

Sawdust

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY



The Right Stuff

2006 GRADUATE
LANDS DREAM JOB
WORKING WITH NASA

Amazing Grace

COUPLE ESTABLISHES AND OPERATES NEEMA VILLAGE IN TANZANIA

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INTERIOR DESIGN ALUMNA'S TALENTS RECOGNIZED WITH MULTIPLE AWARDS

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In January, the Board of Regents approved a new online Master of Science in nursing program within SFA's Richard and Lucille DeWitt School of Nursing. The university is now seeking approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Texas Board of Nursing to offer the program in 2017.

I want to make you aware of another recent board action that will impact alumni and other visitors to campus, along with current students, faculty and staff members. Beginning Aug. 22, SFA will be a tobacco-free campus, meaning the use of all tobacco and vape products will be prohibited on SFA property. This decision followed a mutual resolution from the Faculty Senate and the Student Government Association and policy recommendations from the SFA Employee Wellness Advisory Board, which studied the issue in depth. The changes will include the establishment of tobacco prevention and education programming and the provision of resources to help those wanting to quit using tobacco products. I want to thank everyone who played a role in this process, the result of which will positively impact our campus and our Lumberjack family for many years to come.

As always, I also want to thank our alumni for your continued support of SFA and its students and programs. I hope many of you take advantage of the opportunity to visit SFA this spring when our campus and gardens are arguably the most beautiful for Lumberjacks to behold. See for yourself how SFA is growing and changing for the future.

Axe 'em, Jacks!

Baker Pattillo '65 & '66
President, Stephen F. Austin State University



Sawdust

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
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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.

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Photo by Robin Johnson



ON THE COVER:

Cinematography and graphic design degrees from SFA opened the door for Blake Dumesnil '06 to land his dream

job working with NASA. The alumnus recently used his talents to help create a new exhibit at Space Center Houston honoring the space shuttles' 30-year history.

▲ **EVEN NATURE IS** smiling as spring's first rays of sunlight soak the SFA campus and dissipate the final frosts of winter. Situated behind the SFA Agriculture Building on Wilson Drive, this smiling cactus abuts a long greenhouse kept by Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture faculty members and students, as well as SFA Gardens staff members.

The greenhouse is full nearly year-round, and space within is shared among plants being grown for purchase during the biannual plant sale and for use in student and faculty members' experiments. Food for the SFA Sprout Garden program, created by Dr. Jared Barnes, assistant professor of agriculture, is grown inside the greenhouse and tended by students in his fruit and vegetable production class. Dr. Leon Young's soil and plant relations course also houses plant propagation experiments within the nursery. The greenhouse is sparsest during the summer after students clear out research materials.

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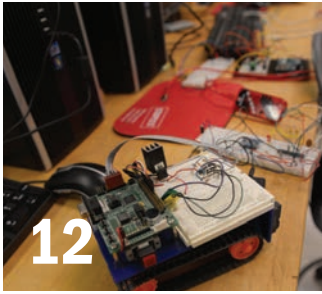
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R.E. McGee Building undergoes renovations

BUSINESS AS USUAL? Not quite.

The Nelson Rusche College of Business has taken professionalism to new heights with its multifloor renovations to the R.E. McGee Building.

Since 1975, the McGee Building has housed the business college. In summer 2015, the college began a renovation project to help create a more business-oriented, corporate and collaborative space.

The new Mattress Firm Commons, Marleta Chadwick Student Financial Advisors Suite and Mark T. Layton Lobby, in addition to the updated wall coverings, ceilings, lighting and flooring, have transformed the building.

“These renovations have been a dream for many people for many years,” said Dr. Baker Pattillo, SFA president. “Because of the generosity of some of our alumni and friends of the university, we were able to move forward with this project.”

The renovations on the first and second floors of the building align with the college’s strategic focus, said Dr. Timothy Bisping, dean of the Nelson Rusche College of Business.

“One of the wonderful things about SFA and the Nelson Rusche College of Business is that everything we do is about the success of our students,” Bisping said. “We have a new mission with a strategic focus

within the college—Learn, Launch, Lead. We want our students to learn the material they need to be successful. We want to help them launch successful careers, and we want them to become leaders in their fields.”

Mattress Firm Commons creates an environment that fosters collaboration. Its modern design includes charging stations, tables and chairs, and digital signage. Amanda Robbins, director of talent acquisition and retention for Mattress Firm, spoke on behalf of company CEO Steve Stagner, a 1991 SFA marketing graduate, who was instrumental in creating the common area.

“This building is very near and dear to my heart. I’ve spent many hours on this campus, not only as a student, but also here attracting and acquiring top talent,” said Robbins, who also is an SFA graduate. “SFA has really been one of the main pillars of success in our company.”

Robbins said during her time as an employee, Mattress Firm has grown from less than 300 to almost 3,500 stores nationwide.

“SFA is one of the universities that helps us achieve that success and growth,” Robbins said. “Mattress Firm Commons supports the learning environment and collaborative space we have at Mattress Firm. It’s very exciting to see and be a part of this. We hope the building will foster a lot of learning, and hopefully more Lumberjacks will join Mattress Firm.”

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held for the Mattress Firm Commons at SFA. The commons area serves as a meeting place for students in the Nelson Rusche College of Business and was supported through funding by Mattress Firm CEO Steve Stagner, a 1991 marketing graduate of SFA. Pictured are, front from left, SFA Regents Dr. Scott Coleman and Brigettee Henderson; SFA President Baker Pattillo; Mattress Firm representatives Amanda Robbins, Haley Hoskins and Zahira Gonzalez; SFA Student Regent Ryan Brown-Moreno; back, from left, SFA Regents David Alders, Bob Garrett, Nelda Luce Blair, Barry Nelson, and Ken Schaefer; and Dr. Timothy Bisping, dean of the Nelson Rusche College of Business.





The Marleta Chadwick Student Financial Advisors Suite honors the late Marleta Chadwick of Center and houses space for a student group dedicated to providing free financial advice and money management tips to SFA students and members of the Nacogdoches community. It is located in a corner on the first floor and is visible to everyone when entering the building.

“Mother was one who never wanted the limelight or spotlight. The suite is exactly where mother would be—in the corner,” said David Chadwick, son of Marleta Chadwick. “There is no mistake of its simplicity, and there is no mistaking that Marleta Chadwick is in the building. We are so grateful that you acknowledged her.”

The building’s east entrance is home to the Mark T. Layton Lobby. Layton received a Bachelor of Business Administration in 1974 from SFA. A letterman on the Lumberjack football team, Layton is a licensed CPA and joined Deloitte, where he developed financial expertise with significant experience in corporate governance, risk management, regulatory compliance and financial reporting.

“Mark Layton served in many senior leadership roles at Deloitte, including his role as managing partner of Deloitte’s Dallas office,” said Jason Downing, Deloitte North Texas managing partner and also an SFA

alumnus. “As a fellow SFA graduate, it gives me a great sense of pride to see Mark’s legacy celebrated in the university that prepared both of us for our business careers at Deloitte. We commemorate Mark’s retirement by dedicating the Mark T. Layton Lobby to the students who will walk these halls for generations to come.”

Layton led an initiative at Deloitte to recruit and hire SFA business graduates. Many of Layton’s friends and colleagues, in honor of his loyalty and dedication to his profession, made contributions that allowed the lobby to be named in his honor. The lobby is equipped with two 75-inch digital signs, which are used to communicate news and opportunities to students.

“When you walk into the Mark T. Layton Lobby and throughout these renovated areas, you see professionalism,” Bisping said. “When our students leave as graduates, land their first jobs and walk into a professional environment, it will not be foreign to them.”

Bisping said the renovation project will continue on the third and fourth floors of the McGee Building, as the college is actively seeking funds to complete those renovations. He described these areas as blank canvases that can be utilized to further the college’s mission. ★

STORY BY KASI DICKERSON / PHOTOGRAPHY BY HARDY MEREDITH



SFA hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Marleta Chadwick Student Financial Advisors Suite. Family members present for the ceremony included, from left, Deborah and David Chadwick of Center, Martha Lou Scott of Waco, and Carleta Sandeen of Houston. SFA Student Financial Advisors provide free financial advice and money management tips to other SFA students and members of the Nacogdoches community.



The Mark T. Layton Lobby in the Nelson Rusche College of Business honors a 1974 graduate. Pictured front row, from left, are honorees Beth and Mark Layton and SFA President Baker Pattillo; back row, from left, Regents Bob Garrett, David Alders, Brigettee Henderson, Barry Nelson, Ken Schaefer and Dr. Scott Coleman; Student Regent Ryan Brown-Moreno; SFA Regent Nelda Luce Blair; and Dr. Timothy Bisping, dean of the Nelson Rusche College of Business.

THE RIGHT STUFF

2006
graduate
lands
dream
job
working
with
NASA



Story by Donna Parish
Photography by Hardy Meredith



“**A**STRONAUTS ARE SOME of the most down-to-earth people you’ll ever meet,” Blake Dumesnil ’06 commented while guiding the *Sawdust* crew through a new exhibit at Space Center Houston.

A graphic artist for UTC Aerospace Systems, a NASA and Johnson Space Center supplier of engineering and technology services, Dumesnil was instrumental in designing the Independence Plaza exhibit, which opened to the public Jan. 23 and highlights the space shuttle program’s 30-year history.

Dumesnil’s connection to NASA and the space program reaches back to his childhood growing up in Clear Lake. His mother still works at Johnson Space Center, and many of his neighbors also were connected to the space program, including Dr. Shannon Lucid, who lived across the street.

Lucid was one of the first six female astronauts inducted into the corps, and until 2007, she held the record for the most hours in orbit by a non-Russian and the most hours in orbit by a woman.

“Shannon’s a legend,” Dumesnil said. “She’s flown on six shuttle missions and was recently inducted into the United States Astronaut Hall of Fame. She’s a close family friend with whom I still keep in contact.”

As most young children do, Dumesnil fantasized that some day he, too, would become an astronaut. But, he realized early on that he wasn’t as strong as needed in subjects like math and science to gain admittance into the program. ➔



However, he had other talents he was able to leverage—talents that would eventually open the door to his working alongside astronauts and making his own contributions to the space program.

Dumesnil, a gifted artist, was fascinated with storytelling and the filmmaking process, which led to his interest in film school. During middle school, he began to use graphic design software programs and quickly discovered that those tools also could be used to help tell a story.

"I was a pretty imaginative and creative kid," Dumesnil said. "The idea of combining art and storytelling really appealed to me."

In 2002, Dumesnil enrolled at SFA to work toward a double major in cinematography and graphic design. Studying under SFA filmmaking legend William Arscott, Dumesnil began to perfect his craft.

"Professor Arscott's influence wasn't just about how to operate a camera or light set," Dumesnil said. "It also was about bringing out the emotion in a story and how to tell it in the most beautiful and effective manner. The greatest things about his mentorship were his bluntness and push to make you better."

Dumesnil recalled that although sometimes the feedback could be harsh, Arscott was always honest.

"One of the worst things you can say to an artist is that their work is always 'good,'" Dumesnil said. "Artists need to hear the truth about their work. It's impossible to grow or make a professional career for yourself if the feedback is sugarcoated. William Arscott never sugarcoated anything, and that made you much more creative and effective as an artist."

When he graduated from SFA in 2006, Dumesnil was able to use the skills he learned at SFA to land a job with UTC Aerospace Systems working as a camera engineer.

"My work involved testing, modifying, certifying and delivering the handheld digital cameras that the astronauts used aboard the space shuttles and still use today aboard the International Space Station," Dumesnil said. "It was a wonderful way to begin working in the aerospace industry, and it helped me learn a lot about NASA processes."

In October 2009, NASA held a competition that led to a career change for Dumesnil—one more suited to his talents.

"NASA held an internal, agency-wide competition to design the patch to commemorate the end of the space shuttle program's 30-year history," Dumesnil said. "There were 90 entries, and I was fortunate to have my design selected."

Winning the competition propelled Dumesnil into a new role within UTC Aerospace Systems, and he soon found himself working as the full-time, in-house graphic designer supporting Johnson Space Center engineering.

"Through the years, my role as a designer has grown, and I've been brought aboard as art director and marketing consultant on a number of projects to help teams tell their stories," Dumesnil said.

Recently, his talents have been utilized to help create Independence Plaza at Space Center Houston, a multi-exhibit complex featuring the historic Boeing 747 shuttle carrier aircraft and the shuttle replica Independence.

"It was extremely disappointing when Space Center Houston and Johnson Space Center were not awarded one of the actual space-flown shuttles for permanent display after the shuttle program retired in 2011," Dumesnil said.

However, as luck would have it, the shuttle carrier aircraft was flown to Ellington Field in 2012 to participate in an air show. What happened next launched the beginning of Space Center Houston's newest exhibit.

"Dr. Ellen Ochoa, Johnson Space Center director and former astronaut, persuaded NASA to turn over possession of the 747 to Space Center Houston. We also were able to secure a high-fidelity mockup of a space shuttle," Dumesnil said.

The goal was to strip the 747's fuselage to renovate and showcase various exhibits celebrating the shuttle program. Another challenge was to position the mock shuttle atop the 747 to depict as closely as possible how the pair would look when an orbiter was being ferried. Then, guests could walk through both vehicles, something the general public had never been allowed to do.



Go behind the scene with Blake Dumesnil:
tinyurl.com/Sawdust-NASA



After the challenge of disassembling and moving the huge airplane almost 10 miles through city streets was accomplished, the plane was reassembled in place outside Space Center Houston's main visitors' building.

While a seven-story tower with two elevators allowing guests access to the flight and mid-decks of the shuttle and the shuttle carrier aircraft were under construction, Dumesnil and the design committee finalized the exhibit details and worked toward their integration.

The landmark attraction includes video interviews with shuttle astronauts and shuttle carrier aircraft crew members—14 of which Dumesnil coordinated, produced and directed. The interviews were then edited into six different videos, which detail much about space shuttle history.

In addition, Dumesnil was responsible for designing the entry wall panel guests see before walking outside to the Independence Plaza exhibit. In recognition of this and his other work, Dumesnil was awarded the 2015 UTC Aerospace Systems President's Award.

While Dumesnil's career working with NASA is still evolving, he says it's difficult to pinpoint a favorite project or moment. He's worked with astronauts in designing their mission patches—seven patches thus far—and he's had the unique experiences of interacting with astronauts like Buzz Aldrin, the second person to walk on the moon, and Fred Haise, who was one of the three astronauts to remarkably make it home after the aborted Apollo 13 mission.

However, he said a moment that will forever remain vivid occurred on the morning of Feb. 1, 2003. Dumesnil was asleep in his dorm room in Mays Hall at SFA when he was awakened by a loud but low rumbling that rattled the windows.

"I clearly heard the noise but drifted back to sleep. Sounds like that were very common for me to hear growing up in Clear Lake because of our proximity to Ellington Field," he said. "Nearly every day, I would hear F-16s or NASA T-38s flying overhead, and they frequently rattled the windows."

Dumesnil said it didn't immediately click that he shouldn't be hearing that sound so far north in Nacogdoches. "Not long after I heard the windows rattle, my phone rang, and it was my parents," he said. "They told me that NASA had lost communication with the Columbia crew. Then, I remembered that my friend's dad was piloting Columbia."

Sean Kasperbauer, Navy Cmdr. William McCool's stepson, and Dumesnil worked together at Space Center Houston during college leading tram tours for visitors at Johnson Space Center.

"I still recall Sean's excitement the summer and winter of 2002 before the mission's launch. Sean brought us some decals of the mission patch, and I was thrilled that his dad was going up," Dumesnil said.

Coincidentally, before he met Sean in December 2001, Dumesnil earned the Eagle Scout rank and received a signed letter and photograph from McCool, who was an Eagle Scout himself, congratulating Dumesnil on his accomplishment.

"It was such a kind, unexpected gesture and something that I treasure to this day," he said. "It was very emotional and heartbreaking when the realization set in that the Columbia crew had been lost, and someone I had a personal connection with was aboard that mission."

As for the future, Dumesnil said although the aerospace industry is in a transitional phase, development of the Orion program is on target, and he expects it to successfully succeed the shuttle era.

In terms of design and marketing, he's on the ground floor of helping develop the public's perception of these new programs and what people will think of NASA during the next 50 years.

"To have an influence on NASA's branding and identity moving forward as we venture into the possibility of going to Mars is incredibly exciting." ★

VISTA VIEWPOINT

TAYLOR RAGLIN

SENIOR

MAJOR: MASS COMMUNICATION/
JOURNALISM

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, *THE PINE LOG*

CONTRIBUTING WRITER
FOR THE DALLAS STARS,
THE HOCKEY WRITERS



WHEN I STEPPED onto SFA's campus almost four years ago, I knew it would become my home. After months of recruiting letters, campus visits and long nights mulling over extremely difficult decisions, the final choice was easy for me.

Let me back up. Coming out of high school, I was recruited to play baseball by several schools—one in California, another in South

Carolina and Harvard University. I was a National Merit Finalist, and Harvard seemed like a natural fit.

I ended up taking a visit to Harvard to participate in a baseball camp, and the head coach spent a lot of time that day trying to sway me toward wearing the crimson. However, I knew I didn't belong. Don't get me wrong, it was tempting. The tradition, the history and the name were all enticing, but I knew it wasn't for me. I heard it from everyone, "Why don't you go to Harvard? Are you crazy?"

I'm not telling you this to brag about my recruitment by Harvard. In fact, that's the furthest thing from the true reason why I include my brief courtship with that university when I tell the story of how I became a Lumberjack.

The truth is, I already had my heart set on SFA. At that point in my life, I needed somewhere that would offer me a place to call home and where I felt like I truly belonged. After stepping onto the campus for an official visit for baseball, I made my decision less than 24 hours later.

Looking back, I wouldn't change a thing. My nearly four years at SFA have afforded me the time of my life, and I've gotten to be a part of some pretty spectacular things.

When my baseball career came to an end, I was able to fully commit to working at *The Pine Log*, SFA's student-run newspaper, and I'm extremely proud to currently serve as its editor-in-chief. It's given me experience that I know will serve me well when I set out to begin my career in journalism.

I'm also fortunate to have been a member of the School of Honors, and I'm positive that the challenging coursework has left

me better prepared for the rigors of postgraduate education. I've made lifelong friends and memories, and I've never once thought about how things might have been different had I gone somewhere else. This place has been my home, and I'll be sad to see my time here end when I walk across the stage in May.

With that being said, SFA will never truly leave me. The generosity

of the alumni, the university and the School of Honors will allow me to walk off of this campus debt-free and give me the opportunity to pursue my master's degree with a tremendous weight off my shoulders. While I may not have loans to pay off, I'm forever in debt to everyone at SFA who has helped me get to where I am today. The names are too numerous to list, but I hope that you know who you are. Thank you all, and axe 'em, Jacks! ★

WHILE I MAY NOT HAVE LOANS TO
PAY OFF, I'M FOREVER IN DEBT TO
EVERYONE AT SFA WHO HAS HELPED
ME GET TO WHERE I AM TODAY.

WORK SPACE



WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN . . . DETECTIVE SGT. AMANDA KENNEDY'S OFFICE:

1. Kennedy jokes with her coworkers that she's "kind of a big deal." A supersize coffee mug imprinted with this phrase was gifted to her by a colleague and rests atop the filing cabinet.

2. Three uniform badges Kennedy received from SFA's University Police Department and her former employer, the Deep East Texas Regional Narcotics Trafficking Task Force, balance against the printer.

3. A framed photo of Kennedy's 6-year-old son William is the focal point for a grouping of family photos.

4. In 2012, Kennedy was voted Officer of the Year by her University Police Department peers. The plaque designating this honor sits on the window sill.

5. Kennedy enjoys running and participating in charity events. The Viking hat and medal were awarded to Kennedy for her participation in the Warrior Dash, a 3-mile obstacle course that benefits St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital. Kennedy received two of the stacked headbands for completing the Tough Mudder, a 12-mile obstacle course, which benefits the Wounded Warrior Project. The white headband was a prize for running in the Nacogdoches Color Up 5K.

6. Two fliers advertising Rape Aggression Defense classes, which Kennedy teaches, hang on the wall. The RAD training program teaches realistic self-defense tactics and techniques to women and begins by educating participants about risk awareness, prevention, reduction and avoidance. As the course progresses, participants receive instruction on the basics of hands-on defense training. Kennedy said teaching in the RAD program is one of the most rewarding aspects of her job.

7. SFA's Residence Life staff members presented this axe handle to Kennedy in recognition of her work with the Adopt-A-Cop program. The program is a collaboration between the University Police Department and the Residence Life program, in which patrol officers are "adopted" by SFA residence halls and invited to hall events so the students and police officers can become better acquainted and network.

8. A bullet-proof vest Kennedy uses when she's on duty is draped over her office chair.

9. A photograph from the Leadership Inventory for Female Executives conference occupies a prominent position on Kennedy's desk. The conference is offered annually to women to help facilitate a forum for discussion, exploration and

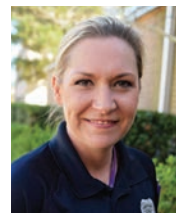
professional career planning with a particular focus on the female executive voice in policing. A retired British female bobby (police officer) taught the 2014 conference and presented Kennedy with the toy bobby sitting in front of the picture.

10. As an avid runner, Kennedy eats a banana daily. Bananas are said to be a good source of carbs and also contain potassium, which runners can lose through sweating. Bananas also can help regulate muscle contractions and prevent cramping.

11. The rock-shaped object on the corner of Kennedy's desk is actually a piece of Garner Apartments, which were razed in 2010 to make room for the Wilson Drive Parking Garage and the freshman residence hall Lumberjack Landing.

12. A painting Kennedy completed at a Leadership Inventory for Female Executives conference reminds her and office visitors to "Keep Calm and Enjoy Life." ★

Amanda Kennedy
University Detective
Sergeant for Criminal
Investigations



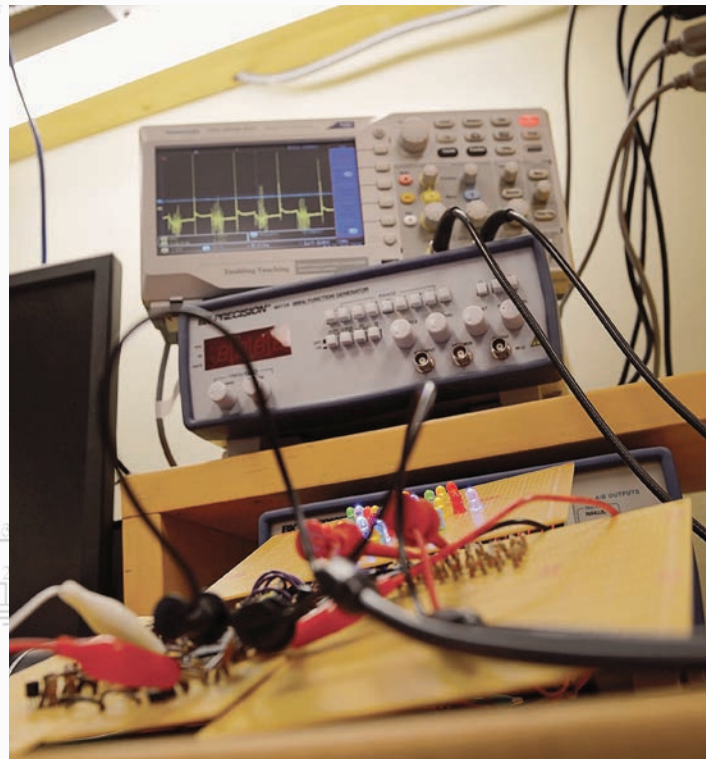
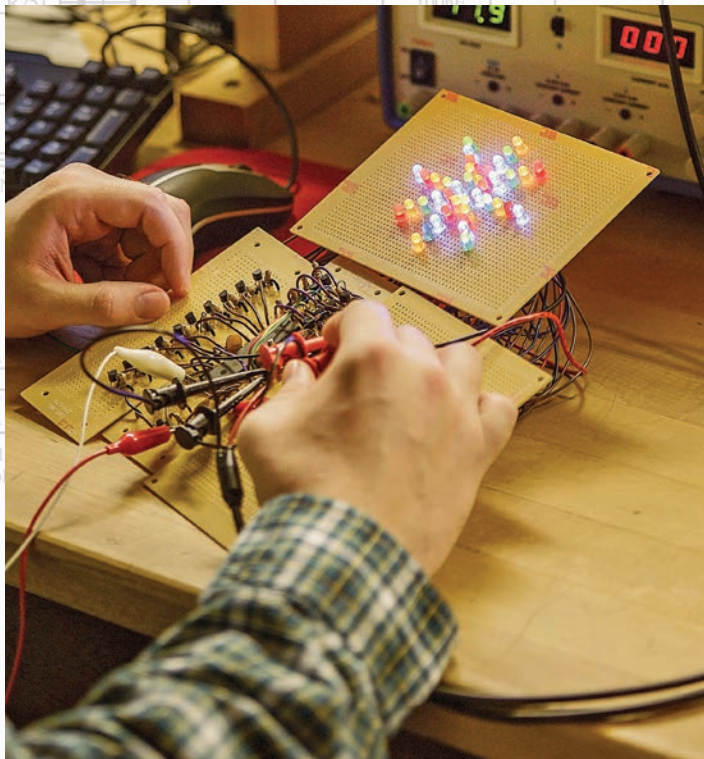
ENGINEERING a DEGREE

First two students ready
to graduate from quickly
growing program

Story by Ryan Perry / Photography by Hardy Meredith



From left: Cash Hamilton, Dr. Dan Bruton and Kasey Holland. The two seniors will be the first four-year engineering physics graduates at SFA.



ENGINEERING OFTEN IS the career choice for people who thrive when finding solutions to real-world problems, as the discipline requires the application of math and science to solve complex issues in a variety of industries.

Two problem-solving students are about to emerge with the first SFA four-year engineering physics degrees, two years after the launch of the program.

Cash Hamilton from Nacogdoches and Kasey Holland from The Woodlands are set to graduate in May with bachelor's degrees in engineering physics, and both students say they have passion for the discipline.

"I have a desire and love for problem solving, and engineering requires a lot of discipline to do it," Hamilton said. "Choosing it for a career came naturally."

Holland also said the career choice was fairly simple. "I've always liked science and math, and combining those interests with creativity and innovation is what drew me to engineering," he said.

Hamilton and Holland often are found working on projects in the SFA engineering labs, and those long hours have helped lead to their success.

"It's a big deal to have graduates two years after starting a program," said Dr. Dan Bruton, adviser for the engineering physics program. "The coordinating board expects you to have your first graduates four or five years after starting a program. Because we have had a successful pre-engineering program for so long, we were able to have our first two graduates in only two years."

For decades, SFA has offered a pre-engineering program, in which students study for two years before transferring to another university to complete their degree. Alternatively, students often finish a physics degree at SFA and then seek work as an engineer.

"I've always liked science and math, and combining those interests with creativity and innovation is what drew me to engineering."

Kasey Holland

"About half the students graduating with physics degrees from SFA are getting engineering positions," Bruton said. "Their degrees didn't say 'engineering,' so getting a license was more difficult. If you have an engineering degree from an accredited program, then it opens a lot of doors. You have broader job opportunities, and your income will probably be higher."

Bruton has been part of a group that has sought to bring a four-year engineering program to SFA since 2002.

"The coordinating board said they had enough engineering programs in the state, but our students were saying otherwise," Bruton said. "They wanted to go to a university in East Texas and receive their four-year engineering degrees. They wanted to stay at SFA."

In April 2014, the coordinating board finally approved the program, and the department added new courses and faculty members.

Dr. Christopher Aul, a mechanical engineer, was one of the first new professors hired. He left his engineering job in Houston designing formation isolation valves for Schlumberger, a leading petroleum technology company, to help start the new program.

Working in the field, he saw a clear lack of supply for workforce demand.

"We need more engineers, simply put," Aul said. "There are more jobs than engineers, and that trend continues. If you earn an engineering degree, you're going to land a job."

Hamilton and Holland were physics majors who planned on attaining engineering careers, and they were among the first students to enroll in the program when it began in the fall 2014 semester. →

"We need more engineers, simply put. There are more jobs than engineers, and that trend continues. If you earn an engineering degree, you're going to land a job."

Dr. Christopher Aul

"Two years ago, our department chair, Dr. (Harry) Downing, sent me a photo of Cash Hamilton holding a degree plan," Bruton said. "The message read 'our first degree plan, and he likely will be our first graduate.' I didn't think he could predict that, but that is exactly what happened."

Hamilton, who has focused on mechanical engineering, said he plans to meet with several corporations before deciding where he will take his first job.

Holland, who has concentrated on electrical engineering, is planning to study robotics in graduate school. Engineering physics programs can be an attractive undergraduate option for students who have an eye on furthering their education.

"Engineering physics works out better for graduate studies because of the emphasis on physics, and you'll have a more high-end understanding," Aul said. "When I was an undergraduate studying mechanical engineering, there were some blurred lines. It can be more of an applied science."

Connor O'Leary, a sophomore engineering physics major from Plano, said he plans to pursue graduate studies. He initially planned on the pre-engineering program.

"They told me about the new four-year program during orientation," O'Leary said. "After being here two years, it really feels like a community. The class sizes are smaller than at the larger universities, so you get more hands-on instruction. You know your professors and have opportunities to take part in projects. Now

that there is a four-year program, I can get that experience for my entire degree."

However, SFA's pre-engineering program is still in demand because some students want to specialize in areas not offered at SFA.

"There are so many areas of engineering that we couldn't possibly offer all of them," Bruton said.

Aul said the first two years of most engineering degrees are similar.

"You need the foundational courses, and then you move into specialized areas," Aul said.

The engineering physics program more than doubled in size during the first year, and Aul and Bruton anticipate continued growth.

"It was surprising to me how quickly the program took off," Bruton said. "The number of students who are engineering physics majors is now equal to the number of physics majors. We now have more than 200 students with majors in our department, which is a record."

The program will be housed in the new STEM building, which should open in 2018. Bruton said long-term plans include adding full mechanical, electrical and graduate engineering programs.

Aul said the program's continued growth could help SFA fill the need for future problem solvers in the workforce.

"It's an 'if you build it, they will come' type situation," Aul said. "As people graduate and others see where they are getting jobs, the growth will continue. The new building is centered on student engagement, and it will be built for the future—a larger program." ★

"The number of students who are engineering physics majors is now equal to the number of physics majors. We now have more than 200 students with majors in our department, which is a record."

Dr. Dan Bruton



Cash Hamilton and Kasey Holland

ATHLETICS HIGHLIGHTS



WOMEN'S BASKETBALL ACHIEVES 1,000 WINS

WITH ITS 72-59 victory against Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi on Feb. 13, the SFA women's basketball team joined a very elite club. The Ladyjacks' victory was the 1,000th in program history, becoming the sixth team in NCAA Division I to reach the monumental milestone. They join the University of Tennessee, Louisiana Tech University, James Madison University, Old Dominion University and the University of Texas at Austin. One of the top programs in the history of women's basketball, SFA has appeared in 18 NCAA tournaments and advanced to five Sweet Sixteens, captured 17 conference championships and produced 66 all-conference performers and six All-Americans. The Ladyjacks have been ranked in the top 20 nationally in 13 different seasons, finishing among the nation's top 10 four times.



DEMI PAYNE BECOMES THIRD WOMAN TO VAULT 16 FEET

SFA SENIOR POLE vaulter Demi Payne continues to rewrite the record books. During the New Mexico Collegiate Classic on Feb. 6, Payne became the third woman in the world to clear 16 feet. After setting a pair of personal bests at 15 feet 7.25 inches and 15 feet 9.75 inches, Payne cleared the 16-foot bar on her first attempt, which moved her into the No. 2 rank in the world behind Team USA teammate Jen Suhr. The 2015 NCAA Outdoor National Champion, Payne continues to be one of the top vaulters in the world as she prepares for her final outdoor season at SFA. In December, Payne was recognized as one of three female finalists for the Bowerman Award, the highest individual award in collegiate track and field, and she is a preseason nominee for the 2016 award, as she continues her quest to qualify for the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



SFA MEN'S BASKETBALL CLAIMS FOURTH-STRAIGHT SLC REGULAR SEASON TITLE

A NEW CHAPTER in Southland Conference history was penned at the Lumberjacks' final home game against Houston Baptist University Feb. 27, as the team captured its fourth-straight SLC regular season crown. Led by its five-man senior class of Demetrious Floyd, Clide Geffrard, Jared Johnson, Trey Pinkney and Thomas Walkup, SFA became just the second team to win four consecutive regular season titles in the history of the 13-team conference. The win against the Huskies also ensured that none of the 'Jacks seniors lost a Southland Conference game at home in their careers.



THOMAS WALKUP CONTINUES TO DAZZLE

SFA SENIOR THOMAS Walkup continues to rake in accolades for his play on the court, as the Pasadena, Texas, native recorded SFA's first triple-double in 43 years against University of the Incarnate Word Feb. 29. Walkup notched 12 points, a career-high 15 rebounds and 10 assists to lead the 'Jacks to their 16th-straight win. Additionally, Walkup was named the *Sports Illustrated* Mid-Major National Player of the Week on Feb. 10. Walkup recently became the third player in SFA's Division I history to tally 1,500 career points and 500 career rebounds, and he and teammate Trey Pinkney surpassed former Lumberjack standout Jacob Parker to become the all-time winningest Lumberjacks.

SURROUNDINGS

REIMAGINED

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT REINVENTS ENVIRONMENTS

STORY BY TIM MONZINGO / PHOTOGRAPHY BY ELIZABETH LAFARGUE '14

WWW.ELIZABETHLAFARGUE.COM





WHERE MOST PEOPLE SEE DILAPIDATED BUILDINGS, VACANT LOTS OR WASTED SPACE, SFA ALUMNUS SETH RODEWALD-BATES '01 SEES THE UNTAPPED POTENTIAL FOR SOMETHING GRAND.

As a landscape architect for international firm Spackman Mossop and Michaels, Rodewald-Bates, who received his bachelor's degree in agriculture from SFA, spends his days working with representatives from cities, communities and some private citizens to reimagine and reinvent urban environments in more functional and beautiful ways.

The firm has two offices, one in Sydney, Australia, and the other in New Orleans, Louisiana, where employees work to develop large urban spaces and infrastructure that reinforce an area's culture and ecology. The firm is responsible for the design of New Orleans' landmarks like the Rosa F. Keller Library and Community Center, St. Roch Park and the City Park observation deck, as well as numerous projects across Australia.

The business is a natural fit for Rodewald-Bates, who was fascinated with design, building and nature from an early age.

Growing up in Chireno, a tiny hamlet of about 400 people east of Nacogdoches on State Highway 21, he developed an early interest in the forests just beyond his front door.

"Thanks to my parents, my sister and I spent most of our childhood exploring the woods and national

forests in East Texas. They taught us how natural systems work and how people impact those systems," he said. "I'm still using many of those same lessons today."

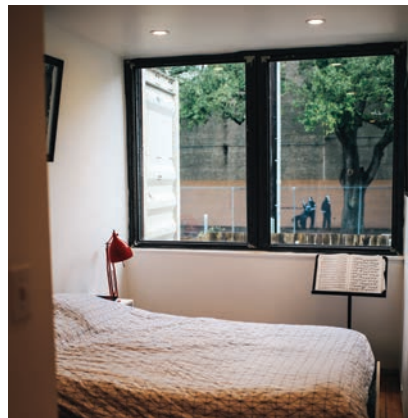
A passion for gardening led Rodewald-Bates to the Texas Master Gardener program, where he began learning from and working with horticulturists like SFA Gardens' Greg Grant.

Grant, a research associate at SFA's Pineywoods Native Plant Center, spoke at many of the master gardener classes Rodewald-Bates attended and encouraged the young naturalist to volunteer with the SFA Mast Arboretum.

In fact, it was Grant who initially introduced him to the world of landscape architecture through a series of courses on the subject, which appealed to his natural interests.

"That also was around the time Barbara Stump started working on the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden, which brought Darrel Morrison to Nacogdoches. He was the first landscape architect I met and certainly convinced me I was on the right path," Rodewald-Bates said.

So far, the 31-year-old's career has taken him north of the pineywoods, where he worked for the design firm Sasaki Associates in Boston, Massachusetts. →



He also worked in Marfa before moving to the Big Easy. Today, the ecology of his workplace isn't unlike what he had as a student at SFA, he said.

Spackman Mossop and Michaels' New Orleans office is a tight-knit organization with eight employees, which Rodewald-Bates said is reminiscent of the close ties he enjoyed with professors and fellow students at SFA's Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture and the Music Preparatory Division, where he studied violin.

He said the ability to work closely with people of different interests and expertise is something that serves him well in his professional life.

Landscape architecture is an inherently multidisciplinary field, and he is currently in the midst of coordinating more than a dozen projects in various stages of development. On a daily basis, he consults with contractors, subconsultants and clients discussing everything from the design and layout of a space to technical construction details.

"It is a great time to be a landscape architect. We are uniquely positioned to deal with complex issues, such as storm water management, transportation, cultural landscapes, ecology and public health, that increasingly shape our urbanizing population," Rodewald-Bates said. "One of the unique things about the profession is its very wide reach. Landscape architects are trained to design across many scales and collaborate with allied professions to create beautiful spaces, both private and public. Chances are if there is a public space that you enjoy or a great park somewhere, it was probably designed by a landscape architect."

Rodewald-Bates shapes minds as well as spaces as an adjunct professor in Tulane University's School of Architecture, and he previously taught at the Boston Architectural College and Louisiana State University's Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture, from which he received his master's degree.

His professional expertise was used to craft something unconventional in his personal life, as well. An essential ability of landscape architects is reimagining common spaces and items to be more functional and aesthetically appealing. As a resident of one of the largest port cities in the world, he and his wife saw an opportunity to do just that with their home.

After consulting with his colleague, New Orleans-based architect Byron Mouton, Rodewald-Bates and his wife, Elisabeth Davies, developed a home built from shipping containers.

"Elisabeth and I started working on the design of the house about four years ago. The use of containers isn't exactly new, but certainly unusual in the U.S.," he said. "We were interested in re-using such a common item, especially in a large port city such as New Orleans."

Rodewald-Bates said his professional, academic and personal accomplishments can be traced back to those formative years among the towering pines of East Texas and SFA.

"Looking back, the amount of one-on-one time with faculty was amazing," he said. "Dr. Dave Creech, Dr. Isidor Saslav, Greg Grant—those three in particular are still some of the best teachers I've had." ★

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, SFA!
OUR GRANDMOTHER, MATTIE VIRGINIA
GRIGSBY YARBROUGH, WAS IN THE VERY
FIRST CLASS 92 YEARS AGO!

STEVE GRIFFIN / FACEBOOK



SFA changed my
life & provided
me with countless
opportunities.
#AxeEmJacks

SHAWN CLYNCH / FACEBOOK



I LOVE this
life-changing
university! #SFA
#BleedingPurple
#AxeEm!

SFACHELSEA / INSTAGRAM

I just stalked myself on Instagram
(is that considered stalking???)
and realized I hold up my axe in
99.9999% of pictures I take. #AxeEm

OLIVIA MARIE MILLER / TWITTER



SPENT SOME
TIME WITH THESE
BEAUTIFUL LADIES
YESTERDAY.

#AXEEM #SFASUALUMNA

SHEESEGORG / INSTAGRAM



TODAY, I'M
THANKFUL
MY PARENTS
RAISED ME
RIGHT, AND I
DIDN'T END UP
A BEARKAT.
#AXEEM

WESTBROOK13 / TWITTER



COLLEGE
HAT DAY.
#AXEEM

CORLEYCL / INSTAGRAM



One last walk on
campus with Ollie
before we move
away from Nac.

BSCOMICS / INSTAGRAM



Dr. Jeffery Roth, left, stands in front of his soon-to-be renovated home, which previously has housed SFA presidents Drs. Alton W. Birdwell and Paul L. Boynton.

Pictured below is the home after its first facelift in 1924.



Back to Basics: First SFA president's house serves as geography professor's sustainable homestead

Story by Christine Broussard / Photography by Hardy Meredith

SIXTEEN ACRES OF land covered in pine and hardwood trees, a natural spring and a trickling creek back up to a two-story, light blue home in varying stages of renovation.

Dr. Jeffery Roth '89 and '96 stands outside the home and land he purchased in 2007, as he details its history and connection to one of his favorite educators—SFA's first president, Dr. Alton Birdwell.

"When I was living in Denver looking for a house in Nacogdoches, I found this one online and thought, 'boy that house looks familiar,'" Roth said. "It's because it was the Birdwell house. I had done some research on Birdwell when I was working for SFA history Professor Dr. Jere Jackson, and I really liked him."

Roth received both his bachelor's and master's degrees from SFA, and during that time, he formed a historical appreciation for SFA's first president. So, when he was hired as an SFA associate professor of geography eight years ago and chanced upon the first SFA president's home for sale, he was giddy.

"Birdwell was a hero of higher education," Roth said, holding tightly to the leash of his large, well-behaved Black Russian Terrier. "SFA wouldn't be here if it weren't for Birdwell."

Named president of Stephen F. Austin State Teacher's College at its inception, Birdwell served in that role through

1942. Delayed by repercussions of the first World War and "Texas politics," Roth wrote in a 1998 paper when he was a research specialist for the Center for East Texas Studies,

Birdwell's family didn't move to Nacogdoches until the early 1920s.

"Birdwell wanted to bring education to the common man, so he did things like ride a mule around East Texas giving speeches," Roth said. "He could have ridden in a buggy, but he picked a mule because it was the symbol of prosperity for the common people—the more mules you had, the more successful you were. He wanted to prove a point."

In addition to the home's history, Roth's excitement about and vision for the property is to build a self-sustainable homestead. His first phase of renovation involved restoration to the home's interior mixed with clearing portions of the land to raise endangered livestock and plant a garden.

"For about 15 years, I've been looking at endangered livestock as a research topic," he said. "Endangered breeds are important because we have 10,000 years of agricultural development at stake. We are raising so few breeds of cattle and

chickens, one disease could go through flocks and wipe out millions of chickens. The same thing is happening with heirloom vegetables."

"... taking what I learn here into the classroom ... If you want to connect it to Birdwell, that's definitely what I'm most proud of."

DR. JEFFERY ROTH

The second stage is to revive the home's aging exterior, ultimately turning the building into a boarding home for students and building a separate, smaller cabin for himself further back on the land. However, the eight-year construction project has come with its fair share of hiccups.

"The project hasn't quite worked out according to plan," Roth said, adding a massive leak that was trickling through the home's walls wasn't found until about a year and a half after he purchased the home. In fall 2014, Roth also contracted double pneumonia while working on plumbing under the house. At some point, too, a group of neighborhood pit bulls got loose and killed several of his chickens and sheep.

"It's been just a cascading chain of events," he said.

Roth stays positive despite the hardships. His aim is to bring sustainable methods of living and lessons he has learned in his struggles into the classroom.

"That's what I'm most proud of—taking what I learn here into the classroom and talking to students about how they can save money on their student loans by learning how to grow a garden, learning how to cook and talking about the failures here to let them know that things don't always work out," Roth said. "If you want to connect it to Birdwell, that's definitely what I'm most proud of. He would want the faculty to move beyond textbooks and theory and do things that are practical that the students will take with them in their lifetimes."

Roth hesitates to speculate on what the future holds, but he isn't giving up. He continues to renovate the interior of the house, many parts of which are nearly complete, and he will soon pick up speed on the exterior. He also just recently seeded his 50-foot by 50-foot garden. ★



Dr. Jeffery Roth, associate professor of geography at SFA, sits in the kitchen of his Nacogdoches home perusing photos of completed house renovations on his laptop. Part of the renovation process included gutting much of the kitchen and creating a countertop from floor tiles Roth glued together. The kitchen, he said, is probably his favorite area of the home and one in which he spends much of his time when indoors. He also widened the kitchen and replaced portions of the home's exterior wall, including the back door.

Off-the-grid tips

By Dr. Jeffery Roth

SFA associate professor of geography



I GREW UP in Texas hunting and fishing. I admired my "off-the-grid" great-grandpa and aspired to be like my outdoorsman heroes. As an SFA student in the late '80s and early '90s, my adventures afield

continued and expanded in Nacogdoches with like-minded people. We grew big gardens, brewed a lot of beer, had big potluck dinner parties and enjoyed a lot of time outside. I inherited generations of wisdom on self-sufficiency, farming and food that I get the privilege of sharing with students regularly. Here are a few of my favorites.

1) In East Texas, solar panels prove to be inefficient, but trees store the power of the sun, making modern, low-emission wood-burning stoves or fireplace inserts an alternative. I burn oak wood collected from dead trees on my farm, scraps from a local hardwood mill and, by permit, wood found in the Davy Crockett National Forest. I burn about six to eight pick-up truck loads of wood that would decompose and create biogenic emissions anyway. You can find many uses for the ashes on the Internet.

2) We live in Texas, so vegetables grow year-round. I recommend building fertile, organic soil by collecting bags of leaves thrown away curbside and composting them for the garden. I generally produce more vegetables than I can eat.

3) If you're thinking about what you might do next, order a Lehman's Hardware catalog or, better yet, take a vacation to Amish country. My great-grandpa took me to this amazing place in Kidron, Ohio, decades ago. You'll find an unbelievable collection of non-electric technology, equipment and books sure to inspire great projects.

4) In Kidron, I learned about "chicken tractors," so I built three that house my 12 birds. These lightweight, mobile chicken coops work great for backyard poultry production wherever local code permits. I have a flock of Dominique chickens ordered from the Murray McMurray hatchery, which also has a great catalog. The American Livestock Breeding Conservancy is a great organization with more information on poultry and other heritage livestock breeds.

5) To find the time to live more sustainably, consider turning off the cable and Internet after doing your research. I'm signing off to go outside to collect some eggs for breakfast and enjoy the sunset in Nacogdoches. ★



AMAZING GRACE

Couple establishes
and operates Neema
Village in Tanzania

STORY BY KASI DICKERSON
PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE FORTSONS



STEPPING OUT OF the airport, Michael and Dorris Fortson immediately noticed a difference. It had been more than 40 years since they had been to Africa, and within minutes, they knew this trip would change everything.

The Fortsons' life together always has included mission work. They met on a blind date during college, and the couple first traveled together to Tanzania, Africa, in 1965 as missionaries with their 3-month-old daughter to make their home in Mbeya for the next six years.

The family lived in a mountain home built by German settlers in 1900, which they reached by negotiating 52 hairpin curves on a treacherous dirt road. Michael taught in the Tanzania Bible School, which was a training school for native preachers, and he kept the mission's generators and machines running.

Dorris taught classes for women, including Bible study, sewing, reading and writing, and she helped at the school's medical clinic. The couple harvested game for the table, grew their own fruits and vegetables, and made their own mayonnaise and ketchup.

While going about their daily existence, they fell in love with the African people, the work and the beautiful continent. Two of their children were born in Tanzania. When they left in 1971, they always knew someday they would return.

After arriving back in the United States, Michael preached for a while in Texas and was later hired as the campus minister for SFA's Yellow House, a non-denominational Christian student center, where he worked for 29 years.

Dorris worked for 20 years at the SFA student center as the coordinator of events and conferences. She completed her bachelor's degree in applied arts and sciences in 1992.

In 2008, the couple retired and decided to revisit their beloved Africa. But when they arrived, they noticed a drastic change.

Now, dozens of begging orphans affected by AIDS lined the streets. This terrible disease was destroying the people the Fortsons had grown to love. ➔

“If you are sick, poor or homeless, you are often begging on the street.” - Michael Fortson



“We discovered most of the orphanages don’t take babies because it is too expensive to care for them.”

- Dorris Fortson

“Tanzania is a third-world country with many poor and desperate people,” Michael said. “Tanzanians don’t have the social services we have in America. They can’t apply to the government for welfare. They have so few options. If you are sick, poor or homeless, you are often begging on the street.”

It is estimated that there are three million orphans in Tanzania, and the Fortsons are on a mission to help reduce this number.

In 2011, Michael and Dorris took a two-month fact-finding trip through Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania touring every orphanage they could locate, which totaled 22 facilities.

“We discovered most of the orphanages don’t take babies because it is too expensive to care for them,” Dorris said. “Formula costs about \$12 a can, and the babies need 24-hour care. African orphanages cannot manage these high costs.”

Working toward a solution, the Fortsons met with local social workers to try to find a way they could help. In 2012, their dedication paid off when the couple opened Neema House Arusha, a center for orphaned, abandoned and at-risk babies.



In Swahili, Neema means grace, and the Fortsons say it is by the amazing grace of God that they are able to do their work. A registered nonprofit, the center is funded through charitable donations.

The center initially began in a rented house with six babies to care for. Michael purchased sterilizers, furniture, bottles and other supplies. He also designed and built baby bunk beds for the house.

The majority of the babies at Neema House Arusha have been abandoned. Abandonment can occur in various ways.

The Fortsons explained how a mother might deliver her baby at a hospital and then leave it, especially if

it is premature. Neema’s smallest abandoned baby weighed 1.65 pounds. There are others almost equally as small, including tiny baby Maxine, who weighed 2.4 pounds when she was abandoned and brought to Neema House Arusha.

Other abandoned babies have been born in villages and later left on the roadside. Babies also have been abandoned at bus stations, gravel pits, airports and hotels.

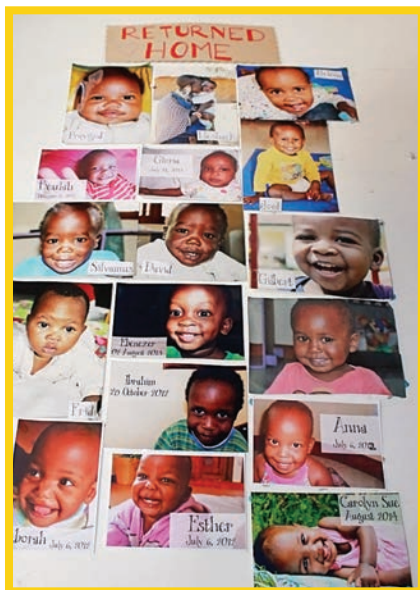
“There’s just no end to the places desperate parents will leave their babies,” Michael said. “For the most part, you imagine the parents hope a good person will pick up the baby. We believe it is not our place to judge these people. We cannot begin to imagine the hopelessness it takes for a mother to lay her baby by the roadside and walk away.”

Other scenarios may include a single mother giving up her baby because she lacks financial support. Also, having a baby out of wedlock is frowned upon in this culture, and the mother may not be welcome back home, Michael said.

“Our very first baby was a boy named Frankie, the smallest of triplets. He was living in a mud hut in a remote Masai village with five siblings and a calf inside the house,” Dorris said. “Frankie was six months old and weighed only 5 pounds. He was diagnosed with cerebral palsy. He stayed

“We believe it is not our place to judge these people. We cannot begin to imagine the hopelessness it takes for a mother to lay her baby by the roadside and walk away.”

- Michael Fortson



IN 2014,
46
BABIES
AT NEEMA

40
FULL-TIME
EMPLOYEES

MORE THAN
125
VOLUNTEERS
FROM
21
COUNTRIES

in the hospital for a few weeks before getting strong enough to come to Neema.”

Currently, Neema has 40 full-time employees, including cooks, drivers, nannies and guards. Staff members work 24 hours a day, and only Tanzanian workers are paid. All other workers, including the directors, are volunteers or have raised their own support. The Fortsons do not take a salary for their work at Neema.

Each year, volunteers from around the world come to help at Neema by holding babies, changing diapers and feeding bottle after bottle of formula.

“In 2014, we had more than 125 volunteers from 21 countries come help. It’s amazing and quite an experience for the volunteers. It takes a lot of coordination to make sure everyone is on the work schedule, has a place to sleep, has food and isn’t left at the airport,” Dorris laughed.

In the almost four years since the center opened, 88 babies have called it home. In 2014, Neema cared for 46 babies.

“We are in love with these children. We absolutely adore them,” Dorris said. “When we drive up, the toddlers run to us and say, ‘Bibi, Babu,’ which means grandmother and grandfather in Swahili, and they jump up and down for us to pick them up and hold them.”

Since its opening, there have been 15 adoptions and 17 babies returned home to their extended families. Neema also provides for 12 babies who have been able to remain home in their villages.

“People ask us why they cannot adopt babies and bring them to America,” Dorris said. “According to Tanzanian law, the person adopting a child must reside in the country for three years before being able to adopt, which makes out-of-country adoptions almost impossible. Our goal is to make a better life for the children through education and lots of love.”

Recently, the organization began expansion efforts to build Neema Village, which will comprise a home for about 60 babies. Additionally, a mothering center is planned and will offer prenatal and child care classes. A school and church also are on the drawing board.

Michael and Dorris plan to teach the mothers skills so they can engage in their own small-business opportunities and earn a wage.

Because AIDS widows are sometimes displaced in Tanzanian society, a home for them has already been built on the property. Additionally, a shop and storage area is complete and in use.

“Michael drove all over the country to find the property to build Neema Village,” Dorris said. “He finally located the perfect place on a slope overlooking a banana grove. It is the most beautiful place I have ever seen.”

The 9.8-acre location is about 15 minutes from a hospital, and on a clear day, Dorris said, you can see Mount Kilimanjaro, the tallest mountain in Africa. A Neema charity climb of the mountain is scheduled for June 2017.

As retirees, Michael and Dorris are consumed with Neema Village. They split their time between their home in Temple, where they coordinate efforts to raise money and awareness for Neema Village, and the remainder of the year they spend in Tanzania taking care of their extended family.

“We are not the type of people who like to sit around and watch TV. We have always been very active and hands on,” Michael said. “Whenever we arrive back in Tanzania, we can hardly wait to get to the village and see the children. I think the homecoming is just as exciting to us as it is to them.” ★

“When we drive up, the toddlers run to us and say, ‘Bibi, Babu,’ which means grandmother and grandfather in Swahili, and they jump up and down for us to pick them up and hold them.”

- Dorris Fortson

Visit neemavillage.org to learn more.

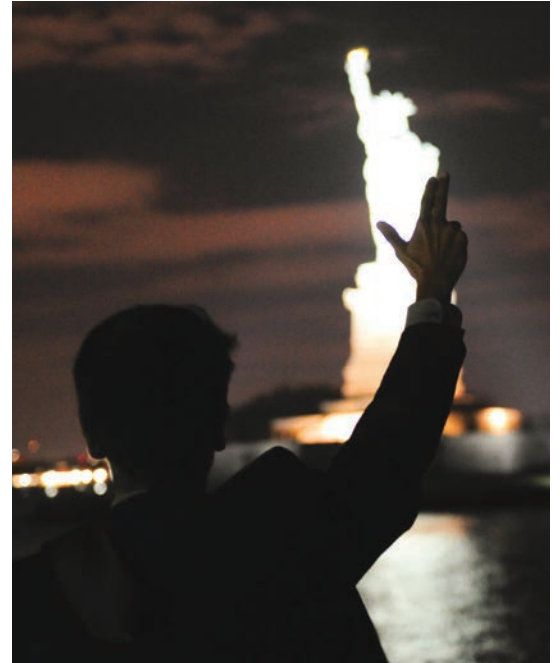


Neema Village is in various stages of construction. The infant home, pictured, is near completion and expected to open in June.



SFA'S LUMBERJACK MARCHING BAND PERFORMS AT THE





PHOTOGRAPHY BY HARDY MEREDITH

2015 MACY'S THANKSGIVING DAY PARADE IN NEW YORK CITY



The highly successful performance of the SFA Lumberjack Marching Band in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade before three million New York City spectators and 55 million TV viewers demonstrates once again why the band is a great ambassador for SFA.

From live interviews with the band's faculty members and student leaders Thanksgiving morning on "Fox & Friends" and "Good Morning America," to a social media video of the band singing the school song on the steps of the iconic New York City Post Office with more than 160,000 views, the parade appearance shared the Lumberjack story with millions.

The great success of the trip has prompted band leadership to begin exploring a possible return visit to perform in the 2023 Macy's parade in celebration of the 100th birthday of SFA.



'JACKS OF ALL TRADES

Tynan Davis '02 – Performer in the North American tour of 'Phantom of the Opera'

AFTER LIVING IN New York for 10 years, Tynan Davis '02 was making plans to move home to Texas when a text message opened the door to a career opportunity she never imagined.

A friend gave the casting director of "The Phantom of the Opera" Davis' contact information, and the next day Davis had an audition, which resulted in her joining the North American tour of the famous opera.

Davis' path to landing the role began when she was a child sitting underneath the piano as her mom, a classically trained pianist, accompanied singers, ballet classes and church choirs.

From age 9 to 16, Davis sang with the Children's Chorus of San Antonio. Throughout high school, she competed in UIL choir competitions before attending SFA.

"At SFA, I studied with Dr. David Jones, who was like a grandfather to me," Davis said. "We had such wonderful conversations. On afternoons when I didn't feel like singing, he would put on an Anna Moffo or Mirella Freni record, and we would listen and talk about Italy, singing and life. I cherish those days in his studio."

Davis said the operetta "Die Fledermaus" by Johann Strauss was her first SFA performance, which she remembers for the crazy wigs and big dresses. "There was a goofy elegance about it," she said. "We were a bunch of kids playing dress up and pretending to be refined, when we actually were waiting for Thursday night so we could go to Jitterbugs."

After receiving her Bachelor of Music in vocal performance, Davis moved home to San Antonio where she opened a private voice studio and taught at middle and high schools in the Northeast ISD.

In 2005, she made her way to the Big Apple, where she became an usher at the Metropolitan Opera House. "If you're not getting paid to sing in the opera, you might as well get paid to watch it and hand out programs," she said.

Davis' career has included many highlights—performing with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project/Odyssey Opera, Opera San Antonio, Austin Lyric Opera, Bronx Opera and others. She's also toured with jazz artist Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and engaged in seasonal appearances with Grammy award-winning ensembles Conspirare and Roomful of Teeth. She also teaches master's classes—most recently at the University of Arizona as a guest of renowned soprano Elizabeth Futral.

"I've been very lucky because most of the singing I do is varied and interesting," she said. "I've not been pigeon-holed into one singing style."

That diversity of singing styles no doubt led to Davis securing the role as a swing (person who covers multiple roles in the chorus) and understudy in her latest musical undertaking, Andrew Lloyd Webber's "The Phantom of the Opera."

At the audition, Davis sang 32 bars of "Unusual Way" from the musical "Nine" by Maury Yeston for the casting, production and music directors. "The music director also wanted to hear some opera, so I sang an aria Dr. Jones taught me my freshman year, 'O Mio Babbino Caro' from 'Gianni Schicchi' by Puccini. Then, I was asked to read some dialogue excerpts from 'Phantom' and was asked to stay for a dance audition, where I learned two short sequences from the show," Davis said.

Not immediately knowing the outcome of her audition, Davis went to Santa Fe, New Mexico, where she had a summer contract with the Santa Fe Desert Chorale. However, four days after arriving, she received a call from the musical's casting director who told her she had landed the role.



Two weeks later, Davis flew to Los Angeles to join the company, which has been touring the country for two years. As a swing and an understudy, Davis, who is a mezzo soprano, is responsible for knowing five female ensemble tracks and the principle role of Madame Giry.

Three weeks after joining the company, Davis had her first "Phantom" performance at the Orpheum Theater in San Francisco. "I was like a deer in headlights. I had no idea what was going on. We like to use the phrase 'Shove with love' when a new person goes into the show. I was shoved with so much love that first night," Davis laughed.

Referring to the cast and crew as "Phamily," Davis is on a six-month contract with the show and said she's enjoying every second.

"It's really fun," Davis said. "When I'm on stage, I have a hard time keeping a straight face in the serious scenes because I'm often thinking, 'You're here!'" ★

- STORY BY KASI DICKERSON
- PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBIN JOHNSON



**The Lumberjack
Business
Network events
are one way
the Alumni
Association
is working
to increase
connections
with our
stakeholders.**

THE SFA ALUMNI Association kicked off the year in style with a Dallas-area Lumberjack Business Network breakfast on Jan. 19. Tom Mason, a 1970 SFA alumnus and CFO of real estate development company Hillwood, was the presenter. Tom wowed the group with a discussion of the company's many projects, which span Dallas/Fort Worth, the country and the globe. He absolutely proved that **Lumberjacks Make Great CFOs!**

The event was attended by a fantastic group of SFA alumni learning about a fellow alum's impressive work. Additional Dallas breakfasts are scheduled from 7 to 8 a.m. April 19, July 12 and Oct. 11, at Maggiano's Little Italy at NorthPark Center.

The Lumberjack Business Network is the centerpiece of the SFA Alumni Association's 2016 programming, but do not let the name fool you—you do not need to hold a business-related degree to attend. For example, my SFA degree is in political science, and I benefit tremendously from attending the breakfasts, where I can network with other professionals who live and work in my geographic area.

The Alumni Association hosted its inaugural Lumberjack Business Network breakfast in Houston on March 8 at Maggiano's Little Italy near the Galleria. Additional Houston breakfasts are scheduled from 7 to 8 a.m. at Maggiano's on May 10, Aug. 16 and Nov. 15.

Additionally, the inaugural Lumberjack Business Network of The Woodlands will be held from 7 to 8 a.m. April 14, at Fleming's Prime Steakhouse.

In other news, our Alumni Association Board of Directors met in Nacogdoches in January and attended the SFA Envisioned Strategic Planning Committee's town hall meeting. SFA is in the midst of a comprehensive strategic planning process, which includes several interdependent goals. Transformative student experiences is the overarching goal and is supported by four operational goals: attracting and supporting high-quality faculty and staff members, fostering academic and co-curricular innovation, redefining university culture, and increasing connections. You can learn more about SFA's strategic plan at www.sfasu.edu/strategicplan.

The increasing connections goal includes linking with SFA alumni and friends—we want you to be connected to SFA and the Alumni Association! Lumberjack Business Network events are one way the Alumni Association is working to increase connections with our stakeholders.

Throughout the remainder of the year, I hope your connection to SFA grows stronger and that you will join us at alumni events. You can access the Alumni Association's online calendar at www.sfaalumni.com/events to view more information about upcoming events. Also, don't forget you can keep up with the Alumni Association and SFA on social media. "Like" the SFA Alumni Association on Facebook, follow SFA Alumni on Twitter and check out our new presence on Instagram.

Axe 'em, Jacks!

Karen Gregory Gantt '95 – McKinney, Texas
President, SFA Alumni Association



ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

SFA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

Karen Gantt '95, McKinney
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MR & MISS SFA



COLLIN RUTHERFORD

Stan McKewen Mr. SFA Award recipient



OLIVIA MILLER

Arnodean Covin Miss SFA Award recipient

SFA Alumni Association names Mr. and Miss SFA

COLLIN RUTHERFORD OF Celina and Olivia Miller of Arlington have been chosen for the 2016 Mr. and Miss SFA Awards. The pair was honored during halftime of the SFA men's basketball game against Houston Baptist University.

The Mr. SFA Award was established in honor of the late Stan McKewen, a 1934 SFA graduate. The Arnodean Covin Miss SFA Award honors the alumna who was named Miss SFA in 1940, 1941 and 1942.

A 2011 graduate of Celina High School, Rutherford, who received the Stan McKewen Mr. SFA Award, is a senior kinesiology major and the son of Mark and Wendi Roundy.

Rutherford serves as the Purple Haze Association's student director, Residence Life community assistant and STEM residential learning community adviser. He also has been the campus involvement chair for Pi Kappa Alpha and an orientation leader.

A community volunteer in various capacities, Rutherford has tutored high school students, worked with the Boys and Girls Clubs and participated in SFA's Big Event. He was awarded the bronze Presidential Service Award in 2013 for his more than 100 hours of volunteer service, and in 2014, he received the gold Presidential Service Award for providing more than 250 volunteer hours.

Rutherford's accolades include earning the Residence Life Leadership Award in 2012, Student Spotlight in 2014, sophomore Homecoming Duke in 2013 and Who's Who Among National College Students in 2014.

"Collin is the true definition of what a Lumberjack should be, as he carries the traits of The SFA Way," said Solomon Delaney, former SFA orientation supervisor.

Miller, recipient of the Arnodean Covin Miss SFA Award, is a 2012 graduate of Arlington James Bowie High School. She is a senior English secondary education major and the daughter of Mike and Lauri Miller.

Since eighth grade, Miller knew she wanted to become a Lumberjack. Many of her family members are SFA alumni, including an aunt who was Miss SFA in 1985. Altogether, Miller has eight relatives with SFA degrees. Her younger sister also is planning to be an SFA alumna when she graduates from the university in 2020.

Miller's service to SFA includes student volunteer coordinator for the Freshman Leadership Academy, graduate and peer mentor for the Lumberjack Leadership Academy, mentor for Sophomore Scholars, secretary and small group leader for Chi Alpha Ministry, member of the Orientation Leadership Institute, group leader for the Student

Leadership Institute, Weeks of Welcome leader, leadership chair and secretary of Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honor Society, off-campus senator for the Student Government Association, member of the Purple Haze Association and secretary of the Student Government Association.

"Olivia is one of the most enthusiastic, committed, conscientious members of the SFA community I have ever met," said Dr. Tim Clipson, SFA 101 coordinator and business leadership professor.

Miller received the Fred and Dottie Seals Leadership Award, Arlington Rotary Leadership Award, Maco Stewart Secondary Education Scholarship, J.A. and Mollie Spears Scholarship and Laz Corley Scholarship. She is a member of Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society and Sigma Tau Delta English Honor Society.

SFA's Alumni Association awards the Mr. and Miss SFA titles annually to exemplary students who well represent and promote the university.

Recipients are selected based on their scholarship, participation and leadership in academic and co-curricular activities, and citizenship, service and loyalty to the university. A committee of faculty and staff members, community leaders and alumni makes the selections. ★

LUMBERJACK LEGACY



AS DEPICTED THROUGH THE YEARS
IN THE STONE FORT YEARBOOK

The Lumberjack mascot has been a part of SFA for almost as long as the institution has been in existence. In 1923, students and faculty members met in an assembly to decide upon a moniker for the school's athletic teams. Several mascots were considered, including the fighting "Pine Cones." By vote, the assembly chose Lumberjacks (thank goodness!).



1933



1941



1949



1953



1955



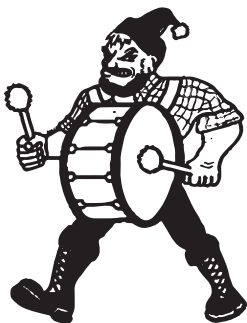
1960



1961



1977



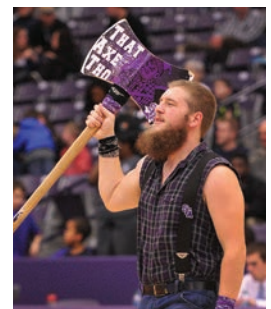
1985



1998



2013



2015

Visit archive.org/details/stephenfaustin to view 1924 to 2003 Stone Fort yearbooks.



Building — HER — Business

**INTERIOR DESIGN
ALUMNA'S TALENTS
RECOGNIZED WITH
MULTIPLE AWARDS**



BRIGHT SAMPLES OF textured carpet, easily dismissed by passing cars and the occasional dog walker, stopped Kara Gordon '00 in her tracks.

The carpet sample book was positioned peeking over the rim of the residential trash bin—another's trash that would soon become Gordon's treasure. On a routine jog, the teenager eagerly pilfered the sample book, walked it home and excitedly showed her family the array of styles inside.

"I carried it all the way home and when I got there yelled, 'Mom, look what I found!'" Gordon recalled in January while standing in the Grapevine home of her interior design client, Lisa Austin. "Mom replied, 'Carpet samples?' And I said, 'Isn't it amazing? There's one in every color.'"

The find stoked Gordon's already-burning passion for interior design, leading her to apply to SFA and enroll in its interior design program. ➔

STORY BY CHRISTINE BROUSSARD / PHOTOGRAPHY BY HARDY MEREDITH



Interior designer Kara Gordon visits with client Lisa Austin in Austin's renovated living room.

"Even when I was younger, everything about me was less about sports and more about the arts," Gordon said. "I excelled at piano, and I was in band. I loved to draw and paint, but I didn't really practice many of my art skills prior to college. In SFA's interior design program, I learned about art mediums, art history and art appreciation. I was in heaven."

Gordon heavily emphasized the word "heaven."

After a 10-year hiatus from the profession, Gordon returned to it in January 2013, when she started her Bedford-based business Sleek to Chic Interiors. In the three years since the business opened, she has claimed at least one award per year, including Best of Houzz, a national website that allows design professionals to showcase their portfolios. In 2015, she was named one of the top 15 designers in Fort Worth, received Best Visual Presentation from Dallas Market Center and was awarded Best of Houzz.



Wasn't ready to be away

Emigrating from the bustle of north Houston, Gordon began attending SFA in 1996.

"I did take a detour," she admitted. "I missed my family and then-boyfriend. So, I came home after my first semester at SFA. My grades were good, but I missed everyone and wasn't ready to be away. I went back home for about a year, attended junior college and then headed back to SFA."

Inclusive of the detour, Gordon still managed to finish the interior design program with a minor in business in four and a half years.

While standing in her design studio in her Bedford home, Gordon fanned through photos of her time in college. She pointed and laughed at a picture of herself — her hair pulled back in a classic '90s Scrunchie — eating popcorn on her Steen Hall dormitory bed with reading materials splayed out in front of her.

Flipping further, she sees a photo of roommate Amanda Johnson and herself. Johnson remained in Nacogdoches to establish and serve as the director of Helping House, a private school for children with autism.

"I still keep in touch with professors and a few of my classmates," Gordon said. "I was always pretty studious. I would go to class and was there to learn."

When asked about stories of her time at SFA, one in particular came to mind.

"The professors taught us mixed media and how to draw a room based on a picture from a magazine," she explained. "I went through the entire process, and it was time to turn it in. I even pulled an all-nighter making sure every detail was covered."

Gordon excelled in her major and kept a stable 4.0 GPA.

"Well, I received my project back, and I made a 95. I looked on the back, and the professor noted that I forgot to color in the pillow," Gordon smiled, rolling her eyes. "I brought it home and colored in the pillow. Then, I had it framed."

Fond memories of SFA abound, including Associate Professor Sally Ann Swearingen's daily routine of entering the classroom and proclaiming, "Every good designer carries a what? A tape measure!"

"Kara's always been really outgoing and very creative," Swearingen said. "She's always been a self-starter. She has even Skyped in for a couple of interior design classes so students can see what an interior designer graduate is doing. It's great she remains involved with SFA."

Sleek to Chic Interiors

Fresh out of Lumberjack country, Gordon landed a position in January 2001 at Houston-based design firm Kathy Andrews Interiors, where she had interned during college. She served in a designer position for almost 18 months before moving to Wisenbaker Builder Services in Houston. Then, wedding bells collided with her professional career when she married Anthony Gordon.

"Soon into our marriage, my stepson Stayton came to live with us," she explained. "He was living with us full time, and my travel and work schedules weren't what was best for him. That was when we kind of put the brakes on interior design."

Gordon spent nine years teaching elementary school, which allowed her to keep a more routine schedule. It wasn't until the adoption of their son, Jake, and her switch to being a full-time, stay-at-home mom that the dust shook loose on her interior design pursuit. However, wanting to return to interior design and needing a job with flexibility were in conflict.

"So, I started my company," she said.

Sleek to Chic Interiors launched in a Dallas/Fort Worth suburb in 2013. Today, Gordon often finds herself juggling eight to 10 clients when six to eight is the designing norm for her company's size. Of course, industry demand varies, but word of her work has spread to the point that she commonly has a four- to six-week client waiting list.

"I've had to learn how to refine my process," Gordon said. "You want to come off as a professional with a buttoned-up procedure, and I will say that's where I was not strong in the beginning, because I had



literally been out of the design field for 10 years and was a stay-at-home, sleep-deprived mom. However, I always try to keep my interactions with my clients and vendors cheerful and upbeat."

That pleasant attitude was a relief to clients like Austin, who contacted Gordon looking to redo three spaces in her home.

"Seeking an interior designer is scary because you don't know what to expect," Austin said while standing in the redesigned foyer of her Grapevine home. "I didn't know if she was out of my budget or what to expect because I've never done anything like this before. But thankfully, Kara came in, I told her my budget, and she made it work."

Slowly and year by year, Gordon stepped her work up a notch, electing in 2014 to put Jake in a Mother's Day Out program two days a week for a few hours. The freed-up time expanded her workload immensely, allowing for in-person consultations and the resources to primp her portfolio for publication on Houzz and other design outlets.

"SFA did a really good job of preparing me for this field because there's a whole course on the business side of it," Gordon said. "There are classes on lighting, art history, art appreciation, so nothing really shocked me after entering the design world. I'm not saying I know everything, and every day I learn something new — picking up on what I could have done or should have done better. I'm constantly growing."

Sleek to Chic Interiors continues to develop daily, and Gordon's hope for her company's future is both detailed and broad. She understands it will grow fluidly and on its own time, but she also has detailed hopes of her own—namely, to procure an office, preferably brick-walled in the historic area of Bedford. She envisions the building's second story serving as a design studio and the first story as a store to sell furnishings and upholstery, as well as draperies and accessories. ★

"SFA did a really good job of preparing me for this field because there's a whole course on the business side of it. There are classes on lighting, art history, art appreciation, so nothing really shocked me after entering the design world."

Griffin honored with street naming

FAMILY MEMBERS OF Bettie Griffin '73 & '75 recognized her 58-year legacy of service to SFA by naming Alumni Drive in her honor for 2016.

The family won the naming right during the SFA Alumni Association's Homecoming online auction in October. Griffin, a member of the SFASU Foundation Board of Trustees for the past 12 years, received her bachelor's and master's degrees from SFA and was employed by the university as both a staff member and educator.

Griffin began her SFA career in 1958 as secretary to the athletic director, and she worked alongside the director and coaches managing and overseeing SFA's then five sports: basketball, football, golf, tennis and track.

Serving as the director's trusted liaison, Griffin was instrumental in recruiting student-athletes to the university. She was often the initial on-campus point of contact for prospects and their families, as she led them on campus tours and made them feel at home with her East Texas hospitality.

The coaches relied heavily on Griffin to work with student-athletes to keep their grades high, and it wasn't uncommon for her to help tutor student-athletes who were having difficulty making the grade. Through her caring and dedication, she became a mentor and friend to many who still remain in contact with her today.

In 1973, Griffin left SFA to teach English at Nacogdoches High School. During this time, she remained connected to SFA through training student teachers as they prepared to enter the profession. She also taught courses in SFA's sociology department part-time.

When she retired from classroom teaching with NISD in 1986, Griffin joined SFA again working for the Department of Secondary Education, where she evaluated student teachers and interns until she retired from SFA in 1990.

Many of Griffin's family members also are SFA alumni, including two daughters, three granddaughters, a grandson and a son-in-law. ★



SFA ALUMNI NIGHTS

 HOUSTON ROCKETS vs. TORONTO RAPTORS FRIDAY, MARCH 25 7 P.M. TOYOTA CENTER	 DALLAS MAVERICKS vs. HOUSTON ROCKETS WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6 8:30 P.M. AMERICAN AIRLINES CENTER	 TEXAS RANGERS vs. KANSAS CITY ROYALS SATURDAY, JULY 30 7:05 P.M. GLOBE LIFE PARK	 HOUSTON ASTROS vs. TEXAS RANGERS FRIDAY, AUG. 5 7:10 P.M. MINUTE MAID PARK
FIND TICKET INFO AT WWW.SFAALUMNI.COM			

ALUMNI CALENDAR

Times and dates are subject to change.
Visit sfaalumni.com/events for the most recent information.

APRIL

2

ATO Golf Tournament

Woodland Hills Golf Course
Nacogdoches

6

SFA Alumni Night

Dallas Mavericks vs. Houston Rockets
8:30 p.m.
American Airlines Center / Dallas

9

Sigma Tau Gamma Alumni Golf Tournament

Piney Woods Country Club
Nacogdoches

10

SFA Alumni Day

Houston Dynamo vs. Seattle Sounders
2:45 p.m.
BBVA Compass Stadium / Houston

13

TAG Cookout with the Deans

11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Tracie D. Pearman Alumni Center
Nacogdoches

14

SFA Business Lumberjack Network Breakfast – The Woodlands

7 to 8 a.m. at Fleming's Prime Steakhouse
1201 Lake Woodlands Drive, Suite 305

15

Varsity Club Golf Tournament

Tee Off: 1 p.m.
Piney Woods Country Club
Nacogdoches

16

Spring Football Game and 22nd Annual Cally Belcher Memorial Event

Nacogdoches

19

SFA Business Lumberjack Network Breakfast – Dallas

7 to 8 a.m.
Maggiano's Little Italy – NorthPark Center

22

Scholarship Stars

5:30 to 7 p.m.
Cole Art Center / Nacogdoches

23

Robert D. Dickerson Memorial Golf Tournament / Nacogdoches

100th Anniversary of SFA ROTC

Nacogdoches

29-30

TKE 45th Alumni Reunion

Nacogdoches

MAY

3

Senior Send Off

5:30 to 7 p.m. / Nacogdoches

6

Big Dip Ring Ceremony

Grand Ballroom, Baker Pattillo Student Center
9:30 a.m. - James I. Perkins College of
Education and College of Fine Arts
2 p.m. - Nelson Rusche College of Business,
College of Liberal and Applied Arts, Arthur
Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture,
and College of Sciences and Mathematics

Gregg County East Texas SFA Exes Golf Tournament (Longview Chapter)

7

SFA Member Day at the SFA Baseball Field

Softball: SFA vs. Sam Houston - 1 p.m.
Baseball: SFA vs. McNeese State - 2 p.m.
Nacogdoches

10

SFA Business Lumberjack Network Breakfast – Houston

7 to 8 a.m. at Maggiano's Little Italy
2019 Post Oak Blvd.

14

SFA Spring Commencement Ceremonies

Nacogdoches

SFA Alumni Nights

FC Dallas vs. Seattle Sounders
8 p.m. / Toyota Stadium / Dallas

JUNE

25

Fourth Annual Worsham Bass Tournament

Tournament begins at safelight (shotgun start)
Lake Sam Rayburn at Jackson Hill Marina

JULY

12

SFA Business Lumberjack Network Breakfast – Dallas

7 to 8 a.m.
Maggiano's Little Italy – NorthPark Center

30

SFA Alumni Night

Texas Rangers vs. Kansas City Royals
7:05 p.m. / Globe Life Park / Arlington

AUGUST

5

SFA Alumni Night

Houston Astros vs. Texas Rangers
7:10 p.m. / Minute Maid Park / Houston

13

SFA Summer Commencement Ceremony

Nacogdoches

16

SFA Business Lumberjack Network Breakfast – Houston

7 to 8 a.m. at Maggiano's Little Italy
2019 Post Oak Blvd.

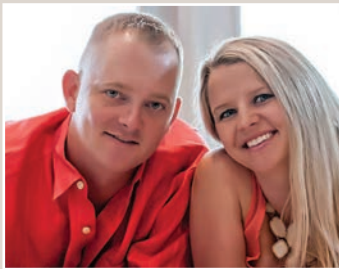


THE DR. ARTHUR AND DOROTHY CLAGETT SCHOLARSHIPS

THE DR. ARTHUR and Dorothy Clagett Scholarships are awarded to deserving SFA students who are majoring in sociology, nursing or social work. The Dr. Arthur and Dorothy Clagett Graduate Sociology Scholarship is awarded to an SFA graduate student in good academic standing. SFA nursing students in good standing are eligible for the The Dr. Arthur and Dorothy Clagett Nursing Scholarship, and social work students in good standing may receive The Dr. Arthur and Dorothy Clagett Social Work Scholarship.

Arthur taught sociology at SFA for 18 years. He received his bachelor's degree in chemistry from Baylor University and later attended the University of Arkansas, where he received his master's degree in psychology. He worked at the Louisiana State Prison while working toward his doctoral degree in sociology and after graduation taught at Lamar State College until transferring to teach at SFA.

Dorothy graduated from SFA with her master's degree in education in 1970. She attended East Texas Baptist University and Louisiana Tech University and taught school in Caddo Parish, Louisiana, for 13 years.



THE NOETH-SEERDEN SCHOLARSHIP

THE NOETH-SEERDEN Scholarship has been endowed for out-of-state students or students from Victoria, who maintain a minimum 2.75 GPA with preference given to students who are active in a university-recognized Greek organization.

Heidi Noeth Seerden graduated from SFA in 2003 and 2004 with her bachelor's and master's degrees in business administration. She was a member of Zeta Tau Alpha. After graduation, she was accepted into the GE Healthcare Commercial Leadership Program. Today, she is an executive client director managing the GE Healthcare portfolio in six health systems in South Texas.

Daron Seerden graduated from SFA in 2005 with a bachelor's degree in hospitality administration and was a member of Sigma Tau Gamma. After graduation, he started Terrace Enterprises, a real estate investment business. He owns and manages properties in the Victoria area.

The couple married in 2006 and have three children: Sadie, 5, and twins, Cade and Kensie, 18 months.



THE JULIA D. LANHAM SCHOLARSHIP

THE JULIA D. Lanham Scholarship benefits a Douglass ISD graduate who is pursuing a degree within the Nelson Rusche College of Business and maintains a 2.75 GPA.

Lanham is a 2014 SFA graduate who received a bachelor's degree in finance with a minor in management. She is pursuing a master's degree in business administration with an emphasis in human resources at SFA.

As a child, Lanham spent many hours on SFA's campus. Her mother, Carla Chumley, has worked at SFA for many years, including serving as an accountant in the alumni and residence life offices. Lanham counts the campus as her home-away-from-home and many faculty and staff members as her family.

Your gift to support SFA students secures educational opportunities for generations of future Lumberjacks. Contact us to create your legacy today.

SFA Alumni Association / P.O. Box 6096, SFA Station / Nacogdoches, Texas 75962-6096

Phone: (936) 468-3407 / Toll Free: (800) 765-1534 / Fax: (936) 468-1007 / Website: sfaalumni.com / Email: alumni@sfasu.edu

1960s

Charles Christopher '64 & '66 of Cedar Park is assisting in developing a process to remove CO2 from natural gas and power plant exhaust at costs far below other processes. Following more than 50 years in the oil industry, he first retired in 2007 and began a consulting practice before moving to Austin in 2012.

1970s



Former Colorado Gov. **Bill Owens** '73 of Denver, Colorado, has joined the international law firm Greenberg Traurig as senior director in the Government Law and Policy Practice.

He will advise and assist clients on capital infrastructure projects and public policy matters.



Dr. Danny Paul Windham DDS, '75 of Center was chosen by the Panola College Alumni Association as the 2015 Panola College Alumnus of the Year.



Dr. Laura I. Hodges '79 & '98 of Dickinson is employed by Region 10 ESC as counselor for the Texas Virtual School Network.

Ramona D. Marek '79 & '85 of Vancouver, Washington, is now a freelance writer and author after teaching special education for 20 years. She has published numerous national and international print and digital publications.

1980s



William E. Oates '81 of College Station was recognized as a Texas A&M University System Regents Fellow Service Award recipient for 2014-15.

Gil Baumgarten '82 of Houston is founder and president of Segment Wealth Management, which was named to the Financial Times 300 Top Registered Investment Advisers.



U.S. Army Chaplain Lt. Col. **Randal Robison** '88 of Fort Gordon, Georgia, retired after 26 years of military service. He has been awarded two Bronze Star Medals, four Meritorious Service Medals, four Army Commendation Medals, two Army Achievement Medals, two National Defense Service Medals, Iraqi Campaign Medal, Afghan Campaign Medal, Korean Defense Service Medal, Navy Unit Citation, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, NATO citation, Army Service Medal and the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal. In addition, he was awarded the Combat Action Badge during his deployment to Iraq.



Diana LaRocca '82 of Plano was appointed chief marketing officer for Dickey's Barbecue Restaurants.



Dr. Timothy B. Jones '83 & '00 of Dallas published his second book, "Harnessing the Dynamics of Public Education: Preparing for a Return to Greatness" in October.



Kevin Layne '83 of Austin competed in the 2016 Longhorn Racquetball Tournament in Austin.

Michele Bauman Joseph '87 of Houston is head of school for the Gateway Academy in Houston.



Connie Page Miserak '88 recently was named both Prosper High School Teacher of the Year and Prosper ISD Teacher of the Year. She has been with the district since 2010 and worked to build a district-wide choral program.

1990s

John Ryder '90 of New Caney was elected to the Roman Forest city council.

Kimberly Murphy '91 was named principal of Bullard Primary School—a new campus within Bullard ISD that will be completed for the 2016-17 school year.



Cheryl Reinke '91 & '92 of San Antonio was named 2016 Teacher of the Year at Fair Oaks

Ranch Elementary School in Boerne ISD, where she serves as K-5 literacy leader and reading specialist.



The Bullard ISD Board of Trustees named **Amy Bickerstaff** '92 as Bullard Intermediate School principal.

Kelly Traylor '92 of Jacksonville, Texas, serves as Cherokee County Precinct 1 commissioner.



Dr. Logan Faris '93, '96, '03 & '06 of Haslet was named executive director of secondary education for the Northwest ISD.



Dr. Larry R. Hygh Jr. '97 & '99 of Sacramento, California, is the director of communications for the California-Nevada Conference of the United Methodist Church.



Amy Harper '98 of Dallas was named Dallas Market Center vice president of marketing, apparel and accessories. Harper was president of the Fashion Merchandising Club during her time at SFA. She also has visited the campus to speak with students and hosted SFA fashion merchandising students for market tours.

2000s



Paul Knowles '00 of Steamboat Springs, Colorado, was named assistant director for the Museum of Northwest Colorado.



Long-time college friends, from left, **Stephanie Bradford Ward** '02, **John Chilcoat** '03 and **Robyn Roehn Chilcoat** '03, made a return trip to SFA to visit the campus for the first time in several years.



Stephen Campbell '03 & '05 of Cincinnati, Ohio, won a position in the Lexington Philharmonic. He was recently a featured soloist and principal trumpeter in a performance of Dmitri Shostakovich's "Piano Concerto No. 1."



Scott Carver '03 of Mammelle, Arkansas, was named director of sales for AT&T in Arkansas and was one of 58 executives selected to serve on Leadership Arkansas, a program designed to take a comprehensive view of the economic and political challenges that face the state.



Hardy C. Meredith '04 of Bryan was promoted to newsroom assignments coordinator at KBTX-TV in Bryan/College Station. He also produces News 3 at Five.

Quinten Boyd '07 of Naples, Texas, is a managing editor and sports editor for the *Cherokee Herald* in Rusk.



Dr. Thomas A. (Tommy) Wallis '07 of Bryan/College Station serves as Bryan ISD's superintendent, a position he has held since 2011.

Matt Kuban '08 and wife, **Brette** '09, had their first son, Neal Cooper Kuban, on Oct. 1, 2015. At just a couple months old, Neal gave the Lumberjack salute.



Kellie Farr '09 of Lufkin gave the keynote address at an SFA James I. Perkins College of Education luncheon. She addressed the college's core values, specifically how they have positively influenced her teaching.

Trevor Smith '09 of Prosper began his own company, Elevate Healthcare Consultants, with two partners. The company, a health care recruitment agency, has grown to 15 members in its first six months.

2010s



Christine Broussard '10 of Nacogdoches recently joined the SFA University Marketing Communications office after working for nearly four years as a reporter for *The Daily Sentinel* in Nacogdoches.



Kasi Dickerson '13 & '15 of Van recently graduated with her Master of Arts in mass communication and began working as a senior marketing communications specialist for SFA.

Michelle McDaniel '13 of Houston is the continuing education coordinator in the Department of Epidemiology, Human Genetics and Environmental Sciences at The University of Texas Health Science Center School of Public Health.

Kaleigh Cox Thompson '14 of Nacogdoches recently won the Newcomer of the Year Award at Lufkin ISD's Slack Elementary.

Rachelle Paige Miller '15 joined the Tyler office of Henry and Peters as a staff associate. She completed SFA's five-year accounting program in May, receiving both bachelor's and master's degrees.



Joshua Brasher '07 of Winter Garden, Florida, has been a Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade balloon handler for the past two years. Brasher said walking the 2.5-mile parade route in front of millions of curbside and television spectators is an exhilarating experience.

"It's a great feeling to see families and friends bundled in their winter wear while enjoying a true American tradition," Brasher said. "It's very surreal to be part of something so iconic."

Brasher works for Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, Florida. In 2015, he was the handler for the red Power Ranger balloon. The parade check-in began at 5:30 a.m. and despite not being a morning person, Brasher said the day's electric energy brightened everyone's spirits.

"Participants are all smiles, and you can tell each person realizes that what we get to do is a big deal," Brasher said. "This year was even better because I saw the Lumberjack Marching Band. It was so cool to see SFA represented in the parade, and the band looked and sounded amazing. I bragged to the other balloon handlers about the band and how SFA is my school."



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. Thank you for helping make *Sawdust* a better publication.

sfasu.edu/sawdust/survey

LIFE MEMBERS

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

- 8066. Mary Sue Carter '64 & '68, Orange
- 8067. Shelby T. Hayes '07 & '08, Nacogdoches
- 8068. Samnang Keo '10, Nacogdoches
- 8069. Chase W. Curry '15, Houston
- 8070. Mary K. Anderson '09, San Antonio
- 8071. Zachary T. Stewart '14, Grandview
- 8072. Erik Hawkins, Friend, Nacogdoches
- 8073. Heather D. Hawkins '00, Nacogdoches
- 8074. Tony Watkins '14, Nacogdoches
- 8075. Michael D. Karns '86, Dallas
- 8076. Lela M. Hogan '83, Wills Point
- 8077. Kasey E. Manke '12, Katy
- 8078. Korbin M. Pate '12, Nacogdoches
- 8079. Jennifer E. Stringfield '08 & '09, Nacogdoches
- 8080. Grant A. Bailey '14 & '15, Lufkin
- 8081. Harei B. Waja '15, Dallas
- 8082. Kacy L. Wilson '15, Nacogdoches
- 8083. Gregory L. Drew '15, Houston
- 8084. Bruce T. Mayberry II '08, Arlington
- 8086. Nicholas B. Durham '02 & '03, Tatum
- 8087. Gerald Mackey, Friend, Timpson
- 8088. Gerald C. Mackey '01, Conroe
- 8089. Edward Russell "Rusty" Braziel '72 & '73, Lindale
- 8090. Laura A. Yuja '14, Nacogdoches
- 8091. Lonnie M. Luna '10 & '14, Nacogdoches
- 8094. Herbert M. Midgley '95, '99 & '14, Nacogdoches
- 8095. Kirk Travis Turner '05 & '14, Nacogdoches
- 8096. Jeffrey M. Muse '92, Spring
- 8097. Peggy A. Johnson '15, Marshall
- 8098. Jeffrey W. Sanderson '15, Sherman

IN MEMORIAM



MICHAEL TERRY WILHITE passed away Nov. 15, 2015. Wilhite was born in Houston on Aug. 19, 1942. He graduated from Stephen F. Austin High School in 1960, and after a one-year stint playing football at Blinn Junior College in Brenham, he headed to Nacogdoches to attend SFA on a football scholarship.

While at SFA, he met and married Mary Jane Bryce. The couple graduated with bachelor's degrees from SFA in 1965 and earned master's degrees in education in 1968. After graduation, the couple moved to Henderson, where Mike began his career teaching biology and coaching football at Henderson High School.

In 1970, Wilhite went to work for Henderson Clay Products, where his hard work and determination eventually led to his becoming vice president of the oil and gas division. He later formed Mustang Drilling alongside longtime friend Bob Slover.

Wilhite held a special love for SFA and served many years on the SFA Alumni Association Board. From 1999 to 2005, he was a member of the university's Board of Regents.

During his lifetime, Wilhite enjoyed team roping, woodworking and vintage cars. He also was an avid supporter of the Lumberjack football team.

His wife, daughter, son and three grandchildren survive him.



ALLEN HELMER OSTER passed away Feb. 1, 2016, in Nacogdoches. Oster was born Feb. 13, 1949, and received his bachelor's degree in theatre from Dickinson State University, master's degree in theatre from North Dakota State University and master's degree in directing from the University of Utah.

He joined the SFA faculty in 1983 and taught performance courses and directing. He also served as the administrator of the student-directed productions program and the director of SFA's High School Summer Theatre Workshop for 20 years. Additionally, he was the artistic director of the SFA Summer Repertory Theatre for 16 years.

Oster directed and acted in more than 200 productions for professional, college, community, summer, regional and dinner theatres in several states. In 1996, he received the SFA College of Fine Arts Teaching Excellence Award and also was recognized that same year with the university's Teaching Excellence Award. In 2006, he was selected as a Piper Professor of Texas, and in 2008, he was recognized with the Faculty Achievement Award in Teaching by the SFASU Foundation. Oster retired from SFA in June 2011 and was named professor emeritus of theatre in 2012.



KEN AUTRY DAVIS passed away Dec. 4, 2015, in Wills Point. Born Jan. 3, 1938, Davis excelled in athletics and was named an All-State Running Back at Wills Point High School in 1955 before attending SFA.

Davis played football for the Lumberjacks and lettered four years in football and two years in track. He received the SFA Todd Award for Outstanding Athlete in 1961, and he graduated

from the university in 1962.

He married Rosa Ruth Curtis and was employed as a coach by the Wills Point ISD for 30 years, serving as head football coach for 25 years until his retirement in 1991. In 1965, he led the team to the Class A State Football Championship with a perfect 15-0 season. Davis compiled a coaching record of 187 wins and 83 losses during his career. In 2005, he was honored with the naming of the football stadium in his honor.

He is survived by his wife and son.



DENNIS MICHAEL BRADFORD passed away Dec. 10, 2015, in Nacogdoches. Bradford was a Marine and a scholar. He was born in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on Sept. 17, 1948, and moved to Texas in 1966. After high school graduation, he joined the U.S. Marine Corps and served in Vietnam from 1969 to 70. After leaving active duty, Bradford attended the University of Houston, where he received his bachelor's degree in

in philosophy and juris doctorate. He later earned a master's degree in history from SFA.

Bradford was a charter member of the Pineywoods Detachment 1189 of the Marine Corps League, where he served as detachment commandant. Though trained in law, Bradford loved history and taught as an adjunct professor at SFA for several years. His service to the university extended beyond the classroom to his work with military veterans, and he served as a mentor and friend to other veterans on SFA's campus. He retired from SFA in summer 2015.

Bradford published scholarly articles in the East Texas Historical Journal and was an active member of the American Historical Association, the Southern Historical Association and the East Texas Historical Association, where he served as a board member and chair of a number of committees, the most recent being the Archie McDonald Scholarship Committee.

Bradford is survived by his wife, Mary Frances, a son and two daughters.

IN MEMORIAM

Margaret J. Agpalza '91 of Pollok, Dec. 28

James E. Akery '50 of Webster, Nov. 22

Rosalind "Roz" Anderson '76 of Houston, Oct. 22

Paul Maurice Beauchamp '51 of Houston, Jan. 28

Ray J. Belsley '75 of Houston, Nov. 29

James D. Bonsall '52 of Bridge City, Nov. 23

Cindy J. Bowes '07 of Colorado Springs, Colorado, Oct. 5

Henry C. Bradbury '75 of Marshall, Nov. 11

Janice C. Cramb '83 of Houston, Oct. 22

Charles Dennard Jr. '72 of Carthage, Jan. 10

Joan N. Duncan '56 of Lufkin, Jan. 7

Gary Fair '65 of Kilgore, Nov. 6

Dorothy L. Fall '46 of Henderson, Nov. 13

Billy F. Feltman '71 & '74 of Lufkin, Jan. 6

Daniel Scott Fleetwood '08 & '10 of Spring, Nov. 10

Wilson Folden '57 of Jacksonville, Texas, Oct. 22

Mary N. Foote '42 of Dallas, Nov. 19

Myrta A. Garrett '44 of Fort Worth, Oct. 3

Charles W. Glona '84 of Burleson, Oct. 28

Paul D. Goforth '74 of Nacogdoches, Nov. 23

William H. Gullette '66 of Carthage, Jan. 18

John Frank Hamilton '58 of West Columbia, Nov. 5

Donna A. Hart '74, '96, '02 & '03 of Lufkin, Oct. 4

Harold Clay Henderson '79 of Plano, Sept. 17, 2014

Earl Hoffman Jr. '90 of Henderson, Jan. 8

Donald R. Holley '75 of Longview, Nov. 15

James D. Holsomback '51 of Huntington, Oct. 8

Clyde Oneal Ingram '52 of White Oak, Nov. 16

Grady Scott Irwin '32 of Reklaw, Jan. 7

Virginia L. Jetton '59 of Center, Nov. 29

Sgt. Jimmie R. Kelly '78 of Midland, Dec. 25

Rebecca I. Kennedy '92 of Jacksonville, Texas, Jan. 11

Sharon K. Laine '84 of Houston, Oct. 26

James M. Mason '49 & '54 of Henderson, Nov. 17

Helen H. Milam '51 of Carthage, Jan. 7

Marie S. Monk '31 of Belton, Oct. 8

Elizabeth Ann (Dement) Amazeen Moore '84 of Gallatin, Nov. 14

Debbie K. Peek '73 of Pittsburg, Texas, Jan. 2

Gloria Pickett of Kingwood, donor and friend of SFA, Oct. 19

Edwin E. Plummer '51 of Mexia, Oct. 27

Carla J. Poage '03 of Amarillo, Dec. 4

Marjorie K. Poss '61 of Carthage, Jan. 24

Clois E. Purvis '68 of Cisco, Dec. 17

Rick Rancher '73 of Magnolia, Dec. 11

Wilma M. Richardson-Johnson '80 of Kilgore, Oct. 27

Glenn A. Ridgeway '73 of Marshall, Nov. 11

Rhonda Courvelle Russell of Nacogdoches, friend of SFA, Dec. 11

Monette P. Sanders '90 & '95 of Huntington, Jan. 14

Edward M. Shepherd '47 of Timpson, Dec. 10

Neva P. Silvers '68 of Henderson, Nov. 8

Jean J. Sittig '40 & '50 of Orange, Dec. 12

Rebecca Brown Slack Stanly of Denton, donor and friend of SFA, Dec. 10

Dannis B. Tamplin '99 of Henderson, Dec. 23

Dr. John F. Teer '67 of Harlingen, Jan. 22

Betty Jean Ham Tiller '52 & '54 of Houston, Nov. 5

Kathleen Edith White '67 of the Gravelhill Community, Jan. 16

Dr. Martin "Will" Wilber of Nacogdoches, friend of SFA, Oct. 28

Timothy A. Wild '14 of Tyler, Nov. 6

Lillian J. Williamson '52 & '55 of Marshall, Oct. 1

Norma J. Young '68 & '84 of Kilgore, Oct. 20

Daryl Zevely '60 of Hallsville, Oct. 1



SFA student

Justin Taylor Lenderman of Jasper, Feb. 12



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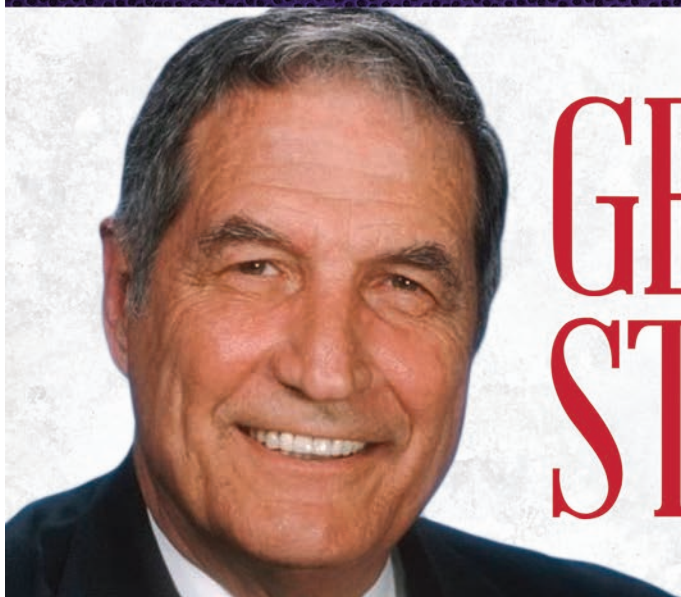
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