




Sawdust

SPRING 2021

THE MAGAZINE OF THE SFA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION AND STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY

Conserving Texas' Wildlife and Wildlands

Alumnus holds key leadership
position with the Texas Parks
and Wildlife Department

A large, multi-story red brick building with many windows. The name 'the Fredonia Hotel' is mounted on the side in a white, stylized script font. The sky is blue with some clouds.

the Fredonia Hotel



F

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MEETS
LUXURY.

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President's Letter



WHEN THE SPRING semester began at SFA, I believe most of us were hoping the beginning of a new year would bring relief from many of the trials we experienced in 2020. Now that we are well into 2021, we have

survived two of Nacogdoches' largest snowfalls in recorded history, and I am happy to say there are many new developments at SFA that have helped to brighten our outlook for the year.

One of our goals as a public-serving institution of higher learning is to build community, so that as our students enter the workforce or continue their educational pursuits, they have a model they may use to transform the communities in which they will live and work. This task can seem overwhelming when COVID-19 restrictions require that we stay physically distant, and it will be at the forefront of the work of our new vice president for student affairs. Dr. Brandon Frye arrived on campus in February and is leading the charge to help our students navigate a college experience that is both safe and rewarding.

As the world continues to battle the coronavirus, Lumberjacks have stepped up to help. Our School of Nursing was honored with the 2020 Do-Gooder of the Year Award from the Texas Forest Country Partnership, an economic development agency serving 12 counties. The award recognized the Nacogdoches COVID-19 Call Center, a collaborative effort of SFA and the city, county, both Nacogdoches hospitals and more than 20 health care providers. Representatives from these entities left their self-interests at the door to join forces and serve the greater good of East Texas, playing a major role in keeping our community — and our campus — safe and healthy.

The call center went from paper to practice in five days, with SFA providing phone lines, staffing and the expertise of our nursing faculty

members and students. During the first two months of operation, student and community volunteers answered more than 2,700 calls, and the center administered nearly 600 COVID-19 tests. Our nursing students have played a major role in COVID vaccine clinics held on campus and in the community. Even before their graduation, they are heroes in my eyes.

We recently learned our forestry students have continued their winning ways — the Society of American Foresters students were named among the top three such groups in the nation. Also, the first graduates of our family nurse practitioner program achieved a 100% pass rate on certification exams. This fall, we will begin offering courses that will eventually lead to a new program in aviation sciences, and we have transitioned our doctorate in educational leadership to be our first completely online doctoral degree program.

Our athletics teams will begin participating in the Western Athletic Conference beginning in July, and the Loddie Naymola Basketball Performance Center at Johnson Coliseum will be complete this summer. Progress on the Griffith Fine Arts Building construction project is impressive.

The new year and the beginning of spring is a time when many of us set goals and think about what we would like to accomplish in the year ahead. We also might pause to consider how we spend our time and what we truly value. I truly value the individuals — from our faculty and staff to our fervent alumni — who hold SFA near to their hearts and work to ensure its vibrant future.

Axe 'em, Jacks!

Dr. Scott Gordon
President
Stephen F. Austin State University



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Through the personal attention
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in a learner-centered environment
and offer opportunities
to prepare for the challenges of living
in the global community.



Photo by Jason Reina '03



Take a road trip - back.

A spring road trip was a rite of passage when you were in college. What better time than this spring for a trip back to see the campus, take in Texas' largest azalea garden and to just kick back and reminisce. If it's a road trip you're ready for, we have a *Nac* for that. Plan your stay with the Visit Nac app or at VisitNac.com.

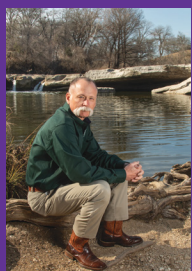


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ON THE COVER:

Chief operating officer for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Clayton Wolf '86 has dedicated his 30-plus-year career in natural resources management to conserving Texas' wildlife and wildlands. He is responsible for the overall operation of a statewide agency that manages more than 770,000 acres of wildlife management areas and 600,000 acres of state parks, natural areas and historic sites. Read about Wolf's career and his plans to invigorate interest in and expand access to the outdoors in this issue of Sawdust.

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Sawdust

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Going Home

Doctors return to Alto to serve their community

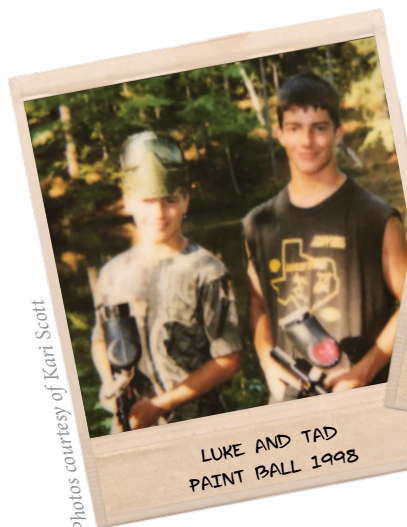
STORY BY JO GILMORE

PHOTOS BY ROBIN JOHNSON '09 & '19



*Drs. Tad Scott '08 and
Luke Johnson '10*





LUKE AND TAD
PAINT BALL 1998



TAD AND LUKE
COLORADO MISSION TRIP 2004



TAD AND KARI '09 SCOTT
SFA GRADUATION 2008



LUKE AND HIS MOM, ROSA ALLEN
SFA GRADUATION 2010



DRS. TAD SCOTT '08 and Luke Johnson '10 have known each other since before birth. Their mothers, longtime best friends, had them seven months apart, and they've been buddies ever since.

After growing up together in Alto, a city of about 1,300 located 30 miles west of Nacogdoches, Scott and Johnson graduated from SFA, earned a Doctor of Physical Therapy and Doctor of Medicine, respectively, and practiced in big cities that include Dallas, Galveston, Houston and New York. But their thoughts kept turning toward their hometown, especially after tornadoes devastated it in April 2019.

BOYS WILL BE BOYS

Scott and Johnson's childhoods were filled with camping, hunting, fishing, paint ball and church activities. Overachievers from an early age, they said they rarely got into trouble.

The tamer acts they admitted to include a bet that Scott made involving eating a whole banana — peel, stem and all — during lunch at Alto Middle School one day. His act of food courage earned him about \$7 in change.

Johnson wasn't as savvy as Scott when it came to making bets. While helping set up for his church's garage sale, he agreed to walk down the street to the convenience store, wearing donated items others selected for him, in exchange for someone buying him an Icee.

"I set my price too low," Johnson admitted.

That outfit featured a woman's floral romper that he accidentally wore backward; the diamond cutout was supposed to be on his lower back instead of his belly button. Luckily, the romper was paired with a derby hat to class it up a bit.

"I was reimbursed for the Icee but not the loss of dignity," Johnson said.

Scott believes Johnson's pride didn't suffer much. "Once you get to know Luke, it's clear he doesn't embarrass easily."

Their irreverent senses of humor developed further in high school, as evidenced by the song they sang as members of the varsity baseball team to "pump up" for a game.

"We sang The Bangles' 'Eternal Flame,'" Scott said. "I still crack up at that song when it comes on the radio." ➔

“I learned
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and
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so I try to
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to those I’m
close with.”

DR. TAD SCOTT '08



PREPARING TO CARE FOR OTHERS

Scott and Johnson attended several University Interscholastic League competitions at SFA, so they were already familiar with the campus when they needed to choose a college.

Scott, who graduated from high school a year before Johnson, earned a football scholarship.

“When it came down to choosing where I would play, it was an easy decision after getting to know coach Mike Santiago and his staff,” Scott said. “Also, I always loved the campus growing up, and I liked the smaller hometown feel of SFA and Nacogdoches.”

He was sidelined for health reasons during his sophomore year, but Scott still learned a lot from the experience.

“As heartbreaking as it was losing that ability to play ball, I was lucky to be surrounded by a good group of friends, teammates and coaching staff,” he said. “I learned having family, friendship and camaraderie can get you through some pretty tough times, so I try to apply that to those I’m close with.”

During his work toward a biology degree, Scott gained knowledge he still uses today in the exercise physiology and exercise testing elements of treatment.

“And just developing the work ethic during those years of school helped out in my doctoral program and with starting my businesses,” he added.

With both Scott and Johnson’s older sister, Amy Guidry ’06, attending SFA, Johnson knew he’d follow in their footsteps.

“Both had given me a glimpse of what SFA had to offer academically and socially — hat tip to the A-Frame and Sports Shack — so it was a no-brainer,” Johnson said. “It was one of the easiest, best decisions I’ve made, and I will always be proud to raise the axe.”

While earning his combined sciences degree, Johnson rushed the Sigma Tau Gamma fraternity during his sophomore year.

“My only regret was not joining sooner,” he said. “I will forever be linked to the principles of integrity, value and leadership it championed and grateful for the friends I made along the way.”

Johnson said SFA’s pre-health professions program laid the groundwork he needed to earn both a Doctor of Medicine and Master of Public Health.

“I wholeheartedly believe that professors like Ali Piran, Drs. Kevin Langford, Russell Franks and Jason Fritzler helped prepare me for medical school and get to me where I am today.”

After graduating in December 2008, Scott married his middle school sweetheart, Kari Scott ’09, and they moved to Galveston so he could earn his doctoral degree at The University of Texas Medical Branch.

Scott then began working at Houston Methodist Clear Lake Hospital, formerly Houston Methodist St. John Hospital, in 2014. In 2015, he also opened a private practice, Advancing Movement with Physical Therapy, in Houston with some business partners. There, he focused on orthopedic injuries, sports medicine and balance disorders.

In the meantime, Johnson graduated in August 2010 and completed his medical school didactics and his master’s degree at St. George’s University School of Medicine in Grenada, West Indies. After finishing his clinical rotations in New York and New Jersey, he completed his residency at Parkland Memorial Hospital and UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas.

BIG PLANS FOR SMALL TOWNS

On April 13, 2019, Scott and his brother were outside in Bryan-College Station noting the ominous-looking sky. Not long after, Scott’s brother got a call from their father in Alto saying everything was gone.

“Dad is lucky to be alive today,” Scott said.

The largest of three tornadoes in Alto that day hit Scott’s parents’ farm while his father was inside the farmhouse.

"He had just enough time to grab hold of the metal spiral staircase inside the house as the tornado passed right through it," Scott said. "It was so strong that it sucked the carpet off the foundation and lifted him off the ground. He watched cow troughs from the pasture pass through the house and all the furniture stack on itself in the corner."

The farmhouse and two barns were totaled. Scott described seeing the amount of devastation as "surreal."

"The response from everyone in Alto was unbelievable, and that's one of the reasons I moved back," Scott said. "It's hard to find a community like that, and I'm glad I got to grow up in one."

Johnson, who watched the tornado coverage from Dallas during his residency, also was impressed by the resilience of Alto residents.

"By no means was this the first time everyone has rallied together — our motto is #Altogether — but it was a great reminder of how proud I am of my hometown and why I wanted to move back, be a part of the community and help when I can."

Johnson returned to Alto in November 2019. He is now medical director at UT Health East Texas Physicians clinic in Rusk.

Despite the devastation caused by the tornadoes, the destruction didn't meet the threshold for federal assistance.

"We've largely been on our own in the aftermath," Johnson said.

Because of this, Johnson recently launched the nonprofit Alto Community Alliance to help protect the city's economic viability and promote community health and unity. The effort combines the knowledge Johnson gained while earning his master's degree in public health with the green thumb passed down from his parents that he refined by taking horticulture classes at SFA.

"Initially, our primary focus is completing the cleanup of debris left by the tornadoes," Johnson said. "Then we'll work on a city makeover."

The makeover includes planting ornamental and wildlife-friendly trees, shrubs and flowers throughout Alto and establishing a central arboretum.

"We're trying to follow the Strong Towns approach by making Alto more walkable," he said. "We think that will generate both economic and health benefits and help us create a community wellness center."

The center would offer indoor and outdoor spaces for the community to congregate, a gym and other resources.

"As a physician, I can treat only one patient at a time, and I usually see those patients once they're already sick and have developed significant risk factors," Johnson said. "My hope is that this offers area residents opportunities to improve their overall health and optimize their quality of life."

As the nonprofit and community center become more established, Johnson is hoping to create some internships for SFA students. In the meantime, he's looking for volunteers; those interested can email him at johnsonla936@gmail.com.

The Scott family returned to Alto in September 2020.

"My wife and I felt like it was time to come back home," Scott said. "We have four children who want to enjoy the

rural childhoods we had. We have a lot of family and friends who are like family in and around Alto. There's just no place better."

Scott added, "Plus, when our kids become Lumberjacks, we will have a short commute to check in on them!"

Like Johnson, Tad and Kari Scott have plans to serve area residents.

"We decided to open a practice in East Texas and offer another resource for medical care to the community," Tad said. "We feel this community gave so much to us growing up, and we want to give back to it."

The Scotts opened Pineywoods Physical Therapy, the first physical therapy clinic in Rusk, in November. They're also opening a location in Lufkin, and Tad is still the majority partner at AMPT in Houston.

Now reunited in their hometown, Tad and Johnson get to hang out together almost every week. If you hear "Is this burning an eternal flame?" blaring from a truck radio in Cherokee County, be sure to wave at them. ★

"My hope is that this (community wellness center) offers area residents opportunities to improve their overall health and optimize their quality of life."

DR. LUKE JOHNSON '10



Conserving Texas' Wildlife and Wildlands

Alumnus holds key leadership position with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

STORY BY SARAH FULLER '08 & '13



FROM THE HIGH mountains of the Chihuahuan Desert to the humid bottomlands of the piney woods ecoregion, Clayton Wolf '86 has dedicated his 30-plus-year career in natural resources management to conserving Texas' wildlife and wildlands. Now, as chief operating officer of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, he is responsible for the overall operation of a statewide agency that manages more than 770,000 acres of wildlife management areas and 600,000 acres of state parks, natural areas and historic sites.

Wolf, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Forestry from SFA, distinctly remembers key outdoor experiences that defined his childhood — hunting his first deer, catching his first fish and participating in family camping trips. It is his goal to provide similar outdoor experiences for all Texans.

"Integral to our conservation mission is engagement in the outdoors," Wolf said. "Whether it's camping, hunting, fishing, hiking or

birdwatching, we are focused on enhancing public engagement with our natural resources."

As the landscape of Texas changes, growing in population and urbanization, this will be no simple task.

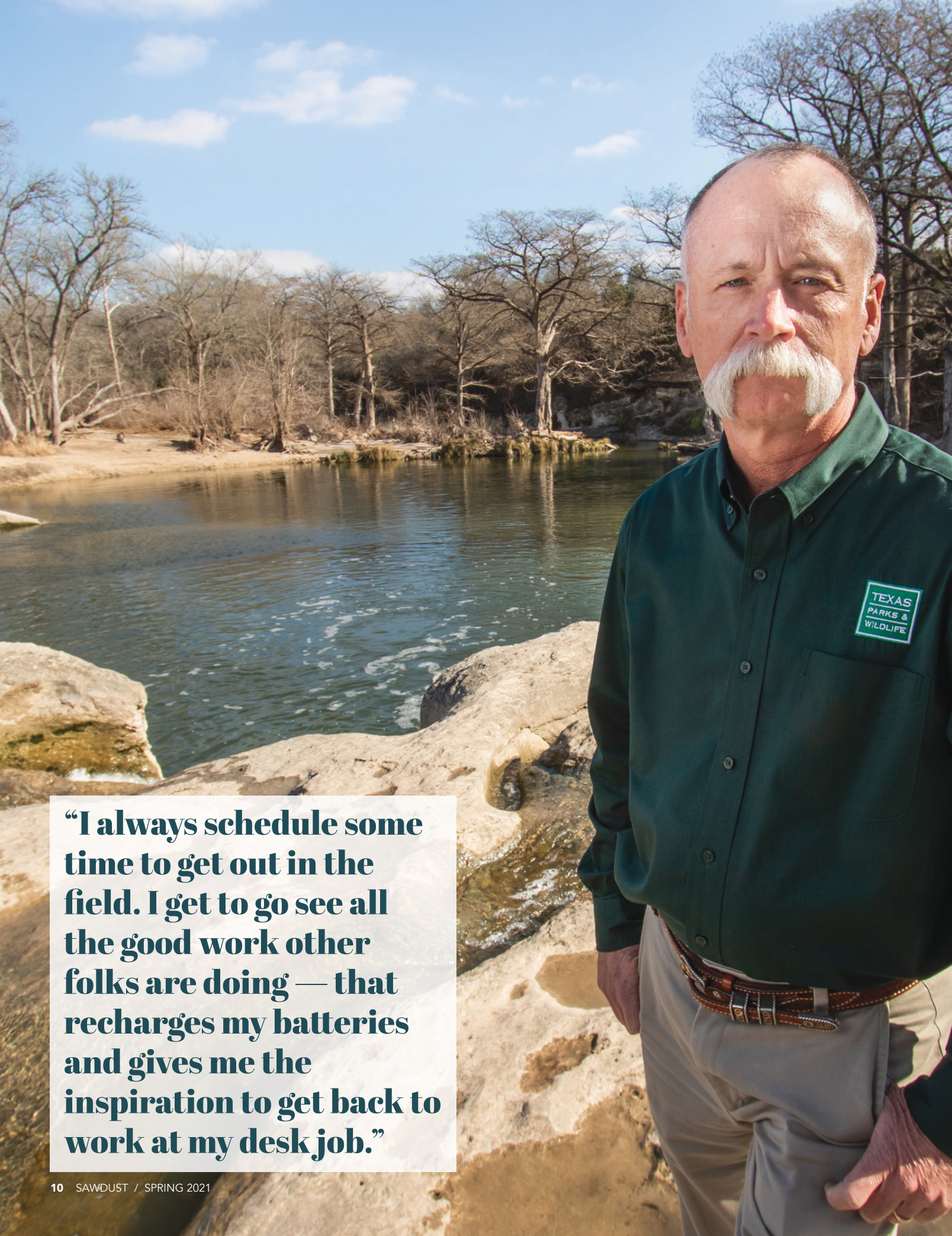
"It's not just conservation issues we face, but the growing detachment of society from the natural world," Wolf said. "If wildlife agencies or anyone in the conservation field is going to be successful in conserving the environment, the public has to believe in and support what we do."

With this in mind, the 10 agency divisions directed by Wolf have launched a number of new initiatives to invigorate interest in and expand access to the outdoors. These new initiatives join a diverse selection of established programming, such as the Texas Youth Hunting Program, which introduces young Texans to hunting safety and ethics; Texas Outdoor Family Workshops, which provide novice campers with basic outdoor skills; the Neighborhood Fishin' Program, which offers free fishing ➔

"It's not just conservation issues we face, but the growing detachment of society from the natural world. If wildlife agencies or anyone in the conservation field is going to be successful in conserving the environment, the public has to believe in and support what we do."

CLAYTON WOLF '86





“I always schedule some time to get out in the field. I get to go see all the good work other folks are doing — that recharges my batteries and gives me the inspiration to get back to work at my desk job.”



opportunities at city and county ponds; and Project Wildlife In Learning Design, known as Project WILD, which equips educators with curricula to teach wildlife-related concepts.

Wolf plans to ensure these opportunities for outdoor appreciation and recreation continue to grow during his tenure as COO.

Palo Pinto Mountain State Park, located 75 miles west of the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex, is currently in development, and the recently opened Roger Fawcett Wildlife Management Area will not only provide recreational opportunities but also myriad possibilities for biological research.

Along the Texas Gulf Coast sits one of the state's newest wildlife management areas — the roughly 17,000-acre Powderhorn Ranch. A portion of this land also will eventually house a state park situated along the shore of Matagorda Bay and Powderhorn Lake.

"This acquisition is considered by most as one of the last great places along the Texas coast," Wolf said. "It was a big deal orchestrated with a lot of partners."

Wolf said this reliance on partnerships and healthy relationships with stakeholders is integral to success both in conservation and leadership.

"Any leader can navigate through the easy times when there's a healthy budget or no contentious issues, but it's during those difficult times when you need to have established good working relationships with other agencies, nongovernmental organizations and the private sector," Wolf said.

Wolf credits Dr. Monty Whiting, SFA professor emeritus of forestry, as being a key mentor, providing guidance and encouraging him to step out of his comfort zone in order to foster professional growth.

"He was an excellent student who worked hard, took leadership roles and continued to do so throughout his life to reach this point in his career," Whiting said.

Prior to his appointment as COO, Wolf served as the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's statewide wildlife division director. This division, comprising top wildlife biologists and researchers, is responsible for navigating the intricate network of modern conservation issues and accompanying stakeholders, as well as implementing science-based initiatives to support Texas wildlife and public access to this resource. This includes restoring threatened and endangered species, improving habitat management on private lands, addressing the impact of exotic and invasive species, and implementing the Texas Conservation Action Plan.

During his time as wildlife division director, Wolf was asked to serve on the advisory council for SFA's Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture. The council, established in 2012, comprises a select group of accomplished professionals representing all disciplines within the college who dedicate their time, insight and expertise to enhancing the mission, academic rigor and success of the college.

"Since graduating from our forestry program, Clayton has been an outstanding role model and mentor for our forest wildlife management students," said Dr. Hans Williams, dean of SFA's Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture. "He is an engaged and valued advisor who exemplifies to our forestry students what it truly means to be a servant leader."

In addition to beginning his career at SFA, Wolf met his wife, Ashley '85, a fellow forestry student and champion for Wolf's journey as a wildlife biologist and conservation leader.

"She has supported me in all of these advancements and in all of the moves our family has taken to advance my career," Wolf said. "Frankly, she helped wrangle the fellowship I earned to pursue my master's at Texas A&M. She's a big part of my success."

As an administrator, spending more time in a boardroom than in the field, Wolf admits he occasionally longs for the days when the outdoors was his primary headquarters.

"I always schedule some time to get out in the field," Wolf said. "I get to go see all the good work other folks are doing — that recharges my batteries and gives me the inspiration to get back to work at my desk job."

Although many Texans may rapidly assert the superiority of their favorite TPWD-managed site, Wolf can do no such thing — instead providing a response that personifies his love for the diverse Texas landscape.

"As I have gotten to know these different sites and all of their unique characteristics, that's kind of like asking 'who is your favorite child?'" Wolf said with a laugh. "They're all distinctive and have their own special qualities." ★

Vista Viewpoint / By Kerry Whitsett '07 & '12



University Marketing Communications / SFA Social Media Specialist

SOCIAL MEDIA HAS become an essential communication tool in higher education. What once functioned mainly as a resource to find fellow classmates and connect with far-away family members has now grown into a critical communication source used to network with audiences from all walks of life. Billions of people worldwide are addicted, and that addiction is being fed by the development of more and more platforms.

While seeing baby photos on Facebook or what someone made for dinner on Instagram is commonplace, the necessary social distancing associated with COVID-19 has brought even more people into the social media fold. It has not been uncommon during the past year to share the location of stores that have toilet paper on the shelves or identify friends who are binge-watching “Tiger King.”

In their search for information, people use social media to connect with universities, and SFA participates in several platforms to showcase everything Lumberjack. News, upcoming events, course registration, alumni happenings, accolades and many other topics are shared with our friends on social media.

Though it has been in existence for years, the way people use social media is ever-evolving, and SFA's social media team diligently works to ensure it is delivering relevant messages and information to our audiences. While a post “going viral” is great, it cannot be predicted. SFA's social media team concentrates on providing a steady stream of engagement with SFA's audiences, and to accomplish this we tailor the content for each platform, often planning posts days in advance.

While the latest dance craze may go over well on TikTok, our Facebook audience is generally more interested in learning about new

developments at SFA or gazing at a photo of our beautiful campus. Lumberjacks on Instagram want to see what students are doing and like to catch up with Twiggy, a “famous” squirrel that lives just outside SFA's Ferguson Building. By crafting messages for each audience and platform, we can maintain the high level of engagement for which SFA's social media is known.

In recent years, SFA's main social media channels have ranked in the top 10% among universities for overall consistent, steadily engaging content, and in 2020, SFA was ranked among the top three Texas universities by Rival IQ, a social media analytics company.

Although an initial post is generated by the university's marketing team to communicate with followers, the communication is not one way. Followers often engage with us, asking questions, commenting on the post, etc. The social media team follows up by answering questions, congratulating new students when they post about their acceptance to SFA or their graduation, sharing pictures of alumni-related events and reassuring parents who may be missing their student.

Whatever your age or affiliation with SFA, whether it be a graduate, current or prospective student, parent or friend of the university, we have at least one social media channel that will appeal to you. And, although SFA has its official university platforms, many colleges, schools, departments, offices, etc. on campus also have their own social media accounts they use to share information particular to that area.

If you're not already following us on social media, I encourage you to do so. In general, we make one post daily on each platform. We love our social media audiences, and we hope you will “like” us, too! ★

SFA'S OFFICIAL SOCIAL MEDIA:

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Work Space / Inside Dr. Judy Abbott's Office



DR. JUDY ABBOTT
Dean
James I. Perkins
College of Education

- Abbott loves beautiful wood and cherishes wood furniture. The bookcases were custom made for her based on a design she found in an old magazine. The gentleman who made them, a retired coal engineer, constructed them in his wood shop. The oak desk is more than 100 years old and was found by her husband in Morgantown, West Virginia. The pedestal table, given to Abbott by her grandmother, is more than 105 years old. The small walnut bookcase (right) was purchased at a garage sale in Austin about 25 years ago.
- While at West Virginia University, Abbott accumulated about 2,500 children's books she used to teach courses and allowed undergraduate and graduate literacy students to use as the basis for lessons. As she prepared to move to SFA, Abbott chose to keep about 150 books that reflected memories of her teaching at WVU and her interests as a literacy scholar.
- The storytelling of singer, musician, songwriter and actor Lyle Lovett has captured Abbott's imagination since the 1980s. When Lovett came to SFA in 2014 as the guest speaker for the Archie McDonald Speaker Series, Abbott was ecstatic. Though she was unable to attend his presentation because of an out-of-state meeting, Abbott's SFA colleagues obtained his autograph for her. Abbott said she cherishes the thoughtfulness of her colleagues as much as Lovett's signature.
- Dr. Julie M. Jenson served as Abbott's advisor and dissertation chair during her doctoral work at the University of Texas at Austin in the early- to mid-1990s. According to Abbott, Jenson invested in her — both professionally and personally. Abbott keeps this photo on her desk as a reminder of her mentor.
- During her doctoral work, Abbott co-taught an undergraduate language arts methods course with Jenson. Because of her belief in journaling as a thinking/communication method, Jenson taught the class members how to make hand sewn journals. That semester, everyone made a journal, in which the students responded to prompts, queried Abbott and Jenson, and expressed their growing understanding of teaching in elementary schools. Abbott continued this instructional approach, requiring hand sewn journals every semester she taught literacy methods courses at WVU.
- Kathleen Worrell, an accomplished local artist, created this small picture of the Texas state flower, the bluebonnet, which features more purple hues than blue.
- In 2004, the International Reading Association, now known as the International Literacy Association, featured LitNet, a professional development initiative, as the lead story in its newsletter. Abbott co-founded LitNet in 2002 as a part of her work at WVU. This long-standing initiative, comprising teachers, graduate students and university faculty members, read texts, showcased instruction, analyzed student work and critiqued practices focused on children's literacy development.
- In 2013, Kathleen Kennedy Townsend was a Woodrow Wilson Fellow for an academic consortium that included SFA. She spent time on campus and worked with small groups of students. Abbott and her husband, Ralph, were honored to stand for a photograph with Kennedy, a member of the famed Kennedy family, who is deeply involved in politics and activism.
- When she arrived at WVU in 1995, Abbott requested to provide site-based literacy instruction at the most language-diverse elementary school in Morgantown (14 languages). Her work included a dual-language initiative to support international children in authoring books as they developed their command of English. She then worked with family members to provide home-language translations. Children composed and illustrated the books, and family members and new-to-the-school children read home-language versions and English-language versions of child-authored books, supporting both children's and family members' language growth. Abbott said this small collection of child-produced books is a testament to the power of literacy and the honoring of home languages.
- Led by Dr. Theresa Coble, former SFA associate professor of forestry, a handful of SFA faculty members, including Abbott, participated in a multiyear grant provided by the National Park Service. It supported faculty members at Oglala Lakota College in developing two concentration plans — hospitality administration and business entrepreneurship — for the Lakota studies degree to support OLC students competing for career opportunities with the state and federal park systems near their tribal lands in South Dakota. As a member of the Chickasaw Nation in Oklahoma, Abbott appreciated the collaborative and coordinated work for tribal members. She kept this framed artwork as a reminder of the project.

FAMILY ON THE FRONT LINES



COUPLE participates in COVID-19 clinical trials

STORY BY WENDI HAWTHORNE (KUNKEL) '13

PHOTOS BY ROBIN JOHNSON '99 & '19

WHEN I THINK back to my days as an SFA student reporter for The Pine Log and my short stint as a small-town newspaper reporter, I never imagined the role I would play in writing one of the more important stories of my career. Just seven months after landing my dream job in public affairs covering infectious diseases and public health at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, a global pandemic emerged, and I became the source for a patient perspective from the front lines of this public health emergency.

From the onset of the pandemic, I was in daily communication with researchers and physicians about the latest findings on COVID-19, trying to distribute critical health information to the public in my role as a media relations specialist. So, when my husband, Brandon, wasn't feeling well one October afternoon after learning a few of his colleagues had tested positive for COVID-19, it was time to put that knowledge into action for both of us. ➔

HAWTHORNE'S FUN FACTS AND MEMORIES

- graduated in May 2013 with a bachelor's degree in journalism/public relations
- worked for student publications from 2010-13, writing for both The Pine Log and the Stone Fort
- as a member of the Chi Omega sorority, Hawthorne developed a passion for philanthropy/community relations work through the group's Make-A-Wish partnership
- has known since fourth grade she wanted to study journalism
- had her first article published in The Dallas Morning News at age 14
- met her husband, an aerospace engineer, while both worked for L3Harris Technologies, an aerospace Department of Defense contractor
- said her copy-editing memories are still rooted in the funny stories her professor, Dr. Gary Mayer, integrated into his lessons
- proudest SFA alumni moment involved helping to create the Pat Spence Scholarship for The Pine Log, established in honor of long-time Director of Student Publications Pat Spence, who retired in 2014 and was instrumental in Hawthorne's education and career development



"It is hard to put into words how frightening it is when the very thing you have avoided for the better half of a year finds its way into your home."



Brandon quickly scheduled an appointment for a rapid test. When he called an hour later to tell me he had tested positive for COVID-19, my heart sank. It is hard to put into words how frightening it is when the very thing you have avoided for the better half of a year finds its way into your home.

The next day I was still feeling normal — no fever or body aches, and my sense of smell and taste were both still intact. I made an appointment to be tested that afternoon so I could know my status for peace of mind. I tested negative, so we continued to quarantine apart in our home.

The month prior to Brandon's illness, I began working with a research team at McGovern Medical School at UTHealth to help educate the public about two clinical trials testing the effectiveness of monoclonal antibodies. It dawned on me — Brandon and I were both qualified candidates for these studies. Brandon fit the requirements for ACTIV-2, a study on multiple treatments, including a monoclonal (laboratory-made) antibody, at preventing mild COVID-19 from advancing to severe illness in the outpatient setting.

While I was not positive for COVID-19, I met the criteria for the REGN-COV2 trial, studying if a combination antibody treatment can prevent COVID-19 illness in individuals who live with someone with the virus.

When we dialed the research hotline and I told the research coordinator on the other end of the phone I was actually reaching out to make an appointment to assess us for these two studies, I had to laugh. "The irony of this is not lost on me," I said.

My first introduction to working in health care public relations was during my days at SFA. As an undergraduate student studying journalism, I had the opportunity to intern in the community relations department at Nacogdoches Memorial Health. It was only meant to be a summer internship before my senior year, but it turned into a yearlong role — one I am so grateful for.

Because of that experience, I knew when I entered the workforce that I wanted to work for an organization whose mission is helping others. I desired a career that would allow me to use my love of writing to inform others and to engage with the community where I lived and worked.

Nearly eight years later, I know my education at SFA prepared me well to chase that dream. Guided by professors who taught me to ask the important questions, find the

LEFT: Brandon Hawthorne's infusion of either Eli Lilly's investigational laboratory-made antibody drug or a placebo was delivered at the hospital and took nearly three hours.

BELOW: Brandon and Wendi Hawthorne pose with Dr. Netanya Utay, an associate professor of general internal medicine at UTHealth, at their final efficacy appointment.

Photos courtesy of Wendi Hawthorne



story and communicate it in a way that is meaningful to the public, I gained confidence that has certainly placed me on the path I am following today.

Rooted in that same passion to make a difference for the community, Brandon and I decided we would both enroll in the respective clinical trials.

The Monday following Brandon's COVID-19 confirmation, I arrived at the hospital to be assessed for the REGN-COV2 trial. After some blood work and two more COVID-19 tests, I was randomized. By that evening, I was the first local patient to be enrolled in the study and receive four injections of either the trial agent, an antibody cocktail that targets two different sites of the spike protein found on the surface of the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, or a placebo.

The next morning, Brandon received his infusion of either LY-CoV555, an investigational monoclonal antibody developed from the blood sample of a recovered COVID-19 patient, or a placebo.

Both trials were double-blinded, meaning neither the research team nor we knew if we received the trial agent or a placebo. However, we closely monitored our symptoms, and Brandon was required to keep a symptom log for the first month. He had to self-administer a COVID-19 test every evening, measure his temperature and log any symptoms he had or medications he took that day. He also had weekly blood draws during this time to monitor his body's response to the treatment agent.

For my trial, I attended weekly follow-up appointments for the first month to measure my vitals and conduct a COVID-19 test. Thankfully, I never tested positive for COVID-19. Brandon made a quick, full recovery, and his sense of smell and taste returned within a week.

While this experience was scary at first, ultimately, I would not trade it for anything. We were able to witness firsthand how incredibly passionate the physicians and researchers I am proud to call my colleagues are, not only for skillfully treating their patients but also for using their expertise to search for a therapy that will hopefully help so many affected by this illness.

During a time when all eyes are on research in the quest for a COVID-19 treatment or cure, I am grateful both my husband and I could participate in this global effort. ★

Advising 101

BY CRAIG TURNAGE '00 & '05
SFA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



WE ARE LIVING in a different time. Approximately 12 months ago, everything changed when the first cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in Texas. Since then, we all have made adjustments to the way we communicate and keep in touch,

including your SFA Alumni Association.

Although in-person meetings, for the most part, have been postponed, there are still lots of ways you can stay connected with SFA and your alumni network. Some of these include:

- **Sawdust magazine** – The magazine you are reading right now is published three times a year — spring, fall and winter — and is a wonderful way to stay updated. Each issue includes several feature articles showcasing notable alumni. The magazine is a source of pride for SFA alumni and shares important information regarding alumni accomplishments, campus updates and scholarships, as well as other relevant communications.
- **Membership in the SFA Alumni Association** – Two tiers are offered — the Purple Pride Annual and the Purple Pride Life. The annual membership ranges in cost from \$75 for an individual to \$125 for a joint membership for one year. A special parent/first-year graduate membership also is available for \$25. The Purple Pride Life costs \$975 for an individual and \$1,500 for a joint membership. The student/first-year graduate option also is offered for \$500. Each tier includes amazing perks! Find out more at sfaalumni.com/page/join.
- **sfaalumni.com** – There is so much you can discover and do by accessing our website – from ordering your SFA Ring to joining the Alumni Association, submitting class notes to Sawdust, updating your alumni records, submitting nominations for the Alumni Awards and more. Log on often to stay current on all the happenings.
- **Social media** – If you're not already following us on social media, now is a great time to start! Follow us on Facebook at [@sfaalumni](https://www.facebook.com/sfaalumni) and on Instagram and Twitter using [@sfa_alumni](https://www.instagram.com/sfa_alumni). We'll keep you in the loop on SFA-related events and information and share fun posts about fellow alumni and their families.

Hopefully, we will soon be able to visit in person during Lumberjack Network, Homecoming and other events. Until then, please know your Alumni Association is continuing to build Lumberjack pride. We look forward to seeing you soon! ★

JACK TALK

Facebook - @SFASU
Instagram - @SFASU

Twitter - @SFASU
Pinterest - SFALUMBERJACKS

Use #AxeEm or tag SFA on social media.



Made my dad a T-shirt quilt from all his old SFA shirts. Came out pretty good! #axeemjacks #SFA #tshirtquilt

@SPENCERTHEGIRL2010 / INSTAGRAM



Took Uncle Trey lunch, and she just had to look at #adayatSFA again. She loves finding all the things. Her favorite thing to say is "what's this?"

@BRANDI_T1MUSICALMOMMA / INSTAGRAM



Added my new axe handle. Axe 'em! #sfa

@TEACHMCAWESOME / TWITTER



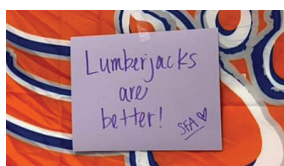
Lumberjack lawyer + SFA socks = Axe 'em

NICK PESINA / FACEBOOK



Just representing on this fine football Sunday.

EVELYN BENTON / FACEBOOK



I'm covering for another teacher this morning. I left my mark.

MARIAH WILLIAMS / FACEBOOK



Anyone need a 38-year-old linebacker?! #relivingglorydays #axeemjacks

@JROB081 / TWITTER

Jacks of All Trades / With Mario Canizares '95



LEADING THE WAY: Career in city management brings Canizares back to Nac

STORY BY DR. SHIRLEY LUNA '85, '06 & '14 / PHOTO BY ROBIN JOHNSON '99 & '19

WHEN MARIO CANIZARES walked the SFA commencement stage in 1995, he had a small U-Haul trailer packed and connected to his Chevy Blazer, and he was ready to drive back to the DFW area and begin his career. He wasn't sure he would ever return to Nacogdoches, but he was positive about the career he wanted to pursue.

"As a 20 year old, I knew I wanted to work in city management," Canizares said.

Canizares' confidence was based on his interactions with Dr. Richard Herzog, an SFA faculty member who encouraged him to consider a career in public administration and introduced him to the Lufkin city manager in neighboring Angelina County.

Canizares went on to work for several Texas cities, including Denton, Coppell, Addison, Hurst and Carrollton. He earned a master's degree in public administration from the University of North Texas and became involved in professional organizations that include the International City/County Management Association and the Texas City Management Association. And, in the midst of a pandemic, he returned to Nacogdoches as city manager in August 2020.

"Coming back to Nacogdoches has been so rewarding," Canizares said. "I was excited and humbled that the city council had the confidence to appoint me as city manager. Everyone I have met has been friendly and extremely supportive. I am proud of what has been accomplished in our community and on campus during the past 25 years. It has blown me away."

In addition to his academic coursework, Canizares said his participation in the Student Activities Association served as valuable career preparation.

"Having a leadership position during my junior and senior years allowed me to work with fellow students and faculty members to coordinate bringing concerts and other entertainment options to campus," he explained. "The opportunities taught me the collaborative nature of working with other employees and volunteers to meet expectations and execute a successful event."

Canizares said the challenges cities face are enormous, with high service-delivery demands and minimal and declining resources. But

the day-to-day stresses of the job prepared him well for his first months in Nacogdoches, when in addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, he led the city through hurricane preparation in August and two of the largest winter-weather events in recorded history.

"Regardless of how much you plan, each day is never the same," he said. "We have emergency plans in place to deal with inclement weather, and with Hurricane Laura and the snowfalls and winter storms."

However, Canizares said COVID-19 was a different story.

"Through the devastation of the pandemic, we've learned that good and effective leadership is vital in making it through tough times," he said. "Local governments have finite resources, so working across jurisdictional boundaries is imperative when budgets are squeezed and resources evaporate. The role of the city manager is to be flexible in approach, clear hurdles, advocate for resources, create avenues for communication and get out of the way so that the subject matter experts can do their jobs. Along the way, the manager should be encouraging and motivating to an exhausted staff, because all of this work is in addition to everyone's normal duties. I can't imagine myself in any other career."

Once again Canizares is using the skills he learned at SFA to ensure that the city, the university, the Nacogdoches Independent School District and Nacogdoches County bring collaboration to a new level to accomplish goals that may previously have seemed out of reach.

"The leaders of each of these entities are meeting regularly and have formed great friendships," he said. "We have set a positive tone and will work together to better our community. I have no doubt that, as a group, we can accomplish so much more than we could on our own."

One of those goals in 2021 is to bring back, within the safe parameters of health guidelines, many of the special events and festivals for which Nacogdoches is known.

"I know many people are ready to get out and travel again, so I encourage alumni to come and see what is going on in Nacogdoches and the exciting changes that are happening on the SFA campus. That charm and hospitality of our community has never been more appealing." ★



LET'S PLAY A GAME CALLED IS THIS REAL, OR ARE YOU PULLING MY LEG?

This is how it goes: I tell you the story of a man who fell in love with animals as a boy, graduated college at 19 years old, went on to receive his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine at 23 and become one of the youngest veterinarians in the state, landed a

dream job straight out of college and is now making a name for himself in the cattle obstetrics world, all before turning 25. When I'm done with the story, you tell me if you think it's real or far too fantastical to be true.

Here we go.

Dr. Tim Turner '16 has lived a truly dedicated life. Born and raised in Alazan, just a 15-minute car ride west of Nacogdoches,



STEERING HIS FUTURE

One of Texas' youngest veterinarians lands dream job, takes over mobile vet clinic

STORY BY CHRISTINE BROUSSARD '10 & '20

PHOTOS BY ROBIN JOHNSON '99 & '19

the care of animals big and small became a passion of his at a young age.

Of course, you hear this about passions often, because they are frequently sown during childhood, when the world is full of wonder. But this translated differently in Turner's life. His passion was unwavering — it stuck so deep that, at 10 years old, Turner was moved to action. He began volunteering at Nacogdoches'

Eastex Veterinary Clinic with Dr. James A. Weatherly just to be near furry friends, and he learned enough there to steer the direction of his future.

At 14, Turner began taking dual credit courses at SFA while continuing to home school; and at 19 years old, he walked the stage as a summa cum laude SFA graduate with dual degrees in animal science and biochemistry. Then, Turner entered ➔



Texas A&M University's College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences and graduated as a full-fledged veterinarian in 2020.

"I would not be a veterinarian without Dr. Weatherly," Turner said. "Whenever I first started working with him, I was still in that kid phase of just loving animals. When I was 12 or 13, I started to get interested in and grasp the medicine and disease side of animal care. That's when I really fell in love with the work."

A lifetime of dedication paid off almost immediately when Turner was hired straight out of his doctoral program to take over Dr. Clint Owens' mobile vet clinic in Longview. His position with The Outdoor Vet is one Turner only dreamed of landing after paying his dues in the veterinary field for many years.

"This is very similar to what my dream job is, which is to be a small animal surgeon in the morning and a large animal vet in the afternoon," Turner said. "I didn't expect to be blessed to come into this job and have such a large base of wonderful clients. Also, I don't think I could have moved forward as quickly as I did if I wasn't 100% sure of what I wanted to do from such a young age."

LUMBERJACK LIVING

Nacogdoches County is Turner's home, and this familiarity made SFA an easy

choice as he began his path toward veterinary medicine.

"My grandfather graduated from SFA, so I had a long-running connection with the school," Turner said. "I also knew vet school was going to be super expensive, so I chose SFA, in part, because I could stay home and save money."

"The personal instruction I received at SFA was phenomenal. The faculty and students all take you under their wing. We had all kinds of barbecues and meetups — there was always something going on, and the professors were very involved."

Turner's work stood out to many of the faculty members that led his undergraduate courses.

"I had heard Tim was an excellent student and had great skills in the lab from other faculty members. He has a natural curiosity, knows how to analyze a problem, and he also has the capacity to solve the problem," said Dr. Alyx Frantzen, SFA associate professor of chemistry. "I have known since I met Tim that he would accomplish his goals."

Being younger than most college students didn't seem to faze Turner. He excelled in his classes and his extracurricular activities.

"Tim is one of the most intelligent students I have met in my 18-year career," said Dr. Joey Bray, professor and chair of SFA's

Department of Agriculture. Bray also served as Turner's academic advisor and as advisor for the campus pre-veterinary medical organization. "Tim always went above and beyond to learn and apply the knowledge I would teach him. He was the type of student faculty members love to teach because he has great critical-thinking skills and was very inquisitive."

Having played an important role in Turner's formative years, SFA continued to influence the course of his life. As the story goes for so many Lumberjack alumni, Turner also met his future wife, Megan Jenkins Turner '16, while studying at the university.

"We met in Organic Chemistry I," Turner said. "We were dating other people at the



ABOVE: Dr. Tim Turner '16 operates The Outdoor Vet, a mobile unit that delivers veterinary medicine directly to his patients in Longview and the surrounding areas.

RIGHT: Turner and his wife, Megan '16, met at SFA and began dating in 2014. Megan is pursuing a career in osteopathic medicine. Photo courtesy of Tim Turner

time, but one year later, when we both took Biochemistry I together, we had broken up with our significant others and reconnected. We started dating fall 2014.”

Megan also is pursuing a career in medicine. She’s studying at the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine and is in the midst of the rigorous residency interview process.

TAKING OVER THE MOBILE CLINIC

Finding a position at Turner’s dream job right off the bat was a bit of a fluke.

“Megan and I knew we wanted to be in East Texas, and the only real residency options for her after she graduates medical school are Longview and Tyler,” he explained. “When she started her

clinicals in Longview, I literally just Googled ‘large animal vets in Longview,’ found Dr. Owens’ information and called him. He had just purchased the small animal clinic and made the tough decision to close his large animal mobile practice. I told him one of my areas of interest is large animals, so after a lot of discussion, we decided I’d continue the mobile clinic.”

As The Outdoor Vet’s mobile doctor, Turner makes house calls to ranches and farms 24/7. He has worked with a wide range of animals across East Texas on an even wider range of medical issues.

“You really have to be able to take care of everything,” he said. “A lot of it is preventative work, but I also do a ton of emergency work. Just

last night, I was out on emergency calls until 1 a.m. I visited a cow that had trouble calving and a horse with a laceration on its foot.”

While he says he hasn’t yet found his niche, Turner really enjoys cattle obstetrics and hopes to direct more professional attention to that as the years go on.

“There are not many vets in the area who will take calls for cattle, so there are enough ranches to keep me working 12 hours a day most days.”

So, from an interest in veterinary medicine at 10 years old to landing a dream job as one of the state’s youngest veterinarians to cattle obstetrics, is Turner’s story real, or am I just pulling your leg?

It’s as true as it is “moo-ving” to hear. ★



TOP LEFT: Turner’s love for animals and medicine began at a young age. At 10 years old, he started volunteering at Eastex Veterinary Clinic with Dr. James Weatherly. Turner said he was blessed to learn so much from his mentor. Photo courtesy of Tim Turner

TOP RIGHT: Turner enjoys the field of cattle obstetrics and works closely with ranchers and producers to collect data and assist with cattle breeding.

LEFT: While Turner enjoys cattle obstetrics, he also likes working with small animals, including dogs and cats, at The Outdoor Vet’s brick-and-mortar clinic, C4 Veterinary Hospital, run by Dr. Clint Owens.

COMPOSITION



COLLABORATION



Music composer shares expertise with students in creating video game soundtracks for game development powerhouse

STORY BY ROBBIE GOODRICH '82

MASON LIEBERMAN '17 has been playing video games since he was old enough to hold a controller. By the time he was 5, he had already decided his life's goal was to compose music for Nintendo and Super Smash Bros.

"However, I'm not sure I really realized 'game composer' was a career at that age," Lieberman said. "I think I started to narrow down from general video game musician to composer specifically in high school." He scored his first game, a tiny mobile title called Bounce the Block, as a freshman at SFA.

Fast forward to 2021 and Lieberman, who spent two years at SFA and then completed an undergraduate degree at Boston's Berklee College of Music followed by a master's degree from SFA in music composition, now works for Tencent, considered to be the world's largest video game vendor. His duties can range from hiring special guest artists for projects and managing studio sessions to designing recording studio facilities and negotiating licensing deals, among many other responsibilities.

But his latest big score is his work helping prepare SFA music composition students for similar promising careers. ➔

A course in video game sound design created by Lieberman helped prepare SFA music composition students to participate in a collaborative project with SMU Guildhall students to design sound for the player party game Space Smack!



Lieberman has composed musical scores for anime series like Rooster Teeth's RWBY and Beyblade Burst Evolution, as well as the video game titled PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds Mobile.

As the senior game audio coordinator for Tencent in the U.S., Lieberman solves audio problems and helps manage the department in pursuit of various company goals to “make sure we’re creating the best music, sound and voice-over possible,” he said. “All of this occurs against the backdrop of the largest company in all of game development.”

Recently added to his job titles is that of adjunct instructor in the SFA School of Music for which he remotely teaches specialized classes he created in video game sound design from his home base in Los Angeles. More than a year ago, Lieberman and his former music composition



professor at SFA, Dr. Stephen Lias (pictured), began working with Southern Methodist University’s Guildhall game development program to establish collaborative projects in which SFA students worked with SMU students to develop music for video games. SMU Guildhall was established in 2003 as a premier graduate-level video game development education program in the United States. It was

created at the request of the game development industry to train its future leaders, according to information at smu.edu/guildhall.

“Guildhall is a powerhouse program with deep industry partnerships and an international reputation,” Lias said, “so our goal was to create a pipeline for our students to work with theirs once Mason’s classes gave them the necessary preparation.”

This past fall, the first collaborative effort between the two universities took place and included SFA students Caleb Guevara, a senior composition major from Houston; Daniel Cooper, a distance graduate student majoring in theory-composition from Hilton, New York; and Travis Wattigney, a recently graduated composition major from Fort Worth and a former College of Fine Arts Dean’s Circle award winner in music. Designed to give the students valuable real-world experience and put them at the forefront of the industry that scores music and creates sound design for video games, the first collaborative project, with SFA students participating remotely, was deemed a huge success, according

to Steve Stringer (pictured), deputy director of the GameLab at SMU Guildhall.



“Daniel, Caleb and Travis knocked it out of the park, and we couldn’t be happier with the results,” Stringer said. “The soundtrack has a retro, ‘arcade’ feel, and as I watch everyone play and enjoy the game, I can see heads bouncing and feet tapping to the beat. It sticks in your head for days (in a good way) and is one of the standout features of the game.”

SMU’s Team Game Project set of courses brings art, design, production and programming students together to create games in a simulated game studio environment. SFA students collaborated on Space Smack!, a capstone project. During the course of the fall semester, they closely worked with the SMU-based team to craft a memorable music track and soundscape for the game. From the SFA students’ perspective, they were able to fully participate in an actual game production, and they’ve added a shipped (released) title to their résumés, which will help them get into the games industry more easily. From SMU’s perspective, they were full team members who simply worked remotely, Stringer said.

“For the SFA students, they were able to plug into a professional-grade game production and gain valuable experience working with others to create a shipped game,” Stringer said. “This work was integrated into their course at SFA taught by Mason, which allowed him to integrate with his own pedagogy and assignments. It’s incredibly hard to break into our industry without that experience, and many music and sound design programs don’t have access to such opportunities. I hope Mason and his students got a lot of value out of the collaboration — as much as we did.”



“I’VE COLLABORATED WITH MANY OF MY PERSONAL HEROES LIKE YOKO KANNO AND THE SEATBELTS, SCORED MAJOR FRANCHISE TITLES, WORKED ON NINTENDO INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, WORKED IN-HOUSE FOR TENCENT AND HAD AN ABSOLUTE BLAST THE ENTIRE TIME.”

MASON LIEBERMAN ’17



Guevara said learning the traits and skills of a game developing professional topped his experience as a project participant.

“Having good communication skills, time management skills and the skills needed to complete a project became very apparent throughout the process of writing the music,” Guevara said. “This collaboration allowed me to use all of those skills in order to deliver a polished, finished product — something I will be proud of when I look back at this project. This experience and the time I spent on the project have already put me miles ahead of where I thought I would be in my career when I first started college. I am thankful for this opportunity and all that it has taught me.”

This project and future ones like it fall in place with one of Lieberman’s personal and career goals of bringing talented people together through music. With numerous credits as a composer, recording artist and producer on popular anime series, triple-A game titles, and Western TV shows and advertising campaigns, his industry experience has generally been at the crossroads of East Asian and Western multimedia.

Having started his professional journey as a full-time freelancer, Lieberman is most known for his work composing on anime series like Rooster Teeth’s RWBY and Beyblade Burst Evolution, among others. In 2019, he partnered with Asia Pacific government officials as an international ambassador to Australia representing the video game music industry. As a cellist, guitarist and vocalist, Lieberman has worked with a variety of film and gaming franchises.

“I’ve always been very focused on bringing people together and helping to make my industry a warmer place,” he said. “Tencent happened to be in need of someone with a combination of audio chops, negotiation skills, game development consulting experience and in-depth familiarity with the Chinese and Japanese game development scenes. I am lucky to say that turned out to be me.”

Teaching others to successfully navigate the industry he loves is another passion.

“While completing my master’s degree, I knew I wanted to focus on video game music, as it has been one of the driving passions of my life,” Lieberman said. “I knew I loved

teaching, and I hoped to one day direct a collegiate game audio program. Finally, I knew SFA was lacking in any game audio courses. I wanted to see the school that helped me so much come to the fore on game audio education. Multimedia scoring is a major frontier for composers in 2021, and gaming represents one of the absolute largest blocs of profit-generating entertainment in the world. The opportunities are there, and I really want SFA students to be taking advantage of that. I created the courses as proof of my thesis, and the School of Music felt they were a good enough fit that they asked me to stay on as a faculty member to continue teaching them.

“I’ve been extraordinarily lucky to do the things I’ve done,” Lieberman said. “I’ve collaborated with many of my personal heroes like Yoko Kanno and the Seatbelts, scored major franchise titles, worked on Nintendo intellectual property, worked in-house for Tencent and had an absolute blast the entire time. Honestly, I just want to keep on doing new things. I love what I do, and I’d consider myself quite lucky if I got to do more of it.” ★



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SHREVEPORT

From the Association

"I am honored to have the opportunity to serve as the SFA Alumni Association president for the next two years. As we move toward SFA's 100th anniversary celebration in 2023, be sure to watch for exciting events!"



GREETINGS, LUMBERJACKS!

We began 2020 with such hope and optimism and then were faced with a pandemic that changed everything. I am excited to report your SFA Alumni

Association staff members have continued to diligently work during the past several months. They quickly regrouped to navigate the uncharted waters of the COVID-19 pandemic. Executive Director Craig Turnage continues to lead his talented staff with enthusiasm and creativity.

In recent history, most of our board meetings have been virtual, social events have not happened and Homecoming events were canceled. Through it all, the staff members of your SFA Alumni Association recreated an environment where Lumberjacks could connect. On social media, "Jack Chats" and "How it Started-How it's Going" were created, and through a robust effort on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, we reached more than 100,000 views. The Homecoming auction was completely virtual. The staff members and board of directors worked hard to assemble unique items to entice and engage fellow Lumberjacks and raised \$35,000.

Meanwhile, in-person graduations were held Dec. 11 and 12. There were five separate graduation ceremonies, where 1,093 new SFA alumni, comprising 968 bachelor's, 122 master's and three doctoral degrees, received their diplomas.

There is anticipation some of the upcoming fall events, such as Homecoming, the Alumni Awards and the Gala, will be held again in person, but at this time no dates have been finalized.

What an outstanding leader Bob Francis has been as the SFA Alumni Association president for the past two years. He led the board during

the pandemic and diligently worked to move our accounting efforts to QuickBooks, which is more manageable, providing concise reporting, and it generates an easy-to-follow financial statement. Going forward, we are fortunate to have Bob on the executive committee as past president and finance committee chair.

I also am delighted to have Bob by my side as past president along with Erika Tolar as president-elect. And I am very proud to welcome Matt Adkins '06 from McKinney as a new SFA alumni board director. Since his graduation, he has actively attended SFA sporting events and is involved in sfasawmill.com. He is a great addition to the board.

I am honored to have the opportunity to serve as the SFA Alumni Association president for the next two years. As we move toward SFA's 100th anniversary celebration in 2023, be sure to watch for exciting events!

If you are not a member of the Alumni Association, I invite you to join. Your involvement is vital to maintaining SFA's excellence and helps keep our valued traditions alive for future generations of Lumberjacks. You can join online at sfaalumni.com/join, or call (936) 468-3407 to speak with an Alumni Association representative to sign up. There are levels for annual or lifetime membership.

Here's to better days in 2021 and hoping for more opportunities to connect with other SFA alumni! ★

Axe 'em, Jacks!

Charlotte G. Ashcraft

Charlotte Ashcraft '80 – Nacogdoches
President, SFA Alumni Association

SFA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

Charlotte Ashcraft '80, Nacogdoches
president

Erika Tolar '02, Spring
president-elect

Bob Francis '78, Bullard
past president

Mike Harbordt '63, Nacogdoches
director emeritus

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD

Matt Adkins '06, McKinney

Tony Both '98, Katy

Larry Brooks '01, Houston

Reuben Brown '07, Grand Prairie

Jeremy Cleverly '98, Mansfield

Pamm Coleman '80, Houston

Brian Dawson '03, Conroe

James Drennan '73, Pittsburg

Mark Friedman '91, Allen

Sam Khoury '97, Longview

Steve McCarty '65 & '70, Alto

Jaclyn Partin '08 & '14, Tyler

Alex Ranc '11 & '13, Nacogdoches

Ted Smith '07, Nacogdoches

Bob Williams '70, Dallas

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION STAFF

Craig Turnage '00 & '05
executive director of alumni relations

Amber Lindsay
assistant to the executive director

Derek Snyder '01
director of alumni relations

Samantha Mora '08
director of events and engagement

Alicia Roland Chatman '16
gifts and records coordinator

Amie Ford '09 & '11
coordinator of events and engagement

Travis Turner '05 & '11
coordinator of communications
and sponsorships

Bob Sitton '60
director emeritus

CONTACT

Sawdust
SFA Box 6096
Nacogdoches, TX 75962
(936) 468-3407 ★ (800) 765-1534
alumni@sfasu.edu ★ sfaalumni.com

THE SFA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

is a nonprofit organization
dedicated to engaging
SFA students, alumni and friends
to create an attitude
of continued loyalty and support.

Scholarships

Two sisters, Laura Farley Sanders '82 and Regina Farley Girdner '86, and their husbands, both named Kevin, have established scholarships at SFA.

Kevin and Laura Farley Sanders '82 Scholarship

THE KEVIN AND Laura Farley Sanders '82 Scholarship was established by the couple from Baytown. The scholarship will be eligible in fall 2021 to be awarded to outstanding, full-time students pursuing a major in mathematics in good standing with the university.

Laura received her bachelor's degree in elementary education from SFA. She has worked for Idealease of Houston for 17 years in accounting. ★

Kevin and Regina Farley Girdner '86 Scholarship

THE KEVIN AND Regina Farley Girdner '86 Scholarship was established by the Girdners of Wolfforth. The scholarship will be eligible to be awarded for the first time in fall 2021, and it benefits outstanding, full-time students pursuing a major in education in good standing with the university.

Regina received her bachelor's degree in education from SFA. She has taught second grade for 24 years, teaching the past 14 years at Bennett Elementary School in Wolfforth. ★

Ways to Support SFA

MAKE A GIFT today and have an immediate impact on SFA students and programs. Your gift helps create educational opportunities for current and future Lumberjacks and can support academic and athletic programs, research initiatives, and scholarships in perpetuity.

If you are interested in creating a scholarship, call the Stephen F. Austin State University Foundation or the SFA Office of Development at (936) 468-5406, or send an email to givetosfa@sfasu.edu. Staff members in the Office of Development will be glad to discuss the ways you can make a positive impact on SFA students.

Visit our website at sfasu.edu/give.



Life Members

The SFA Alumni Association thanks the following alumni who recently became life members:

- 8395. LaCresha S. Lamb '03, Cypress
- 8396. Paul T. Hartmann '87, Dallas
- 8397. Rachel M. Bjerkaas '21, Katy
- 8398. Sara L. Middleton '20, Allen
- 8399. Dr. Debra S. Munsell '79, Bailey, Mississippi
- 8400. Lawrence M. Kirby-Craig '72, Houston
- 8401. Christine G. Koenig '20, Frisco
- 8402. James R. Grunert '72 & '73, Cleburne
- 8403. Karen S. Grunert '72 & '73, Cleburne
- 8404. David A. Jackson '06, San Antonio
- 8405. Mark A. McLean '19, Richardson
- 8406. Sandra L. Hatcher '71, Houston
- 8407. Robert S. McDonald '03, Port Neches
- 8408. Robert D. Sherman '14, Longview
- 8409. Gannon Boyer '20, The Colony
- 8410. Tracie R. Estepp '20, Nacogdoches
- 8411. Sandy B. Kanakis '88, Chapel Hill, North Carolina
- 8412. Kathryn N. Bock '94, Dallas

BRINGING THE WAC TO NAC!



This ad compliments of the SFA Alumni Association.

SFA leaves Southland Conference for Western Athletic Conference

SFA AND THREE other Southland Conference programs — Abilene Christian University, Lamar University and Sam Houston State University — will join the Western Athletic Conference July 1.

With these additions, known as the “Texas 4,” along with Southern Utah University, a current member of the Big Sky Conference slated to move to the WAC in 2022, the WAC will comprise a 13-member, two-division conference and revive the league’s sponsorship of football, which has been dormant since 2012.

Although the Texas universities were originally scheduled to join the WAC in July 2022, the WAC board of directors unanimously voted to expedite the schools’ entry.

“On behalf of our coaches, student-athletes and staff members, I want to thank the WAC board for its unanimous support in allowing us early entry for the 2021-22 season,” said Ryan Ivey, SFA director of athletics. “We are extremely excited about the opportunity we have in front of us and look forward to years of success and partnership within the WAC league.”

During the 2021-22 academic year, men’s and women’s basketball will feature both divisional and crossover play with the number of conference games to be played still pending. Football will include full conference play; all other sports that feature a regular season are expected to begin divisional play.

Administrators from involved institutions will work with conference staff members to finalize divisional alignment, scheduling and championships.

With six Texas members (including Tarleton State University and University of Texas Rio Grande Valley) and three Utah members, the majority of the WAC will be housed in the nation’s two fastest-growing states since 2010. The expansion also means the WAC will have members located in or near five of the nation’s top 13 media markets. Member locations in those areas will enhance university exposure, increase recruiting territory and draw more recruiting attention, according to Dr. Scott Gordon, SFA president.

“Joining the WAC is a tremendous opportunity to elevate our athletic program and competition,” Gordon said. “This move will increase our institutional profile and our exposure in some of the fastest-growing population areas in the country and simultaneously help enhance our revenue. The strong commitment of the WAC to academics and athletics, as well as our ability to keep our traditional rivalries and start new ones, is exciting.” ★

Pictured, from left to right, Colby Carthel, SFA head football coach; Ryan Ivey, SFA director of athletics; Dr. Scott Gordon, SFA president; Dr. Alisa White, Sam Houston State University president; Bobby Williams, SHSU director of athletics; and K. C. Keeler, SHSU head football coach

FOSTERING LOVE

'Wild Home' tells story
of kindness and compassion

STORY BY RICHARD MASSEY

PHOTOS BY ROBIN JOHNSON '99 & '19

ILLUSTRATION BY ERIN GENTRY '09





DeAnna Prunés '08 and Erin Gentry '09

WHEN A BABY squirrel tumbled from a tall tree last spring, she landed on the porch of the Prunés family home, where DeAnna '08 and her two daughters, Bella and Chloe, found her. Unable to return her to the nest, they nursed the squirrel to maturity, later releasing her back into the wild, where she now enjoys life in the yards and trees of her Lufkin neighborhood.

This adventure prompted Prunés and Erin Gentry '09 to turn the squirrel's story into a children's book, "Wild Home," a parable about loving something enough to let it go.

Started during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the book, written by Prunés and illustrated with 33 original watercolors created by Gentry, is printed in both standard and dyslexia fonts. The collaboration for "Wild Home," a seven-month project, is the first but is not expected to be the last book created by the pair.

"It has been a dream of mine for a long time to write a children's book," Prunés said. "This little squirrel and my daughters' love and care for it provided my inspiration." ➔

BELOW: The squirrel was nursed with milk replacer administered through a small syringe.

CENTER: Bella Prunés enjoys her time with the baby squirrel. Though she lived with the family, the squirrel never became a permanent pet.

RIGHT: The squirrel enjoys book time with Chloe Prunés.

Photos courtesy of DeAnna Prunés



ABOVE: The squirrel the book is based on has her favorite tree and recognizes the Prunés family when they come and go.

RIGHT: Snuggling with Chloe was a favorite pastime.

Photos courtesy of DeAnna Prunés



Bella, Chloe and Prunés cared for the baby squirrel in their home for three months, feeding it milk replacer they administered orally through a small syringe and housing her in a cage where they fashioned a fluffy nest from blankets. As the squirrel grew, so did their attachment to her. However, Prunés is quick to point out that keeping it as a pet was never an option.

"I believe wild animals deserve love, but more than anything, they need to live in their natural habitat," Prunés said. "That point is made clear in the book by the juxtaposition of the squirrel, which we never named, and our family pet, a pug named Peppa Lou."

The pandemic and subsequent quarantine provided the opportunity to craft the book. Prunés wrote it between March and September, authoring a story about compassion and boundaries.

"The lesson is that sometimes animals need our help," Prunés said. "We should extend love and kindness, where in return, we also benefit."

The story ends happily with releasing the squirrel back into its natural habitat but still being able to watch her contently live her life — from a distance.

"In our world right now, kindness is important," Prunés said. "When you're sending a message to children, it has to be positive."

During her preliminary work on the book, Prunés reached out to Gentry, who teaches art and painting at Lufkin High School. The two met in 2009 when Gentry was working as a substitute teacher while Prunés was preparing for maternity leave at an elementary school in Lufkin. With a degree in art education and minor in cinematography, Prunés knew Gentry was the perfect person to illustrate the story. For the past decade, Gentry has been honing her craft. While working on "Wild Home," she had the opportunity to showcase her skills.

"This is what I came to SFA to learn to do," Gentry said. "I was able to draw what DeAnna wanted, and that's one of the most difficult things to accomplish



as an illustrator — take the client’s vision and make it a reality.”

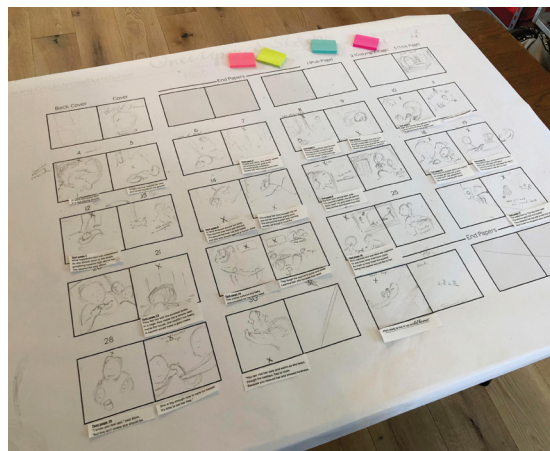
It took a lot of back and forth creating the storyboard, character design, editing and formatting.

The book was published in November 2020 and has already received acclaim. Shortly after its release, “Wild Home” landed a five-star review from Readers’ Favorite, an organization comprising nearly 1,000 authors who volunteer to review their fellow authors’ books. It was named the No. 1 selection by BookAuthority as the Best New Go Book of 2021. According to its website, BookAuthority identifies and rates the best books in the world based on recommendations by thought leaders and experts.

Prunés said although 2020 was wracked with worry and stress due to the pandemic, there are still bright spots to be celebrated.

“Nurturing that little squirrel and watching her gain her independence was such a wonderful, positive thing,” Prunés said. “My girls often see her outside and understand that their love and kindness helped her to live. She has her favorite tree and lets us know when the feeder needs a refill. It was a lucky day for all of us when she appeared on our porch.” ★

“WILD HOME” IS AVAILABLE THROUGH AMAZON, WALMART, BARNES & NOBLE, BOOK DEPOSITORY AND BOOKSHOP.



ABOVE: Started during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, “Wild Home,” written by DeAnna Prunés and illustrated with 33 original watercolors by Erin Gentry, is printed in both standard and dyslexia fonts.

CENTER: Character design was a big part of the creative process and required a high level of collaboration between writer and artist. Photo courtesy of DeAnna Prunés

BOTTOM: Creating the storyboard was a painstaking process. Photo courtesy of DeAnna Prunés

Class Notes

1970s

Texas Railroad Commissioner **Wayne Christian '73** of Center was selected vice chairman of the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission.



← **Carolyn Curtis '73** of Fort Worth had her seventh book, "Women and C.S. Lewis: What His Life and Literature Reveal for Today's Culture," released as an audiobook.

Phyllis Carlton '77 of Edmond, Oklahoma, and her husband, George, joined Chinowth and Cohen Realtors.

Dr. Debra Munsell '79 of Bailey, Mississippi, is director for a new Master of Physician Assistant Studies program at Mississippi State University at Meridian.

1980s



← **Phil Tappe '82 & '87** of Monticello, Arkansas, retired from his position as dean of the University of Arkansas at Monticello's College of Forestry, Agriculture and Natural Resources. He also served as director of the Division of Agriculture's Forest Resource Center.

Herb Minyard '85 of Baytown retired from Goose Creek Consolidated Independent School District after 35 years of service in education.

Laurie Emerson '86 of Spring was named Planview Inc.'s vice president of professional services for the Americas and Asian Pacific.



← **Lynda March '87** of Lubbock was promoted to senior manager of nutrition services for Fresenius Kidney Care.

→ **Dr. Larry Redmon '87** of Bryan-College Station received a Crop Science Society of America's 2020 Fellow award.



Dr. John P. Erwin '88 of Evanston, Illinois, was named the Louise W. Coon Chair of Medicine, NorthShore Chairman of the Department of Medicine. Additionally, he was appointed as a clinical professor of medicine at the University of Chicago's Pritzker School of Medicine.



← **Eric Gray '89**, director of bands and fine arts for the Gilmer Independent School District, was elected president of the Association of Texas Small School Bands.

1990s



← **Steve Hever '90** of Friendswood was named director of product management for JSC Federal Credit Union.



→ **Jason Kinder '91** of Rockwall was hired as director of marketing for Pinnacle Management Systems.

Sleep systems manufacturer Southerland named **Daryl Newton '91** of Peoria, Arizona, regional vice president of sales to oversee company operations in Texas, Mississippi, Louisiana, New Mexico, Colorado and Wyoming.



← **Jeff Lentz '92** of Leander was promoted to senior vice president of underwriting for Texas Mutual Insurance.

Eric Brittingham '93 of Arlington was inducted into the Marquis Who's Who biographical registry, a biographical source for thousands of researchers, journalists, librarians and executive search firms around the world.



← **Chastiti N. Horne '93** of Houston was named Panola College 2020 Alumna of the Year. She graduated from Panola in 1991 and obtained a law degree from South Texas College of Law in 1998. She is a managing partner with the Horne Rota Moos firm.

Colette DePriest '94 was inducted into the Tenaha Independent School District's 2020 Hall of Honors, which recognizes individuals who have displayed outstanding dedication and commitment to their community. DePriest serves on the TISD board of trustees.



← **John Glaze '94** of Houston was named chair-elect for the Associated Builders and Contractors greater Houston chapter, board member for the ABC of Texas, and chair-elect of the Construction Maintenance Educational Foundation.

Class Notes

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott appointed **Jon “Mark” Sjolander ’94** of Dayton to the Coastal Water Authority Board of Directors.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott appointed **Dr. Velma “Jean” Stanley ’95 & ’02** of Lufkin to the Council on Sex Offender Treatment, which sets forth the standards for treatment and oversees the licensing of providers.



← **Chad Martin ’96 & ’98** of Cedar Creek was promoted to senior principal for Cardno, a worldwide environmental consulting firm.



→ **Angie Tipton McKenzie ’97** of Denton, was named senior program manager of heavy bulky returns reduction for Amazon.



← **Dr. Shelby Melton ’97 & ’99** of Dallas was elected to serve a two-year term as membership affairs committee chair and member of the board of directors for the Association for Molecular Pathology, a nonprofit scientific society.



← **Justin Wallace ’98** of Kingwood was named North America offshore facilities and warehouse leader for Baker Hughes Oilfield Services.



→ **Jason Lyons ’99** of Prosper was named senior vice president of workforce solutions at the National Association for Healthcare Quality.

2000s

Dustin Harrell ’01 of Rayne, Louisiana, was named resident coordinator for the Louisiana State University AgCenter H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station.



← **Derek ’01** and **Holli Snyder ’06** of Nacogdoches announced the July birth of Ross Matthew Snyder.

Wynter Patterson ’02 of Houston signed as a client of Alli Rodriguez PR. Patterson is a TV personality, host, speaker, entrepreneur and author who stars on the Oprah Winfrey Network’s “Ready to Love: Last Resort.”

Jason Tullos ’02 & ’06 of Houston was named principal of Hamilton Middle School.



← **Veronica Watkins ’02** of Fort Worth was named chief financial officer of Worthington National Bank.

Karina Elizondo ’04 of Lexington, Kentucky, an emergency room registered nurse at UK-Chandler Hospital, recently was featured in the documentary “In Case of Emergency,” which reveals the high-stress settings of the health care front lines.



← **Constance Gilmore ’04** of Beaumont was named a child protective services’ employee of the quarter by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

Lara Bunn ’05 of Houston was one of three finalists for the Kathryn S. Stream, Ph.D., Award for Excellence in Women’s Health presented by the Greater Houston Women’s Chamber of Commerce Women’s Health Network.



← **Lisa McBride ’05** of Terrell was named 2020 Teacher of the Year at Dr. Bruce Wood Elementary.

Zach ’06 and **Courtney Carnley ’07** purchased Sneed Funeral Chapel in Lampasas.

→ **Ayanna Williams ’06 & ’08**

of Grenada, West Indies, was awarded the Unsung Heroes Frontline Award by CIBC FirstCaribbean International Bank for her work with the Acts of Kindness Foundation, a nonprofit Williams founded that provides food hampers and vouchers to families in need.



← **Danielle Copeland ’08** was named director of Human Resources for Malakoff Independent School District.

2010s

Brandi Hernandez ’10 of Nacogdoches was hired as a certified physician assistant at U.S. Dermatology Partners.

→ **Emma ’12** and Justin Gautreaux of McKinney announced the October birth of daughter Frances Marie Gautreaux.



Class Notes



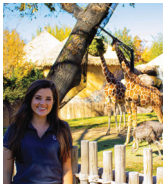
← **Caitlin Dodson '14** of Flower Mound married Gary Michael Bunch in February 2020.

Miao Wang '14 of Mansfield was featured in the November issue of Greenhouse Management magazine's Meet the Grower series. Wang is head grower at Green Lake Nursery in Dallas.

→ **Matt McDaniel '16** of Longview was promoted to portfolio manager and banking officer at Texas Bank and Trust.



← **Austin Rogers '16** of Grandview married Randall Van Zandt in September.



← **Gracie Chauncey '17** is public relations manager for the Fort Worth Zoo.

Nella Kopp '18 of Diana married **Dylan Custer '18** of Kilgore in March 2020. The couple met at SFA in 2016.

Dr. Audrey Young '19 of Nacogdoches was elected to the Texas State Board of Education. Young works as Nacogdoches Independent School District's director of student support services.

2020s

Sara Brown '20 of Frisco is a spatial services professional at NewEdge Services.



← **Annemarie Price '20** of Houston is Belvoir Real Estate Group's marketing coordinator.

→ **Sarah Rosa '20** was presented the Token of Excellence by Little Elm Independent School District Superintendent Daniel Gallagher.

She is a dual-language kindergarten teacher.



SHARE YOUR LUMBERJACK STORY WITH OTHER ALUMNI!

The Sawdust's Class Notes section is a great way to update the Lumberjack community on marriage, birth, job status change or latest accomplishment. Visit the Sawdust website and scroll down to "Submit a Class Note."



TELL US WHAT YOU THINK.

As part of our continuous effort to improve Sawdust, we are conducting an online survey to gain information about reader preferences.

sfasu.edu/sawdust/survey

In Memoriam

DAVID HAROLD ATKINSON



David Harold Atkinson, who was inducted into the Jacks of Honor in 2009, passed away Nov. 3.

Atkinson played football for the Lumberjacks from 1968-69. Prior to transferring to SFA, he played football for Blinn College, where his father

served as a coach, dean and president of the college.

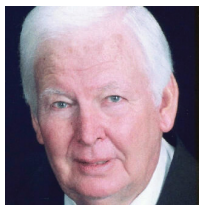
After his graduation from SFA in 1970 with a Bachelor of Business Administration, Atkinson remained at the institution, serving as a graduate assistant. His tenure as a student-athlete and coach spanned seven years.

Atkinson later moved to Austin, where he served as an assistant to the governor, working closely with the Texas Speaker of the House of Representatives, Gus Mutscher. Continuing in public service, he later worked for the Employees Retirement System of Texas. While there, he served as the director of the insurance program for state employees.

Continuing his studies in Austin, Atkinson received his Master of Business Administration from St. Edwards University. His time working for ERS instilled a love for the health care industry, where he continued to work in many capacities, culminating in his position as director of Tiopa, an independent physicians' association, where he spent 17 years until his retirement.

Atkinson was a founding member and served on the board of the SFA Letterman's Association, (now named the J Association), a group that contributes to the success of SFA Athletics.

C.L. NIX



Former SFA standout basketball player C.L. Nix passed away Oct. 15 at his home in Whitehouse.

Nix attended Tyler Junior College, where he played basketball for the legendary Floyd Wagstaff, and in 2008, he was inducted into the TJC Ring of Honor.

Nix later transferred to SFA and played basketball for the Lumberjacks. He received two SFA degrees, a bachelor's in 1956 and a master's in 1957 in elementary education. He earned All Lone Star Conference honors

and was named an All American while at the university. At SFA, Nix held many individual scoring records, which stood for years. In 1988, he was inducted into the SFA Hall of Fame.

After receiving his master's degree, Nix began a long career at Whitehouse High School, where he held coaching, athletic director, teaching and principal positions. During his coaching career, his varsity boys basketball team recorded an impressive 693 wins. Nix took three basketball teams to the state championship and won the 1978 championship with his two sons on the team.

The school renamed its high school gymnasium in honor of Nix in 1987, and when that gym was razed in 2018, the new facility also was named after him — the C.L. Nix Wildcat Arena.

Nix had many business interests, as well, including Nix Roses, one of the few remaining wholesale rose growers in the greater Tyler area. He was a founder and director of the City National Bank of Whitehouse and served on the board of Oakbrook Health Center. The City of Whitehouse honored Nix and his wife, Peggy, with the Mr. and Mrs. Yesteryear award in 2010.

DR. JOHN THOMAS THORNTON JR.



Professor Emeritus of Elementary Education Dr. John Thomas Thornton Jr. passed away Nov. 4.

Thornton served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War and, upon his return to the U.S., completed his bachelor's degree in education

at Harding College in Searcy, Arkansas. He later received his doctoral degree in education from the University of Arkansas.

Thornton served as a professor and reading specialist at SFA. He retired from teaching in 1999.

In Memoriam

JoLena Adams '06 of Vidor, Oct. 20
Paul W. Anger '54 of Brenham, Dec. 12
Carol C. Ansel '71 of Houston, Oct. 19
Eva Jean Holcomb Arnold '63 of Garden Ridge, Nov. 12
Billy Rex Autrey '53 of McGregor, Sept. 12
Augustus M. Ayres Jr. '62 of Nacogdoches, Sept. 9
Frank B. Baggett '70 of Kilgore, Sept. 6
John R. Bandy '61 of Athens, Oct. 25
Ottis T. Barge '60 of Lufkin, Nov. 27
Joe B. Birch '67 & '69 of Corrigan, Oct. 27
Ronald Bonner '77 of Lufkin, Dec. 13
Doris F. Bowman '80 & '81 of Lufkin, Nov. 11
Emery D. Cherry '53 of Nacogdoches, Dec. 1
Billie Jo Childers '58 & '60 of Houston, April 20
Mary A. Claiborne '55 of Greensboro, North Carolina, Nov. 1
Steve Clark '71 & '77 of Montgomery, Sept. 19
Cynthia K. Cole '67 of Van, Dec. 4
Susan E. Coles '87 of Kingwood, Oct. 18
Larry N. Duncan '74 of Nacogdoches, Nov. 9
Harold R. Dungan '75 of Mount Pleasant, Sept. 27
Preston L. Dunn Sr. '70 & '83 of Elizabeth, Arkansas, Oct. 17
Bob Dyer '69 of Tyler, Oct. 6
Mary F. Eubanks '76 of Tyler, Dec. 23
Richard W. Fogleman '85 of Waco, Sept. 17
Carlos Raul Galván '96 of Crystal City, Jan. 24
Margaret M. Giraud '85 of Richmond, Oct. 16
James Malcolm Greer '58 of Irving, Sept. 17
Jeremy L. Grigsby '05 & '17 of Lufkin, Nov. 10
Brian C. Hartman '16 of Nacogdoches, Dec. 4
Sherman E. Hughes '50 of Grand Saline, Nov. 8
Andrea Irby '97 of Spring, Nov. 12
Nancy J. Jennings '68 of Spring, Nov. 9
Billy R. Johnson '88 of Fort Worth, Nov. 24
Larry W. Jones '69 of Mineola, Sept. 3
Freddie Coussons Kelly '59 & '68 of Katy, Aug. 21, 2019
Sophia E. Kelly '41 of Brenham, April 3
Brooks E. Kennemer '67 of Nacogdoches, Sept. 10
Tom B. Kingham '76 of Nacogdoches, Dec. 17
Sallie A. Knox '89 of Montgomery, Nov. 12
Sandra L. Lenard '60 of Racine, Wisconsin, Sept. 25
David G. Lonsford '82 of Fort Worth, Dec. 15

Jack O. Mathews '53 of Nacogdoches, Oct. 15
Elizabeth A. Mathis '72 & '77 of Houston, Oct. 14
William George McCullough '71 of Mexia, Dec. 1
Billy M. Melton '94 of Longview, Sept. 29
Barbara L. Mosley '88 & '90 of Fort Worth, Dec. 13
Harold Newsom '51 of Lufkin, Oct. 17
Bonnie S. O'Dell '59 of Jacksonville, Sept. 22
Jerry Perritte '72 & '78 of Lufkin, Oct. 17
John D. Phillips '74 of Douglass, Nov. 21
James C. Polk '13 of Kaufman, Sept. 7
Alice M. Puckett '69 of Irving, Oct. 16
Barbara H. Read '72 of Longview, Nov. 9
Edwin G. Rhame '70 of Nacogdoches, Sept. 4
Joe E. Rich '51 of Lufkin, Nov. 19
Charles A. Roethke '65 of Carthage, Dec. 18
Lucie Acker Rothschild '64 & '67 of Tyler, Aug. 5
Auby Rowe '65 of Texarkana, Sept. 30
Nelwyn F. Samford '51 of Tyler, Sept. 11
Royce D. Shipp '74 of Longview, Dec. 11
Shirley Ann Hall Sitton of Nacogdoches, friend of SFA, Nov. 28
Shena L. Smith '07 of San Augustine, Sept. 9
Sandra J. Spencer '79 of Huntsville, Oct. 13
Sharon B. Stewart '72 & '77 of Timpson, Nov. 4
Connie E. Stott '70 of New Braunfels, Nov. 12
Monty W. Suttle '75 of Azle, Sept. 30
James B. Tarrant '64 of Clute, Dec. 5
Olene Taylor '46 of Nacogdoches, April 17
Kathi S. Townes '88 & '89 of Timpson, Oct. 11
Julia A. Truitt '47 of Pittsburg, Nov. 14
Dr. Charles A. Ward '54 of Corpus Christi, Sept. 21
Linda J. West '91 of Fairfield, Sept. 14
James L. Wilkins '51 & '52 of Spring, Nov. 20



SFA students

Shantrell Goodnight of Huntsville, Jan. 9
Livye Lewis of Hemphill, Oct. 31
Leila Thompson of Kilgore, Feb. 1

JUNE 5 | TICKETS \$25

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Events are subject to change, visit SFAAlumni.com/Events for updates.



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