

Sawdust

WINTER 2017

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

Memorable Moments

Louis DeLuca '78
captured the image
that captivated
the nation



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President's Letter

"We have much to look forward to ... in 2018, including the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Ed and Gwen Cole STEM Building in July and the university's 95th anniversary celebration in September."



IT IS HARD to believe another fall semester at SFA is already drawing to a close, and the holiday season is upon us. I would like to share with you some highlights from the fall and alert you to some

important milestones we expect to reach next year.

First, SFA's Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture has a new leader at the helm, although he is a familiar face to many alumni. Dr. Hans Williams officially assumed the duties of dean of the college Sept. 1. He has filled a variety of roles since joining our faculty in 1993, including interim dean and associate dean of the college as well as associate professor and professor of forestry. During the 2010-11 academic year, Dr. Williams served as Regents Professor, the highest honor SFA bestows on faculty members. Dr. Williams has a long-held passion for challenging and inspiring his students and preparing them for successful careers. I am excited to see that commitment expand to include all students in the college as he embraces his new leadership role.

It is always a thrill to watch the Lumberjack Marching Band perform at our football games, both in Homer Bryce Stadium and on the road. But there was a special performance during the Sept. 16 home game against University of the Incarnate Word that we won't soon forget. Prior to kickoff, alumni who were attending the Lumberjack Marching Band and Twirl-O-Jacks reunion performed for the crowd, and one of those taking part was 87-year-old Mary Jo Goodwin Morris of New Braunfels. Janice and I enjoyed visiting with the former Twirl-O-Jack during the game as she shared memories of her time at SFA and the bonds she formed with her classmates and fellow twirlers. This year, about 350 SFA students are making their own special memories as members of the current Lumberjack Marching Band. The Boldest Sound from the Oldest Town will once again be on international display in March when the band performs in the 2018

St. Patrick's Day Parade in Dublin, Ireland. As they did in the 2013 London New Year's Day Parade and the 2015 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City, I know the band will represent our university with the utmost Lumberjack spirit, pride and tradition.

We have much to look forward to on campus as well in 2018, including the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Ed and Gwen Cole STEM Building in July and the university's 95th anniversary celebration in September. I hope many of our alumni and friends will take part in these events, although you never need to wait for a special occasion to visit your alma mater. We are happy to welcome you to campus anytime.

Even as we look ahead to future celebrations, we understand many in our alumni family are still struggling in the aftermath of devastation wreaked by Hurricane Harvey during the summer. The compassionate response by our Lumberjack family to aid in the recovery efforts has been inspiring. From on-campus blood drives, to donations of band equipment and other educational materials for impacted students, to SFA Athletics' "Buckets for Building" campaign and other relief projects organized by student groups across campus, Lumberjacks came out in force to help Texans in need. And we will continue to offer support as the needs of those impacted by that horrific storm evolve.

Thank you for supporting these initiatives and for all you have done and continue to do to benefit SFA's students and programs. I wish you and everyone connected with our alma mater many blessings this holiday season and throughout the coming year. ★

Axe 'em, Jacks!

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



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ALTHOUGH THE BEAUTY of the SFA campus is always picturesque, there's just something about fall and the spectrum of autumn colors that catches the eye. The SFA Mast Arboretum is always impressive with its vast variety of foliage that looks like it could be the featured landscape on a Thanksgiving greeting card. / Photo by Robin Johnson

Sawdust

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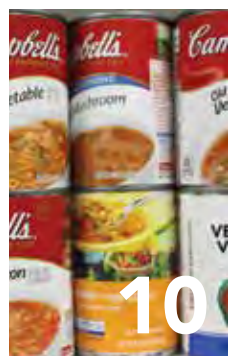
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ON THE COVER:

A photographer for The Dallas Morning News,

Louis DeLuca '78 knows his way around a camera. DeLuca has spent almost 40 years capturing photographs that evoke emotion and preserve the past. In August during Hurricane Harvey, the SFA alumnus snapped an image that captured the attention of the nation.

The Dallas Morning News



The Dallas Morning News

HURRICANE HARVEY | AFTERMATH

DALLASNEWS

Devastating deluge

Rescuers struggle to respond to calls for help amid Houston floodwaters



'This ain't normal': Boat owner turns into rescuer

Boat owner turned rescuer
A man who owns a boat in Houston turned into a rescuer after Hurricane Harvey hit the city. He was one of the first to respond to calls for help from people who were trapped in their homes or cars. He used his boat to transport them to safety.

Seeing a future here, where they found refuge

Seeing a future here, where they found refuge
A family of four found refuge in a temporary shelter in Houston after Hurricane Harvey. They were one of many families who were displaced by the storm. They are now looking for a permanent home in the city.

Unsettling rain inundates city; authorities fear death toll will rise

Unsettling rain inundates city; authorities fear death toll will rise
Heavy rain fell over Houston and surrounding areas on Sunday, causing flooding and power outages. Authorities are warning that the death toll from Hurricane Harvey could rise as more people are rescued.

Search for missing

Search for missing
Rescuers are searching for missing people in the flooded areas of Houston. They are using boats and other equipment to reach the trapped people.

memorable moments

*Louis DeLuca '78
captured the image
that captivated the nation*

LOUIS DELUCA '78 was down to his last lens.

The Dallas Morning News photographer's other two lenses were fogged over and waterlogged from the rain and humidity that rolled over the Texas coast with Hurricane Harvey the previous day. DeLuca, who grew up in LaPorte, traveled from Dallas to Houston to stand on the flooded highway in the city he once considered home and, for five hours, took pictures he hoped would document and elucidate the massive flooding that enveloped a city he still loves.

And when the image that would capture the attention of people across the nation unfolded before him,
he shot with the only lens he had left. ➔

STORY BY DR. SHIRLEY LUNA
PHOTOGRAPHY BY HARDY MEREDITH

a LUMBERJACK AT HEART

DeLuca originally came to SFA to play baseball for the Lumberjacks. “That’s all I wanted to do, but I was not an asset to the team the way I would have liked to have been. It became obvious that I had



topped out and needed to start deciding what I wanted to do for a career. I was good in English, so I figured I could be a sports writer and enrolled in the journalism program.”

Although DeLuca claims he wasn’t a very serious student, he did serve as editor of SFA’s student newspaper, *The Pine Log*, during his final semester. Photography, at that time, was a long way down on his list of priorities.

“Dr. Roach taught photography and sent a letter to me when I graduated that read, ‘You don’t seem to be very interested in photography, and I recommend you look at something else

as a profession.’ He was totally right. I did not put forth effort or apply myself.”

Shortly after his graduation, another SFA faculty member contacted DeLuca to tell him of the Marshall newspaper’s need for a photographer.

“He told me he knew I wanted to write but said that if I applied, I would probably get the job,” DeLuca recalled. “I found out later that the paper had a company softball team, and I was chosen over another candidate — who absolutely was more qualified — because they knew I had played college baseball, and they figured I could help their team.”

Despite DeLuca’s latent talent for photography, his first foray into the profession was less than stellar.

“It was pretty pathetic. I had a cheap 400 mm lens I bought from the back of a photography magazine, and not one of my photos turned out. The sports editor went to our boss and said, ‘I don’t want him shooting sports anymore.’ It was an inauspicious beginning.”

But DeLuca looked to other photojournalists in order to learn and emulate their work.

“I knew I had to figure something out quickly, and if I couldn’t do anything else, I at least could copy what someone else was doing,” DeLuca said. “Ironically, I looked to the Dallas newspapers and called on several photographers when I needed advice.”

After stints at the Shreveport Journal and the Chicago Sun Times, DeLuca returned to Texas in 1984 to work for the Dallas Times Herald, a competitor of *The Dallas Morning News* at that time. When the Morning News purchased and subsequently closed the Times Herald in 1991, DeLuca, with vastly improved skills, was the only Herald photographer hired to join *The Dallas Morning News* staff.

“The Herald had been on its last leg for a while,” DeLuca said. “We were down to a bare-bones staff, and there was always talk of layoffs. So it was amazing to come to *The Dallas Morning News*. They were rich and strong. They planned things out, and they were sending people all over the world. I was thrilled.”

FINDING FU YANG

In October 2003, DeLuca was asked by a photographer friend working on behalf of an adoption agency in China to take a photo of Fu Yang, a 12-year-old orphan. Philanthropists had flown Fu to a Dallas hospital for surgery to correct birth defects.

“I had shot a Dallas Cowboys home game the day before, so I was tired and didn’t really feel like working, but my wife gave me this look and said, ‘Go take an hour of your busy day and help an orphan.’”

That one hour would change the course of several lives.

Fu has Treacher Collins Syndrome, a genetic defect that affects 1 in 10,000 infants. He is missing bones in his face, had an open palate and couldn’t hear or talk.

“His ears never fully formed, and people with Treacher Collins have very flat cheekbones,” DeLuca explained. “It causes the skin around their eyes to droop and requires many surgeries to restore typical human features.”

DeLuca’s first concern when he arrived at the hospital was how he was going to communicate with Fu.

“Actually, we got along from the moment I met him,” DeLuca

➔ LOUIS DELUCA AND HIS SON FUYANG JOSEPH DELUCA

*Photo courtesy of
Louis DeLuca*



recalled. "I just followed him around and took pictures. He was like a regular kid except that he couldn't talk, but he was very charismatic. Everyone he met just loved him."

While he was recuperating between surgeries, Fu lived with a family from a local church.

"It was wonderful, but they didn't have any young kids, so he often was playing by himself and was kind of lonely," DeLuca said. "I felt bad for him, so I visited several times, playing cards with him and putting together puzzles."

In China, orphans who are not adopted by the time they are 10 have very slim chances of finding a family, and Fu's chaperone suggested to DeLuca that he adopt the child.

"I was thinking, 'My kids are almost grown. My wife and I are not prepared. I've got kids to put through college.' But I introduced Fu to Dinah, my wife, and she said, 'There's no way we can let that little boy go back to China.'"

For the next two years, the DeLucas suffered through a profusion of paperwork associated with the adoption process and cared for Fu as he endured multiple surgeries. Physicians repaired his cleft palate and attached a titanium post to his skull. A conduction hearing aid now transmits sound waves through his skull bone to his inner ear, and Fu can hear better than many people. His cheekbones have been surgically created.

Fu was formally adopted in Beijing on Thanksgiving Day 2005, changing his name officially to Fuyang Joseph DeLuca.

"When he first started going to school, we were afraid students would tease him because of his appearance," DeLuca said. "Instead, he became one of the most popular kids. He has a self-confidence that is hard to explain."

In addition to a home, DeLuca provided Fu with a skill upon which he might build a career.

"He was a photographer for his high school newspaper," DeLuca said. "One November, he was photographing his team in a playoff game, and I was covering the same game for my newspaper. At one point during the game, a player flipped into the end zone, and I saw it, but I didn't get it. I just figured no one did. But as we uploaded photos at the end of the night, Fu said, 'Hey, dad. Look at this.' And he had it — an unbelievably great photo. I transmitted it back to the Morning News along with mine, and they chose his photo. That was the first time he was published."

Now 25, Fu spent this past summer as an intern in Hawaii working with a friend of the family who is a wedding photographer there. And now, he is in Asia working with the same photographer friend who requested that DeLuca take that initial photo of Fu more than a decade ago.

"He invited Fu to work for him during a three-month internship in Hong Kong," DeLuca laughed. "So now Fu is Mr. International photographer. Because he couldn't hear or speak the first 12 years of his life, his sight was his learning tool. He is very perceptive and observant, and I think that translated over into why he's a great photographer. He's a very special person."

CAREER

DeLuca has spent almost 40 years capturing memorable moments in time. He has covered 12 Super Bowls, the NBA Finals, the World Series, the Stanley Cup Finals, the Summer Olympics, and a variety of youth, high school and college sports events in Texas and nationwide. He's covered county fairs and church events as well as hurricanes, riots and earthquakes. His work has been published in Sports Illustrated, Life Magazine, ESPN The Magazine, Newsweek and The New York Times Magazine. His photos have been on display in galleries in



Photo courtesy of Louis DeLuca

Dallas' Design District. Five times DeLuca has been named Regional Photographer of the Year by the National Press Photographers Association, and he's finished as runner-up another five times.

"Being a baseball guy, covering baseball has always been my favorite thing to do, but having worked in Dallas since 1984, we haven't always had the greatest team in the league," DeLuca said. "I had laid awake at night thinking: When the Texas Rangers win the big one, where would I want to be? So in 2010, when they won the American League Championship for the first time ever, the photo I took made me the happiest of any photo I have ever taken in my life."

According to DeLuca, photographers can't always tell where and when the perfect shot is going to happen.

"You just have to try and guess what the best-case scenario will be," DeLuca explained. "This one worked out as well as it possibly could."

The best-case scenario in this instance included two Rangers players in a midair embrace several feet above ground while the electronic scoreboard near the top of the stadium flashed "American League Champions," and fireworks above the field washed the sky in red.

A photo that stands out in DeLuca's mind for a different reason is one he took in Los Angeles during the 1992 riots that followed the beating by police officers of Rodney King and the subsequent beating of Reginald Denny by rioters.

"I was riding with a reporter and didn't feel comfortable about getting out, so I rolled the window down and was shooting a crowd of looters from the car. I was just scanning with my camera, taking pictures of the crowd. Then, through my viewfinder, I saw a guy standing there with an axe, and I saw him see me. He came at us, screaming, 'Don't take my picture,' but we were stuck in traffic. The reporter was repeatedly inching forward then backward to try to get some room so he could cut out. Just as the guy got to my window, the reporter got enough room to gas it, jump the curb and get out of there. By that time, though, a crowd had gathered around us, and people were throwing things at our car. We hauled across a parking lot and got out of there. When we were finally in a place that was safe to stop, the reporter looked at me and said, 'You know, maybe we should shoot something other than looting photos while we're here.'"

HARVEY

DeLuca said it was surreal to see U.S. Highway 59 in Houston transformed into a river by Hurricane Harvey. After taking the exit for Interstate 610 South, DeLuca and his colleague were stopped in their tracks by a lake of water covering the roadway ahead. He saw rescue crews in boats and on Jet Skis and considered riding along with ➔

**“DESPITE THE
UNIMAGINABLE
DESTRUCTION IN
HOUSTON, PEOPLE
PULLED TOGETHER
TO HELP EACH OTHER,
REGARDLESS OF RACE
OR ANYTHING ELSE.”**

– LOUIS DELUCA

a rescuer to photograph evacuees being loaded into boats to flee their flooded homes.

“I saw a boat pulling up, and there was a mom in the group cradling her baby in her arms,” he said. “At that point, I wasn’t sure what was going to happen, but I knew there could be an opportunity, and I had to get ready.”

The boat pulled as close to the dry part of the street as possible, then Houston SWAT officer Daryl Hudeck disembarked and carried Catherine Pham and her son, 13-month-old Aidan, while Pham’s husband carefully transported an armload of supplies, including bottles of the baby’s formula.

DeLuca was still working in Houston the following day when the photo was published and went viral. DeLuca’s phone and The Dallas Morning News’ phone lines were buzzing as news organizations and other interested entities called for permission to use the photo. It has been featured on websites and in newspapers throughout the country and seen by people around the world.

“I certainly understand the power of the still image to move people,” he said, “and I’m just thankful to have taken one that so many have responded to positively. Every week, stories of hate and conflict make the news. Despite the unimaginable destruction in Houston, people pulled together to help each other, regardless of race or anything else.”

As DeLuca walks through the building that houses the 132-year-old Dallas Morning News, things are not as noisy as they once were. The staff has been downsized, and the remaining staff members are preparing to move to a smaller building that will more closely match their numbers and will feature a digitally focused newsroom to meet the needs of the future. The facility they leave is known as the “rock of truth” because of the massive three-stories-tall tablet above the building’s front door inscribed with a quote from the newspaper’s founder to which journalists have aspired:

“Build the news upon the rock of truth and righteousness. Conduct it always upon the lines of fairness and integrity. Acknowledge the right of the people to get from the newspaper both sides of every important question.”

After almost 40 years as a professional photographer, DeLuca — the baseball guy — is not sad that the photo for which he may ultimately be best known illustrates a city he once called home during a moment of despair.

“To me, it shows that, even in the midst of this horrible circumstance, there was a quiet strength. It’s just a guy with strong arms helping a lady who’s cradling her little baby, who is just peacefully sleeping. And for me, personally, it speaks to having faith and becomes a metaphor for what God does for all of us. It shows that there was a light of hope in the midst of this storm, and hope resonates with us all.” ★

**Visit sfasu.edu/sawdust
to view more of DeLuca's photographs.**



Vista Viewpoint / By Dr. Adam Peck



DR. ADAM PECK

Assistant Vice
President and
Dean of
Student Affairs
*Office of
Student Affairs*

LEADERSHIP IS A concept that must be applied in order to be learned. For this reason, service has been a major component of Freshman Leadership Academy, a program designed to teach leadership skills to incoming students. Each year, between 80 and 100 students are accepted into the program that integrates first-year students into our co-curricular experiences.

During a retreat this year, we asked students what they would like to pursue as our service project. The most common response was helping people impacted by Hurricane Harvey. Another passion was helping people in locations that might otherwise be forgotten.

As we scanned the map, we wanted to choose a place where our work would not present an additional burden, so we decided to remain within driving distance of SFA. We noticed many of the cities in Lamar University's backyard were hit hard by the storm, and it occurred to us that we might partner with Lamar students to provide service to these areas.

That's when I thought of Brandie Van Zanden '12 & '14, associate director of student involvement at Lamar. Brandie earned her undergraduate and graduate degrees from SFA where she was a dedicated student leader and the graduate assistant for Orientation programs.

I approached Brandie, and she was enthusiastically supportive of the idea. Many Lamar students were impacted by the storm and were already helping those affected.

Led by student project leaders, the SFA group quickly mobilized to plan a service day on Sept. 23. Many Port Arthur homes were just beginning to dry out, and the local Habitat for Humanity was busy helping people tear down drywall and remove damaged carpeting, furniture and appliances.

Despite the emergent nature of the program, 31 Freshman Leadership Academy students signed up and traveled to the Beaumont and Port Arthur areas. The work was far from glamorous — it was hot and muggy. The wet drywall, carpets and garbage piling up in the streets created a putrid smell. But our students were undeterred.

Dr. Terry Mena, Lamar dean of students, joined us in the service project, working alongside our students and his. At the end of the day, Terry boarded the bus that brought the SFA students to Port Arthur, thanked them for their work and commended them on their positive attitude. One thing he said really resonated with me: "In one day, you've changed these people's lives. They have gone from having no hope to having a new hope."

The bus ride home was quiet as exhaustion had set in. Students also were processing everything they had experienced. You can learn a lot about leadership by serving others. One thing students undoubtedly learned was the value of perseverance. There were times when they probably wanted to stop, but they kept going.

I think they also learned something about the value of leading ourselves. None of us was well trained in construction work, but we solved problems and asked for help when we needed it. Those are some of the most important learning outcomes we teach in Freshman Leadership Academy. ★





Food for Thought

Campus pantry feeds
Lumberjacks facing food
insecurities

STORY BY KASI DICKERSON



Joy Hammonds, right, helped establish SFA's Food for Thought Food Pantry that opened in 2015. Hammonds, volunteers and members of Hunger Jacks, a student organization working to remove hunger in Nacogdoches, operate the pantry. Pictured, from left, Hunger Jacks members Destinee Williams, Tamia Garrett and Celine Gragas serve as personal shoppers for students who utilize the pantry. / Photo by Hardy Meredith

IT'S ALWAYS THE same face motivating Joy Hammonds, administrative assistant in the Office of Student Affairs, to help run SFA's Food For Thought Food Pantry.

"There was a student the semester we were working on the food pantry who caught my attention," Hammonds said. "He had lost a lot of weight, and I started noticing. I soon realized he was spending his grocery money on copays at the doctor because of a health problem."

According to Hammonds, the monetary constraints college students often face can leave them having to choose between health care or other necessities and purchasing food. When this occurs, students can develop a temporary food insecurity.

Food insecurity is essentially not knowing where one's next meal will come from. In the U.S., there are more than 42 million people suffering from food insecurity, according to Feeding America, the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization.

"Food insecurities can be cyclical and happen at different times during the semester. Students' budgets are so tight," Hammonds said. "If they get a flat tire, that repair expense might come out of their grocery money. If they have to pay a copay at the doctor, that could come out of their grocery money. It's these little things that can cause temporary food insecurities for college students."

SFA students are not immune. Since fall 2014, campus organizations and departments have been working to provide students a service to help alleviate hunger.

"Prior to the establishment of the food pantry, I really had no idea how many of our students were regularly missing meals due to a lack of food," said Dr. Adam Peck, assistant vice president and dean of student affairs. "It has really opened my eyes. I am very proud of the work our students have done to help meet this need in the SFA community."

Through the efforts of Hunger Jacks, a student organization working to remove hunger in Nacogdoches and SFA, and the Student Government Association, SFA opened its Food for Thought Food Pantry in January 2015 — only three months after initial meetings regarding the project began. ➔

From 2016 to 2017, the Food for Thought Food Pantry served 199 individuals who made 791 visits to the pantry, and volunteers distributed 12,688 items. Students can visit the pantry once a week and select 20 items. The pantry accepts monetary donations as well as food items. Targeted items include rice, rice sides, pasta, pasta sides, spaghetti sauce, macaroni and cheese, boxed cereal and oatmeal, peanut butter and jelly, fruit juice, salt, pepper, spices, and canned beans, soup, chicken, tuna, vegetables and fruit.

"We built the airplane in the sky," Hammonds said. "We knew we had students who couldn't wait for us, so this project was urgent."

Hammonds helped establish the food pantry that now supplies supplemental healthy, nonperishable food to dozens of SFA students experiencing food insecurities. From 2016 to 2017, the pantry served 199 individuals who made 791 visits to the pantry, and volunteers distributed 12,688 items.

"We named the food pantry Food for Thought because it is hard to think and study when you are worried about where your next meal will come from. The food we give is the healthiest nonperishable food we can obtain," Hammonds said.

During the semester, students who live off campus or do not have a meal plan can visit the pantry from 3 to 5 p.m. Mondays on the third floor of the Baker Pattillo Student Center. Hunger Jacks members and volunteers serve as personal shoppers for students and walk them through the pantry where they can choose 20 items.

"We realized through research that having choices rather than a prepackaged bag is critical," Hammonds said. "It gives students personal self-worth, and it's a lot of fun for our volunteers and shoppers. There are internal and external barriers to asking for help, so we try to break this down. When you have a choice, it makes it easier to access charitable contributions."

Celine Gragasin, human resource management sophomore from Prosper, has been

volunteering at the pantry for a year and is a Hunger Jacks member.

"Working at the pantry means not only helping students make sure they have food, but it also gives me an opportunity to network with other students and see what their lives are like," Gragasin said. "Having them walk through the door and knowing that I can help provide something they need is a huge blessing."

Hunger Jacks member Destinee Williams, health science sophomore from Hutto, agrees the pantry provides a valuable resource for students.

"It's a way to give back, and that's wholesome," Williams said. "Whether you have the funds or not, this is a good resource because we are all struggling; we are all college students. It's great that we can have an impact on other people."

The pantry is supported by charitable contributions and donations. To make a donation or to contribute, contact the Office of Student Affairs at (936) 468-7249 or dosa@sfasu.edu. The pantry accepts monetary donations as well as food items.

"We have students who really depend on this. My goal is that this program will be supplemental. If students don't have to purchase items from the pantry, they can afford to buy bread, milk and other items they need," Hammonds said. "We don't want to lose students because they are hungry, and we don't want students to miss opportunities because they are hungry." ★

SFA strengthens academic offerings

Academic opportunities at SFA continue to increase as a result of new face-to-face and online degree programs that have been developed in response to initiatives in the university's strategic plan, "SFA Envisioned." The plan includes directives for the university to be innovative in the ways in which it engages students in experiences that prepare them for the challenges of living in a global community.

Nurses across the state now have access to an online family nurse practitioner program that began this fall and leads to a Master of Science in Nursing. Students are allowed to utilize preceptors for clinical experiences in their home communities when possible.

"This program offers nurses access to graduate nursing education and provides much-needed primary care to citizens throughout the state," said Dr. Sara Bishop, director of SFA's DeWitt School of Nursing. "We are already one of the best-known schools of nursing in Texas — our graduation rates are excellent, and our students perform remarkably on their state board exams. This program will increase the awareness of our nursing program statewide."

Among the requirements for admission are a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from an accredited institution, a current unencumbered Texas registered nurse license and one year of full-time or equivalent experience practicing as a registered nurse.

Other new degree programs were approved by the SFA Board of Regents in October and will begin in fall 2018, pending approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

New degree programs in the James I. Perkins College of Education include a Bachelor of Science in human services and a Bachelor of Science in food and nutrition. In the College of Liberal and Applied Arts, regents approved a Bachelor of Science in criminal justice, a Bachelor of Arts in intercultural communication and a Master of Arts in publishing.

The board also approved new online programs: a Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts in both public administration and communication studies as well as a Bachelor of Arts in intercultural communication.

"There are 'three Rs' in higher education: rigor, relevance and relationships," said Dr. Steve Bullard, provost and vice president for academic affairs. "We need to offer our students rigorous programs while staying relevant in regard to technology and industry standards. We must continue to develop meaningful and impactful relationships with our students, alumni and industry professionals to better prepare our students for successful careers."

"Part of SFA's strategic plan is meeting students where they are, and that involves offering content online and off-site," Bullard said. "Through our recent partnerships with select institutions and our development of additional online programs, we continue to expand SFA's reach and invest in the East Texas community and in opportunities to provide services to students throughout the state and beyond."

For more information about SFA Envisioned, visit sfasu.edu/strategicplan. For information about academic programs, visit sfasu.edu/admissions. ★

Work Space / Inside Dr. Paul Shockley's Office



DR. PAUL SHOCKLEY

Lecturer of Philosophy

Multidisciplinary Programs



1. A fan of "Star Trek," Shockley purchased several costumes from the popular science-fiction television and movie series years ago. In 2009, he and a group of 23 students wore the costumes to the "Star Trek" movie premiere.
2. Shockley believes powerful philosophical ideas are communicated to the masses through the images, characters and stories displayed on movie and television screens. The posters lining his back wall are all examples of pop-culture images Shockley uses to help his students see the dynamic relationship between entertainment, personal identity and the development of society.
3. Shockley received this digital print of Papyrus 46 (c. 200 A.D.), the oldest known manuscript copy of the apostle Paul's letters, from the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts, founded by Dr. Daniel B. Wallace, a leading scholar in textual criticism.
4. In 2005, Shockley traveled to Liberia with Living Water International, a faith-based nonprofit organization that helps with humanitarian efforts in developing countries. Several Liberian men gave Shockley this plaque depicting the seal of Liberia to thank him for being their teacher following the 1999-2003 Second Liberian Civil War.
5. When Shockley's mom was a young girl, she found this Native American petroglyph in the Chihuahuan Desert near El Paso. Although broken, the petroglyph, which is cradled in a holder, appears to depict the torso and head of a person.
6. A light saber rests on Shockley's desk. The object reminds him of a quote by Yoda, "Do or do not. There is no try," from the movie "Star Wars: Episode V – The Empire Strikes Back." Shockley said the quote symbolizes that the issue is never his students' capabilities but rather their willingness to learn.
7. The ancient coins displayed in an acrylic holder on the desk give Shockley's students the opportunity to hold a relic from the past. The coins include images of Alexander the Great, Porcius Festus, Constantine the Great, and Emperors Commodus, Diocletian, Marcus Aurelius and Nero.
8. Shockley and Dr. Timothy Demy of the Naval War College served as co-editors of "Evangelical America: An Encyclopedia of Contemporary American Religious Culture" that was recently published by ABC-CLIO. It offers a survey of evangelicalism since World War II.
9. The rock and vase filled with pottery shards are from ancient historical sites throughout Israel and ancient Petra. The rock was near the foot of Qumran Cave No. 1 where the Isaiah Scroll, one of the Dead Sea Scrolls, was discovered.
10. Shockley's favorite Marvel Comics' villain is Magneto, whose character is complex, powers vast, and solutions raw and sometimes chilling. When Shockley's students discovered he liked Magneto, they helped build his collection of figurines.
11. Shockley's forthcoming book exploring the existential struggles of the human condition is tentatively titled "Finding Fulfillment in an Age of Captivity." Award-winning artist Chris Hopkins created the cover art, displayed on the easel, for the book. Hopkins has designed, drawn and painted images for movie poster art, including "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom" and "Return of the Jedi." He also was the album cover artist for Styx's "Paradise Theater" and Oingo Boingo's "Only a Lad," and he created the theme art for the 1985, 1986 and 1988 Super Bowls. ★

UNDERDOG COMES OUT ON TOP

Filmmaking alumnus
finds success in Hollywood

STORY BY ROBBIE GOODRICH





DEREK WAYNE JOHNSON '06 has always felt like an underdog.

"I've always had an affinity for the common man who rises up to become a champion," he said.

"I guess my own life, growing up in the pineywoods of East Texas dreaming of Hollywood success, seemed like a pipe dream to some. But I knew early on that's what I wanted to achieve."

On his way to realizing that dream, it was only natural that the former SFA filmmaking student, now a Hollywood director, writer and producer, make a film chronicling the life and work of a relatively unknown filmmaker who championed the underdog in films like "Rocky" and "The Karate Kid."

"John G. Avildsen: King of the Underdogs," produced by Johnson's production company, AJ16 Entertainment and released in August 2017, took three years to complete. The documentary examines the life, career and films of the Oscar-winning director of "Rocky" and "The Karate Kid" and includes exclusive never-before-seen interviews with Sylvester Stallone, Ralph Macchio, Martin Scorsese, Burt Reynolds, Jerry Weintraub, Talia Shire and many others.

"Making this documentary changed my life and my career in many ways," Johnson said. "Not only did I get to meet my hero, John Avildsen, but I also got to befriend him, be mentored by him and make a movie about him." ➔



"I'm very proud to have been mentored by my hero, and I hope I can give back to some hungry filmmaker one day like he gave to me."

- DEREK WAYNE JOHNSON
ABOUT THE LATE DIRECTOR
JOHN G. AVILDSSEN



Johnson and Avildsen

Born and raised in Carthage, Johnson began making short films at an early age. He spent the first 12 years of his life growing up on Lake Murvaal just outside of Carthage, where his imagination ran wild and his interest in filmmaking began.

"I absorbed movies from an early age," he said, "re-watching VHS tapes over and over that my grandfather recorded for us from his giant satellite dish and circling upcoming movie titles in the TV Guide and recording them when they finally came on weeks later."

Weekly visits to the video rental store also proved to be extremely influential.

"The first movie I remember seeing in a movie theater was Avildsen's 'The Karate Kid Part II,'" he said. "I was 3 years old, and I was mesmerized."

Movies like "Rocky," "The Karate Kid," "Se7en," "Raiders of the Lost Ark," "Lethal Weapon" and "Poltergeist" had a big effect on Johnson growing up.

"Storytelling and crafting movie ideas was just something I was good at. It felt natural," Johnson said.

The 2001 Carthage High School graduate won several filmmaking awards as a high school student. In his senior year of film school at SFA, Johnson wrote and directed his first feature film, "Within Us." After receiving his Bachelor of Arts, he got his start in Texas and Louisiana by directing independent feature films such as "Broken Blood" and "Scrape."

Johnson studied Avildsen's films as well as those of John Hughes, Martin Scorsese, David Fincher and Steven Spielberg. Later, he studied the films of William Friedkin, Francis Ford Coppola, David Lean, Stanley Kubrick, Richard Donner, Alfred Hitchcock, Elia Kazan and others.

"I guess you can say I have a lot of filmmaking heroes and influences," he said.

Originally unaware that SFA had a filmmaking program, Johnson planned to study radio/TV and then attend film school in Los Angeles. Meeting William Arscott, a former Regents Professor at SFA, changed all that. Johnson describes studying filmmaking with Arscott as "life-changing."

"Simply put, the man is a legend and a force of personality that students who've been taught by him all appreciate and love," he said. "He really cares about his students and their filmmaking futures, and his hands-on approach of 'grab a camera and make a movie' is far beyond most film school techniques."

"I made a lot of mistakes at SFA that helped prepare me for the real world of the film industry," Johnson said. "I believe film school is where the majority of your mistakes should be made."

Brad Maule, lecturer of acting/directing and filmmaking, who is known for his longtime role as Dr. Tony Jones on the soap opera "General Hospital," started teaching at SFA during Johnson's senior year and had a major influence on his career, as well, Johnson said.

"He taught me a lot about the Hollywood system," he said. "Both he and Professor Arscott remain close friends and mentors of mine to this day. I fully support SFA and the film program. It's the best film school in the world, in my opinion."

Johnson didn't realize until he was older that Avildsen had become his favorite filmmaker. He studied the way Avildsen framed shots, his editing techniques, his characters and performances, his use of montage and music, and of course, his "riveting climaxes."

"John was in my life for five years, yet his art was in my life since I first saw 'The Karate Kid Part II' at 3 years old," he said. "I'm very proud to have been mentored by my hero, and I hope I can give back to some hungry filmmaker one day like he gave to me."

The two filmmakers came from very different backgrounds.

"John had a silver spoon in his mouth from birth, and I grew up as a small-town country boy," Johnson said, "and yet, we both loved the same type of films and have a knack for the underdog story."

"I've experienced a lot of tragedy, heartache and rejection in my life, including the terrible loss of my little brother in a car accident. (Johnson's production company, AJ16 Entertainment, was formed in honor of his late brother, Adam: AJ for his initials and 16 for his favorite sports number.) But, something kept me going. Something inside of me made me want to be the best I could be.

"John Avildsen achieved greatness when he won the Oscar for 'Rocky' and winning my own Oscar is something I aspire to do," he said. "One day I asked him if I could hold his Oscar, and he said 'yes,' gave it to me, and took a photo of me. I was smiling from ear to ear. He told me, 'Get used to it, kid. You'll have your own one day.' Man, that was such a wonderful moment, and that statue symbolized my burning desire to make it in Hollywood like John did."

Avildsen passed away from pancreatic cancer in June 2017.

Currently, Johnson is directing two documentaries simultaneously. "40 Years of Rocky: The Birth of a Classic" with Sylvester Stallone is a unique documentary about the making of "Rocky" using Avildsen's behind-the-scenes footage, home movies and rehearsal footage from the set. He also is in production on "STALLONE: Frank, That Is," a documentary about the fascinating life and career of Grammy and Golden Globe-nominated singer, musician and actor Frank Stallone, brother of Sylvester. The film includes interviews with Frank, Sylvester, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Billy Zane, Joe Mantegna and many more stars. Johnson will be making his return to narrative films with an untitled feature-length drama set for production in 2019.

Johnson's producing partner, Chris May, also is an SFA film graduate, and another SFA alum, Chris Collier, is one of the company's executive producers.

"I'm very proud to have worked with fellow Lumberjacks on 'John G. Avildsen: King of the Underdogs,' and we plan to make more films together out here in Hollywood," Johnson said.

"John G. Avildsen: King of the Underdogs" was released on Digital Download, Blu-Ray and DVD Aug. 1 on Chassy.com, iTunes, Amazon, Google Play, YouTube, Comcast VOD and many other platforms under Adam Carolla's distribution company Chassy Media. ★

ABOUT DEREK WAYNE JOHNSON'S FILM "JOHN G. AVILDSSEN: KING OF THE UNDERDOGS"

John G. Avildsen's films have inspired millions of underdogs and shaped popular culture for decades, yet most people are not familiar with him.

The documentary highlights the unknown legend behind "Rocky" and "The Karate Kid" in this official biography about a prolific filmmaker who directed seven actors to Academy Award nominations and earned his own Oscar for Best Director.

Johnson's film explores the life, career and films of Avildsen, who had as many hits as misses, and rediscovers the legendary director through interviews with actors, filmmakers and Avildsen himself.

The documentary features exclusive never-before-seen interviews from Sylvester Stallone, Ralph Macchio, Martin Scorsese, Burt Reynolds, Jerry Weintraub, Talia Shire and many more.



*Derek Wayne Johnson
directing Rick LaCour,
Penny Harville, Nina Leon
and Garrett Kruithof on the
set of "Scrape" (2013).
© Scrape Movie, L.L.C.*

Faculty Advising



How to make a traditional holiday wreath

DAWN STOVER '99
Research Associate
SFA Gardens

FOR MORE THAN a decade, I have led a holiday wreath-making workshop offered through SFA Gardens. The workshop remains popular with participants returning year after year to utilize the unusual foliage from our conifer collection.

You don't need to have your own conifer collection to create a beautiful holiday wreath. Many plants located in your own garden will work just fine.

To begin, gather about 50 6-inch branch tips from plants like boxwood, juniper, arborvitae, holly and/or rosemary. Pine also works well but leaves a sticky resin on your hands. Soak your gathered branches in a bucket of water overnight.

Purchase these supplies: one 14-inch metal wreath frame, Spanish moss, 24-gauge green paddle wire (available at craft stores), pruning shears, wire snips and embellishments like ribbon and ornaments.



1. Make your wreath: Affix the cut end of the paddle wire firmly to the metal wreath frame. Begin to tightly wrap a layer of Spanish moss along the concave side of the wreath frame with the paddle wire. This allows for a flat working surface. Once the frame is covered with moss, cut the paddle wire and twist the end of the wire around the frame. You can use this prepared frame year after year.



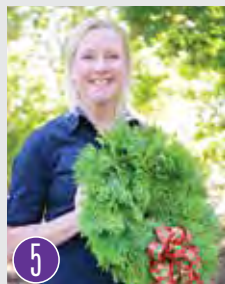
2. Reattach the paddle wire to the frame. Lay a small bundle of stems on the now-flat side of the prepared frame with the tips facing right, and wrap paddle wire tightly around the bottom of the stem bundles to attach to the frame. Slightly position each added bundle right, then middle, then left.



3. Continue to layer and wrap bundles, moving about an inch in a clockwise direction around the frame, taking care to hide the wire-wrapped ends with the additional bundles. As you near the end, lift up the tips of the first bundle, and add more sections around the wreath until it is lush and full. Cut and tie off the paddle wire.



4. To finish, make a hanger for your wreath by cutting an 8-inch section of paddle wire, fold it in half, and then form a loop by twisting the ends together, and attach to the back of the wreath at the top. You are now ready to attach your embellishments with additional paddle wire. If you notice thin areas, consider attaching an embellishment there to fill in.



5. Your wreath is now ready to hang and enjoy all season long. Happy holidays! ★

Visit sfasu.edu/sawdust to view a wreath-making video by Dawn Stover.

'JACK TALK



It's a sweet time to be a Lumberjack! #cookietime #AxeEm

SFA_JACKS /
INSTAGRAM



Jack is checking out his future alma mater. HE APPROVES! #classof2038

SARAH BANKS MOORE / FACEBOOK

The Jacks will wear this sticker on their helmets to remember those impacted by Hurricane Harvey. #TexasStrong #AxeEm

SFA_ATHLETICS /
INSTAGRAM



Showing his love for @SFA_Football with @SFAPurpleHaze and @LMB_SFA #littlelumberjack #AxeEm

CRIS RAZO / TWITTER

Athletics Highlights

TOP 10 ON ESPN

SFA AND UNIVERSITY of the Incarnate Word appeared to be headed into overtime Sept. 16 at Homer Bryce Stadium during the Southland Conference football opener for both teams, but SFA sophomore Alize



Ward made sure overtime wasn't necessary. On the game's final play, the defensive back from San Diego, California, intercepted Incarnate Word quarterback Sean Brophy's pass and returned it 70 yards for the game-winning touchdown as time expired.

ESPN's SportsCenter named the play No. 3 among its Top 10 plays of the night. Through ESPN's broadcast and SFA Athletics' social media channels, Ward's play was viewed by more than two million people around the globe. ★

TO THE RESCUE



AS THE FLOODWATERS from Hurricane Harvey rose and devastated Southeast Texas, SFA baseball alumnus Alex Hrinevich was one of many individuals from the Houston area who extended a helping hand. The Katy native took to Twitter to inform those who were stranded that he was launching a boat to help rescue them. ★

HARVEY DONATIONS

FOLLOWING THE DEVASTATION wrought by Hurricane Harvey, SFA's chapter of the Student-Athlete Advisory Council did its part to aid in the university's efforts to help those affected. The group encouraged donations of a multitude of items, including nonperishable food, water and toiletries, and collected three pickup trucks full of supplies that were delivered across Southeast Texas. At SFA's home football opener, members of SFA's baseball team collected buckets filled with household cleaning and repair items as part of its "Buckets for Building" campaign geared toward starting the repair and rebuilding process throughout the region. ★



WINNING STREAK

AFTER FALLING TO Florida Atlantic University in its first match of the season, the SFA volleyball team responded by going on an 11-match winning streak that spanned 17 days. The Ladyjacks' stretch of consecutive victories was the longest-active streak among all NCAA Division I volleyball teams at the time and the eighth-longest in program history before it came to an end at the hands of Texas State University Sept. 12. ★



650 CAREER WINS

ALREADY HERALDED AS one of the nation's most successful volleyball coaches, Debbie Humphreys reached another impressive milestone as a result of SFA's Southland Conference victory against Northwestern State University Sept. 23 inside Shelton Gym. That triumph gave Humphreys her 650th career win, making her one of only 15 active NCAA Division I volleyball coaches with 650 or more career victories. ★



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A PASSION FOR PEOPLE

DeWitt
School of
Nursing
graduate
excels
at her
profession

STORY BY
DONNA PARISH

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
HARDY MEREDITH

ON
LE



“There is no greater feeling than being there for my patients when they need it most. Whether it’s giving them comfort, holding their hand or just listening to them, serving others is a rewarding experience. Nursing is my calling.”

- NANCY PALACIOS '14



IT'S ONLY BEEN three years since her SFA graduation, but registered nurse Nancy Palacios '14 has already attained quite an impressive résumé.

She serves as chair of the Unit Based Council for the Neurology, Internal Medicine and Orthopedic Unit, clinical ladder advisor, case coordinator and preceptor at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center where she works. She has been recognized multiple times by her peers and has received the Meritorious Service Award and the Problem-solving, Attitude, Compassion and Teamwork Gold Award. She is a DFW Great 100 Nurses Scholarship recipient. Palacios also is working toward her Doctor of Nursing Practice at Baylor University.

Nothing stands in this first-generation college graduate's way of helping others. The oldest of four children, Palacios said she decided to become a nurse while attending Seagoville High School.

“During high school, I had the opportunity to volunteer at a hospital and nursing home. Being there just felt right,” Palacios said. “There is no greater feeling than being there for my patients when they need it most. Whether it’s giving them comfort, holding their hand or just listening to them, serving others is a rewarding experience. Nursing is my calling.”

Palacios transferred to SFA from the University of Texas at Arlington during her junior year. She said she set her sights on obtaining a bachelor's degree from SFA

because of the nursing program's high passing rates on the National Council Licensure Examination, a nationwide exam for licensing nurses in the United States and Canada.

“Visiting the campus reassured me of my decision to attend,” Palacios said. “The DeWitt School of Nursing had just opened a new facility with state-of-the-art technology. There also was a vibrancy that permeated throughout the campus. I noted a sense of unity and friendliness from students and staff members that was uplifting. I can't forget to mention the beauty of the pineywoods. I loved the scenery. SFA felt like home.”

After her arrival on campus, Palacios was selected to join Omicron Delta Kappa Leadership Honor Society.

“Being selected for this prestigious organization was such a big achievement,” Palacios said. “As a new transfer student, it was a great way to acclimate to campus. Being an ODK member also helped develop my leadership skills.”

Palacios credits Dr. Tammy Harris, SFA assistant professor of nursing, with being a mentor to her.

“All of the faculty members in the School of Nursing were exceptional,” Palacios said. “Dr. Harris left a lasting impression on me. She was one of my professors during my first semester and made the transition easier.

“One day before her class, I was in a very scary automobile accident. When I contacted Dr. Harris to inform her I would be absent, she demonstrated genuine concern for my well-being. I wasn't just a number — she truly

cared for me as a student. Later, she wrote letters of recommendation for both my job at UT Southwestern and admittance to my doctoral program. She has been much more than just a professor.”

Palacios' praise of Harris is reciprocal. “Nancy came to SFA with a goal in mind and never veered from it. I have had the pleasure of watching every step Nancy has taken since her SFA graduation,” Harris said. “Her steps have been planned and meticulous, always supporting and improving her chosen profession. I am honored to have maybe played a small part in all of this and look forward with anticipation to what she will accomplish next. Nancy is a driving force for change and excellence in our profession. She is one of those students who reinforced the reason I am involved in nursing education.”

Today, Palacios is one of the more than 1,600 nurses who work at UT Southwestern Medical Center, which recently was ranked the No. 1 hospital in Dallas/Fort Worth and second in Texas by U.S. News & World Report. The publication's annual Best Hospital list, released in August, showed UT Southwestern ranked nationally in urology, geriatrics, diabetes and endocrinology, neurology and neurosurgery, nephrology, and ear, nose and throat. Palacios is proud to have a part in these accomplishments.

“As a registered nurse, I help care for neurology, orthopedic and internal medicine patients on the medical/surgical floor,” Palacios said. “I also serve as a charge nurse,

which means I meet with other medical team members to discuss patient care, assign patients to nurses and complete other staffing functions. I also assist my fellow nurses.”

Palacios also was one of only three nurses in her unit to be selected to cross train as a care coordinator. “In this role, I work closely with physicians, social workers and therapists to plan safe discharge for patients,” Palacios said. “From the moment patients are admitted, we start their discharge planning. For instance, if we know the patient will need home health care after discharge, we give the patient a list of home health companies to choose from. Once they have selected their preference, we work closely with the social workers to send referrals to the facility of choice. By the time the patient is discharged, approval has been received, and everything is set in place to make the patient’s transition from the hospital to their home a smooth one. This is vital for the patient’s continued care, compliance and overall recovery.”

Typically, Palacios said she administers care to neurology patients, which comprise the primary population of patients on her floor. “We see many rare diagnoses in the neurology department,” Palacios said. “And we admit patients from across the nation. The most difficult diagnosis I’ve seen as a nurse has been Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. Globally, it affects about one person in every million. CJD destroys brain cells. It resembles Alzheimer’s disease, dementia or Huntington’s disease, but symptoms from CJD evolve within days to weeks rather than years. It is always fatal.”

As the disease progresses, Palacios said, problems with coordination worsen, and vision becomes impaired. Eventually, the patient can no longer move or speak, and he or she will enter a coma.

“Being there for the patients and their families to help them cope through these difficult moments takes courage. It’s not easy, but it’s necessary,” Palacios said.

In addition to her duties as a registered nurse at the medical center, Palacios also volunteers in the community assisting at local food banks, visiting middle and high schools to talk about nursing, and speaking about stroke education to all age groups.

“I volunteer at the North Texas Food Bank where we pack meals for those in need,” Palacios said. “I have met people there who have told me they live off of the food the North Texas Food Bank provides, so I understand how important these food pantries are for them. I recall being at one of the pantry locations on one occasion when the food truck was delayed. During that delay, I took the opportunity to teach those waiting about stroke signs and symptoms. It might save a life and diverted their attention until the food truck arrived.”

Palacios said she is able to understand the hardships many people in need face because she, too, has been through difficult times.

“I came from a very loving and nurturing family,” Palacios said. “My parents are Mexican immigrants, and although they lacked a college degree, they instilled in me a love for learning. What I had growing up didn’t come easy.

And what I have now wasn’t given to me on a silver platter. I often helped my mother clean homes and my dad mow lawns while in high school. I did it to help them because I realized how hard those jobs were. It kept me humble, helped me appreciate what I had and helped me appreciate my parents’ hard work. Those experiences made me who I am today and helped me appreciate my education.”

Another way Palacios is able to help others is through her service as an interpreter.

“I am a certified interpreter for the medical center,” Palacios said. “I’m often called upon to help the medical doctors and physical and occupational therapists during assessments and evaluations. Being bilingual allows me to communicate with Spanish-speaking patients, and the rapport I’m able to build with them is truly special. Once they realize someone is able to assist them in this way, their faces light up with confidence because they know they can communicate their needs and be understood.”

Today, Palacios is busier than ever. She and her husband, Andrew, welcomed a daughter, Madison Grace, in July.

“By the time I complete my doctoral degree, my daughter will be 3 years old,” Palacios said. “When she grows up, I don’t know if she’ll remember the long nights I spent studying after work, or if she’ll recall sitting on my lap as I read for school. I do know I want her to be proud of my accomplishments and me. After all, my ceiling will be her floor. I hope that through my and her father’s example, she also will value the power of education and the opportunities it provides.” ★



'Jacks of All Trades / with Kristy Norman '97



**CRAFTED FOR
SUCCESS:**
Couple opens
family-owned
business to
sell handmade
goods

*Story and photography
by Kasi Dickerson*

Visit sfasu.edu/sawdust to
view more product images.

CARTOONS PLAY IN the background as their 18-month-old son, Levi, rolls a child-sized basketball across the patterned rug situated behind a wooden desk. While keeping an eye on Levi, Kristy '97 and Nate Norman reflect back to November 2016 when an idea changed their lives.

"Our dream has always been to own a handmade-goods store," Kristy said. "We were at a craft show, and I mentioned the idea of opening a store to a friend who was selling records in the booth next to us. He said, 'That's rad! You should look at the building I'm about to move into.'"

With this friendly nudge, Kristy and Nate began investigating property in downtown Tyler where brick streets and neon marquees remind visitors of bygone days. Although the Normans were excited to move forward with this project, some hesitancy remained.

"In December 2016, I was saying, 'No, we can't do it,' but every obstacle was knocked out of our way," Kristy said. "God cleared a pathway for this. Everything we asked for to make this happen he gave us."

The Normans "decided to go for it" and started the groundwork for what is now 903 Handmade, a boutique-style shop with a range of handmade items.

The shop opened Feb. 10, 2017, after two months of preparation, which included visiting similar stores in Texas, building a pallet wall and organizing items in the store.

The day of the soft opening, Nate recalls putting the final touches on the store at 11:30 a.m. and opening for customers a mere 30 minutes later. The couple described the day as "crazy" and "a relief."

"The community has been super supportive since day one," Nate said. "We have loyal customers who come in every couple of weeks to see what's new. They not only want to support us, but they also want to support the makers of the products."

The business is family owned and operated. Kristy and Nate have two sons and a daughter. In addition to Levi, their son Camden is 14 years old. Sophia, their 16-year-old daughter, often helps run the store.

"I grew up in a family business, so this is something I've always wanted to do," Nate said. "This is a cool thing to have, and I'm super proud of my wife. She runs it day-to-day with three kids. She's here with Levi every day; he's known as the shop baby."

A plethora of handmade items is sold in the store such as jewelry, leather goods and purses, canvas bags, cards, screen-printed T-shirts, soy candles, all-natural body and cleaning products, pillows, and more. As the store's name suggests, most of the items are from Texas makers and locals who live within the 903 area code in East Texas; however, the shop also showcases items from across the U.S.

"We wanted to design a shop where people could come every day and buy something that is handmade and local," Kristy said. "There's something special about handmade goods."

The store opened with 25 vendors and now features more than 60, including Kristy and Nate. As an SFA student, Kristy majored in fashion merchandising with a minor in art.

"I grew up watching my dad with his business, and my mom always made crafts when I was growing up," Kristy said. "In college, I took an art history course, which spurred me to want to be a maker."

Kristy enrolled in photography, pottery and jewelry making at SFA. This training and her natural creative abilities led her to make her own jewelry.

She now sells stamped jewelry known as Lou C's designs in 903 Handmade. Likewise, Nate's grandfather was a woodworker, and Nate spent much of his childhood with his grandfather in the wood shop. Nate's love of woodworking continues, and he builds growth-chart rulers to sell in 903 Handmade.

The shop is open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays; 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesdays; and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays. ★

From the Association

“There is something special about the fall semester. Perhaps it is the incoming freshman class or the excitement that comes with fall sports kicking off at the same time the students return to campus. There is just a buzz around campus and on social media as the fall semester kicks into high gear.”



AS I WRITE this letter, the activities of a somewhat normal fall semester are underway. However, for many Houston and South Texas area alumni, students and friends, the past several months have

been anything but normal. To those in our SFA family who have been impacted by Hurricane Harvey, I hope you have felt the love and prayers from your fellow Lumberjacks. In times of need, we come together. I am very proud to be a part of this amazing and supportive Lumberjack community that has come together with aid and prayers.

There is something special about the fall semester. Perhaps it is the incoming freshman class or the excitement that comes with fall sports kicking off at the same time the students return to campus. There is just a buzz around campus and on social media as the fall semester kicks into high gear. It is a wonderful time of the year, but it also is an incredibly busy time for those who work behind the scenes.

Sometimes when I am participating in fall activities and events, I notice the attention to detail and how everything seamlessly comes together. Then I remember the faces and people behind the scenes who make it all happen. The SFA Alumni Association staff members never cease to amaze me! Of course, Homecoming is one of the busiest times for our Alumni Association staff members, but I am amazed when I also observe that they put just as much effort and attention into reunion gatherings, regional networking events, the SFA Ring program, orientations, Senior Send-Offs, etc.

What many SFA stakeholders do not know is these dedicated Alumni Association staffers do more than work these events and activities. Whether it is handling the accounting or record keeping, designing graphics or managing other alumni business, each of these “unsung heroes” has a primary professional role in addition to an active engagement and hospitality role.

I recently asked a group of alumni to share a few thoughts about our Alumni Association staff members. I received too many comments to share them all, but the theme was consistent. SFA alumni and friends believe our hardworking and loyal Alumni Association staff members go the extra mile to serve and engage SFA alumni, students and friends. They are responsive, courteous, a joy to work with, eager to accommodate and professional. They work long hours but always with a smile and a great attitude. They truly bleed purple.

I hope you participate in some future alumni activities. When you do, please tell the friendly SFA Alumni Association staff member or volunteer how much he or she is appreciated. ★

Axe 'em, Jacks!

David Madrid '02 – Bossier City, Louisiana
President, SFA Alumni Association

SFA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

David Madrid '02, Bossier City, Louisiana
president

Bob Francis '78, Bullard
president-elect

Karen Gantt '95, McKinney
past president

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD

Charlotte Ashcraft '80, Nacogdoches
Tony Both '98, Katy

Larry Brooks '01, Houston
Reuben Brown '07, Grand Prairie
Jeremy Cleverly '98, Mansfield

Robin Dawley '77, Nacogdoches
Brian Dawson '03, Conroe

Doris Havard, Nacogdoches
Ron Hunt '91 & '94, McKinney

Bruce Mayberry II '08, Arlington
Steve McCarty '65 & '70, Alto

Jaclyn Partin '08 & '14, Nacogdoches
Alex Ranc '11 & '13, Lufkin

Erika Tolar '02, Spring
Bob Williams '70, Dallas

SFA ALUMNI FOUNDATION GOVERNORS

Dr. Mike Harbordt '63, Nacogdoches
chairman

Mark Layton '74, Dallas
vice chairman

Stephen Greak '92, Lufkin
recording secretary

Wendy Buchanan '85, Nacogdoches
Cody Corley '01, Houston

Don Cox '71 & '76, Nacogdoches
Bob Francis '78, Bullard

Karen Gantt '95, McKinney
Curtis Sparks '85, Tyler

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION STAFF

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

Jennifer Sowell
assistant to the executive director

Heather Hawkins '00
assistant director of alumni relations

Samantha Mora '08
director of events and engagement

Alicia Roland Chatman '16
gifts and records specialist

Amie Ford '09 & '11
scholarship coordinator

Derek Snyder '01
communications and marketing
coordinator

Hannah Franks '13 & '16
accountant

DIGITAL DESTINY

Alumni help pioneer digital marketing through Austin-based company

STORY BY CHRISTINE BROUSSARD

BRIGHT BLUE AND yellow accents stretch the length of the Somnio office's open communal workspace. Hushed conversations hover above the rows of six-person, collaborative desks lined perpendicularly against floor-to-ceiling windows.

The modern space resembles something from Silicon Valley, replete with glassed-in meeting rooms, a virtual reality area, and a cozy break room with tabletop shuffleboard and a nearly full-service kitchen. The office's innovative atmosphere is reminiscent of the company's beginnings when three SFA alumni started the digital marketing company at a time when marketing was done almost entirely in print.

"No one was doing digital back then," said Harold Valderas '91, Somnio CEO. "It was all print marketing. In fact, our very first offering was on a DVD because that was digital then even though it was a physical object. A lot of agencies just did print or newspaper ads and just learned digital recently, so we definitely were ahead of the curve."

Fourteen years later, as Chief Operating Officer Garrett Goeters

'92, Chief Financial Officer Scott Killingsworth '89 and Valderas sit in the spacious meeting room of their contemporary Austin office, they discuss the tactics they continue to employ to stay modern in an ever-evolving industry.

"We reinvent ourselves every two years," Valderas said. "A decade ago, video was big, and later it was interactive websites. Then it would be flash and mobile apps. Right now, we are using more and more artificial intelligence for marketing and are starting to do some things with virtual reality."

"Our DNA is all about reinventing ourselves because marketing changes so quickly, and we are the old guys here," he added. "We have a lot of millennials who keep us on our toes and are always trying out new tools and new things. We try to promote an environment where anyone's idea can rise to the top and be a new solution."

Somnio is a business-to-business digital marketing company offering strategic, creative and engagement services to Fortune 500 companies, including AT&T, IBM, Hewlett Packard Enterprise and Dell.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY HARDY MEREDITH

"It's interesting, some of the clients we work with today, even though they are major corporations, are behind the curve, and they just can't keep up," Killingsworth said. "There are a lot of companies that still haven't moved along in that digital era yet. What's made us so successful is, first, the foresight that Harold and Garrett had when the company started, then also being in the right place at the right time when the computer industry and internet were maturing and digital was becoming the format."

The three men met years ago as undergraduates on the SFA campus. They met their wives at SFA, too, became fast friends and, in figurative and literal ways, eventually family.

"I first started dating my wife, Jennifer Palmer '93, a few years after she graduated from SFA. She was a sorority sister of Garrett's wife, Jill DeBroeck '93. These two," Valderas laughed, pointing to Goeters and Killingsworth, whose wife is Kelly DeBroeck Killingsworth '90, "they married [biological] sisters so they're in the family together. I had to get adopted in."

After graduation, Goeters and Valderas entered the sales and marketing world while Killingsworth took a more financial route. Valderas worked at Apple in the company's formative years, and the three kept in touch even while working in cities across Texas.

Years after working in the industry, Valderas saw opportunities for the companies he worked at to use the burgeoning digital and technological fields. He developed a business plan and shared it with Goeters.

"Harold and I had this mutual arrangement," Goeters said. "We both had well-paying jobs at these large corporations, so our agreement was to just moonlight, get a few clients and, over time, explore taking the next step. I think our first job was with the U.S. Postal Service. It was \$4,000, and Harold calls me up and says, 'Hey, I quit my job.'"

Valderas' sudden decision to go all-in on owning a company seemed increasingly promising, and the two men eventually contacted Killingsworth to join their team. ➔

Somnio's six core values:

We {
aim to delight.
are intelligence-driven.
are fearless.
chart our own course.
keep it real.
love doing great work.

See more, including the company's "Rally Cry," at somnia.com.

From left: Scott Killingsworth, Harold Valderas and Garrett Goeters

"You know what, you need to do that sometimes," Valderas said. "We all took the leap, and we are lucky we did because we get to own a company that we created ourselves. We write our own future, and we have plans for the long term."

One of Somnio's core tenets is to have the ability to change. It has kept the company competitive, marketable and cutting-edge in an increasingly digital world.

"We always tell employees and clients, 'Change is constant here. You have to be willing to change.' That keeps us from sticking a flag in the ground on any specific technology," Killingsworth said. "We could have said five years ago we wanted to be the best flash company in the world, and we'd be out of business right now. So we just keep changing as the market changes. It's been

fortuitous, but I'd like to think some of it is planned."

Somnia has been on the Inc. 5000 list of fastest-growing companies for three years and Austin's Fast 50 list of the city's fastest-growing companies. It employs 50 individuals full-time and between 20 and 30 others through contract.

When you first walk in to Somnio's glossy, cement-floored office, you're greeted by state-of-the-art technology that boasts just some of Somnio's capabilities. To the right of the entry door are shelves upon shelves of awards and recognitions that are a testament to Somnio's continuing success.

"We've won awards, we've got great clients, and we have great people and great employees," Valderas said. "It all started in the marketing department at SFA!" ★



Scholarships

Gilbert I. "Buddy" Low Scholarship Program celebrates 10 years at SFA

DURING THE PAST 10 years, the Gilbert I. "Buddy" Low Scholarship Program has covered the cost of tuition and fees for several San Augustine High School graduates to attend SFA.

Those involved with the scholarship program celebrated a decade of promoting student success in September with a luncheon that brought scholarship donors, current and past scholarship recipients, and SFA administrators together.

Low, who graduated from SFA in 1954 and is a trial attorney with Orgain Bell & Tucker in Beaumont, credits his San Augustine teachers with preparing him for the rigors of higher education.

"When I got to SFA, I did well because of the quality education I received from my teachers in San Augustine," Low said. "I had a job on campus and did pipeline work — hard, hot work — and saved during the summers to pay for my education. I started the scholarship program because I wanted to help students like me who really couldn't afford to go to college be able to attend SFA and concentrate on their studies."

Low's pay-it-forward approach has helped 31 SFA students achieve their dream of higher education.

"During the past decade, we have selected three scholarship recipients per year to join this elite group of student leaders," said W. Frank Newton, president and chief executive officer of the Beaumont Foundation of America, which administers the scholarship program. "From year to year, the recipients become mentors and support the subsequent year's recipients, thus continuing the cycle of academic success."

The scholarships are awarded based on financial need as well as potential for academic success in college. Interested students are screened by the school district and participate in an interview with representatives of the Beaumont Foundation of America.



Each scholarship recipient is eligible to receive up to \$11,200 per year for four years of study at SFA. In addition to paying for tuition and fees, the scholarship also provides reimbursement for books and supplies. ★

Pictured, back row, are scholarship recipients Brock Johnson, Ben Eberlan, Armando Ledet, Christian Haynie and Tony Nguyen; and front row, Tabitha Davis, Cordestine Clifton, Lizzet Mendoza, Rebeca Landaverde, Jairole Josue, Skylar Smith and Alicia Watts.

First Christopher J. Snyder Memorial Scholarship awarded

NATALIE CLEM OF Memphis, Tennessee, is the first recipient of the Christopher J. Snyder Memorial Scholarship.

"Orientation and mobility is my passion," said Clem, a senior orientation and mobility student. "Christopher Snyder is an inspiration to me because he made it from Chicago to Nacogdoches in 1997 to do something that I love and I'm passionate about, as well. To be able to follow in his passion and love for orientation and mobility is an honor."

Clem said the scholarship made it possible for her to transfer from a university in her home state to SFA where the only undergraduate orientation and mobility program in the nation is offered.



Snyder was a two-time SFA graduate and a certified orientation and mobility specialist who moved to

Nacogdoches from Chicago in 1997 to pursue a bachelor's degree in orientation and mobility. After his graduation in 1999, Snyder returned to Illinois to work with visually impaired students, teaching them how to travel safely in different environments. In 2001, Snyder and Nacogdoches-native Kim Luna were married, and they lived in the Chicago area before moving back to Nacogdoches in 2004.

Snyder served each summer as an instructor for a six-week SFA course teaching other teachers orientation and mobility skills to better assist their visually impaired students. In 2005, he earned his Master of Education in special education with an emphasis in serious emotional disorders and autism. He worked for Nacogdoches ISD as an assistive technology teacher and orientation and mobility specialist, helping special-needs students and their teachers throughout the district, until his death in January 2017. ★



Natalie Clem of Memphis, Tennessee, received the first Christopher J. Snyder Memorial Scholarship in September.





2017 HOMECOMING

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS FOR SUPPORTING THE SFA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION.

Liberty Mutual Insurance
The Fredonia Hotel
Barnes & Noble Bookstore
ShopSFA.com
University Rental
Suddenlink
First Bank & Trust East Texas
Nacogdoches Eye Associates
XETX Business Solutions
SFA Lettermen's Association
Nacogdoches Pediatric Dentistry
Olivia Kling - Simpson Real Estate



HOMECOMING WINNERS

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION GOLF TOURNAMENT

Gross Winners:

Carl Baker, Sparky Cartwright,
Mike Hopson and John Kennedy

Net Winners:

Eric Appel, Steve Cooper,
Harold Rapsilver and Paul Van Bentem



SFA RECREATION CENTER HOMECOMING 5K

Overall Female: Tyler Fisher

Overall Male: Braynan Ruiz

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION DUCK DASH

First Place: John Rulfs

Second Place: Jim Hamilton

Third Place: Ida Gonzalez

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION STOREFRONT DECORATIONS

First Place: Fredonia Vintage House

Second Place: Goodwill on Main

Third Place: The Fredonia Hotel

STUDENT ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION SFA PARADE FLOAT

Grand Champion: Yellow House Christian
Student Center

Lumberjack Spirit: Delta Delta Delta

Lumberjack Spirit: Purple Haze Association

STUDENT ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION NON-SFA PARADE FLOAT

Grand Champion: SFA Charter School

Lumberjack Spirit: GETCAP Head Start





STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY ALUMNI AWARDS

Alumni Award recipients were honored Sept. 8 during the annual awards banquet.

Each recipient is pictured with Dr. Baker Pattillo (left), SFA president, and David Madrid (right), president of the SFA Alumni Association.



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

JAMES DICKERSON '68 received his bachelor's degree in chemistry from SFA and then attended South Texas College of Law where he earned his Juris Doctor. He began his employment with Dow Chemical Company in 1968 as a research chemist and in 1979 moved into Dow's Intellectual Property Department where he advanced to senior managing counsel for Dow's Polyolefin and Elastomers business. In this role, he represented the company nationally and internationally, developed new and innovative chemical processes, and managed multimillion dollar budgets and joint-venture relationships. He retired from Dow Chemical in 2004.

After his retirement, Dickerson and his wife, Linda, who also attended SFA, became heavily involved in community service. In 2007, Gov. Rick Perry appointed Dickerson to serve on

SFA's Board of Regents. During his six-year tenure on the board, Dickerson served as board secretary and chairman of the Academic Affairs Committee. He has served on the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Strategic Planning Committee and the District Review Commission of the Texas Medical Board. Dickerson was president of Comal County Habitat for Humanity and treasurer of the New Braunfels Library Foundation board. Dickerson and his wife were selected as New Braunfels 2016 Unsung Heroes.

Dickerson demonstrates a passion for SFA and its students. He has traveled to Nacogdoches multiple times to evaluate senior research presentations and participate in roundtable discussions with undergraduate students to provide career advice. In 2013, he delivered the spring commencement address.



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

STEVE MCCARTY '65 & '70 worked as a coach and teacher in Beaumont, Longview and Orange before returning to Nacogdoches in 1981 to serve as athletics director and head football coach for Nacogdoches High School. In 1984, he assumed the role of associate athletics director for marketing at SFA. In 1990, he was promoted to university athletics director, a position he held until his retirement in 2005.

In 2009, McCarty was appointed by Gov. Rick Perry to serve on SFA's Board of Regents. From 2009-12, he served as chairman of both the Athletes Attendance Committee and the

Building and Grounds Committee. In 2012, he was appointed vice chairman of the board and, in 2013, he was named chairman of the Board of Regents, serving two terms. In July 2014, McCarty was named athletics director emeritus of SFA.

Additional honors and achievements bestowed upon McCarty through his relationship with SFA include induction into the SFA Lettermen's Association Jacks of Honor and Southland Conference Hall of Fame, and the establishment of the Steve McCarty Student-Athlete of the Year Award and the Southland Conference Steve McCarty Citizenship Award.



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

DR. WALTER "MIKE" ROBERTSON '51 taught biology at SFA for more than 35 years. During his tenure at the university, Robertson was named Regents Professor in 1982, the highest honor SFA may bestow on a faculty member. Upon his retirement in 1999, he was named professor emeritus of biology. Robertson's many contributions to SFA include serving as a pre-professional advisor and Homecoming parade volunteer organizer.



Robertson passed away July 29, 2015. The Distinguished Alumni Award was bestowed upon Robertson posthumously and accepted by his daughter, Martha Robertson Lee. Although Robertson is deceased, his love for SFA continues through his five children, who all attended the university, three earning bachelor's degrees, and two grandchildren, who are SFA graduates.



Outstanding Young Alumna Award

Before and after her graduation from SFA, **JULIE WOODS '99** has bled purple and white. After graduating, she represented SFA in Dallas/Fort Worth for two years as an admissions recruiter for the university. She later founded Julie Woods & Associates, one of the leading real estate firms in Northeast Texas, with offices in Kilgore and Longview.

Woods is active in her community, engaging in numerous civic, political and social activities. She has served as a board member for the Gregg County Appraisal District, ArtsView Children's Theatre, Junior Achievement, Junior League of Longview, Legacy Longview, University of Texas at Tyler Longview University Center and Neal McCoy's East Texas Angel Network. As owner of her real estate firm, she has hired and mentored many SFA graduates and helps fund SFA scholarships through her annual sponsorship of the Longview/Greater East Texas Chapter Golf Tournament.



Lumberjack Pride Award

SYDNI MITCHELL '10 & '12 works as communications director and policy analyst for Texas Sen. Robert Nichols.

During 2010-11, Mitchell was appointed by Gov. Rick Perry to serve as SFA's student regent. As a student, she also served as president of the Student Government Association, Circle of Omicron Delta Kappa Leadership Honor Society and Jacks Council on Family Relations.

Mitchell is an avid supporter of SFA's athletic programs. She is a regular attendee at SFA alumni-related events in the Austin area and spreads her purple pride wherever she goes.



Distinguished Professor Award

DR. MICHAEL TKACIK began his teaching career at SFA in 1999 as assistant professor of political science. He was later promoted to associate professor and named professor in 2009. Since 2008, Tkacik has served as the director of SFA's School of Honors.

He received the College of Liberal and Applied Arts Teaching Excellence Award in 2002 and was a Fulbright Award recipient in 2004. Later he received a Fulbright Senior Specialist Award.

Tkacik has traveled and taught abroad in locations such as Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Slovakia and Turkey. He is a prolific writer and researcher, authoring myriad journal articles and a book titled "Nuclear Strategy in the 21st Century: Balancing Safety and Deterrence in an Anarchic World" in 2003. Tkacik has presented papers in Sweden and Finland and lectured in New Zealand, the Czech Republic and England. He has served on dozens of committees.

While Tkacik enjoys research, he is most comfortable in the classroom. He has taught classes on American foreign policy, international terrorism, international law, politics and strategy, and American government.

Alumni Calendar /

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

FEBRUARY

10

SFA School of Honors 25th Anniversary
Nacogdoches

14-17

Texas Music Educators Association Convention
San Antonio at the Marriott Riverwalk
Alumni Reception from 9:30 to 11:30 p.m.
Feb. 16

23-24

Nacogdoches Film Festival
Nacogdoches

24

Showcase Saturday
Noon to 5 p.m.
Nacogdoches

Ladyjack Basketball Academic Shootout
Johnson Coliseum / Nacogdoches

Alumni Night and Cram the Coliseum

3:30 p.m. Ladyjack Basketball
6 p.m. Lumberjack Basketball
Johnson Coliseum / Nacogdoches

Mr. and Miss SFA Presentation

Halftime of the Lumberjack basketball game
Johnson Coliseum / Nacogdoches

26-28

SFA Ring Week
Pearman Alumni Center
300 Vista Drive / Nacogdoches

MARCH

1

SFA Ring Week continued
Pearman Alumni Center
300 Vista Drive / Nacogdoches

Alumni Awards Nominations Due

7-11

Southland Conference Tournament - Basketball
Leonard E. Merrell Center / Katy

12-16

Spring Break

24

Showcase Saturday
Noon to 5 p.m.
Nacogdoches

28

Tuition Raffle Drawing

APRIL

6

SFA Sportsman Social
5 to 8 p.m.
Meadow Ridge Archery and Gun
Nacogdoches

WAS YOUR SFA DIPLOMA DESTROYED OR DAMAGED DUE TO RECENT FLOODING?

If so, email the Office of the Registrar at graduation@sfasu.edu and include the following:

- your full name
- address where your diploma was located during Hurricane Harvey
- your campus ID, if you know it.

We will respond with further instructions. Alumni who have confirmed addresses in the flood-affected areas will be issued free replacement diplomas.

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN
STATE UNIVERSITY



Class Notes

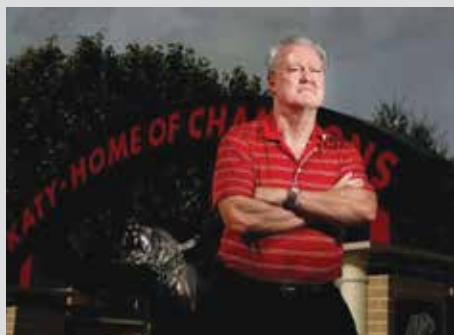
1960s

Dr. Richard Morrison '60 of Wilmington, North Carolina, was appointed to the Board of Directors of Argos Therapeutics.

Dr. Giles Ray Deason '68, '71 & '00 retired from his position as Ore City ISD assistant superintendent after 50 years in education.

Alex Nemer Jr. '68 was appointed by the Palestine City Council as the city's municipal judge.

The field at Legacy Stadium in Katy was named in honor of **MIKE JOHNSTON '69**, former Katy High School football coach, who led the team to multiple state championships. "There's no doubt it's a blessing, a great honor, and I am humbled," Johnston said. Voters approved the project in 2014. The stadium seats 12,000 and cost about \$72 million. Officials said the stadium is needed because about 3,000 new students join Katy ISD annually.



Dr. Geoff Gearner '81 of Morehead, Kentucky, professor of biology at Morehead State University, received the Distinguished Teacher Award during MSU's 2017 Fall Convocation.

Paul Blakely '83 of Forney retired from the Dallas Fire Department after a 33-year career.

Ken Craver '84 of Tyler was appointed to the Learning Technology Advisory Committee of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Jim Berry '85 of Dallas is vice chairman of Deloitte and leader of its U.S. real estate and construction sector practice.

Kelly Pickle '85 & '87 of Paris is in her third year as superintendent of Roxton ISD.

Gregory B. Hayes '86 of Jacksonville, Florida, was appointed vice president of finance and chief financial officer for the Jacksonville Transportation Authority.

Brig. Gen. Neil S. Hersey '86 of Fort Gordon, Georgia, was named the first general officer commandant of the U.S. Army Cyber School.

Don Jackson '87, '02 & '04 of Jacksonville won the 2016-17 National LifeChanger of the Year Award. Jackson is principal of Grapeland Elementary School.

David Murray '87 of Geneseo, Illinois, was hired as dean of North Central State College's liberal arts division.

1970s

The Texas Dairy Queen Operators Council presented two awards to **Gene Brumbelow '70** of Jacksonville. The Helping Hands Award was given for continuous efforts to mentor store operators, and the Lifetime Achievement Award was presented for the 29 years Brumbelow has operated DQ stores and held various board and other notable positions.

Hal Brockman '74 of Hillsboro, Oregon, completed his third Ironman competition. He participated in his first Ironman at age 60.

Van Welch '77 of Spring joined Mobile Mini Inc. as executive vice president and chief financial officer.

1980s

An article by **Karen Guenther '80** of Mansfield, Pennsylvania, professor of history at Mansfield University, titled "A Question of Loyalty: German Churches in Reading During the First World War" was published in the summer 2017 issue of "Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies."

Life Members

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

- 8213. Lloyd L. Langston '79, Coupland
- 8214. Christopher G. Lloyd '16, Garrison
- 8215. James V. Davoli '16, Garland
- 8216. Amy R. Ashley '16, Nacogdoches
- 8217. Richard A. Hurtado '06, Houston
- 8218. Dr. Karen L. O'Brien '93, Richmond
- 8220. Derrick L. Sneed '97, Cedar Hill
- 8221. Katelyn D. Childress '17, Lumberton
- 8222. Dr. Dan F. Wilkins '73 & '74, Tenaha
- 8223. Corey D. Johnson '14, Carthage
- 8224. Regan S. Stubbs '16, Mexia
- 8225. Matthew Eldredge '15, Nacogdoches
- 8227. Richard Trent Johnston '98, The Woodlands
- 8229. J. Elaine Hart '78, Plano
- 8230. John Bradley Streit '79, Tyler
- 8231. Suzanne M. Streit '79, Tyler

Class Notes

1990s

Brett Ward '92 of San Antonio met Shianne S. Sinks, an SFA undergraduate from Wimberley, when both attended the Ben Delatour Scout Ranch in Red Feather Lakes, Colorado. Sinks was the camp's horsemanship merit badge instructor and taught Ward's son.

Winifread Williams '92 of Marshall recently retired from education after 32 years working for Wills Point ISD.

Kenneth Williams '94 of Buda was elected vice president of the Texas City Management Association.

The Temple Independent School District Board of Trustees hired **Kelly Madden '96** of Temple as principal of Kennedy-Powell Elementary School.

Vivian Nichols '96 of Palestine recently published a book titled "Whisper Mountain." The book is based on the story of her grandmother, Ida Williams, and recounts her time growing up in the Ozark Mountains. The anguish of her grandmother's childhood was not discovered until 30 years after her death when family members located more than 100 pages of journal entries that Nichols adapted and retold in the book from her grandmother's perspective.

Monica Stefek '97 of St. Louis, Missouri, was named director of marketing for Spellman Brady & Co., an interior design firm specializing in senior living, health care and higher education environments.

Dr. David Waters '99 & '05 of Llano was named Nocona ISD superintendent.

The Texas Forestry Association selected **ROBERT HUGHES '96** as its new executive director. A Texas native, Hughes has more than 20 years' experience in the forestry industry, most recently as harvesting/silviculture manager for Campbell Global since 2014. "I am honored to be chosen to lead an amazing group that has been the voice of forestry for more than 100 years," Hughes said.



2000s

Dr. Donny Lee '02 of Oakwood was named 2017-18 Region VII Outstanding High School Principal of the Year by the Texas Association of Secondary School Principals.



← **Tiffany Deal '03** and her husband, Michael, of Houston welcomed daughter Vivienne Dior April 23.

Jennifer Moody '03 and Rafael Wilder of Pflugerville were married in April.

→ **Joel Bourdier '06 & '07** of Orange and **Kristen Trent-Bourdier '08** of Frisco sent their sons, Trent and Joseph, to their school's College Week in spirited SFA clothing.



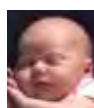
David Hollas '06 of Houston was named environmental, health and safety advisor for Australis Oil & Gas.

Jessica Bridges '07 of Cypress launched a new online fashion line named Jess Lea.

Benjamin Cameron '09 of Longview joined Christus Good Shepherd Medical Center. He specializes in internal medicine.

Heather Ursprung '09 of Channelview conducted the Channelview ISD All-District Choir's performance of "The Star-Spangled Banner" during a Houston Astros game in August.

2010s



← **Justin '10 & '11** and **Kelsey Pelham '11 & '14** of Nacogdoches welcomed daughter Ellie Grace in March. Justin is a clinical instructor in SFA's School of Human Sciences. Kelsey is an instructor in SFA's Department of Languages, Cultures and Communication.

Cole Tomberlain '10 of Longview was selected as the Longview News-Journal's 2017 Best Insurance Agent of East Texas.

Houston Press recognized two SFA graduates for their performances in Houston-based theater productions. **Blake Weir '12** of Sugar Land was named a Best Supporting Actor finalist for his role as Henry VIII in "Wolf Hall" and "Bring Up the Bodies" at Houston's Main Street Theater. **Allen Titel '12** of Richmond was awarded the Best Trouper award for his role as Winston Smith in Obsidian Theater's production of "1984."



← **Felicia Petrosky '13** and Shane Cribbs of Angleton announced the July birth of son, Declan.

Weekendfer Saurit '13 and **Jacklyn Reyes '14** of Austin were married in July.



← **Jacob '13** and **Kaylyn Waters '14** of West announced the June birth of Samuel Jacob.

Shalonda Washington '14 of Coldspring was named Coldspring-Oakhurst Consolidated ISD's 2016 Teacher of the Year.

Robyne Williams '14 of Richmond, also known as DJ Teddi, is now the home DJ for two professional sports teams in Houston.

Amanda Dover '16 of Rusk was appointed Cherokee County auditor.

Karen Rush '16 of Houston played one of three Victorian explorers who travel through time and have an encounter with a yeti in Pasadena Little Theatre's production of "On the Verge."

Nathan Weant '16 of Hallsville was selected to lead the Indian Hills Community College golf program.

In Memoriam

ANDREW HOPKINS SR.



Former SFA football and track and field star Andrew Hopkins Sr. passed away Sept. 30 in Sugar Land. Hopkins, who was born in Crockett, was inducted into the SFA Athletics Hall of Fame in 1999. Only two individuals — Gus Johnson and Leonard Harris — accumulated more rushing yards

in a Lumberjack uniform than Hopkins. He remains in the top 10 all-time in a number of SFA football statistical categories. In addition to his prowess on the gridiron, Hopkins earned a number of astounding achievements on the track. His school record time of 10.10 seconds in the 100-meter dash has stood since he set it in 1968. That same year, he was part of an SFA team that captured the national title in the 4x100-meter relay. During the 1968 National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics' Men's Outdoor Track and Field Championships, Hopkins participated in the 200-meter dash. He clocked a time of 20.9 seconds to become SFA's first individual national champion in men's track and field. Hopkins spent three

seasons with the NFL's Houston Oilers. He later played for the Canadian Football League where he also excelled, producing three seasons of 1,000 or more rushing yards.

EARL H. MILNER JR.



Earl H. Milner Jr. '72, loyal supporter of SFA track and field and cross-country, passed away Aug. 30. During his time as a student, Milner served as manager for the track and field programs. He later worked for more than 18 years as the starter for SFA home track and field events, ensuring student-athletes got a fair and equal start for each race. Additionally, he helped when SFA hosted Southland Conference track and field and cross-country championship meets. Milner also assisted with high school track and field meets held on SFA's campus. In 2016, SFA Athletics named the high school meet held at the Fletcher Garner Track "The Earl Milner Invitational" to honor his dedication to SFA track and field.

Shannon D. Abernathy '83 of Tyler, Aug. 14
Cheryl Athey '79 & '85 of Nacogdoches, Aug. 6
Paula Beauchamp '49 & '52 of Houston, Sept. 2
William T. Bell '48 of Huntsville, July 28
James Lowell Bogue '54 & '63 of Timpson, June 30
Michael B. Bonner '86 of Lufkin, Sept. 7
Grove S. Brame '80 of Boerne, July 4
Heather M. Butler '10 of Hurst, Sept. 22
Bryce C. Cain '97 of Conroe, Sept. 5
Sally A. Cassidy '72 & '78 of Longview, July 25
Glendell P. Chadwick '71 & '74 of Carthage, July 11
Kitty L. Chamness '59 of Austin, July 21
Bobby Dean Coe Sr. '59 of Tyler, Aug. 22
Steve A. Copeland '72 & '76 of Hallsville, July 27
Theresa McMurray Crenshaw '91 & '93 of Bedford, May 16
Matthew Raymond Flynn of Nacogdoches, staff member, Sept. 27
Martha M. Gaston '72 of Nacogdoches, Aug. 16
Jimmie C. Goodson '72 of Pollok, Aug. 4
John Bernard Herson '69 of Denton, Sept. 2
Charles J. Hock '65 of Houston, July 29
Dr. Wayne E. Johnson of Farmington, Missouri, retired professor of political science, July 23
Vernon R. Kemp '79 of Houston, July 21
Charlotte Maluski of Houston, donor and friend of SFA, Aug. 3
Al McLaren '62 of Denver, Colorado, May 4
Desiree Michelle Morrison '09 & '11 of Nacogdoches, Aug. 15
Stephen E. Muslow '73 of Shreveport, Louisiana, Sept. 11
Michael W. Narmour '82 of Ferrum, Virginia, Sept. 1
Joel M. Nash '64 of Bellaire, Sept. 4
Terrence T. Nied '67 of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, June 27
Fleda F. Olsen '49 & '52 of Jasper, Sept. 9
Jerry W. Piper '74 of Tyler, June 24
Carol W. Poe '88 of Kingwood, July 31

John D. Porter Jr. '68 of Marshall, Sept. 19
Jean Powers '65 & '80 of Nacogdoches, Aug. 23
Frank E. Price '47 & '51 of Huntsville, Sept. 1
Joe F. Rabago Jr. '96 & '99 of Houston, Aug. 2
Tonya J. Reynolds '85 of Tyler, Aug. 19
Alice Rhiddlehoover '63 of Carthage, June 24
Betty S. Richards '52 & '69 of Henderson, June 23
Jose (Pigui) Felix Rodriguez Jr. '12 of Dallas, July 15
Ret. Lt. Col. Auguste Runte '69 of Atascadero, California, July 31
Cliff E. Sandoz '87 of Opelousas, Louisiana, July 11
Russell Sarver '95 of Katy, Sept. 9
James E. Scott '61 of Lake Jackson, June 25
David W. Shepard '77 of Lufkin, Aug. 7
Frances A. Shofner of Nacogdoches, friend of SFA, June 26
Jay E. Simonsen '69 of Pearland, Sept. 18
Patsy L. Smith '72 of Dallas, Sept. 19
Carrie L. Stevens '79 of Kaufman, July 6
Linda G. Thompson '81 & '85 of Pearland, June 17
Charles R. Townes '81 & '85 of Timpson, June 29
Bertis Wells '65 of San Augustine, Sept. 13
Dr. Roy D. Wilson '52 of Ben Wheeler, July 31
Laura C. Winborn '57 & '74 of Longview, Aug. 7



SFA students

Caleb S. Gibbs of Nacogdoches, Sept. 20
Addison H. Neal of Van, Sept. 6



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