of their daughter, Addison Lea, April 13. They live in Vidor.

Kaitlyn Smith '19, B.S. political science, is executive managing editor of Texas Tech Law Review. She lives in Beaumont.

Vidor Elementary School honored **Ciara Tinkle** '19, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, with the 2022-2023 Rising Star Award. She lives in Silsbee.

Thanh Tsan '19, B.S. mechanical engineering, is a senior maintenance engineer with Dow Chemical Co. She lives in Port Neches.

Alex Tso '19, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, earned his master of athletic training degree in 2023. He lives in Houston.

Sarah Vickery '19, B.S. theatre and dance, earned an M.F.A. in dance in May. She lives in Huntsville.

Divon (Edwards) Williams '19, B.S. sociology, who earned her master's degree in community development in 2023, is deputy director of planning and community development for the city of Orange. She and her husband, Brian, live in Orange.

Jerry Yamashita '19, M.Ed. digital learning and leading, is senior technical advisor for World Education Inc. He lives in Sacramento, Calif.

20s

Jhocelyn Alvarado '20, B.S. communication-corporate, is prospective marketing specialist at TCS Education System. She lives in Beaumont.

Marilyn Beard '20, B.S. biology, is a lab technician for Indorama Ventures. She lives in Port Arthur.

Congratulations to **Shelby Brashers** '20, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, on her marriage to Brenden Berlinger Feb. 4. She teaches fifth grade at Groves Intermediate School, and they live in Bridge City.

Bailey Broussard '20, B.S. communication-corporate, is a cast member with Disney Cruise Line. She lives in Cape Canaveral.

The Southeast Texas Coaches Association named **Jackie Brown** '20,

M.Ed. administration, a 2022 Coach of the Year. Brown coaches boys soccer for East Chambers High School, where she is also the assistant principal. She lives in Baytown.

The Riley Institute at Furman University selected **Kristina Cannon** '20, M.Ed. administration, to participate in the South Carolina Afterschool Leaders Empowered initiative. She lives in Newberry, S.C.

Lacy Castolenia '20, B.S. sociology, teaches at Silsbee Elementary. She lives in Lumberton.

The 2022 Southeast Texas Cattle Baron's Ball granted **Makenzie (Sattler) Coplen** '20, B.B.A. human resource management, the Shining Star Award. She is human resources manager for G&G Enterprises Construction Corp. and lives with her husband, Caden, in Kountze.

Mackenzie Cumpian '20, B.S. studio art-education, earned her master's degree in museum studies in 2023. She is a studio assistant at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and lives in Long Island City, N.Y.

Vidor school district named third grade teacher **Kira DeVillier** '20, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, 2023 Vidor Elementary School Teacher of the Year. She lives in Vidor.

Brooke Duzan '20, B.S. speech and hearing sciences, '23, M.S. speech-language pathology, married Seth Cox Jan. 7. They live in Sulphur, La.

Congratulations to **Bailey Giffen** '20, B.G.S. general studies, on the birth of his son, Wesley Scott, Feb. 5. They live in Milano.

Alexis Granados '20, B.B.A. finance, B.B.A. economics, is a global corporate and investment banking credit associate at Bank of America. He lives in Dallas.

Shelby Harris '20, B.S. nutrition-dietetics, is industrial relations processor at Bechtel Corp. She lives in Beaumont.

Govin Kaggal '20, B.S. political science, earned his law degree in 2023. He is a research assistant at the University of Alabama and lives in Tuscaloosa, Ala.

Congratulations to **Taylor (Evans)** '20, B.S. nursing, and Grayson LeDoux on the birth of their daughter, Charlotte Hazel, Feb. 9 and the purchase of their new home Oct. 31 in Beaumont.

Brandi (Anderson) Lopez '20, B.S.W. social work, is patient navigator at Baptist Hospitals of Southeast Texas and lives with her husband, Jesus, in Beaumont.

Raegan Minaldi '20, B.S. political science, earned her law degree in 2023. She lives in Beaumont.

Jade Moreau '20, B.S. communication-broadcasting, is a multimedia journalist with KPLC News. She lives in Vidor.



Congratulations to **Beth (Castillo)** '20, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, and **Avery Murdock** '19, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, on their marriage Dec. 31, 2021, and their graduation with honors with their Doctor of Physical Therapy degrees April 24. They live in Groves.

Matt Schuldt '20, B.S. physics, B.S. mathematics, is a systems engineer for Octavo Systems. He lives in Beaumont.

Bayleigh Smith '20, B.S. sociology, is associate director of admissions for Lamar University. She lives in Lumberton.

Vidor school district named life skills teacher **Nicole Spencer** '20, B.G.S. general studies, 2023 Pine Forest Elementary School Teacher of the Year. She lives in Vidor.

Redwater school district named **Jennifer Stacy** '20, M.Ed. administration, 2023 Teacher of the Year. She teaches fourth grade math and lives in Texarkana.

Logan Thompson '20, B.B.A. finance, is an analyst for Aramco Trading Americas. He lives in Houston.

Congratulations to **Brandee Williams** '20, B.S. speech and hearing sciences, and **Jaylan Brown** '21, B.S. communication-advertising, on the birth of their daughter Oaklyn Danielle Feb. 3. Jaylan is a senior field trainer with Financial Education Services Ind. With their eldest daughter, Englyn Emelle, they live in Beaumont.

Carli Woolly '20, B.B.A. marketing, married Kilby Pope May 2, 2023. Carli is a marketing assistant for Streetz Dance Convention and Competition, and they live in Beaumont.

Savion Wright '20, M.S. management information systems, placed fifth on NBC's season 23 of The Voice, Team Blake. He and his life partner, Elissa Pineda, live in Hutto.

Kassidy Adkins '21, B.B.A. general business-construction management, '22, M.B.A. business administration, married **Blake Johnson** '19, B.B.A. general

business, B.B.A. management, March 25, 2023. They live in Buna.

Sam Arthur '21, B.B.A. general business, B.B.A. management, married Landon Prejean April 29, 2023. Sam is human resource generalist for Baptist Hospitals of Southeast Texas, and they live in Beaumont.

Ashtyn (Jones) Barthol '21, B.S. speech and hearing sciences, earned her master of science degree in communication sciences and disorders in 2023. She and her husband, Zachary, live in Port Arthur.

Cammie Canchola '21, B.S.W. social work, earned her master's degree in social work May 11. She lives in Houston.

Patrick Carruth '21, B.S. communication-broadcasting, is digital advertising specialist for U.S. Physical Therapy Inc. He lives in Katy.

Cecilia (Sandoval) Contreras '21, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, teaches English as a second language at Bob Hope High School. She and her husband, Jesus, live in Nederland.

The Cuero school district Education Foundation board has named **Sean Douglas** '21, M.Ed. administration, as executive director of the foundation. He lives in Cuero.

The Better Business Bureau of Southeast Texas promoted **Darren Erwin** '21, B.S. university studies multidisciplinary, who earned his master's degree in business administration in 2022, to president and CEO. He lives in Silsbee.

Margaret Fazio '21, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, married Michael-Jay Evans March 10, 2023. Margaret teaches fifth grade writing and social studies at Hamshire-Fannett Intermediate School and owns Shining Star Embroidery. They live in Beaumont.

Grace Granger '21, B.S. mathematics, '22, M.S. mathematics, teaches dual credit algebra at Bob Hope High School. She lives in Groves.

U.S. Coast Guard graduate **Sean Gros** '21, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, earned a physical therapy degree in May. He lives in Bridge City.

Stephanie (Kirby) Harris '21, M.B.A. healthcare administration, is director of communications and marketing for Baptist Hospital of Southeast Texas. She and her husband, **Joshua** '06, B.S. health and kinesiology, who teaches at Fletcher Elementary School, live in Beaumont.

Nicolas Hernandez '21, B.M. music education, is assistant band director at Cleveland Middle School. He lives in Beaumont.

Engineer and author of *Celeste Saves the City*, **Courtney Kelly** '21, M.B.A. business administration, was recently named an Engineering-News Record Texas and Louisiana 2023 Top Young Professional. She is a project manager with McCarthy Building Companies Inc.

CLASS NOTES

and founder of Courtney Kelly books. She lives in Dallas.

Arvato Supply Chain Solutions promoted **Bhagyashri Khole** '21, M.E.M. engineering management, to digital product manager. She lives in Beaumont.

Emily Lewis '21, B.F.A. studio art-drawing, is administrative coordinator for the Lamar University Department of Art and Design. She and her partner, Michael, live in Vidor.

Congratulations to **Emma (Wheeler)** '21, B.G.S. general studies, and **Layne Miguez** '18, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, on the purchase of their new home in Fannett. Emma teaches seventh and eighth grade English at Hamshire-Fannett Middle School, and Layne is a firefighter with the Port Arthur Fire Department.

Maxwell Mize '21, B.B.A. management, B.B.A. general business, '22, M.B.A. business administration, is baseball operations assistant for PROGRAM 15. He lives in Katy.

Macie Moore '21, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, is head drill team director and dance department instructor at West Brook High School in Beaumont school district. She lives in Orange.

Gilbert Ortega '21, B.S. criminal justice, recently celebrated 25 years with Bryan school district. He is a painter in the Maintenance Department, and he and his wife, Patricia, live in Bryan.

Congratulations to **Kierstyn (James)** '21, B.S. nursing, and Neilbert Pe Benito on their marriage Jan. 27 and their new home in Vidor.

The Golf Coaches Association of America has awarded the \$5,000 2023 Ron Balicki Scholarship to **Carson Racich** '21, B.S. communication-broadcasting, a junior at Florida Gulf Coast, a PGA Golf Management university and tournament director for the PGA Golf Management Program. She lives in Fort Myers.

Anthony Ragan '21, B.S. criminal justice, is deputy director of the Bureau

of Land Management's Office of Law Enforcement and Security. He lives in Penryn, Calif.

Lydia Rosario '21, B.B.A. accounting, married **Jacob Fredieu** '20, B.S. industrial engineering. They live in La Marque.

Port Arthur school district named **Guadalupe (Vargas) Sambrano** '21, B.S. university studies multidisciplinary, 2023-2024 Rookie Teacher of the Year at Tyrrell Elementary School, where she is a first grade bilingual teacher. She lives in Port Arthur.

Stran Saunders '21, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, is the athletic trainer for women's softball at Lamar University. He lives in China.

Desmond Veals '21, B.G.S. general studies, signed a deal as linebacker with the Raptors in Mexico.

Luke Wallis '21, B.B.A. finance, B.B.A. management, '22, M.B.A. business administration, M.S. management information systems, is a financial analyst with Dover Precision Components. He lives in Cypress.

Courtney Willis '21, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, earned her M.S. degree in kinesiology in 2023. She lives in Houston.

Kavya Bhatt '22, M.B.A. business administration, is a business development intern at Republic Finance. She lives in Beaumont.

Jacob Brooks '22, B.S. university studies, teaches physical education at Laura Reeves Primary School in Silsbee school district, where he lives.



CISNEROS

Chelse Cisneros '22, B.B.A. human resource management, married Patrick Morris March 11. They live in Bridge City.

Reginald Coffey II '22, M.S. criminal justice, is judicial administrative assistant to the Chief Judge Anita Josey-Herring for The Superior Court of the District of Columbia. He and his wife, Cassia, live in Manssas, Va.

Faith Dickey '22, B.S.W. social work, is admissions counselor for the Lamar University Office of Admissions. She lives in Katy.



FINLEY

Helena Park Elementary School in Nederland school district named **Katelynn Finley** '22, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, First Year Teacher of the Year. She lives in Groves.

Germer Beaman & Brown promoted **Cameron Hargroder** '22, B.B.A. general business, to administrative clerk. She lives in Groves.

Mykayla Johnson '22, B.S. criminal justice, is an intern with the Disney College Program at Disney World. She lives in Crosby.

Katelyn Long '22, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, teaches second grade at Highlands Elementary School. She lives in Pasadena, Texas.

Meagan Marley '22, B.B.A. general business, married Matthew Goetz March 25, 2023. They live in Beaumont.

Macy (Sourdellia) Medrano '22, M.B.A. business administration, is a registered nurse in nurse management at Houston Methodist Hospital. She and her husband, Alex, live in Houston.

Caleb Parker '22, B.B.A. finance, B.B.A. economics, is a personal banker with PNC. He lives in Sour Lake.

Port Arthur school district named **Kiersten Scott** '22, B.S. university studies multidisciplinary, 2023-2024 Rookie Teacher of the Year at Memorial 9th Grade Academy, where she teaches biology. She lives in Port Arthur.

The Texas Society of Certified Public Accounts granted **Dion Tran** '22, B.B.A. accounting, '23, M.S. accounting, the Accounting Excellence Award. He is the co-founder of K.Creates and lives in Port Arthur.

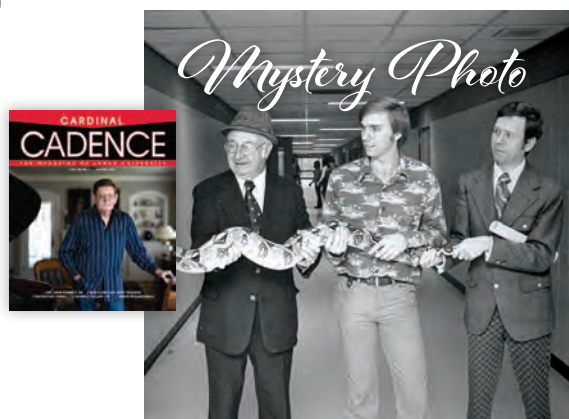
Congratulations to **Tiffany Tran** '22, B.S. biology, for being selected from among 16,000 applicants across the nation as one of 13 Chick-fil-A Community Scholars. She lives in Beaumont.

Port Arthur school district named **Ingra Williams** '22, B.S. university studies multidisciplinary, 2023-2024 Rookie Teacher of the Year at DeQueen Elementary School, where she teaches fourth grade. She lives in Beaumont.

Jacob Wills '22, B.S. university studies multidisciplinary, is vice president of administration at First Security Bank. He and his husband, Bryan, live in Beaumont.

Congratulations to **Amber Wilson** '22, B.S. university studies multidisciplinary, on the purchase of her new home with Zamean in Nederland. She teaches fifth grade at Little Cypress Intermediate.

Timothy Cohrs '23, B.S. communication-journalism, is producer of The Morning Show at KFDM News. He lives in Tomball.

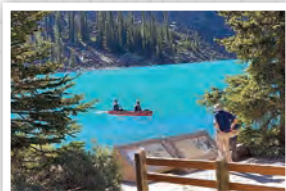
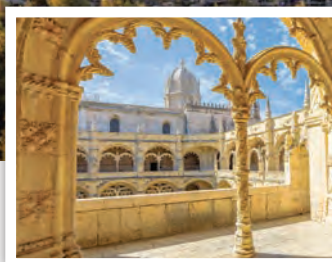


Julius Squeezer needed helping hand

The back cover of *Cadence*, winter 2022, brought back a fond memory to Bill Cox of his late wife Merry (Bradford) '81, B.S. biology, '92, M.S. biology, and her compassionate heart for helping animals. Cox wrote, "My wife told me an interesting story about that snake. She obtained her M.S. in microbiology from LU so she was in the Biology Building quite a lot. As I understand and recall, the snake was kept in some kind of glass display case in a hallway somewhere in the building and normally was given living lab mice on which it could feed. There was a lightbulb hung in the case where the snake could get to for warmth if it wanted. Apparently the snake burned its eyes from the light bulb, so they believed, and couldn't see the mice to catch. So it was not eating, and someone was concerned the snake might starve if something wasn't done. Merry volunteered to force feed the snake living mice and then was able, with forceps, to peel off or remove the scabs that had formed on the snake's eyes, allowing it to again see to catch its own food. This story was substantiated to me at the time by the numerous scratches on Merry's wrist from stuffing the mice down its throat. Plus Merry certainly would have done such a thing without hesitation." And so, thanks to Merry, Julius Squeezer lived a long and healthy life.



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Lamar University leads in state funding formula increase, recognizes collaborative efforts

by Sherri Smith

In a remarkable achievement, Lamar University stands out as a leader among its peers, earning the highest percentage increase in formula funding among all 38 colleges and universities in Texas.

Since becoming LU's president in 2021, Jaime Taylor has made formula funding a central focus in the university's strategic planning. States that use a formula-based funding model allocate funds based on specific published criteria tied to student success or academic program objectives for the state. Taylor views this funding boost as evidence of alignment between the university's goals and the state's vision for higher education.

While Lamar University's performance in meeting these formula metrics played a pivotal role in bringing home more funding, Taylor also noted that the legislature increased the overall formula pool allocation. "This additional funding effectively doubled the percentage increase we would have earned based solely on our institutional performance," Taylor noted, acknowledging Speaker of the House Dade Phelan's leadership in securing this crucial additional support.

Taylor's extensive executive-level experience at universities with complex funding structures and his in-depth understanding of formula-based funding inform his overall approach. "Funding formulas really mean more predictable state allocations, which enables us to take calculated risks in upgrading our technology and infrastructure or keeping tuition costs under control," Taylor said. "This stability will allow us to make meaningful lasting improvements that serve both students and the community." Mark Robinson, LU's chief financial officer, also emphasized the impact of increased funding on the university's financial stability and success. "This infusion of resources will enhance our financial reserves and offer more flexibility to pursue innovative financial strategies that align with our mission," Robinson said.

Taylor attributes Lamar University's success during the legislative session to its commitment to producing graduates in professional programs that meet the needs of Southeast Texas. "We prioritized initiatives and programs that genuinely matter



for Texas, which helped us to secure the highest percentage increase," Taylor said.

Beyond formula funding, Phelan and fellow state legislators successfully advocated for enhanced funding for the Hazlewood Legacy Reimbursement and increased support for health insurance costs. Phelan also secured funding for the establishment of a new Institute for Energy and Petrochemical Industries' Engineering Needs at Lamar University.

While the recent state funding increase marks a significant step forward, Taylor is committed to securing diverse sources of support for Lamar University. His two-pronged approach emphasizes the role of private gifts, which are equally essential in broadening the university's capabilities. "Generous contributions from alumni and friends empower us to invest in innovative programs, fortify scholarship offerings, and create extraordinary opportunities for our students and local community," Taylor said. This comprehensive funding strategy, in turn, amplifies Lamar University's role in shaping the future of education in the region.

After the legislative session, President Taylor expressed gratitude for the comprehensive support provided by the Texas State University System. "Their guidance and support have helped us to develop fruitful interactions with the legislature, among many other valuable contributions," he said.