SCHOLARSHIPS
When you hear the word “scholarship,” many things may come to mind. A gift to Lamar University from an alumnus in the name of a beloved teacher or family member. The overall quality of the learning enterprise at an institution of higher education. Monetary help in order to live on campus, study abroad or even play sports as a student-athlete. However you consider it, scholarship involves academics and the assistance of our university’s supporters in a concrete, tangible way giving students opportunities at LU. The articles in this issue of Cadence center on this topic through our students, alumni, faculty and staff. This introduction to this magazine features brief synopses of LU’s first and second endowed scholarship as well as the largest and second-largest scholarships in the history of our institution. The difference in how these scholarships came into being is remarkable all these years ago. It is also striking the various stories that are documented here—how people decided to give a scholarship, why they created what they did, who the scholarship is named for and what a student accomplished while receiving this support or an alumna after graduating on scholarship. Of the numerous scholarships at LU, a few highlighted here include the Smith-Hutton Scholarship Program, which has assisted 126 students so far and is going strong. The Steinagau Global Fellows Program that to date, has allowed 40 business students to study abroad. Another is the Larry and Cynthia Norwood Chemical Engineering Scholarship, which has seen 100 recipients of this award with 19 just this semester. We look forward to witnessing all of these scholarships continuing to help make many more students in the years to come. Some alumni chose to pay it forward and create scholarships as they were originally recipients as students. Randy Sampson did just this as did Victor Zaloom. Others give through their Cardinal Club memberships to support student athletic scholarships so these students have opportunities such as they had when attending LU. Additionally, alumni such as David Beck seek out unique ways to give back to the university. Through the Beck Fellows Program, he has accomplished this, and additionally with the new Beck Teaching Excellence Award. A few young alumni who benefitted greatly from scholarships share their stories. Carlos Caballero was mentored and befriended by the family who created a scholarship he received—the Alicia Christine Bonera Memorial Rogers Scholarship in Engineering. Chelsea Boling, a computer science and mathematics graduate and McNair Scholar, now works for Disney. LU student-athlete Mariantonieta Gutierrez Soto came from Venezuela to the U.S. on a tennis scholarship and never left as she now is an assistant professor of civil engineering at the University of Kentucky. Hayley Rodriguez earned “Rookie of the Year” at the elementary school where she teaches third grade after working her way through LU with the help of the Lucy S. Turner Memorial Scholarship and the Vivian Liddell Scholarship. Circulation includes 55,000 copies distributed to alumni, faculty, staff and friends of Lamar University. If you have received more than one copy of this publication, please let us know. Changes of address may be sent to: University Advancement PO Box 10011 Beaumont, Texas 77711 or alumni@lamar.edu
Mildred Bland Lucas and Harry Lucas Memorial Scholarship

Mildred and Harry Lucas Sr. were active in business and civic endeavors, particularly in the oil industry. The community and Lamar University have benefited from the Lucas family philanthropy for decades. After the death of her husband, Harry, in 1955, Mildred Lucas established the second scholarship at LU, the Mildred Bland Lucas and Harry Lucas Memorial Scholarship. When she passed away in 1991, Harry Lucas Jr. kept the endowment and changed the name to the Harry and Mildred Bland Lucas Memorial Endowed Scholarship.

Orange Memorial Hospital Corporation Scholarship

The Orange Memorial Hospital board of directors established this scholarship when the board voted to dissolve its corporation, which had formed in the 1950s to manage local hospital operations and later changed focus to support ambulance service and provide scholarships. In 2013, the board gifted $2.5 million of its assets to the Lamar University Foundation to provide scholarships to students from Orange County who are majoring in health-related fields. Alumni Benjamin Thacker ’88 and Bob Walker ’57 named chairman emeritus. A long-time Beaumont attorney, Morris died in 1982. He served as attorney for the cities of Beaumont and Port Arthur, the Beaumont and South Park school districts, the Port of Beaumont and South Park Junior College since its inception in 1923 as the forerunner of Lamar University. He was responsible for drawing up the measure for the election to create the Union Junior College District and to issue $850,000 in bonds for purchase of the school’s site and buildings. He later wrote the bill the Texas Legislature passed in the late 1940s to change the school from a two-year community college to the four-year Lamar State College of Technology. He served in the U.S. Army during World War I. Morris Hall residence hall was named in his honor in 1958.

Jerry Rudd Memorial Scholarship

Jerry Rudd ’56, B.B.A. general business, ’71, M.B.A. business administration, believed the education he received at LU contributed significantly to his successful career and consequently, the native Texan and 1950 graduate of Port Neches-Groves High School chose to designate the Lamar University Foundation as one of the beneficiaries of his estate. He established the Jerry Rudd Memorial Scholarship, which supports dozens of students each year. Following high school graduation, he served two years in the U.S. Army with an overseas assignment in the Korean War. After receiving a business degree from Lamar University, he began a 32-year career with Mobil Chemical Co., retiring in 1991 as assistant controller, International Planning Supply and Distribution, Petrochemical Division.

Marketing students make their mark

This past spring, Kamal Karani, associate professor of marketing and management, and chair of the department of management, rejoiced as 14 students received the Mildred and Harry Lucas Memorial Scholarship. The student team had tweaked their winning marketing strategies. “Our student team had powered through the campaign with creative marketing ideas which did not cost much and still got the message across. They even personally created a promotional video for the business,” Karani said. “Students in my entrepreneurship class did a great job analyzing the business and making recommendations. Through developing a student marketing team, she was able to establish a unique marketing plan for Reaso-anticils as well as connect students with real-world project engagement. She described the experience as a win-win for both LU students as well as the business.”

Hope after Harvey

Following the devastation wrought by Hurricane Harvey, professor of management and marketing, Henry Vesta, received a $441,000 grant from the Economic Development Agency to help fund the study of efforts to discover recovery in the region. Through his research, Vesta hopes to discover the efforts that proved most successful for business recovery. Co-investigators for the project are James Slaydon, assistant professor of management; Gevorg Sargsyan, instructor of economics and management; andaren Cohan, chair and professor of accounting and business law.

College hosts inaugural Spring Honors Awards

The College of Business held its first-ever Spring Honors Awards Luncheon April 17. This event recognizes students who achieved outstanding academic accomplishments and involvement in the College of Business. The event also celebrates faculty and staff who displayed exceptional dedication reaching milestones of 5 to 40 years of service. Those recognized for their years of dedicated service were Jeff Duson, professor of management and marketing, for 10 years of service; Allison Hosi, instructor of management information systems and director of sustainability, and Phyllis Johnson, accounting programs coordinator, for 20 years of service; Marlean Swordrow, professor of accounting and business law and director of the general business program, for 35 years of service; and Larry Allen, professor and chair of economics and finance, for 40 years of service. Student honors included the following: the Aaron Rose Award to economics and finance major, Madison Marling; the Ben J. Rogers Outstanding Business Student Award to Kristy Riley Delcambre and Kendra Coleman; the Texas Business Hall of Fame Scholarship to Madison Akins; the Financial Executive International Scholarship to Diana Turcies; the TSCPA Accounting Excellence Award to MSA senior, Alexander Defrancis; the Dean’s Awards for Excellence was awarded to Jonathan Menne, Ryan Malone, Syd Alli, Tori Smith, Luis F. Rodriguez Salinas, Lindsey Fontenot and John Ellis; the Carter Innovation Fund Study Abroad Scholarship to Alexander Eau, Jackson Dolce, Kara Ficken, Robert Salazar-Diaz, Casey Smith, Farouk El-Hoss, Bailey Thompson, Garrison Spring, Nicole Kyle-Arden and Yesenia Lorea Rame; and the Jane Nelson Steinhagen and Mark Steinhagen Global Fellowship Study Abroad Scholarship to Lindsey Fontenot, Reid Johnson, Lindsay McManus and Brav Hamdan.
Marleen Swerdlow had a plan: graduate from law school, move away from home and build her career at a prestigious law firm. But for this College of Business professor, she says landing at Lamar University was nothing short of fate.

Just out of law school, the Tyler native found herself in Beaumont working a one-year clerkship that eventually turned into two. During her second year, she met her late husband, Robert Swerdlow, a marketing professor in LU’s College of Business. Three years after the pair married, Swerdlow joined Robert at the university teaching business law. “After I graduated from law school, I would have never thought that I would be teaching at a university,” she said. “It’s funny how things work out.”

Between them both, Swerdlow says that they’ve likely taught thousands of students, but there’s one student in particular who stands out above the rest—Todd Hoffman. Hoffman graduated from the university.

“Right after Robert and I got married, I was teaching business law classes with Swerdlow. Over time, the pair became mentors and role models for Hoffman, even after he had graduated from the university. “They were my professors, but they were also my mentors, including the Alicia Christine Bonura Memorial Regents Scholarship in Business in honor of Robert and Marleen Swerdlow. “I’m simply honoring and celebrating what they’ve done to help me,” Hoffman said. “They were very impactful in my life and through our scholarship, I want to give that same mentorship that was given to me.”

During her tenure, Swerdlow has continued to be a mentor and advisor for her students. She’s served on 135 university committees to date and been named director of both the campus General Business Program and the B.B.A. online business program. Now known for her massive cardinal figurine collection in her office and often regarded as “the lady in red” by students, Swerdlow reflects on her 35-year career at the university.

“You know, I don’t do the things that I do for plaques or for awards because that’s not the point of it,” she said. “You’ve got to have a reason to get up in the morning. Lamar University is that reason, and coming here to help the students is really my main purpose.”

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Simply put, the scholarships allowed my career to happen,” said Carlos Caballero ’18, ’19. “They allowed me to be on campus and focus on my studies. That wouldn’t have happened without the generosity of my scholarship donors.” Caballero graduated magna cum laude with a B.S. in mechanical engineering and received his second bachelor’s a year later in physics. He works for Optimus Steel as a process engineer.

While at LU, Caballero received numerous awards and was involved in the McNair Scholars Program. He became a global sensation when his “Walking on Water” video about the behavior of non-Newtonian fluid went viral, garnering more than 40 million views. He presented the experiment at New Student Orientations and Cardinal Views, and he even appeared on the TV show Pickler and Ben in Nashville, Tenn.

Caballero received several scholarships including the Alicia Christine Bonura Memorial Regents Scholarship in Engineering. Josh Bonura, Alicia’s brother, says his parents Mike and JoAnne Bonura started the scholarship after Alicia passed. “It really is just about giving back to LU and giving back in my sister’s name. She wanted to be an engineer,” Bonura said. Alicia was planning to study mechanical engineering at Texas A&M University in fall 2006 before she and a teammate tragically died in a bus accident on the way to a soccer playoff match. “She would want to look back and know she is helping students reach their dream of becoming an engineer,” he said.

Bonura, who works at ExxonMobil, said “the ExxonMobil matching program is a huge benefit; it helps supplement my contributions and maximize the benefit I can give to the students.” Caballero met the Bonura family his first year at LU and from there built a mentorship with Mike Bonura. The Bonura family even attended his graduation ceremony and the graduation party at his home. They formed a unique bond and continue to stay in touch. Josh Bonura has met several scholarship recipients. “One thing that really stood out is that the scholarships allowed the students to fully focus on going to school without the stress of working a job,” he said.

Being involved at LU is important, and I really don’t think many of them would have the ability to be involved in student organizations if they didn’t have the scholarships.”

Caballero credits his scholarships for his involvement in student organizations. He served as vice president of the Honors Student Association, homecoming coordinator for three years and a founding father of Alpha Tau Omega fraternity. “Without the scholarships, I would not have been able to devote so much time to give back to the university.” While reflecting on his experience as a recipient, Caballero said, “Their investment is put to good use. The donors invest not only in the students but also in the university and the community. It’s a way to pay forward and give back.”
The Janie Nelson Steinhagen and Mark Steinhagen Global Fellows Endowment in the College of Business, established in 2011, has allowed 40 business students to study in Spain, China, Costa Rica and Panama.

The fellowship was established for students to study and observe global businesses in foreign countries and witness economic, cultural and political forces impacting the way business is conducted worldwide.

“We have a global economy, and this is an opportunity for some of our outstanding graduate students to make some trips and contacts and see and do some things that they may not get to do presently,” said Hamdan. “We cannot do that unless you have experience. You can read about it, but that’s never as accurate as first-hand.”

Students studying abroad participate in a variety of curriculum-related activities as well as social and cultural events. In Costa Rica, Hamdan toured a coffee bean factory, went ziplining and lived with a host family. Her experiences allowed her to compare the Costa Rican economy, cultural traditions and lifestyle to that of the U.S.

“Their economy is so different because it stems from tourism. They have a lot of pride and passion in their work and value their things more than some do,” said Hamdan. “Their recycling is a good example. There is no trash on the streets. I was surprised to learn Costa Rica has allowed 40 business students to study and observe global businesses in foreign countries and witness economic, cultural and political forces impacting the way business is conducted worldwide.”

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The value of living with a family surpassed all expectations, Hamdan said.

“They were very kind and generous to have a stranger in the house, and it was nice to interact with them; it really made the program meaningful for me to understand their different perspectives,” she said.

Cade Johnson, a 2019 graduate of Lamar University with a bachelor’s degree in business and exercise science, will attend McGovern Medical School (UT Health) after receiving his M.B.A. from LU in May 2020. He traveled for 11 days to China, Hong Kong and Taiwan as a Steinbrenner Global Fellow. He says his experiences allowed him to be an empathic physician.

“Being immersed in a completely different culture was really impactful and allowed me to see how different it would be moving to another country and how hard it would be for me to adjust,” said Johnson. “Now I think about the reverse side of people moving here and the struggles they must have day-to-day; being mindful of that will allow me to better treat international patients.”

While in Asia, the students toured a Coca-Cola manufacturing facility, met with Invest Hong Kong officials, where they learned about Hong Kong’s one-page simple tax code for everyone, and ate at traditional Asian restaurants where food is served family style.

“I liked the emphasis on family and being part of a society overall,” said Johnson. “The whole experience really gave me a different perspective on the world. I was excited to have received the Steinbrenner Global Fellowship and to go on this particular trip. It expanded my world view and helped me understand why things are different in various countries.”

For Rebekah Maxwell ’11, the experience of receiving scholarships not only affected the trajectory of her life but also now helps in her current position as director of Lamar University Office of Scholarships.

“I think it changed my life,” she said. “Those scholarships that I received allowed me to spend time on campus and be involved in student organizations. I was a part of the Honors Program [now the Brould Honors College] and was able to spend time with other high-achieving students. I have a more fulfilling life because of that.”

While attending LU from 2007 to 2011, working toward a Bachelor of Business Administration degree with a concentration in retail management, Maxwell received multiple scholarships, including two not limited to the M.M. & C.A. Stead Jr. Scholarship, Tom F and Ann D Jones Scholarship, Wilfred H Long Jr. and Catherine Long Regent Scholarship, McMaster Honors Scholarship and Texas 4-H Youth Development Richard Wallath Scholarship.

“It’s a peace of mind,” she said. “It allows you to focus on your studies compared to possibly working full-time to pay for school. It allows you to focus on doing well and getting those grades up.”

After graduating, Maxwell pursued a Master of Science in international marketing from the University of Strathclyde University in Glasgow, Scotland, a feat made possible by a scholarship.

“When I went to the University of Strathclyde, I was sponsored by the Braumont Rotary Club of District 5910, and I was a Rotary International Ambassadorial Scholar,” Maxwell said. “As a student, being on a scholarship, not only for my bachelor’s degree but also for my master’s degree, lets you breathe that sigh of relief that you have some security in knowing where your funding is coming from for school.”

Without the aid of a scholarship, Maxwell would not have studied abroad for her graduate degree, a life-altering decision, she said.

“That particular scholarship was a major contributor to what my life is now,” she said. “You can go back to your scholarships when I was getting my undergraduate degree, and if I didn’t have those and was willing to get my undergraduate degree, then I wouldn’t have been able to get my master’s. It’s this domino effect of what scholarships can do for your life. Without the aid of a scholarship, I wouldn’t be where I am today.”

Maxwell said that her experience as a scholarship recipient helps her relate to students as well as donors.

“I’ve seen both sides now,” she said. “I tell students all of the time that I was a student just like them when I came to LU: I let donors know about the impact not only on the student’s education right now but how it’s impacting their entire life. It’s an investment.”

With more than 670 scholarship opportunities available, Maxwell tells students to be persistent.

“Apply every single year, continue to apply every single year, for as many scholarships as possible. It may be surprising by what opportunities come your way.”
With a disabled father and a mother who worked as a janitor, attending a four-year university wasn’t a guarantee for LU alumna Katie Shroff ’17—but it was a dream. Like so many other prospective students, financial assistance played a huge role in deciding whether or not Shroff would be able to pursue her goals. She dreamed of becoming the first in her family to graduate from a university, but feared the financial burden that would be placed on her parents’ shoulders and the likelihood of living in debt for years. Fortunately for Shroff, her dream was made possible through the Smith-Hutson Scholarship.

“I was looking for any type of assistance where I could to get an education,” Shroff recalled. “I had a really great counselor in high school who helped me find all of the different scholarships that I qualified for, and one of those was the Smith-Hutson Scholarship.” The possibility of living close to home while working towards an education immediately drew her towards LU, and receiving the scholarship opened a door that might have otherwise remained closed.

The Smith-Hutson Scholarship Program originated at Sam Houston State University in 1996 and was designed to offer much-needed financial assistance for those pursuing a major in business. The program eventually found its way to Lamar University in 2012, and in 2014, was amended to assist students studying under any major. “Smith” is an anonymous donor who provides the scholarship’s funding; meanwhile, Hutson works with his wife, Sylvia, and assistant, Dawn, to conduct interviews, attend events and serve as the face of the program. So far, 126 LU students have received and maintained the scholarship.

“Really, it opened so many doors for me,” Shroff explained. “It gave me the opportunity to figure out what my dream job was.” With a desire to apply her creative capabilities in a business setting, she pursued a major in advertising communications. In 2017, she became the first university graduate in her family, and even landed her dream job as a marketing communications manager. “I definitely give all the props to the Smith-Hutson...I cannot rave enough about the opportunities that I’ve received because of the scholarship.”

Following in Shroff’s footsteps are students Caleb Hall and Sydni Doiron. Like Shroff, both students are attending LU under the Smith-Hutson scholarship with the goal of becoming the first in their families to graduate from a four-year university.

“Receiving the Smith-Hutson scholarship was, by far, the happiest moment I can recall,” described Caleb, who is a current biology major and hopes to eventually become an optometrist. “It has allowed me the opportunity to save money and prepare myself to move onto graduate school...I will always be grateful for what the Smith-Hutson Scholarship has done for me.”

The two students and alumna also share the opinion that some of the greatest benefits of the scholarship program are the connections and friends they’ve made along the way. “I have gained so many friends that now feel like family,” shared Sydni, currently a junior with a dream of owning her own bridal boutique. “The community through the Smith-Hutson foundation has been here for me while continuing to push me to be my best.”

And as the students learn, grow and mature, the Hutsons are there every step of the way. The couple makes an effort to be involved firsthand in interviews, events and ceremonies at every opportunity, supporting the students as a family member would. “They’re amazing, amazing people and have made an impact on a lot of lives,” Shroff said. “I always told my parents that the Hutsons were like second grandparents because they cared so much about each of the recipients.” Hutson confirmed his investment by sharing how much he enjoys seeing the students grow and evolve. “The most rewarding part of [the program] is seeing them from the interview to graduation, and the transition that they make. The difference that four years of education makes is just unbelievable.”

Katie, Sydni and Caleb each recalled how overwhelming it was to search and apply for different scholarships, knowing that they could make or break their college experience—but they all agree that it was worth it. “I was taking care of myself completely, so I knew that college would be very hard for me to achieve without scholarships,” Sydni confirmed. When asked if she had any advice for current high school students in similar circumstances, she added, “I know the process is long, but the education and family you will receive makes all of it worth the end result.”

Dawn Wesneski and Robert and Sylvia Hutson
by Casey Ford '13, '15

One Good Turn... Three Scholarships Bear Writerly Ethos of Remembrance, Reciprocity

H yman Asher ‘H.A.’ Perlstein was born in Lithuania, came to the United States at age 15 and arrived in Beaumont in 1889. He married Miriam Gordin in 1893, and they had three surviving daughters: Lilian Perlstein Selber, Eleanor Perlstein Weinbaum and Juliet Perlstein Simon. Perlstein was an entrepreneur and early developer of downtown Beaumont who was loved and respected for his generosity, a trait he passed down to his daughters and their children.

Perlstein’s daughter, Eleanor Perlstein Weinbaum, a beloved member of the Beaumont community, was a poet and also wrote a memoir entitled Shalom. American: The Perlstein Success Story. She also was an ardent supporter of Lamar University. Her son, Charles Weinbaum—H.A.’s grandson—now a dynamic 93-year-old Beaumont businessman, has made it his priority to continue his family’s spirit of philanthropy, especially where LU is concerned. Years ago, Weinbaum established two scholarships in the Department of English and Modern Languages—the Eleanor Perlstein Weinbaum Memorial Scholarship in English and Foreign Language and the Gloria Weinbaum Annually Funded Literary Scholarship—to honor his mother and wife. Weinbaum described his wife, Gloria, as having “a beautiful mind” and being a “classic writer whose friends raved about her style, even in the prose of something as simple as a thank-you note.”

Many LU students have benefitted from the Perlstein and Weinbaum families’ generosity, including alumnus Randy Sampson, who today is an LU scholarship donor, but who was a first-year student and recipient of the Eleanor Perlstein Weinbaum award. Sampson attended LU as a non-traditional student who decided to pursue higher education while continuing to work for ExxonMobil. Changes in his personal life created a need for an emotional outlet, so he focused on creative writing as a graduate student of English. Sampson credits two focused on creative writing as a graduate student while working professional, spouse and parent of five children, he was glad to have the extra money, and he recalls a distinct pride and a sense of validation in being recognized for his creative writing ability. He hoped to express to the Weinbaums how thankful he had always been for the award that helped and encouraged him and would continue doing so for many other students.

Capitalizing on an ExxonMobil initiative to encourage giving, in which the foundation was then matching scholarship donations 1 to 1, Sampson set up the R.S. Gwynn Scholarship in Creative Writing in 2006. He reported that the endowment has since tripled in size because of wise investments by the university, and today, that scholarship has been renamed the R.S. Gwynn and Jim Sanderson Scholarship in Creative Writing. Sampson said that he established the award to honor his teachers, to help him to grow as a writer for helping them to grow as a writer and for expanding his thinking and his creative community.

LU afforded Sampson the opportunity to become a poet. He said that his technical expertise and education landed him in a successful and enjoyable career that creatively, he needed “something else.” Sampson studied creative writing with Sanderson and Gwynn, who invited Sampson to attend the prestigious West Chester Poetry Conference in Pennsylvania, an opportunity he capitalized on for three consecutive years. Sampson wrote for and edited Pulse, LU’s literary magazine, and participated in numerous other literary activities, all while working at the big plant next door and raising his family.

Asked about what being a scholarship recipient meant to him, Sampson remembers only gratitude. A full-time working professional, spouse and parent of five children, he was glad to have the extra money, and he recalls a distinct pride and a sense of validation in being recognized for his creative writing ability. He hoped to express to the Weinbaums how thankful he had always been for the award that helped and encouraged him and would continue doing so for many other students.

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Today, the Department of English and Modern Languages boasts a faculty that includes numerous published and prolific creative writers, and each semester, several of their students benefit from the donations of Randy Sampson and Charles Weinbaum. In fact, the author of this article was herself a beneficiary of the R.S. Gwynn Award in 2015. It seems important to mention that all students who receive this award are also benefiting from the philanthropy of the ExxonMobil Foundation, which supports the scholarly work of students in every college in the university. Lamar University alumni and our community partners prove each year that generosity is reciprocal—one good turn does not only deserve another but naturally inspires and creates other good “turns.”

Weinbaum, echoing Sampson’s desire for leaving a legacy, said he hopes and intends that his children will continue their family’s history of financial support for the university, which he believes is “one of Beaumont’s greatest assets, if not the greatest.” We certainly agree, and we wholeheartedly thank Randy Sampson and Charles Weinbaum for creating scholarships that honor Beaumont’s literary past and ensure the future of language and literature scholars at Lamar University.

Charles Weinbaum

Eleanor Perlstein Weinbaum Memorial Scholarship in English and Modern Languages—R.S. “Sam” Gwynn Award in Creative Writing—Randy Sampson and Charles Weinbaum. In fact, the author of this article was herself a beneficiary of the R.S. Gwynn Award in 2015. It seems important to mention that all students who receive this award are also benefiting from the philanthropy of the ExxonMobil Foundation, which supports the scholarly work of students in every college in the university. Lamar University alumni and our community partners prove each year that generosity is reciprocal—one good turn does not only deserve another but naturally inspires and creates other good “turns.”

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In March, the Lamar University women’s basketball team defeated rival McNeese 85-68 to lock up their second-straight Southland Conference Regular-Season Championship. Although it was a repeat performance, it also was a first in program history. It marked the first time Big Red had won the Southland Conference title in back-to-back seasons, and the Cardinals did so in near perfect fashion.

The Cardinals rolled through the 2018-19 campaign posting a 24-7 (.774) overall record and a near perfect 17-1 (.944) mark in Southland Conference play. During the two-year stretch, the Cardinals had 34 conference games with only two setbacks. This season was no different as LU was awarded an opening-round home game in the postseason WNT against South Alabama, which was the second consecutive season the Cardinals advanced to the WNT. The Cardinals now have the third-highest total of regular-season titles in Southland Conference history.

There were many majestic high points along the way that provided cherished memories for all LU fans. An early indicator of just how talented the Cardinals have been was in their first game at No. 17 Texas A&M. The Cardinals traveled to College Station in November 2018 to take on the heavily favored Aggies and proceeded to pull off the most stunning upset in program history, not Southland Conference history, by defeating Texas A&M, 74-68. The victory eventually propelled LU into the Mid-Major Top 25 poll where it remained into March.

Last February, the Cardinals traveled to Houston Baptist and defeated the Huskies, 97-49, but the final score wasn’t the headline. Senior Chastadie Batter came into the game and knocked down 10 steals in the contest, but it was a steal she recorded with 3:35 remaining in the second quarter that went down in the NCAA record books. That theft was the 625th of her career to move her near the NCAA all-time steals leader. Barnes will go on to be named Honorable Mention All-American.

Prior to All-American honors being handed out, the Southland Conference bestowed recognition on several Cardinal players, including Barnes and fellow senior Moe Kinard. Both Barnes and Kinard hit the 1,000-point plateau during their Red and White careers, and both were named first-team all-conference. In addition to the first-team honor, Barnes was named the Southland Conference Defensive Player of the Year for the fourth consecutive season. Barnes is the first player in Southland Conference history to earn the award as a freshman and to earn it in all four seasons of her collegiate career.

Softball adds Honorary Member Abigail Arias

Prior to a game in mid-March, the Lamar University softball team held a special signing-day ceremony for a courageous young girl. In March, the honorary Texas Ranger and member of the Freeport Police Force, Abigail Arias, was signed to a letter of intent, becoming an honorary member of the LU softball team.

Arias was diagnosed with kidney cancer (Wilms Tumor) in 2017 as a four-year-old. She battled for seven months as she fought and beat it. The worst news came just a few months later, however, when she was diagnosed with the same cancer for a second time. This time, doctors said there was nothing they could do.

During a Christmas event in December when Abigail and Freeport Police Chief Gatney met, she told him she wanted to be a police officer when she grew up to fight the “bad guys,” which she also calls the cancer inside of her.

On Feb. 7, she was sworn in as an honorary member of the Freeport Police Department Badge #758, and, recently, she was named an honorary member of the Texas Rangers. She continued to go on an inspiration to all whom she meets with her incredible smile and spirit as she continued to fight her cancer.

Arias, who threw out the first pitch at the Cardinal’s game also served as the bat girl. She wore number 758, her Freeport Police Officer Badge number and will be the only Cardinal to ever don the jersey 758. Besides becoming a police officer, Arias also had dreams of being a collegiate softball player. Despite her courageous fight, Arias passed away in November.

Women’s basketball marks historic achievement
W
hen Chelsea Boling ’15 was accepted to the McNair Scholars Program during her final two years at LU, going to work for Disney was only in her wildest dreams.

The computer science and mathematics graduate said if it weren’t for the resources and funds the program gave her to pursue her studies, she wouldn’t be where she is now, a software engineer at Disney.

The program targets college juniors and seniors who are first-generation and low-income students, or who are from a group underrepresented at the doctoral level. It provides access to technological resources and faculty support as well as funds for conferences and research.

“When I received the McNair scholarship during my junior year at LU, it was a great time to get into research,” Boling said. “Instead of going for a traditional internship, I went into research for a year studying data mining. “I worked on conferences,” Boling explained. “I used my resources and opportunities, like I had, to bring my expertise on board.”

“Everything I do now at Disney is because of the opportunities I’ve had," she said. “The skills I have because of the research I did at LU is transferable wherever I go.”

Boling said before she got into LU, she always knew she was destined for the technology industry. “A lot of people were there (at LU) to encourage women and minorities to join the industry," she said. “I believe the opportunities for people to get into technology are just endless. The professors I worked with were so friendly and helpful, and there’s a lot of resources for people like me.”

“Everything I do now at Disney is because of the opportunities I’ve had," she said. “The skills I have because of the research I did at LU is transferable wherever I go.”

Boling describes the year she spent in Baton Rouge developing applications for information technology giant IBM. After realizing she wanted to get her master’s degree in software development, Boling headed for a night course in industrial engineering at Texas Christian University. “It was then that Zaloom began to pursue his doctorate, which was financially supported by the University of Houston.

Today, Zaloom also has a scholarship in industrial engineering at the University of Houston, and another through the Institute of Industrial and Systems Engineers. “I’ve raised around $500,000 in scholarship funds because I feel like if I can give back, I should,” he explained.

“I think the main impact is to show the student recipients that somebody cares enough about their success to donate funds towards their education," Zaloom said. “They can have a better university experience this way, and I hope that someday in the future they can give back themselves.”

Being given the opportunity to use financial assistance during graduate school made a make-or-break impact on Victor Zaloom’s career path.

That, and faculty at the University of Houston who believed in Zaloom, can ultimately be attributed to his success today. Now chair of the Department of Industrial Engineering at LU, Zaloom recognized the importance of financial assistance and wanted to reciprocate by creating opportunities similar to those he was given as a student. He established two scholarships in an effort to propel qualified students to success, as someone who had done for him years ago. As a bonus, in recognition of his leadership inside and outside the classroom, others were named for him.

“I wouldn’t be where I am today if I didn’t get my doctoral degree, and (the financial assistance) made it possible," Zaloom said. “I felt like since they provided me with such a great opportunity I wanted to give back in the same way.”

The Victor Zaloom Scholarship in Engineering has awarded 12 recipients since 2007. Established by the Industrial Engineering Council of Lamar University to honor Zaloom’s dedication to engineering at LU, the scholarship is open for all undergraduates in the College of Engineering, with preference given to freshmen and industrial engineering majors.

The American Society for Quality established the Victor Zaloom Leadership in Quality Endowed Scholarship to promote education in the quality sciences, encouraging future careers in the quality profession. The scholarship is open to industrial engineering majors and has helped 16 recipients since it was created in 2002.

After losing his daughter Shar ZaloomMcCabe, 39, an LU College of Business graduate, to leukemia when she was just 39, Zaloom decided to create a scholarship in the College of Business in her honor, with the hopes that the recipient goes on to have a successful career as his daughter did. “I think she would very much appreciate that her name will live on and be recognized under that scholarship,” Zaloom said. “It’s giving opportunities to students who choose to go on in business. All the scholarships, and getting to know their recipients, is such a rewarding experience,” he added.

Zaloom served as the department chair of the industrial engineering department at LU from 1981 until 2014, when he began to serve as interim dean of the College of Engineering before returning to his position as chair this year.

He said he found his passion for teaching after he had finished his master’s degree and was working for Lockheed Martin in Dallas when he was unexpectedly asked to teach a night course in industrial engineering at Texas Christian University. Though he had never taught before, teaching that first course made Zaloom realize he’d uncovered a passion and wanted to teach for the rest of his career rather than working in the field. It was then that Zaloom began to pursue his doctorate, which was financially supported by the University of Houston.

Today, Zaloom also has a scholarship in industrial engineering at the University of Houston, and another through the Institute of Industrial and Systems Engineers. “I’ve raised around $500,000 in scholarship funds because I feel like if I can give back, I should,” he explained.

“I think the main impact is to show the student recipients that somebody cares enough about their success to donate funds towards their education," Zaloom said. “They can have a better university experience this way, and I hope that someday in the future they can give back themselves.”

The professors I worked with were so friendly and helpful, and there’s a lot of resources for people like me.” —Chelsea Boling

Beating the odds when Zaloom’s father was diagnosed with leukemia as a child, Chelsea Boling ’15 seized every opportunity she could to launch her career at Disney.

Boling’s Journey from LU to Disney

by Krista Salter
Dreams

through technology to limit the damage for future natural disasters. Hurricane Dorian. She focuses on what can be done personally. We focus our research to find ways to be prepared at LU we had Hurricane Ike, and this is something I take very personally. "I wanted to know the motivation behind my research."

Gutierrez Soto was not only a student athlete, she was involved in several student organizations on campus during her time at LU. One of these was when she worked with other students to restart the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers. She is now the faculty advisor at the University of Kentucky and served as the faculty chair of the national convention in 2018. She directs the student organizations and national conferences to furthering her education in graduate school. "At the time, everyone was focused on going to school and getting a job, student organizations help us open our eyes to a larger picture of what we could do with our degrees and how we could research our field further." The scholarships she received—the Rodney K. Bogan Memorial Scholarship, Dr. Luther A. Beale Memorial Scholarship, Susan M. Morgan Scholarship and the David Bernsen Endowed Scholarship, all in civil engineering, along with the Tony Paine Memorial Scholarship in Engineering and the Clark and Hazel Phippen Scholarship in Women’s Tennis—were the reason she could become involved in those enriching activities outside the classroom.

She described the love she has for the LU College of Engineering and says they became a small family. "I remember my professor’s passion for making our education the best that it could be. We had field trips to learn more about what we were studying. I became a professor because of the professors at LU. They were so devoted to the education, and it showed. I wanted to be like them; they were very supportive and encouraging. I am grateful for that opportunity."

Gutierrez Soto added one last thing. "When donating, any amount is appreciated, a $100 can make a big difference, especially for international students who cannot work. Nothing is too small. You really are making a big difference to a student."

New Dean Announced

LU named Craig A. Benson, Ph.D., as dean of the College of Engineering this past June. A faculty member since 2001, Craig served as professor and chair of the Department of Industrial Engineering for eight years before his appointment. Under his direction, the Department of Industrial Engineering grew in numbers, both in students and faculty, and helped successful and highly ranked online degree plan options. Craig helped establish the Center for Advances in Port Management and is director of the Multidisciplinary Smart Structures Knowledge Research Lab. Innovative smart structures integrate sensors, controllers, devices and other elements, or smart materials, into a system that can adapt to environmental changes in real-time. "I feel very passionate about protecting the built environment subjected to natural disasters," Gutierrez Soto said. "When I was at LU we had Hurricane Ike, and this is something I take very personally. We focus our research to find ways to be prepared before a natural disaster and how to recuperate after. That is the motivation behind my research."

As a senior at LU, Gutierrez Soto began learning about how smart structures can prevent damages and also help people recover more effectively after a disaster. "I wanted to know what technology we can use to make the world more resilient," she said. She assessed the damage in Rockport from Hurricane Harvey and did virtual assessments for both Hurricane Michael and Hurricane Dorian. She focuses on what can be done through technology to limit the damage for future natural disasters and the impact natural disasters have on a community.

Summer camp engineered for fun

The College of Engineering hosted two summer day camps for students entering seventh through 12th grades. A total of 65 visited campus to learn about the various engineering disciplines from current students and faculty. Seventh- and eighth-graders who attended LITE Camp participated in hands-on activities moderated by student engineering organizations and visited the NASA Johnson Space Center, thanks to contributions from ExxonMobil, Motiva, BASF and Total. High schoolers attended Project Engineer, a robotics-based camp that incorporated other engineering disciplines into a final challenge, made possible by sponsorship from Chevron Phillips.

Fan honored

Fan Honored

Eleni Alexiadou, professor of chemical engineering, was elevated to Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Fellow. The distinction is awarded to only a tenth of 1% of professionals members worldwide who meet the standard of extraordinary accomplishments in the institute’s fields of interest.

Benson awarded patent

Benson Awarded Patent

Tracy Benson, professor of chemical engineering, along with her collaborative team, was recently awarded a patent for "Nanoparticle synthesis of alkali metal MO12-based catalyst." The catalyst produces medium-chain alcohols through cost-effective reactions.

LU helps local educators sharpen STEM skills

The College of Engineering held the third Annual Research Experience for Teachers program this summer. The National Science Foundation funded the six-week course for the purpose of educating local teachers in new technology, allowing them to bring their knowledge and skills into the classroom and share with other educators. Research topics covered all disciplines of engineering and included subjects like 3D design and printing, laser engraving and micro-machining, VR/AR, LED modeling, simulation and manufacturing, design and manufacturing for smart structure; computational fluid dynamics simulation in industrial applications; and synthesis and manufacturing of robotics. Participating teachers assembled a 3D printer, which they were able to take back to their classroom for use in their curriculum. For the first time, teachers created lesson plans based on the information they have learned for submission to teachengineering.org for consideration. All submissions are peer-reviewed, and approved teachers receive a $1,800 grant. Several members of College of Engineering faculty worked with the teachers during the course of the program with the ultimate goal of improving STEM education for the next generation of students.
Le Grand Bal 2019 raises record-breaking amount to support fine arts

The Lamar University Friends of the Arts announced a record year for Le Grand Bal, raising more than $132,000 for the fine arts programs in the College of Fine Arts and Communication. Rusty Chimene ’67 and Dean Terribone ’13 co-chaired the event, held Saturday, March 30. Incorporating a theme of “New Orleans Inspires LU,” the committee created an evening of Southern elegance with a beat of the Crescent City.

Kicking off the festivities was a silent art auction at the Dishman Art Museum with a White Linen Night theme, based on the annual event held every year in the Arts District in New Orleans. Patrons then sauntered to the Setzer Student Center for a social, followed by a Commander's Palace-style dinner celebration. No trip to New Orleans would be complete without a visit to the French Quarter, so in celebration of the beloved Vieux Carre, guests danced the night away to sounds from Slim Coussin.

“For many years, Rusty and I have enjoyed the White Linen Night event in New Orleans, and our favorite restaurant is Commander’s Palace. We wanted to share these experiences with patrons of this event and introduce a less formal affair, but not casual–thus, changing up the dress code to this year’s Southern elegance,” said Terribone. “We thought it was a perfect fit with the art portion of the evening at the Dishman. It was our desire to raise as much funding as possible to benefit the fine arts programs and provide an enjoyable and memorable evening for all who were able to join us.”

Each year, the Le Grand Bal committee members select an artist honoree, as well as honorees recognized for their contributions to the arts. This year’s year’s honoree was Sandra and Joseph Ferril ’72, a once-in-a-lifetime ‘92er and the featured guest artist nominee was musician Gary Welsey ’94. As longtime contributors to the fine arts in the Beaumont area, the Ferrilts share their many talents to help make the community a better place. Welsey, an accomplished musician and sought-after performer on trumpet and harmonica, earned a bachelor’s degree in music from Lamar University.

Speach and Hearing Sciences partners with Beaumont Community Players

The Speech and Hearing Sciences Department, partnered with Beaumont Community Players, to host interACT, a program that allows children with atypical language and social development skills to take part in a theatrical production.

“interACT was derived from the idea that theater and acting promote social interaction and perspective talking skills,” said Karen Saar, clinical supervisor, instructor and head of Speech-Language Pathology Clinical Services at LU. “We run this inclusion group for children of all ability levels. Several children are diagnosed with autism, Down syndrome or other primary diagnoses that affect their development. In our program, you see kids begin to put themselves in other people’s shoes through acting, through being given a space to play and pretend.”

Lamar University’s Speech-Language Pathology Program is one of very few in the field creating and using a connection with a local arts organization. Monica Harm, professor and chair of an interACT said, often healthcare looks for interdisciplinary partnerships and doesn’t consider collaborations with the arts.

“We found that it is very rare. The arts offer so many opportunities that can lead to effective changes in the lives of kids facing these challenges.”

Communication and media students benefit from new residency program

Students in the Department of Communication and Media Studies now have access to a state-of-the-art media innovation lab, which serves as a collaborative space and studio for students. The recently created lab was made possible through a collaborative space and studio for students. The recently created lab was made possible through a collaboration between Lamar University and the Media Lab at the University of Technology & Dance in Taiwan.

“The media lab was made possible through the Lamar University and the Media Lab at the University of Technology & Dance in Taiwan,” said Hecuba Chew, assistant professor of Communication and Media Studies. “They were easy to talk to, definitively supportive and seemed to really enjoy giving the scholarship to students. I was always glad I went and had the opportunity to meet and thank them.”

College fundraiser held to benefit music students

The Mary Morgan Moon Department of Music presented the second annual Collage concert to benefit music students. The Feb. 26 event raised more than $15,000.

The evening featured the department’s choral ensembles, small chamber groups and large ensembles including student and faculty performers. Both students and faculty performers performed in quick-paced and seamless concert that showcased the talent and prowess of Lamar University. The Mary Morgan Moon Scholarship Fund raised $7,000. All proceeds from the event will benefit music students directly in the form of scholarships and other program enhancements.

The 2020 Collage fundraising concert will be held March 3 at 7:30 p.m. in the University Theatre. Tickets may be purchased online at lamar.edu/collage.

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FROM COLLEGE TO CAREER TO CONTRIBUTION

By Shally Vitana

Elohor Okene, who was born in Nigeria but raised in Houston, said, “Every scholarship that I have received helps with that financial burden so I don’t have to work so hard while being a full-time student.”

Okene, who was born in Nigeria but raised in Houston. “They were easy to talk to, definitively supportive and seemed to really enjoy giving the scholarship to students. I was always glad I went and had the opportunity to meet and thank them.”

Chemical engineering senior Elohor Okene has worked her way through college. Since her freshman year, she has held varying jobs and is currently a resident assistant on campus, which has made her maintain a high GPA to qualify for scholarships. Her 3.6 GPA earned her the Larry and Cynthia Norwood Chemical Engineering Scholarship.

“When I received the scholarship it honestly meant a lot,” said Okene. “It’s an amazing offer, and even though I’m undecided, having it before the school year started was a blessing.”

Another Norwood Scholar, Colton Broussard, had an early job offer. Motiva in Port Arthur offered him a process engineering position prior to his May 2019 graduation. The chemical engineering major was a three-time recipient of the Larry and Cynthia Norwood Chemical Engineering Scholarship.

“I have one job offer that I received before starting my senior year,” said Okene. “It’s an amazing offer, and even though I’m undecided, having it before the school year started was a blessing.”

While at LU, Broussard, a Nederland native who chose LU for its chemical engineering curriculum, had an early job offer. Motiva in Port Arthur offered him a process engineering position prior to his May 2019 graduation. The chemical engineering major was a three-time recipient of the Larry and Cynthia Norwood Chemical Engineering Scholarship.

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On an annual basis, the Austin couple endowed the scholarship with $1 million in 1973 as a co-op student and retired as vice president of Lamar University. Elohor Okene, who was born in Nigeria but raised in Houston. “They were easy to talk to, definitively supportive and seemed to really enjoy giving the scholarship to students. I was always glad I went and had the opportunity to meet and thank them.”

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In March 2011, Larry Rose ’65 had a heart attack. For all intents and purposes, he died. The doctors prepared his wife and family and asked them to say their goodbyes. But Rose, evermore the fighter, came back. A man who has lived his life with gusto, promised himself he would do more, give more.

“I went to the other side, and I came back as a different person. I’ve often wondered why I came back, and I realize that I came back to help people,” pondered Rose.

With a fresh outlook on life, Rose, who was no stranger to giving and helping students at Lamar University, decided to contribute more to students at LU. Rose, who since 1973 has funded the Aaron and Pearl Rose Business Scholarship, awarded to a top business student each year in memory of his father and mother, decided to assist dance students along their journey. Rose established two awards for dance majors, Best Contemporary Dancer and Best Technical Dancer, and funded financial awards for members of the Lamar University Dance Team.

“Through my orthodontic practice, my patients would ask me to come to their dance performances and recitals. While watching them, my wife, Helen, and I started to notice these performers had the same characteristics that make a business graduate successful—perseverance, dedication, a team mentality, intelligence,” said Rose. “This led Helen and me to see about offering a dance award.”

This past spring semester, two dance majors were awarded this newly created honor, Mia Paul of Houston for Outstanding Contemporary Dancer and Haley White of Beaumont for Outstanding Technical Dancer. Margan Ferguson received the award for the LU Dance Team.

“Being the first recipient of the Helen and Larry Rose Scholarship was an honor and a genuine surprise. I received the award at the end of preparation bootcamp during our team dinner, and it was truly a special moment,” said Ferguson. “This scholarship took care of all of my books and supplies need for this semester, and I’m extremely grateful. I have been a member of the Lamar University Dance Team for four years, and the program is very near and dear to me. I appreciate Dr. and Mrs. Rose recognizing us and seeing fit to contribute to the program in such a way.”

Rose, a self-described spiritual man, firmly believes that everything happens for a greater reason. To understand Rose’s journey. Rose established two awards for dance majors, Best Contemporary Dancer and Best Technical Dancer, and funded financial awards for members of the Lamar University Dance Team.

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Scholarships WIDENED HER REACH

by Kristina Scott

Lakeland Elementary in Port Arthur single out alumna Hayley Rodriguez’ 15, ’16, as the school’s Rookie of the Year for her stellar work as a science teacher in the school’s third grade wing. Ever since she was a child, Rodriguez knew she wanted to teach, and today what she enjoys most about her profession is “seeing the kids coming in, not even knowing how to write their name, and then leaving, having grown,” she said. With the help of two scholarships, the magna cum laude graduate and Alpha Delta Pi sorority member became a “lifelong learner” whose greatest joy is seeing the sparks in the eyes of students as they learn.

Since she discovered her love for teaching, she has always been drawn to working with younger children. She feels she can relate to them more because she likes “how curious they are and how they love to learn,” she said. Rodriguez’s time at LU helped prepare her because “I was working.” At the time she received the honor, she had recently started teaching third grade and was tutoring students, working hard to help the students grow and be the best they could be. She was elated by the recognition.

Rodriguez’s time at LU helped prepare her because the intern hours gave her real-world experience. “Being in the classroom and seeing everything, the different types of students and home life taught me different styles of teaching,” she said. The intern experience also provided ways to form relationships and connections to different schools and school districts. She offered advice on what others can do to be more prepared when they step into their own classrooms for the first time. “Try to get as much experience inside the classroom as you can and seek out guidance, attend professional development as much as you can, take the internship seriously and try different grade levels,” she said.

At LU, Rodriguez received the Lucy S. Turner Memorial Scholarship and the Vivian Liddell Scholarship, both of which allowed her to be financially stable so she could focus more on earning her bachelor’s in interdisciplinary studies. The scholarships had a huge impact on her educational journey and allowed her to take summer and winter classes to stay on track to graduate in four years. They also helped her have time to branch out and be more involved on campus. As she began her second year at LU, Rodriguez joined the dance team and stayed on until she graduated as head officer. It was through the dance team that she met her lifelong friends. Rodriguez also helped her fellow classmates as a resident assistant in the residence halls upon graduation, she chose to continue her education and earned her master’s degree in teacher leadership at LU.

When she received the Rookie of the Year award, she wasn’t expecting it. “It all came at a surprising time,” Rodriguez said. “It meant so much to me and showed that the administrators saw how much I was working.” At the time she received the honor, she had recently started teaching third grade and was tutoring students, working hard to help the students grow and be the best they could be. She was elated by the recognition.

Advice Rodriguez followed that may inspire future teachers is to “build relationships with other teachers and always aim to better yourself. Every year, students are different, and there are always new and improved methods you can use to better their experience.”

Full advocates education for all

The College of Education and Human Development held a 60/30 anniversary party Feb. 1 attended by more than 250 faculty and former faculty, student, staff, alumni and friends. The celebration marked the college’s 60th year since its founding in 1959 and its 30th year since incorporating the disciplines of health, kinesiology, nutrition, hospitality and human services, and adding “Human Development” to its name in 1989. The historic event included the inaugural presentation of two new awards, the Ruth Oclott Faculty Award, awarded to Kaye Shelton, professor of educational leadership, and the Lena Mae Francis Staff Award, awarded to Simplex Jones, director for certification and testing.

The recognition of key educators and staff represents an important aspect of the college mission, as does honoring its past leaders. The anniversary falls during a time in which the college looks to the future with the launch of its new strategic plan—the first one for the college—focused on diversity and multicultural competence, innovation, economic development, quality, success and equity.

60/30 anniversary party success

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Judge Giblin addresses college commencement

The Honorable Keith F. Giblin, U.S. magistrate judge for the Eastern District of Texas, delivered an inspiring keynote during the May 2019 commencement ceremony. Graduates and guests alike were encouraged by his humble words, which focused on believing in others even when they do not believe in themselves. He received a standing ovation from those in the room, a first for commencements hosted by the college.

College and residence halls Open House

More than 200 online counseling students visit campus each semester and spends a week during their residency required for their degree programs. Many students who have not online through their course work are glad to meet face to face during the week for cooperative study and role play.

Diplomatic networking creates opportunities

The College of Education and Human Development Alumni Network strives to enhance and develop strong alumni connections. The goal of this initiative is to connect with alumni and provide ways to partner together. To join, visit humaneducation.edu.
to be honest. I remember being seven
been in my life since I was born. I fell in
professional," he said. "So, tennis has
old. "My dad played professional tennis,
playing tennis since he was five years
coming here and being an athlete and keep playing
that comes from studying here in the
be able to cover all the cost difference
to find a job or other economic help to
impossible for me. I would have needed
America and tuition are much lower
America," Santibanez said.
are completely different as compared to
cost of living, and cost of education,
lot to me as I come all the way from
enjoying the state of play
most of the student
for attending a university in the U.S.
for the opportunity to become a
for attending a university in the U.S.
by Sierra Kondos
Santibanez said that his main reason
Basketball player and 2019 Cardinal
Cowart, said that she is happy that she’s
being assigned an award that recognizes her
academic ability: “I didn’t really
like basketball until my junior year of
high school,” the senior criminal justice
major said. “That’s when I started to gain
recognize and be productive. I fell in
love with basketball over the course of
that season because I was just starting
to see what I could really do at a
level in middle or
college, and I am finishing my M.B.A. in financial
management this coming May.

Lamar University named Kendrick Aung, professor of mechanical engineering, as the 2019 University Professor, recognizing his superior teaching, scholarship and service to the university.
During his 18-year tenure at LU, Aung has taught a wide variety of mechanical engineering courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels. He co-directs the mechanical engineering senior design projects, teaches the senior capstone design courses and guides capstone design teams. Under his direct mentorship, more than 50 teams have successfully competed in engineering design contests across the country. Aung has received significant teaching grants, several Presidential Faculty Fellowships for teaching and innovation and the Dr. Anita Riddle Excellence in Engineering Teaching Fellowship. Aung has supervised four doctoral engineering students and 28 graduate students in engineering science. He has published more than 90 peer-reviewed papers and made nearly 50 presentations at conferences and exhibitions. He has mentored two McNair Scholars and has been invited to the Lamar Association of Mechanical Engineering Student Chapter, Lamar American Society of Heating Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers Chapter and Phi Tau Sigma honors society of mechanical engineers. He is also Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology accredited and is the accreditation coordinator for the Department of Mechanical Engineering, working for many years mentoring faculty members on continuously improving the department.
Fan awarded endowed
Ksun Ken, professor of mechanical engineering, has been awarded the inaugural Mary Ann and Lawrence E. Faust Endowed Professorship in Engineering in recognition of his outstanding research in multi-physics and multi-scale modeling and accounting of turbulent flows. "Dr. Faust is a highly respected and accomplished scholar who brings international research recognition to the College of Engineering and Lamar University," said Victor Zaloom, chair and professor, College of Engineering, "his research spans broad areas and crosses many disciplines."
The Mary Ann and Lawrence E. Faust Endowed Professorship in Engineering was established in 2017 by a bequest from Mary Ann Faust 61. Faust received her business degree at LU and her law degree from the University of Houston Thurgood Marshall College of Law.

Dockens honored as faculty mentor
The Office of Undergraduate Research bestowed the 2019 Faculty Mentor Award upon Ashley Dockens, assistant professor of speech and hearing sciences, for her mentorship of numerous undergraduate McNair Scholars. Beck Fellows and University Undergraduate Research Fellows and Office of Undergraduate Research scholarship recipients. These students go on to mentor other students through Cardinal Community, LU Ambassadors, Student Government, the National Student Speech-Language Hearing Partnership, the Lamar University Academy of Audiology and through the Future Leaders of Audiology Student Association.

Forrest named fellow
Provost James Marquart announced that faculty members selected Jeff Forrest, professor of history, as 2019-2021 Distinguished Faculty Research Fellow. Forrest was chosen through a rigorous review process of elected faculty members representing each of LU’s colleges. A total of nine candidates were considered. Marquart said Forrest’s proven and internationally recognized track record of scholarly productivity coupled with his clearly defined and ambitious research plans that include works in progress extending into 2022 have made a significant, positive influence on Lamar University.
Forrest is a social historian specializing in southern history. Forrest’s current work in progress, “Slave Ships to Freedom: Documents few in number in which British government freed American slaves shipwrecked in British colonial Atlantic colonies.”

Haslbeck named Engineer of the Year
The Texas Society of Professional Engineers, Sabine Chapter, has named chair and professor of the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department, Dr. Hsun Haslbeck, “Engineer of the Year” based on experience, published works, involvement in the community and professional organizations. It was quite humbling this honor, as it typically goes to a practicing engineer,” said Haslbeck. “My faculty and I have worked for the last couple of years on an effort here at LU to teach out to the current and future engineering community in southeast Texas.
Azois receives prestigious Tevatrick Trust award
Bonnie Azois, a physics and hearing sciences, has received the Tevatrick Trust for Aphasia Distinguished Scholar Award, which recognizes excellence in research and mentoring to meet the needs of people living with aphasia, their families and caregivers. “The key to recovery lies in the ability of people with aphasia to engage in appropriate and successful interactions; communicate positive identities and sustain meaningful social relationships with others,” said Azois. “Through the Aphasia Conversation Labs, in the Speech and Hearing Sciences Clinic, we offer weekly therapy sessions that focus on improving life participation, including a book club, conversation groups and a technology group that helps people with aphasia better access the Internet and smartphone.”

Bahrim distinguished for mentoring
The Council of Undergraduate Research, Physics and Astronomy Division awarded Cristian Bahrim, professor of physics, its 2019 Faculty Mentor Award. The division bestows the national award each year to recognize and honor mentors who have devoted a significant amount of time to mentoring students participating in undergraduate research. Bonnie Ruten, a physics major said, “Dr. Bahrim goes above and beyond to make sure that they are receiving the right information that they need to be successful. He’s just a great example of someone who loves what he does.”
LU News

First Lady Nancy Evans Remembered

As a master gardener and artist, the late First Lady Nancy Evans envisioned LU students surrounded by beauty as they pursued their dreams of a college education. To that end, Evans, who passed away in June, 2018, spearheaded the LU Public Art Committee to secure sculpture and other works of art in a variety of media for display in interior and exterior settings on campus. She also worked with others to beautify the landscape and transform the northwest corner of Jimmy Simmons Blvd. to the South Park Community Garden.

In recognition of her efforts and in remembrance of all she accomplished to make Lamar University’s campus a more beautiful place, the Lamar University Student Government Foundation dedicated a bench in her memory at the John Gray Pond last spring. The bench was installed next to a memorial in honor of the late, Robert “Bud” Evans, who passed away in June, 2017. Mrs. Evans’ memory.

A fountain by Rockport sculptor Jesus Munoz, an artist who the Evanses purchased a piece from, is being installed across from the bench. Rob Clark and Jerry Thacker donated the fountain in Mrs. Evans’ memory. A South Park Community Garden planter and archeway is dedicated to Evans May 8. She had worked with LU gardens and South Park neighbors to start the garden to increase the accessibility of fruits and vegetables to the community as well as provide funding on nutrition and food preparation, offer opportunities for learning and to establish a sustainable local food system.

The garden, created in 2016 and located on the northwest corner of Jimmy Simmons Blvd. and Vurnett St. in Beaumont, is a project of the Greater South Park Community Partnership, an organization of civic, business, education, social service, faith-based and spiritual leaders, elected and representative, who work to revitalize South Park neighborhoods.

Volunteers, students and community members maintain the 25-bed garden, and vegetables are donated to the Southeast Texas Food Bank, Some Other Place and to those working the garden.

ExxonMobil presents $174,450 employee gift match to LU

LU received a gift of $147,450 from the ExxonMobil Foundation in May as a part of the company’s Educational Matching Gift Program. The grant is a result of the three-to-one match of contributions donated in the previous year by company employees, retirees and surviving spouses. “Art research and development opportunities at Lamar and the ones I was with, I still talk to my coach. I call him to tell him that I have my ring back.”

ExxonMobil has also worked with others to beautify the landscape so that students could enjoy a beautiful campus and be proud of their school. The campus was truly her campus.” A fountain by Rockport sculptor Jesus Munoz, an artist who the Evanses purchased a piece from, is being installed across from the bench. Rob Clark and Jerry Thacker donated the fountain in Mrs. Evans’ memory. A South Park Community Garden planter and archeway is dedicated to Evans May 8. She had worked with LU gardens and South Park neighbors to start the garden to increase the accessibility of fruits and vegetables to the community as well as provide funding on nutrition and food preparation, offer opportunities for learning and to establish a sustainable local food system.

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Most of these students, who would find themselves challenged with homelessness, transportation issues, health issues and more, on top of the stresses of university life. It is for these situations that Lamar University first established the Cardinal Emergency Fund, a fund that remains active and attentive to the needs of a disaster survivor.

Morgan Martin, a pre-med biology major from Mauriceville, had been through several hurricanes in the past prior to Hurricane Harvey, so he didn’t think much of it. “Our yard is in a low-lying area, so it floods easily, but it’s never reached the house before, so it didn’t concern me that much,” said Martin. That month had already been heavy for him and his family—he had just turned 18 and was excited for college; his brother, a star linebacker, tore his ACL; and their incapacitated grandmother had recently moved in. It was 7 p.m. when the flooding began, in the middle of dinner preparation when the entire family began receiving back-to-back emergency notifications on their phones. Their cats were acting strange, and they began checking outside. “We were getting nervous,” said Martin. “We were waiting for the rain to let up, because if it stopped, we’d be fine, but it kept rising and rising. At around 8 p.m., they packed everything they could, took their pets and left to stay with family in Louisiana. Three days later, they’d receive pictures of their home, now flooded with three feet of water, losing all of their furniture, clothes, children’s toys, and all of Morgan’s books, the hardest blow for him. One of the strangest experiences Morgan and his family had to come to terms with was the turned tables, from donor to recipient. ‘We were usually the people that gave,’ said Martin. ‘We would give donations to church and stuff like that, and then we were on the receiving end of that. So it was very humbling for us, a good kind of humbling.’

The hardest thing for Morgan was no longer having a home. ‘We had the shell of a home, but we didn’t have a home. All of the stuff that made it a home was gone,’ Morgan and his family found themselves still having to pay off the fees revolving around his home being turned to dirt, which is why when he was introduced to the Cardinal Emergency Fund. ‘They were able to give me a substantial amount, enough to cover my first year of college tuition-free,’ said Martin. ‘They were very generous, and we were able to alleviate the things my father would have had to pay otherwise.’ Their troubles wouldn’t be over yet, as it wouldn’t be too long before Imelda arrived and unmoved Morgan’s family had worked so hard to recover. ‘I woke up [around 4 a.m.], and I checked my phone to see what time it was. I had a text from my mom and a message from my sister telling me that our house had flooded again,’ said Martin. He’d hoped for only two inches, which unfortunately happened to be two feet, rendering the house uninhabile for perhaps another year. Morgan was once again able to utilize the Cardinal Emergency Fund to mitigate the disaster. ‘They covered not only the leftover tuition from this semester, but for next semester as well,’ said Martin. ‘We started the Cardinal Emergency Fund after Hurricane Harvey,’ said Brenda Nichols, vice provost for digital learning who oversees the Cardinal Emergency Fund. ‘We had a lot of donors that was given to the fund for other things that reached out and said, “What can we do to help?”’ According to data collected from Imelda survey submissions, those affected by Imelda had the most concerns about housing—a direct consequence of the disaster destroying more than 300 homes. Transportation, health issues and tuition were also focal points of aid requests.

Nicole Kyles-Burton, an MBA student with a bachelor’s in psychology and sociology from Beaumont remembers packing a suitcase in case of evacuation, thinking, “If it continues to rain, I can pack, and I can leave the next day,” said Nicole. “The next day didn’t come.”

That night, her home would accumulate 15 inches of water while she slept. By the time her sister called to make sure she was alright at 3 a.m., it was already level with the third step of her staircase. The mother of three was not ruffled, until it became clear that the water was continuing to rise. “Then, I hear a pop, the electricity goes off, and I smell smoke—that’s when I lose it,” said Nicole. “The water’s still rising, we have no electricity, how are we gonna get out of here?”

In order to catch the attention of the Cajun Navy that were operating around the neighborhood, she wrote ‘Please Help’ signs and placed them in the windows. Fortunately, she was successful, and was able to escape off the second-floor balcony. “I guess it just happened so soon. We’re just starting to rebuild from Harvey. It was just Harvey again,” said Nicole. “The things we could save from Harvey, from the pictures, the furniture, couldn’t be saved from Imelda. Everything was lost.”

After reaching relative safety, Nicole attributes a large part of her recuperation process to the Cardinal Emergency Fund, noting the simplicity and immediacy of the process. ‘It reached so quickly, it was a saving grace to receive the email that said, “Don’t worry about your costs. If you need shelter, fill out this form. It took that worry off my plate because I knew that they would give me time and not,’ said Nicole.

“The Cardinal Emergency Fund can be anything from food emergencies to things like computers or tablets,” Nichols said. ‘It can help with dorms and textbooks. It’s sad to say that we learned a bit after Harvey, so by the time Imelda came, [the fund] was up the next day.”

The Cardinal Emergency Fund has been a life preserver for the people that needed it, with a goal of helping as many students as possible based on their amount of need. “We’d like to continue to build it,” said Nichols, “so we are looking at ways to continue to help the students using it so it’s there for them.”
If you have news to share—a being a Cardinal.

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Alumni selected as Texas Rising Star

For the fifth year, LU graduate and trial attorney Ronnie Turner Jr. has been named to the 2019 Texas Rising Stars list of top young attorneys. Turner, who graduated in 2007 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology and a minor in political science, represents plaintiffs in complex Povrov Uitzimate Law Firm. While attending LU, Turner served as student body president and vice president. He was vice chair of the Student Advisory Board to the Texas State University System Board of Regents. He was also a member of Order of Omega Honors Fraternity.

Ginger Beeler ’95, B.S. chemistry, is a math teacher at Shiloh Middle School and the lives in Katy.

Chris (Weeker) Sizer ’90, B.S. psychology, M.Ed. school administration, is the assistant principal of Henderson Middle School in Hardin-Jefferson school district. She and her husband, Barry ’99, B.S. in Winters, and they have three adult children, Jace, Deilan and KaliISING.

Carolyn (McDonald) Thompson ’95, B.S. communication, is a theatre director of Leadership Development Workshop for the Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce, and her husband, David ’07, B.A.S. arts and sciences, work for A&M Equipment. They live in Beaumont.

Jennifer (Bender) Birdsong ’96, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, holds an M.A. in teaching and is director of advanced learning and development at FlightSafety International and is the, Jan., live in Lumberton.

Tom (Waller) Crockett ’98, B.S. aviation management, is a program manager at Stratford University in Port Arthur. He and his wife, Lauren ’99, B.S. in construction management, live in Beaumont.

Ted Mann ’96, B.S. civil engineering, is a project manager at Schultze & Polk and lives in Beaumont.

Kari Schneidmiller ’98, B.S. kinesiology, M.Ed. school leadership, is principal of Ridgewood Elementary in Port Arthur.

Karin Schneidmiller ’98, B.S. kinesiology, M.Ed. school leadership, is principal of Ridgewood Elementary in Port Arthur.

Neches Groves school district. He has worked for 30 years as a teacher, coach and counselor. He and his wife, Corrie, live in Port Neches with their two children.

Lin Ellis II ’90, B.A. history, M.S. in management information systems, is an athletic director and a coach at Spring Hill School. His wife, Jamie (VanLangendonck) ’92, B.A. psychology, also holds an Ed. administration, is in her 15th year of teaching second grade at Fairmont Elementary in Deer Park school district.

Colleen Oubre ’99, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, teaches fourth-grade science at Odyssey Galvaston. Her wife, Cheve (Morgan) ’99, B.S. biology, also holds a Ph.D. in microbiology and is an associate scientist at NASA Johnson Space Center. They live in a city.

Gina (Binkenborg) Tiller ’99, B.B.A. marketing, works as the enrollment services coordinator at the University of Texas at Arlingtont and lives in Arlington with her husband, Mark.

Chris Johnson ’90, B.S. kinesiology, is the associate head coach of women’s track and field and head coach at the University of Arkansas. In 2018, Chris toxic the National Women’s Track and Field Assistant Coach of the Year team. He and his wife, Gigi, live in Fayetteville, Ark.

Reuben Johnstone ’91, B.S. electrical engineering and B.S. computer science, earned master’s and doctoral degrees in systems engineering, and is a researcher at John Hopkins University in the Applied Physics Laboratory and a lecturer at John Hopkins University Information Security Institute. He lives in Kingsville, Md. with his nephews.

Amber (Armbrister) Royer ’80, B.A. English, debuted her first science fiction novel, a comic space opera titled Free Chocolate in June 2018. She and her husband, Jacob, live in Richmond.

Tara (Larkin) XII ’92, B.A. psychology, is an associate professor at Galveston College. She and her husband, Michael, are in Lumberton.

KathleeCofman ’95, B.S. communication, is an educational leadership administration, is an education specialist for Region 7 Education Service Center. She lives in Austin with her husband, Andrew, and daughter, Sullivan, and they live in Beaumont.

Rajesh Malla ’03, B.S. computer science, earned master’s and doctorate degrees in systems engineering, is a member of the leadership team at FlightSafety International in Port Arthur, and they live in Port Arthur.

Stormy (Markham) Thibodeaux ’91, B.S. mathematics, holds an M.Ed. and is the coordinator of mathematics for grades K-12 of Barbours Hill school district. Her husband, Robert ’00, B.Ed. administration, is an assistant teacher and golf coach at Robert E. Lee High School in Houston school district. They live in Old River Place.

Linda (Saye) Allen ’92, B.A. management information systems, is a vice president-assistant accountant and live in the community of them. She and her husband, Jeff, live in Lumberton.

Allen Desdazo ’92, B.S. psychology, is school football coach at Bridge City High School. He and his wife, Jennifer, are in a family.

The Southeast Texas Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (SETCAD) ’92, B.S. kinesiology, is the Boyce G. Crum II Executive Director of the year for 2017 at a banquet held at the MHC Regional Crime Laboratory in Beaumont. She and her husband, Richard, and their daughter, Jocelyn, live in Beaumont.

Wesley Under ’91, B.S. engineering, is an electrical engineer at the Department of Justice. She and her husband, John Under, are both in Beaumont.

Danielle (Howell) Mitchell ’92, B.S. psychology, M.A. kinesiology, is a certified health and fitness specialist and a consultant for the U.S. Army. He and his wife, Lauren, have a son, and a daughter, born in Woodbridge, VA.

Richard Murphy ’92, B.S. geology, is a geologist at A&M in Houston. He and his wife, Sana (Ezzi) ’90, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, live in Denton.

Kara (Hammenn) Smith ’92, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, is a teacher at Highland Park Elementary in Nederland school district and her husband, Colt Smith ’92, B.S. kinesiology, is an engineer at Iron Mountain, located in Brown, Mass. They live in Nederland.

Amber (Kimura) Ambrose ’93, B.S. communication, is the founder of Amber Ambrose Communications in Houston, where she lives with her husband, Lance.

Jeff Kaufman with her husband, Jeremy.

Kara (Hamann) Smith ’92, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, is a teacher at Highland Park Elementary in Nederland school district and her husband, and they have four adult children, Jace, Dylan -93, live in Winnie, and they have three adult children, Jace, Dylan -93, live in Winnie, and they have three adult children, Jace, Dylan -93, live in Winnie, and they have three adult children, Jace, Dylan -93, live in Winnie, and they have three adult children, Jace, Dylan -93, live in Winnie.
Jared Byrd | B.B.A. engineering, M.S. biology, B.B.A. accounting — March 30
Meghan Scurria | B.A. English, B.B.A. business administration — March 30
Dwight Sandifer | B.A. psychology, B.S. psychology, M.S. psychology, M.Ed. educational leadership — March 30
Brian Van Zandt | B.A. B.A.S. applied arts and sciences, B.B.A. business administration — March 30

Dine with Outstanding Alumni — March 30

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CARDINAL CADENCE | Scholarships | WINTER 2019
Jesica Morehead ’13, B.S. communication, is a human resource administrator, is an ISM monitor at North Shore Senior High School in Galena Park school district of his residence and he lives in Combine with his wife, Elizabeth.

Ryan Dillinger ’14, B.S.W. social work, earned his master’s degree in social work and public administration, and served on the state. Nomination and Leadership Identification Committee for the National Association of Social Workers, Texas, from July 1, 2018, to June 30, 2019. His wife, Anna, is a former social worker at Metro Health services in Beaumont with his wife, Amber.

Jacqueline Harris ’14, B.A. American Sign Language, is the executive assistant to the CEO of Trinad-Handford Planting and lives in Rowlett.

Wha Lee ’14, B.S. political science, is an administrator at University/Regional International in Houston, she lives in Liberty.

Jared Herrington ’14, B.S. criminal justice, head freshman basketball coach at Evadale High School and lives in Buna.

Erica (Giffin) Jean-Felix ’14, B.A. biology, married her husband, Jerry, in May 2018. He is an educator in the Houston school district where they live.

Rolando Lema ’14, B.S. criminal justice, is a special agent for the Department of Homeland Security and lives in Edinburg.

Shahid Mahomed ’14, M.E. mechanical engineering, is a resident radiology resident at the Goodfellow Air & Space Co. in Davis, Va., where he lives.

James Nobles ’14, B.A. English, and his wife, Angel, have a son, Willie, and they live in Houston. Angel Prophet ’14, B.A. applied arts and sciences, received her doctorate in psychology from Oral Roberts University and lives in Denton with her husband, Anthony.

Angela Alah ’14, B.A. health education, received her doctorate of physical therapy from Florida A&M University in 2018 and lives in Missouri City.

Weasley Arnold ’14, B.G.S. general studies, married his wife, Catherine, in May 2018. She is an educator in the Houston school district where they live.

Paul Rick ’14, B.S. chemical engineering and B.S. physics, earned his medical degree from UT Northern Medical School. He is currently a resident at the University of Texas Department of Orthopedics and Rehabilitation. He married his second wife, Samantha, in January 2018. They live in San Antonio.

Shelby Wells ’14, B.A. bilingual education, is a speech-language pathologist at 212 Therapy in Beaumont with her husband, Gabriel.

Jake Whaley ’14, B.S. political science, worked for Texas A&M Commerce, his wife, Whitney, is a partner at Locke & Shepard Attorneys at Law and lives in Houston.

Candice ’15, B.S. communication, 16 M.E. general studies, married on January 21, 2018. On August 4, 2018, Candice was featured in an episode of AMC’s TV show ‘The Walking Dead.’ She is an educator in the Houston school district. She and her husband, Will Robbins, live in Spring, where she lives.

Ellie Bardin ’15, B.A. social work, married her husband, Javaris, in January 2018. She is an educator in the Houston school district and lives in Katy. She and her husband, Samon (Tahir) Rasul, live in Beaumont.

Robin (Hatton) Barela ’15, B.A. applied arts and sciences, received her undergraduate degree in January 2010. Candice is a gift track and head softball coach at University. The Allen family lives in Copperas Cove.

Briana Blacknell ’15, B.S. criminology, married her husband, Brian. They live in San Antonio.

Marques Collins ’15, M.Ed. administration, is principal of Carthage Elementary School in the Houston school district where he and his wife, Diamonds, live in Conroe.

Brennen Doty ’15, B.S. management information systems, and Kyal’l (Betay) ’15, B.S. speech and hearing sciences, were married on January 20, 2018, in Austin, where they live.

J.P. Johnson ’15, M.Ed. administration, was named principal of Corinthia Middle School. He and his wife, Amy, live in Conroe.

Micah Mitchell ’15, B.S. industrial technology, is a systems engineer for Lockheed Martin and lives in Fort Worth with his wife, Whitney.

Sarah Murphy ’15, B.S. chemical engineering, is a group supervisor at Tokyo Electric Power Company, Ltd. She and her husband, Myles, live in Houston.

Stella Chinwe ’15, B.S. urban studies, and Malakhi (Wikele) ’15, B.S. construction technology, were married in January 2018. They live in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Amin Dada ’15, B.S. finance, is a credit analyst at Origin Bank and lives in Houston.

Isabella Ramirez ’15, B.S. communication, is a human resources assistant at Comerica in Spring, where she lives.

Charity Ogbae ’15, B.S. economics, received his law degree from University of Houston College of Law. She works as a principal at Benedict Law, an immigration law associate at Prominent Foggy Bank in Houston, where she lives.

Terry Carpenter ’15, B.B.A. finance, is a credit analyst at Origin Bank and lives in Houston.

Kevin Dominguez ’15, B.S. industrial technology, is the South Texas operations manager for Advanced Quality Power Services. He and his wife, Phyllis, live in Spring
Morris, associate professor of the Speech and Tran Nguyen, Marilyn Beard, Govin Kaggal, Evans hosts ambassadors for food, Sub Alumni Board Past President Tony Landry ’94 Debbie Maxwell, Rebekah Maxwell ’11 and LU Emily Sterling Andrew Guidry and current student March 29 Graduates and their guests McKee Durrall ’72, and Shannon Copeland Chelsea Barnard ’12 Beck Fellow 2012, Pam 4. Randy ’67 and Nancy Best in Dallas Juan Rodriguez Taylor Poyner in Dallas. White Research Institute and lives ’15, B.S. nursing, is ’15, B.S. civil Grande, Ore., where he lives with his sister station of 12News, where he previously worked. Colb Schmidtle, ’15, B.S. political sciences, and Kate (Hammons) 74, B.A. political science, married on January 6, 2018. Colb is a legal clerk at the U.S. Department of the Interior, and Kate is the director of campaign activities at HBW Resources. They live in Washington, D.C. Brett Smith, ’15, M.Ed. administration, is assistant principal at La Grande High School in La Grande, Ore., where he lives with his wife, Kristin. Glenn Cowford, ’15, B.S. communication, is a reporter for the Salt Lake Daily News in Tahkoda, Okla., where he lives. The city of the President and Capital of the Cherokee Nation, which has more than 35,000 citizens and in the main heart of us. He credits his time at LU and roles with the University Press for his current success. Brianna Costafine, ’16, B.S. family and consumer sciences—family studies, is a teacher at Little Cypress Junior High School. As an alumna, she was named the Zeta Lady award for the St. Gamma District of Zeta Tau Alpha Fraternity two years after being awarded the same award for Province XI Gamma of Texas and lives in Convent. Glis M. Gumbs, ’16, M.Ed. school counseling, is a school counselor for Austin school district and lives in Convent. Amanda Prince ’16, B.FA. graphic design, is the social media manager for Amercian Marketing in Beaumont. She graduated in Summer 2016 and lives in Beaumont. LaTasha Richard ’16, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, is a scheduler at Translation and Interpretation Network and lives in Dallas. Shamin Jahan ’16, M.B.A. is a marketing specialist at General Dynamics. She and her husband Tahsin Mujib ’16, M.B.A. in accounting, live in Stamford, Conn. Kristie Kelley ’15, B.A. applied arts and sciences, is principal at Dr. E.B. Richter Elementary School in Denton school district, where she lives. Carre Kity ’15, M.Ed. administration, is assistant principal in his home district less than a year after graduating from LU. He and his wife, Shodie, lives in Arkadelphia. Matthew McGillic, ’16, M.B.A., is a project manager for Enterprise Private Capital Company of Texas and lives in Waco, Texas. Meredith Meyer ’16, M.Ed. administration, is an ESL implementation specialist for Fort Worth Independent school district, where she lives. Brett Nicholson ’16, B.G.S. general studies, is director of football operations at Abilene Christian University and lives in Lubbock. Dara Middle, ’17, M.Ed. administration, teaches at Eagle Nest Middle School of Cimarron Municipal Schools in Cimarron, N.M. She lives in Eagle Nest with her husband, Dennis. Trent Setliff ’17, M.Ed. administration, teaches and coach at Springtown High School and lives in Weatherford with his wife; and child. Katie (Salon) Shoff ’17, B.B.A. advertising, is a marketing communications manager at You to Youth - Whatcom Community Dental Services. She lives in Spring with her husband, Michael. Alumnus named “Young Engineer of the Year” The Texas Society of Professional Engineers, Sabine Chapter, has named alumnus Keith Zotzky ’11, “Young Engineer of the Year”- Zotzky, a professional engineer, who works as a staff engineer for Arencues Wilson & Cole LLC, a civil engineering firm located in Port Arthur, is responsible for drainage designs, land development, and water and sewer design as well as pipeline designs. Zotzky says he comes from a long time of “Aggie engineers,” but decided LU was a better fit for him. “I was supposed to be an Aggie, wanted to be an Aggie- but the smaller class size and the more hands-on and face-to-face instruction was a better fit for me and my personality.”
Q&A with Big Red & Lu

Big Red and Lu are the hardest working birds in the business...at every game cheering the Cardinals, lighting up little faces and making the crowd roar, all while being two of the most influential LU ambassadors on campus and off. For their dedication, they receive high fives wherever they go—and a scholarship—because these super Cardinals are also earning degrees and are as highly valued by LU as our student-athletes, dance team, cheer team and members of the Showcase of Southeast Texas. The pair took a breather to answer a few questions.

Q: What’s your major?
A: I’m an education major, EC-6 Generalist. I hope to teach the younger grade levels, kindergarten through third grade.

Q: Where’s your rootst?
A: Big Red’s nest is located in the Montagne Center, inside of the score board where he has a TV and a microwave.

Q: How did you feel when you got the news of the scholarship?
A: I felt super excited when I got the news. I could not wait to start my collegiate mascot career!

Q: What has the scholarship meant to you?
A: The scholarship has allowed me to attend college and for me to further my education and has let me continue doing what I loved! My time as mascot has given me many different and amazing experiences I would never have had. It has also allowed me to live this secret life here at LU, which is pretty cool.

Q: Favorite mascot moment?
A: I have two favorites, the first was performing at Texas A&M Kyle Field for a football game back in September, and my second is traveling to Cedar Falls, Iowa, for the first FCS playoff game in LU history.

Q: Where’s your favorite perch?
A: Big Red’s favorite place to perch is on top of the highest tree in the quad.

Q: What’s your favorite peck?
A: Big Red’s favorite snack is gummy worms, or sunflower seeds!

Q: Favorite song?
A: Big Red’s favorite song is a tie between ‘The Bird is the Word’ and ‘Shake Your Tail Feather.’

Q: What do you enjoy watching?
A: Big Red loves watching himself on the big screen.

Q: Favorite color?
A: My favorite color is red, because Big Red is always confident.

Q: Favorite motto?
A: ‘Just Wing It’

Q: What are your nicknames?
A: A few nicknames Big Red likes to go by, Big R, Red or The Big Bird in Charge.

Q: What’s your major?
A: Accounting and marketing

Q: Where’s your rootst?
A: Montagne Center downstairs where Lu has her own personal suite.

Q: How did you feel when you got the news of the scholarship?
A: I was excited to have the opportunity to spend more time with Big Red and the students of Lamar University, while cheering on our wonderful athletes!

Q: What has the scholarship meant to you?
A: The scholarship allows me to continue doing what I love and assists me in being the first person from my family to graduate college (which is my biggest goal). I have also met life-long friends and made memories I will cherish forever. Having this scholarship has allowed me to further my education and continue being the mascot which is my absolute passion. It has allowed me to make connections with people I never would have without doing this.

Q: Favorite mascot moment?
A: Always being able to show off my dance moves on the big screen and blaming everything I do on Big Red. Also, watching women’s basketball dominate every season and being a part of their historical winning streak at Lamar University.

Q: Where’s your favorite perch?
A: In my bird bath with my Starbucks frap next to me and hanging out in my nest to binge watch my favorite Netflix shows. Or getting a nice workout in at our wonderful rec center.

Q: What’s your favorite peck?
A: I love, love, love gummy bears, sour worms and what girl doesn’t love chocolate?!

Q: Favorite song?

Q: What are your nicknames?
A: Lu, Lady Red, Miss Big Red, Beautiful, Princess and Sweetheart. (Okay, so I may have made those last three up, but they should be a thing.)
It’s the kind of classroom interruption any faculty member would be happy to accommodate and Ashwini Kucknoor, associate professor of biology, was no exception, although, as the award attests, she is exceptional. Kucknoor is Lamar University’s first recipient of the David J. Beck Teaching Excellence Award. President Ken Evans interrupted one of Kucknoor’s classes to announce her selection for the distinction and present her with a $25,000 check.

“I was shell-shocked and overwhelmed, especially the way it all went down with Dr. Evans walking into my class,” said Kucknoor, who has been at LU since 2010. Kucknoor was one of 73 nominations submitted by students, faculty and administration for the award. Of those 73 nominees, 25 faculty members completed the application process. A selection committee interviews the candidates to determine who best represents “the pinnacle of teaching excellence and whose academic performance brings acclaim to LU.”

“Honestly, a big shout out to my student, Carlo Vanz, who nominated me without my knowledge, as he was leaving LU to pursue his Ph.D. in immunology and microbiology at University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio,” said Kucknoor. “Due to my summer teaching assignment and lack of time, I almost didn’t turn in my application, but decided to give it a try because I did not want to disappoint Carlo.”

Kucknoor, who earned her Ph.D. in molecular microbiology from the University of Calgary in Alberta, Canada, came to LU from Washington State University where she was an assistant professor of research in the School of Molecular Biosciences. Prior to her work at WSU, Kucknoor completed postdoctoral research in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. In June of this year, Kucknoor was one of 22 attendees nationwide to take part in a week-long workshop on DNA barcoding aimed at enhancing student learning by adapting course-based undergraduate research experiences in teaching undergraduate biology courses.

“My professional goal is to reach as many students as I can by adopting most, if not all of the proven styles/strategies out there, by constantly updating my teaching techniques, by taking a personal interest in students’ struggles and successes, and by going that extra mile at times, in the best interest of the students,” said Kucknoor.

Through a generous gift to the Lamar University Foundation, Houston attorney David J. Beck established the award. Each year, a recipient of the award will receive $25,000 and will retain the title of Beck Teaching Excellence Award recipient throughout her or his academic career.

President Evans explains, “Mr. Beck is a great friend of our university. Since 2009 he has inspired and enabled the highest level of scholarship and research through the David J. Beck Fellowships given each year to two outstanding undergraduate students. His most recent unique offering of support is dedicated to recognizing the foundation of the university, our faculty,” Evans said. “Mr. Beck’s generous gift supports the very best in teaching at Lamar University and will have a lasting impact on our faculty and student success.”

“My heartfelt gratitude to Mr. David J. Beck for his generosity and his support to promote faculty excellence,” said Kucknoor. “I consider myself both honored and humbled to be the one out of the 73 amazing colleagues. This award to me is yet another milestone that will keep me going ahead on the same path with the same amount of zeal and passion.”