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

REUNION 2011
FORMER CHEERLEADERS AND FORMER HOMECOMING QUEENS

The Office of Alumni Affairs is planning reunion events for all former cheerleaders and homecoming queens on October 22, culminating with the homecoming football game, which will see the Cardinals square off against Central Arkansas.

If you cheered for Lamar or are a former homecoming queen, please visit Advancement.Lamar.edu/Reunion to be certain that you receive reunion information.

This year will also mark the first-ever Alumni tailgate before the homecoming game. Visit Advancement.Lamar.edu/Reunion for the most current information.

GO CARDS!

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GO CARDS!
From the President

These are exciting and challenging days for Lamar University. Lamar passed a major milestone this spring when it was named a doctoral research university by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Being a doctoral research university—one of two in The Texas State University System, one of seven public Texas universities, and one of 27 public universities in the U.S.—to have this classification—raises Lamar’s visibility and prestige and qualifies the university for opportunities we would otherwise be unable to pursue.

We are delighted to welcome Gregg Lassen to Lamar’s executive team as vice president for finance and operations. He joins Lamar with a track record of success. Gregg has served in higher education since 2000, most recently at U.Tyler, and has nearly two decades of corporate experience to draw on as well.

These are challenging days for the State as legislators struggle to develop a budget for then next biennium. While the final figure is unknown, it is clear that Lamar will see a significant reduction in state support. Careful planning for the anticipated shortfall over the past 18 months has put LU in the best possible position and will enable the university to continue to move forward. Whatever the final reduction, we will deliver the highest quality instruction possible as we embrace research, scholarship and professional service and continue invest in areas that create opportunity for future growth.

And, despite the challenging economy, the alumni and friends of Lamar has continued to support the university through the Investing in the Future comprehensive campaign. Donors have already given more than $78 million to enhance LU for current and future generations. In support of the university through the Investing in the Future comprehensive campaign. Donors can read about several new gifts including: Ray and Mary Moore’s gift creating the Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music; Byron and Connie Dyer’s gift creating the Byron and Connie Dyer Innovation Fund for the Department of Earth and Space Sciences; Mark and Jane Steinhegten’s gift creating the Jane Nelson Steinhegten and Mark Steinhegten Global Fellows Endowment in the College of Business; Henty and Fran Straits’s gift creating the H.D. “Tex” and Emma Straits Baseball Training Facility; Richard and Cathy Price’s gift naming the head coach’s office in the Athletic Complex; and Bart and Martye Simmons ‘78 honor longtime Coach John Payton by naming the John Payton Academic Success Center in the Athletic Complex.

With Cardinal Pride,

James M. Simmons
President
Lamar University

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14 DreamMakers
Alumni and friends are choosing to create vibrant legacies through a variety of endowments
Lamar business students and faculty will have new opportunities to gain first-hand knowledge of the global marketplace, thanks to the Janie Nelson Steinhagen and Mark Steinhagen Global Fellows Endowment in the College of Business.

By studying and observing global businesses in foreign countries, they will witness the economic, cultural and political forces impacting the way business is conducted worldwide.

Their experiences will benefit teachers and students alike to enhance teaching as well as learning.

“The importance of this gift is the fact that this is a globally competitive world, and our students need exposure to the whole world—beyond the world in which they live,” said Enrique “Henry” Venta, dean of the College of Business. “This is one of the largest gifts in the history of the College of Business and represents a tremendous infusion of both monetary support and prestige. It will be a treasured growing experience for us because globalization is very important to our program.”

The fellowship will enhance the college’s position in attracting top-notch graduate students to the master of business administration (MBA) program at Lamar, said Venta.

“It moves us to the next tier of business schools and will help us differentiate ourselves. This gift will increase the size and scale of our graduate study-abroad program.”

Beginning in summer 2012, five or six student Steinhagen Global Fellows will travel abroad, accompanied by a College of Business faculty Steinhagen Global Fellow. They will participate in classes and seminars with other students, visit businesses and experience the culture of the country—all at an advanced level.

“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 normally wouldn’t get to do. We’re pleased to be able to be a part of it,” said Mark Steinhagen, a long-time community and business leader and former Lamar regent. “We have always supported local activities, and there’s nothing more important in Southeast Texas than Lamar University.”

Throughout their lives, Mark and Janie Steinhagen have contributed time, talent and treasure to improve the quality of life in Beaumont and Southeast Texas. Their example inspires current and future generations to make a difference in the lives of others by becoming active volunteers and donors.

Mark Steinhagen is known for his achievements in the business community, and his leadership has contributed substantially to the success of Steinhagen Oil Co., founded in 1940.

“The thing that really sparked our interest to make a contribution, particularly to the College of Business, is the firm leadership that’s been provided by (President) Jimmy and Susan (Simmons) and their entire team. They’ve done a wonderful job. Even though I went to the University of Texas, Lamar is important to this area and to us. Because of all the good things that are going on out there, we decided this was one thing we wanted to do.”

Steinhagen has established a strong legacy of leadership in economic development for the region, serving as president of the Beaumont Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club of Beaumont and being active in numerous civic and community organizations.

H is commitment to Lamar is exemplified by his service as a regent of the Lamar University System from 1979 to 2005 and his gift in 2001 to help create the Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies. A Presidential Scholarship is named in honor of Mark, his brother and their father. Roy Steinhagen established the Janie and Mark Steinhagen Scholarship in Business in honor of his parents.

Also a key supporter of Lamar, Roy Steinhagen served four terms as president of the Lamar University Foundation. “Roy has worked hard out there and done a good job. That was part of our reason for taking a hard look at this program,” said his father. “My background is in business, and when H. enry and the team presented this idea, it appealed to us. We’re pleased we were able to do it.”

Most of Lamar’s MBA students are full-time professionals, Venta said, and, because of the quality of the program, it has attracted international students and students from other states. “Our international students make every class a global experience—a dynamic learning environment would be hard to reproduce elsewhere.”

The Steinhagen fellowships provide a perfect fit—enabling the part-time students from the industrial and professional community the opportunity to study abroad over a period of two weeks, instead of a semester. Most attend classes at night while maintaining full-time jobs and supporting families, so they can’t take a semester to study abroad.

Study will be intense with two-week courses of 40 hours per week, Venta said. Steinhagen Fellows also will have additional responsibilities when they return. “We expect that they will participate in presentations to the entire college. We hope they will take their experiences and infuse them into the student body.”

MBA students have studied abroad for the past two summers and will do so again in 2011. But support has been limited, and faculty members have been unable to participate because of budget constraints.

“We’re excited about the Steinhagen Global Fellows endowment,” said Bradley Mayer, associate dean of the College of Business and director of the MBA program. “Through study abroad, MBA students will benefit in both their personal and professional developments. It will give students a greater perspective of diversity and will increase their connectivity well beyond the region. The best way to gain an understanding of diversity is to visit other countries and begin to understand their cultures. Students who have experienced international study are eager to share their new perspectives with others when they return.

The Steinhagen Global Fellows experience will allow the MBA program to expand its global reach by increasing the number of students who will be able to study abroad as well as increasing the various study-abroad offerings.”

The Steinhagen endowment represents another mark of excellence for the College of Business, which has seen its MBA student population increase from 70 five years ago to more than 200. For the fifth year in a row, the college is listed among Princeton Review’s 300 best business schools, of 1,600 in the country. It has twice been listed in the Aspen Institute’s “Beyond Gray Pinstripes” survey, a ranking of universities focusing on ethics, corporate-social responsibility and sustainability. The college has been accredited for many years by the American Association of Colleges of Business International — placing it among the top 25 percent in the nation and top 2 percent in the world.

Venta expressed appreciation to the Steinhagen family. “The most important thing is the trust they have placed in Lamar University and the College of Business,” he said. “This is an important gift because, even though they are not graduates of Lamar, they believe this university is an important resource.”
Teaching today’s students how to make decisions that pinpoint valuable resources demands not only the best from professors in the classroom and laboratories, but also in the field. Getting faculty researchers and their students into the field to gain first-hand experience takes resources of another kind—money. At times, budgets can be stretched painfully thin—and result in missed opportunities.

Such knowledge comes at a price—thankfully, it is made possible through the Dyer’s generosity. Helping keep those opportunities alive through a million-dollar gift from Houstorians Byron and Connie Dyer, Lamar has created a fund for faculty travel to geologic areas of interest. The fund will help faculty and students participate in laboratory and field studies that will give them the experience they need.

“The Byron and Connie Dyer Innovation Fund is a tremendous gift to the people of Southeast Texas and a wonderful asset for the Department of Earth and Space Sciences,” said Jim Jordan, chair of the Department of Earth and Space Sciences. “Their gift is funded by taking the annual required distributions from their Individual Retirement Account and in turn making a gift of like amount to the Dyer Innovation Fund. While the annual distributions are taxable to the Dyers, they realize a charitable tax deduction for their annual gift to the fund. At the time of their passing, the remainder of the IRA will go to the university to complete the Dyer Innovation Fund free of any estate tax or income tax consequences to their family.”

“Byron’s incredible career in oil and gas exploration has fueled his love for the incredible riches our planet holds—whether that wealth is black gold or crystal formations more beautiful than any cathedral,” President James Simmons said.

The journal American Mineralogist credits Dyer with the discovery in 1957 of the mineral Chamberale, named after the Texas county in which it was first observed. Dyer’s admiration for the incredible range of geologic wonders of the Earth led him to help bring “the best mineral exhibit in Texas outside of the Houston Museum of Natural Science” to Lamar University, Simmons said. Dyer was serving as the vice chairman of the board of advisors for the Earth and space sciences department at the time and helped facilitate the relationship with the museum’s world-class Cullen Exhibit that resulted in a stunning collection of “88 of the most fantastic minerals from famous mines around the world now on permanent loan to Lamar,” Jordan said. The minerals are exhibited in the hallways of Lamar’s Geology Building.

“The Dyer Innovation Fund will help our faculty travel to geologic areas of interest and participate in laboratory and field studies that will give them experience to share with our students,” Jordan said.

Lamar’s Earth and space sciences department has a long history of student and faculty interaction in research, and this profound gift will enhance this tradition, Jordan said. In recent years, Lamar faculty and students have traveled to sites in Panama, Australia, England and, of course, to American sites like Big Bend, the Four Corners and many others. These trips, which often include Lamar geology students, are vital to building thorough scientific understanding, Jordan said.

Likewise, scholarships help the department attract the best and brightest students, and retain geology majors who need a financial boost. In the past year, the department has tripled the number of majors and students, and retain geology majors who need a financial boost. In the past year, the department has tripled the number of majors and students, are vital to building thorough scientific understanding, Jordan said.

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Investing In The Future
THE CAMPAIGN FOR LAMAR UNIVERSITY

Moore milestone
Gift establishes Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music
by Larry Acker

F or more than 60 years, alumnus Ray Moore '50 has been an ardent supporter of Lamar University. Mary, his bride of 56 years, joins him in that passion, and together they have given their time, talents and financial resources to the university and to Southeast Texas.

Lamar University achieved exceptional prominence with the announcement of the naming of the Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music, joining those at Rice, SMU, University of Houston and the University of Texas as one of only five named music departments or schools in the state.

The naming is a lasting memorial in appreciation for a $2 million donation to the College of Fine Arts and Communication from Ray and Mary Moore of Beaumont. The gift brings the university’s Investing in the Future comprehensive campaign total to more than $78 million.

“Future generations of music majors will benefit from the generosity of the Moore family in supporting excellence in musicianship and music education,” said Lamar President James Simmons. “Not only does it ensure the generosity of this couple will live on, it also guarantees the musicians who graduate from this department will keep the music playing.”

Schultz said the gift will “lift the department to new heights,” allowing it to provide even greater academic programs and further enhance the support it gives to the other performing arts within the community.

“Future generations of music majors will benefit from the generosity of the Moore family and will identify Mary and Ray Moore with the esteemed reputation of the Lamar University College of Fine Arts,” said Schultz. “This extraordinary gift is the culmination of a lifetime of support from Mary and Ray Moore,” said Lamar President James Simmons. “Not only does it ensure the generosity of this couple will always be remembered, but it also guarantees the musicians who graduate from this department will keep the music playing.”

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Bart, ’78, ’79, and Martye Sculley Simmons ’78 have made several gifts to Lamar University to inspire its students to succeed. The gifts they’ve chosen to make to the Investing in the Future campaign reflect their pride in LU tradition and a desire for students to be aware of LU’s rich heritage. The couple established the George and Patricia Sculley Scholarship in Business, created an endowment for the College of Business and named the Coach Vernon Glass Field of Champions in tribute to the beloved coach and to the record of achievement of many other coaches and players.

Their latest gift honors longtime Coach John Payton with the naming of the athletics academic center. The John Payton Academic Success Center serves as a resource to help student-athletes excel in the classroom and achieve their personal goals of earning degrees. The gift champions the importance of succeeding in the classroom as well as on the playing field and was made possible by Bart’s success as president of Tritar Producer Services Inc. Bart credits Payton as a seminal influence in his life. He still carries on his PDA a scanned copy of the invitation to play for the Cardinals that Coach Payton sent to him, “It reminds me of what I should live up to,” Bart said. “I respect Coach Payton greatly.”

Payton now serves as special assistant to Athletic Director Larry Tidwell. He spent 13 seasons as an assistant football coach and remains an adjunct professor in the Department of Health and Kinesiology after retiring as assistant professor. He assists Tidwell as a consultant, a counselor to athletes and coaches and as a representative for the athletics department within the Beaumont and Southeast Texas communities.

Some 53 years after earning All-America recognition as a running back at Prairie View A&M University, the Cardinal Hall of Honor member continues to inspire students and athletes.

“Coach Payton has been a very loyal professional, coach, counselor and leader at Lamar University for 40-plus years, and he represents the Cardinal N Alton in a first-class manner each and every day,” said Tidwell.


His guidance has helped innumerable student-athletes apply a winning attitude in both their athletic and academic careers. “Get an education,” Payton tells his students. “Go as high as you can go.” Every student has talent, and you must be educated. We have a great institution here at Lamar. Our students should take advantage of the many opportunities they have here, and, as Winston Churchill said, ‘Never surrender.’ The Academic Success Center is a masterpiece, and I can’t get over the fact that Bart and Martye Simmons thought enough of me to give this to Lamar.”

The John Payton Academic Success Center provides student-athletes with an academic counselor to discuss major selection, course scheduling and degree completion requirements in addition to regular mentoring services. Student-athletes receive letters to help coordinate their absences with their professors and to ensure they can make up missed work and reschedule test dates due to team travel.

Both Bart and Martye Simmons credit Coach Payton for equipping them for success in their professional and personal lives. “The mentors and experiences we had at Lamar helped us grow as individuals and gave us a professional foundation to achieve success for which we are very grateful,” Martye said. “We know students today are enjoying and making the most of similar experiences. Whether or not they realize it at this particular time in their lives, they are part of a big Lamar family.”

Today’s student-athletes stand on the shoulders of dedicated and loyal Lamar Cardinals such as Coach Payton, allowing them to reach for an even brighter future—one Bart and Martye Simmons are happy to share—CH
This training facility is one of the best in the Southland Conference," said Jim Gilligan, head coach for Lamar baseball. "It is a great recruiting tool, and it’s obviously advantageous when you can practice rain or shine."

Like many young men, "Tex" Strait joined the Army after Pearl Harbor. He married Emma in 1943 while on leave from Fort Knox. He was assigned to the 8th Armored Division and fought in the Battle of the Bulge, a pivotal battle in the history of World War II. Tex and Emma were both huge baseball fans. As a teenager, Tex traveled around Texas with his father, who played second base for semi-pro teams.

Emma’s father was also a baseball player, so it’s no wonder the Strait family developed such a love for America’s favorite pastime. Emma had a passion for the music of Glenn Miller and Benny Goodman and loved to dance. She recalled listening and dancing to Big Band music at the old Harvest Club where current LU President Jimmy Simmons was a frequent entertainer.

With her unwavering support, Tex began his career in 1954 with Culligan Inc., eventually making his way to Beaumont where he bought the Culligan dealership in 1968. The Straits were members of St. Anne Catholic Church for 35 years and active members of the Catholic Adults Club. They were also involved with their community. Tex was a 30-year member of the Downtown Rotary Club, past president of the Sierra Club and a founding member of the Beaumont Literary Guild. He coached Little League baseball, winning the league championship in 1969. A respected businessman and a leader in the water treatment industry, Tex was a founding member of the Texas Water Quality Association and served on the national Culligan Dealer Advisory Council.

While Emma was a high school graduate and attended trade school, Tex accomplished all this armed with only a ninth-grade education and Emma’s constant love and support. They instilled in their children the importance of an education, and they led by example, showing their children firsthand how to live and how to treat others. They were role models for their children and for everyone who knew them well.

"The donation we were honored to make would never have been possible had it not been for all the work and sacrifice of Mom and Dad," said Henry. "We are honored to stand on their shoulders.

Tex and Emma had been married 59 years when Emma died in 2002. Tex passed away 10 months later at the age of 83. Together, they raised eight children who gave them 21 grandchildren.
PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARSHIPS
The GLORIA SWARTS LOCKE AND CHARLES BLAYKELY LOCKE PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARSHIP IN THEATRE was established by the Helen Caldwell Locke and Curtis Blaykely Locke Charitable Trust directed by Gloria and Charles Locke. Charles '44 and Gloria, now retired, were owners of the Forest Lawn Funeral Home and Cemetery and the Memory Gardens Cemetery.

The MIKE AND BETTE TURNER PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARSHIP was established by Dallas residents Mike '71 and Bette (Woodward) Turner '70 in recognition of the quality education and social experiences they encountered while attending Lamar. Mike is a member of the Lamar University College of Engineering Advisory Council.

The CHARLES V. AND FRANCES W. ALBERTO SCHOLARSHIP was established by Charles and Frances (Wimberly) Alberto '56, '74. Charles is a retired director of employee and labor relations for the U.S. Postal Service. Frances is a retired teacher, and they live in Beaumont.

The MYRA KEEN CALDWELL AND HERBERT KIMBELL CALDWELL SCHOLARSHIP was established through the generosity of the H. Edward Garner in honor of their children Carole and Bob Garner. This scholarship is given in memory of the parents of Myra Caldwell Loecke. The SANDRA FRENCH CLARK SCHOLARSHIP IN CHORAL MUSIC was established by Sandra (French) Clark '76. Clark is a trial lawyer with Mabry/Velmer in Beaumont. She serves on the Lamar University College of Fine Arts and Communication Advisory Council.

The ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP was established by former students of the electrical engineering department. Lasting efforts to raise the funds for this endowment was A. Scott McCuley '81.

The CAROLE AND BOB GARNER SCHOLARSHIP IN BUSINESS was established by Tommy J. and H. Edward Garner in honor of their children Carole and Bob Garner. This is the second endowed scholarship established by the Garners, who recently relocated from Woodville to Keauze, Ore.

The DR. HOWELL H. GWIN JR. SCHOLARSHIP IN HISTORY was established by his mother, Elizabeth Smith Gwin, to honor his commitment to scholarship, teaching and academic service. Dr. Gwin began teaching at Lamar in 1962 and retired in 2007 as Professor Emeritus.

Three endowed scholarships, the ALAN R. HEFTY SCHOLARSHIP IN ACCOUNTING, the CHERIE HICKETT HEFTY SCHOLARSHIP IN EDUCATION and the HEATHER R. HEFTY SCHOLARSHIP IN CHEMICAL ENGINEERING, have been established by Alan '69 and Cherrie (McVey) Hefty '70. Alan is president of the accounting firm Alan R. Hefty & Co. PLLC, and Cherrie is a retired Beaumont area educator.

The DR. BELLE HEAD HOLM MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP was established by colleagues and former students of Belle M. Ed M. Holm, former LU women’s athletic director and health, physical education and recreation department head.

The FLOYD M. MIZE SCHOLARSHIP IN BUSINESS was established by Floyd Mize '40, '58. Mize spent much of his career at South Dakota State University where he worked in student personnel and raised funds for student scholarships. Mize resides in Lufkin.

The RENAISSANCE HOSPITAL SCHOLARSHIP was established by the Renaissance Hospital Scholarship Foundation for undergraduate baccalaureate students in nursing. This gift was made possible at the direction of alumni Drs. R. Atteberry '73 and Marilyn (Rogers) Arrell '74.

The SOUTH TEXAS SECTION SOCIETY OF PLASTICS ENGINEERS SCHOLARSHIP was established by the South Texas Section of the Society of Plastic Engineers for undergraduate and graduate students who are science and engineering majors interested in polymer research.

The ENRIQUE V. VENTA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP IN ACCOUNTING was established by his family to honor his lifelong dedication to the accounting profession. Born in Cuba, Venta moved his family to the United States in 1963. Venta’s son, Enrique “Henry” R. Venta, has served as dean of the College of Business at Lamar since 2002.

ACADEMIC AND PROGRAM SUPPORT
The BYRON AND CONNIE Dyer GEOSCIENCES INNOVATION FUND was established by Byron '57 and Connie Dyer to provide field study opportunities for the Department of Earth and Space Sciences. Byron was named a distinguished alumnus in 2009 and currently serves on the Earth and Space Sciences Advisory Board. The Dyes live in Houston.

The THOMAS C. MAYS IV SCHOLABSHIPS were endowed by Thomas Mays '72 who is a member of the marching band under the direction of James Simmon, the current president of Lamar University. Mays lives in Denver.

To begin your own endowment or to add a gift to an existing endowment, please contact the Lamar University Foundation at (409) 880-2117.
Low-maintenance mesquite flooring, brushed stainless architectural accents and geometric “cloud” ceilings reminiscent of the shapes of the Sydney Opera House coalesce into a renovation that rebuilt the Music Building from the floor up. Fitting new concepts, needs and desires of music faculty into an existing footprint demanded creativity from the architects. After 24 months of planning and design and 18 months of construction, the final fanfare is a beautiful blend of form and function.

VLR Architects Inc. won the contract over several architectural firms because of its previous work on the campus’s Chemistry Building and other Texas State University System sites, its specialized background in education buildings, its experience in designing performance centers and music facilities, and its access to sound engineers and consultants.

That’s my reward—to hear the excitement in someone’s voice who saw the ‘before’ and now sees the ‘after.’ It is a fine arts building, so we wanted to do something different there to enhance that sense.

—LYNN WHORTON, director, facilities planning, design and construction

Normal walls are 4 3/4 inches thick. Most walls in the building are now 15 inches thick, with layers of gypsum board, sound insulation and air space. The majority of doors used in the building are high-tech, specialized doors for soundproofing.

For the Rothwell Recital Hall flooring, designers chose mesquite wood for its beauty and unique end grain cut as well as its endurance in combating wear and tear.

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The performance hall incorporates an in-the-round design with two main areas: a choral area, fixed seating and balcony so it can accommodate different applications. Each area has its own viewing screen for classroom use, and a flying wall can descend from the ceiling to provide a backdrop for a speaker.

More suspended geometric ceiling panels—clouds—in the Rothwell Recital Hall, the drapes for staging and the bowl for fixed seating helped the acoustics exceed even the consultant’s expectations for the overall design.
The benefits of a university extend beyond the education it provides to include significant economic activities that enrich the communities it serves. A recent study completed determined that Lamar University generates economic activity of more than $310 million a year.

Collecting and analyzing statistics that are valuable for decision makers is the life work of Ray Perryman, founder and president of The Perryman Group, creators of the US Multi-Regional Impact Assessment System. The Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce asked Perryman to determine the economic activity Lamar University creates in Southeast Texas. Perryman collected data and, using models that summed the effects of operations and out-of-area student and visitor spending, derived estimates of the total annual impact of Lamar University on the local, regional, and state economies.

Lamar employs more than 1,400 faculty and staff and generates substantial economic impact through employment, organizational operations, and student and visitor spending.

For the Beaumont-Port Arthur metro area, the total annual ongoing impact of Lamar University includes $263.1 million in output and 3,878 jobs. Extending the study to the greater Southeast Texas region, the economic benefits rise to $310.9 million in output and 3,976 jobs. For the state as a whole, Lamar University generates $310.8 million in output and creates 4,260 jobs.

This economic activity also creates tax receipts to the state and local governments and capital investment, and helps promote economic development.

— BK S

The Perryman Group

The Perryman Group (TPG) has performed numerous impact assessments for The University of Texas at Austin, Texas A&M University, The University of Texas Medical Branch, M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, the University of Kansas Medical School, Navarro College, UT Health Science Center, UT-Tyler, UT-San Antonio, Baylor College of Medicine, Baylor University, and many others.

In addition, TPG recently completed a study for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that examined the overall economic impacts of achieving the goals of the “Closing the Gap” initiative of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, as well as a major pro bono study illustrating the effects of creating additional Tier One universities in the state.
Rafael Tadmor insists that his perspective is no different than anyone else’s. “I don’t think I see the world any differently than anyone else, and I don’t know what other scientists do for fun,” he said, “but I know what I like to do for fun.”

The avid runner and father of two enjoys reading the newspaper and watching basketball (his favorite team: Tel Aviv). But at a young age, Tadmor was shown the universe that exists under the microscope, and what he saw changed the way he viewed his world.

“As a child growing up in Israel,” Tadmor said, “I had a few ideas of what I wanted to be when I grew up—a pilot, a scientist, or I wanted to have my own shop to sell watermelons. The last one was my dream. I thought that I could make a good living for my family this way.”

A trip to Jerusalem as a very young boy was Tadmor’s first exposure to science. “I saw archaeologists excavating parts of the city. They were digging out these very old and very interesting pieces of broken clay pottery. When we went trick-or-treating, by the second house, he asked to trade masks with me,” Tadmor said.

“When we went trick-or-treating, he wanted to trick me. He would put on a Darth Vader—and he is a very intriguing character? “Oh, yes,” said Tadmor, “I’ve seen all the Star Wars movies. My favorite characters are Han Solo, because he was funny and Darth Vader—he is a very intriguing character. In fact, I was once Darth Vader for Halloween. Actually, my son wanted to be Darth Vader, so we bought this realistic helmet-like mask that was very heavy and uncomfortable. I knew he wouldn’t want to wear it all night, so we also bought a much simpler version.”

In 2009, Tadmor and a group of his students performed groundbreaking experiments that changed the way science defines force and motion. The paper detailing the discovery was published in Physical Review Letters, one of the country’s most prestigious scientific journals, bringing both Tadmor and Lamar unprecedented scientific recognition.

“The ripple effects from Tadmor’s research are difficult to predict. “When the apple fell on Newton’s head, he wrote some rules of physics. He had no idea these rules would send satellites into outer space. He did it because he was curious, not because he knew where his findings would lead. The research performed here at Lamar may open doors to other fields of technology that we are not even aware of yet,” Tadmor said.

But it is his students’ own scientific curiosity that is most inspiring to Tadmor as a professor. “Science is theoretical, so I encourage them to question everything,” he said. As a father to Daniel, 14, and Gafia, 8, does he see the same spark of curiosity in his own children? “They grasp more than I ever did,” he said. “They are much more curious, more driven.”

When grown-ups told me that the tiny dot in the night sky is actually Venus, a huge planet in the universe, or that germs existed, I thought, ‘How could this be?’ But, looking at the Petri dish in my uncle’s lab, I was convinced they were there. —RAFAEL TAMDOR

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“Once again, Tadmor’s perspective would be shaped by unique circumstances. “My last year of undergraduate study took place during the Gulf War when Scud missiles were being shot at Israel,” said Tadmor. “I don’t know if these were traditional or chemical warfare weapons, the government issued gas masks.”

“Once, while studying for an exam, two classmates and I heard the alarm go off that meant missiles were targeting our area, so we took our masks and hid in the bathroom. So here we are, breathing through these masks and studying for an exam at the same time. It was great that we could stay focused despite the terrorist threat, but it was a very weird situation, but we thought, ‘Is this scientist also a fan of science fiction?’”

In 2007, Tadmor received the first faculty member from Exxon Mobil, in recognition of his outstanding research and discovery. Tadmor was the first faculty member from the College of Engineering to receive the honor.

Tadmor’s lecture drew comparisons from both the ancient and modern worlds, like Galileo, Newton and Einstein, to describe the evolving scientific definitions of force and motion; however, he also used pop culture references to distinguish between supernatural and scientific forces, including characters from X-Men, Star Trek and Star Wars.

“I think Tadmor’s students are much more curious, more driven.”

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Sometimes, when the silence between two of these2004, his inter- est in the pin-
ning phenomena exhibited by water molecules led him to write theoretical equations about the volume of contact angles of drops on surfaces. These equations are currently the only way to calculate these volumes.

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In October, Tadmor was named the 2010 Distinguished Faculty Lecturer, sponsored by Exxon Mobil, in recognition of his outstanding research and discovery. Tadmor was the first faculty member from the College of Engineering to receive the honor.

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December Lamar graduates included the first group of Army civil engineers enrolled at Lamar University in the Army Logistics Leadership Program housed at the Texarkana Army Depot. The 11 participants from across the United States earned master of engineering degrees in additive manufacturing.

Pictured, from left, are, front row, Christopher Lyman, Forest Hill, Md.; Andrew Ruddick, Rockford, Mich.; Marc Loertscher, Midway, Utah; and Brian Schmitt, Texarkana, and, back row, Meghan Murphy, Planteville, Wis.; Eboni Crayton, Montgomery, Ala.; Dominic Pham, Davenport, Iowa; Nicholas Steinhauser, Louden, Tenn.; Clinton Hanson, Texarkana; Joshua Arrington, Heber City, Utah; and Monica Tubbs, Birmingham, Ala.

Many Lamar alumni and friends visited during a dinner to introduce newly appointed Chancellor Brian McCall.

December cum laude graduate Allen Rienstra of Beaumont receives a congratulatory hug from proud mother Ellen (Walker) Rienstra ’62, ’80.

Jim Gilligan ‘69 and his wife, Lafiname, wait at a ride-down on Gilligan Way, the new name for former East Houston Avenue. After the ribbon-cutting by President Jimmy McCall, chairman of the Jim Gilligan Way Support Committee; Mayor Becky Ames; Big Red and President James Simmons get together before the commencement ceremony Dec. 18, 2010.

Regent David Montagne ’74, Student Government Association President Thaddeaus Green, TSUS Chancellor Brian McCall and President James Simmons get together before the commencement ceremony Oct. 18, 2008.

Steven Zavi and President James Simmons present ExxonMobil’s Kathleen Jackson with a poster promoting the 2010 Distinguished Faculty Lecture, which ExxonMobil sponsors annually.

Steven Zavi and President James Simmons present ExxonMobil’s Kathleen Jackson with a poster promoting the 2010 Distinguished Faculty Lecture, which ExxonMobil sponsors annually.

Donna Wilsker, second from right, receives congratulations from nursing department colleagues Rochelle Wright, Eileen Deges Curl and Dianna Rivers after Wilsker received Lamar University’s Julie and Ben Rogers Community Service Award Nov. 10.

At the podium, Juan Zabala ’07, executive director of Alumni Affairs, thanks Beaumont City Council for a proclamation issued Oct. 5, to encourage citizens throughout the community to join the Red, White & You Homecoming celebration. Joining him were, from left to right, Lisa Amanasova, Robergr; Megan Barret; Cale Blyl; and Searles; Sandra (Pat) Abbage ’08, ’10; Tim Abbage ’72, ’74; ’83; Henry Ogden ’74; and Ray Woodard, head football coach.

Josanna Wissler, second from right, receives congratulations from nursing department colleagues Rochelle Wright, Eileen Desps Curr and Dianna Rivers after Wissler received Lamar University’s Julie and Ben Rogers Community Service Award Nov. 10.

Distinguished Faculty Lecture. Steven Zavi, center, joins his chemical engineering department colleagues Photograph, Dee Davis Campbell; Danielle Chen and John Gossage, from left, in reception in his honor Oct. 11.
LU achieves Carnegie doctoral/research classification

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has included Lamar University in its prestigious list of doctoral/research universities, placing Lamar in the upper echelon of degree-granting institutions nationally.

Being a doctoral research university—one of two in The Texas State University System, one of seven public Texas universities, and one of 27 public universities in the U.S. to have this classification—raises Lamar’s visibility and its prestige, said Steve Doblin, provost and vice president for academic affairs at Lamar. “It qualifies us for a variety of opportunities we would otherwise be unable to pursue,” he said.

“This elevation in Lamar University’s designation by the Carnegie Foundation from a ‘large master’s institution’ to a ‘doctoral research university’ is, in my view, a milestone in the history of our institution,” said Doblin. “The major factors considered in granting this classification are doctoral degrees granted and research funding attracted, so this is a real tribute to the hard work and productivity of our faculty.”

The Carnegie Foundation classifications identify meaningful similarities and differences among institutions. From its inception, the Carnegie classification’s purpose has been to assist those conducting research on higher education. Researchers need a way to reference the great diversity of colleges and universities in the United States, and classifications enable them to identify groups of roughly comparable institutions. The primary audience is the research community, including academic researchers and institutional research staff as well as other education analysts.

Record enrollment shows growth in on-campus students

Lamar University has set another all-time enrollment record. Official figures for the fall 2010 semester record 14,388 students—the largest enrollment in the university’s 87-year history. Growth of more than 1,100 on-campus students contributed to the number, Smith said. This improves upon recent years, when Lamar’s enrollment growth has been attributable largely to its distance learning programs.

Even in light of tightened admission standards imposed last year, first-time-in-college freshmen numbers grew as well, up 6.7 percent compared to last year. Smith sees the return of Cardinal football and the marching band, the opening of Cardinal Village V, improved recruitment and retention efforts, new academic and campus programs, and the slack local economy as playing key roles in the increase.

The university is also seeing increases in other important measures of its incoming freshmen. The percentage of entering freshmen with a 3.0 or higher SAT score increased a record 23.5 percent compared to 2009. Growth in research was another important measure of its incoming freshmen. The percentage of entering freshmen who graduated in the top quarter of their high school class grew to 45 percent, up from 40.3 percent in 2009.

Lamar University partners with Kaohsiung University of Taiwan

Lamar University has joined Taiwan’s National Kaohsiung University of Applied Sciences (KUAS) to establish a variety of collaborative programs between the two universities.

Planned programs include two online master’s degree programs in family and consumer sciences (one with an emphasis in hospitality administration and one with an emphasis in event management), study abroad programs and a joint bachelor’s degree program.

“We want our students to study abroad and encourage them to do so, but many of them cannot. If we can’t send our students out to the world, we’ll bring the world to them,” said Steve Doblin, provost and vice president for academic affairs. “In every discipline, an understanding of the world is important to success. That’s why we’re so committed to this.”

Doblin noted that the agreement with KUAS is the most recent among several collaborations. Lamar University has undertaken with universities around the world.

Academic Open House welcomes high-ability students

More than 370 high-achieving high school juniors and seniors explored what Lamar University has to offer by attending Academic Open House last Nov. 13.

“Today’s event is specially designed for high-ability students who are interested in talking with Lamar University deans and professors about their academic pursuits and competing for top scholarships,” said Jim Rush, director of academic services.

“These students owe it to themselves to seriously consider the competitive programs and generous scholarships we offer that might not be available to them elsewhere,” Rush said.

High school juniors and seniors ranking in the top 5 percent of their class and/or with SAT scores of 1100 and higher are encouraged to attend the event each fall to learn more about Lamar’s academic offerings.

Spring Open House introduces the even broader range of students to the benefits of attending Lamar University.

Academic Open House reception

Investing in the Future: Lamar partners with Kaohsiung University of Taiwan

14,388 LARGEST ENROLLMENT

in Lamar’s 87 YEAR HISTORY

While we have done everything we can

to reduce costs,” Simmons said, “some of

the cuts will have to be offset by tuition and fee increases. We understand that tuition increases are difficult, but we remain a great value in higher education with a tuition price lower than our peer institutions.”

Even during this challenging time, Simmons said, donors to the Investing in the Future comprehensive campaign have enabled LU to reach the three-quarters mark with more than $78 million raised toward the $100 million goal. “These gifts translate into scholarships, faculty and facilities,” Simmons said. “Lamar would be a much different place without the support of our donors.”

Another recent milestone underpinning Lamar’s success is the re-affirmation of the university’s accreditation by the Council on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), the “stamp of approval” that university programs meet or exceed national standards.

“I believe we educated SACS on quality online programs,” Simmons said. Lamar is a national leader in the online delivery of public education and graduates more master of education students than any other university in the country.

“Ohline distance education is a fast-moving, exciting domain, and Lamar is at the head of the pack,” Simmons said. Through the university’s academic partnership program and traditional Blackboard courses, more than 4,000 students are exclusively online.

Growth in research was another milestone, Simmons noted, with $12 million in research underway at the university.

“We are a long way from where we began several years ago with $3 million,” he said.
Faculty notes

Sandra Harris, professor and director of the doctoral program in educational leadership, has been selected to receive the 2011 Living Legend award by the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA). Harris is in her seventh year on the Lamar faculty. She served as a teacher, principal and superintendent during the early years of her career... The Texas State University System honored professors Keith Carter and Pamela Saur as new regents' professors, the system’s highest faculty award. A professor of art, an internationally acclaimed photographer and a faculty member since 1989, Carter holds the Waltes Chair in Visual and Performing Arts. A faculty member since 1988, Saur is a professor of German in the Department of English and Modern Languages. The honor of regents' professors is conferred on professors who demonstrate excellence and exemplary achievement in teaching, research and publication, and service to the regents of The Texas State University System adopt ed a resolution designating Professor Joseph L. “Joe” Pizzo Jr., who retired in May 2010 after more than 46 years of service, as distinguished professor emeritus of physics, a title he will hold in perpetuity. The resolution describes Pizzo as “an engaging instructor who punctuated his lectures and laboratories with captivating demonstrations and exhibits that translated the esoteric to the common for his students,” earning him the reputation as a master teacher. Pizzo’s reputation for instructional excellence reached the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, where he twice served as a visiting professor of physics... Theresa Hefner-Babb, assistant professor of library services, is one of 34 librarians nationwide to be selected for participation in the Association of College & Research Libraries’ Immersion Program. This immersive, 4-day interactive training course designed to enhance the ability of academic library and information professionals to meet the needs of the higher education community. In addition to Lamar University, institutions whose librarians were accepted for participation include Harvard, Michigan, Clemson, M. University and William & Mary... Ruhai Wang, associate professor in the Phillip M. Drayer Department of Electrical Engineering, has recently been appointed as an Overseas Achievement Professor by the Harkin Institute of Technology... Lamar University’s nursing department received one of six grants awarded by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board under the Nursing Innovation Grant Program. Lamar qualified for the Best Practices category in Clinical Education Competitions in which award selections were based on project quality and reviewed by several higher education faculty members from across Texas as well as a Texas Board of Nursing member... "Our methodology set Lamar apart from other universities for this grant," said Gina Hale, Dishman Department of Nursing retention coordinator and SUCCSS program manager. “We really had some innovative and creative ideas that were based on sound educational practices.”

Grant boosts nursing student success

Nursing program students are benefitting from additional resources targeted at improving their classroom success. JoAnne Gay Dishman Department of Nursing was awarded a two-year grant that focuses on keeping more students in the nursing program and increasing the number of graduates, especially those who are minorities and international students. The grant project, called Students Understanding Course Content Essential for Success in School (SU-CCESS), received $258,204 from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and an additional $25,820 from Baptist Beaumont Hospital. “We are trying to improve the nursing workforce within the community by putting more nurses into our hospitals,” said Eileen Dege Curi, Dishman Department of Nursing chair and SU-CCESS principal project director. “One of our goals is to have a nursing workforce that reflects the community in which the nurses live and work.”

Gerald Bryant, chief nursing officer for Baptist Beaumont Hospital said, “Providing funding to our local university will provide health benefits to the entire community. It is imperative that we are proactive in preparing for the forecasted shortfall of nurses in Texas. Statistics reveal that by the year 2012, nurses in their 50s are expected to retire faster than the number who enter the nursing workforce, accounting for almost one quarter of the R.N. population. As many of these nurses are preparing to exit the health care arena, Lamar and Baptist Beaumont Hospital have partnered to make sure that quality nursing is available in Southeast Texas.”

SU-CCESS will consist of tools and resources for student retention used previously by other universities while building on traditional program practices. Online resource modules, Skills for Academic Success seminars, academic workshops and a resource center will be available for students needing assistance with complex content. Laptops loaded with nursing software will also be available for nursing students to check out to help them improve classroom performance.

Lamar University, a Hometown University, was named a Best Business School by Princeton Review. Lamar University has once again been recognized as an outstanding business school by The Princeton Review. The education services company features LU in the 2011 edition of its “The Best 300 Business Schools.” The university has been included on the list since it began in 2005. “This shows that even though we’re a regional school, we’re a national school in terms of the quality of the education we provide,” said College of Business Dean Enrique “Enny” Venta. According to Robert Franek, Princeton Review senior vice president of publishing, TU is a top choice for students nationwide who wish to pursue a degree in business. According to Mr. Venta, a student who had to choose among the 300 business schools in this book based on his high opinion of their academic programs and offerings, as well as our review of institutional data we offered several different business schools. We also strongly consider the candid opinions of students attending the schools who rate and report on their campus experiences at our schools on our website,” www.PrincetonReview.com, as one of the best institutions they could attend to earn an M.B.A. The M.B.A. courses at Lamar are available on campus, online and both online and traditional. The reports by the American Chemical Society Committee on Professional Education published in last August’s issue of Chemical & Engineering News revealed that Lamar University once again led the nation in master’s degrees in chemical engineering.

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Nursing program students are benefitting from additional resources targeted at improving their classroom success. JoAnne Gay Dishman Department of Nursing was awarded a two-year grant that focuses on keeping more students in the nursing program and increasing the number of graduates, especially those who are minorities and international students. The grant project, called Students Understanding Course Content Essential for Success in School (SU-CCESS), received $258,204 from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and an additional $25,820 from Baptist Beaumont Hospital. “We are trying to improve the nursing workforce within the community by putting more nurses into our hospitals,” said Eileen Dege Curi, Dishman Department of Nursing chair and SU-CESS principal project director. “One of our goals is to have a nursing workforce that reflects the community in which the nurses live and work.”

Gerald Bryant, chief nursing officer for Baptist Beaumont Hospital said, “Providing funding to our local university will provide health benefits to the entire community. It is imperative that we are proactive in preparing for the forecasted shortfall of nurses in Texas. Statistics reveal that by the year 2012, nurses in their 50s are expected to retire faster than the number who enter the nursing workforce, accounting for almost one quarter of the R.N. population. As many of these nurses are preparing to exit the health care arena, Lamar and Baptist Beaumont Hospital have partnered to make sure that quality nursing is available in Southeast Texas.”

SU-CCESS will consist of tools and resources for student retention used previously by other universities while building on traditional program practices. Online resource modules, Skills for Academic Success seminars, academic workshops and a resource center will be available for students needing assistance with complex content. Laptops loaded with nursing software will also be available for nursing students to check out to help them improve classroom performance.

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TSU S chancellor keynotes winter commencement

Lamar University conferred 1,014 degrees during two ceremonies at winter commencement Dec. 18 at the Mонтague Center. Brian McCall, chancellor of the Texas State University System, delivered keynote addresses.

Graduates hailed from 11 countries, 20 states outside Texas and 216 cities and towns in Texas. The degrees include doctor of engineering and one doctor of philosophy in chemical engineering.

When TSU S regents appointed McCall in April 2010 to serve as chancellor, they turned to a legislative leader with a solid track record of accomplishments. In the Texas House of Representatives, he was speaker pro tem for four years, chairman, they turned to a legislative leader with a solid track record of accomplishments. In the Texas House of Representatives, he was speaker pro tem for four years, when TSU S regents appointed McCall in April 2010 to serve as chancellor, they turned to a legislative leader with a solid track record of accomplishments. In the Texas House of Representatives, he was speaker pro tem for four years, chairman of the House Calendars Committee and was a member of the Higher Education Committee. Texas Monthly magazine named him one of the 100 Best Legislators of the 2009 session. Previously McCall served as president of Westminster Capital Corp., an investment firm focused on acquisitions primarily in software and technology.

Bridges to Life founder addresses violent crime trauma

John Sage, founder of the Bridges to Life prison rehabilitation program, spoke Oct. 28 during a program presented by the Lamar University Student Government Program. Sage, who also serves as executive director of Bridges to Life, has spoken at Lamar several times to report on the continued growth of the program, which began in Beaumont. Although he has spent most of his professional life in real estate and finance, Sage has earned honors for his efforts on behalf of Bridges to Life. In 1993, Sage’s younger sister, Marilyn, was murdered. The two killers were apprehended and sentenced to death.

A former several years of trauma, rage and grief, this life-changing experience inspired John to found and direct Bridges to Life in an effort to empower victims and rehabilitate prisoners,” said Bridges to Life spokesman Jesse Dorton, an instructor of English and modern languages at Lamar.

Bridges to Life, a faith-based, non-profit charity, takes victims of crime, members of their families, and other volunteers into prisons in an effort to reduce recidivism and, thereby, effect a consequent reduction in crime. Dorton said, “Since 2000, Bridges to Life has experienced significant growth, with more than 11,000 inmate graduates, 80 volunteers and programs in 33 prisons throughout Texas, he said.

LU hosts Commissioner of Higher Education

Lamar U. Hosts Commissioner of Higher Education, Dec. 8 to meet with higher education and K-12 leaders in Southeast Texas. The discussions included proposed funding changes for Texas colleges and universities as well as the progress Texas has made increasing the number of Texans going to college and new initiatives to increase the percentage of college students successfully completing a degree. Also, the Southeast Texas P-16 Council discussed new educational development initiatives at Lamar University. The university’s distance learning division is seeking K-12 input on new online courses and how to implement them to best help K-12 schools meet education and reporting goals.

Paredes’ goal is to close the gaps between leadership and cognitive development. The goal is include creating a college-going culture in every pre-K-12 school in Texas, increasing the rigor of the high school senior year, and aligning high-school exit standards and college-entrance standards. At the higher education level, Paredes’ goals include increasing state and federal financial aid, overhauling developmental education and increasing transfer rates from two-year to four-year institutions. Concurrently, he seeks to improve the quality of undergraduate education and increase graduation rates while improving educator quality for pre and in-service teachers.

South African ambassador speaks about multiculturalism

Eric Best, ambassador to the Republic of South Africa from 2006 to 2009, spoke Oct. 20 as part of Lamar’s Cultural Enrichment Series. Best has worked with the United Nations on projects including domestic and foreign relations, AIDS relief and nutrition and consumer services. In January 2009, he was named vice president for global initiatives at Texas A&M University. His roles include providing leadership for the university’s international and global initiatives programs.

Best discussed the importance of multiculturalism in gaining international perspective. “We are incredibly fortunate to have had such a diverse dynamic individual speak on our campus,” Best said. “By the time they leave our lecture, I believe our students will understand the importance of getting involved in international relations. Working for America in an overseas capacity is beneficial, not only for our students, but also for the country’s image, economy and global stability,” said Dominic Beggs, assistant professor of political science and member of the university’s Cultural Enrichment Series committee.

New VP joins admin team

GREGG LASSEN has joined LU’s administrative team as vice president of finance and operations. He comes from the University of Texas at Tyler, where he had served as executive vice president since 2006 with a portfolio that includes all business affairs and student affairs functions.

“Gregg brings a wealth of expertise and experience to the position,” said President James Simmons. “He has served in higher education since 2000 and has nearly two decades of corporate experience to draw on as well. He is not only adept at managing the financial and business operations of a major university, he is also a life-long learner who has continually enlarged his own world through education,” Simmons said. “I am very pleased to welcome such a champion of higher education to the administrative team.”

Previously, Lassen worked at the University of Southern Mississippi and University of Phoenix, where he began his career as a faculty member in the Marketing Department of Business. He became a department chair and was associate dean before moving to Southern Mississippi. His higher education is a second career for Lassen; he spent 18 years in the energy industry, with assignments including financial and commercial management, regulatory affairs, business development, negotiations, marketing and auditing in a large corporate environment. He holds a doctorate in international affairs from the University of Southern Mississippi and a law degree from the University of Houston.
Beyond the classroom

Kathleen Doss, a senior computer science major from Beaumont, earned the first-place award for a research paper presented at the prestigious Association for Computing Machinery’s Student Paper Competition. Doss, a recipient of the Lamar University Computer Science Scholarship, earned the award for her paper, “An Inductive Proof for Program Termination Analysis,” at the 2010 ACM International Conference on Object-Oriented Programming Systems, Languages, and Applications. The paper was authored by Doss and her faculty mentor, Dr. Steven Anderson, professor of computer science.

Doss’s paper focused on the automatic induction of program termination proofs, a critical aspect of program correctness and reliability. Her work demonstrates a novel method for automating the generation of termination proofs for computer programs, which is a significant contribution to the field of computer science.

Doss is currently working on her senior thesis, which extends her research on program termination analysis. Her work has gained recognition not only at the conference but also at other academic gatherings, further highlighting the importance of her contribution to the field of computer science.

LU raises admissions standards for Fall 2011

As part of a continuing effort to enhance the academic environment at Lamar University, undergraduate admission requirements will rise for students entering the university in or after Fall 2011.

“We want to do our best to attract and retain good students and have found that having appropriate admissions standards is one way to do that,” said Kevin Smith, senior associate provost. “These steps are part of a long-range plan to enhance admissions standards to stay competitive with our Texas public university peers.”

To qualify for unconditional admission to Lamar University, students must be graduated from an accredited high school with at least 14 credits in specific college-preparatory courses and must achieve a certain class rank and SAT or ACT score.

Applicants ranked in the Top 10 percent of their high school classes have no minimum SAT or ACT score requirement. Under new admissions standards, those in the Top 11 percent to Top 25 percent must have a minimum score of 18 on the ACT or 850 on the SAT (combined math and critical reading). Applicants in the second quarter of their high school class must have a minimum score of 19 on the ACT or 900 on the SAT. Those in the third quarter must have a minimum of 24 on the ACT or 1000 on the SAT.

Lamar will continue to review individual cases on a case-by-case basis.

Mentoring program a finalist for Texas Higher Education Award

Lamar University’s African-American Male Preparations and Professional Connections mentorship program was one of 10 finalists for the 2010 Texas Higher Education Star Award. The award recognizes programs that work diligently to provide valuable services to Texas and its people by helping to close the gaps in education.

“Research shows that if a student identifies with a university, then he is more likely to stay at the institution, follow through to graduation and become a productive alumnus,” said Oney Fitzpatrick, interim associate vice president for student retention and program developer and mentor.

“When the idea is to get these students to develop a sense of community on campus and to recognize that there are people here who care about them and want them to be successful.”

The program, which serves 50 students per semester by offering informative guidance on campus resources like scholarships and services, financial and graduate school planning, study skills and the opportunity to work with mentors in the community, including medical doctors, church pastors, business owners, university faculty and upperclassmen. The program includes workshops on a variety of topics, including job hunting, interviewing, networking and resume building.

Anglers win regional and $50,000 in prizes for club

The team of Matt M. Morrison, a senior from Silsbee, and Danny Iles, a sophomore from Hemphill, led all three days of competition at the National Guard FLW College Fishing Texas Division Regional Championship on Sam Rayburn Reservoir. The pair weighed a six-bass catch of 12 pounds 6 ounces for a three-day total of 51 pounds 4 ounces to win a top prize of $50,000, which includes a Ranger boat and outboard wrapped in Lamar’s red and white for the winning club and $25,000 for the university. The team also qualified for the National Championship. “We had nothing to lose coming into this so we went out and it paid off,” said Iles. The top five teams from each regional championship, 25 teams total, will advance to the 2011 National Guard FLW College Fishing National Championship that will be hosted by Murray State University in Kentucky Lake, April 7-9, 2011. The National Championship is a three-day televised event.

Biology major named LU’s third David J. Beck Fellow

Elizabeth M. awell, a sophomore biology major from Beaumont, is the 2011 recipient of Lamar University’s most prestigious undergraduate award, the David J. Beck Fellowship. David Beck presented Mawell with an engraved medallion and certificate in a ceremony Nov. 29. She also will receive a full scholarship for one year—including tuition, fees, books and on-campus room and board—and funding to pursue a summer project proposed as part of her application packet.

Mawell, 20, plans to participate in a two-month internship with the South African Shark Conservancy to further her goal of becoming a marine biologist. She had researched the internship previously but set it aside because she could not afford it. With the David J. Beck Fellowship, she will be able to pursue what she describes as the perfect opportunity for the career she plans.

“One of the cool things about this internship is that you get to participate in all the activities they have to do as a pro. It’s not just doing research, but it’s how you get this kind of organization going and keep it going.” Mawell said. “They do a lot of work with other agencies and the fishing industry and governmental institutions to work together on issues like overfishing and pollution.”

A unique undergraduate fellowship program, the David J. Beck Fellowship was made possible by a generous gift to the Lamar University Foundation from David J. Beck, a 1961 LU graduate and founding partner of Beck, Redden & Secret, LLP, a boutique litigation firm in Houston. A distinguished alumnus, Beck created the fellowship to reward academic excellence and to allow top students to further challenge themselves.

“The fact that we have this fellowship says that Lamar University puts the students first. It gives students an opportunity that they could never have before,” Mawell said.

The event also included a presentation from the university’s second Beck Fellow, Michael Z. Arzola, a biology major from Lumberton, about his summer spent performing research in Ambergris Caye, Belize. Arzola collected and analyzed samples from dogs to determine the prevalence of parasites that could be transferred to humans, if it expects the research experience and the related academic paper he plans to produce to help him achieve his goal of obtaining his doctorate in veterinary medicine and a Ph.D. in public health.

Beck Fellows work with a faculty mentor to complete their summer projects. Mawell and Arzola both selected Ana Christiansen, associate professor of biology, as their faculty mentor.
When she was a child growing up in Michigan, her father was an avid antiques collector, and her mother owned a shop that sold local artists’ works. “I grew up surrounded by art and antiques,” she said.

As an undergraduate at Brown University, she initially wanted to study international relations, but she had an epiphany while studying Gothic cathedrals in an art history class. Dandona was so moved by her beauty that she decided to change her major course of study.

The young scholar graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor’s degree in the history of art and French studies before moving to Quebec for graduate research in 18th-century architectural history as a Fulbright Fellow at Université Laval. She earned her doctorate in the history of art from the University of California at Berkeley.

“A true Francophile, Dandona is fluent in French and has been traveling to France on a regular basis since she was 14. As an undergraduate, she spent a year at the Sorbonne and the School of the Louvre,” said D. R. Dandona, a significant addition to our program,” said Russ Schultz, dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communication.

“She brings us to a tremendous background in art history, as well as an understanding of the relationship of the Dishman Art Museum to the academic setting.”

Dandona looks forward to directing the museum and plans to host exhibits with broad appeal, such as a showing of contemporary comic-book art and a quilt exhibition.

“Art is essential,” she said. “It allows us to see our world anew.”

Lamar’s Dishman Art Museum is more than a building filled with paintings, prints, photographs and sculptures. For Jessica Dandona, the museum’s new director, it is a gathering place for the community. “The role of the museum in our society is to provide a forum to talk about ideas,” said Dandona, also an assistant professor of art.
Jerry taught me that making art never has to end . . . He showed me that the creative process is reflected beyond the realms of art . . . He taught me how to approach living.”—Mike Kennbaugh ’96, Houston, Texas

To this day, Jerry inspires me to get up early and stay up late doing what I am so privileged to be able to do—paint . . . He challenged me at every level . . . no matter what I accomplished . . . all I could ever get from him was, ‘Hey boy you’re coming along.’ I realized many years later, this was Jerry’s way of saying, ‘I love you.’ . . . Jerry was able to inspire each of us in our own personal way.”—Bruce Tinch ’72, Arlington, Texas

“My drawing teacher was gifted in that he could teach you how to draw if you wanted to learn. He was a soulful person too . . . and imparted some of that, as well. He and I were very close, and that proximity exists for me today in my art and in my life.”—Paul Manes ’72, ’82, New York, New York

“I’m a sculptor by trade, although I started out painting—realism at the University of Houston. I was able to sculpt my sculpture.”—Betty (Allen) Iles ’90, Beaumont, Texas

“When I reflect on my life and how I have arrived at this point in time, I see a great number of steps—some short and some very tall . . . In those reflections . . . I remember Jerry helping me onto many of those tall steps, pulling me up, whether I was ready or not.”—Kyle Young ’90, Bellaire, Texas

“Jerry’s genuine interest in every student in his class, to help them grow and develop their own visions and goals was an inspiration . . . I never ceased to stand in awe of Jerry’s vast knowledge about art and his wisdom about the whole of life.”—Betty (Allen) Iles ’90, ’95, ’94, Lumberton, Texas

“Jerry’s impact on my life reaches far beyond subject matter, painting technique or artistic endeavors . . . His words of wisdom and encouragement are a permanent part of my being.”—Amy (Koski) Richard ’84, Gainesville, Florida

“Jerry’s impact on my life greatly extends beyond subject matter, painting technique or artistic endeavors . . . I remember Jerry helping me onto many of those tall steps, pulling me up, whether I was ready or not.”—Kyle Young ’90, Bellaire, Texas

“Jerry Newman pointed out the path and then walked it with me. He still does.”—Laura Lee (Burchfield) Scott ’95, ’94, Beaumont, Texas

“Perhaps (Newman’s) greatest gift to me was his advice to me when he said, ‘If you’re going to paint cowboys, you need to step in cow dung.’ I like to think he taught me that life ain’t a dress rehearsal; you need to live it like it’s a command performance.”—Red Allen ’90, Beaumont, Texas

“This was a kind man who took great satisfaction when his students succeeded . . . Many times, we never saw him coming but felt his presence . . . ”—Mary Grace (Bookman) Leavoy ’91, Beaumont, Texas

“If influence has gone from the lessons of a teacher to being a core element in my creative ability. To this day, after creating hundreds of pieces of sculpture and ceding many tons of bronze, art feels like oil painting.”—David Iles ’73, Denton, Texas

“I met Jerry when I was a young student, insecure and uncertain about what to study and what to do with the rest of my life . . . He took me under his wing . . . and taught me most of what I needed to know about art, but also about what is important in life and love, about commitment and perseverance . . . just like him, I became a professor of art at a university, returning the gift he gave me to other young students.”—Richard Davis ’66, Denton, Texas

“Jerry Newman was, and still is, the driving force behind my art. I still hear his words of wisdom every time I pick up a brush or pencil. Mr. Newman cared for me like a son, and I cared for him like a father. He is the reason for every success in my life since the day I met him.”—Calvin Carter ’80, Jasper, Texas

“Never confrontational, always questioning, always asking for more exploration, he determinedly forced me, sometimes kicking and screaming the whole way, to experiment with color, shape and movement . . . I am grateful for his insistence in stretching my imagination and for his firm hand in enlightening me.”—Kim (Chen) Allen ’76, ’95, Lumberton, Texas

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he 1978-79 basketball season saw the first team in school history advance to the NCAA Division I Tournament. Coached by Billy Tubbs ’58 and assistant Dennis Walsh, the team included B.B. Davis ’81, Clarence “Pick” Kea ’86, Billy Tubbs ’58 and Norman Bellard ’79—three former players who remain actively involved with Lamar today. Those Cardinals went 23–9 overall and 9–1 in the Southland Conference and set a standard for what became the most successful run in Lamar basketball history.

Tubbs, now special assistant to the president at Lamar and consultant for athletics, remembers the 1978–79 Cardinals as both a misjudged and underestimated team. “A lot of people thought we were a cocky and arrogant team,” said Tubbs, who compiled a 121–89 record over two stints as Lamar’s head coach. “What they failed to grasp was that it was simply a very confident team—one that played with a lot of pride and a lot of emotion. It was a team that expected to win and to do big things.”

Not only did Tubbs’ confident Cardinals qualify for the Big Dance, they performed a stunning Texas Two Step over 18th-ranked and highly favored Detroit in the first round. The Cardinals’ 95–87 shocker delivered that night in Munn Fieldhouse, Tuscaloosa, Ala., may never have occurred, Tubbs disclosed, had it not been for a little off-seasonopolis he instigated.

“The previous season, we finished in a tie with M.O. State for the conference championship, and we both had good clubs but neither one of us went anywhere (in the playoffs),” said Tubbs. “After that happened, I convinced Hig (J. B. Higginson, then Lamar’s director of athletics) and Dick O’Leary (then commissioner of the Southland Conference) to go with me to Chicago where the NCAA presidents were meeting, and we lobbied for an automatic bid for our conference. The N.C.A.A. granted a bid to our conference, our players were determined to be the first team to win it.”

Not only did the brash Cardinals win it, they won it in a runaway—by a three-game margin over Louisiana Tech and Southwestern Louisiana.

“It was a wonderful thrill to me to have the opportunity to coach those young men,” Tubbs said. “They were a fun bunch to be around, and I still cherish the memories they left me with.”—RW

Lamar men win fifth straight SLC cross country title

The men’s cross country team captured its fifth consecutive Southland Conference title with a dominating performance this past fall at Bayou Din Golf Club. The Cardinals finished with 38 points, well ahead of runner-up McNeese State’s 70 points. The Cardinals had three runners earn all-conference honors by placing in the top 10. Bob Akinsbile, last season’s SLC Freshman of the Year, led Lamar with a second-place finish. LU’s Matt Johnson was third in 24:56.1, while Tallam Kipruto was seventh in 25:13.3.

Men’s cross country has Freeman and Newcomer of the Year

Two members of the cross country team received major accolades from the Southland Conference. Matt Johnson was named Freshman of the Year, while junior transfer Tallam Kipruto was tabbed as Newcomer of the Year. Johnson was the top freshman finisher at the Southland Conference Championships, placing third to help Lamar win its fifth consecutive men’s championship. Kipruto, a transfer from Baumont, Oxnard, was one of 12 players named to the All-SLC First Team as selected by the league’s head coaches and media relations directors.

Women’s cross country earns national honor

The women’s cross country team was named as a 2010 Division I All-Academic Cross Country program by the U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association (USTFCCCA).

The Lady Cardinals had a cumulative GPA of 3.45 and a G.R.W. of 3.23 for the fall semester. Lamar had three runners, Sam Walkow, N’ora-Beth Saunders and Elzbieta Gworn, with perfect 4.0 grade-point averages. Other members of the team were Taylor Clay, Katilee Vae, and Angela Laborde, Emily Carpenter, Daisi Cantu, Tessa Dennis and Sharon Sarson.

Hopes to qualify for Olympics

Women’s basketball Coach and Athletics Director Larry Tidwell has accepted an invitation to become head coach of the Bahamas senior national women’s basketball team.

“If this is one of the big things we wanted to do when we started football back up at Lamar, was to give local guys a place to come home and play...” —Jaye Bazile

Tidwell named Manager of the Year

Mike Sarbaugh ’93, who starred at shortstop for Lamar University over the 1986–1989 seasons, was honored recently as the 2010 Minor League Manager of the Year.

Tidwell noted the team will compete in the Caribbean Championships, the Centrobasket Championships, the FIBA America’s Championships, the Pan-American Games and other FIBA-certified tournaments during Lamar’s offseason.

Former LU star Sarbaugh named Manager of the Year

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For the most up-to-date news and schedule information, visit lamarcardinals.com.
SLC honors Lamar student-athletes

66 athletes attain GPAs of 3.00 or higher

Lamar student-athletes found success on the playing field and in the classroom during the fall 2010 semester as 66 Cardinals were named to the Southland Conference Commissioner’s Fall Academic Honor Roll. The fall honor roll includes student-athletes who took part in men’s and women’s cross country, football, volleyball and women’s soccer. The honor roll recognizes student-athletes who maintained a minimum 3.00 grade point average.

Lamar’s total of 66 was tied for the fourth most among the 12 member institutions, while the 13 LU student-athletes who posted a perfect 4.0 grade point average ranked second among all SLC schools.

“We know the importance of academics, and we’re especially proud that the overall GPA for our student-athletes was a 3.0, and that includes all 17 sports,” said Athletics Director Larry Todd.

He credited Helene Thil, Rose Hubbard, Rob McDermid, Tommy Collins and tutors for “an outstanding effort in achieving this high plateau of academic excellence.”

Student athlete graduation rate sixth in state

The NCAA Division I student-athletes continue to show record graduation rates, the organization announced recently.

In the statistics released on graduation rates for Texas student-athletes who enrolled as freshmen from 2000-01 through 2003-04, Lamar University ranked sixth in state and tied with Texas A&M-Corpus Christi, taking the lead. The highest ranked state institutions were Texas Christian and Baylor, and tutors for “an outstanding effort in achieving this high plateau of academic excellence.”

Perhaps no name is more synonymous with the storied Lamar University basketball tradition than Billy Tubbs. That name, along with his wife of 52 years, Pat, became a permanent part of the basketball legacy Feb. 19 when the Mонтague Center floor was named “Billy & Pat Tubbs Court” in their honor. Tubbs, who played at Lamar from 1955-57 under Jack Martin, is now in his 27th year of service to his alma mater. Just the 28th coach in NCAA history to record 600 career wins, Tubbs currently serves as special assistant/consultant to the president.

“Billy Tubbs is a legendary figure in the basketball community and has left a lasting legacy at Lamar University—for first as a player, then coach and finally athletics director,” said President James Simmons. “It is success as the men’s basketball coach could not have been possible without the loving support of his wife, Pat, so it is only fitting that the playing court in the Mонтague Center bears their names.”

The ceremony took place during the annual basketball players’ reunion weekend and honored Tubbs’ 1978-79 team, the first in school history to advance to the NCAA Division I Tournament.

Naming honors Coach Gilligan

Jim Gilligan’s way has proven to be a reliable formula for Lamar University basketball through 33 seasons and almost 1,200 victories.

So, it was appropriate that Beaumont City Council voted unanimously this past summer to rename a section of East Florida Avenue to Jim Gilligan Way in honor of the head coach, who ranks sixth among the NCAA’s active coaches in career victories.

Jim Gilligan Way extends from Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway and past Vincent-Beck Stadium to Uiversity Drive.

Gilligan is a Lamar graduate, having earned a bachelor’s degree in 1969 and a master’s in 1970. In coaching the Cardinals for 33 seasons, he guided LU to 10 Southland Conference championships, two SLC zone titles, four conference tournament championships—the most recent in 2010—and 12 NCAA Regional appearances.

DCSA honors Lamar student-athletes

The Southland Conference’s fourth annual Distinguished Alumnus Community Service Award was presented to Vernon Durden ‘04 and Vernon ‘04 and Johnnie Durden ‘00 haven’t been sidelined by retirement. While most people look forward to slowing the pace, this China couple has embraced a life of giving back and setting a positive example for many young people in the Golden Triangle. During their brief periods of relaxation, they prefer to saddle up either on their Harley for a cross-country jaunt or on their champion Tennessee Walkers for a lazy afternoon ride through the pasture.

“Once you retire and people find out you have all this time to give, somehow your name gets to the top of everybody’s list,” Vernon said. “But, what we found out is when you’re helping people, the time spent is good quality time, and we just enjoy that so much.”

From their small horse ranch west of Beaumont, the Durdens offer their time and talents to the community by serving on numerous advisory boards and mentoring organizations. The walls and tables of their home are dotted with plaques and awards as testaments of their outreach. The majority of their time is spent mentoring young adults in organizations such as Ben’s Kids Brighter Futures Mentoring Program, 100 Black Men of America and Lamar University’s AAMP program, an academic success and leadership development program for African-American male students.

Vernon is a mentor for the Ben’s Kids organization, which matches at-risk students with advisers who help them make positive personal choices. Each mentor in the organization invests his or her time to help a young person improve his or her life through character development, guest speakers, and athletic and community service activities. Lamar’s AAMP program is another opportunity Durden embraces because it enables him and other mentors to align themselves with students pursuing advanced education. He’s also active as president of the Beaumont chapter of the 100 Black Men of America group, one of fastest growing of the 136 chapters nationwide that work to educate and empower African-American young men and women.

In addition, Vernon is president of the board of the Southeast Texas Food Bank, on the board of the United Way of Beaumont, and regional chair for the Southeast Texas region of Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve.

Johnnie is a member of The Links Inc., an international non-profit corporation of professional women of color in 270 chapters nationwide. It is one of the nation’s oldest and largest volunteer service organizations committed to enriching, sustaining and ensuring the culture and economic survival of African-Americans. As a member of Top Ladies of Distinction, she helps teenagers plan their career goals and futures. She also serves as a member of the A&M Alumni of Southeast Texas advisor board.

Vernon has also served on the Lamar University Alumni Advisory Board.

On being selected a distinguished alumnus, Vernon said, “I can think of no better time in the history of Beaumont to be associated with the growth and progress of Lamar University...”

— VERNON DURDEN ’04

Vernon and Johnnie Durden

“I can think of no better time in the history of Beaumont to be associated with the growth and progress of Lamar University,...”

— VERNON DURDEN ’04

“...I can think of no better time in the history of Beaumont to be associated with the growth and progress of Lamar University,...”

— VERNON DURDEN ’04

For the most up-to-date news and schedule information, visit lamarcardinals.com.

Cardinal Cadence | March 2011
**Distinguished Alumna:**

**Grace England**

One of the first students to earn a bachelor’s degree in elementary education at Lamar, England went on to earn her master’s degree in curriculum and instruction at the University of North Texas and her Ph.D. in child development and special education at Texas Woman’s University.

England has worked as a consultant for U.S. Department of Defense Dependents Schools worldwide and for a variety of school districts in Texas. She has participated in educational training sessions around the world and presented at conferences across the country and internationally. She currently serves as an educational consultant for the Spring Branch school district and as an assistant professor of education at University of St. Thomas in Houston.

England credits Lamar with providing a supportive environment, encouragement and opportunities that opened the door to valuable experiences as a teacher, administrator, special educator and professor. She still recalls the words of her professor in her first education class at Lamar: “We of one generation must teach those of another generation how to live in yet another generation. That magnificent challenge became a guideline for my career.”

Working with both children and with future teachers has been rewarding. “In special education there’s another component, and that’s working with the families,” she said. “I have such a respect for families and how they accommodate and maneuver their lives so they can give the children they have the support they need.”

Grace England said she was “overjoyed” by the honor. “It gave me an opportunity to think back to the beginning of a really exciting career and to recall all the people at Lamar who boosted me along the way in ways that I now can genuinely appreciate and respect.” —BG

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**Distinguished Alumnus:**

**Bill Macatee**

Bill Macatee ‘78 has become a familiar face and voice of authority at some of the biggest sporting events in the world.

From the Masters and PGA Championship in golf to the U.S. Open, French Open and Wimbledon in tennis to play-by-play for weekly NFL broadcasts, Macatee is a veteran television sports broadcaster with unparalleled versatility. With CBS Sports since 1995, Macatee provides insightful coverage of some of the most prestigious golf and tennis tournaments internationally each year. In addition to his NFL responsibilities, he has handled play-by-play for college basketball, including the NCAA Tournament, and hosted CBS Sports Spectacular events for skiing, figure skating, and track and field.

He is many successes in sports broadcasting build on the dedication and hard work he showed even before he began his studies at Lamar. Macatee got his start in broadcasting as a teenager doing radio newscasts in El Paso. While in college at the University of St. Thomas, Macatee became weekend sports anchor at the local NBC affiliate in Austin. That led to a job at Beaumont’s KBTM as sports director and led Macatee to transfer to Lamar to complete his degree in speech. At 21, with a full-time job and full course load, Macatee said he was “dual between being a kid and being a grownup.”

Macatee said he was impressed then and is pleased now by all Lamar has to offer, including the quality of its teaching and the diversity of its student body. “It really prepared me for traveling internationally and having a broad world view. During my career, I’ve been lucky enough to do play-by-play in everything from golf to sumo wrestling to the NFL,” Macatee said. “So much of the preparation for the life and the career I’ve had comes from my time at Lamar.”

After graduation, Macatee moved on to television stations in Kansas City and Dallas before joining NBC at age 26, becoming the youngest network sportscaster in the industry. With NBC, he covered events including the World Series, the Super Bowl, Wimbledon and college bowl games and served as sports correspondent for “The Today Show.” With the USA Network, he anchored coverage of numerous sports specials and major events, including the 2006 Olympic Winter Games in Torino, Italy. He served as co-host of CBS coverage of the 1998 Olympic Winter Games from Nagano, Japan. In addition to his work with CBS, Macatee currently is an executive producer and anchor with cable’s Tennis Channel.

Macatee said he is proud to be a Lamar University graduate and is honored to be recognized as a 2011 distinguished alumnus. “This is significant for me. It’s the first thing I’ve asked my family to attend,” Macatee said. “I’m proud of the growth of the university. It’s grown not just in scope but in its prominence nationally.”

Macatee said he thought back to his Lamar days often while teaching sports media for two years as an adjunct professor at Chapman University, where his daughter, Caitlin, is now a student. He also serves on the advisory council of Lamar’s College of Fine Arts and Communication. Macatee makes his home in Newport Beach, Calif., and Dallas. —BG
When you enjoy reading about other classmate stories. If you have news or a personal milestone, please share it with the Cardinal Cadence. We love hearing from you.

Send us your news:
Write to Cardinal Cadence, PO Box 10011, Beaumont, TX 77710,
e-mail cymhilcks@lamar.edu or call (409) 880-6421.

40s
Tommy Walter ’40, A.A., general studies, earned a medical degree from Radley College of Medicine. He lives in Englishtown, N.J. The Port Arthur Evening Sertoma Club awarded the Service to Mankind award to Herbert Shofford ’40, A.A. general studies.

50s
Howard Goldman ’51, A.A. general studies, ’53, B.S. biology, is retired and lives in Ham Lake with his wife, Carolee.
James Dolden ’54, B.S. physical education, is a retired sales executive and lives in Port Arthur with his wife, Janine.
Charles Alexander ’58, B.S. history and his wife, Julie, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in April. They reside in Scottsdale, Ariz. He earned his master’s degree and doctorate from the University of Texas. He is a distinguished professor of history emeritus at Ohio University.
Tom Willard ’59, B.S. chemistry, earned a degree from Texas A&M University and is a professor emeritus at Florida Southern College. He lives in Winter Haven, Fla.

60s
Larry Dryer ’60, B.S. electrical engineering, and his wife, Anne, ’62, B.S. speech, celebrated their 50th anniversary. They live in Austin. Both of his brothers, Jamey ’61, B.S. electrical engineering, and Phil ’62, B.S. electrical engineering, are also graduates.
Larry Johnston ’60, B.S. history, is a writer and lives in Paradise Valley, Ariz. He earned his master’s degree in zoology and botany from Mississippi College in Clinton. He lives in New Orleans.

70s
Ken King ’71, M.A. history, is retired from teaching and lives in Flower Mound. He lives with his wife, Miriam.
Ron Beaumont ’71, B.S. electrical engineering, earned a master’s degree from Stanford University and is chief executive officer for H genco, inc. in Lampasas. He lives in Granbury with his wife, Linda.

50s
Robert Tolar ’51, A.A. general studies, earned a master’s degree from the University of Texas at Austin and a doctorate from Texas A&M. He is a professor of history at Dickinson University. He retired as an executive from AirSpace Electronics in Urbana, Calif., where he lives.
Brad Cudney ’52, B.S. business administration, is chief auditor for Federal Express. He and his wife, Kay Budby, ’61, B.S. family and consumer sciences, ’62, M.S. family and consumer sciences, live in St. Louis.

Joe Wilson ’53, B.S. chemistry, received the Service to Mankind award from the Port Arthur Evening Sertoma Club. He lives in Spring with his wife, Karen.

Sarah Davis ’55, B.S. biology, worked for Texas State Bank in Galveston, where he lives with his wife, Myrna.

60s
John Gilbert ’64, B.S. industrial engineering, earned a master’s degree from Purdue University. He has been principal of the John Gilbert Jr. national healthcare executive search firm, for 37 years. He lives in San Louis, Calif., with his wife, Martha, who is a pianist.

Wally Porter ’64, physical education, is retired and lives in Austin. He is a member of the Intercollegiate Tennis Association. He lives in Port Arthur.
Harman Wader ’64, B.S. government, earned a master’s degree in public administration from the City University of New York and is personnel director for the city of Pasa Deus, where he lives with his wife, Mary.

Bobby Gilbert ’64, B.S. chemistry, earned a doctorate from Tulane University. He works for Luminex Corp. as a senior scientist. He lives in San Antonio.

Sally (Ponario) Hontges ’65, B.S. elementary education, worked for 34 years as a teacher and is retired. She and her husband, Earl, live in Lubbock.

Steve Hummer ’65, B.S. business administration, lives in Savannah, Ga., with his partner, Pete. He retired from the University of Georgia in 2004.

Mary (Haas) Biggs ’67, B.S. education, retired as a principal in the Garland Independent School District after 37 years. She lives in Sachin with her husband, Bob.

Ron Beaumont ’70, B.S. electrical engineering, earned a master’s degree from Stanford University and is a doctorate from Texas Woman’s University. He retired from teaching and is in the hospitality business. He lives in Tempe, Ariz.

Bill Scott ’70, B.S. government, was honored with the Boy Scouts of America 2010 Society Award. He lives in Nederland with his wife, Gay (Backer).”

Louie Tackett ’70, B.S. health and physical education, earned a master’s degree from Stephen F. Austin State University and a doctorate from Texas Woman’s University. He retired from teaching and is a fitness consultant for American Airlines and lives in Nederland.

Bill Caughman ’71, B.S. biology, is a sales representative for Wyeth Pharmaceuticals. He lives in Sugar Land with his wife, Peta.

Sue (Brenn) Neuman ’72, B.S. vocational services, retired from the city of Beaumont. She was the owner of Sutton Enterprises in Beaumont for nearly 50 years. A campus director for Lamar University, Neuman said.

Karen (Ross) Richardson ’76, B.S. music, earned a master’s degree in music education and is assistant director of guidance and counseling at high school and college.

Bobby Rice ’77, B.S. education, worked for Asphalt and Associates as a certified professional accountant in Sugar Land, Texas. He lives with his wife, Mary.

Bill (Shelton) Golson ’78, B.S. chemistry, works for MEC Pascana. She lives in Lufkin, with her husband, Scott.

Robert Caughman ’78, B.S. education, earned a master’s degree in education from Stephen F. Austin State University. She retired and lives in Anahuac.

Robert Suttle ’79, B.A. marketing, is owner of Sutton Enterprises in Beaumont, where he lives with his wife, Brenda.

70s
Joe Wilson ’53, B.S. chemistry, received the Service to Mankind award from the Port Arthur Evening Sertoma Club. He lives in Spring with his wife, Karen.

Joe Hunt ’60, B.S. music, and his wife, Anna (Hopkins) Hunt, ’51, A.A. general studies, ’53, B.S. education, earned a doctorate degree from the University of Texas at Austin and a doctorate from Texas Woman’s University. He is married to Jimmie. He is a retired sales executive and lives in Port Arthur.

Donna (Lemmon) Sherrick ’64, B.S. education, earned a master’s degree from Lamar University and is a principal officer for Bayless Consulting. He lives in Katy with his wife, Cheryl.

Jill Ritter ’65, B.S. chemistry, is principal officer for Fulcrum, M.H. White and Co. in Beaumont, where she lives with her husband, Mike.

Garrett (Hervey) Mouton ’69, B.S. education, is principal officer for American Airlines and lives in Nederland.

1054x329 to 1180x625
Charles McFadden ’72, B.A., mathematics, is a retired financial consultant. He lives in Key West, Fla., with his wife, Cindy.

Jerry Whittredge ’78, B.S. education, retired as assistant superintendent for the Port Neches-Groves school district in Nederland and is in her 37th year teaching. She lives in Hamshire with her husband, Thomas.

Faye (Montagne) Parish ’76, B.S. elementary education, is senior project engineer for AK Steel in Port Neches. She lives in Orange with her husband, Robert.

Yvonne (Collins) Huddleston ’82, B.S. mechanical engineering, has published her first novel, Tampico’s Gold engineering, has published her first novel, Tampico’s Gold

Diane (Ramby) Daniels ’80, A.S. law enforcement, is a provider resiliency trainer for the Army. She lives in San Antonio with her husband, Thomas.

Warren Adler Short Story Contest winners

Bill Dixon ’78, B.S. mechanical engineering, was involved in faculty, innovative research facilities and more. Our mission is to engage graduates, friends and corporations, and foundations.

Lamar University is a vibrant center of knowledge and learning, comprised of student scholars, involved faculty, innovative research facilities and more. Our mission is to engage graduates, friends and corporations, and foundations. In the life of the University, we also seek to encourage financial investment in Lamar University’s programs and scholarships. We are most grateful to our many alumni and friends who choose to support Lamar University with financial gifts. If you are considering a gift to Lamar University, we encourage you to use the Lamar University giving option online now available at

donate.lamar.edu/advancement

Select the “GIVE NOW” button. Large or small, your gift keeps students learning and LU growing.

Lamar University
ALUMNI LIVING IN GEORGIA, Alabama, Tennessee and Florida gathered Nov. 6 for a pre-game reception hosted by the Office of Alumni Affairs to cheer on the Cards vs. the Georgia State Panthers in the Georgia Dome.

1. 1. From left, Doss (Brown) Thiem ’90, Virginia (Sheffield) Seabiss ’73, Wayne Seabiss ’70, Stan Thiem and Chris Fame ’88 2. Aiva Primm, left, Camille Moxon, vice president for university advancement, and Phil Primm ’97 3. From left, Vann Barneck, Thad Paris ’79, Cynthia (Puckett) Thomas ’78, Robert Thomas and Joseph Rabalow ’84 4. From left, John Zaibek ’97, executive director of operations, Marian Phillips ’84, Michelle Bonds and Bobby Flores ’77 5. From left, Alisa Harchman, Nitika Harchman, Chris Fame ’88, Heath Harchman ’88 and Naisy Harchman 6. From left, Spencer Decuir, Larry Decuir ’93 and Austin Decuir

2. Janet (Villar) Caso ’85, B.B.A. economics, operations and finance/accounting major; Club President. She lives in Baumgart. Her daughter, Michele, is a Lamar student.

3. Darion (Doss) Seabiss ’95, B.S. secondary education, major in physical education, minor in health. Serves as a teacher at the University of South Carolina College of Education. She is a member of the University of South Carolina College of Education. She lives in Orange with her husband, Eric.


6. Mark Williams ’77, B.S. business administration, minor in computer information systems; minor in accounting. owns Water Resources Co. in San Antonio, where he lives.


8. Alana Jones ’92, B.S. education, teaches grade one in the Deer Park school district. She lives in Pasadena with her husband, Jeffrey.

9. Teresa (Brantley) Camp ’89, B.S. secondary education, minor in health and physical education, minor in education. She is a science teacher and coach at L. L. Cyprema-Harrinove High School. She lives in Orange.


11. Rodney Cavness ’87, B.S. sociology, minor in education, earned a master's degree in counseling from Stephen F. Austin State University as a superintendent's certification. He is superintendent of the Lumberton school district, where he lives.

12. Rick Williams ’76, B.S. business administration, minor in computer information systems. owns Brentwood Country Club. She lives in Orange. She is a certified financial planner and lives in Kirbyville.


19. Emily (Smith) Fullbright ’90, B.S. education, minor in education, minor in education. teaches in the Bridge City school district. She lives in Port Neches.


21. Alisa Harchman, Nitika Harchman, Chris Fame ’88, Heath Harchman ’88 and Naisy Harchman 6. From left, Spencer Decuir, Larry Decuir ’93 and Austin Decuir
Sheri (Moore) Sheppard on the State Board of Texas Association of lice in Silsbee. He technology, is chief executive officer of Sterling Halo in Houston. He Sheppard, R.N., S.B., is nursing. He works for Christie Hospital S. to practice of the peace for in Hardin County. He works for Motiva and lives in Nederland with his wife, Kelly. Aimee Lieby, B.A., B.S., is marketing, is an educator with Little Cypress-Mauriceville schools. She lives in Groves, Texas. Jessica (Lyon) Burgin, B.A., B.S., is applied arts and sciences, teaches at Vidor High School and lives in Vidor, Texas. C. Shep Mandeville, B.A., B.S., is educational, is a regional business manager of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services in Beaumont. She lives in Lumberton. Kyle Boudreaux, B.S., B.A., is educational leadership, is a director of special pro- grams for Channelview ISD school district. She works for RedSky Land, LLC. She lives in Nederland with her husband, Ronald.

Katie (Coziar) Martin, B.S., M.B.A., is management information systems, is an educator with Central High School in Beaumont, where she lives with her husband, Tye. Jared (von der Au) Turner, B.S., B.A., is applied arts and sciences, teaches at Vidor High School and lives in Vidor, Texas. Jessica (Lyon) Burgin, B.A., B.S., is educational, is a regional business manager of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services in Beaumont. She lives in Lumberton. Kyle Boudreaux, B.S., B.A., is educational leadership, is a director of special programs for Channelview ISD school district. She works for RedSky Land, LLC. She lives in Nederland with her husband, Ronald. Aimee Lieby, B.A., B.S., is marketing, is an educator with Little Cypress-Mauriceville schools. She lives in Groves, Texas. Jessica (Lyon) Burgin, B.A., B.S., is applied arts and sciences, teaches at Vidor High School and lives in Vidor, Texas. C. Shep Mandeville, B.A., B.S., is educational, is a regional business manager of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services in Beaumont. She lives in Lumberton. Kyle Boudreaux, B.S., B.A., is educational leadership, is a director of special pro- grams for Channelview ISD school district. She works for RedSky Land, LLC. She lives in Nederland with her husband, Kelly.
BILL MCAFEE ’92 has lived and worked in Antarctica periodically since 1992, managing the Information Technology and Communications Department at the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station for eight of those years. Here, he shows off the Red and White, standing in -20F weather in the Station for eight of those years. Here, he shows off the Red and White, standing in -20F weather in the Station for eight of those years. Here, he shows off the Red and White, standing in -20F weather in the Station for eight of those years. Here, he shows off the Red and White, standing in -20F weather in the Station for eight of those years. Here, he shows off the Red and White, standing in -20F weather in the Station for eight of those years. Here, he shows off the Red and White, standing in -20F weather in the Station for eight of those years. Here, he shows off the Red and White, standing in -20F weather in the Station for eight of those years. Here, he shows off the Red and White, standing in -20F weather in the Station for eight of those years. Here, he shows off the Red and White, standing in -20F weather in the Station for eight of those years. Here, he shows off the Red and White, standing in -20F weather in the Station for eight of those years. Here, he shows off the Red and White, standing in -20F weather in the Station for eight of those years. Here, he shows off the Red and White, standing in -20F weather in the Station for eight of those years. Here, he shows off the Red and White, standing in -20F weather in the Station for eight of those years. Here, he shows off the Red and White, standing in -20F weather in the Station for eight of those years. Here, he shows off the Red and White, standing in -20F weather in the Station for eight of those years. Here, he shows off the Red and White, standing in -20F weather in the Station for eight of those years. Here, he shows off the Red and White, standing in -20F weather in the Station for eight of those years. Here, he shows off the Red and White, standing in -20F weather in the Station for eight of those years. Here, he shows off the Red and White, standing in -20F weather in the Station for eight of those years. Here, he shows off the Red and White, standing in -20F weather in the Station for eight of those years. Here, he shows off the Red and White, standing in -20F weather in the Station for eight of those years. Here, he shows off the Red and White, standing in -20F weather in the Station for eight of those years. Here, he shows off the Red and White, standing in -20F weather in the Station for eight of those years. Here, he shows off the Red and White, standing in -20F weather in the Station for eight of those years. Here, he shows off the Red and White, standing in -20F weather in the Station.

Rachel Brennan, '08, B.S. communication, studied in Switzerland and Israel and a intern at the University of Texas Health and Science Center in Houston. She lives in Houston.

Jackie Gerges, '08, B.S. communication, teaches high school in the Port Arthur school district. She lives in Nederland.

Karen (Fennell) Vandebbeck. Russell Welch, '08, B.S. nursing, died Aug. 2, 2010. He was working as a registered nurse. He died in Beaumont.

Rodney Christ, '48, A.A. general studies, died July 20, 2010. He was a retiree. He died in Port Arthur.

Jackie LaRue, '51, A.A. general studies, died Aug. 28, 2010. She was a retiree. She died in Orange.

Joyce (Whitman) Hester, '61, B.S. music, died Sept. 6, 2010. She was an instructor at the Lamar University Foundation. She lived in Orange.

Wendy Weirich, '69, M.Ed. administration teaches and coaches softball in Marvel High School in Catonville, where she lives with his wife, Ethan.

Dawn Katz, '09, B.B.A. management, is a health insurance specialist for the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. She lives in Houston.

Lyn Williams, '42, A.A. general studies, was a third grade teacher in the Port Arthur school district. She lives in Groves, with his wife, Sandy.

John Hignett Jr., '80, B.S. education, died July 20, 2010. He was a retiree. He died in Beaumont.

Mary (Beck) Murdock, '58, B.A. history, died July 22, 2010. She was a teacher. She died in Vidor.

Dorothy Law, '41, A.A. general studies, died Aug. 28, 2010. She was a retiree. She died in Groves.

Lula (Conway) Riley, '42, A.A. general studies, died Aug. 29, 2010. She was a retiree. She died in Orange.


David Barnett, '08, B.S. nursing, died July 27, 2010. He was a registered nurse. He died in Beaumont.

Doris Mentzer, '59, B.S. music, died Aug. 31, 2010. She was a music teacher. She died in Nederland.


Jennifer (Schwaiger) Sawyer, '08, B.A. general studies, died Aug. 28, 2010. She was a social worker. She died in Vidor.

George Taylor III, '80, B.A. physical education, died Sept. 1, 2010. He was a tennis instructor. He died in Nederland.

Dorothy Field, '46, A.A.S. social work, died Aug. 29, 2010. She was a social worker. She died in Nederland.


Roberta Davis, '11, B.S. business administration, died July 29, 2010.

Jesse Lafferty, '41, A.A. general studies, died Sept. 5, 2010. He was a lawyer. He died in Nederland.

William White, '54, B.S. physical education, died Aug. 29, 2010. He was a coach. He died in Nederland.

James Keller, '43, B.A. education, died Aug. 29, 2010. He was a principal. He died in Nederland.

Stephanie Hall, '09, M.Ed. administration, is a director of the Lamar University Foundation, P.O. Box 11530, Beaumont.

Barbara (Youngblood) Willard, '69, B.S. home economics, died Nov. 17, 2010. She was a teacher. She died in Nederland.

Sandra Wiegand, '80, B.S. psychology, died Aug. 29, 2010. She was a psychologist. She died in Nederland.

Janis Dupuy, '73, B.A. business administration, died Sept. 10, 2010. She was a principal. She died in Nederland.

Kasey (Lawler) Vandebbeck. Rodney Christ, '48, A.A. general studies, died Aug. 28, 2010. He was a retiree. He died in Orange.

Linda (Wilcox) Santorin, '57, B.S. psychology, died Aug. 28, 2010. She was a psychologist. She died in Nederland.

Donna Kiser, '78, B.S. education, died Oct. 25, 2010. She was a teacher. She died in Nederland.

James (Joe) Whiting, '54, B.S. education, died Oct. 12, 2010. He was a principal. He died in Nederland.

Mary Jane Arceneaux, '80, B.S. nursing, worked for Christus Hospital St. Mary in Port Arthur.

Barbara (Youngblood) Willard, '69, B.S. home economics, died Nov. 17, 2010. She was a teacher. She died in Nederland.

Wade Womack, '40, A.A. general studies, died Aug. 29, 2010. He was a principal. He died in Nederland.
A corporate vice president of operations for the Lubrizol Corp., Larry Norwood ’73 is no stranger to international travel. The specialty chemical company headquartered in Wickliffe, Ohio, has facilities in North America, South America, Africa, Europe, Australia and Asia, and Norwood oversees the operations of all of them, a responsibility that requires monitoring things first-hand at times.

Earlier this year, Norwood visited Nanjing, China, for an official contract signing ceremony with the construction and engineering companies that will build a new facility for Lubrizol in Zhuhai, China. Another business destination offered some enjoyable excursions in Normandy, France. The company has facilities in the cities of Le Havre and Rouen.

The travel has made Norwood’s work more interesting and, on occasion, more challenging. “It’s always interesting to get an opportunity to meet different people and see how different cultures approach things,” Norwood said.

Norwood can trace his opportunities for a career with such a global reach directly to his roots at Lamar University. After he graduated from Liberty High School, three of the factors that attracted Norwood to Lamar were its strong engineering program, reasonable tuition and Norwood’s desire to enhance engine efficiency, reduce emissions, improve fuel economy or increase performance of fuels. These products have changed over the past 200 years. Her interest in the art and craft began as a hobby and evolved into a profession challenge as grooming his successor and forward momentum for his company.

In the years ahead, he sees his biggest professional challenge as grooming his successor and forward momentum for his company. “This is an issue facing a number of companies. People my age are moving through their careers and are working to develop the next generation of leaders, to make sure the industry, Norwood said. “I think my fondest memories are about the friendly campus atmosphere and interactions with other students and the professors.”

Norwood and his wife, Cynthia (Smesny) Norwood ’72, married while attending Lamar. They will celebrate their 40th anniversary this year. The couple met on a blind date in high school and continued dating as college students. Cynthia, who majored in history at Lamar, teaches classes around the country on making traditional hooked rugs using techniques that date back about 200 years. Her interest in the art and craft began as a hobby and evolved into a business, Norwood said. She even wrote a book on the topic, published in 2008. The Norwoods enjoy interests such as golf, gardening, downhill skiing and attending orchestra performances. Norwood said he also enjoys fly fishing and woodworking.

Lubrizol produces a variety of lubricant additives to improve the performance of transportation and industrial lubricants and fuels. These products have changed over the years in response to auto manufacturers’ desires to enhance engine efficiency, reduce emissions, improve fuel economy or increase equipment durability. The company also has diversified into advanced specialty polymers used in consumer and industrial applications, such as thermoplastic urethanes, performance coatings and various components used in personal care products.

Because of his vast experience in the industry, Norwood was invited to join Lamar’s College of Engineering Advisory Council. “It’s expertise in the chemicals business and the lube oil additives business is excellent,” said Jack Hopper, dean of LU’s College of Engineering. “He understands Lamar and understands the industry, so he’s an extremely valuable addition to the advisory board.”

Norwood said he looks forward to working with the council and with Hopper, who was one of his professors, to further strengthen Lamar’s engineering programs and develop additional graduate education offerings in engineering. He enjoyed his own time at Lamar, particularly the friendships he made and the dedication he saw from professors to take extra time to help students learn. “We had a pretty good time there. When I first started attending Lamar we had some pretty good basketball teams,” Norwood said. “I think my fondest memories are about the friendly campus atmosphere and interactions with other students and the professors.”

Norwood is not the only person with the construction and engineering companies that will build a new facility for Lubrizol in Zhuhai, China. Another business destination offered some enjoyable excursions in Normandy, France. The company has facilities in the cities of Le Havre and Rouen.

The travel has made Norwood’s work more interesting and, on occasion, more challenging. “It’s always interesting to get an opportunity to meet different people and see how different cultures approach things,” Norwood said.

Norwood can trace his opportunities for a career with such a global reach directly to his roots at Lamar University. After he graduated from Liberty High School, three of the factors that attracted Norwood to Lamar were its strong engineering program, reasonable tuition and good cooperative education program. Norwood knew little about Lubrizol when it came up as a possible co-op assignment. But, with facilities in Houston, it wasn’t too far from home or from Lamar. In 1969, Norwood went to work for Lubrizol as a co-op student. He has been with the company ever since.

“I really liked the company,” Norwood said. “They offered a lot of challenges and opportunities to do different things as a co-op student. I liked the way they treated employees. When I graduated in 1973, I went to work for them full-time.”

Then and now, co-op students alternate one semester in classes with one semester in paid employment related to their studies to provide practical professional experience. As a chemical engineering major, Norwood found Lubrizol, which was then a small specialty chemical company in Houston, a good fit.

“It was a company that, as long as you proved you could handle responsibility, they gave you responsibility early in your career. I had the opportunity to work in a number of different areas. That was interesting and exciting,” Norwood said.

The company’s philosophy of building reciprocal relationships with co-op students has paid off. Norwood is not the only person in Lubrizol’s senior management team who got his start with the company through cooperative education. The chief executive officer was a co-op student from Texas A&M, and the chief operating officer was a co-op from Cornell. The company’s strong management and marketing dominance recently prompted Warren Buffett’s Berkshire Hathaway to acquire Lubrizol for approximately $5.7 billion. With significant operations in Texas and Ohio, Lubrizol continues to use co-op students from Lamar, among other Texas universities, and from universities in the Midwest.

Staying with one company for an entire career and moving up through the organization was fairly common for people who, like him, started their careers in the early 1970s, Norwood said. With changes in the economy and globalization, however, such a practice is more unusual today. Norwood cites globalization as one of the biggest changes he has seen during his career.

“I guess I started doing work in China as a younger engineer in the early 1980s when the country first started opening up to international investments. It’s been interesting to see how much the chemical industry has grown globally,” Norwood said. “Another major change has been the advances in technology—the use of computers, electronics, distributed control systems in the day-to-day operations. From a technology perspective, things have changed very rapidly.”

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Through the fire:
From military man to statesman
by Brian Sattler

When he graduated in 1984—the morning ceremony took place in the old M.D. and GYM—he was sworn in as an officer that afternoon. Two days later, he was on his first military post learning the art and science of war. His career would take him on assignments around the world, including combat with the 2nd Armored Cavalry Battle Group in the Battle of 73 Easting inside Iraq where the lead elements of the 7th Corps hit Saddam Hussein's Republican Guard on Feb. 26, 1993. His Army career was well underway.

“When Sept. 11 occurred, Mel became both mom and dad to our son Matt and the sole decision-maker in the family because I was incapacitated,” Birdwell said. “There is a tremendous burden in being both caregiver and parent and being faced with decisions not really knowing the long-term implications.”

“Throughout those hard moments for both of us for a lot of days,” Birdwell said. On one of those days Jack Elwood, an associate pastor of the church the Birdwells attended, visited Birdwell in physical therapy. “I was at first just angry with pain, looking at it every day 24/7. When 60 percent of your skin is missing, you’re dealing with pain on a moment-by-moment basis,” Birdwell said. “Pastor Elwood said ‘God doesn’t waste our pain.’ It wasn’t until about six months later when my returns to the hospital were becoming less frequent that I began to see what he meant.”

On one visit, Birdwell’s physical therapist asked him to visit the family of a newly arrived burn patient. At first he was reluctant, wondering what he could share. “I visited with the family for about an hour, and, when I stepped out of the room, the little light bulb came on,” he said. “I realized how God could use our experience to help other folks.”

Birdwell’s medical journey would continue into 2005, and he knew from a medical perspective that his military career was over. He would have to retire with 20 years of service. The big question was what was next. “My plan didn’t work out the way I wanted it to,” he said, “but I realized that we could comfort others as we had been comforted as Second Corinthians tells us to do.”

Together, Brian and Mel started Face the Fire Ministries, sharing their story with burn survivors and their families. They also raise funds to help offset the costs associated with keeping families intact while one member, often the primary breadwinner, is being treated. Expenses can mount quickly, from temporary housing to child care. It takes a lot to just make ends meet. The ministry has also provided funds to medical facilities specializing in the research, treatment and care of burn injuries.

“The financial gifts we’ve been able to provide to burn survivors and wounded servicemen and women have been able to help defray the costs of their displacement from home,” Birdwell said.

Beyond the vital financial support, the ministry gives survivors and their families the ability to “talk with someone who walked that same dark path and knows the emotions and things you’re going through. It’s a great opportunity to do what scripture tells us to do and to comfort others as we were comforted.”

Along the way the couple, with co-author Ginger Kolbaba, wrote Refined by Fire: A Family’s Triumph of Love and Faith, which chronicles their life-changing ordeal. “It’s a story of the Lord’s grace more than anything else and what life is like in a burn center,” Birdwell said.

Birdwell was awarded the Purple Heart for wounds received at the Pentagon and at his retirement received the Legion of Merit Award, the capstone of a long and successful military career.

Today, Mel manages the work of the ministry while he serves the people of Texas in the Senate in a very challenging session with big issues such as overcoming a massive budget shortfall. Other challenges include redistricting, voter identification, security and immigration, as well as various issues specific to the many regions of Texas.

Birdwell is a proponent of limited government, a term he sees “as a statement of jurisdiction, not just a measure of how many employees or the size of your state budget. It is a measure of the jurisdiction we are exercising on people’s lives on a day-to-day basis.”

“I trimately those 49 words of the Declaration of Independence are most important,” Birdwell said. “We are a people ‘endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,’ and then the phrase right after is the charge to us as elected officials and ‘to secure these rights governments are instituted among men.’” Birdwell said. “My primary duty is to be here to protect you from government. To protect your rights, to protect your ability to go out and succeed or to go out and fail and learn from that failure.”

“I always ask myself the question, ‘Is what you’re asking government to do going to expand opportunities by removing an obstacle or will it put another rock in their rucksack?’”

A native Texan and resident of Granbury, Birdwell was elected in a special election to fill the unexpired term of Senator Kip Averitt. Birdwell ran unopposed on the November ballot and was elected for the full term.

Although calamity could easily have weighed him down, he is quick to credit faith, family and friends with helping him triumph over the trauma and once again find fulfillment in serving others.
Butch Smith ’75 and two colleagues completed a flight around the world last summer in a 300-m.p.h. twin-engine Beechcraft King Air to raise awareness for Grace Flight, a non-profit organization providing free air transportation for medical and humanitarian purposes.

“It is our goal to remove the transportation burden from patients so they can get to specialized medical treatment not available to them locally and focus on getting well,” Smith said. “Many of our patients do not have access to conventional transportation or are too ill to drive or fly commercially. Grace Flight of America relies completely on volunteer pilots and donations from individuals, foundations, clubs and corporations.”

“Our global circumnavigation flight was an incredible adventure,” said Smith who, when he’s not flying with Grace Flight, pursues business opportunities through McRight-Smith Capital, LP, a private equity company.

A 1975 history graduate of Lamar University, Smith built a career in marketing and financial institutions. Smith was one of the first speakers in the College of Business’ Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies speaker series.

“To our great surprise, we know that hundreds and hundreds of people followed the flight. It is very gratifying, and more than a little humbling to know that these good folks, and their friends, were introduced to Grace Flight and its compassionate mission.”

—BUTCH SMITH ’75

Grace Flight provide their time, equipment, and fuel and operating costs with no reimbursement. Grace Flight, a non-profit corporation headquartered in Addison, Texas, works with hospitals, care facilities, and social, community, and religious workers to identify people whose access to critical care is hampered due to location or transportation difficulties. All Grace Flight services are provided free of charge to those in need.